

## Health and Safety Policy

This policy covers all staff at Acuity and is compliant with Section 2(3) of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Acuity is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and working environment for all our employees, and to meeting the specific requirements of the law. Acuity does not have a physical office location but recognises that its responsibility for the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of staff as set out below extends to home-workers too. Acuity does hire venues for events and meetings and undertakes to ensure that all such external venues and spaces comply with this policy.

The Director with HR responsibility will have the responsibility for providing advice and reports on all matters relating to health and safety, and reports to the Board as Health & Safety Advisor.

Acuity's specific aims are:

1. to keep staff informed on health and safety matters relating to their jobs and to make them aware of their responsibilities to Acuity, their colleagues and themselves;
2. to provide regular opportunities for management and union representatives to discuss arrangements for the appropriate development of health and safety measures. These arrangements are designed to ensure that lines of responsibility and communication are clearly understood at all levels and in all parts of the organisation;
3. to ensure that adequate training and education is available to all staff to enable work to be carried out in a safe and healthy manner;
4. to ensure that all operational activity, especially where equipment is involved, is carried out in a way that minimises risk to health and safety.

All line managers of Acuity must give full support to this policy for health and safety which must be carried out in full. We ask that every member of staff actively co-operates with those regularly responsible for the effective planning, organisation and monitoring of our health and safety.

## Organisation for Implementation of this Policy

### Responsibilities

The Directors of Acuity have ultimate responsibility for health and safety matters relating to the organisation. This includes the monitoring and reviewing of safety management systems. This is discharged through line managers who have primary responsibility for health and safety within their teams.





## Directors

Directors are responsible for the health and safety of all members of staff working with them. They are required:

- 1) to be aware of all legal requirements and procedures relevant to their activities and apply them accordingly;
- 2) to ensure that regular safety inspections and audits are carried out in their directorates;
- 3) to participate in any review of the policy on health and safety.
- 4) Ensure that the Health and Safety Adviser is competent and able to interpret relevant legislation and standards and codes of practice;
- 5) Ensure that Acuity policy, organisation and arrangements on health and safety are developed, kept up to date and made available to all members of staff;
- 6) Ensure adequate resources are allocated for the training of all members of staff in health and safety matters;
- 7) Be aware of the UK health and safety legal framework, and ensure that the management team responds appropriately to any new developments;
- 8) Ensure that adequate safety records are maintained to comply with legal requirements, and that these are regularly checked;
- 9) Develop arrangements for consultation with staff on health and safety matters.

## Line Managers

All line managers have day to day responsibilities for the health and safety of all staff working in their teams. They are required:

- 1) to have reasonable knowledge of the hazards arising from processes and equipment in their area of responsibility, and to ensure that their members of staff are made aware of these hazards
- 2) to develop, implement and maintain safe systems of work, processes and equipment
- 3) to ensure that audits on safety arrangements are carried out and where hazards are identified, that appropriate action is taken;
- 4) to be aware of the first aid provision and location of facilities near to their area where applicable
- 5) to complete the appropriate report (see 3.2 for procedure) for accidents and 'near misses' and to assist in their investigation;
- 6) to review all incidents, 'near misses' and accident reports within their department and take appropriate action to ensure preventative measures are carried out
- 7) to maintain a high standard of house-keeping and hygiene at all times
- 8) to ensure their staff attend appropriate health and safety training courses
- 9) to ensure their staff receive the health and safety policy as part of their induction and to ensure that they are familiar with its contents;
- 10) to report to their own line manager any assistance they may require in carrying out their health and safety obligations;



- 11) to include health and safety factors when assessing the performance of their staff;
- 12) to provide personal leadership in safety matters and consult with their staff to promote progressive improvement in the safety of their activities.

### **All Members of Staff**

All members of staff have a duty in law to co-operate in achieving a safe and healthy work environment. Therefore, they are required:

- 1) to work safely and efficiently;
- 2) to observe and comply with safety rules and procedures laid down for their area of activity;
- 3) to take reasonable care, to the best of their individual knowledge and ability, to avoid injury to themselves and to others by act or omission in their work activity;
- 4) to maintain a high standard of house-keeping and hygiene at all times;
- 5) to report all accidents, incidents and 'near misses' promptly, and to assist in their investigation;
- 6) to ensure the safety of visitors to the organisation.

### **Business Support Officer**

The Business Support Officer in conjunction with Directors and HR provider is required:

- 1) to advise all aspects of occupational health, safety and fire;
- 2) to prepare and maintain emergency evacuation procedures where applicable;
- 3) to collate and review accident statistics;
- 4) to arrange and run training courses for both new and existing employees on health and safety matters;
- 5) to participate in audits and investigation of accidents, incidents and 'near misses';
- 6) to ensure all fire prevention equipment is properly maintained where applicable;
- 7) to post notices on any machine which they consider a hazard, which immediately forbids its use until a suitable solution has been affected where applicable;
- 8) where appropriate, carry out risk assessments relating to home working or lone working.

### **Arrangements for Health and Safety**

Our aim is to have a healthy workforce in a healthy working environment. The success of our organisation depends heavily on the effectiveness of the people employed, and is related to their physical and mental health. While line managers are responsible for creating a healthy and safe working environment, every individual has a responsibility for their personal health.

Risk assessments should be undertaken on a regular basis by line managers and they should follow the five step approach which is detailed below:

Step 1: Look for the hazards

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how



Step 3: Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide where existing precautions are adequate or more should be done

Step 4: Record findings

Step 5: Review assessments from time to time and revise it if necessary

## **Accident and 'Near Miss' Reporting**

It is essential that all accidents which happen at work, no matter how small, are properly reported. This should be done even if no apparent injury is received. In addition to reporting an actual accident, it is equally important to report 'near misses' or potential hazards, so that Acuity can take appropriate action. The procedure is as follows:

- 1) As soon as possible the victim/witness should report to their line manager or, in that person's absence, any available Director
- 2) The person completes a standard accident report form
- 3) Administration is responsible for keeping a central record and also filing accident details in staff files, notes to include:
  - where it occurred, giving the time and place
  - what happened
  - how it happened, if known
  - follow up action

The line manager responsible for the team where the accident occurred must set up an investigation and recommend to H&SO any preventative measures they consider necessary. In order to prevent a recurrence of the accident, the person involved and any witnesses to it may be asked to discuss it with HR. In this instance they may be accompanied by a workplace colleague or union representative if they wish.

Following an accident H&SO is required to report the incident to the union's health and safety representative who may carry out an inspection on the part of the workplace concerned and investigate.

The procedure for reporting a 'near miss' or hazard is as follows:

- 1) The witness should report the 'near miss' or hazard to their line manager who in turn will inform H&SO
- 2) H&SO notes the details of the incidents and ensures that the line manager in question takes action to make the hazard safe and to prevent a recurrence.

The Health & Safety Adviser is also responsible for reporting all R.I.D.D.O.R. (Reporting of Injuries Disease and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations) incidents to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and for any subsequent liaison on these accidents with organisations or individuals outside Acuity. The Directors will be informed.



## **Health and Safety Training and Education**

Acuity recognises that safety training and education for all staff is an integral part of the overall policy. Such training and education enables staff to carry out their work in a safe and healthy manner. All new members of staff must receive general safety information appropriate to the nature of their work from their line manager and as part of the induction process. In addition, as their jobs change, all members of staff should receive training on health and safety aspects of any new tasks.

The Health & Safety Adviser must be aware of the potential impact on Acuity of all changes to the occupational health and safety legal framework and will recommend appropriate training for staff likely to be affected. A record of the health and safety training undertaken by members of staff is held by HR. Line managers are required to be aware of their responsibilities for health and safety and awareness courses provided and are required to attend regular health and safety training courses. Health and safety training must be given a high priority by line managers, and failure to attend appropriate courses is unacceptable.

## **Audits**

All venues and areas used by the organisation must be risk-assessed at least once each year and it is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that this risk-assessment takes place. The H&SO will issue a questionnaire to be completed, from which they will produce a report, which:

- highlights any hazards, defects and remedial actions required
- indicates the appropriate timescales for action
- identifies the person responsible for taking action.

Copies of the most recent assessments for each area or venue should be held by the Health and Safety Adviser.

## **Display Screen Equipment (VDUs)**

All display screen work stations must satisfy legal requirements regarding the display screen, keyboard, desk, chair and working environment. Instruction and training is given to all staff to increase their awareness of the potential hazards of using display screens and to enable them to apply good ergonomics to their workstations. All staff are encouraged to have an eye test annually.

There are some simple steps people can take to reduce the risks from display screen work:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises
- avoiding eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time



## **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)**

It is Acuity policy that non-hazardous substances are used if possible, for cleaning any machinery where applicable.

### **Manual Handling**

All staff recognised as involved in manual handling operations must be provided with instructions and training to enable them to carry out safely the task of lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying and moving material or equipment. It is the responsibility of the line manager of each team to assess the need for such training and to ensure that staff have attended courses. Those responsible for the design of processes which include the movement of materials or equipment must seek to minimise the requirement for manual handling.

### **Fire Prevention, Control and Evacuation Procedures**

The safety of all members of staff and visitors to Acuity is paramount. In the event of fire, the safety of people comes first; buildings and property take second place.

#### **Prevention**

Fire doors must be kept closed.

#### **In case of fire**

In the event of a fire, you should operate the nearest fire alarm immediately. If it is safe to do so without taking personal risk, you should attack the fire using the correct type of extinguisher:

#### **Water**

Suitable for most fires except those involving flammable liquid or live electrical apparatus.

#### **CO2 Carbon Dioxide**

Suitable for fire involving flammable liquids and electrical apparatus.

#### **Evacuation**

Where applicable on hearing the fire alarm, you must leave the building and proceed immediately to your assembly point. You should walk, not run, using the nearest clear exit. You must not use lifts. You must not stop to collect personal belongings. You should not re-enter the building until you are told that it is safe to do so.

Where applicable the alarm signal is tested regularly and regular evacuation practices are carried out. All staff are required to co-operate fully in these exercises where applicable.

### **Housekeeping**

Good housekeeping is considered an important part of our safety program. In particular:



- 1) floors, steps, stairs, passages and fire exits must be kept clear of obstructions at all times where applicable;
- 2) wires to telephones, electrical equipment etc. should not be placed so that someone could fall over or put their chair on them
- 3) offices should be kept tidy and desks tidied each evening
- 4) office layout should be designed with safety in mind.

## **Smoking**

Smoking is illegal in public buildings.

## **Alcohol and Drugs**

Alcohol and drugs are not compatible with safe working practices. Any member of staff or associates suspected of serious intoxication by drink or under the influence of drugs will be liable to disciplinary action.

## **Visitors**

It is the responsibility of every member of staff to look after the safety of visitors. In the event of emergency evacuation, members of staff must escort their visitors out of the building and to the appropriate assembly point.

## **Home working**

Acuity has the same health and safety responsibilities for home workers as for any other workers.

Home workers should complete their own basic assessment at home using this HSE checklist:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf>

## **Staff Safety in Travelling to and from Work**

Staff who are required to work outside normal working hours or in remote locations, are encouraged to take precautions to ensure their safety. Within reason, staff working late at night or at weekends will be reimbursed for the cost of a licensed taxi, should they feel unsafe walking or using public transport.

Staff who need to drive late at night should ensure that they take regular breaks and are familiar with the ROSPA Safe Driving Guide. <http://www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/employers/safer-driving-for-work-handbook.pdf>

## **Pregnancy – health and safety risk assessment**

Pregnant employees are advised to notify their line manager or the Health & Safety Advisor of their pregnancy as early as possible. A risk assessment will be carried out to identify and eliminate any potential risks or health and safety concerns that might be associated with carrying out their duties.



THIS POLICY WAS ADOPTED BY ACUITY MARCH 2014

Denise Raine

Director

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