

The Highland Council

**Health and Safety**

**POLICY ON HOT WATER MANAGEMENT**

**1. POLICY REFERENCE**

- 1.1 This policy document refers to the following aims and objectives outlined in the Council's general statement of Health and Safety policy.
- a) Arrangements for ensuring so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the management and use of installed hot water systems, equipment and plant.
  - b) The provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, *so far as is reasonably practicable*, the health and safety at work of employees.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 **Duty of Care:** Health and safety legislation places responsibility for meeting safety requirements on those that own or manage a site or property. The owner or manager has a "duty of care" to ensure that his property or area of responsibility is safe for those who use it and for those who work in or visit the property. If this "duty of care" is not properly managed and discharged with respect to hot water and its associated installations this can:
- a) Allow the development of Legionella bacteria, resulting in the potentially fatal type of pneumonia called Legionnaires disease.
  - b) Create the potential for injury and death through scalding.
  - c) Create the potential for injury and death through burns sustained by contact with high temperature surfaces.
- All of the above listed problems may manifest themselves individually or collectively within a site or property and any arrangements implemented must ensure that all problems prevalent are adequately addressed.

**3. ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 The Highland Council will take all reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of employees and those other persons affected by their work activities who are exposed to *hot water*, and associated installations. In particular, arrangements will be made to:
- a) Ensure adequate risk control arrangements are established and implemented by delegating responsibilities through Service line management.
  - b) Ensure that all activities or services delivered by the authority with the potential to cause harm to an employee or other persons as a result of the use or exposure to hot water or hot surfaces, are subjected to systematic risk assessment with appropriate control measures implemented.
  - c) Ensure that there is a demonstrated and linked process involving design, maintenance, servicing and premises management.

- d) Ensure that engineering control measures are in place, properly maintained and monitored to ensure their continued effectiveness.
- e) Inform all employees and others who may work in affected areas of the safe operation of all engineering controls.
- f) Ensure that there are “Safe Systems of Work” introduced to ensure that residual risks are minimised and adequately managed.
- g) Arrange for employees to be provided with appropriate information and training regarding the safe systems of work to be employed.
- h) Ensure that appropriate surveillance and monitoring of associated incidents and actions taken are provided and used in future system and procedure improvements.

#### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 The Chief Executive shall be responsible for carrying out his obligations as contained within Section 1.2 of The Highland Council’s Health and Safety Policy as it relates to Hot Water Management.

4.2 Service Directors shall be responsible for ensuring that:

Adequate resources are made available to enable the objectives of the policy to be met by establishing and maintaining a Hot Water / Hot Surface Management System appropriate to their Service needs, and

- a) They have undertaken suitable and sufficient Risk Assessments within the properties where they have employees or where they are responsible for performing a delegated Highland Council function.
- b) They have established a process for evaluating, prioritising and financing any works that require to be undertaken in regard to the elimination, reduction or management of identified risks, in consultation with colleagues in Property and Architectural Services and the corporate Health and Safety Team.
- c) They have established a system and procedure for the adequate management of residual or existing risks.
- d) All of delegated responsibilities can be met in an evidenced and structured manner.
- e) That all incidents or accidents concerning *hot water* are properly reported and investigated with suitable preventative measures implemented.

4.3 Director of Corporate Services shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- a) The corporate Health and Safety Team meet with client representatives on a regular basis to review and provide advice in the carrying out of risk assessments.
- b) The corporate Health and Safety Team carry out regular inspections on the premises to ensure that the agreed management systems and procedures are adequate and are being implemented.
- c) The corporate Health and Safety Team provide periodic reports to client services and others on the findings and recommendations of their inspections.

4.4 Area Managers shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- a) This corporate policy, and any relevant Service policies, for the management of risks from hot water or hot surfaces are monitored and implemented.

4.5 Director of Property and Architectural Services shall be responsible for ensuring that:

- a) All contract and engineering works shall be undertaken in accordance with best practice and in a manner that eliminates, reduces or controls identified risks.
- b) Property staff meet with client representatives on a regular basis to assist in the provision of property advice or related matters for use when carrying out risk assessments.
- c) Property staff carry out regular recorded inspections to ensure that any works to hot water systems which are undertaken are satisfactorily and that installations are performing to required standards.
- d) Property staff compile and manage an “outstanding” works list and ensure that client representatives are made fully aware of the issues and the manner by which residual or existing risks can be managed.

## **5. INFORMATION AND TRAINING**

5.1 The Council will give sufficient information, instruction and training to ensure full understanding of the hazards to health posed by Hot Water in the workplace, and the importance of the management and control measures provided. Information will also be given to others who may be affected, such as contractors, temporary staff, residents, users of the facilities and visitors.

5.2 Arrangements will be made to ensure that sufficient numbers of staff are adequately trained to implement the hot water / hot surface management system.

## **6. GUIDANCE**

6.1 To assist in the implementation of this policy, guidance in respect of the following will be issued:

- a) Legal requirements
- b) Identification of hazard types and locations (water temp checks)
- c) The risk assessment process
- d) Managing and monitoring of the built installation(s)
- e) Recommended Risk Control Measures
- f) Training of risk assessors

## **7. LEGAL REFERENCE**

7.1 This policy and associated guidance outline the provisions the Council will make to discharge its duties in relation to the following statutory obligations:

- a) The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 – the duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use of hot water installations and their associated issues.
- b) The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999,
- c) Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Regulations and Approved Code of Practise L8 ‘Legionnaires’ disease – The control of legionella bacteria in water systems’
- d) Health and Safety in Care Homes HSG220 by HSE
- e) ‘Safe’ hot water and surface temperatures by NHS Estates

## **8. REVIEW**

8.1 This policy and associated guidance shall be reviewed at an interval to correspond with the reviews of the The Highland Council’s Health and Safety Policy, every year, or when any personnel, management or Service responsibilities are altered or changed within the Highland Council and which amend the contents of this policy document.