



Rickmansworth Waterways Trust
General Safety Plan for the Canal and
Education Centres

Document Number R01

Date Reviewed and Approved by the Trustees – Jan 2024

General Principles

Consultation

RWT see discussion between everyone at all levels as an essential part of effective health and safety management. It allows the Trust to take the benefit of the experience and advice of staff and volunteers, and to agree the best way of carrying out the tasks required. Everyone should feel free to engage in constructive discussion of safety concerns or issues.

Communication

We will endeavour to communicate to everyone our commitment to safety, and to ensure that everyone is familiar with the contents of the Trust's Risk Assessment and Safety Framework. More importantly, we will distribute these principles of our safety management, the relevant Risk Assessments, and the actions that we ask people to take as a result.

We also ask that people tell us of anything that concerns them – ideally, having taken action to fix any immediate threat to safety.

Co-Operation and Care

To build and maintain a healthy and safe working and volunteering environment, co-operation between people at all levels is essential. We expect all our staff and volunteers to co-operate with the Trustees, and to accept their responsibilities as indicated in this document. We may have to take appropriate action if people violate our safety rules, or fail to perform the duties they undertake when working with us.

Everyone associated with the Trust has a duty to take all reasonable steps to preserve and protect the health and safety of themselves and **all** other people affected by the operations of the Trust – which includes our volunteers as well as our visitors.

Training

Training is an indispensable element of our safe operations. It's therefore essential that every person working or volunteering in the Trust is trained to perform his or her role effectively and safely. All staff and volunteers will be given induction, and other training as required, in safe working practices and procedures before being allocated any new role.

Training does not automatically confer competence, especially in boat management, or in dealing with the public - especially young people. It is ultimately for the Trustees to determine whether an individual has achieved the competency standards required to a specific task, and this will require the consideration of a range of factors.

Workplace Inspections

As required by the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSAW) 1974 the Trustees or their nominee will conduct regular inspections of the Trust's workplaces and take necessary action on any observations. Any changes that require updates to procedures will be documented and the relevant staff and volunteers informed of the changes. Additional inspections will be made whenever there are significant changes in our operations. Workplace inspections will also provide an opportunity to review the continuing effectiveness of the policy and to identify areas where revision of the management system may be necessary.

Accident Investigation & Reporting

We are required to comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013. In any case, accident and incident investigations are valuable tools in the prevention of future incidents. The overarching principle is that accidents/Injuries must be REPORTED & RECORDED.

Accident /Injury reports (copies kept in the Education Centre Office) must be completed in a timely manner, by the person or persons involved in the accident /injury and preferably as soon after the accident/injury has occurred as event will still be fresh in the memory detailing:

- The circumstances of the accident including photographs and diagrams wherever possible
- The nature and severity of any injury sustained
- The identity of any eyewitnesses
- The time, date and location of the incident
- The date of the report

All eyewitness accounts should be collected as near to the time of the accident as is reasonably practicable. Any person required to give an official statement has the right to have a lawyer or other representative present.

The completed report will then be submitted to the Trustees or their nominated representative, who will attempt to determine why the accident occurred and what action should be taken to avoid a recurrence of the problem. Accident reports are kept by the Trustees who are also responsible for reporting under the Regulations where applicable. If possible a follow up report will be completed after a reasonable period of time examining the effectiveness of any new measures introduced.

Measurement

The effectiveness of this General Safety Plan will be measured by considering the number of incidents, the outcomes and the steps taken to avoid recurrence.

Management Review

Any Accident/Injury report would be sent to the Chair of Trustees as soon as completed for further review. If then deemed necessary a meeting of the Trustees will investigate any specific incident and the Trustees will agree the further action to be taken.

Specific Points of Implementation

Risk Assessments

Risk Assessments will be done as recommended by the HSE's Guidance INDG 163 (Risk assessment: a brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace). The Trust will produce, and update as necessary, written Risk Assessments covering the Trust's operations. These Risk Assessments will be used to communicate the safe systems of work used in all the Trust's activities, its premises and the boats for which it has responsibility. Our principal activities are based on the canal, which carries inherent risks mainly from water, but all risks will be assessed and addressed as far as possible.

Work Equipment

Although we have little by way of work equipment, we comply with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), and endeavour to ensure that any equipment used in the workplace is safe and suitable for the purpose for which it is used. All employees and volunteers will be provided with adequate information and training to enable them to use work equipment safely. It may be necessary, following a Risk Assessment, to restrict to authorised persons the use of any work equipment that could pose a specific risk - boat specific equipment could be an example.

All work equipment will be maintained in good working order and repair. All staff and volunteers will be provided with PPE as required. All work equipment will be clearly marked with health and safety warnings where appropriate and will be checked annually.

Trust equipment will only be used on Trust property or projects and in general no other equipment should be used by staff or volunteers undertaking any work on behalf of the Trust.

Personal Protective Equipment

Although we undertake few tasks requiring PPE, we nonetheless comply with the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992. Any staff or volunteer who may be exposed to a risk requiring the use of PPE will be provided with suitable equipment.

All PPE provided by RWT will be properly assessed prior to its provision, and will be maintained in good order. People provided with personal protective equipment will receive training and information on its use and maintenance, and will be required to use it properly. Defects in PPE must be reported to the General Manager and Chair of the Trust.

Manual Handling

We comply with Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002. Manual handling operations where there is a risk of injury will be avoided as far as is reasonably practicable. Where it is not possible to avoid manual handling operations, an assessment of the operation will be made taking into account the task, the load, the working environment and the capability of the individual concerned. An assessment will be reviewed if there is any reason to suspect that it is no longer valid.

Display Screen Equipment

The main risk covered by the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 is to the staff working in our office, and will be assessed by a DSE Assessment where use of DSE is part of a person's usual work for the Trust. Eyesight tests will be provided for VDU on request, and if necessary users will be provided with basic corrective glasses.

Control of Hazardous Substances

A risk assessment will be conducted for any work involving exposure to hazardous substances as covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. The assessment will be based on manufacturers' or suppliers' Hazard Data Sheets or other guidance, and on our own knowledge of the work process. The Trust will ensure that exposure of staff and volunteers to hazardous substances is minimised, and adequately controlled in all cases. Any staff and volunteers who come into contact with hazardous substances will receive training and information on the health and safety issues relating to that type of work and any COSHH assessments will be reviewed when appropriate.

New or Expectant Mothers

It is the policy of RWT to comply with the European Directive on Pregnant Workers.

In addition to the general risk assessment, a further assessment of risk to new or expectant mothers will be conducted. Where a risk to new or expectant mothers is identified, working conditions and/or working hours will be adjusted so as to reduce the risk. Where this is not reasonable the employee(s) or volunteer(s) concerned will be taken off that activity and may be asked to leave the Trust's premises.

First Aid

First Aid kits are located in the Canal Centre, in the Education Centre and on the Trust's boats, easily accessible by all staff and volunteers. Our staff and a number of volunteers are trained in First Aid procedures and the Trust contracts with an external trainer to run courses for staff and volunteers in the Education Centre.

The role of Responsible Person, especially the requirement to take charge in event of an accident, is problematic for our small, volunteer organisation, where no one individual is certain to be present. The Trust's response to this is to invite the person on duty in the Canal Centre to take charge if someone else is injured – at least to make sure that appropriate help is called for.

The General Manager will be responsible for the contents of the first aid kits in the Canal Centre, Education Centre and our boats and the role of checking First Aid kits may be delegated to a volunteer with the required knowledge and expertise in First Aid.

The names of qualified first-aiders are recorded electronically and also on a hard copy kept in a file in the Education Centre office.

Environmental Management

Our duty for the correct management of the environment is based on the avoidance of pollution and of litter, especially in relation to the canal (which, in most of our operating area, is also a river).

Fire Safety

Our policy is to carry out an assessment of the fire risk for each of the Trust's activities and locations where we have responsibility. These risk assessments, which are required by the



Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, will be reviewed as required and will detail the fire precautions to be taken in each of the Trust's areas of activity.

We expect all staff and volunteers to behave in such a way as to minimise the risk of fire. This involves taking care when smoking (which is not in any case permitted in any of our buildings); keeping combustible materials separate from sources of ignition, and avoiding unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials. The Trustees are ultimately responsible for ensuring the provision and maintenance of appropriate fire prevention and detection equipment, though in practice this responsibility will be exercised by those responsible for the Trust's various premises and areas of responsibility. These people are responsible for ensuring that other staff and volunteers are trained in relevant fire prevention and emergency procedures.

The detailed requirements for Fire Safety, including emergency response and evacuation, are covered in the separate Fire Risk Assessments.

Electrical Safety

Electrical appliances and installation are a major cause of fires, as well as posing a hazard of their own. We will address these concerns by making sure that portable equipment is tested, and that we know the currency of the required inspections of the building.

Working at height

This refers to any situation in which it's possible to fall – regardless of the height. In the Canal Centre, this usually relates to using steps and in or outside the Education Centre the use of step ladders or a ladder.

No working at height should be undertaken without an appropriate assessment of the work to be undertaken. Always use the appropriate step ladder or ladder for a specific task - in particular, do not stand on chairs to reach items out of normal reach.

Working Alone

A feature of volunteering in the Canal Centre is that the volunteer is often there alone. There is the risk of being overtaken by illness, or of suffering some sort of injury. Volunteers working in the Canal Centre should call or text the General Manager mobile phone number 07875 393703 if any issues arise while working alone.

Those who prefer not to be asked to be in the Canal Centre alone should discuss this with the General Manager.

Instructions to Staff and Volunteers

General

1. All staff and volunteers should be aware of, respect and adhere to the rules and procedures contained in this statement.
2. No person under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating drug that might impair skills or judgment, whether prescribed or otherwise, shall be allowed to work or volunteer.
3. Horseplay, practical joking or any other acts, which might jeopardise the health and safety of any other person, are forbidden and must be prevented.
4. No person whose levels of alertness and /or ability are reduced due to illness or fatigue will be allowed to work or volunteer if this might jeopardise the health and safety of that person or any other person.
5. All waste materials must be disposed of carefully and in such a way that they do not constitute a hazard to others.
6. Volunteers are primarily responsible for their own safety and no one should undertake a task that appears to be unsafe or is beyond their capabilities.
7. Staff and volunteers using tools should take care to ensure that all protective guards and other safety devices are properly fitted and in good working order and shall immediately report any deficiencies to the General Manager or the Chair of the Trust.
8. Suitable clothing and footwear will be worn at all times.
9. Working areas must be kept clean and tidy, and waste materials and rubbish must be removed routinely.
10. Walkways and passageways must be kept clear from obstructions at all times. In particular, trailing cables are a trip hazard and should not be left in any walkway or passageway.

Manual Lifting and Moving

1. Whenever reasonably practicable, lifting and moving of objects should always be done by mechanical devices rather than manual handling. The equipment used should be appropriate for the task at hand.
2. Staff and volunteers should not attempt to lift or move a load that is too heavy to manage comfortably.
3. The load to be lifted or moved must be inspected for sharp edges, slivers and wet or greasy patches. Gloves should be worn if necessary.
4. The route over which the load is to be lifted or moved should be inspected to ensure that it is free of obstructions or spillage which could cause tripping
5. When lifting an object off the ground those involved should assume a squatting position, keeping the back straight. The load should be lifted by straightening the knees, not the back. These steps should be reversed for lowering an object to the ground.

General Risk Assessment

This Assessment relates to hazards encountered in ordinary conduct of volunteer duties. Any maintenance tasks must be separately assessed.

No.	Hazard	Cause	Consequence	Mitigation	Assessment	Action required
1	Electricity	Appliances or installations	Death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrict use of portable appliances as far as reasonably possible. Ensure that all appliances used in the Canal and Education Centre are PAT tested at appropriate intervals, regardless of ownership. Ensure that all installed equipment is properly used. 	Risk moderate – tolerable	Ensure that all staff and Volunteers are aware of hazards and rules.
2	Falling from height.	Attempts to reach items at height without proper support.	Injury, perhaps serious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep items routinely needed by staff or volunteers at reachable height. Use only provided steps or ladders to reach higher levels, or ceilings including light fittings. 	Risk moderate - tolerable	Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of hazards and rules.
3	Falling on uneven or floor.	Uneven ground, obstructions to movement, slippery surface	Injury to staff, volunteers and visitors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid leaving boxes and other equipment in the Canal Centre as there isn't enough space. Keep floor areas in all buildings clear of obstructions Ensure all spills on hard floor surfaces are mopped up. Make sure people are aware of the generally slightly uneven surfaces (for example the cobbles) outside the Canal Centre. 	Risk moderate – tolerable	Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of hazards and rules.
4	Fire	Source of ignition in contact with flammable materials.	Injury to member of public or staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Fire Risk Assessment. 	Risk low – acceptable	See Fire RA.
5.	Manual Handling	Heavy items in deliveries	Injury to volunteers or staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stow heavy items at low level. Avoid heavy or bulky items being stored on the high shelf in the Lock Centre toilet. Arrange for heavy deliveries to be received by people able to deal with them. 	Risk low – acceptable	Make sure all are aware of rules for handling loads.
6.	Undetected illness or injury	Lone Working	Injury or illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information and a process for volunteers to obtain support if needed while working alone in Canal Centre. 	Risk moderate	Careful preparation of simple plan.