

A Health & Safety Policy for my group?



This page has information and links to sample documents that will help you to ensure that your group is working in a safe way. Health and Safety is not complicated, and you should not be afraid of being sued as long as you have taken reasonable care to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and the public.

There are many myths about H&S, but you cannot be sued if you clear the snow from your path, teachers can apply sun screen to children. Read more myths about Health and Safety here. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/index.htm>

Also read this excellent page on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/when-it-applies.htm>

What do We need to do?

Have a written policy.

The law says that unless you have five or more paid staff you do not need a written policy, **but it is good practice to have one**; you may also find that some funders insist you have one before they will give you any money.

Your policy will describe how you will manage health and safety in your organisation. It should clearly say who does what, when and how. The policy does not need to be complicated or time-consuming, however it will only be effective if everyone follows it and it is reviewed regularly.

To help you we have created a model policy that is available from the C CVS website. Also check out the HSE website that has guidance on writing a policy.

Carry out a risk assessment.

A risk assessment is a systematic method at looking at your group's activities to eliminate or reduce the risk to those taking part. Risk assessments might seem like a chore, but they are a very useful tool.

- They can ensure the venue you use is not only safe, but also that it is suitable for your activity.
- The trip you are planning not only brings everyone back in good health, but ensures everyone feels safe and so has a great time
- The activity or event you are running not only keeps your visitors and volunteers safe but is also well organised.

They help with the planning of your activity or meeting so that you appoint the people who will deal with any problems in advance, ensuring that they know what to do and who to contact in case of any emergencies or problems. This can save a lot of stress.

Risk assessments are also an important tool in reducing the liability of the group and those organising the activities or events, ensuring that all that was 'reasonable and practical' was done to prevent accidents, damage or loss.

Note: Health and safety law doesn't generally apply to individual volunteers (although the common law may do so). Voluntary groups with no employees are not bound to undertake risk assessments however they are strongly advised to do so in order to demonstrate good working practices.

In addition, it may be a requirement of the organisation funding activities or of a groups governing body.

What is involved in a risk assessment

There are four main stages:

- Identifying the hazards and the risks they pose
- Deciding on appropriate actions that will eliminate or reduce the risk
- Recording these
- Checking that the recorded actions have been completed.

In voluntary organisations it is considered good practice to nominate one or two persons, normally including a committee member to undertake the risk assessment for the organisation as part of the Health & Safety procedures.

Assessing the risk requires detailed knowledge of the organisation's activities and working practices and should always involve employees and volunteers who actually do the work.

Resources to help you.

The following can be found CCVS Website:

<http://www.cambridgecvs.org.uk/group-support/Health%20and%20Safety>

- Check list for Venues
- Check list for trips
- Check list for Events
- Risk Assessment for events
- Health & Safety Policy for small groups without paid staff

Other Resources can be found at:

Health & safety Executive information for voluntary organisations

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/voluntary/index.htm>

HSE: Controlling risk <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm>

Start Now—guide for getting community events off the ground in Cambridgeshire.

www.startnow.org.uk

Sport—Club Mark

<http://www.clubmark.org.uk/resources/volunteer-resources/managing-your-club>

Food safety— <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/casestudies/pdf/foodprep.pdf>