Provision and Use of Work Equipment Procedure

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1.0 Introduction

The aim of this guidance is to ensure the safety of all people who use work equipment in the Trust.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with:
- The Health and Safety at Work Policy
- Manual Handling Policy
- LOLER Guidance
- Medical Devices Guidance
- NIAIC Reports and Alerts

2.0 Background

The legal duty to provide safe work equipment is laid down in the Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (NI) 1999 (PUWER). These regulations put a requirement on the employer, Southern Health & Social Care Trust (The Trust) to ensure that work equipment is suitable for its intended use, maintained in a safe condition and in certain circumstances, inspected to ensure this remains the case.

All people using, supervising or managing work equipment are required to be provided with adequate information and where appropriate, written instructions, training and/or safe systems of work. Equipment provided for use at work should be accompanied by suitable safety measures eg protective devices, markings and warnings. These duties are supported by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (NI) 2000.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Work Equipment

Work Equipment is any machinery, appliance, apparatus or hand power tool used on Trust sites or in connection with the Trusts undertaking.

E.g.
- Tool Box Tools e.g. hammers, knives, hand saws, single machines such as drilling machines or circular saws
- Photocopiers
- Equipment e.g. ladders, pressure water cleaners. (hoists, lift trucks, or mobile elevating work platforms are subject to the Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER), refer to LOLER Guidance
- Medical Devices and Equipment
- Vehicles used for work, but not private cars

3.2 Use of Equipment

The definition of use is wide and includes all activities involving work equipment such as stopping, starting, repair, modification, maintenance and servicing. Cleaning and transport of the equipment is also included.
4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 Line Manager

Line Managers must ensure that:

- all equipment is suitable for purpose, safe for use and falls in line with legal requirements. Managers should carry out a Risk Assessment of work equipment to demonstrate this.

- regular inspections and visual checks of work equipment are completed and a record kept. Defects identified with work equipment should be reported to the Estates Help Desk (for service user equipment) or the Line Manager for non-service user equipment. Where there is a risk to employee safety, the equipment should be taken out of service.

- any safe systems of work are designed in accordance with manufacturing recommendations.

- staff are provided with adequate and appropriate training and instruction as to the use of the work equipment, the risks to be avoided and the need to report defects. A ‘Safe System of Work’ should be readily available.

- work equipment is used following manufacturing guidelines and safe working procedures.

4.2 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring their own health and safety and also that of others who may be affected by their actions in the safe use of work equipment.

- Cooperating with their line manager in ensuring that they and others operate equipment in a safe environment and apply safe practice.

- Following instructions and training given and not misusing or abusing any work equipment.

- Reporting any working conditions to their line manager that may give rise to a risk of exposure to a hazard while using work equipment.

4.3 Reporting

Where a hazard/fault materialises during the use of work equipment it shall be reported immediately to their line manager and entered on the Trust Datix IR1 form. The faulty work equipment must be withdrawn and labelled “Faulty, Do Not Use”. Faulty equipment in relation to service users should also be reported to the Estates Help Desk and recorded in the service users care plan, a Datix IR1 should also be completed.
5.0 Suitability

Any work equipment must be suitable by design, construction or adaption for the actual work it is provided to do. When selecting new work equipment it should be appropriate for the use intended. CE marked (is a key indicator of a product’s compliance with European Union (EU) legislation) and take account of ergonomic principles.

6.0 Maintenance

All equipment should be maintained in a safe condition for use, so that the user and others are not put at risk.

All maintenance must be carried out by a competent person.

7.0 Inspection

Where a significant risk has been identified from the installation or use of the work equipment, or where deterioration would likely lead to a dangerous situation, a suitable inspection must be carried out.

This may be a simple visual inspection to a detailed, comprehensive inspection, including some dismantling and/or testing.

Line Managers should liaise with the Estates Department to determine what form the inspection(s) should take, their frequency and who will be completing them. Estates will maintain records of inspections.

8.0 Specific Risks

Where risks cannot be adequately controlled by hardware measures such as guards or other protection devices, only designated persons should carry out the work, having received sufficient instruction and training.

9.0 Information, Instruction and Training

Line Managers must provide adequate training, information and instruction (where appropriate) to users of work equipment and their supervisors. This may include manufacturer instruction sheets, drawings, operating instructions, use of personal protective equipment, instruction placards and warning labels. Limitation on the use of work equipment should also be given.

All employees, and those working on behalf of the Trust using work equipment should be competent in its use (i.e. - a person with the relevant skills, knowledge, training and experience to be able to complete the task or procedure). This includes the procedures that must be followed
when using the equipment, the risks the equipment poses and precautions to take when operating.

Where necessary, close supervision should be provided until the person is deemed to be competent.

10.0 Conformity

New work equipment should conform to European Community requirements as follows:

- Carry a CE marking and be accompanied by relevant certificates and/or declaration as required by the relevant product directive.

11.0 Dangerous Parts

Access to dangerous parts must be prevented. This may be achieved by:

- Fixed enclosed guards
- Other guards and protection devices
- Protection appliances
- Information, instructions and training

Guards and Protection Devices should:

- Be Suitable
- Be of sound construction, sound material and adequate strength
- Be maintained in efficient state/working order and good repair
- Not be easily by-passed or disabled
- Be at sufficient distance from the danger zone
- Not unduly restrict the view of the operating cycle of machinery
- Continue to protect (if possible) during maintenance
- Not increase any risk to health and safety

12.0 Protection against Specified Hazards

The specified hazards should be assessed so that they can be prevented. Examples include:

- Materials falling from equipment
- Materials being thrown out of or ejected
- Parts of equipment breaking off and being thrown out
- Parts of equipment coming apart
- Overheating and fire
- Explosion of the equipment due to pressure build-up
- Explosion of the equipment due to a chemical reaction
- Damage to eyes due to frequency of light waves
- Damage to body tissue due to heat/pressure/vibrations

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should always be considered as a last resort.
Protection against burns, scalds or sears arising from (use of) work equipment should be considered.

13.0 Controls

All controls must be easy to operate, recognisable, visible and able to safely start and stop equipment.

Emergency stops are installed where appropriate in suitable locations which will enable the equipment to be stopped when an irregular event occurs bringing the equipment to a stop safely.

Emergency stops should be positioned to prevent inadvertent contact and positioned so as not to expose the operator to additional hazards. All emergency stops must be maintained in good working order.

14.0 Isolation from Sources of Power

All work equipment must be able to be isolated from all sources of energy e.g. electrical, pneumatic, and hydraulic, steam, liquids and gases. The means of isolation must be clearly visible and readily accessible.

Emergency stops should be Red, mushroom-headed and clearly labeled as to their function.

For portable powered work equipment a plug and socket disconnection would be satisfactory.

Staff must be trained on how to isolate all work equipment during maintenance or if it becomes defective.

Where equipment is positioned in such a manner which would allow it to be accidentally reconnected, a suitable locking device should be introduced.

15.0 Stability

All work equipment which may fall over, collapse or overturn must be adequately secured in place. This should be achieved by fixing equipment to the floor by bolting, tying or clamping. Stability of mobile equipment must employ the use of out-riggers as necessary.

16.0 Lighting

Wherever work equipment is used, there must be suitable and sufficient lighting for the operation, maintenance and cleaning and repair of the equipment.
17.0 Maintenance Operation
When maintenance work is carried out the equipment should be stopped and isolated.

18.0 Protection for people being carried
When equipment is being used to carry people, account should be taken of the potential for falling, unexpected movements when in motion, or when stopping.

The following items may be required:
Seating, secure handholds, restraining systems, guard rails, side, front or rear barrier/guard rails.

19.0 Markings and Warnings
All necessary markings and warning devices should be provided on equipment for use as necessary.

20.0 Roll Over Protection
Roll over can occur due to uneven, variable or slippery ground conditions or excessive gradients. It is important that the equipment is stable, has roll over protection structures and restraining systems.

21.0 Infection Control
Staff should be aware that all equipment and the environment has the potential to be contaminated with pathogenic micro-organisms. Staff should always follow the Trust Infection Control Procedures with regard to effective hand hygiene and decontamination of equipment.

22.0 Further Reading