

Work Equipment Safety Policy

1. Introduction
2. Who does this policy apply to?
3. The legal position
4. Management responsibilities
5. Purchasing Procedures
6. Setting up of fixed machinery
7. Risk Assessment
8. Employee training
9. Maintenance and Inspection

1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is Snowdonia National Park Authority's policy to provide a safe working environment for our employees at all times. To help us do this, we have introduced a policy to cover the safe use of any machinery (purchased or hire) that will be used within our organisation.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Snowdonia National Park Authority staff and volunteers (all are referred to as 'employees' in this policy).

3. The legal position

- 3.1 The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) require that any equipment which we provide for use at work is:
 - suitable for its intended use
 - can be used safely
 - maintained in a safe condition
 - inspected as necessary
 - effectively guarded
 - only used by operators who have received adequate information, instruction and training.
- 3.2 The regulations also require that when we purchase new equipment we ensure that it complies with the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992, as amended 1994. Where we import machinery from outside of the EU, or produce machinery in-house, we are wholly responsible for ensuring that it conforms to these regulations. In any case, as a user of purchased machinery we must ensure that it is CE marked and has a declaration of conformity.
- 3.3 In addition to these general machinery/work equipment regulations we must also comply with the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. They require us to specifically assess the risks of vibration which may arise from the use of particular machinery and electrical hand tools. In order to comply, it is our policy that a risk assessment will be undertaken for all activities where vibration is present. Where it is identified, all reasonable steps will be taken in order to reduce it.

3.4 Other specific requirements apply to lifting equipment, equipment which operates under pressure and gas appliances. These include the need for statutory inspections which are arranged by the Property Service and gas checks which we arrange with a GasSafe Registered engineer.

4. Management Responsibilities

4.1 Managers with responsibility for work involving machinery must:

- ensure that the right machinery is provided for the type of work being carried out
- ensure that risk assessments are undertaken as described within this Policy
- consult with staff on the introduction of new machinery or methods of work
- ensure that any potentially dangerous machinery is restricted to authorised and trained users over the age of 18
- ensure that staff are supplied with suitable and properly fitting personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with risk assessment findings, e.g. ear defenders, goggles, respirators, safety footwear, that there is somewhere clean for them to store it and that there is a programme of maintenance and replacement
- arrange for staff to receive training in the safe use of the machinery and for dealing with breakdowns, blockages, maintenance and repairs, as appropriate
- ensure that staff are provided with suitable information in the form of warning signs and written instructions for the safe use of the equipment
- monitor that safe working practices are being followed, including the correct use of guarding, the use of the right machine for the right job, the wearing of PPE, the use of push sticks and jigs
- check that machinery is being maintained correctly by users under a planned preventative maintenance schedule, e.g. routine oiling, emptying of dust extraction, replacement of cutting fluids, blade changing, checking of fluid levels and pressures, brakes etc.
- ensure suitable / appropriate checks are made of machinery prior to the use of that equipment
- carry out, or delegate to a competent person, daily / weekly / monthly inspections of machinery including emergency stop devices, interlocks, photoelectric systems, dust/fume extraction and other safety devices
- ensure that where necessary, machinery is subject to external servicing and inspection, including statutory inspections, where applicable
- implement a safe system of work for maintenance activities involving machinery isolation, draining of power (if applicable), time for the machine to cool (if applicable), lock off, tagging and, where deemed appropriate, permits to work
- ensure that employees know how to report defects and problems with machinery
- have a system for taking equipment out of use until repaired including, as necessary, disabling it from use
- investigate any machinery accident in accordance with Authority policy and implement any improvements required

- enforce the rules and take disciplinary action against staff in the event of serious or repeated non-compliance.

5. Purchasing Procedures

5.1 To be followed by all managers with purchasing authority.

The first stage is to draw up a full specification of the machine. This will include installation details, access issues, size, vibration levels, weight of machine (to ensure that the floor can take the weight), power requirements and information on dust/fume extraction systems. In addition to this, the following requirements will apply to the purchase of both new and used equipment. The requirements can be summarised as follows:

- a well-known and reputable supplier must always be used
- where the same item is available from more than one supplier, quotes must be obtained
- if equipment is purchased outside of the UK, a declaration of conformity with EU requirements must be supplied
- the machinery must be checked to see that it is suitable for the intended work environment, taking into consideration flammable atmospheres or wet conditions, where applicable
- only a supplier who can provide a full set of operating instructions should be used. If a foreign supplier, then the instructions must be translated into English
- a complete set of basic routine maintenance instructions must be included in English
- warning signs and instructions applied to the machine which are not pictorial must be written in English and must include safety limitations for use, e.g. safe working load for lifting plant.

6. Setting up of fixed machinery

6.1 When new equipment is fixed into position we will ensure that there is sufficient space to operate it safely and that it is stable, e.g. by securing it to the floor or a bench.

Where necessary, the floor will be marked to show the work area which must be kept clear of obstructions.

6.2 Such machinery will be connected to the power supply via a lockable isolator. The start and stop controls will be set up so that in the event of a power cut, or when an interlocked guard is closed, the machine will need to be positively restarted as opposed to restarting automatically. An emergency stop will be located in a position which is readily accessible to the operating position of the machine and its function will be clearly labelled.

6.3 Where use of the machine is restricted to authorised staff and the area is accessible to others, a notice will be displayed indicating who is authorised to use the machine. The machine will also be locked out of use where practicable and the key accessible only to authorised users.

- 6.4 We will ensure that lighting is suitable for use of the machinery. For machines with rotating parts we will ensure that the lighting does not flicker at a rate which makes the machine appear to be stationary, i.e. stroboscopic effect. Where this is a concern, half of the fluorescent lighting will be connected to a different phase of the supply.
- 6.5 Warning signs and notices will be displayed to highlight hazards and underline safety requirements, such as PPE.

7. Risk Assessment

- 7.1 Before any item of machinery is introduced for the first time, we will carry out a risk assessment. The purpose of this is to identify whether there are any particular hazards associated with its use in our workplace. For example, these could involve space constraints, noise levels or guarding which is unworkable given the intended use of the machine. We will consult with staff or their representatives at this stage. If it isn't reasonably practicable to reduce or eliminate the hazards, then the risk assessment will describe to staff how these hazards will be dealt with, e.g. by the use of hearing protection. Any risk assessment findings will be communicated to staff.

8. Employee training

- 8.1 As part of our duty to maintain safe systems of work, only trained employees will be allowed to operate machinery. This training may be provided by a number of sources including our suppliers, as well as training on the job by our own staff. All records of staff training will be kept on individual employees' personnel files. In addition, we will maintain a register of trained users, which can be updated as necessary.

9. Maintenance and inspection

- 9.1 All machinery will be subject to maintenance and inspection, as necessary, for its continued safe operation. This will usually involve a combination of in-house checks and routine maintenance as well as a periodic service by a specialist provider.
- 9.2 Maintenance and inspection will only be carried out by staff/contractors who are competent. A planned preventative maintenance schedule will be devised for each machine taking into account the manufacturer's instructions and recommendations arising from previous inspections etc.
- 9.3 In the case of gas-fired equipment, pressure systems and lifting equipment, statutory inspections will be arranged in addition to general maintenance and inspection.
- 9.4 We recognise that serious injuries can occur during machinery maintenance; therefore, such work will be subject to risk assessment. Safe systems of work will be devised to ensure that machines are effectively isolated from power sources and drained of power before maintenance access. Permits to work will be issued before work begins as necessary
- 9.5 Where we hire machinery on a long-term basis, we will agree maintenance and inspection responsibilities with the supplier.

- 9.6 Spare blades, discs and other spare parts will be stored carefully so that they are protected from damage.
- 9.7 Records of any maintenance and routine repairs will be kept for at least three years.

Further information

HSE: INDG 291 (rev 1), Providing and using work equipment safely

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