



Hitchin Community Gardens

# **Health & Safety Policy Manual**

**February 2010**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Hitchin Community Gardens' policy is to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment, equipment and systems of work on all of its sites and areas of operation. This extends to all employees, clients, volunteers, visitors and the general public.

This document applies to all Hitchin Community Gardens' operations and locations, thus covering gardens, buildings and services delivered off site.

Each location has a supplementary document/log book containing site-specific information.

This policy and the resulting procedures are subject to a formal review each year in order to reflect practical experience and any legislative changes.

It is important to remember that all employees are responsible for working in a healthy and safe manner, and to take care that they do not place themselves, their work colleagues, or anyone else, at any risk.

## **MANUAL HOLDERS**

**The Health & Safety Policy Manual is issued to the following:**

- 1 Chair of Core Group**
- 2 Core Group H&S Representative**
- 3 Project Managers**

## **HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**

In accordance with its duty under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Hitchin Community Gardens will implement standards of Health, Safety and Welfare which fully comply with the requirements and conditions set out under the Act, and with all other relevant Statutory Requirements, EEC Directives and Approved Codes of Practice and subsequent changes.

It is the aim of the Organisation through its Health & Safety Policy, as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure:

- ◆ The provision and maintenance of safe and healthy working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all employees and volunteers, and to provide such resources, information, training and supervision as is needed for these purposes.
- ◆ A risk assessment is carried out to assess the Health & Safety risks to employees, volunteers (and others) who may be exposed as a result of their work.
- ◆ Maintain good general working conditions by the provision of adequate facilities such as heating, lighting and ventilation.
- ◆ Arrangements for the safe use, handling, storage and transportation of all items and hazardous substances are in place.
- ◆ Adequate information, supervision, training and instruction is provided as necessary, together with consultation, to enable all employees and volunteers to work safely and effectively, and contribute positively to their own Health & Safety at work.
- ◆ Those persons who are not in the employment of Hitchin Community Gardens who may be affected by its activities are not exposed to risks to their health, safety and welfare.
- ◆ Make available, supervise, train and encourage the use of all personal protective equipment.
- ◆ Investigate all accidents, incidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences, ensure they are correctly reported and recorded, and that corrective and preventive action is taken.
- ◆ Institute systems and procedures, which allow the conditions of the policy to be met in an ongoing manner with adequate recording, control and review procedures.

Employees and volunteers are reminded of the requirements to ensure that the Health & Safety Policy is observed. In particular they are required:

- To take reasonable care for their own health & safety at work and those who may be affected by their actions, or by their neglect;
- To co-operate fully with their employer and others to ensure that any statutory duties or requirements for Health & Safety are complied with;
- Not to intentionally, or recklessly, interfere with, or misuse, any aspect or anything provided in the interests of Health & Safety.

The allocation of responsibilities for Health & Safety matters, and the particular arrangements made to implement the policy are set out in the following pages.

Signed:.....  
Core Group Chair – Vicky Wyer

Date: ...18.2.10.....



## **HEALTH & SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Chair of the Core Group**

The Chair of the Core Group has ultimate responsibility for all aspects of Health & Safety at all of the organisation's buildings, sites, gardens and areas of operation to ensure that:

- 1) The policy is effectively administered, monitored and the necessary changes are made to the policy to reflect changes in legislation and any organisation changes.
- 2) Adequate funds and resources are made available to meet the requirements of this policy.
- 3) The appropriate insurance cover is provided and maintained.
- 4) Risk assessments are carried out at each location, wherever appropriate, and preventive actions are taken.
- 5) The Health & Safety Policy and procedures are formally reviewed on an annual basis.
- 6) Good general working conditions are maintained by the provision of adequate facilities such as heating, lighting and ventilation.
- 7) All accidents and incidents are correctly reported and recorded, and that action is taken to prevent re-occurrence.
- 8) All employees and volunteers understand the requirements placed upon them by this policy.
- 9) All employees and volunteers receive adequate and appropriate Health & Safety training, and are informed of any changes in legislation.
- 10) Safe working practices are observed and followed.
- 11) Disciplinary action is taken against employees who do not comply with the requirements as detailed in the policy documents.
- 12) Any hazardous substances are stored and handled in accordance with established rules and procedures.
- 13) All equipment on site is safe guarded in accordance with the relevant legislation and has the required certificates of inspection or examination.
- 14) Trained and experienced personnel operate all equipment, and all repairs to equipment are carried out in the proper manner.
- 15) The required protective equipment is issued and used correctly.
- 16) Provision is made at management meetings to discuss Health & Safety matters.
- 17) Joint consultation and participation with employees and volunteers is encouraged to promote and maintain Health & Safety at work.
- 18) A risk assessment is carried out for new and expectant mothers to assess risks in workplace activities, and that the appropriate adjustments or changes are made to her working conditions or environment.
- 19) The necessary action is taken in respect of the Working Time Directive.
- 20) Fire drill practices (where appropriate) are carried out at least once every six months.

### **H&S Representative on the Core Group**

The H&S Representative on the Core Group reports to the Chair and is the person responsible for the practical day to day administration, implementation and monitoring of all aspects of the Health & Safety Policy at all of the organisation's buildings, sites and areas of operation. This includes responsibility for:

- 1) Complying with the statutory requirements of all relevant legislation and Approved Codes of Practice and any subsequent changes.
- 2) Regularly inspecting all locations to ensure the Health & Safety Policy and procedures are being complied with and making any recommendations to the Chair of the Core Group concerning Health & Safety matters.
- 3) Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out at each location, whenever appropriate, and that any corrective and preventive actions identified are taken.
- 4) Liaising with Project Managers on an annual basis to discuss and review Health & Safety.
- 5) Carrying out an annual review of the Policy and Procedures.
- 6) Ensuring that all Health & Safety rules and safe practices are observed at each location and that protective equipment is used or worn where appropriate.
- 7) Ensuring that all machinery and equipment is safe to use and adequate maintenance schedules are in place.
- 8) The provision of Health & Safety information, training, instruction and supervision for all employees, especially new starters and volunteers at all locations, as necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of all employees.
- 9) Maintaining accident and incident records at each location.
- 10) Ensuring all accidents and near misses are fully investigated and reported correctly (including those covered under RIDDOR).
- 11) Promoting an active interest in Health & Safety by all employees.
- 12) Ensuring the Fire Appliances are maintained annually
- 13) Ensuring all electrical equipment and appliances are regularly maintained and tested on an annual basis.

### **Project Managers**

The Project Managers report to the H&S Representative on The Core Group and are the people responsible for the practical day to day administration, implementation and monitoring of all aspects of the Health & Safety Policy at each location / project. This includes responsibility for:

- 1) Complying with the statutory requirements of all relevant legislation and Approved Codes of Practice and any subsequent changes.
- 2) Regularly inspecting the premises to ensure the Health & Safety Policy and procedures are being complied with and making any recommendations to the H&S Representative on the Core Group concerning Health & Safety matters.
- 3) Carrying out risk assessments at the location whenever necessary, and taking the required corrective and preventive actions.
- 4) Ensuring that all Health & Safety Rules and safe practices are observed and that protective equipment is used or worn where appropriate. Disciplinary action to be taken as necessary.
- 5) Ensuring that all machinery and equipment is safe to use, and that only authorised and trained personnel are allowed to operate them.
- 6) The provision of adequate Health & Safety training, instruction and supervision for all employees, especially new starters, clients and volunteers.
- 7) Maintaining accident and incident records, reporting all accidents and near misses to the H&S Representative on the Core Group. (Including those covered under RIDDOR.)
- 8) Investigating **all** accidents and near misses and recommending corrective and preventive action.
- 9) Ensuring all employees and volunteers know the correct procedures in the case of fire or other emergency and the location of fire fighting equipment (**ONLY TO BE USED IF FULLY TRAINED IN THE OPERATION OF SUCH EQUIPMENT**)
- 10) Ensuring all employees and volunteers know the whereabouts of First Aid facilities.
- 11) Making sure all clients, visitors and the general public at the locations are aware and comply with safety procedures.
- 12) Ensuring that prior permission is obtained from the H&S Representative on the Core Group before purchasing hazardous materials or substances, and a COSHH assessment is carried out. The supplier must provide the safety data sheet, which gives special instructions for use and storage. Ensure these instructions are followed and the details passed on to the relevant people. Emergency action details must be added to the list on the front of the COSHH cupboard.
- 13) Maintenance of good housekeeping and standards throughout the location.
- 14) Promoting an active interest in Health & Safety by all employees and volunteers.
- 15) Appoint a H&S Co-ordinator to take the lead on H&S matters when the project Manager is not present. This does not remove any responsibility for H&S from the Project Manager.

**All Employees and Volunteers**

All employees and volunteers have the following responsibilities under Health & Safety, to ensure that they:

- 1) Have read and understood Hitchin Community Gardens' Health & Safety Policy, and comply with the requirements of the Policy in accordance with the laid down rules and procedures.
- 2) Co-operate fully with Hitchin Community Gardens on all aspects of health, safety and welfare.
- 3) Take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves or to others who may be affected by their work or actions.
- 4) Follow safe working practices when using equipment, tools and handling chemicals.
- 5) Use the appropriate personal protective equipment provided.
- 6) Do not use or operate any equipment unless they have been trained and instructed in its operation.
- 7) Report all defects in equipment and materials, and any obvious health or safety hazards.
- 8) Report all accidents, injuries, dangerous occurrences, hazards or near misses to the H&S Core Group Representative or relevant Project Manager, which must be recorded in the Accident Book.
- 9) Maintain good standards of housekeeping, especially within their own working area and where others may be expected to have access.
- 10) Are aware of the emergency procedures to be taken in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- 11) Comply with the safety rules or instructions imposed by them, when working off site on customer, clients and other third party premises or sites, but only if these instructions conform with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act.
- 12) Inform the H&S Core Group Representative or Project Manager of any change to their state of health, either temporary or permanent, which may affect their working ability or their suitability to carry out any particular task or tasks.

**NEGLIGENCE OF HEALTH & SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE REGARDED  
AS A DISCIPLINARY MATTER**

## **ARRANGEMENTS**

### **1 FIRST AID**

- 1.1 Each location / project / activity should have a trained First Aider, or appointed person for First Aid, with a current certificate.
- 1.2 A first Aid box meeting statutory requirements is maintained at each location.
- 1.3 The First Aider will regularly check the contents of the First Aid box to ensure that it is adequately stocked and that it contains all the required items and no others. It is the First Aider / appointed person's responsibility to order items and replenish the First Aid box. In practice this will be done by the H&S Core Group Representative.

### **2 RECORDING AND REPORTING ACCIDENTS**

- 2.1 An accident report book is kept at each location. All accidents, incidents and near misses must be recorded and fully investigated. The records for each incident should include the name of the casualty, circumstances, treatment given, and outcome. The details of each incident should be signed by the casualty, (if able), or advocate, and the person completing the report. The accident book will be examined at least annually as part of the review process.
- 2.2 Major accidents, dangerous occurrence and certain diseases have to be reported under the RIDDOR Regulations 1995. This covers:
  - Death or Major Injury as a result of an accident connected with work, involving an employee, volunteer or self-employed person working on the premises, or members of the public. These must be reported immediately (by telephone) to the Local Authority, or HSE and followed up within 10 days by a completed Accident Report Form (F2508).
  - Over Three Day Injury as a result of an accident connected with work (including an act of physical violence). F2508 Form must be completed and sent to the Local Authority, or HSE within 10 days.
  - Disease. If a Doctor notifies you that your employee suffers from a reportable work related disease you must send a completed disease report form (F2508A) to the Local Authority or HSE
  - Dangerous Occurrence. If something happens which does not result in a reportable injury, but which clearly could have done, it may be a dangerous occurrence, which must be reported straight away (by telephone) to the Enforcing Authority, following up by an accident report form (F2508) within 10 days. Further details can be found in the leaflet RIDDOR Explained. Forms are available from the web site - [www.hse.gov.uk/forms/incident/F2508.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/forms/incident/F2508.pdf)  
The Project Manager must notify immediately Hitchin Community Gardens' H&S Representative on the Core Group of any accident falling within these categories and should immediately seek advise in the event of any doubt.
- 2.3 All accidents have potential insurance implications. There is a separate accident/claims procedure. Monthly report form (including Nil returns), to be submitted to H&S Representative on the Core Group, by the 1<sup>st</sup> working day of following month.

### **3 FIRE PREVENTION AND PROCEDURES**

- 3.1 Detailed fire precautions will vary between locations and detailed procedures will be provided at each location. It is up to the H&S Core Group Representative to ensure that the Policy set out here is interpreted appropriately and to project managers to ensure that it is fully implemented locally and that fire risks of any activities are properly assessed and the necessary actions taken. A fire safety risk assessment is now a requirement under the amendment to the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 which came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1999 (H&S Core Group Representative to arrange).
- 3.2 Full use should be made of advice from the local Fire Officer. Where such advice has resource implications these should be discussed with Core Group. The Local Fire Officers instructions take precedence in the event of any conflict with Hitchin Community Gardens' policy and procedures.
- 3.3 There should be a fire alarm system at each location appropriate to the degree of risk, size and circumstances. Clear instruction will be displayed showing the arrangements for raising the alarm, exit procedures, and assembly point.
- 3.4 Appropriate signs must be provided for fire exits, fire routes, fire doors and fire extinguishers and Fire Assembly Point. Fire doors must comply with Health & Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996.
- 3.5 Each location must have a logbook, recording all events associated with fire. This will include Fire Officer visits, fire practices, fire extinguishers inventory and servicing, and other occurrences.
- 3.6 Where appropriate the H&S Core Group Representative / Project Manager should arrange one announced, and at least one unannounced, fire drill practice every six months, and record these with observations and outcomes in the logbook.
- 3.7 There must be sufficient and appropriate fire fighting equipment at each location and these must be subject to regular inspection, testing and maintenance agreements. Appropriate staff should be familiar with the operation and application of the extinguishers.
- 3.8 Common sense and good housekeeping go a long way in preventing fires. Points to remember include:
- ◆ Keep fire doors shut at all times.
  - ◆ Keep passageways, corridors, stairways and all fire and potential escape routes clear of all obstructions.
  - ◆ Ensure that all waste, especially flammable materials like paper, is regularly removed.
  - ◆ Ensure that materials, such as flammable gases, liquids on plastic foams, are stored in areas away from the workplace, or in fire-resistant stores.
  - ◆ Store equipment, books, paper etc. tidily and away from power points and leads.
  - ◆ Electricity is a major source of fire; when leaving a building, ensure that all equipment and lights are turned off, other than computer servers and supporting network equipment.
  - ◆ Make sure all staff are familiar with the Emergency Procedures, the location of escape routes, fire extinguishers and the assembly points.
  - ◆ Any petrol stored for use in equipment must be stored in an approved container in a fully ventilated area, not in proximity of any naked flames (e.g. boilers, sparks) and where any electrical appliances (i.e. light switches) are appropriately protected.

#### **4 STATUTORY INFORMATION AND ADVICE**

- 4.1 In accordance with Regulations each site must display a notice Health & Safety Law – 'What you should know' or provide employees and volunteers with the equivalent leaflet. This gives statutory information and the location and telephone number of the nearest office of the Health & Safety Executive or Local Authority Environmental Health Department.

#### **5 MANUAL HANDLING**

- 5.1 This area is subject to the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, amended 2002.
- 5.2 All employees and volunteers involved in handling bulky, heavy or awkward loads should be familiar with the advice in the booklet '–Getting to Grips with Manual Handling' (for Manual Handling Assessment Form see Appendix 8). Concurrent with the annual Health & Safety Policy review the Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative is required to complete annually a standard Manual Handling Assessment Form (included in the location's Health & Safety Log Book) and take appropriate action, and training if required, or complete relevant risk assessments.
- 5.3 In general, employees and volunteers should avoid manual handling where there is a risk of injury, and see if there is an easier, safer way. Think about using mechanical help, making loads smaller, lighter, and plan a lift. As a final measure use PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) e.g. for hands and feet.

#### **6. INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND IMMUNISATION**

- 6.1 All garden employees are required to be immunised against tetanus and are responsible for arranging necessary boosters. All volunteers and others regularly in the garden environment are strongly recommended to be immunised against tetanus and to arrange for the necessary boosters. Where this is not the case, a note should be provided either from their doctor confirming advice received or from a parent/guardian/carer confirming that the risks are understood and accepted. It is a condition of accepting clients on site that they follow these directions against tetanus.
- 6.2 Those employees and volunteers most exposed to risk should also be immunised against Hepatitis (B), or to produce a note from their doctor confirming that his advice has been sought and followed. Hitchin Community Gardens will support requests to GPs for this.
- 6.3 In order to minimise the risk of contracting any infections, all those treating cuts, wounds or coming into contact with blood in any other way, must wear appropriate gloves. Cuts and abrasions must routinely be kept well covered with waterproof dressings.
- 6.4 Further guidance and information on infectious diseases, and the position of volunteers in the gardens in this respect, is contained in separate notes, a copy of which can be found in Appendix 3 of this Policy.

## 7 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) & CLOTHING

- 7.1 It is in everyone's interests to wear clothing which keeps them warm, dry and gives protection from injury. It should not itself become a hazard, and so unduly loose and fraying clothing should be avoided.
- 7.2 Those using the gardens are expected to wear appropriate protective clothing, including boots.
- 7.3 Steel toe-cap boots must be worn when digging, using rotary mowers or similar machinery and when handling building and other heavy materials. No other footwear may be worn on garden sites.
- 7.4 Hard hats should be worn for substantial building operations and may be appropriate for particular users (see section 8).
- 7.5 Gloves give useful protection for much outdoor work, and must be worn when handling dangerous plants such as those with thorns or stinging properties, and when those who are certified to do so are handling pesticides.
- 7.6 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) clothing specific to the use of machinery, e.g. shredders and strimmers, **must** be worn in accordance with the manufacturers instructions (e.g. shredder – gloves, ear and eye defenders).
- 7.7 Hitchin Community Gardens will provide PPE for all staff, clients and volunteers.
- 7.8 If client risk assessment identifies the need for PPE when assisting with personal hygiene, this must always be worn and safely disposed of.
- 7.9 It is the responsibility of the Manager to ensure that all PPE is maintained in a clean, fully serviceable way.

## 8 USERS AND HAZARDS (Hitchin Community Gardens' commitment to a Safe Working Practice for Vulnerable People).

- 8.1 Those using the garden may have individual needs in the context of Health & Safety, which the Project Manager/Horticultural Therapist staff will need to identify in consultation with the user and/or his/her support staff. Staff will need discretion and imagination in recognising and overcoming potential hazards.
- 8.1.1 Assessments **must** be carried out on each individual, and any specific protection required noted and used.  
Some examples follow.
- 8.2 Someone with epilepsy may need head protection when working near glass or on a hard surface, and a stroke patient may need to lean on a protective cushion against a raised bed.
- 8.3 Thorny bushes, nettles, hard paving, glasshouses and projections generally are all special hazards to those with walking, movement and/or visual impairments.
- 8.4 Those who are frail, elderly, and/or have restricted mobility or poor circulation are liable to lose body heat quickly and must have warm and draught free places in which to work.
- 8.5 Some users may experience difficulty in following complex instructions, with implications for the level of supervision required and tasks which can be undertaken. Such matters must be covered before entering into a contractual arrangement.
- 8.6 Employees must ensure that all others on site are aware that some plants are poisonous and require care in handling.

Bonfires are not allowed on any Hitchin Community Gardens sites due to the potential risk to clients, staff or volunteers.

Hitchin Community Gardens will try to ensure it always provides a safe and secure environment for those who need it.

Wherever possible Hitchin Community Gardens will try to ensure information is provided in accessible formats.

## **9 MECHANICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT**

- 9.1 This is covered under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992.
- 9.2 It is the responsibility of the Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative to ensure that all machinery is regularly maintained and used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. All the manufacturers devices (e.g. guards, shields, automatic cut-outs and brakes) to protect operators from moving parts **must** be in place.
- 9.3 For each item of machinery the Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative shall decide who may operate it: only authorised and trained staff or volunteers, certified user (chain saw, strimmer, spray equipment) or an appropriate user or volunteer under supervision. In deciding this there shall be due regard for 8.1 above.
- 9.4 When machinery is purchased, the appropriate level of instruction and training must be provided before the machinery/equipment is used.
- 9.5 The appropriate PPE must be worn/used as necessary.
- 9.6 Gas or paraffin heaters are potential hazards. Manufacturer instructions regarding ventilation and filling procedures must be strictly followed and undertaken by demonstrators or others under close supervision. Heaters must have guards and be positioned away from access routes.
- 9.7 Before use, on every occasion, the equipment must be checked. If it is not fully operational, it must not be used.
- 9.8 All equipment must be professionally checked at least annually (or more frequently if recommended by manufacturer).
- 9.9 If equipment is not fully operational, it must be removed from service, marked as such, and arrangements made for professional repair or replacement.
- 9.10 Operating instructions for equipment should be maintained in a file and held in the project building. A copy of those instructions should also be located with the equipment.

## **10 ELECTRICAL MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT**

- 10.1 All electrical machinery and equipment is subject to the general procedures set out in Section 9 and only authorised and trained staff and volunteers can use them.
- 10.2 All outdoor electrical machinery and equipment must be fitted with a 30 mille-amp (maximum) residual current device (RCD), or operate through one at the mains socket.
- 10.3 Electrical machinery and equipment must **never** be used in the rain or where it might be sprayed with water or subject to damp.

- 10.4 All electrical equipment must be turned off when unattended, and portable (mobile) equipment unplugged at the mains at the end of the day. Always switch off before plugging in or unplugging.
- 10.5 Extension leads should be laid out with due regard to access and to minimising any hazard.
- 10.6 There is legislative requirement (The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989) to manage the risks from portable electrical equipment. To achieve this:
- 10.6.1 The electrician conducting the PAT test will record all portable electrical equipment. Filed with the logbooks.
- 10.6.2 The Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative will undertake a six monthly visual inspection of the equipment and maintain a record of these inspections (location log book)
- 10.6.3 The Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative will assess users in carrying out routine user checks.
- 10.7 The H&S Representative on the Core Group will provide necessary training and provide written guidance as to what to look for, and the procedure to follow when faults are found. (Location log book).
- 10.8 The H&S Representative on the Core Group will assist in selecting an authorised professional at each location to carry out testing of equipment on an annual basis.
- 10.9 Records will be reviewed and arrangements monitored to ensure follow up action is carried out.

## 11 HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

- 11.1 The intention is to ensure compliance with the COSHH Regulations 1999 (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) and subsequent amendments, and with guidance issued within the framework of the Regulations.
- 11.2 The Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative at each location should have a copy of and be familiar with COSHH – A Brief Guide to the Regulations (see appendix 4). To comply with COSHH, the following steps will be taken:
- ◆ Assess all the risks (risk assessment)
  - ◆ Seek to remove or select less hazardous authorised substances only
  - ◆ Decide what precautions are needed to reduce the risks
  - ◆ Prevent or adequately control exposure
  - ◆ Ensure control measures are used and maintained
  - ◆ Monitor the exposure of employees and volunteers and others as necessary
  - ◆ Obtain a copy of the relevant data sheet from the manufacturer and maintain this in the Health & Safety file
  - ◆ Ensure details of emergency actions are recorded and placed on the external front of the COSHH cupboard
  - ◆ Ensure any such substances are housed in a locked COSHH cupboard and are safely disposed of when no longer required, or at 'use by' date
  - ◆ Ensure employees and volunteers are properly informed, trained and supervised.
- 11.3. Chemicals must be stored in a locked, dry airy spacious place, which is subject to inspection.

**Also refer to Appendix 4 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Assessments'**

## 12. CARS, MOBILE PHONES AND DRIVING

- 12.1 Employees are expected to drive responsibly at all times on Hitchin Community Gardens business and with due regard to the law and other road users. They should plan their work and appointments so as to allow adequate time for journeys and for rest breaks on long journeys.
- 12.2 The law changed from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2003, making it illegal to use a **mobile phone** whilst driving.  
Any Hitchin Community Gardens drivers on the road need to be aware, as an employer, we insist that you do **not** use your mobile phone when driving a vehicle and fully comply with this legislation.  
We would recommend that if you are driving for work (or at any other time) and on your own in the vehicle, any mobile you have is turned off, or if it does ring, you ignore it and allow the system to move to voice mail so that a message can be left for when you are no longer driving.  
Equally, those in the office need to be aware that the person may be driving when trying to contact them. If it is known that they are driving, no calls should be made to them until it is fairly certain that they have completed their journey.

## 13 SMOKING

- 13.1 Hitchin Community Gardens recognises that smoking is hazardous to health. It also accepts the right of its employees, clients and volunteers to smoke, and the right of those who do not, to enjoy a smoke-free environment.
- 13.2 At each location, indoor, work and rest areas will be no smoking areas: smoking areas will be established where this is practicable.

## 14 DOGS

- 14.1 Project Managers should take appropriate steps to avoid dog excrement in the Gardens, given the resulting risk to health (especially to children) and unpleasantness for all those working in the Gardens. This calls for discreet vigilance by staff and volunteers given the potential for casual visitors with support working dogs.
- 14.2 As a general rule, dogs and other pets are not allowed on Hitchin Community Gardens premises (apart from support working dogs). At some locations, dogs accompanying visiting members of the public must be allowed where the garden forms part of a larger garden (e.g. Ransom's).
- 14.3 Pets, other than support working dogs, are not allowed within the buildings.

## 15 PERSONAL SAFETY FOR EMPLOYEES

- 15.1 The Project Manager / H&S Core Group Representative is responsible for ensuring an adequate employee/user ratio during Hitchin Community Gardens workshops and other activities. That ratio will depend on the circumstances for any given session, including the needs of the users, the type of work being undertaken, and the location (e.g. Hitchin Community Gardens Gardens, indoors at users' centres, etc.).

- 15.2 Non-Hitchin Community Gardens employees associated with users are expected to participate in workshops, help supervise users, and inform staff of a user's particular needs and of any necessary precautions.
- 15.3** Employees and volunteers should avoid putting themselves at risk from the general public, by, for instance, working alone in potentially vulnerable situations (e.g. at Ransoms Recreation Ground after dark). If such a situation is regular and unavoidable an appropriate form of personal security alarm should be provided – **(see Hitchin Community Gardens' policy and procedure on 'Working Alone')**.

## **16 PUBLIC LIABILITY**

- 16.1 *Employees and volunteers should take care to inform visitors, clients etc, of any dangers within the gardens and discourage visitors from putting themselves at risk.*
- 16.2 *A sign should be displayed at gardens informing the public of any possible hazard in the gardens at any time it is open to the public and unmanned.*
- 16.3 Any individual or organisation using Hitchin Community Gardens' gardens or premises for an event, not arranged by Hitchin Community Gardens, must ensure they have adequate insurance, including Public Liability insurance.**

## **17 VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS (VDUs)**

- 17.1 VDUs are used Hitchin Community Gardens staff and volunteers and those using them need well-designed workstations with suitable lighting and comfortable adjustable seating. This helps to reduce aching hands, arms, backs and neck, eyestrain, headache, fatigue, and occasional longer-term health problems. It is necessary to take steps to minimise the risks in VDU work in the interests of employees and the organisation, and in compliance with the Display Screen Equipment Regulations.
- 17.2 Those employees most affected, and those covered by the Regulations, are those who habitually use VDUs for a significant part of the normal work. As a guide, this could cover those who, on average spend a quarter or more of their working time on a VDU, and/or those, who on occasions, use for an intensive period. All of the following steps should be followed as good practice:
- 17.3 Annually, at the time of the Health & Safety review, the named person in each location will, for those employees covered by 17.2 and in consultation with them, review the whole workstation equipment, furniture and work environment, and together with any special needs of the individual. Any risks identified must be reduced in accordance with the guidance set out in the HSE booklet 'Working with VDUs', pages 12 to 14.
- 17.4 Health & Safety training and information will be provided, as part of the induction, to make sure employees can use these VDU and workstations safely. This comprises of a short video, followed by completion of an individual workstation assessment. This is repeated on an annual basis.
- 17.5 Individual users should plan breaks or changes of activities at their discretion, more frequent short ones being better than longer occasional ones. No VDU should be used continually for more than 50 minutes without a short break being taken.

- 17.6 Employees falling within 17.2 above are to be advised of all aspects of health and safety in relation to VDU users as set out in Pages 12 to 14 of HSE Leaflet "Working with VDUs".

## **18 PERSONNEL ON SITE**

- 18.1 A daily attendance register will be maintained at each location. All staff, users, volunteers and visitors are required to sign in and out, so that, in the event of fire, it can be determined that all have been evacuated.

## **19 AWARENESS, INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

- 19.1 All those employees/volunteers at Hitchin Community Gardens locations should be aware of the Hitchin Community Gardens Health & Safety Policy and Procedures. It is a condition of appointment that employees familiarise themselves with and accept this policy and procedures. The employee induction procedure will include briefing on Health & Safety as follows:
- Contents of Health & Safety Policy. (Request that the employee reads it and becomes familiar with it).
  - General Health & Safety rules applied at Hitchin Community Gardens.
  - Fire Evacuation Procedures (especially fire exit points and the Assembly Point) explained.
  - The location of the First Aid Facilities and the First Aider/Appointed Person for First Aid.
  - Instruction on the provision and use of any protective clothing or equipment.
  - Known hazards on the premises, with instructions on eliminating risks indicated.
  - Person(s) to whom an employee/trainee should go with any queries, complaints, suggestions relating to Health & Safety.
  - Specific Health & Safety instructions, safe working practices and the main hazards relevant to a particular job and department outlined.
  - Training records explained.
- 19.2 Health & Safety Training will be recorded on each individual's Training Record.
- 19.3 The Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative will be responsible for identifying employee training needs in Health & Safety and reviewing these annually.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY RULES - GENERAL**

**IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL EMPLOYEES TO READ AND BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THESE RULES AND TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE FOLLOWED**

### **1. Working Conditions/Environment**

- 1.1 All accidents, however minor must be reported to the Project Manager / Health & Safety Coordinator, and details entered in the Accident Book. These are reported monthly to H&S Representative on the Core Group.
- 1.2 Make proper use of all safety equipment and facilities provided.
- 1.3 Keep work areas in a clean and tidy condition.
- 1.4 Clean up any spillages of liquid immediately, taking the necessary precautions depending on the spillage. (Use PPE, particularly for all bodily fluids).
- 1.5 Dispose of all rubbish and waste materials in a proper manner.
- 1.6 Keep all access ways clear and ensure fire doors are kept shut at all times.
- 1.7 Keep all emergency and fire exits free of obstructions.
- 1.8 Trailing cables from VDUs, telephones etc. should be positioned so as not to cause a tripping hazard.
- 1.9 Stairs, steps and ladders should be maintained in good condition. Do not climb on chairs or desks, use the specific devices supplied.
- 1.10 Observe the non-smoking rules.

### **2. Filing & Storage**

- 2.1 Load bottom drawers of filing cabinets with the heaviest materials to ensure stability. Only open one drawer at a time.
- 2.2 Ensure files, books etc. are stacked on shelves and in cupboards correctly and safely.
- 2.3 Heavy items must **NEVER** be stored above waist height.

### **3. Protective Clothing and Equipment**

- 3.1 Items of protective equipment/clothing provided, must be used/worn and cleaned as instructed.
- 3.2 Do not misuse or wilfully damage any item of protective clothing/equipment.
- 3.3 Report any damaged, lost, faulty or unsuitable protective clothing/equipment to the H&S Representative on the Core Group/Project Manager.
- 3.4 When attending to any bodily fluids, always use protective clothing and appropriate disposal methods.

### **4. Equipment/Machinery**

- 4.1 Only trained and authorised users of any type of machinery or equipment can operate that equipment.
- 4.2 Machine guarding and safety features or devices, must be used at all times and in place before work commences.

- 4.3 The operator must fully understand how to start, operate and stop the machinery safely before work commences. (Refer to each machine's safe system of working).
- 4.4 Wear the personal protective equipment provided i.e. eye protection, (goggles), ear protection, gloves etc.
- 4.5 Never leave a running machine unattended and switch it off when it is not in use.
- 4.6 Report immediately any fault, damage, defect or malfunction of any machine, plant, equipment, tools, guards or safety features.
- 4.7 Only authorised personnel are permitted to repair or adjust electrical and mechanical machines, light fittings, plugs, connectors, and power cables.
- 4.8 VDU's should not be used continuously. Break up work patterns with other tasks so you get a regular rest from the VDU.  
(Refer also to section 9, 10 & 17 under the section on Arrangements).
- 4.9 Any electrical work carried out must be signed off by an authorised electrician (legislation January 2005).

## **5. Materials and Hazardous Substances**

- 5.1 Use all substances, chemicals, flammable liquids, pressurised gases (including aerosols) etc. in accordance with the written and verbal instructions provided. (Refer also to Section 11 under Arrangements.)
- 5.2 When using hazardous substances consult any COSHH Assessment Data Sheets. After use always return substances/materials to their designated safe storage area.
- 5.3 Waste paper baskets must be used for scrap paper waste only.
- 5.4 Broken glass, batteries, aerosols, cans etc., should be placed in a separate container and clearly labelled.

## **6. Personal Safety & Security**

- 6.1 It is a legal obligation, of all employees, to take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves or to others who may be affected by their work.
- 6.2 Refrain from unintentional or reckless interference with anything provided in the interest of Health & Safety.
- 6.3 Be aware of, and conform to, the correct emergency actions to be taken in the event of a fire or emergency situation.
- 6.4 Report to the Project Manager/H&S Core Group Representative any medical condition, or the taking of prescribed medicines, that could affect your safety or that of others.
- 6.5 All employees, volunteers and clients are required to sign on and off the daily attendance register.
- 6.6 Before leaving your office, lock away any important papers and secure, or shut down, your computer. Close all windows, blinds or curtains and turn off any machinery.
- 6.7 Refer also to section 15, & 18 under Arrangements.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY RULES - MISCONDUCT**

Any employee will be subject to disciplinary measures if found to have acted in the following way/s:

- 1.1 Any serious or wilful breach of the Health & Safety Rules.
- 1.2 Unauthorised removal or interference with any safety guard or protective device.
- 1.3 Wilful damage to, misuse or interference with any item provided in the interests of Health, Safety and Welfare at Work.
- 1.4 Misuse of fuels, chemicals, flammable materials, pressurised gases, hazardous substances or toxic materials.
- 1.5 Smoking whilst handling, or in close proximity of, flammable substances, or where smoking is prohibited.
- 1.6 Practical jokes or horseplay, which could cause accidents to persons or equipment.
- 1.7 Making false statements, or in any way deliberately interfering with evidence, following an accident or any dangerous occurrence.
- 1.8 Working under the influence of alcohol, drug or solvent abuse.

**This list is not exhaustive**

## **HEALTH & SAFETY RULES - VISITORS/CONTRACTORS ON PREMISES**

It is the responsibility of Hitchin Community Gardens to ensure that all visitors, clients, (users) and contractors are aware of, and comply with, the organisation's Health & Safety procedures whilst on Hitchin Community Gardens' premises, and before any work commences.

**1. Fire & Emergency Procedures**

All visitors/contractors must follow the fire procedures displayed on the premises.

**2. Personal Protection**

Protective clothing must be worn when provided by Hitchin Community Gardens.

**3. Accidents**

All accidents and/or injuries must be reported to the H&S Representative on the Core Group, or the Project Manager and details recorded in the Accident Book.

Any immediate attention will be given on site by the First Aider/Appointed person, who will arrange emergency services if required.

In the event of a First Aider not being immediately available, the emergency services should be called if there is any possible risk to life or limb.

**4. Smoking**

Please adhere to any "No Smoking " regulations.

**5. Security**

Parked vehicles must not obstruct fire exit routes, road access or other vehicles  
Nothing must be removed from the premises without prior permission. Hitchin Community Gardens reserves the right to request to search visitor's bags, packages and vehicles.

**6. Insurance**

Contractors must not work on the premises unless covered by insurance against risk.

## **MONITORING PROCEDURES**

The following should be used by both the H&S Representative on the Core Group and Project Managers as an initial and ongoing checklist of questions which will ensure that ongoing monitoring takes place and that the necessary action is identified and taken.

<b><u>Policy Manual &amp; Policy Statement</u></b>	Copy of the H & S Policy & Statement displayed so that all employees have access to it?	Policy Statement signed by Chair of the Core Group?	Regular reviews of the Policy (at least annually)?	Regular Health & Safety Meetings held and minutes taken?
<b><u>Health &amp; Safety Responsibilities</u></b>	Have responsibilities been delegated to named individuals?	Do they understand responsibilities and the standards of performance required?	Have they received necessary training and instruction for them to carry out their responsibilities?	Have any training needs identified been arranged?
<b><u>Premises</u></b>	Regular inspections of the premises to ensure Health & Safety procedures are being complied with?	All machinery/ equipment is safe to use?	Premises are kept in a clean and tidy manner?	
<b><u>Legal Requirements</u></b>	Is Hitchin Community Gardens complying with the statutory requirements of all relevant legislation and Approved Codes of Practice?	Any changes in legal requirements that require implementation?		
<b><u>Health &amp; Safety Rules</u></b>	Have all employees and trainees received or seen copies of the Safety Rules & Regulations?	Are they aware of the consequences of any breach of these rules?	Any additional rules needed for extra, or new activities not covered?	
<b><u>Visitors/Contractors Rules</u></b>	Are these predominantly displayed?			
<b><u>Training</u></b>	Have all areas for Health & Safety training been identified?	Training programme been drawn up and carried out?	Induction Training cover Health & Safety?	

## Hitchin Community Gardens Health and Safety Policy

<b><u>Fire Procedures</u></b>	Fire Procedures displayed?	Fire drills & emergency evacuations conducted at least 6 monthly?	All familiar with procedures & their responsibilities?	Fire alarm tested regularly (approx once a month)?			
<b><u>Risk Assessments</u></b>	Reviewed & updated?	Fire Risk Assessment?	All preventative & protective measures identified been implemented?	Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) carried out regularly?	Display Screen Assessments for new employees?	Display Screen Assessments reviewed for existing staff & volunteers?	COSHH assessment carried out & reviewed to include new substances?
<b><u>Machinery</u></b>	Programme of regular & preventative maintenance?	All machines checked regularly & any faults reported?	Only trained & authorised personnel use machinery?	Adequate training provided?	Necessary guards, safety devices & measures in place?	Equipment provided suitable for job involved?	Appropriate PPE provided?
<b><u>Machinery continued</u></b>	Programme of regular & preventative maintenance?	All machines checked regularly & any faults reported?	Only trained & authorised personnel use machinery?	Adequate training provided?	Necessary guards, safety devices & measures in place?	Equipment provided suitable for job involved?	Appropriate PPE provided?
<b><u>Machinery continued</u></b>	No Smoking rule adhered to?	Copy of machines manual with machine?	Copy of machines manual held in office?	Labels if equipment requires attention or repair?			
<b><u>Accident Reporting Procedures</u></b>	All accidents, injuries and near misses recorded in Accident book?	Monthly report (inc Nil) submitted to H&S Core Group Rep?	Causes of accidents / incidents being investigated?	Appropriate actions being taken so they do not recur?	Reportable injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences covered by RIDDOR?	Are these being recorded and reported to the Enforcing Authority?	Are these being immediately reported to Support Services?
<b><u>First Aid Arrangements</u></b>	Copies of First Aid arrangements posted on notice boards?	Is this up to date?	First Aider/ Appointed Person holds a current certificate?	When are they due for re-training?	First Aid box being regularly checked & restocked?	Are you sure that existing & prospective employees are medically fit for the task involved?	
<b><u>Consultation</u></b>	Are employees consulted on matters relating to Health & Safety at Work?	Is enough information provided for employees to understand the issues involved?					

## **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

- **GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENTS**
- **SITE RISK ASSESSMENTS**
- **ACTIVITY RISK ASSESSMENTS**
- **COSHH ASSESSMENTS**
- **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS**

**THESE ASSESSMENTS ARE COVERED IN SEPARATE DOCUMENTS, WHICH CAN BE FOUND IN THE HEALTH & SAFETY FILE.**

**PERSONAL RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR THOSE WITH SUPPORT NEEDS ARE HELD IN THEIR PERSONAL FILES.**