



**Ilminster Town Council
Health And Safety Policy and Procedures**

Approved by Council 18 July 2018

Approved by Council 23 March 2021

Approved March 2026

**Review March 2028 or when significant changes to
legislation occur**

Policy

It is the Town Council's policy to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable:

- A workplace and work activities that will be safe for our employees, Councillors, volunteers, visitors, and others who may be affected by what we do
- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions including appropriate welfare arrangements
- Provide and maintain safe equipment
- Ensure safe handling, storage and use of equipment and substances
- Provide information, instruction and training for employees and volunteers
- Provide appropriate training for Councillors
- Consult with employees on matters affecting health and safety
- Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- Provide sufficient resources to implement the policy
- Review and revise this policy as necessary, especially when changes in legislation have an impact on health and safety

Background Information

1. The Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities e.g. service users, members of the public, volunteers, visitors and Councillors.
2. As the employer, Ilminster Town Council, has overall and final responsibility for health and safety matters and for ensuring compliance with health and safety legislation but this responsibility is discharged through the Town Clerk to managers, supervisors and employees.
3. Ilminster Town Council will periodically review the operation of its health and safety policy and will ensure that:
 - Employees, volunteers and Councillors receive relevant and appropriate training on health and safety matters
 - Risk assessments are undertaken and recorded, and a summary report is provided to a Committee or Council meeting for consideration at least once a year
 - Accidents and “near-misses” are investigated and reported to a Committee or Council meeting as soon as possible after the event
 - Arrangements are in place to monitor the maintenance of equipment
4. Day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk as necessary.

Indicative Responsibilities Regarding Health and Safety

Town Council

- Provide a lead in developing a positive health and safety culture throughout the Town Council
- Ensure that decisions take account of health and safety considerations
- Ensure adequate resources, including budget, are available for equipment and training relating to health and safety

Town Clerk

- Ensure that the health and safety policy is implemented, monitored, reviewed, amended and developed
- Communicate the Town Council’s health and safety policy to staff, councillors and other relevant people and organisations
- Ensure that staff understand their responsibilities regarding health and safety
- Ensure insurance cover is provided and reviewed
- Consult with employees on health and safety issues
- Investigate safety issues and implement changes to working practices if required
- Report at least annually to Committee / Town Council on health and safety matters e.g. the findings of health and safety risk assessments, training

Employees & Volunteers

- Take reasonable care regarding their own safety and that of colleagues, members of the public, volunteers and visitors
- Observe safety rules
- Comply with the health and safety policy
- Comply with instructions / directions regarding health and safety
- Co-operate with colleagues, supervisors and line managers on all matters regarding health and safety
- Report health and safety concerns to an appropriate person
- Use the provided safety equipment and protective clothing
- Maintain equipment in good condition and report defects to their line manager
- Attend health and safety training
- Report accidents and “near-misses” to their line manager

Contractors

- Contractors who regularly undertake work for the Town Council will be expected to read and sign to say they have read and will implement, this Health and Safety Policy and the principles contained therein
- Any one working on Town Council premises (including grave diggers and memorial masons working at the cemetery) must inform an appropriate member of staff (usually the Senior Open Spaces Warden or Town Clerk) when they arrive and when they leave
- For discrete projects contractors will be expected to provide method statements and health and safety risk assessments
- Contractors are responsible for compliance with health and safety legislation and are responsible for the health and safety of their employees and that of the public when they are undertaking work for the Town Council
- Contractors must have appropriate insurance arrangements – evidence of which must be supplied to the Town Council upon request

Event Organisers

- Event organisers must provide the Town Council with:
 - Plan / lay out of the event
 - Description of the activity
 - Health and safety risk assessment
 - Copy of relevant insurance

Overarching Principles and Arrangements (in alphabetical order)

Accident Investigation and Reporting

An accident is an unplanned event that causes injury to people and / or damage to property / equipment.

A “near-miss” is an unplanned event where actual injury or damage did not happen but there was a great potential for injury or damage.

Accidents and near misses should be reported by employees and volunteers to the Town Clerk via their line manager, or by Councillors direct to the Town Clerk, and the Town Clerk will conduct a proportionate investigation which will be formally reported to Councillors at a Committee or Town Council meeting.

Certain accidents causing injury or disease and dangerous occurrences are reportable to the appropriate enforcing authority under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR). The Health and Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk/riddor has a list of the reportable incidents and an electronic incident reporting portal.

Alcohol And Drugs

The Town Council has a separate Alcohol and Drugs Policy which complements the following over-arching rules

Employees, volunteers, contractors and Councillors are not permitted to be in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs on Town Council premises or whilst on Town Council business.

An employee, volunteer, contractor or Councillor, who, when reporting for duty is under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or medication which impairs their ability to undertake their role, will be asked to go home and will be escorted from the premises immediately.

Intoxication at work either as a result of alcohol or illegal drugs will normally be treated as gross misconduct and result in disciplinary action.

Asbestos

An asbestos management survey has been undertaken of the Town Council owned premises.

In the event of a major refurbishment or demolition the Town Council will obtain a full Demolition Survey prior to the commencement of work.

Cemetery

Graves must be dug in accordance with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Code of Safe Working Practice for Cemeteries.

Memorials may only be installed by masons who are registered with the National Association of Memorial Masons or the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons.

Separate policies for Memorial Masons and Funeral Directors are available and should be followed.

Contractors

All contractors working on Town Council owned or managed premises and / or land are required to comply with the appropriate legislation for their activities; before any work is started the Town Clerk must be provided with a risk assessment and method statement and a copy of the contractors insurance.

Note: Memorial Masons providing memorials in Ilminster Cemetery must be either a member of the National Association of Memorial Masons or the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons and memorials installed according to the standards of the professional body.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Under the COSHH legislation employers have a duty to assess the risks related to substances. The Town Council will implement measures to identify such substances that are used by Town Council employees or to which they may be exposed in the course of their work.

Where practical, effective, alternative solutions exist harmful substances will not be used.

Substances that the Town Council do use will be assessed and control measures introduced to reduce risk; the control measures will include:

- The COSHH assessment and Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet will be referred to by the employee before the substance is used
- Known hazardous substances will be handled, contained stored and used according to The COSHH assessment and Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as detailed in the Manufacturers Safety Data Sheet will be issued to employees handling the substance
- Employees will be advised of the risks and trained accordingly

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

All reasonable steps will be taken by the Town Council to ensure the health and safety of employees who use display screen equipment and to comply with the relevant legislation (Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 2002).

- Each workstation will be assessed and risks to users identified
- Remedial action will be taken to mitigate the identified risks
- Information and training about safe use and potential risks of using DSE will be provided to employees
- Staff using DSE are entitled to request and receive eye sight tests paid for by the Town Council, details are available in the Eye Test and Glasses Policy.
- Work duties will be arranged, wherever possible to incorporate changes of tasks in order to prevent intense periods of using DSE
- Staff using DSE will take regular breaks away from the screen - at least 10 minutes away from the screen in every hour
- Adjustable seating will be provided for DSE users
- Screen height adjusters, adjustable keyboards, foot rests etc will be provided to suit the assessed needs of the employee

Employees must:

- Use the equipment that has been supplied for their assessed need and adjust chairs, etc to appropriate and comfortable positions
- Inform their line manager of any disability or health condition which may affect their ability to work using DSE
- Report any disability or health concern that may be associated with the use of DSE
- Take regular breaks

Driving

The Town Council is committed to minimising the risks staff face or create when driving at work. Employees may drive on the public highway as well as on Town Council owned or managed land.

The Town Council will

- Not put unreasonable time constraints on travel
- Ensure that those driving vehicles are competent and fit to drive

- Provide training that may be deemed necessary to reduce driving related risks
- Ensure that vehicles are suitable for purpose
- Ensure that vehicles are maintained to the required legal standards
- Require drivers to annually submit copies of their current driving licence and confirm they are physically fit to drive
- Require drivers who use their own vehicle on Town Council business to provide copies of their insurance cover annually in order to confirm that they are covered for business use.

Employees who are driving as part of the duties have the following responsibilities:

- To comply with Road Traffic Regulations and the Highway Code
- To inform the Town Clerk of anything that could affect or impair their driving e.g. health conditions or use of prescribed medication
- To inform the Town Clerk of changes to their driving licence e.g. offences
- To inform the Town Clerk of any defects and repairs that are needed to Town Council owned vehicles
- To complete the vehicle record sheets for Town Council owned vehicles before and after journeys, daily use
- To inform the Town Clerk as soon as practicable, of any accidents or incidents that have occurred whilst driving on Town Council business
- To drive with consideration for other people
- Not to drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or any drugs, including those prescribed by a Doctor, that may impair driving skills e.g. may cause drowsiness
- Not to operate mobile phones or any other devices which may cause a distraction when driving

Electricity and Electrical Equipment

All building maintenance work will be carried out by competent, qualified people. Staff must not endanger themselves and others by carrying out such work.

Electrical equipment must always be used and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Any defective items must be repaired according to the manufacturer's instructions or, if beyond economic repair, disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Town Council owned or managed buildings will have the fixed wiring installations supplying electrical sockets, lighting etc inspected at least every five years by a competent electrician.

Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) will be undertaken at intervals which reflect the potential risks associated with the appliance.

Fire

Fire hazards will be identified within health and safety risk assessments.

Fire extinguishers will receive regular maintenance and safety checks

Where appropriate, fire alarms will be tested on a weekly basis

Fire safety training is mandatory and will be completed yearly.

First Aid

First aid supplies are contained in clearly marked First Aid Containers which are located in the Town Council offices, the Wardens Workshop and the all terrain vehicle.

All members of the Open Spaces Team have a work mobile phone which could be used if appropriate in emergency situations.

Members of the Open Spaces Team will be provided with the opportunity to undertake a 3 day First Aid at Work training course and to renew the qualification at regular intervals.

In the event of anything other than minor injuries medical assistance must be sought.

Details of all first aid treatment must be recorded in the accident book and reported to the Town Clerk as soon as possible after the event.

Home Working

Should employees carry out work for the Town Council at home then the same health and safety requirements apply as they do in any Town Council owned or managed premises.

Hygiene

Employees, volunteers and Councillors must keep all areas, particularly those used for food and drink preparation clean and tidy

Toilets must be cleaned regularly and kept in a hygienic condition

Wash hand basins should have a supply of hot water, hand wash and towels

Sanitary towel bins will be provided, emptied and sanitised regularly by contractors

Lone Working

Office Staff

Staff working alone in the office should:

- Ensure that a responsible person is aware they are working alone in the office and what time they are due to start and finish
- Ensure that the door into the office is locked
- Only open the outer door to expected visitors

Martyn's Law

Introduces new duties to help ensure publicly accessible premises and events are better prepared for a potential terrorist incident. Although most Ilminster Town Council events and venues are expected to host fewer than 200 people and therefore fall outside the statutory scope of Martyn's Law, the guidance encourages all organisations—whether formally in scope or not—to adopt proportionate protective security measures and strengthen their security culture. The following measures should be considered when creating individual risk assessments for Town Council events:

Basic security awareness training

Clear Emergency procedures

Review site layouts

Basic crowd management principles

Open Spaces Team

Certain tasks will not be carried out whilst working alone, these include, working at height e.g. from ladders, heavy lifting, chainsaw work

- Before lone working the open spaces team member will undertake a risk assessment that will include:
 - The remoteness / isolation of the workplace
 - Ease or difficulty of communication
 - The possibility of interference, such as abuse, violence or criminal activity by other persons
 - The potential for injury or damage to health
- The lone worker will contact their line manager or, if they are absent, the Town Clerk to advise the work they intend to undertake, their risk assessment and the time they expect to complete the work
- At the end of the lone working period the lone worker will contact their line manager or, if they are absent, the Town Clerk to advise that they have finished work.

Machinery

Employees and volunteers should use and maintain machinery and equipment in accordance with the manufacturers instructions (see also noise & vibration)

Manual Handling (including Lifting)

Staff and volunteers in operation, identified as having a significant element of manual handling, will receive instruction and training in manual handling best practice.

Employees and volunteers should be aware of their own limitations and use lifting aids and the assistance of colleagues to reduce risks.

Injuries, including twists and sprains that are incurred as a result of manual handling must be reported and recorded as part of the accident reporting procedure.

Noise & Vibration

Some items of machinery and equipment generate noise and vibration that could cause harm over a period of time.

The Town Council will

- arrange noise and vibration testing of Open Spaces equipment on a regular basis.
- Provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment

Employees will

- maintain a record including the type of equipment used and the duration of use each time they use a piece of equipment that generates noise or vibration
- report any causes for concern to their line manager

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment will be provided where risk assessments show that a risk cannot be avoided. Eg – chainsaw trousers.

PPE will be repaired or replaced as necessary to maintain its effectiveness. Employees and volunteers must report loss or defective PPE to their line manager as soon as practicable.

Play Areas, including the Skatepark

The Town Council recognises the need to keep play areas and play equipment safe for the users.

The Town Council will

- provide play inspection training for members of the Open Spaces Team
- make a weekly inspection of the play equipment with a written record
- obtain an annual independent inspection.

Public Toilets

Toilets must be cleaned regularly and kept in a hygienic condition.

Wash hand basins should have a supply of hot water, hand wash and towels.

Sanitary towel bins will be provided, emptied and sanitised regularly by contractors.

Risk Assessments

Suitable risk assessments will be carried out to safeguard Town Council employees, volunteers and Councillors and others who might be affected by Town Council activities.

Risk assessments will be carried out at intervals proportionate to the potential hazard but will be reviewed at least annually and with the implementation of any new working practice or amendment to a working practice.

Under no circumstances should employees, volunteers or Councillors put their safety or that of colleagues or the public at risk on account of the property of Ilminster Town Council.

Smoking

Smoking, which includes vaping, is not permitted inside any Town Council premises or vehicles.

Consideration will be given to designating a smoking/ vaping area and making appropriate arrangements if a need arises.

Staff Consultation

All relevant employees will be consulted on health and safety matters and employees are encouraged to provide information and suggestions via staff meetings or direct to the Town Clerk.

Staff Training

The Town Council is committed to providing adequate information, instructions and training for all staff. Newly appointed or promoted staff will receive induction training for their role and this will include health and safety responsibilities.

Training needs will be reviewed as part of the on-going appraisal process.

Records of all training undertaken are kept on the employee's, volunteer's or Councillor's personal file.

Stress Management

A definition of stress is "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other demands placed upon them."

The Town Council will attempt to identify potential causes of stress and control them whenever possible.

Employees have a responsibility to raise concerns about stress with their line manager

Trees

The Town Council is responsible for numerous trees on Town Council owned land and in the closed Churchyard and will take a balanced and proportionate approach to tree safety.

The Open Spaces Team will undertake a visual inspection of trees, particularly those adjacent to pathways and play areas and will arrange for remedial work when hazards are identified in accordance with the ITC Tree Management Plan