

## POLICY ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

September 2004

Approved

Policy	Action	Date
Health and Safety Policy	SMT	28/09/04
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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. AIM	3
3. SCOPE	3
4. ORGANISATION of HEALTH and SAFETY	3
5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	4
5.1 Facilities Management	
5.2 Line Management	
5.3 Employees	
6. INCIDENT CONTROL and FIRE PRECAUTION	6
7. HEALTH and SAFETY INFORMATION and TRAINING	6
8. FIRST AID and ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING	6
9. SAFETY OUTSIDE THE OFFICE	7
10. MONITORING	7
Appendix 1 Health and Safety Policy Statement	
Appendix 2 Specific Health and Safety Procedures	

## **SECTION 1 – AIMS AND ORGANISATION**

### **1. Introduction**

The Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) will comply with all legal requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act (HASAWA) 1974 and all other relevant statutory provisions subject only to such exceptions and qualifications upon its obligations as are provided in the legislation, and requires the support of all members of staff in achieving this compliance.

HFEA will ensure that for all places of work under its control, the proper means of access and exit are maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to health. Matters relating to Health and Safety will be formally discussed through the Authority's Risk Management Group. This group reports to the SMT which reports to Authority members.

The HFEA accepts that as an employer it has a duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work, of all employees, and conduct its undertaking in such a way that employees, visitors, and contractors are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. The HFEA will also ensure that contractors engaged by the Authority, working on our premises comply with the relevant regulations and conform to HFEA safety standards.

The HFEA is committed to providing:

- A safe working environment for all staff;
- Safe systems and working practices for the maintenance of fabric, plant and equipment and the management of materials;
- Adequate welfare and first aid facilities;
- Sufficient information, instruction, training, and supervision, to ensure staff work in a safe manner.

The HFEA seeks the support of all staff in achieving these aims.

### **2. Aim**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all HFEA employees are aware of the authority's standards and procedures relating to health and safety.

### **3. Scope**

The scope of this policy extends to all HFEA employees, both permanent and fixed term, Authority members, agency staff and contractors.

### **4. Organisation of Health & Safety in the HFEA**

The Chief Executive is ultimately responsible for all health and safety matters.

Under him or her, the Facilities Manager is responsible for the coordination and monitoring of health and safety policy throughout the HFEA.

HFEA occupies premises and uses equipment and materials supplied by other government departments and agencies. These other departments and agencies have responsibilities of their own under the Act for the premises, equipment and materials supplied, and for any maintenance of them that is required. HFEA has a responsibility for taking remedial action to deal with any immediate risk arising from the premises, equipment, and materials, supplied to them by other departments and agencies, and for the health and safety of all members of staff, and others affected by HFEA's work activities, or who enter premises controlled by HFEA. The responsible line manager shall give adequate warning to those who are, or might be, in danger, and shall notify the officer responsible for liaison with the supplying department or agency. The liaison officer shall report any risk to the supplying department or agency for their action.

## **5. Roles & Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Facilities Management**

- Co-ordinate and monitor health and safety arrangements and policy issues throughout the HFEA and ensure that the HFEA's health and safety policies are implemented;
- Provide information and guidance to staff about health and safety matters;
- Ensure full and timely compliance with health & safety legislation and codes of practice and to keep staff aware of changes;
- Make official reports, on behalf of the Chief executive, to the Health and Safety Executive of any incidents, as defined under RIDDOR and other health and safety legislation
- Uphold the principles of good house keeping, ensuring that all safety equipment is maintained in good order and used correctly;
- Ensure adequate training is provided to staff on health & safety practices;
- Create a climate among staff of the need for good health & safety practices;
- Undertake, with line managers and staff, workplace risk assessments, including assessments for pregnant workers or new mothers, advising on adjustments or aids required;
- Manage the processes for access to free eye tests and basic glasses, as required under the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) regulations (see Eye Test Policy);
- Co-ordinate first aid arrangements & safety evacuation procedures within the HFEA;
- Co-ordinate any necessary action following an accident, or incident which could result in an accident, noting action to be taken to avoid recurrences, and maintain a record of all such accidents or incidents and disseminate learning across the organisation from such accidents or incidents;
- Be vigilant in preventing hazards arising in the building;

- Inspect the building comprehensively at least annually, ensuring that any hazards are promptly rectified
- Ensure that contractors and visitors are made aware of their responsibilities under the HASAWA Regulations and Approved Codes of Practices whilst on the premises;
- Provide protective clothing, where appropriate

## **5.2 Line Management**

Directors are responsible for the health and safety at work of members, of their staff and of others in their areas of responsibility who are affected by the HFEA's work activities, or who enter premises controlled by the HFEA.

Line Managers at all levels must ensure that suitable work procedures and arrangements are in place for safeguarding the health, safety and welfare, of their staff, including homeworkers. This responsibility includes the provision of sufficient information and training for the safe operation of any equipment or machinery, or the safe use of any substance. Line Managers are encouraged to seek advice from the Facilities Manager about any health and safety matter, and must report any hazard or unsafe practice which cannot be remedied.

## **5.3 Employees**

It is the duty of every member of staff whilst at work to look after their own welfare and health & safety, to abide by the health & safety guidance and provisions which are in place, and to ensure that their actions cannot result in injury or harm to anyone else. In particular, staff should make themselves aware of the arrangements for fire and other emergencies, first aid, and accident reporting procedures. These are set out in Section 2. If staff fail to take reasonable steps to safeguard their own health & safety, or that of anyone else who may be affected by their actions. It will be regarded as a serious breach of conduct and may lead to disciplinary action.

In addition, failure by line managers or individual members of staff to discharge duties imposed under the HASAWA and Regulations made under the Act could lead to criminal prosecution. However the Health and Safety Executive have given an assurance that where there has been a failure of management organisation, individual civil servants will not be prosecuted.

All members of staff are required to bring to notice any matter that is considered to be a hazard.

It is the responsibility of the staff, either in face to face meetings or when chairing larger meetings, to inform visitors of building evacuation procedures.

## **SECTION 2 – HFEA HEALTH & SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS**

### **6. Incident Control and Fire Precautions**

The overall responsibility for incident control and fire precautions for the building is with The Insolvency Service. The HFEA Facilities Team is responsible for co-ordinating fire precautions arrangements in liaison with The Insolvency Service. The HFEA Facilities Manager is to take management control in relation to HFEA's office area or staff, in the event of a major incident. The HFEA Facilities Manager will appoint deputies to assist in carrying out this duty. The Fire Marshals are appointed to assist in the evacuation, where necessary, of buildings during an incident and fire control.

The Insolvency Service has appointed managing agents to regularly review fire precautions arrangements at 21 Bloomsbury Street. The Facilities Manager of the HFEA will normally be involved with such inspections in order to be consulted about any subsequent actions. The Insolvency Service will produce local Bomb and Fire Precautions and Emergency Procedures instructions for their building, which will be regularly reviewed and issued annually to all staff in the building and to new staff as part of their induction.

Fire instruction notices are prominently displayed throughout the office. Fire drills are arranged twice a year. Fire alarms and fire fighting appliances are tested and maintained at frequent and regular intervals. The Insolvency Service monitors that fire drills are undertaken at least twice each year, and liaises with the HFEA's Facilities Manager to ensure that any necessary follow-up action is processed without delay.

### **7. Health & Safety Information and Training**

The Facilities Manager is responsible for ensuring that the HFEA's staff have sufficient awareness, information and training to discharge their general health & safety obligations. Appropriate arrangements will be made for training of Fire Marshals and First Aiders. There may be cases where specialized information or training is required to meet localized needs and in such circumstances it is line management responsibility to identify those needs and to seek advice from the Facilities Manager. The Facilities Manager will circulate health & safety information for all staff as necessary.

### **8. First Aid and Accident/Incident Reporting**

The HFEA will aim to maintain a ratio of at least one trained First Aider for every 50 members of staff. In addition trained First Aiders are available from Insolvency Service staff, and it is expected that HFEA First Aiders will provide services to others if needed. First aid facilities are available on the Lower Ground Floor of 21 Bloomsbury Street. Names of first aiders and appointed persons will be displayed on

the Plasma Screen at Reception on the first floor and in hard copy in the kitchen area.

Staff should report all accidents/incidents at work, however trivial, to line management as soon as possible so that work procedures can be reviewed. Staff should also ensure that all accidents/incidents are entered in an accident book, which is kept by the Facilities Manager. Line managers should enter details in the accident book when a member of staff is not in a position to do it for themselves. All accidents or incidents should be recorded even if there is no apparent immediate injury.

The Facilities Manager should be notified immediately of:

- any accidents, injury, or work related disease, which results in an absence from work of more than three days:
- fatalities and major injuries which are defined by the HSE as reportable:
- diseases, which are defined by the HSE as reportable.

## **9. Safety Outside the Office**

The nature of the HFEA's work can involve members of staff in visits to outside premises. While we do not have control over another employer's premises, they have responsibilities of their own under the HASAW Act for the premises, equipment and materials supplied and for any maintenance of them that is required. However, the responsible line manager/employee visiting the outside premises shall notify the local officer responsible and shall report any risk to the local officer for their action.

Examples of hazards that may be taken onto their site include:

- Electrical equipment: tools, trailing leads and mobile communications (this is particularly relevant if there are areas that have explosive atmospheres or sensitive scientific or medical equipment)
- Access equipment (ladders, steps, towers, cartridge guns, etc.).
- Heavy loads
- Hazardous or flammable substances

In similar vein, members of the public may very occasionally pose a threat to staff. Staff should not put themselves, or others, at risk and should take whatever steps are necessary to safeguard themselves and others in such situations. Particular care may need to be taken when it is necessary to conduct interviews outside the office.

## **10. Monitoring**

The HFEA will monitor all accidents/incidents and reported hazards at least annually to ensure the policy is operating fairly, consistently and effectively.

Appendix 1

**Health and Safety Policy Statement**

**Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority**

The HFEA recognises that complying with the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974* (and regulations made under it) is a legal requirement, not a matter of choice, and will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and healthy working conditions in co-operation with our employees.

Our policy is to exceed the minimum requirements of the law where possible and to do this we will provide sufficient resources to meet this commitment. We will also ensure that systems are in place which will allow us to maintain, monitor and, where necessary, improve safety performance. Included in these systems will be means to allow communication and consultation on health and safety matters between all levels of the organisation, particularly in relation to the introduction of new technology or working methods.

In return, the HFEA expects employees at all levels to comply with their legal duties, which are outlined in the Health and Safety Policy. This includes co-operating with us on safety matters and taking care of their own safety and that of others, whether from within the HFEA or from outside, who may be affected by their actions.

Any information, instruction, training or supervision necessary to meet these commitments will be provided to those who require it in order to perform their job safely.

The policy and the way it operates will be reviewed at least annually and more often if the business changes in nature or size. Any revision necessary to improve safety performance will be made and then reported to employees.

Signed:

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Angela McNab

Position: Chief Executive

This revision dated: September 2004

## APPENDIX 2

### SPECIFIC HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES

#### Good Housekeeping

Undue hurrying and forgetfulness cause many office accidents. **DO NOT** run down steps or along corridors. Use handrails going up or down the stairs.

- Watch out for someone coming round blind corners or opening doors quickly
- Never read while walking
- Ensure that the weight in filing cabinets and on shelves is evenly distributed
- Electrical and telephone cables **MUST NOT** be allowed to lie uncovered on the floor and should be taped down, as they are a major tripping hazard
- Ensure that floor areas and passageways are kept clear of obstructions
- Spilled hot or cold drinks should be cleaned up immediately
- Any form of unruly behaviour is unacceptable
- Windowsills or space under desks must not be used as filing or storage space
- Avoid manual handling wherever possible
- Do not lift heavy weights, without supportive and approved machinery or aids

#### Electrical Equipment

- Electrical equipment is normally safe, provided it is properly installed and checked regularly.
- Remember that water and liquids are conductors of electricity and their association with faults caused by, for example, damaged cables, flexes, plugs and sockets, the overloading of circuits and fuses would make that shock more severe. Therefore you should:

##### Never

- Touch electrical equipment with wet hands
- Move any portable electrical equipment without disconnecting it from the mains
- Make electrical repairs
- Overload circuits
- Do other electrical work unless you are an 'authorised person'
- Plug in electrical equipment that has not been tested and approved by the HFEA
- Place food or drinks on your PC or other electrical equipment

##### Keep

- Electrical supply cables and flexes away from wet areas or from where they will be damaged by being walked over or knocked when moving equipment about.

##### Always

- Switch off all equipment when not required, **UNLESS** continuous operation is necessary

- Disconnect electrical equipment at night by removing the plug from the socket, **UNLESS** continuous operations is necessary and/or instructed otherwise. Computers and printers should not be unplugged as continuous operations are necessary for this equipment.
- Report defective equipment immediately to your department head who will then inform the Facilities Manager of the situation.

### Office Machines

- Do not use equipment unless you have been trained to do so
- Be attentive when learning how to operate machines. Your safety depends on it
- Always follow safety advice and safety systems on machines do not try and cut corners definitely **DO NOT REMOVE** any safety guards or processes
- Be alert for electrical hazards. Unplug any machine that overheats, smokes, sparks or causes shocks, and report the problem
- Only use operator controls when using or adjusting machinery. If more complex adjustments, repairs or maintenance are required, inform the Facilities Manager
- Avoid wearing loose sleeves, ties, dangling jewellery etc., around machines with exposed or unguarded moving parts
- Avoid physical contact with photocopier toners or other chemicals. If you must add toner, wear rubber gloves, if possible. Wash your hands with COLD water in the event of spillage. In the event of photocopier toner spillage contact the Facilities Manager immediately and keep yourself and others away from the immediate area.
- Keep the document cover down when you are photocopying.

### Chemicals

- Never use a substance at work that you are not familiar with or able to find out more about
- Never use a substance at work that does not appear on the schedule of substances for your department (see COSHH Regulations).
- Do not purchase or bring in for use at work substances not on the list for your department.
- Familiarise yourself with the precautions to be taken for the substances approved for your department and with the general rules for all chemical handling attached to your department's schedule.