

Work Equipment including Lifting Equipment Policy (HS_P8)

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Policy

1. Introduction

Equipment used at work for a variety of purposes can pose a number of risks to both users of the equipment and to others in the vicinity of work being carried out. The Provision and Use of Workplace Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 was introduced to reduce and control the risks to health and safety from work equipment. The regulations cover the operation of work equipment including starting and stopping, programming, setting, transporting, repairing, modifying, maintaining, servicing and cleaning work equipment.

Although PUWER applies to all lifting equipment, the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) provide more detailed information about the specific hazards and risks associated with lifting equipment and lifting operations.

PUWER requires that work equipment provided for use at work is:

- Suitable for its intended use
- Safe for use, maintained in a safe condition and inspected to ensure it is correctly installed and does not subsequently deteriorate
- Used only by staff (and others) who have received adequate information, instruction and training
- Where appropriate, accompanied by suitable and sufficient health and safety measures, such as protective devices and controls. These may include emergency stop devices,

adequate means of isolation from sources of energy, clearly visible signage and markings and warning devices

- Used in accordance with other specific regulations and requirements, such as mobile work equipment

2. Definitions

Work equipment is all equipment used for work purposes ranging from hand tools, such as hammers, chisels and screwdrivers to more complex items of mechanised and/or powered machinery.

Lifting equipment is work equipment used for the lifting or lowering of loads. It includes attachments used for supporting, anchoring or fixing loads. Examples include passenger and goods lifts, vehicle tail lifts and hoists.

Lifting accessory is work equipment used for attaching loads to lifting equipment such as ropes or hooks.

UKCA (UK Conformity Assessment) conformity is a new UK product marking that is used for goods placed on the market in England, Scotland and Wales. It covers products that previously had the CE (Conformité Européenne) mark and demonstrates conformity with UK standards.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that work equipment is provided, maintained and used safely in accordance with PUWER, LOLER and any other applicable regulations and Codes of Practice in order to minimise the risks to health and safety of staff, volunteers, visitors and others.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all staff employed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (the "Trust"), to volunteers and to others in the Trust who use work equipment, irrespective of whether the equipment is used in premises or sites which are managed, owned or leased by the Trust or owned by third parties. The policy also covers lifting equipment and accessories.

The PUWER regulations also apply to any Trust employees and volunteers who bring work equipment from home or other areas for use at the Trust. In this case the employee or volunteer has a duty to inform the Trust that they are using the equipment at work and the Trust has a duty to make sure the work equipment in question complies with the Regulations.

The Trust has explicit policy arrangements for the Use of Power Tools and Winches which are incorporated into this Policy as [Appendix 1](#)

Some work equipment is subject to other health and safety legislation in addition to PUWER, for example, pressure equipment must meet the requirements of the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations (PSSR) and personal protective equipment must meet the requirements of the

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations. Therefore, some of the precautions and requirements may overlap with this policy.

The Trust's policies are predicated on the Health and Safety Executives (HSEs) *Sensible risk management* – in other words focusing on significant risks with the potential to cause real harm. In the context of this policy, sensible risk management means focusing on safety critical work equipment.

5. Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Duties

The **Chief Executive** has specific accountability to ensure that responsibilities for Health and Safety are effectively assigned, accepted and managed at all levels in the Trust consistent with good practice. In practice the Chief Executive will discharge these responsibilities by delegation to the Senior Management Team and then through the line management structure.

The **Senior Management Team** (SMT) are responsible for ensuring that this policy is complied with and that any other managers and staff who are involved in obtaining, using or maintaining work equipment are made aware of the requirements of the policy.

The **Health and Safety Manager** is responsible for:

- Providing guidance and advice where required.
- Developing health and safety policy for the Trust
- Following up any related incidents and making appropriate recommendations
- Ensuring that any issues relating to work equipment arising from health and safety audits and inspections are highlighted to the relevant manager

All **managers and senior staff with purchasing and budgetary authority** should ensure that equipment is safe and suitable for its proposed purpose before authorising its purchase.

Staff and volunteers who use work equipment should use it in the manner prescribed by the manufacturer and must:

- Not operate equipment without first undergoing suitable training in its use and be authorised to do so
- Not operate equipment whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs including prescribed medication which may affect the operator
- Where applicable, follow the relevant Safe Working Procedure
- Visually check the equipment for any faults or defects before using it
- Report any defects or malfunctions without delay
- Take any damaged or unsafe equipment out of use and label it to ensure that it is not reused
- Report any accidents, incidents or near misses through the Trust's reporting procedure
- Not use equipment for any other purpose than that for which it is intended to be used

6. Staff who maintain work equipment

Staff who maintain work equipment have a responsibility to follow manufacturers' maintenance procedures and schedules and to keep a suitable record of tests, servicing and maintenance. Staff should be suitably trained and competent to carry out equipment maintenance.

7. Contractors

The Trust requires that all contractors working for the Trust should not pose a health and safety risk to staff or others on Trust sites. This includes ensuring that unsafe work equipment is not used, and using work equipment in a safe manner. Details of the requirements are provided to contractors before attending.

8. Equipment Selection and Suitability

Managers and other senior staff who are responsible for obtaining work equipment must consult with staff who will use the equipment. Work equipment and lifting equipment should not be purchased until the manager has:

- Carried out an assessment to determine the suitability of equipment. This should consider what the equipment will be used for, where it will be used, who will use it and how often, as well as any additional risks the equipment may cause in the workplace, either when in use or when undergoing maintenance. E.g. Create noise or vibration
- Considered any ergonomic risks, such as operating position and reach distances
- Sought advice around suitable manufacturers and suppliers. All equipment purchased should be legally compliant. Compliant equipment will be marked with the UKCA conformity marking
- Considered servicing and maintenance costs and training requirements

9. Receipt of new equipment

Checks should be carried out when equipment is first delivered to ensure that the equipment:

- Is complete and in good condition without visible defects
- Is in full working order
- Is marked with a UKCA conformity or CE conformity mark
- Is supplied with a Declaration of Conformity and user instructions in English

If equipment needs to be installed in a fixed location such as Beech Farm, this should be done by a qualified and competent person and safety checks carried out before first use. It should be installed in a location where there is a suitable lighting level to be able to easily see any instruments needed to operate the equipment and to stop it in an emergency.

10. Maintenance and storage of equipment

Managers and senior staff responsible for work equipment must ensure that the equipment is maintained in good condition and in efficient working order and repair, so that it is safe to use. Maintenance should be carried out in line with manufacturers' recommendations. Under LOLER, all lifting equipment and accessories must undergo thorough examination:

- At least every 6 months if it is used for lifting people
- At least every 12 months for other lifting equipment, or
- If the equipment has been used in exceptional circumstances that may compromise the safety of the equipment. E.g. Used in high winds or damaged whilst in use

The frequency of maintenance may need to be increased if the equipment is used intensively and often, or in work environments where it is likely to deteriorate more quickly. For example, if regularly used outside or in dirty environments. For lifting equipment this may mean that inspections are required between the thorough examinations.

Where work equipment has been provided with a log book, this should be used and kept up to date. In order to do this effectively, work equipment should be given a unique identification number that can be specifically quoted during the recording of maintenance. All work equipment must also be recorded on the Trust's Asset Register.

Maintenance includes ensuring that moving parts are kept free of contamination and may include cleaning equipment so that it continues to work properly.

Where equipment is hired, the terms of agreement between the hirer and the hiring company should make it clear who is responsible for equipment maintenance and checks.

Equipment should be stored in such a way as to avoid deterioration when it is not in use. This includes not storing items where they may suffer damage from moving equipment or vehicles or be exposed to extremes of temperature or humidity.

11. Training and information

Managers and senior staff must ensure that all persons who use any work equipment are provided with suitable and sufficient health and safety information including, where appropriate, written instructions (i.e. Safe Working Procedures) for use of the equipment. Managers also need to consider supervision of any person using work equipment and ensure that they are provided with suitable and sufficient information which should include any foreseeable abnormal or emergency situations which may occur.

If any equipment poses an inherent risk, suitable signage indicating the risk must be installed on and around the equipment.

Staff and authorised volunteers who use work equipment must have received adequate training in safe use of the equipment. Additional training will be needed if new equipment is

introduced or new risks are introduced because of a change in working tasks. Some work equipment also requires operators to be first aid trained.

The Trust will ensure that training needs are suitably assessed and that where relevant, suitable industry and recognised national occupational training standards are followed.

12. Safe Use of Lifting Equipment

Where people are present when a lifting operation is carried out there must be arrangements in place to protect people from falling items and to prevent people from falling from height. A risk assessment should be carried out and adequate precautions put in place. These will include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that all lifting operations are planned by a competent person, supervised and carried out safely
- Assessing the weight and size of the load
- Selecting the correct lifting equipment for the operation with sufficient weight capacity for the load and any packing or lifting accessories contained in the load
- Preventing loose loads from breaking apart by securing them e.g. Secure with plastic sheeting or straps
- Checking that the ground where the lifting operation will be carried out will bear the weight of the load and lifting equipment
- Avoiding overhead cabling or powerlines
- Ensuring sufficient clearance around buildings
- Ensuring that the area beneath the lift is cordoned off to prevent unauthorised people walking beneath the lifted load

Appendix 1: Use of Power Tools and Winches Policy

(Incorporating what was previously a separate policy – Version 2: 2019)

Policy Statement

Identified and competent staff, and in some cases volunteers, may use power tools in conjunction with the Trust's work. However, only identified and competent staff may use winches. Power tools or winches owned or hired by the Trust may not be used outside the context of the Trust's work. Only power tools owned or hired by the Trust may be used on its nature reserves, unless written permission has been granted by the Nature Reserves Manager, and H&S requirements are complied with.

Volunteer Power Tool Use:

- Brushcutters and mowers: The Trust will allow brushcutter and mower use at its discretion. Brushcutter users must be formally trained to at least Lantra-qualified and ideally NPTC-certified.
- Chainsaws: Due to the dangerous nature of chainsaw use and tree felling, and level of formal training required, the Trust does not permit volunteer use of chainsaws on its reserves, other than where permission has already been granted and training standard approved by the Reserves Manager being continually met. Future authorisation will no longer be given for volunteers to be chainsaw operators.
- Winches: Due to the dangerous nature of winch work, and its specified use as an aid for tree felling, volunteer use of winches is neither appropriate nor necessary, and therefore winches will only be used by trained members of staff
- **The Trust reserves the right to withdraw permission where necessary based on reasonable evidence and on precaution**

In all circumstances, power tool use may only be allowed by a volunteer (for the avoidance of doubt, this excludes winches as per the above restriction) under the following circumstances:

- Permission has been granted by the Reserves Manager.
- Relevant training and recognised qualifications, where applicable, are obtained, and a formal certificate is stored centrally on file. The Trust sets the appropriate standard to be reached.
- The Trust has satisfied itself that use of the power tool is appropriate for the role and that it is being used safely
- All Health and Safety records are kept up to date and Safe Working Procedures are complied with. These include:
 - A dynamic risk assessment is filled out logging the machinery number and use time, which is returned regularly to reserves administration
 - Monthly maintenance is undertaken by the user, and recorded on the relevant form, returned regularly to reserves administration
 - For power tools, the machinery is vibration limit rated for Hand Arm Vibration (HAVs) on a periodic basis and duration of use is restricted in line with this
 - Tools are serviced professionally when necessary

- All ongoing training needs, such as recognised refresher courses are kept up to date including first aid
- That the Trust is satisfied that the individual has no medical condition which would preclude the use of power tools.

In circumstances where a volunteer keeps a power tool at their house and uses it without staff supervision, completion and submission of dynamic risk assessments, compliance with Safe Working Procedures and vibration use limits, and completion and submission of monthly maintenance spreadsheets (when the tool has been used) are the responsibility of the volunteer. Failure to do so may result in permission to use the power tool on or behalf of the Trust being withdrawn.

Context

A power tool is a tool that is actuated by an additional power source and mechanism other than the solely manual labour used with hand tools. Power tools most commonly used by the Trust include vehicles, brushcutters, chainsaws and mowers, although a number of others may be used from time to time. Basic battery-operated versions of hand tools, such as cordless drills and screwdrivers do not normally come within the context of this policy as long as they are not being used in a context where they can induce potential significant risks to health and safety

Power tools and winches are potentially very dangerous if used inappropriately, without relevant training or for too long a period of time. It is therefore essential that the Trust ensures that anyone using power tools and winches in conjunction with the Trust's work is safe and competent to do so and that all Safe Working Procedures are complied with at all times. It is also essential for staff to know when works are being carried out, so that they can ensure all our Health and Safety logs and systems are kept up to date. Volunteers play an important role in the Trust's nature reserve management work, particularly wardens, trainees and regular work party volunteers. An enormous amount of site management work can be achieved beyond that achievable just with paid staff. Often power tools are the safest and most appropriate tool for the job and it is important that, where appropriate, volunteers are able to use power tools.

Some power tools are potentially more dangerous than others and each requires specific training. For some tools not requiring recognised qualifications, such as push along mowers, it may be acceptable for training to be carried out in-house and logged, prior to the task being carried out. Regular supervision should be carried out to ensure the trained individual is using the tool confidently and competently. However, for the majority of power tools regularly used by the Trust, such as chainsaws, recognised accredited courses and qualifications are required and must be successfully completed by anyone using such power tools in conjunction with the Trust's work. For some power tools internal training is adequate and a record of this training completed will be kept.

This Policy also aims to ensure that the use of power tools has no detrimental impact upon the health of staff or volunteers, such as Hand and Arm Vibration Syndrome. Anyone using power tools will therefore need to complete an annual medical questionnaire to be reviewed internally and where necessary further specialist advice will be sought, and will need to keep comprehensive records of the type of power tool used and duration of use. Failure complete the annual questionnaire may result in permission to use the power tool on or behalf of the Trust being withdrawn.

Leaders of conservation activities where power tools are to be used will ensure that all volunteers present will be aware of the safe working practices and requirements.