



**BCQS**  
INTERNATIONAL

BCQS International  
**HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

January 2019

# BCQS Health and Safety Policy

## INTRODUCTION

Health and Safety is a fundamental consideration for all staff. It should be part of everyday working both with activities inside the office and on every project. There is both a legal and professional responsibility to ensure understanding and application of health and safety principles at all times.

This Health and Safety policy sets out the standards and principles for the practice. It is important that all staff familiarise themselves with the contents and ensure that they refer to it when appropriate. If staff are in any doubt over the application or requirements at any time they must ensure that issues are discussed with their line manager or a senior member of staff.

Overriding principles

Staff should:

- Ensure they understand the contents of this document and when to apply them.
- Look out for their own safety first and ensure they never put themselves at risk.
- Ensure that they understand what is required of them and compliance with the practice's policies.

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## **SECTION 1: POLICY STATEMENT**

### **1.1 General policy**

- 1.11 To issue this Health and Safety Policy to all staff and to new staff members and to issue further or revised guidance from time to time on safety matters affecting the Practice. Staff are required to read the policy thoroughly and sign the relevant documentation confirming receipt of the issue/revision.
- 1.12 To consult with staff on matters affecting their health and safety and to provide the opportunity to raise health and safety matters at any time.
- 1.13 To receive proposals from staff, jointly or individually, for improving the effectiveness of these procedures and policies.
- 1.14 To regularly monitor and revise this policy and health & safety system as necessary, particularly as the business changes in nature and size.

### **1.2 The Policy in relation to individual staff**

- 1.21 To provide healthy and safe working conditions for staff and for the safety of clients or other members of the public who may visit the premises.
- 1.22 To operate this policy in conjunction with the safety policies of the landlord of any property occupied by the Practice.
- 1.23 To give adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to staff on all aspects of their work to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, their health and safety at work including the safe handling and use of any equipment and hazardous substances.
- 1.24 To provide and maintain, where necessary, protective clothing and equipment and hard hats in accordance with the legal requirements of the country you are working in.
- 1.25 To record all accidents/injuries and notify any major accidents/injuries or work related diseases to the enforcing authority in accordance with current regulations.

### **1.3 The Policy in relation to professional functions**

- 1.31 To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from the Practice's work activities.
- 1.32 To comply with the requirements of construction, demolition or installation work and the manner of its execution shall be such that safe working conditions are possible for all during the construction phase or after completion are safe.
- 1.33 To obtain from Clients details of existing hazards or safety policies affecting their specific projects.

- 1.34 To encourage staff to report health and safety hazards to the Practice H & S Co-ordinator.
- 1.35 To require clients or contractors to discharge in full their duty of care under the applicable local Health and Safety Act.

#### **1.4 Health and Safety risk management**

- 1.41 The Practice, in accordance with current Health and Safety at Work and using competent persons, will make suitable and sufficient assessment of all relevant risks or hazards affecting:
- The health and safety of its staff whilst they are working for the Practice;
  - The health and safety of other persons not in its employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct of its undertaking.
- 1.42 The assessment will be recorded, and any required changes will be made and recorded accordingly (see Section 7: Health and Safety risk assessment for details).
- 1.43 Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator

The First Aid Appointed Person are as known within the office or displayed at Tea/Coffee Point.

The appointed Fire Warden is known or displayed at Tea/Coffee Point.

## **SECTION 2: ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **2.1 Introduction**

1. The Director/Partner with overall responsibility the Health and Safety Policy is the Managing Director of the Practice.
2. The Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator, is the Head of Human Resources or such other person delegated from the HR department as responsible for implementation of the Health and Safety Policy.

It should be noted, however, that neither are personally responsible for the personal health and safety of staff.

Employers' requirements under standard Health and Safety requirements note:

'It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.'

It further notes:

'It shall be the duty of every employer to conduct his undertaking in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons not in his employment who may be affected thereby are not thereby exposed to risks to their health or safety.'

Members of staff also have responsibilities to co-operate in and to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of any other persons who may be affected by their acts and omissions.

Specifically, it shall be the duty of every employee while at work:

1. To take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and
2. As regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.'

It is a duty on all persons whether they be employers, employees or self-employed to note that:

'No person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions.'

## **2.2 Duties and responsibilities of the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator**

These are to:

- Take overall responsibility for the health and safety of staff when carrying out their work.
- Ensure that sufficient resources are provided to meet the practice's health and safety needs.
- Take executive responsibility for implementing and supervising the Practice's Health and Safety Policy and its procedures, including risk assessments.
- Ensure all members of the practice co-operate in meeting the aims of the policy.
- Ensure sufficient training is provided to all staff to enable them to fulfil their duties in accordance with the Policy.
- Appoint a First Aid Appointed Person(s) and ensure that the First Aid Box and Accident record book are properly maintained.
- Maintain an Accident Record Book, record all known accidents and significant occurrences of work related ill health.
- Investigate any accidents and work-related periods of sickness absences.
- Ensure fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented and fire escape routes and equipment are regularly checked and tested.
- Report staff to a Director for appropriate disciplinary action in the event of any breach of or refusal to comply with statutory (or Practice) safety regulations or the Policy of Practice.
- Ensure all staff are given adequate safety training.
- Ensure all staff are issued with a copy of the Policy and any subsequent revisions, and that a signed record copy of the Policy is retained for each member of staff.
- Set a personal example in all aspects of health and safety.

## **2.3 Responsibilities of staff**

All members of staff must:

- Take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- Report any accident, however minor, to the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator.
- Set a personal example to their colleagues and clients in all aspects of health and safety.
- Ensure electrical plugs are safely and correctly wired and place telephone and electricity cables where they are not a potential hazard.
- Do not overload socket outlets with adaptors and multiple plugs.
- Report any loose connections/faults to the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator.
- Switch off electrical machines after use or at the end of the day unless otherwise instructed.
- Report faulty office equipment to the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator – untrained staff must not attempt repairs.
- Escape routes (in case of fire), stairways, passageways and space between desks must be kept free of all obstructions.
- Report potential hazards (such as fire escape obstructions) to the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator.
- Do not dispose of broken glass or scalpel blades in waste bins. These must be wrapped safely (i.e. blades wrapped in tape) and deposited in the designated bins.
- Always leave the kitchen/refreshment facilities hygienically clean and tidy.

## **2.4 Responsibilities of the Practice (Directors/Partners)**

The Practice (Directors/Partners) as freeholders, leaseholders or tenants of its offices, will ensure:

- compliance with local Health and Safety at Work; local Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations;
- Sufficient Fire Wardens and First Aiders are appointed, trained and their names and responsibilities known and published.
- Offices are space-planned, cleaned and kept in good repair to ensure safety of staff and visitors.
- Office machinery is safe, properly maintained, fitted with any necessary guards or safety devices and that staff required to use such machinery are trained in its use and are not permitted to carry out repairs without authority.
- A health and safety plan is prepared for all construction, maintenance and repair works at the Practice offices.
- Electrical equipment and systems in the premises are properly maintained.

## **SECTION 3: PROJECT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This section draws attention to two aspects of Health and Safety affecting Project Design and Construction. These are, firstly, managing risks arising from the design affecting users of the completed facilities and secondly, assessing the risks during construction works.

This places duties on persons (e.g. the Practice) who design, import or supply articles for use at work to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable that any plant, machinery, equipment or appliance is so designed and constructed as to be safe without risk to health.

They must carry out any testing or examination necessary to achieve this and ensure that adequate information will be available about the use for which it was designed and about any conditions necessary for its safe use. They must ensure that there is adequate information available about this and about any conditions necessary to ensure that it will be safe and without risks to health when properly used.

The duty of employers, or self-employed persons and of managers (i.e. those 'not employing but controlling persons at work') to ensure decisions affecting health and safety during construction works are made following assessment of the risks arising through the design. The term 'construction works' includes maintenance, repair and demolition. These regulations also impose duties on Clients, and Consultants. It should be noted that this is different from most construction law in that it is Criminal Law. The client should be made aware of their responsibility and preferably this action confirmed in writing.

### **3.2 Responsibilities of the Client**

The duties of the Client are:

- 
- to provide information in the possession of the Client relevant to health and safety aspects of the project to the health and safety file;
- to appoint a General Contractor where the project is notifiable;
- to ensure those appointed are competent and adequately resourced to carry out their health and safety responsibilities;
- to ensure a suitable Health and Safety Plan has been prepared by the General Contractor before construction work starts;
- 

### **3.3 Responsibilities of the Project/Construction Manager**

The duties of the Project/Construction Manager for a project are as follows:

- Where applicable, to ensure the local Health and Safety Executive is notified of the project,
- to ensure co-operation between designers;
- to ensure a pre-tender stage Health and Safety Plan is considered and prepared;
- Where applicable, to ensure a Health and Safety File is prepared and passed to the Client at practical completion.



### 3.5 Health and Safety risk control

Identification and control of risk to health and safety is a continuous activity to be taken into account with other factors when making design decisions. It is also to be subject to formal review at the end of each work stage.

The general principles of hazard identification and assessment involve:

- listing the processes, tasks or work activities;
- identification of potential hazard(s);
- assessment of each risk in terms of likely frequency and seriousness;

If the hazards cannot be eliminated, follow the hierarchy of risk control:

- alter the design to prevent or remove the hazard, but if that is not reasonably practicable
- combat the risk at source, e.g. provide lifting attachments if appropriate, only then
- consider personal protection, e.g. harnesses or respirators, or special training, or access limitation.

### 3.6 Implementation

When appointed as a Project/Construction Manager, to a project the Practice will discharge, as far as is reasonably practicable, its obligations:

(a) to ensure design decisions affecting health and safety during construction works are made following assessment of the risks by:

- applying Local Approved Code of Practice published by the Health and Safety Executive;
- following local guidance or the 'Managing Health and Safety in Construction: Construction (Design and Management) Regulations, published in the UK;
- following applicable local building codes. If none are applicable, the codes published by CUBIC should be implemented.
- allocating members of staff with the necessary competence to undertake specific health related tasks;
- maintaining a library as source of safety information;
- monitoring, compliance with the local Practice Health and Safety Policy.

(b) to ensure that a design and specification meets the local requirements, by:

- complying with appropriate Government Acts
- complying with guidance applicable to specific industrial, sector or substances published by local Health and Safety Executive;
- specifying installations, plant, equipment and materials which comply with relevant local Standards and Codes of Practice;
- where local Codes of Practice do not exist, using authoritative sources of information such as CUBIC,
- consulting the local HSE in cases where guidance is not available or not clear.

### **3.7 Competence**

All Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) members should be aware that they are expected to comply with the CPD requirements and be fully aware of their responsibilities. (RICS CPD Core-curriculum requires minimum 2 hours CPD per annum on Health and Safety issues).

Other members of staff that belong to other similar professional bodies are considered to have similar status.

Members of staff that are not RICS members should have relevant CPD training.

## **SECTION 4: SITE VISITS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

When any member of staff is making an official visit to other premises or working away from the office (for instance, at the offices of a client, or other consultant or on a construction site) their health and safety is the responsibility of the person or firm or contractor controlling that place.

Nevertheless, the Practice, as the employer, is not absolved from its responsibility but can only discharge its duty of care with the co-operation of the staff.

Everyone's compliance with the following guidelines will help with the achievement of the principal aims of ensuring the safety of each staff member, and the safety of others.

### **4.2 Time and location of visit**

Any staff member who intends to be out of the office for any reason must enter the precise details of time and location into the office diary and inform the office if these arrangements change.

### **4.3 Personal safety**

All staff should take special care when visiting sites, inspecting properties unaccompanied, leaving offices or attending appointments after dark and should remain on guard when travelling on public transport late at night or in remote places. They should be wary of escorting strangers around empty properties by themselves. Be aware of advice on personal safety by the Police.

#### **4.4 Permission to visit site**

Do not enter sites or buildings without permission.

On construction sites, the Contractor is responsible for the safety of persons lawfully on the site. Be aware of and comply with all of the Contractor's on site Health and Safety requirements. Report to him/her on arrival and when you leave.

If visiting occupied buildings, make prior arrangements with the person in charge and report on arrival to the responsible member of staff in the area or department being visited and on leaving. Always seek assistance from others on the site when personal safety is at risk.

Do not visit a site or an empty building or unfrequented spaces (e.g. ducts) in existing buildings on your own without permission. Make sure someone knows where you are, what you are doing and report back at an agreed time. Establish an action plan in case of non-appearance after an agreed time.

The office has a pool mobile telephone for use by staff who are not issued with a dedicated mobile telephone. This should be booked out and taken on all visits. Preferably go accompanied especially to unoccupied sites.

#### **4.5 Planning a site visit**

It is the client's responsibility to provide enough information about the site to enable a visit to be undertaken with full knowledge of the conditions.

It is good practice to undertake a Health and Safety risk assessment to focus attention on any issues that will need to be identified and need to be avoided.

Procedures need to be adjusted depending on whether the site is occupied or unoccupied.

Plan the visit and take appropriate equipment and protective clothing. As a minimum, all visits will require:

- a hard hat that is undamaged and 'in-date'
- boots or shoes with steel toecaps and preferably steel insoles
- high visibility vest or jacket

additionally, quite often the following may also be required-

- safety glasses
- gloves
- full high visibility clothing
- additional warm or water proof clothing
- sunglasses
- sun block (especially for roof inspections in summer)

Familiarise yourself with all safe working rules applicable to the site or place being visited and comply with them. Such rules could cover access and egress, the wearing of safety helmets, safety harnesses, eye protection, ear protection, footwear and clothing, special precautions in areas of particular hazard, reporting your presence on site, etc. When conducting third parties on construction sites, you must ensure that they always wear hard hats, high visibility clothing and are wearing appropriate protective clothing.

#### **4.6 Occupied site safety rules**

The basic safety rule is when staff perform their duties, they must not put themselves or others at risk whatever pressures are exerted by others. Draw attention to risks or hazards that appear to have gone unnoticed.

When visiting any construction site or surveying or inspecting premises under the control of a contractor:

- ensure that on your first visit you are offered and attend a site induction. If you are not able to be given an induction for any reason, do not enter the site;
- always attend site properly equipped;
- do not accept an escort as an alternative to inductions as your guide could be needed in an emergency and you will not know the safe way to exit the site.

As minimum:

- wear a hard hat, suitable clothes and stout shoes or boots with toe caps; do not wear thin-soled, high heeled or slippery shoes;
- avoid loose clothes which might catch on obstructions;
- familiarise yourself beforehand with the plan of the building, particularly the exit routes; make sure that security devices on exits will allow you to reach safety quickly;
- check on protection when approaching stairwells, balustrading, lift shafts, roof perimeters, etc; only use lifts when permitted; beware of ladders with rusty or rotten rungs, and never climb a ladder which is not securely fixed;
- ensure that there are toe boards to each lift of scaffolding, scaffold plates and that plant hoists are correctly protected;
- check that planks are secure; beware overhead projections, scaffolding and plant, and proceed with caution;
- keep clear of excavations; walk over the structural members (e.g. joists, beams, etc.) whenever possible - do not rely on floorboards alone; look for defects in the floors ahead, e.g. wet areas, holes, materials that might cover holes; do not lean on guard rails or roof lights;
- do not touch any plant or equipment; keep clear of machinery and stacked materials; watch out for temporary cables, pumps, hoses and electrical fittings;
- assume that services (e.g. cables, sockets, pipes, etc.) are not safe or have not been isolated;
- leave the building immediately if you suspect the presence of gas, flammable liquids, dangerous chemicals or free asbestos fibre;
- take particular care in windy, cold, frosty, wet or muddy conditions;
- do not walk and look around at the same time; keep one hand free at all times when moving; be in a safe and balanced position whenever making notes or taking photographs; do not become distracted while climbing ladders.

- ensure any access equipment you used is in good working order, is insured and if needed is operated by a correctly trained operator.

#### **4.7 Unoccupied Site or Building**

If the building or site is unoccupied, always anticipate hazards. Do not take chances. Do not visit an empty building if you think it unsafe. Do not visit an unoccupied site if it could be considered to be dangerous. Notify the office if you intend to visit an unoccupied building.

Undertake a Health and Safety risk assessment to understand what is known and what is a potential risk. If in doubt ask the client for more information or ask for additional resources to ensure that any potential risks can be mitigated.

Common dangers include:

- rotten or insecure floors and stairs;
- unsupported excavations and trenches;
- hidden pits, ducts, openings, etc.;
- fragile construction, e.g. roof sheeting;
- spaces which have not been used or ventilated for some time;
- contamination by chemicals or asbestos;
- intruders who may still be around;
- contamination by vermin or birds, or poisons put down to control them;
- unstable groundworks;
- watercourses and wells hidden by overgrown vegetation.

#### **4.8 Structural Collapse**

On discovering a partial or total structural collapse do not enter that section of the building, and consider the need:

- to contact the HSE and/or the Local Authority Building Control Officer;
- to contact the police where the public may be affected;
- for the display of appropriate hazard notices.

#### **4.9 Accidents**

When any accidents occur on sites or buildings where the Practice is carrying out professional services, proceed in accordance with the guidance in Section 5.

#### **4.10 Hazardous Activities**

Report any apparent or potentially unsafe or hazardous procedures on a construction site to the Project Manager, Contract Administrator (or Employer's Agent) or the clerk of works, or if these are not available, to the site agent or person responsible for that place. All such reports should be noted and, in the case of a construction site, recorded at the next site meeting.

In the case of any dangerous, or potentially dangerous, site activity, the Contractor or person responsible must be advised to cease carrying out that particular activity which contravenes the

applicable local Health and Safety at Work Act and to continue only in a manner which does accord with that Act. Take steps to ensure these actions are confirmed by written notice by the Project Manager, Contract Administrator (or Employer's Agent) to the Contractor (or person responsible) as soon as possible.

It should be emphasised that failure to deal adequately with the danger will be notified to the local HSE Inspectorate. If in doubt as to whether a situation is dangerous or not, err on the side of safety and contact the local HSE Inspector for advice.

#### **4.11 Unsafe Practices**

Do not act as a safety officer for Contractors or others but informed professionals have a duty and a legal responsibility to prevent, so far as reasonably practicable, a Contractor or others from carrying out unsafe practices and placing staff or visitors in jeopardy.

When encountering any difficulties or being unable to deal with a situation, seek the advice of the local HSE immediately in the country.

### **SECTION 5: MISCELLANEOUS PROCEDURES**

#### **5.1 Accident Reporting / First Aid**

Any incident which results in injury to any person or damage to any equipment or property affecting or involving the Practice and its staff and all accidents in the Practice premises must be reported to the Practice H & S Co-ordinator who will record the incident. On the spot collection of factual information (location, witnesses, measurement, parties involved, police and fire brigade services, hospital, photographs where possible) will be the responsibility of the Practice H & S Co-ordinator or senior person concerned.

Any accident on a construction site must be reported immediately to the relevant person in charge and to the Practice H & S Co-ordinator on return to the office.

The First Aid Appointed Person(s) is trained in emergency first aid on the premises. They must be notified immediately an accident occurs. The First Aid Box is situated on the wall at the Tea/Coffee Station together with the Accident Record Book. The Practice H & S Co-ordinator is responsible for the contents of the First Aid Box and maintaining the relevant record book.

Emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) are contacted by telephoning '999', '911' or other local code.

#### **5.2 Illness - Not Used**

#### **5.3 Occupational Health**

All members of staff are expected to have regard to the maintenance of their own physical and mental well-being in the conduct of their business and personal lives.

Excessive stress in personal or business life can impair performance and lead to illness. Any member of the firm who considers they are suffering from excessive stress, for whatever reason, should consult the Practice H & S Co-ordinator or a Director in the first instance, who will treat the matter confidentially.

#### **5.4 Smoking**

In the interests of fire safety, as well as general health and the working environment, the Practice operates a non-smoking policy on the premises.

#### **5.5 Driving**

All members of staff or other persons engaged by the Practice on its business or at any time when using a vehicle supplied by the Practice must conform with all requirements of local Road Traffic Acts, associated legislation and the Highway Code.

All personnel driving in the course of their employment or driving vehicles supplied by the Practice must:

- ensure that the vehicle is serviced, maintained and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines. If the condition of a Practice's vehicle is in doubt, advice or a garage should be sought;
- be in possession of a valid local driving licence. This must be checked by the Practice every year and endorsements notified to the insurers (for Company vehicles);
- ask staff's GP if any prescribed medication will affect their driving ability and if so they must refrain from driving;
- refrain from using telephones whilst driving;
- wear glasses or lenses if prescribed for this activity.

Personnel must avoid over the counter medications such as anti-depressants, antihistamines for hay fever, nettle rash, asthma, eczema, or travel sickness preparations or cough remedies which can adversely affect driving.

Personnel must not drive having consumed alcohol.

Staff are advised to consider the provision of a fire extinguisher (dry Powder) and a first aid kit for their vehicles.

Staff driving on business of the Practice, in a vehicle not supplied by the Practice, must have full comprehensive insurance cover to cover the driver and passengers in the course of their employment.

#### **5.6 Hazardous Substances**

When any potential hazardous substances are used at work, the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) require a register to be kept listing such risks and warning notices to be posted adjacent to store and equipment using hazardous materials or substances.

Basic precautions, as follows, must be adhered to:

- All chemicals must be stored bearing the approved safety signage and directions.
- Never 'top up' one bottle from another.
- Never mix chemicals as these may be incompatible and cause an adverse reaction.
- Ensure adequate ventilation when using glues, solvents, etc.

If an accident occurs:

- ventilate the area;
- evacuate staff;
- summon emergency services if necessary;
- ensure a full written report is prepared without delay and submitted to the manager responsible.

The most hazardous materials are likely to be cleaning chemicals. The basic precaution is to avoid mixing any two cleaners which are incompatible, such as powder and acid cleaners, liquid bleaches and powder bleaches. In both cases, toxic gases can be produced. Protective gloves and in some cases goggles must be worn when handling the chemicals.

Chemicals used by staff might include duplicating fluids, glues and solvents and reprographic chemicals. In all such cases, adequate ventilation needs to be available when these materials are used. The warning labels, if any, must be carefully studied and the precautions on them followed. Some of these materials may be flammable and the appropriate precautions, such as prohibition of smoking, should be taken.

## **5.7 Visual Display Units (VDUs)**

Display Screen Equipment risks of VDU work is to be assessed.

The objectives of the assessment are to meet the following criteria for health and comfort.

- The VDU screen should be positioned to avoid unnecessary reflections on it.
- Brightness should be variable; image should be steady and characters should be clear.
- The chair should be correctly adjusted for height and back support and in good condition.
- The need for breaks depends on the nature and intensity of the work, the Regulations require breaks or changes of activity but do not specify their timing or length. Short, frequent intervals are more beneficial than infrequent ones. Work should be arranged so that it is interspersed with other tasks.
- VDU operators should have their eyes tested before operating a VDU and at yearly intervals. Spectacle wearers should consult their optician.
- People who suffer from epilepsy or associated illnesses should see their own medical adviser before operating VDUs.
- Discomfort or illness associated with VDUs must be reported to the Practice H & S Co-ordinator.



## **5.8 Use of Office Equipment**

Whilst no special training is needed on any particular Practice equipment, care should be taken when for example:

- using the guillotine and binder machine;
- trimming with a scalpel blade or knife- always use a cutting mat and steel edge;
- using a ladder, which should only be undertaken when another member of staff is present to supervise/hold the ladder;
- lifting and carrying heavy loads
- No member of staff should attempt to lift a load which is beyond their capacity. People with back problems should not attempt any lifting.

Responsibility for ensuring the effective maintenance and guidance on the safe use of office equipment lies with the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator.

## **5.9 Advice and Consultancy**

Enforcing Authority: local authority

Employment Medical Advisory Service: Local authority

## **5.10 Visitors**

Visitors must report to Reception upon arrival and sign the Visitors' Book. Staff should be aware of the whereabouts of visitors to the premises at all times.

# **SECTION 6: FIRE AND EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS**

## **6.1 Fire Precautions Register & Risk Assessment**

The Practice H & S Co-ordinator maintains, in the Health and Safety file, a Register of Fire Precautions giving details of checks on equipment, systems, fire drills and the Practice's Fire Warden(s).

In line with the local codes an up-to-date Risk Assessment is held by the Practice H & S Co-ordinator and suitable action taken regarding identified risks.

Fire Regulations

Compliance with local code is required, together with local standards, unless alternative fire engineering approaches are required or a Fire Engineer consulted.

## **6.2 Means of Escape**

No person should obstruct a means of escape. Fire exit routes must never be obstructed or fire doors wedged open.

### 6.3 Fire Evacuation Procedures and Practices

A fire drill should be undertaken at least twice in every period of 12 months and training in evacuation will be given regularly by the fire system's maintenance company.

In the event of a fire:

- Operate the nearest fire alarm point and call '999/911 etc.' for assistance.
- Normally the Fire Warden(s) will be responsible for assessing firefighting but in their absence, attack the fire if possible (and if you have been trained), without taking personal risk, with the appliances provided.
- If an electrical appliance is involved, switch off the current before dealing with the fire and use the appropriate CO2 extinguisher located by rear fire escape, central office column, tea/coffee point.
- Other sources of fire can be tackled by the other extinguisher(s), located at rear fire exit and by main entrance.
- Shut doors and, if possible, windows before leaving the room. Do not stop to collect personal belongings.
- Use the nearest available exit and leave the building.
- Report to the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator at the designated assembly point.
- The current Fire Warden(s) is/are as indicated on wall at tea/coffee station.
- Fire Wardens' duties, in addition to the above, are as follows:
  - to familiarise themselves with the location and operation of firefighting equipment in the office and the escape routes;
  - to advise staff on fire precautions and equipment as necessary;
  - to keep alert to any potential fire hazards within the office, e.g. build up of waste, obstruction of escape routes, and to take necessary action to remove the hazard;
  - in the event of an evacuation of the office to carry out a rapid but thorough check to ensure it is clear of people before they themselves leave, and to report the completion of the search to the Practice H & S Co-ordinator outside the building;
  - to inform neighbouring occupants in order that their own procedures may be put into operation.

Generally, firefighting operations must be abandoned if:

- The means of escape is threatened;
- The fire is out of control;
- The extinguisher is exhausted.

### 6.4 Fire Protection Systems

#### 6.41 System Records

Details of all maintenance, testing or alterations to fire protection systems should be recorded in the Fire Precautions Register by or on behalf of the Practice H & S Co-ordinator. In the case of fire alarms, details of the causes of all alarms (genuine, practice or test), faults which develop, periods of disconnection, and any further action required should also be recorded in the Register.

## 6.42 Fire Alarms

The fire warning system should be checked periodically, with different call points (following a set sequence) activated upon each occasion.

## 6.43 Emergency Lighting

The installation should be tested every six months, with a full discharge test once a year. Periodic visual checks of the system should be made by or on behalf of the Practice H & S Co-ordinator.

## 6.44 Fire Fighting Equipment

The purpose of portable firefighting equipment is as follows:

- to extinguish minor fires;
- to protect means of escape as a priority;
- to protect staff and visitors;
- to protect property.

Fire extinguishers shall be maintained by a local company who shall be awarded a maintenance contract yearly.

Responsibility for ensuring the effective maintenance and guidance on the safe use of firefighting equipment lies with the Practice Health & Safety Co-ordinator.

The list below identifies a variety of firefighting appliances. Note that all fire extinguishers are now Red (colour) and may have a distinguishing label or band to denote the type of contents.

Water Fire Extinguishers - For use on Wood, Paper, Textiles.

Foam Fire Extinguishers - For use on Wood, Paper, Textiles, Petrol, Diesels and Oils.

Powder Fire Extinguishers - Highly versatile, for use on all above plus Electrical hazards, e.g. computers, switchgear.

CO2 Fire Extinguishers - Particularly effective for electrical fires, plus Petrol, Diesels, Oils

## **6.5 Bombs and Bomb Warnings**

### 6.51 Suspect Letter or Package

- Do not tamper with it.
- Place it in a protective container if available, but otherwise leave it alone.
- Evacuate the immediate area and adjacent offices/areas, and allow no-one in other than specialist disposal personnel.
- Inform the Practice H & S Co-ordinator immediately, who will summon the Police and.

If the building has to be fully or partially evacuated, instructions, including the exit routes and Assembly Area to be used, will be passed via Fire Wardens.

Everyone should then quickly but quietly make their way outside the building, along the exit routes to the Assembly Area given, to answer the roll call and await instructions.

Everyone should be warned to keep clear of large areas of glass and, with this in mind, the designated Assembly Point.

## **6.6 Training**

### **Fire Wardens**

Evacuation of all staff and notification of the brigade in the event of fire is the primary solution. However, waste bin or other small fires can cause considerable damage prior to fire brigade arrival. Fire Wardens' training of responsible staff not only encourages good fire housekeeping practices and managed evacuations but also first aid fire fighting action with extinguishers and blankets. This can considerably reduce losses to the practice whilst not putting the Fire Marshalls at undue risk.