LONDON BOROUGH of MERTON

Annual Health and Safety Report 2016

Produced by Corporate Safety Services
Contents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Policy and organisation arrangements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Legislation update</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Planning and implementation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Raising awareness</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Proportionate risk assessment</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Health and safety committees</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Performance statistics</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
To go directly to the page, hover over the title and press Control + Click.
1. Introduction

As a public body, the London Borough of Merton must lead by example. The HSE continue to hold local authorities to account on this basis and expect councils to put in place robust arrangements for managing the health, safety and welfare of staff and others who come into contact with the authority as part of the Council’s business.

To help the Council fulfil this requirement the Head of Safety Services leads a team of professionals to provide a statutory Health and Safety service to all employees of the London Borough of Merton as required by duties imposed on employers under the Health and Safety At Work Etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations 1999.

In line with good practice and industry standards, Merton’s strategy reflects the work of the Health and Safety Executive who’s principals are to ensure that those who create risks take responsibility for managing those risks.

In following these principals we will ensure that moving forward our systems reflect the HSE in that actions should be proportionate to the risks that need to be managed, and that they are tailored to the areas of the business where risks are generated, the work undertaken and the people who work there.

In achieving this, Safety Services will work with departmental management teams in identifying and developing suitable systems and procedures in compliance with their duties under the legislation. Our methodology uses the principals of HSE guidance HSG 65, Managing for health and safety. The key principals are Plan, Do, Act, Check. These principals underpin the council’s safety management system and operational arrangements as detailed in the Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.

2. Policy and organisation arrangements

The London Borough of Merton is committed to providing its employees with safe conditions of work as far as is reasonable practicable and has structured arrangements in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and others who may be affected by our activities. Our aim is to minimise the adverse impacts to individuals and the business from ill health and injury.
Making it Happen

The fundamentals of safety management remain at the core of what we do:

- Strong and visible leadership
- Collaboration and partnerships, including worker engagement

This is achieved by ensuring that;

- Professional health and safety arrangements are adequately resourced to meet the needs of the organisation
- CMT routinely accepts and acts on health and safety advice
- Risk assessments are carried out for all relevant areas under their control

Departmental Management Teams (DMT) considers the health and safety as an agenda item.

- Actions arising out of Health and safety inspections and audits are acted on in a timely manner
- Line managers are fulfilling their roles in implementing health and safety
- Employees or their representatives are involved in decisions that affect their health and safety.

- Horizon scanning to ensure that effective risk management is designed in to our current and future business models
- Both CMT & DMT decisions are made in the context of the organisation’s health and safety policy and recognise the importance of ‘designing-in’ health and safety when implementing change.
Visible leadership — DMT members can reinforce health and safety policy by being seen on the 'shop floor', following all safety measures themselves and addressing any breaches effectively and efficiently.

Having robust procurement standards in place for purchasing goods, equipment and services that recognises health and safety in operation.

Ensuring that key issues are addressed at risk management committee level, whilst ensuring that effort is not being wasted on trivial risks and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Assessing the health and safety arrangements of partners, key suppliers and contractors, as their performance could adversely affect the organisation.

Supporting worker involvement in health and safety, above our legal duty to consult worker representatives, can improve participation and help prove commitment from all.

Considering health and safety when deciding senior management appointments.

Promoting healthy workplace initiatives to encourage and create health working environments, help reduce sickness absence and improve employee wellbeing.
Corporate Health, Safety & Welfare Policy

Corporate Safety Services produces and reviews the Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Policy annually. The process of revision considers any changes to legislation, organisation and or good practice and is formally consulted on via the trade unions and management.

The policy is published on the intranet and the Merton website and there is an expectation that all managers will consider and communicate the contents of the corporate to staff directly and through the production of their own procedures and arrangements for the safety of staff.

All Policies, advice and guidance are now available on the Merton intranet and the Merton website making it accessible to all who need it.

Health and Safety information (Intranet)
Health and Safety Information (web pages)

Planned policy work for 16-17 includes:


- A revision of the Managing Violence at Work Policy

Key work streams

Acting together will be a key to our success into the future, as Merton works towards 2020 and its aspiration to be London’s best Council, we will need to work together with managers and partners to achieve common goals and building on the success of previous years. In simplifying our processes and collaborating on work streams we will ensure that Merton does not overburden managers with complex safety management processes and procedures. We will work with them to ensure they are proportionate and appropriate.

The results of this will be a wider ownership of issues that foster a culture of good safety management and proportionate risk assessment.

Working with managers through DMT our discussions will include the implications of introducing;

- New or revised processes
- New working practices and procedures
- New personnel
- Closer working with other Local Authorities, partners and other organisations
3. Legislation Update and significant changes for 2016/17

On the 6th April 2015 changes to the CDM (Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015) were introduced. There are three key changes in the legislation to be aware of:

**Principal Designer**, This replaces the CDM Coordinator role. This means that the responsibility for the pre-construction phase will now rest with an appointed member of the design team. This person must be appointed by the client.

**Client**, the new regulations recognise the influence and importance of the client as the head of the supply chain and that they are best placed to set the standards required throughout the project. This includes making sure that other duty holders are appointed, sufficient time and resources are allocated, that the principal contractor and principal designer carry out their duties and that welfare facilities are provided.

**Competence**, this will be split into the component parts of skills, knowledge, training, experience and organisational capacity. The client is responsible for ensuring that they engage suitably competent persons to fulfil the roles and duties under CDM.

4. Planning and implementation

The health and safety work plan is based on a framework for health and safety management across the organisation. The strategy is based on a combination of audit and inspection alongside risk management and implementation of best practice / industry standard management controls. This is in line with the Health and Safety Executives strategy of “Plan, Do Act, and Check”.

These work streams are managed as part of our routine day to day health and safety management activities.

A breakdown of areas of work includes:

- Audit and inspection of all Merton owned, managed or maintained premises
- Audit and inspection of management controls
- Provision of advice and guidance to managers and staff
- Development and implementation of policies, procedures and guidance to aid managers in compliance of health and safety
- Management and oversight of accident and incident reporting and investigation.
- Asbestos management including management reviews and actions.
Accident reporting system

Safety Services has worked with the Business Improvement team to develop and implement a new council online accident and incident reporting system. The original system had been in place since 2003 and was no longer fit for purpose. All new reports are completed via an E-form which is available on the Merton Internet page and this means it is now accessible to all council employees including schools and other locations outside of the Civic centre.

Advice and Support

In compliance with the Health and Safety At Work Etc Act 1974, and corresponding legislation, the Council employs Safety professionals to act as competent lead on all matters of health safety and welfare across the council. Safety Services act under the authority of the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Services as detailed within the Corporate Safety Policy.

5. Raising Awareness and Promoting a Positive Health & Safety Culture

The Safety section continues to promote safety awareness, highlight relevant health & safety issues and advice on any amended policies, which has health & safety implications throughout the authority. The section responds to managers and staff safety concerns and provides specialist advice to the organisation by working with them to resolve issues and improve safety management.

Raising health and safety awareness within the organisation will enable managers to consider the risks and produce effective controls to improve safety management and drive forward a positive safety culture and reduced instances of injury and ill health. The safety services team maintains professional standards through individual and corporate membership of professional organisations such as the Institute of Occupational Health (IOSH) the British Safety Council and The International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM). Initiatives and information gained through this route is discussed and built into work plans and passed on to managers and staff directly.

Healthy Workplace

Over the last year the Safety Services team has been working closely with the Director of Public Health and health colleagues to introduce a health workplace scheme for Merton. This is based on the London Healthy Workplace Charter that has been introduced by the Mayor of London and Merton has signed up to this charter to with a view to improving the health of our employees using evidence based initiatives and schemes across eight domains. These domains are; corporate support for wellbeing, attendance management, health & safety management, mental health and wellbeing,
tobacco, physical activity, healthy eating and problematic use of alcohol and other substances. Initial successes of the programme includes the recognition by the GLA’s Health Workplace Charter at commitment level, the Step Jockey programme which encourages staff to use the stairs as an alternative to using the lifts during the lift refurbishment program. During the second Step Jockey challenge staff burned 81,283 calories from taking the stairs. The other health challenge has been to include controlling the use of E-cigarettes as part of the revised corporate smoking policy.

6. Proportionate risk assessment

The formal process for the review of health and safety performance exists across the organisation and is a crucial element of a robust safety management system. It allows the management teams to establish whether the essential health and safety principles are working within the departments.

The Safety Services team undertakes health and safety audits of all Merton owned, managed or maintained properties. The audits follow a recognised process to get under the skin of the property or service and provide an in depth look at the management of that part of the organisation. In each case a report is generated and along with general information and advice the responsible manager will receive a list of actions that are prioritised with recommendation as to how to deal with that action.

Actions are split into three categories;

| Priority A | To be completed within 4 weeks | • Where a failure to meet or achieve the required standard or level of compliance results in a breach of statutory duty giving rise to an immediate threat to people, property or process  
| Priority B | To be completed within 8 weeks | • Where there exists an unacceptable level of risk if remedial action is not taken  
<p>| Priority B | To be completed within 8 weeks | • Where a failure to meet or achieve the required standard or level of compliance will result in a breach of statutory duty giving rise to an imminent threat to people, property or process if action is not taken within the eight week completion period |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority C</th>
<th><strong>To be completed within 12 weeks</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|           | • Where the level of risk will become unacceptable if remedial action is not taken within the eight week completion period  
|           | • Where there has been a failure to complete any item previously assigned as Priority C.  
|           | • Where a failure to meet or achieve the required standard or level of compliance will result in a breach of statutory duty if action is not taken within the twelve week completion period  
|           | • Where the level of risk will become unacceptable if remedial action is not taken within the twelve week completion period  
|           | • Any defect identified at the time of the inspection that does not fall into the Priority A or B category. |

In order to promote health and safety and to ensure that the most serious actions are dealt with in required timescales, Priority “A” actions are monitored and reported to Corporate Management Team on a monthly basis as a key performance indicator.

**Issues of note arising from the 2015-16 audits:**

Whilst there has been a big improvement in the timescales for completing the priority actions that are issued as part of the audit programme, we now need to focus attention on why the actions are raised in the first place. It is our aim to work with the managers of premises and the support services of the council to reduce the number of priority actions produced by tackling at source the underlying cause of the action.

An example of where this has begun is in CS&F Early Years children Centres. Having completed the planned audits of all the centres we recognised a common theme around policy and management of arrangements across the localities. After discussion with the management team, Safety Services is helping them to implement a common policy document and tables of arrangements that clearly define what is required, who will do it and where the documents are held for each centre. The aim of this piece of work will be to eliminate future priority actions as all sites will operate common procedures and will have a clearly defined and documented arrangement for managing their day to day operation of children centres.
We aim to adopt this strategy with other groups and use this as a model for reducing the number of priority actions in the future.

**Premises inspected 2015/16**

Safety Services aims to inspect 60 premises per annum based on a rolling 18-24 month cycle. This year, due to staff leaving and difficulty in recruiting a suitable replacement we have not been able to inspect as many properties as usual. This year the total number of properties inspected was 40.

Inspections are planned several months in advance and premises managers are sent questionnaires prior to each visit for them to provide detail on compliance and an opportunity for the inspecting officer to consider documentary evidence of safety management prior to the physical inspection. Post visit the premises manager will receive a comprehensive report and action plan detailing any work to be done along with the timescales to achieve it. All actions are agreed with the manager on the day.

**PREMISES INSPECTED 2015-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Premises Type</th>
<th>Number of Inspections</th>
<th>Average no. of Priority A actions</th>
<th>Total no. of Priority A actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cemeteries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children's Centres</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Centres</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Care Homes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Centres</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Centres</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Buildings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registry Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing Base</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste Site</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
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7. Health and Safety Committees

Merton’s Corporate Health & Safety Committee meets on a quarterly basis and is well attended.

The Corporate Safety committee is a consultative forum of trade union representatives and representatives from all directorates, which discusses safety related issues pertaining to Merton’s undertakings. Various issues are discussed, such as: Accident Analysis, violence to staff, progress on safety audits, policies, staff training, forthcoming legislation and welfare concerns etc. The committee is also there to receive reports from representatives from sub committees on matters which have not been resolved and require higher level intervention.

Children Schools & Families and Community and Housing have 2 arenas, in which the safety section attends,

- A joint directorate ‘Health & safety forum’
- Individual directorate departmental consultative committee (DCCs).

Specific departmental health & safety issues are discussed at these meetings. The safety section produces interim accident figures for all departments at these areas.

The safety section attends the education forum, teacher’s consultative negotiation forum (TCNF) in which specific health & safety issues are discussed relevant to schools.

There is also a DCC for Corporate Services including the Chief Exec.
Environment and Regeneration Management Team hold a regular site safety forum for the Garth Road transport, Waste Services and associated depots. The forum is regularly attended by management and employees safety representatives together with a member of the safety section. Specific health & safety issues are discussed relevant to these areas of operation which are fed up to the E&R DCC.

The safety section also attends the DCC for Environment and Regeneration every quarter and produces interim accident reports for the whole of the directorate with a breakdown of all departments.

8. Performance statistics

The following statistics provide a high level view of accident reporting across the council and departments. Safety Services publish quarterly reports on a detailed level on the intranet and council website, see links below or contact Safety Services on 0208 545 3384 for information;

Health and Safety information (Intranet)
Health and Safety Information (web pages)
In summary there has been an increase in reported accidents in most areas over the last twelve month period. This is potentially due to the improved access to the online accident reporting system that was introduced in September 2015. Safety Services will be monitoring accident reporting to consider any specific trends that may indicate changes in risk management which might need to be addressed.
Where trends are identified (up or down) this information will be reported to the relevant managers, Directors and consultative committees along with the recommended remedial actions.

END