



Office Safety

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Summary of Changes

Section	Change
Whole Procedure	New policy format



Office Safety Procedure

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1.0 Introduction

This procedure contains information and guidance on the health and safety aspects of working safely in an Ark office.

Office work is any task which is conducted within an Ark Office and can include meetings, answering phone calls, managerial / staff office tasks, managing the office environment and monitoring health and safety.

2.0 Office Equipment

Office equipment used by Ark staff should be recorded in an inventory and serviced / maintained according to Ark and regulatory standards especially for electrical items.

Ark staff should not use office equipment that is faulty / defect noted or is not supplied by Ark. Small personal electrical items can be used if in good working order, such as phones and radios.

2.1 Display Screen Equipment

This includes electrical items that must be checked regularly by staff for defects and electrically tested annually by a competent person, this includes items such as a screen, laptop, thin client router and desk lamps. More information is available in HS09 Display Screen Equipment Policy and Procedure.

2.2 Other Electrical Equipment

Electrical items such as printers / shredders / welfare equipment must also be checked regularly by staff for defects electrically tested annually.

Every office should have an annual Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) certificate for small electrical items used in an office and an in date EICR certificate that's lasts for 5 years for electrical installation compliance, these certificates must be stored in the fire log book for the office.

Please contact Ark Assets to ask for a copy of these certificates if you do not have them available.

2.3 Office Furniture

All office furniture such as desks, chairs, tables, storage and notice boards should be in good condition and not at risk of collapse or failure, any defective furniture must be removed and replaced with new furniture.

2.4 Fire Safety Equipment

Every office should have a fire risk assessment / fire log book / regulatory servicing documents. The fire risk assessment and log book should be reviewed annually or after a fire incident, if you need support with fire safety you can contact Ark H&S

All offices should have fire safety equipment in place, depending on the size of the office or if it is connected to a licensed premises.

Smaller offices will have fire extinguishers, fire blanket, signs and smoke detection in place, larger offices may have a fire panel, fire doors and emergency lighting installed.

Everything connected to fire safety needs checked regularly by staff and these checks noted in the fire risk assessment and logged in fire log book.

Regulatory annual / six monthly checks / servicing of fire safety equipment must be completed by a competent contractor and a copy of these checks /servicing should be provided by Ark or the landlord for storage in the fire log book.

3.0 Office Environment

3.1 Lighting – Natural and Artificial

Natural light in offices can help with screen work and the office environment but all windows should have blinds attached to control the amount of glare / heat from outside.

Artificial light such as overhead lights / desk lamps / external security lights should provide suitable lighting for work in an office, your DSE assessment asks if there is enough lighting for you to work safely in the office.

All replacement of bulbs in lighting should be risk assessed as some types of overhead lighting requires a competent electrician to work at height and install, contact Ark Assets or Landlord if your lighting requires repair or bulb replacement from an electrician.

3.2 Gas Safety

If an Ark office has a gas supply and boiler installed, an annual check by Ark or the landlord must be completed annually by a gas safe engineer and a gas safety certificate supplied and a copy kept in the fire log book.

If you smell gas in your office you should turn off the gas at the emergency shut off valve if you know the location, if you don't know the shut off valve, try and open windows / doors and evacuate the area and contact the National Gas Emergency Service – 0800 111 999 and contact Ark Assets and H&S to report the incident.

3.3 Legionella

A legionella log book must be in place to manage water safety at Ark offices. Ark will supply a log book and train staff on how to monitor water temperatures and report defects.

Non Ark owned office legionella compliance may be completed by the landlord's staff, you can ask the landlord how they comply with legionella regulations.

3.4 Slips / Trips / Falls

Slips / Trips / Falls are associated with flooring / wires / poor lighting / items left on routes. Managers and staff must regularly check internal areas to reduce the risks of staff falling in offices and report any defects in flooring that are hazardous.

External areas must be checked for any pot holes / loose paving / moss underfoot and during winter paths must be cleared of snow and ice. You should have a supply of snow clearing equipment and grit/salt, there is a snow and ice clearing risk assessment available for this task.

3.5 Temperature and Ventilation

The minimum temperature for an office is 16°C, There is no maximum temperature within any regulations or Approved Codes of Practice and so it is recommended that the temperature does not exceed the comfortable level. It is generally considered that when the temperature goes above 25°C for long periods of time then it is considered uncomfortable.

All windows should open in an office to provide fresh air ventilation and have blinds attached to help with keeping rooms cool on hotter days.

3.6 Security

Security of an office is not only important for theft reasons or accessing confidential files but also for the personal safety of employees.

However, a few general recommendations are:

- Offices should always be secure, particularly when lone working, please refer to HS12 Lone Working Policy and Procedure;
- No uninvited people allowed in to office;
- There should be a system for opening/locking an office; and
- Visitors should be logged in and out.

3.7 Storage

Storage within an office is often limited and the common practice of storing files and paper should be minimum with electronic storage on AIMS and General Drive preferred.

Not only is this good safety practice but also good management practice as losing files in a fire results in losing valuable business information.

Contact Ark Q&C team to decide if documents with personal information is to be held on site /archived or destroyed.

Suitable and adequate storage should be provided, preferably in metal or wooden cabinets which can be locked, especially if they contain personal or sensitive business information to comply with GDPR procedures.

The quantities of combustible materials ordered at any one time should be limited to the storage available.

3.8 Office Space

Guidance allows a minimum recommended space requirement per employee of 11m³.

Where this guidance cannot be achieved there should be sufficient space for employees to have freedom of movement around their desk and clear passageways for emergency exit.

3.9 Staff Induction

For working in an office a general in house induction is required which will cover the safety elements of office working.

The induction should discuss fire safety /evacuation, moving & handling, security, lone working procedures, office layout, lighting, DSE, tripping hazards, electrical safety, aggressive behaviour management and first aid arrangements.

4.0 H&S Inspection of Offices

Six monthly inspections of offices not connected to a licensed premises.

Quarterly Inspections of offices connected to a licensed premises must be carried out when inspecting the licensed premises.

The Ark premises inspection template for your workplace is stored on the H&S pages on the general drive which also contains guidance on completing the inspection.

The inspections can be completed by an Ark manager at a time convenient for all parties who use the office.

Support workers can also be given responsibility to carry out office inspections, once completed these have to be reviewed and signed off by the support workers manager.

It is the responsibility of the Ark Manager to report and follow up on any identified actions within a reasonable timescale.

5.0 Implementation and Review

5.1 Implementation

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that this procedure and the policy that support it, are followed by all Employees and Board Members.

5.2 Review

The Chief Executive will ensure that this procedure is reviewed at least every three years, and that any amendments required are submitted to the Board of Management for approval.