

Resource Centre

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Safety Procedures

General

These procedures should be followed by staff at all times In order to ensure safe work methods and use of equipment and to maintain safe and healthy working conditions for all employees and users of the Centre.

These procedures will be reviewed annually by the staff team and ratified by the management committee.

These procedures were revised in January 2006.

Signed: Date:

Director of B&H SWET Ltd (the employer)

Fire

- a) Raise the alarm - warn everyone in AIR rooms (public area), Equipment store, Quiet room & Back Office, Main office and Toilet.

In particular, ensure that disabled people are able to leave the building safely.

The Resource Centre and Brighton Unemployed Centre share a Fire Alarm system so anyone sounding the alarm at any break point will be notifying all occupants in all other parts of the building. Fire alarm points on the ground floor are situated in:

Lobby – to the left of the main entrance doors

BUC classroom/laundry area - to the left of the exit doors

Print room – to the left of the exit doors

- b) Call the Fire Brigade – even if the alarm has been raised by someone from BUCFP, do not assume they have made the call.

Exact location is:

Prior House, top of Tilbury Place, off Carlton Hill, Brighton

- c) Try to put out the fire using fire extinguishers or blankets if you can do so **without personal risk**. There are extinguishers at AIR room Fire Point. There is also a water extinguisher in the Office.

RED (water) extinguisher - wood or paper fires only.

BLACK (CO₂) extinguisher - electrical and liquid fires.

BLANKET - wrap blanket over a small fire or roll a person in the blanket if her/his clothes are on fire.

- d) Clear the Centre and direct people to the corner of Mighell Street and Carlton Hill. Ascertain where the fire is and direct people out of the Centre by the safest route:
- i) The Fire Exit from the Office and the side exit from the Print Room lead to the external passage, which exits into Tilbury Place at the side of Prior House.
- ii) Fire Exits from the Quiet room and main exit from the AIR room lead into the lobby with exit via main entrance to Prior House.
- e) Try to clear any vehicles in Tilbury Place which may block access for the fire brigade and ensure that everyone keeps to the pavement.
- f) Ensure that nobody goes back into the building until the fire brigade pass it as safe.

Electricity

The main switches are in the cupboard in the Lobby. This cupboard should be unobstructed to allow immediate access but must be kept bolted both top and bottom to keep children out.

There are separate circuits for the Resource Centre and the Unemployed Centre. The Resource Centre box is marked (the long grey box). The circuit is on a trip switch (Residual Circuit Breaker).

All equipment must be unplugged before cleaning or adjusting. It is not sufficient to turn off the power switch of the piece of equipment as most will be on stand-by and still live. Unplug by pulling out the plug itself (not by pulling the cable).

Plugs and cables must be inspected regularly for loose connections or faults. Check plugs and cables immediately after moving equipment in case of damage during movement.

Power supplies and electrical equipment must be tested annually by a qualified electrician or service engineer.

When carrying out visual Inspections, look for the following signs of damage:

- Cuts or abrasion (apart from light scuffing) to the cable covering

- Damage to the plug such as cracked casing or bent pins

- Non-standard joints, including taped joints in the cable

- The outer covering (sheath) of the cable not being gripped where it enters the plug or equipment

- Equipment having been used in unsuitable conditions eg a wet or very dusty environment

- Damage to the outer cover of equipment and obvious loose parts or screws

- Signs of overheating (burn marks or staining)

A formal inspection of the plugs and cable of equipment for hire should be carried out annually, and as required for equipment used in the centre only. This formal inspection may be carried out by a members of the centre's staff team and should include the following checks:

- Removal of plug cover unless a moulded plug is fitted

- Plugs must contain the correctly rated fuse.

Rubber plugs should be fitted to equipment for hire.

The cord grip is holding the outer part of the cable tightly

Wires are connected to the correct terminals

No bare wire is visible other than at the terminals

Terminal screws are tight

There are no signs of internal damage to the plug from over-heating or entry of liquid, dust or dirt.

In addition to these checks, power-breakers must be tested each time that hire equipment is returned.

Cables should be kept clear of passages or other areas in which people walk and must not be covered by carpets or boxes.

Computers and monitors should be turned off at the end of each day except for the server which must always have clear space around it.

Refer to HSE Guide - Maintaining Portable Electrical Equipment In Offices and Other Low Risk Environments

Electric Shock.

If a person suffers an electric shock:

Switch off power immediately. Do not touch the person with bare hands until power is off.

If it is impossible to turn off power quickly, use something non-conductive (eg wooden stool) to move casualty from source of power.

If the casualty is breathing, place her/him in recovery position and telephone for an ambulance. If the casualty is not breathing, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. If the pulse is absent, give chest compressions and continue with resuscitation.

***Refer to HSE Guide - Electrical Safety and You
First Aid Manual and Electric Shock Action poster***

Gas

- a) In the event of a leak
- i) Turn off gas supply at the mains. Gas meters are located in the services cupboard in the lobby. Be sure to switch off the supply to the whole building by pulling down the handle to the right of the black meter. (The tap by the red meter will stop the supply only to the Resource Centre)
- ii) Switch off the electricity at the mains and make sure that nobody is smoking in the building.
- iii) Ring Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.
- iv) Inform Brighton Unemployed Centre.
- v) Turn off the gas central heating boiler, to avoid a gas escape when the gas supply is resumed.

Refer to HSE Gas Appliances

Equipment & machinery

1. Guillotine:

- a) When the guillotine is not in use, the guard must be closed and the power supply switched off.
- b) The built-in safety devices of the guillotine make it safe for use by members of the public; they must be trained by staff before operating the guillotine.
- c) To use the guillotine, put in the paper to be cut without putting your hands beneath the line of the blade. Lower the clamp and close the guard. Switch on the power supply and operate the machine by pressing the right hand and left-hand power buttons simultaneously. Remove paper carefully.
- d) After members of the public have used the guillotine, check that it is left as in (a).
- e) Check safety devices once a week.

2. Power drill:

- a) Check electrical safety. Use a power-breaker if not on the RC circuit and make sure the drill is switched off before plugging it in.
- b) Ensure that the drill-bit is correctly inserted and the jaws fully tightened.
- c) Use the correct setting for the task, eg. hammer for masonry.
- d) Use safety spectacles when drilling into brick or masonry, and a face mask when sanding in an enclosed area.
- e) Make sure the work area is free of obstacles and passers-by, do not over-reach and take care not to damage electrical cables or water pipes when drilling.
- f) Switch off the drill when you finish or if you leave it unattended.

3 Soldering Iron:

- a) Follow the electrical safety rules for power drills.
- b) When setting down the hot iron, make sure it is clear of paper, plastic or machinery and well out of reach of any worker or user of the Centre.

4. Jig Saw

- a) Follow the electrical safety rules for power drills.
- b) Ensure that blade is correctly inserted and firmly secured and that guard is in place.

c) Ensure that material to be cut is on a firm surface and can be held firm. Make sure the area is free from obstacles and people. Guide blade carefully when cutting and cut away from the body.

f) Switch off the jig saw when you finish or if you leave it unattended even for a short while.

5. Photocopier

a) Follow general rules for electrical safety.

b) Photocopiers produce ozone and other gases which may cause respiratory problems and actual lung damage, as well as irritate eyes and skin.

There must be adequate ventilation whenever the copier is used continuously for longer than 15 minutes or at regular intervals throughout the day.

c) Toner is carcinogenic. Never re-use spent toner. Dispose of it in the manufacturer's container and make sure that the container is tightly sealed. Should you spill toner, clear it up immediately. Refer to COSHH risk assessments.

6. Artwork equipment:

Front desk workers must ensure that users do not leave unprotected scalpels or open scissors lying around in the Artwork room.

Light-boxes should be switched off after use to avoid overheating and the risk of fire.

7. VDUs

a) Screens should be free of reflections, grime and finger marks, and the characters should not flicker.

b) Users should have a short break from the machine every 2 hours and not use the computer for longer than 6 hours in any one day.

c) Users should be able to adjust the chair to sit properly.

* The back of the chair should hug the small of the back

* Knees should be bent to just over 90 degrees with no increased pressure on the thighs

* Feet should be flat on the floor (or footstool if required)

* Shoulders should be relaxed and dropped

* The neck should be straight with forearms and hands parallel to the floor

- * The keyboard should be 3-4 inches from the edge of the desk
- * The screen should be straight ahead at arm's length.
- * The forehead should be in line with the top of the VDU, so that the user's eyes can move from top to bottom of the screen without straining the neck.

d) Computers, scanners and printers should be switched off at the end of the day. Only the server may be left switched on and there should be regular checks that air is free to circulate around it.

8. Digital duplicators

- a) Follow general rules for electrical safety.
- b) Refer to COSHH risk assessments for safe use of ink.
- c) Keep the machine away from humidity or dust to avoid the risk of fire or electrical shock.
- d) Ensure adequate ventilation.
- e) If the machine is moved, retighten the caster clamp in order to prevent the machine from moving during use.

*Refer to UNISON Display Screen Equipment regs 1992
HSE Working with VDUs
Baring, Houston & Saunders VDUs*

Substances hazardous to health

1. Storage:

All substances listed in the COSHH file must be stored in their designated cupboards when not in use.

2. Usage:

All listed substances must be used according to the manufacturers' directions.

3. Disposal:

All the listed liquid substances may be disposed of via the drains. There is no danger from mixing in the drains the liquids currently in use. Pour each liquid away separately and flush with water after each.

N.B. Any new substances must be investigated to ensure that they can be disposed of safely when mixed with other substances in use.

4. Decanting & pouring:

Care should be taken when decanting liquids into smaller containers and any spillages cleared up immediately. Rags used to wipe up spillages should be disposed of in a plastic sack.

5. General precautions:

No eating or drinking while using any of the listed substances. All listed substances (with the exception of pain-killers) are for external use only. All substances must be kept away from children.

Refer to Resource Centre COSHH file for full details of usage, components, hazards and First Aid measures in the Product Safety Data Sheets. HSE COSHH guide.

Manual Handling

Over a third of workplace injuries result from manual handling, most involving the back. Many workers do not recover fully from their injury. While no job at the Resource Centre requires constant repetitive lifting, paper and equipment are moved on a regular basis so care and attention should be given to the manner in which this is carried out:

General:

- a) Do not lift or carry a load unless it is absolutely necessary.
- b) Most loads in the Centre will fit on to a trolley. If a load will not fit on to the trolley and you are unsure whether it is safe to lift it, do not attempt it alone.
- c) Consideration should be given to the variation in the loads different individuals are able to lift. It should not be assumed that a person who appears strong enough to lift a certain load is necessarily able to do so.
- d) Trolleys should be used to move heavy loads, including paper.
- e) The recommended safe load, if it is essential to lift manually, is 24lb/11kg for women and 35lb/16kg for men.
- f) If it is essential to lift manually, follow the guidelines on pages 11-12 of the Northbrook College training manual and posters at reception and in the storage area.
- g) If there is concern about people's ability to lift a load safely, the task should be postponed until the appropriate equipment or people are available, even if this causes disruption to the activities of the centre and its users.

Equipment for hire:

- a) When taking bookings for hire of heavy equipment, staff should advise where a suitable vehicle is required and where more than one person should come to collect equipment.
- b) Trolleys should be available for members of the public to use when hiring the 'bouncy castle' or 'balloon typhoon'.
- c) Staff should be aware of manual handling guidance, and advise centre users accordingly.
- d) When organising equipment for hire, if practical, organise items into easily handled units e.g split an item into two light boxes rather than one heavy.

Practical guidance for manual handling:

- a) Where possible, consider splitting a heavy load into smaller parts: e.g unpack A3 paper boxes so that you are lifting individual reams of paper rather than whole boxes full.
- b) Do not stand on chairs to reach shelves, etc, but use a step-ladder or kick stool as appropriate. A kick stool is located in the print room, and step ladders are kept In the equipment store and next to the storage cupboards in the back corridor.
- c) Store heavy loads at heights which may be comfortably reached - do not store heavy loads above shoulder level and try to avoid storing them below knee height. When it is necessary to place or take down loads from shelves above shoulder height, two members of staff should carry out the task.
- d) Take care not to overstretch by twisting the torso or bending when carrying a load. If necessary, plan to move the item by stages or with two people to avoid the need for twisting.
- d) Do not let the load obstruct your view and make sure the route is clear.
- e) Use gloves when handling rough materials.
- f) To change fluorescent tubes in the overhead lighting, two members of staff must carry out the task using the two long step-ladders provided.
- g) For risk assessment of new and unknown loads, refer to flow chart in 'Equipment and Manual Handling' file.

***Refer to UNISON guide to Manual Handling regulations 1992
HSE Getting to Grips with Manual Handling
Northbrook College Manual Handling course notes
Baring, Houston & Saunders Manual Handling of Loads***

General

- a) The temperature should reach at least 60.8 degrees F (16C) after one hour. The temperature should not be uncomfortably hot. There must be a thermometer in the Centre.
- b) There should be good ventilation especially in high humidity.
- c) General noise levels should be kept as low as possible to avoid nuisance and stress.
- d) Staff must have a lunch break of at least half-an-hour, with provision to take the break undisturbed and away from the general work of the Centre.
- e) Smoking is banned to workers during usual working hours and to users of the Centre during public opening hours. Smoking may be allowed after evening meetings if people at the meeting agree. Ensure that all cigarettes are properly stubbed out to avoid the risk of fire.
- f) Knives, scissors, scalpels and carpentry & other tools should be stored carefully and tidily.
- g) The front door has an electric shutter which should be left in the 'up' position when the centre is open to the public. This shutter may only be lowered when there are staff in the building if all other fire exits are open.

Personal Safety

The Resource Centre takes the issue of staff safety very seriously. It is important to make a realistic assessment of the dangers facing staff in order to draw up safety measures which are appropriate. Staff regularly discuss personal safety and keep the safety measures under review.

The Resource Centre has been based at Prior House since 1985. During that time there has not been a single serious incident affecting personal safety.

The Centre is fully aware that women members of staff face greater problems of personal safety; however, so far, the general safety measures have been considered adequate and the Centre has not introduced specific measures for women staff.

On duty in the Centre

- a) Staff are rarely alone in the Centre during opening hours. On the few occasions that all other staff are out of the building, there are usually members of the public using the Centre.
- b) If a staff member is alone in the Centre during opening hours, there are always staff and users of the Unemployed Centre in the building.
- c) The vast majority of Centre users are representatives of local community and voluntary groups and so staff do not face the problems faced by staff in drop-in centres for individuals.
- d) Staff receive training in working with users of the Centre and, in particular, with demanding or aggressive members of the public.
- e) Outside of opening hours, doors to the Centre are kept locked.
- f) In the event of serious trouble, staff may use the emergency code of the intruder alarm; this will make the alarm sound in the Centre and alert the Police.

If it is not possible to reach the alarm control box, staff may sound the fire alarm at one of the three downstairs points (in the AIR room, the main lobby or the classroom/laundry area); this will alert the entire building.

Leaving the Centre

Staff sometimes have to work late and may be alone in the Centre. There is some risk if they are leaving alone late at night or on dark evenings, though the risk is less now that Tilbury Place is a residential street. There are a number of measures to keep any risk to a minimum:

- a) The Centre will liaise with BUCFP to ensure that lighting in the lobby and at the front of the building is kept in good working order.
- b) Most late working is for a meeting with members of community groups; staff should aim to leave at the same time as people attending the meeting.
- c) If staff have to leave alone late at night, the Centre will pay for the hire of a taxi. Staff should remain in the building until the taxi arrives.

Emergency call-outs

Staff on-call may have to attend an emergency call-out. The alarm system detects both intruders and fire. The alarm receiving centre will notify the Police and the staff on call-out.

- a) Staff should check that the Police have been notified and should wait for the Police to arrive before entering the building. On no account should staff enter alone as there may still be an intruder present or the Centre may be on fire.
- b) If staff remain in the Centre after the Police have left (for example, to wait for emergency boarding-up), the door should be kept locked. Staff should take a taxi home and remain in the building until the taxi arrives.
- c) It is important that false alarm calls are kept to an absolute minimum so that the Police continue to respond to notification from the alarm receiving centre.