

# Maintaining Health and Safety

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## Key messages

The main objective of this policy is to:

- Describe the arrangements for maintaining health and safety within the ICO.
- Ensure that the ICO is compliant with relevant health and safety legislation with regard to the information, training and guidance provided to staff.
- Provide an overview of general health and safety rules to be observed in ICO workplaces.

## Does this policy relate to me?

This policy applies to all ICO staff, and users of ICO buildings including visitors, agency staff, consultants and contractors.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The work environments in ICO offices are low risk, but still require effective management to ensure that they remain that way and provide people with safe places to work and visit.
- 1.2. This document describes the items that will be displayed in ICO offices, the training available for staff and the general rules/guidelines for using our offices safely.

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## 2. Items for display

- 2.1 The following items must be displayed in each of our offices:
  - i) The Health and Safety Law poster as published by the Health and Safety Executive. This poster will be completed with the names and roles of staff with specific health and safety responsibilities.
  - ii) The ICO's Health and Safety Statement of Intent
- 2.2 Details of how to contact First Aiders in the office will be accessible on the intranet.
- 2.3 Health and safety documents and information will be available on the intranet, and information from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will be published in Sharepoint.

## 3. Safety checks, record keeping

- 3.1. The Facilities Manager and Health & Safety Manager will conduct regular inspections at Wilmslow offices to ensure compliance with statutory requirements, identify hazards and to resolve issues. Records will be kept of relevant inspections, risk assessments, accidents and near misses.

The London office will be inspected each month by the Facilities team member based there.

Arrangements at other capital city offices will vary depending on the control of the premises. The Facilities and Health & Safety teams will conduct checks at them at least quarterly, or liaise with local management to do so.

- 3.2 Whilst health and safety checks will help to prevent issues arising, problems can occur at any time. Everyone has a responsibility to report hazards to the Facilities team if they notice them.
- 3.3 Managers have a responsibility to ensure that members of their team work safely and do not behave in a way that could cause hazards for others, for example through poor housekeeping or misusing equipment.

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## 4. Induction and training

- 4.1 All new staff will be required to complete an on-line Health and Safety training induction. All staff will be required to re-complete this training every three years.
- 4.2 Line Managers are responsible for ensuring that the team or departmental inductions cover the health and safety arrangements for their area of the office, for example the location of emergency exits and first aid facilities. If a team member requires a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), managers must liaise with the Health & Safety Manager and the Inclusion and Wellbeing Team.
- 4.3 Staff will also be provided with guidance and information to help them to work safely. This may be in the form of training courses, information resources, on-line guides and the like.
- 4.4 Role specific training will be provided to staff when necessary, for example manual handling training will be provided for Facilities Team members. Line Managers should liaise with the Health & Safety Manager and Organisational Development and Capability team to determine if any role specific safety training is needed for a job.

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## 5. General Safety Rules

- 5.1 Do not misuse anything supplied in the interest of health and safety, for example firefighting equipment or materials in first aid kits.
- 5.2 Make sure that you are prepared for the work activity that you are going to undertake. This could mean wearing Personal Protective Equipment or appropriate footwear.
- 5.3 Follow all emergency evacuation instructions. Leave buildings immediately by the nearest safe route, and do not use lifts after the fire alarm has sounded. If you will require support to evacuate a building, contact your manager and the Health and Safety Manager to develop a PEEP.

- 5.4 Only use equipment that you have had instructions or training in how to use it. If you use equipment like guillotines or shredders, make sure that guards are in place.
- 5.5 Never attempt to repair equipment that you have not been trained to repair. Be aware that printers and photocopiers have hot surfaces inside that can burn when trying to remove paper jams. Shredders must be turned off at the socket before attempting to clear blockages.
- 5.6 Keep the heaviest items in the lowest drawers of cabinets or on the lowest shelves. This will help to prevent storage from toppling over.
- 5.7 You must report bare or exposed wires on electrical items to the Facilities team. Do not use the equipment until it has been repaired.
- 5.8 Report any slip or trip hazards to Facilities. If you spill liquid, try to soak up as much as you can with paper towels before asking Facilities to complete the clean-up. If you work in an office without a Facilities team member on site, you should soak up what you can and alert colleagues to any remaining hazards.
- 5.9 Do not attempt to carry loads that are too heavy to lift comfortably. [You can view this free manual handling course on YouTube.](#)

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## 6. Housekeeping rules

- 6.1. Keep walkways clear of obstructions. Changes to office layout must only be made following consultation with the Facilities and Estates team to ensure that hazards are not unintentionally created.
- 6.2 It is important to have good management of cables and leads so that they do not create a trip hazard. Cables must not cross walkways unless enclosed in trunking designed for the purpose.
- 6.3 Keep locker and cabinet doors closed after use and remove keys from locks so that they do not protrude and have potential to hurt someone walking by.

- 6.4 Report damaged floor coverings to Facilities as soon as possible.
- 6.5 You must clean up spillages immediately. If spillages happen on the stairs you must inform Facilities immediately.
- 6.6 Ensure that stored items are stored in a safe way, and not stacked in a way that make them difficult to reach or at risk of toppling over.
- 6.7 For working at height, a kick stool or step ladder is needed. You should never stand on a wheeled chair or unstable surface to reach high areas.
- 6.8 Keep fire doors closed during working hours. Locked fire doors must be able to be opened immediately via a push bar or turn latch.

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## 7. Cleaning

- 7.1 Premises will be cleaned regularly. The most frequently used offices cleaned every day, whilst quieter offices will be cleaned at least once a week.
- 7.2 Cleaning activity will be timed to minimise the risk of slips on wet floors or trips on trailing cables. Toilet facilities will be closed off whilst they are being cleaned, and for a short period afterwards in order to allow floors to dry.
- 7.3 The Facilities Manager will manage contracts with cleaning contractors, and will ensure that they have satisfactory safety procedures in place which are adhered to. Safety and environmental considerations will be integral parts of the procurement process for cleaning services.
- 7.4 You should let the Facilities Team know if you feel that the office has not been cleaned satisfactorily and/or may cause a hazard. The Facilities Manager will remedy the issue with the cleaning team.

- 7.5 You are required to keep the workstations you use clean and clear. You should wipe down the desk area at the end of the day, and ensure that you adhere to the ICO's clear desk policy.
- 7.6 A specialist contractor will empty sanitary bins. If you notice an issue with these bins, please inform the Facilities Team.

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## 8. Kitchen areas

- 8.1 You are responsible for ensuring that you keep the kitchen areas and equipment that you use clean and hygienic. This includes keeping fridges and microwaves clean, and wiping up any spills or overflows.
- 8.2 You should either wash any crockery and cutlery that you have used straight after use, or place it in the dishwasher for cleaning at the end of the day.
- 8.3 Fridges will be emptied at the close of business each Friday. Any out of date or spoiled items will be thrown away.

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## 9. Lighting

- 9.1 Adequate lighting will be provided throughout the premises and particularly on staircases.
- 9.2 Additional lighting, such as desk lamps, can be supplied if required and if their provision does not create other hazards such as overloading of sockets.
- 9.3 You must report defective switches, fittings, blown bulbs/tubes or other issues with lighting to the Facilities Team as soon as possible.

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## 10. Heating and ventilation

- 10.1 The minimum recommended temperature for seated or light work is 16°C. Where possible, a temperature of 18° - 21°C will be maintained. If the minimum temperature cannot be achieved due to breakdown of the heating system, temporary heaters may be put in place, or alternative temporary working arrangements implemented.
- 10.2 There is no maximum working temperature described in legislation, but the temperature should be comfortable as possible allowing for external temperatures and individual preferences.
- 10.3 Facilities staff are responsible for setting heating and ventilation controls to ensure that adequate temperatures are met.
- 10.4 You must not obstruct wall heaters with overhanging papers or posters, as this will significantly increase the risk of fire in the building.
- 10.5 Ventilation will be provided either via opening windows, or via a mechanical ventilation system.
- 10.6 Where a mechanical ventilation system is installed to provide a fresh air supply, it will be fitted and maintained by the installer/supplier or a maintenance contractor.

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## 11. Windows and doors

- 11.1 Window cleaning will be carried out by contract cleaners, who will provide a written scheme of safety precautions for their operations at ICO premises. Responsibility for the arrangement of window cleaning will be discussed with the landlords of premises as part of the tenancy agreement.
- 11.2 Transparent surfaces such as glass doors or large glazed partitions/panels will have markings that make them apparent. Doors on thoroughfares will have vision panels included, so that people can be seen from the other side.

11.3 Any faults with windows or doors must be reported to Facilities immediately.

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## 12. Floors

12.1 Slips, trips and falls due to poor floor surfaces are easily prevented, but may develop slowly due to wear, repeated minor damage or faulty maintenance.

12.2 Underfoot surface will be provided that are suitable for the environment they are being used in, the work activity being done, and the type and amount of traffic. They will be maintained in good condition and free from damage and unevenness.

12.3 Small changes in the level of walking surfaces, such as slopes, ridges or unevenness will be eliminated where reasonably practical, or be marked or highlighted if elimination is not possible.

12.4 Walkways through work areas must be kept clear, and you must not create trip hazards by placing items like bags in walkway areas.

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## 13. Staircases

13.1 Staircases will be fitted with handrails and have, where appropriate, an anti-slip tread which is kept in good condition.

13.2 Staircases will be well lit, and emergency lighting will be available where needed.

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## 14. Workstations

14.1 Workstations where Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is located should be arranged as described in the Workstation Audit Policy.

14.2 Workstations must be arranged in such a way that minimises the need for trailing cables. Where cables must cross over floor ways

they must be routed under a suitable cable cover which will be highlighted appropriately if necessary.

- 14.3 Disabled colleagues, or those who have particular needs, will have their workstation adapted to accommodate those needs as far as is reasonably practicable following an assessment by a Work Station Assessor, Occupational Health or Access to Work.

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## 15. Storage

- 15.1 Racking and shelving will be of sufficient strength to carry the intended objects or materials. Wherever possible they will be secured to walls, floors, ceilings or other racking, as recommended by the supplier/installer or if recommended by the Facilities and Estates Team.
- 15.2 Materials stored on shelving/racking should be stored safely, for example by making sure that heavy items are as low as reasonably practicable.
- 15.3 Wherever reasonably practicable, the delivery company or Facilities Team should delivery heavy loads to the point of storage.
- 15.4 Trolleys for moving materials around the office will be provided where needed.

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## 16. Welfare Facilities

- 16.1 Sufficient toilets and washbasins/washing facilities will be provided and maintained in a good condition. Hot and cold water will be provided together with soap and towels/hand dryers and sanitary disposal.
- 16.2 An area separate from working areas will be provided for staff to consume food and drink, as well as having a break away from workstations.

16.3 There will be adequate storage for outdoor clothing available in offices.

16.4 A readily accessible supply of drinking water will be provided.

16.5 Facilities for rest and/or expressing milk, will available for expectant and new mothers.

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## Feedback on this document

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## Version history

<b>Version</b>	<b>Changes made</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Made by</b>
5.0	Content reviewed and format updated	September 2023	Mike Collins
6.0	Content reviewed and updated	October 2023	Mike Collins
7.0	Scheduled review and changes to reflect new arrangements in capital city offices	September 2025	Mike Collins

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