

Health and Safety Policy

The Masonic Charitable Foundation (“the Foundation”) (Registered charity number 1164703, Company number 09751836) is committed to the Health and Safety of all its volunteers.

This Policy explains how the Foundation acts to lower risk for Visiting Volunteers and the responsibilities of Visiting Volunteers for their own safety and towards the people around them. Failure to act in accordance with this policy will be taken very seriously and may result in the Foundation ending its relationship with the Visiting Volunteer.

Health and safety policy statement

All employers are required to display the poster “Health and Safety Law: What you need to know” in the workplace. As good practice the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) also recommend that this information is brought to the attention of volunteers and the information is reproduced below for this purpose.

Health and Safety Law: What you need to know

All workers have a right to work in places where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled. Health and safety is about stopping you getting hurt at work or ill through work.

Your employer is responsible for health and safety, but you must help.

What employers must do for you:

1. Decide what could harm you in your job and the precautions to stop it. This is part of risk assessment.
2. In a way you can understand, explain how risks will be controlled and tell you who is responsible for this.
3. Consult and work with you and your health and safety representatives in protecting everyone from harm in the workplace.
4. Free of charge; give you the health and safety training you need to do your job.
5. Free of charge; provide you with any equipment and protective clothing you need, and ensure it is properly looked after.
6. Provide toilets, washing facilities and drinking water.
7. Provide adequate first-aid facilities.



8. Report major injuries and fatalities at work to our Incident Contact Centre: 0845 300 9923. Report other injuries, diseases and dangerous incidents online at www.hse.gov.uk.
9. Have insurance that covers you in case you get hurt at work or ill through work. Display a hard copy or electronic copy of the current insurance certificate where you can easily read it.
10. Work with any other employers or contractors sharing the workplace or providing employees (such as agency workers), so that everyone's health and safety is protected.

What you must do

1. Follow the training you have received when using any work items your employer has given you.
2. Take reasonable care of your own and other people's health and safety.
3. Co-operate with your employer on health and safety.
4. Tell someone (your employer, supervisor, or health and safety representative) if you think the work or inadequate precautions are putting anyone's health and safety at serious risk.

If there's a problem

1. If you are worried about health and safety in your workplace, talk to the Masonic Support Programme Lead.
2. You can also look at our website www.hse.gov.uk for general information about health and safety at work.
3. If, after talking with your employer, you are still worried, you can find the address of your local enforcing authority for health and safety and the Employment Medical Advisory Service via HSE's website: www.hse.gov.uk

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Risk assessments

The Foundation undertakes Risk Assessments to identify significant hazards to Visiting Volunteers and acts to lower the risks.

Training

The Foundation will provide Visiting Volunteers with any information, training or equipment they need to remain safe whilst carrying out their tasks.

Personal protective equipment

Personal protective equipment may be provided for use in your work to help reduce the risks from any hazards/hazardous activities. Where this is provided you will receive the necessary training, instruction, and information on how to wear and use it safely.

Personal protective equipment should be worn as and when instructed and you should report any loss, defect, or problems with your personal protective equipment to Masonic Support Programme Lead immediately.

Duty of care

Visiting Volunteers are expected to remember their duty of care towards the people around them, and not act in a way that might endanger those around them.

Incident/Accident /Near Miss Reporting and recording systems

Visiting Volunteers have a responsibility to report all accidents resulting in injury and non-injury incidents and 'near miss' incidents which involve any person and which are associated with any Visiting Volunteer activities. This includes physical attacks, serious or persistent threats and verbal abuse.

An accident/incident/near miss form should be completed and returned to the Masonic Support Programme Lead as soon as possible after the accident/incident/near miss. The form asks for details of when the accident/incident/near miss occurred, who was involved and any relevant circumstances that may have contributed to the accident/incident.

Under the RIDDOR Regulations 1995 the Foundation must report any accident resulting in major injury to Visiting Volunteers or others. Any accident which results in a Visiting Volunteer or another person being taken directly to hospital must also be reported by the Foundation.

Less serious incidents, including near misses are recorded and will be monitored. Action will be taken if there is an increase in reports, several reports within a short period or reports about the same individual. Action taken may include contacting the police about a persistent offender, reviewing the risk assessment and considering further prevention measures, or increased vigilance by the Foundation and Visiting Volunteers to prevent a more serious incident occurring.

Lone working

The role of Visiting Volunteers means they work without close or direct supervision or company for much of the time.

The Foundation recognises that Visiting Volunteers working alone in potentially isolated conditions have no immediate back up or support and so are at a greater risk of injury through aggression or violence directed towards them from applicants, relatives, carers or the general public.

The Foundation also recognises that Visiting Volunteers working alone need to rely on their own judgement and initiative and may be at a greater risk of making mistakes or errors.

The Foundation believes that training is particularly important for lone workers. In particular Visiting Volunteers need to be deemed competent to work alone, to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions needed fully before they are allowed to make unaccompanied visits.

All Visiting Volunteers have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect. The Foundation will not tolerate harassment, threatening behaviour or violence towards volunteers.

Lone Workers' Security

When a Visiting Volunteer visits a client in their own home he or she may be at risk through health and safety hazards in and around the service users' homes and of physical or verbal assaults and hostility from service users, relatives and the general public.

It is the policy of the Foundation that:



- Visiting Volunteers should carry mobile phones so that they can summon help quickly;
- When carrying out a visit, Visiting Volunteers must leave written details of the visit with a nominated contact. This should include who they will be visiting and where, the anticipated length of the visit, how they can be contacted during the visit and what to do in the event of an emergency. Visiting Volunteers should check in with the contact at pre-agreed intervals to confirm if the visit overruns and following the conclusion of the visit.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel uneasy about anything – whether when first speaking to the applicant on the phone or when meeting them in person – don't tell yourself it's fine; take action to improve your safety. For example, arrange to be accompanied on the visit.
- Be aware of your exits and have a pre-planned way to excuse yourself from a difficult situation. For example, you need to return to your car to collect some papers.
- It is strongly advised that Visiting Volunteers carry in their cars the absolute minimum amount of equipment and that they always park their car in a well-lit, public place if at all possible.
- Thefts from cars are a major area of concern and muggings of volunteers are a real threat, especially in high crime areas. If on foot then Visiting Volunteers should avoid dark, unlit, isolated routes.
- Visits to an applicant with a known history of aggression or violence associated with them will not be carried out by Visiting Volunteers and the contact will be managed by the Advice and Support Team.
- Visiting Volunteers have the right to refuse to carry out a visit if they believe this will place them at unacceptable risk for any reason, including due to exposure to illness, threat of verbal or physical aggression or unsafe working conditions. (See Escalation of cases to the Advice & Support Team)
- Visiting Volunteers have the right to end a visit or contact with an applicant at any time if they feel threatened or are concerned for their own safety, including due to unsafe working conditions or persistent or intrusive contact from the client or an

associate of the applicant. Afterwards, the Visiting Volunteer should fill in an incident form for review by the Foundation.

- In a situation where a Visiting Volunteer feels under immediate threat of their physical safety they should contact the police directly. After the incident the Visiting Volunteer should fill in an incident form for review by the Foundation.
- Visiting Volunteers must fill in an accident/incident/near miss report for any accident, incident or near miss involving any person and linked to the activities of Visiting Volunteers. This includes cases of physical or verbal assault or harassment or hostility.

Dealing with aggression

When faced with difficult or stressful situations many factors can affect the way you behave; from your own confidence and experience to how you are feeling on the day. There are no right or wrong answers but it is helpful to think through the options ahead of time.

The following tips will assist you:

- Be aware of changes in the behaviour of the person you are with, especially if they seem to be becoming more angry or irritated. It is very rare for aggression or violence to come from nowhere.
- Try to use your own communication skills to defuse a difficult situation early on. Think about not only what you say but how you say it.
- If the person you are with is getting angry, try to remain calm. Do not be drawn into their anger.
- Avoid entering the aggressor's personal space or touching them, as this will make the aggressor feel threatened and can escalate the situation.
- Remember
 - Trust your instincts
 - Never underestimate a threat
 - If you feel uneasy or alarm bells start ringing — act right away

- Beware of your own body language. For example, standing with your feet apart and your arms folded or your finger pointing can be seen as aggressive or patronising.
- The majority of communication is through body language, a lot through tone of voice and only a little through words.
- If all else fails...your aim is to get away!
- Be assertive but avoid meeting aggression with aggression.
- Use exit strategies — have a pre-planned way to excuse yourself from a difficult situation.
- Apply diversion techniques to distract them whilst you make your exit. For example, use your voice — shout a specific instruction such as “Call the police!” or use a Personal Safety alarm.
- Remember, the earlier you spot a potential problem arising the more choices you have to avoid it.
- Physical self-defence should only ever be used as a last resort with the only purpose being to get away from your attacker. Remember also that if you use excessive force, you could be legally liable for assault

Driving and use of own vehicle

The Foundation is committed to reducing the risks which Visiting Volunteers face and create when driving or riding for work.

Use of own vehicle

Visiting Volunteers using their own vehicles must ensure that it is always legal, safe, in roadworthy condition and is suitable for the purpose for which it is being used.

Failure to comply with the policy will be regarded as a serious matter and may result in the Foundation ending the relationship with the Visiting Volunteer.

Visiting Volunteers will be asked to present vehicle documents and proof of eligibility to drive on a periodic basis.

Visiting Volunteers who drive their own vehicle whilst volunteering must inform their motor insurance company that they are using their vehicle in the course of volunteering. This should not incur any additional premium.

Membership of an appropriate breakdown service is recommended.

Any vehicle that is (or is suspected to be) in an unsafe or illegal condition must not be used until all necessary repairs have been completed.

Fitness to drive

Visiting Volunteers who drive whilst volunteering must ensure they:

- are fit to do so
- do not drive when affected by alcohol, drugs or medicines
- do not drive when affected by illness
- do not drive when they are too tired to do so safely
- remain within speed limits, including variable limits and temporary limits
- avoid unnecessary distractions, including the use of mobile phones, smoking and the consumption of food and drink
- ensure all occupants are using their seat belts and head restraints are adjusted correctly.

Accident, breakdown and emergency procedures

In the event of an accident:

- Use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine
- Do not move injured passengers unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion
- Call the emergency services immediately; provide them with information about the situation, any special circumstances (for example, if carrying oxygen bottles) and if any passengers have special needs
- If child passengers are present, ensure an adult remains with them
- If the emergency services are called, stay at the scene until they allow you to leave
- Obtain the names and addresses of all independent witnesses (if possible)
- Ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before continuing on the journey

- If there is any injury or the names of people are not exchanged, you must report the accident to the Police as soon as possible or in any case within 24 hours

In the event of a breakdown:

- Move the vehicle off the carriageway (onto the hard shoulder on a motorway) and switch on the hazard warning lights
- If this is not possible, move it as far away from moving traffic as you can
- Move passengers out of the nearside of the vehicle and as far away from it and other traffic as possible. No one should stand between the vehicle and oncoming traffic
- On motorways or other busy roads, passengers should be taken onto the embankment or grass margin and as far from the traffic as is practicable
- Keep passengers together, keep children under constant supervision
- Telephone the emergency services, or breakdown firm, giving them accurate details of the vehicle's location, and whether children or passengers with mobility problems are being carried
- Telephone your nominated contact person to tell them what has happened
- On a motorway, use the roadside emergency telephone as this will enable the Police to pinpoint your location.

Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses whilst driving

Visiting Volunteers should fill in an accident/incident report form after any accident, incident, or near miss whilst driving.

Visiting Volunteers must report road safety problems, including fixed penalty notices, summons and convictions for any offence, including vehicle defects to the Masonic Support Programme Lead.

Work environment

As part of their duties Visiting Volunteers may use computers. The following guidance is provided to help individuals to avoid injury by sitting in the right position and arranging their desk correctly.

The following advice is taken from the NHS Choices Website and is reproduced in accordance with their Terms and Conditions of use:

Support your back

Avoid back pain by adjusting your chair so that your lower back is properly supported. A correctly adjusted chair will reduce the strain on your back. Get one that is easily adjustable so that you can change the height, back position and tilt. Have your knees level with your hips. You may need a footrest for this.

Adjust your chair

Adjust your chair height so that you can use the keyboard with your wrists and forearms straight and level with the floor. This can help prevent repetitive strain injuries. Your elbows should be by the side of your body so that the arm forms an L-shape at the elbow joint.

Rest your feet on the floor

Your feet should be flat on the floor. If they're not, consider using a footrest, which lets you rest your feet at a level that's comfortable. Don't cross your legs, as this can cause posture-related problems.

Place your screen at eye level

Your screen should be directly in front of you. A good guide is to place the monitor about an arm's length away, with the top of the screen roughly at eye level. To achieve this you may need to get a stand for your monitor. If the screen is too high or too low, you'll have to bend your neck, which can be uncomfortable.

Using the keyboard

Place your keyboard in front of you when typing. Leave a gap of about four to six inches (100mm-150mm) at the front of the desk to rest your wrists between bouts of typing. Your wrists should be straight when using a keyboard. Keep your elbows vertical under your shoulder and right by your side. Some people like to use a wrist rest to keep their wrists straight and at the same level as the keys.

Keep your mouse close

Position and use the mouse as close to you as possible. A mouse mat with a wrist pad may help to keep your wrist straight and avoid awkward bending. If you are not using your keyboard, push it to one side if using the mouse a lot.

Avoid screen reflection

Your screen should be as glare-free as possible. If there's glare on your screen, hold a mirror in front of it to identify the cause. Position the monitor to avoid reflection from overhead lighting and sunlight. If necessary, pull blinds across the windows and replace ceiling lighting with table lights. Adjusting the screen's brightness or contrast can make it much easier to use.

Working with spectacles

People with bifocal spectacles may find them less than ideal for computer work. It's important to be able to see the screen easily without having to raise or lower your head. If you can't work comfortably with bifocals, you may need a different type of spectacles. Consult your optician if in doubt.

Make objects accessible

Position frequently used objects, such as your telephone or stapler, within easy reach. Avoid repeatedly stretching or twisting to reach things.

Avoid phone strain

If you spend a lot of time on the phone, try exchanging using a hands-free option. Repeatedly cradling the phone between your ear and shoulder can strain the muscles in your neck.

Last reviewed/updated: August 2018

Next review / update due: August 2019