charitable incorporated organisation number 1183921

Taunton Welcomes Refugees
4d. Health and Safety Policy

Policy

Although volunteers are not included in Health and Safety legislation in the same way as paid staff, any organisation involving volunteers has a legal responsibility and a 'duty of care' towards their volunteers.

Health and safety legislation The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation governing occupational health and safety in Britain and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is responsible for enforcing the Act.

'Duty of care' is a common law duty to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to others. An organisation may face a legal liability if this duty is breached. A duty of care is required if you are delivering an activity that might harm another person – physically, mentally, or economically.

Procedures

1. Minimising risk

To reduce the risk of ill health or injury, TWR will provide a safe place to volunteer, which is clean and free from risk. All relevant safety measures will be in place, e.g. procedures for handling dangerous substances, guards in use on machinery. Volunteers will be given training and information to carry out their roles safely.

2. Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a procedure for identifying potential hazards, assessing the degree of harm they could cause against the likelihood of the hazard occurring. The assessment then determines what measures should be put in place, if any, to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. TWR will carry out a risk assessment for any volunteer role that might cause the volunteer harm. The results of the risk assessment will determine what information and training (if any) should be given to the volunteer.

3. Fire safety and risk assessment

All public and community buildings, even if owned or operated by an organisation without employees, must meet minimum levels of standards so that the risk of fire is reduced. .

4. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

COSHH regulations require employers both to assess the workplace for risks which may be caused by substances hazardous to health and to take all necessary steps to control any risks identified.

Volunteer-only organisations

Voluntary groups with no employees are not required to conduct a COSHH assessment, but you should consider doing one anyway to meet your duty of care.

5. Registering your organisation's activities

Volunteer-only organisations

Organisations without employees are not required to register unless they:
• are involved in dangerous activities, such as putting on a fireworks display;
• own, control or are responsible for premises and buildings (register with the local fire authority); or
• prepare, store, supply or sell food on five or more days in any five-week period (register with the local environmental health department).

6. First aid

All employers have a legal duty to make a first aid assessment. How much first aid you need to provide will depend on what activities you run. At a minimum, an organisation with employees must provide at least one first aid box and display a notice that tells staff • the location of the first aid box; • who the first aider or appointed person is (see below); and • where the first aider or appointed person can be found. An appointed person is someone who has basic first aid knowledge. They can take charge in an emergency and are responsible for calling the emergency services.

Volunteer-only organisations

Voluntary groups with no employees are not bound to conduct a first aid assessment, but it is good practice. It can also be useful to have at least one first aid trained volunteer. There can be a legal duty to provide first aid facilities. For example, if an organisation holds a public event without first aid facilities and someone is injured, they may have broken their duty of care. Even if you do not usually have to register your activities, you may need to for one-off events involving the public.

7. Working with other organisations

When organisations work together, there can sometimes be confusion over who is taking responsibility for health and safety; and there can be conflicting policies. It is useful, when planning joint activity, to agree:

- which organisation has ultimate responsibility for health and safety;
- how the organisation with responsibility will ensure its policies and procedures are implemented;
- what the organisation will do if its standards are not met;
- how volunteers will be trained to fulfil their health and safety responsibilities;
- if volunteers are dissatisfied with or concerned about health and safety how they will share their views and how this information will be recorded.