

# **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**

## **1. General Statement**

1.1 The Valuation Tribunal Service (VTS) recognises and accepts the statutory responsibility to take all reasonable steps to:

1.1.1 Provide a safe and healthy workplace and environment for employees at places of work under the VTS' control and elsewhere when performing their duties.

1.1.2 Protect Valuation Tribunal Members and other persons who are lawfully on VTS premises against risk to their health or safety, which might arise out of activities in those places.

1.2 The VTS will take all reasonable steps to meet this responsibility, paying particular attention to the provision and maintenance of:

1.2.1 Equipment and systems of work that are safe.

1.2.2 Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.

1.2.3 Sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health at work.

1.2.4 A safe place of work, and safe access to it.

1.2.5 A healthy working environment.

1.2.6 Adequate welfare facilities.

1.3 To assist the VTS in meeting its statutory responsibility, each Regional Manager shall appoint a Health and Safety Officer who will, in consultation with the Regional Manager, ensure that reasonable steps are taken in providing a safe and healthy workplace and environment in VTS offices.

1.4 The VTS has established a Health and Safety Committee with the responsibility to determine health and safety policies necessary for the VTS to discharge its legal obligations.

1.5 The VTS Health and Safety Committee will comprise all appointed Health and Safety Officers and the Corporate Director.

## **2. Responsibility for the health and safety policy**

2.1 It is the responsibility of the Regional Manager to ensure that the VTS policy is implemented throughout the administrative region. The appointed Health and Safety Officer shall:

2.1.1 Ensure that risks to health and safety are assessed.

2.1.2 Ensure that arrangements are made to implement the health and safety measures identified as being necessary by the risk assessment.

2.1.3 Ensure that the significant findings of the risk assessment are recorded.

2.1.4 Ensure that the arrangements for health and safety measures are recorded.

2.1.5 Consult with staff, or their representatives, and the employer regarding the implementation of and changes to health and safety measures.

2.1.6 Co-operate on health and safety with the Employer, the Landlord of the building and any other occupiers within the building.

2.1.7 Implement emergency procedures and ensure such procedures are displayed in public areas.

2.1.8 Ensure that adequate first-aid facilities are provided.

2.1.9 Ensure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and welfare requirements in relation to matters such as ventilation, temperature and lighting, and sanitary and washing facilities.

2.1.10 Prevent or adequately control exposure to substances that may damage health.

2.1.11 Take precautions against dangers from flammable or explosive hazards, electrical equipment noise and radiation.

2.1.12 Minimise the risk of injury from hazardous manual handling operations.

2.1.13 Provide appropriate health surveillance, for example, eye tests in relation to computer use.

2.1.14 Provide free protective clothing or equipment if risks are not controlled adequately by other means.

2.1.15 Ensure that appropriate safety signs are provided and maintained.

2.1.16 Ensure that all legal requirements are met in relation to health and safety, for example, the reporting of certain injuries and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority.

### **3. Responsibilities of employees**

3.1 Nothing in the previous section detracts from the legal responsibilities of employees in relation to health and safety. Principally these are:

3.1.1 To take reasonable care for their own health and safety.

3.1.2 To take reasonable care for the health and safety of others who may be affected by what the employee does or does not do.

3.1.3 To co-operate with the Employer on health and safety.

3.1.4 To use equipment and other work items correctly, in accordance with training or instruction.

3.1.5 Not to interfere with or misuse anything provided for their health, safety or welfare.

3.1.6 To report unsafe acts or conditions that would show a shortcoming in health and safety management systems.

### **4. Fire Precautions and Procedures**

4.1 The Health and Safety Officer will ensure the appointment of a minimum of two Fire Officers within each office who shall be responsible for the safe evacuation of the workplace.

4.2 Fire/evacuation procedures for the relevant office must be displayed in areas accessible to the public areas and in the General Office, identifying the names of Fire Officers.

4.3 The Health and Safety Officer will ensure, (*in conjunction with the Landlord*), that fire drills are carried out at least annually and that a log is kept as a record.

4.4 The Health and Safety Officer will ensure, in consultation with the VTS Estate Manager, that adequate and appropriate fire fighting equipment is provided. The VTS Estate Manager will ensure that a person adequately qualified for this purpose checks this equipment at least annually.

4.5 The Fire Officers will ensure that fire exits are marked, unlocked and free from obstruction. A Fire Officer will check exits at least weekly.

4.6 The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for making all new employees aware of the fire procedures, and for making all staff aware of any changes to the procedures.

### **5. First Aid**

5.1 The Health and Safety Officer will ensure that there are a minimum of two First Aid Officers in each office, and who in the event of illness or injury will take

control of the situation and, if appropriate, call for assistance from the Emergency Services.

5.2 First Aid Officers are responsible for maintaining a properly equipped first aid box. A notice stating where the first aid box is kept and the names of First Aid Officers must be displayed prominently in public areas.

5.3 The Health and Safety Officer is responsible for making all new employees aware of the first aid arrangements, and for making all staff aware of any changes to the arrangements.

## **6. Office Equipment & Machinery**

6.1 The Health and Safety Officer will ensure that all office equipment and machinery is suitable for its purpose and is maintained in good working order. The VTS Estate Manager will make arrangements for all electrical equipment to be checked for safety at least annually (Portable Appliance Testing). The IT Manager will take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of data cables.

6.2 The Health and Safety Officer will keep such records and make them readily available for inspection whenever required.

## **7. Recording & Reporting of Accidents/Incidents**

7.1 All accidents and other dangerous incidents must be reported in the first instance to the First Aid Officers, who will ensure that:

7.1.1 First aid is immediately provided.

7.1.2 Any possibility of future danger occurring from the same incident is immediately removed.

7.1.3 The incident is clearly logged in the "Accident Book".

7.1.4 The incident is reported as soon as reasonably practicable to the Health and Safety Representative, or in his absence the Regional Manager.

7.2 Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) there is a requirement to report to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) accidents that lead to:

7.2.1 Death if it is from an accident relating to work.

7.2.2 Major injuries (this will include people not at work if the injuries result from an accident connected with work).

7.2.3 Dangerous occurrences (an accident includes a non-consensual act of physical violence to a person at work).

7.2.4 Certain non-work related diseases.

7.2.5 Incidents relating to gas.

7.2.6 Accidents causing more than three days' incapacity for work:

7.2.6.1 These accidents must be reported to the HSE, within 10 days of the accident happening (14 days for gas incidents).

7.2.6.2 **Annexe A** provides a Health and Safety Accident Reporting Flow Chart.

7.2.6.3 The reporting officer to the HSE is the appointed Health and Safety Officer, in his/her absence the Regional Manager.

## **8. Training**

8.1 The VTS will ensure that the Health and Safety Officer is conversant with all relevant aspects of health and safety.

8.2 The Health and Safety Officer (in consultation with the Regional Manager and VTS Training Manager) will ensure that all new members of staff are trained on health and safety issues.

8.3 The Health and Safety Officer will ensure that staff receive appropriate training when new equipment is introduced into the office and maintain a log of when the training was provided and to whom.

## **9. Monitoring**

9.1 The Health and Safety Officer will monitor all aspects of this policy by carrying out annual risk assessments in consultation with the VTS Health and Safety Committee.

## **10. Consultation**

10.1 The Health and Safety Officer will consult and train employees on matters of health and safety, including:

10.1.1 Changes in practices, procedures or equipment/technology that may substantially affect health and safety.

10.1.2 Arrangements for ensuring that competent people help the tribunals satisfy health and safety laws.

10.1.3 Information to be given on the likely risks and dangers associated with work activities and the measures to reduce or eliminate these risks.

10.1.4 Advice to be given on how to deal with risks or dangers that are encountered.

10.1.5 The planning of health and safety.

## **11. Distribution of Policy**

11.1 The Health and Safety Officer shall ensure that:

11.1.1 Each member of staff is provided with a copy of this policy statement.

11.1.2 New members of staff receive a copy of the statement as part of the induction procedure.

11.1.3 Any revision of the statement will be notified to all members of staff.

## **12. Audit**

12.1 Health and Safety audits will take place as part of the VTS' commitment to health and safety.

12.2 The VTS Health and Safety Committee will consider audit recommendations and monitor action plans.

**LJF Barnes**  
**Chief Executive**

**9 June 2006**



**Annexe A**

**Health and Safety Reporting Flow Chart**

