



015 - Work Equipment Policy and Procedure

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1. POLICY

NHS 24 acknowledges its responsibilities under:

- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998

In respect of its duties and obligations towards the health, safety and welfare of its staff and others who may be affected by our work or processes.

The purpose of this procedure is to enable NHS 24 to meet its obligations to protect and support employees when using work equipment so far as is reasonably practicable. This procedure will apply to Work Equipment that is purchased, loaned, hired given or provided for test or trial. The document covers delivery inspection, and in use maintenance and inspection.

2. INTRODUCTION

Work equipment is defined as any machinery, appliance, apparatus, tool or installation for use at work.

This includes “tool box tools” such as hammers, screw drivers, drills etc, “lifting equipment” such as passenger lifts. For the purpose of NHS 24 this will also include trolleys and chairs.

The objective of the policy is to ensure the provision of safe work equipment for employees of the NHS 24 by a structured selection process to ensure that such equipment conforms to standards laid down by the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 or other relevant Regulations. This includes defining the process and safe system of work to be followed by staff using work equipment.

3. SCOPE

This Policy will apply to all employees of NHS 24 who use any item of work equipment as defined in section 2.

4. AIMS & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 This policy aims to:

- increase employee awareness on the safe use of work equipment
- ensure that work equipment is suitable for the purpose for which it is used or has been provided
- ensure that work equipment is inspected at regular intervals
- ensure that work equipment is maintained in good working order and kept in good repair
- ensure an up to date faults and repair or replace log is maintained

- employees receive information, instruction and training in relation to using work equipment
- Ensure ergonomic factors have been considered

4.2. Other Applicable NHS 24 Policies and Procedures

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Electricity at Work Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Incident, accident and near miss reporting procedure

4.3. Employee Responsibilities

- To carry out a visual safety check before using any equipment
- To use the equipment in accordance with the manufacturers instructions
- Not to use equipment they are unfamiliar with until they have received the appropriate instruction
- To only use equipment for its intended use
- Only equipment purchased by NHS 24 should be used e.g. employees should not bring in tools or equipment from home
- Not to use faulty equipment
- To report any faults promptly in order that this can be logged and attended to as quickly as possible (AIR for or incident report form (NHQ))
- To remove faulty equipment from use, label it as faulty and ensure it is not returned to use until it has been repaired or replaced
- Not to alter the specification of equipment or repair or attempt to repair faulty equipment
- To report any incident, injury or near miss occurrence when operating work equipment

4.4. NHS 24 Responsibilities

- Ensure all equipment is purchased from reputable suppliers
- Ensure all equipment is inspected and maintained to a safe standard and the necessary records are kept (Service support teams must record this information within their databases)
- Ensure employees receive adequate information and instruction on the safe operation of all equipment in the workplace – where this is necessary
- Where employees require specific training this should be sourced
- Ensure any risks associated with the use of any work equipment are adequately assessed and controlled
- Ensure resources are allocated to repair and maintenance schedules and replacement of equipment as necessary

4.5. Inspections and Maintenance

- As described in 4.3 staff should carry out a visual check of any equipment before it is used and report any deficiencies.
- Equipment should be included in the routine workplace inspection schedule.
- Certain equipment must be inspected and maintained or repaired by a competent contractor (such as IT equipment, passenger lifts, electrical systems, alarm systems, boilers, gas appliances etc) and records kept.
- Faulty chairs should be reported to the service support teams without delay in order that they can be repaired or replaced
- Where NHS 24 is not directly responsible for the inspection and maintenance of certain equipment (as described above) the Health and Safety Lead Coordinators should request a copy of the necessary records for their own file.
- Reference should be made to the relevant IT Procedure, Electricity at Work Policy for Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) cycles and to the Fire Safety Policy for maintenance and inspection of fire safety equipment.

4.6 Trolleys and Chairs

Trolleys and Chairs should be also subject to regular inspection and maintenance and a programme of repair and replacement should be implemented.

4.7 Service Support Departments (SST)

Have responsibility to ensure all portable electrical equipment is periodically assessed (PAT) in conformance with The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, in addition to other statutory inspection requirements such as lift inspections under Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

4.8 Procurement

This is a key stage to the management of all equipment. NHS 24 procurement policy should be referred to when procuring any equipment to ensure compliance with all relevant H&S Legislation.

Where NHS24 purchases for equipment are being pursued the Procurement Department shall ensure that the maintenance costs of the various suppliers are taken into account during the bidding process. The Procurement Department/SST (as appropriate) shall ensure that all suppliers provide information required to identify ongoing costs with equipment, this information is required by the Health and Safety at Work act and regulations enabled by it. Typical information that should be provided would include:

- In use and in maintenance risk assessments
- User instructions (including maintenance)
- Maintenance requirements
- Preventative maintenance requirements
- Spares lists
- Equipment calibration
- Trouble shooting guides
- Cleaning requirements
- Any additional employee training needs

Prior to purchase the Procurement Department shall ensure that all equipment is risk assessed and where appropriate trialled.

Prior to purchase all maintenance requirements including pre delivery inspection and certification (if required) shall be considered and a decision taken as to who will be responsible for the maintenance of the equipment.

If a “maintainer” is chosen who is not the original supplier then the Procurement Department/SST (as appropriate) shall ensure that this provider is competent to maintain the equipment and that they have the means to identify any changes in the service or maintenance requirements as specified by the supplier.

The documentation of service and maintenance shall be agreed at the purchase stage, this will include who is responsible for maintaining the records and any equipment log books.

Newly Acquired Equipment

This section will define pre-use checks, inspection and/or formal examination and testing of equipment that is newly delivered to NHS 24.

The objective of these tests is to:

1. Ensure the correct product has been delivered, complete with manuals and all accessories and that the product is in good condition and working order
2. Ensure that re-usable devices are: recorded onto the equipment database, appropriate maintenance protocols are put in place, first use is documented which evidences good practice.
3. The pre-use Risk Assessment will ensure that the introduction of new devices to the NHS 24 is managed and that :
 - a. All training requirements are identified
 - b. All maintenance activities (on condition or planned preventative) are identified
 - c. Sources of technical support are identified

5 Performance standards and record keeping

Performance standard	Responsibility	Frequency	Records required
Ensure suitability of all equipment prior to purchase/installation.	Facilities Manager	As required	Yes
Ensure implementation of equipment inspection process and maintenance programme. Specific hazard identification.	SST	As required	Yes
Ensure implementation of all processes relative to contractors working on site.	Facilities Manager/SST	As required	Yes
Ensure required levels of information, training and supervision remain constant.	Managers/Team Leaders.	As required	Yes

Review History

Issue No	Reason for review and brief description of changes made	Effective Date
1	Initial Issue	Oct 2012
2	Changes made to roles and responsibilities	Sept 2015
3	Policy Review – no changes	October 2018
4	Policy Review – no changes	April 2021

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