



'Individual Growth, Individual People'

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Code of Practice Health & Safety in School Caretaking

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

CODE OF PRACTICE

SCHOOL CARETAKING

INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice covers activities carried out by caretakers, cleaners and site managers in schools and other Children's Services establishments and should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Health and Safety Manual.

Caretakers are key members of the school/establishment's staff and undertake a wide variety of tasks in and around the premises. This Code of Practice highlights the hazards and risks associated with these activities and sets out the control measures needed to ensure that caretakers work safely and competently.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Bodies in schools have a duty to ensure that the Health and Safety Policy, Codes of Practice and other directives are observed.

The Headteacher has a responsibility to co-operate with the LEA in implementing this code.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Code and for ensuring a copy is made available to the caretaker. The Headteacher is responsible for completing the form 'Record of Procedural Arrangements (School Caretaking)' contained in Annexe 7 for performance monitoring purposes.

The Caretaker is responsible for ensuring the code is brought to the attention of any relevant staff (e.g. cleaning staff employed by either the school/establishment or Nottinghamshire County Council) and that it is complied with.

The Caretaker must co-operate with the school Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

ABOUT THIS CODE

For ease of use this document has been split into Annexes, each of which relates to a particular aspect of the caretaker's duties, e.g. working at height, building and site maintenance, storage etc. These are followed by a further section on COSHH (The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations).

DISTRIBUTION

Headteachers or heads of establishments should ensure that this code is made available to the caretaker, cleaner in charge or site manager as appropriate.

REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE CODE

This code, together with policy documents, will be regularly reviewed and modified as necessary.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be found in the following publications:

- NCC Health and Safety Manual
- Health and Safety in Design and Technology Code of Practice

RISK ASSESSMENT

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, it is necessary to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment to identify the measures necessary to comply with appropriate health and safety standards.

This Code of Practice was drawn up on the basis of an assessment of the risks inherent in caretaking activities. It indicates the hazards and the "protective and preventive" measures necessary.

Any risk assessment must take account of the local circumstances. Where the Code covers fully all the work activities and hazards/risks associated with them, and the protective and preventive measures are followed and adequately control all the risks, then it is a simple matter of signing the Record of Procedural Arrangements form contained in Annexe 7.

There may be hazards not covered by the Code or different "protective or preventive" methods may be in use. If this is the case, it is necessary to indicate the details on the above form.

Once completed these risk assessment forms must be kept on the premises to which they refer. It will be necessary from time to time to produce these records in order to satisfy any external health and safety monitoring which takes place. Assessments should be reviewed annually or if there are any significant changes to the work to which it relates.

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 are concerned with protecting people from hazardous substances. They require employers to carry out a risk assessment and on the basis of the risk assessment to prevent exposure or, if that is not possible, to control exposure to hazardous substances.

THE PROVISION AND USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment (PUWER) Regulations 1998 lay down health and safety requirements to ensure the safe provision and use of all types of work equipment in all work places. Broadly the requirements of PUWER can be divided as follows:

- General duties concerning the selection of suitable equipment, maintenance, information, instruction and training etc. applying to all work equipment
- Specific requirements relating to the control of specific hazards such as contact with dangerous parts, risk of fire and explosion etc. These specific standards apply to all such work equipment (including second hand and hired or leased equipment).

In practice compliance with the standards set out in this Code should ensure that legislative standards are met. Where a work activity falls outside the scope of this Code it may be necessary to seek specialist advice (e.g. Nottinghamshire County Council Technical Advisers or the Children's Services Health and Safety Adviser).

Purchase of New or Second Hand-Hand Equipment

All new or second-hand equipment purchased must comply with the specific requirements of PUWER. In addition, new machinery must bear a CE mark to show that it conforms to European Safety Standards. Purchasers of new or second-hand machinery must ensure that it is suitable for the task taking into account: -

- its initial integrity
- the place where it will be used
- the purpose for which it is to be used

Although equipment made for domestic use may bear a CE mark it may not be suitable for use in a school environment. If in doubt about the purchase of an item of work equipment, specialist advice should be sought from your Caretaking and Cleaning Technical Adviser or the Children's Services Health and Safety Adviser.

Modification of Equipment

A part from very minor modifications which can be carried out without affecting the integral safety of the machine, modifications should normally be undertaken by a competent organisation or body. However, it is recognised that in some circumstances a member of staff may have the required degree of competency.

Prior to starting any activity, it should be ensured that equipment used is appropriate for the activity and conforms to British Standards. Equipment should be in good condition and be regularly maintained. A regular, systematic maintenance programme for fabric, furniture, fittings, machinery, tools and other equipment forms an important part of the health and safety monitoring system.

Further information on PUWER can be found in Section B27 of the Health and Safety Manual.

Use of Workshop Equipment

It is recognised that caretakers in Comprehensive schools in particular may, from time to time, use workshop equipment in e.g. day to day minor repairs. In these circumstances, the following items may be used, provided that the caretaker is experienced in their safe use: -

Disc sander; drilling machines; horizontal belt sander; mortiser; hegner/tabletop fretsaw/jigsaw.

When using such items reference should be made to the relevant section of the Health and Safety in Design and Technology Code of Practice.

The following items must not be used unless an appropriate qualification is held: -

narrow band saw; circular saw; wood turning lathe; surface planer, thicknesser and combination machines; heat treatment equipment; equipment used in welding operations; centre lathe.

Hand Tools

When using hand tools such as hammers, knives etc follow these five basic rules:

- use the right tool for the job
- make sure that it is in good condition
- use it in the correct way
- do not use tools you have not been trained to use
- report worn and broken tools.

Hand tools should not be left lying on surfaces should be secure from unauthorised use and stored in such a way that their serviceability is maintained.

PORTABLE ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

Only Class II double insulated tools or earthed Class I insulated tools should be used. Class II double insulated tools are preferred.

Consideration should be given, particularly where portable electric tools are extensively used, to the use of 110V tools operating from an isolating transformer with a centre tapped earth. In wet or damp conditions it is essential to use 110V tools operating from a transformer with a centre tapped earth.

Where this is not possible, residual current device (RCD) protection must be used whenever 240V electrical equipment is used externally e.g. lawnmowers, hedge trimmers, power washers etc. Where a protected mains socket is not available, a protected plug must be fitted to the equipment.

A visual inspection of portable electric power tools should be carried out each time they are used. Particular attention should be paid to the condition of the plug, lead, casing and switches. Faulty or damaged equipment should be taken out of use and marked accordingly until the fault has been rectified. Regular inspection and testing

should also be carried out in accordance with Electrical Safety Guidance contained in section B3 of the Health and Safety Manual.

Portable electric power tools should be purpose built and used for their designated purpose. Home made attachments should not be used.

Under no circumstances should a portable power tool be used other than by its design method. Clamping to a bench or fixing on a vice etc. is a serious misuse and potentially dangerous.

HAZARDS AND MACHINERY DEFECTS

It is the responsibility of everyone to inform their supervisor/ manager of any hazards e.g. defects to machinery, equipment or protective equipment, so that appropriate action can be taken. Defects should be recorded in a defects book or log and should be available.

If the caretaker considers a defect to be a significant threat to health and safety, the machine or equipment must be taken out of action until the defect to the machinery or protective equipment has been remedied and/or the premises manager agrees it is safe to be used. The machine or equipment should be taken out of use by such methods as isolation of electrical supplies and withdrawal of fuses and a notice must be hung on the machine and/or electrical isolator indicating that the machine is faulty and must not be operated.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Caretakers should ensure that loose clothing, ties, long hair etc., liable to become entangled in equipment or machinery, is adequately secured; aprons, overalls or protective coats and gloves are worn where appropriate and rings; watches and loose jewellery are removed.

Dangers to the feet can arise from falling heavy objects, sharp tools and from spillages of hot or damaging liquids etc. Ensure that shoes protect the feet and there is no excessive wear on heels.

When starting work as a caretaker you will be issued with a minimum of two sets of overalls which will be replaced when needed. Other PPE will also be available for use, e.g. gloves, dust masks, eye protection etc. For further information please contact your supervisor/manager.

PPE must be:

- suitable for the intended use
- maintained in good condition
- correctly stored

Defects must be reported and defective equipment repaired or replaced promptly. Records of PPE issued must be kept.

Further Information on PPE and record keeping forms is contained in Section B15 of the Health and Safety Manual.

MANUAL HANDLING

Where possible manual handling tasks should be avoided or the risk of handling injury minimised by appropriate task design or the use of handling aids, e.g. trolleys. The layout of storage areas should minimise the need to stretch, reach, bend or twist the body excessively to reach frequently used or heavy items.

Frequently caretakers may need to lift and transport awkwardly shaped or heavy objects. Before doing so they should assess the risks and take appropriate precautions. The premises manager should identify situations in which lifting and carrying problems are likely to arise and control measures which are adopted.

The generic lifting and carrying risk assessment in the box below needs adaptation to take account of school specific matters, e.g. whether the premises is on several floors or separated sites.

Hazardous situation	Hazard	Action
Congestion in corridors, stairs etc.	From a variety of accidents	Avoid moving equipment at times of congestion.
Moving equipment, e.g. furniture, deliveries, swimming pool cover, salt bags, refuse containers	Damage to backs (vulnerable to even moderate loads) and to feet from dropped items	Use the following equipment: general trolley; Avoid dark bad weather and times of congestion.
Lifting equipment down from high shelves	From falling load and falling from steps	Store frequently used items at a comfortable height. If an item has to be lifted down use steps and assistance. Avoid twisting motions.
Carrying equipment up or down stairs	Hazards of moving equipment enhanced by difficulty of using trolleys, increased risk of slipping etc.	If available, consider special trolleys for stairs. Avoid hazard: Have duplicate sets if possible or swap rooms or ensure task is carried out by at least two people.
Lifting heavy and awkward objects, including portable hand tools etc.	Damage to backs, feet etc.	Items should be labelled: 'To be lifted only by two members of staff, observing good practice for lifting'.
Non-routine lifting	Damage to backs, feet etc.	Carry out full risk assessment before attempting activity.

Section B1 of the Health and Safety Manual contains a checklist to assist with manual handling assessments.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire Precautions

Detailed guidance on fire safety is contained within Sections B16 and B19 of the Health and Safety Manual.

Caretakers should be particularly aware of the following points: -

- It is essential that good housekeeping standards are maintained to safeguard means of escape.
- Storage of materials and furniture must not obstruct corridors, staircases or the means of escape.
- All fire/smoke doors must have signs "*Fire Door, Keep Closed*". Never leave these doors wedged open, even if the building is empty.
- Emergency lighting, exit doors etc. must be checked regularly. All signs relating to fire exits must be clear and free from obstruction. Fire notices must be placed in positions where they can be easily seen.
- Caretakers should be aware of the position of water valves and fire points. Vehicles should never be allowed to park over fire valves and there must always be a clear access to the building and to water points for Fire Service vehicles.
- All staff (including cleaning staff who access the premises after school /office hours) must know the fire arrangements for the premises, i.e. -
 - a) what to do if you discover a fire
 - b) the sound of the fire alarm
 - c) what to do when you hear the fire alarm
 - d) where the nearest fire point is
 - e) how to use the fire fighting equipment if confident to do so
 - f) what is the nearest escape route
 - g) what is the fire assembly point

Incident Reporting

It is essential that all accidents, violent incidents and near misses are reported using the County Council Wellworker incident Recording system and incident reporting procedure, and also Section B5 of the Health and Safety Manual.

First Aid

A first aid box or boxes containing first aid materials as laid down in Section B40 of the Health and Safety Manual should be available on the premises.

Caretakers should know the location of the first aid equipment, which the first aiders are and where to locate them.

Staff, while waiting for first aid or professional medical treatment, should take the following action:

- **Hazardous substance splashes in the eye:** Immediately wash the eye under running water from a tap for at least 10 minutes. The flow should be slow and eyelids should be held back. In order to ensure eye washing can be carried out without delay a short length of rubber tube (which could be attached to a workroom tap) should be available. It can be kept in a plastic bag pinned to the wall or in a drawer and labelled emergency eye-wash. In some situations direct washing under the tap may also be possible. Afterwards the casualty should be taken to hospital.
- **Burns:** Cool under gently running water until first aid arrives.
- **Toxic Gas:** Sit the casualty down in the fresh air.
- **Clothing on fire:** Smother the flames with a thick cloth or garment. A fire blanket is ideal but only use if very close by and, if necessary, push the casualty to the ground.
- **Electric shock:** Taking care for your own personal safety, break electrical contact switching off the electricity supply or pulling the plug. If it is necessary to move the casualty, break the contact with a wooden broom handle or window pole and wear rubber gloves or another non-conductive item.
- **Bad cuts:** Apply pressure on or as close to the cut as possible, using the fingers or a pad or cloth. Leave any embedded large pieces of glass etc. and press around them. Lower the casualty to a chair or the floor and raise the wound as high as possible.

In all cases it may be necessary to send the casualty to hospital for further treatment.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING

The following health and safety training is available to caretakers, cleaners and site managers in Children's Services premises: -

- Health and Safety Awareness Course for Caretakers – a one day course organised by Nottinghamshire County Council. Contact H&S team for details.
- Health and Safety Awareness Course for Headteachers and other school staff with health and safety responsibilities. Contact your H&S team or manager for details of course dates.

CONTROL OF CONTRACTORS

A number of different contractors, e.g. cleaners, catering staff and grounds maintenance contractors are likely to visit the premises either daily or from time to time. The caretaker will, in some cases, oversee the work of these contractors (e.g. Nottinghamshire County Council Catering cleaning and landscape staff) and liaise with their line manager regarding working arrangements and standards of work.

It is important that the caretaker liaises closely with contractors to ensure that the day to day activities of the premises/establishment are not disrupted. The following points should be considered: -

- Consider the nature of the work - where and when it will be carried out?
- Will access and egress be affected?
- Will pupils be affected in any way? e.g. playground areas
- Contractors may use equipment owned by the premises. Such equipment must be suitable for the job and properly maintained.
- If equipment has been installed, safe operating procedures, maintenance routines etc must be clearly identified and understood involving, where appropriate, the hand over of necessary documentation.
- Contractors and sub-contractors should be made aware of evacuation and emergency procedures.

When a contractor leaves the premises the caretaker should check that all equipment and materials have been removed and those working areas have been left in a safe condition. Any damage to fixtures, fittings, floor surfaces etc. should be made good or reported to the premises manager and the area secured if necessary.

Further information on contractor control and selection is available in Section B10 of the Health and Safety Manual, Control of Contractors.

LONE WORKING

The caretaker's duties will often involve working alone for some periods.

The following precautions should be taken in such circumstances:

- Let people know where you are going and when you will be back.

- Keep regular contact between yourself and another person using either a telephone or radio.
- Bring into use other automatic warning devices, which raise the alarm in case of an emergency and which are operated manually or automatically by absence of activity.
- Supervisors may wish to periodically visit people working alone.

Section B30 of the Health and Safety Manual contains detailed guidance on assessing the risks associated with lone working.

SITE SECURITY

As a key holder for the premises, the caretaker has a particular responsibility for site security especially where evening lettings and weekends or holiday periods are concerned. The main aim of keeping the school site secure is to prevent unauthorised entry, to detect unauthorised entry, to protect property and to prevent the spread of fire.

Control measures that can be put in place to maintain site security are: patrolling the school premises, making use of safes, locks, intruder alarms and secure stores. See Section B2 of Health and Safety Manual for further detail on security measures.

The whole school site, doors, windows and perimeter fence should be locked at the end of the day. If any lettings or functions take place during the evening all unused areas should be kept locked.

Formalised maintenance procedures are necessary to ensure that the fences, doors, windows etc. are kept in good working order. A checking and locking procedure at the end of the day should be enforced. This should be carried out by the caretaker who should ensure that other persons, e.g. cleaners, are not left to lock up.

Intruders

If an intruder is found on the premises the caretaker should decide if the person has a lawful right to be there. Outside of school working hours it may be acceptable to assume this.

If an intruder refuses to leave the premises when challenged, the caretaker should consider contacting the police for assistance. Should the intruder display abusive, threatening or aggressive behaviour, cause damage to property or commit an actual physical assault, police assistance should be sought at once.

Do not attempt to forcibly evict or detain an intruder. It is important that the caretaker makes a reasoned judgement of the situation based on the particular circumstances.

Any incidents should be reported to the Headteacher/premises manager.

SCHOOL CARETAKING

WORKING AT HEIGHT

INTRODUCTION

Caretakers undertake a wide range of tasks involving working at height e.g.

- changing light bulbs
- changing batteries in clocks
- painting and decorating
- minor maintenance and repairs
- putting up posters/decorations
- opening, closing windows
- window cleaning
- gaining access to roofs – clearing guttering and retrieving objects

Hazards

The hazards associated with working at height are:

- Falling from height
- Falling through roofs
- Unsafe or unstable equipment

More than half of the accidents involving falls from height occur because ladders etc. are not securely placed and fixed or because of poor standards of erection or misuse. Many of these happen when the work is of 30 minutes duration or less.

Controls

- Recommended access equipment appropriate for the particular task should be used.
- Before any roof is accessed, assess the integrity of the roof to sustain weight. If there is any doubt you should not proceed.
- Contact Property Services to ascertain the load bearing ability of the roof structure if in any doubt.
- See Section B36 of the Health and Safety Manual for information on the safe use of ladders and access equipment. See page 25 for guidance on choosing the appropriate equipment for the task.

SCHOOL CARETAKING

BUILDING AND SITE MAINTENANCE

INTRODUCTION

This Annexe is concerned with general building and site maintenance activities which are not dealt with as specific annexes.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE: PAINTING AND DECORATING

Hazards

Hazards associated with painting and decorating include:

- Working at Height
- Working with Paints and Solvents

Controls

When undertaking painting, first read the container label and relevant COSHH assessment. You should ensure that you take all precautionary controls listed, e.g. open all doors and windows during use. The COSHH assessment will also provide special instructions for storage, cleaning up spills and disposing of left over paint.

If the painting and decorating work requires use of ladders or other access equipment, refer to Annexe 1.

Flammable/ Combustible Materials

Some paints contain flammable or combustible materials. If this is so the label will read Warning Flammable or Caution Combustible. In either case you must take the following precautions:

- Open all windows and doors to increase ventilation and disperse fumes
- Eliminate all sources of flame, sparks and ignition
- Do not Smoke
- Do not use electrical equipment that could spark
- Make sure light bulbs are not exposed to sudden breakage
- Clean up any spills immediately and dispose of the used rags safely
- Always keep cans closed when not in use

Health Effects

Some paints are poisonous if ingested. Containers should always be tightly closed after use and stored in a secure area out of the reach of children.

You should prevent over exposure to solvent fumes which cause effects such as dizziness, headaches and nausea. Exposure is reduced by:

- Allowing adequate ventilation
- If your eyes water or you feel dizzy or nauseated leave the work area and breathe plenty of fresh air, if discomfort lasts or you have difficulty breathing see a doctor
- if you cannot get enough ventilation use a respirator

BUILDING MAINTENANCE: FLOOR LAYING AND REPAIRS

When purchasing, laying and repairing flooring the following safety aspects should be considered:

- Slip Resistance
- Resistance to Wear
- Chemical Resistance
- Level and Flatness
- Ease of Maintenance
- Flammability and Fire Safety

BUILDING MAINTENANCE: WORKING WITH ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS AND ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

Electricity can kill. Even non-fatal shocks can cause severe and permanent injury. Shocks from faulty equipment may lead to falls from ladders or other access equipment. Poorly maintained electrical installations and faulty electrical appliances can lead to fires.

Hazards

Hazards associated with electricity include:

- Electrocution
- Fire

Controls

Detailed guidance on fault action, use and maintenance of fixed electrical installations, portable electrical appliances, extension leads, adapters, fuses, residual current devices and plugs is contained in Section B3 of the Health and Safety Manual.

SITE MAINTENANCE: USE OF GRASS CUTTING EQUIPMENT

Hazards

Hazards associated with grass cutting equipment such as small motor and hand mowers are:

- Contact with moving parts of machinery
- Electricity
- Injuries to feet, eyes and hands

Controls

- Each item of equipment should be checked before use for wear or damage.
- If any defects are found they should be reported and the item of equipment should be taken out of use until remedial action is taken.
- The cutting gear of mowers should never be adjusted while they are running.
- When new machines are delivered advice should be sought on the type of ground where it can be used with safety.
- Correct PPE should always be worn e.g. protective footwear, eye protection and gloves.

SITE MAINTENANCE: USE OF PESTICIDES

Use of Pesticides is subject to The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986. These Regulations are designed to protect people and the environment and enable informed official approval of pesticides as well as control of their marketing and use.

Hazards

- Inhalation or ingestion of toxic or harmful substances
- Skin Irritation

Controls

Only a competent person holding appropriate certification or qualification should use pesticides. Advice must be sought from the NCC Grounds Maintenance service on 01623 406820.

SITE MAINTENANCE: DRAINS AND GULLIES

Caretakers will be required periodically to remove leaves, debris etc from drains and gullies.

Where there is a build of uric scale in drains acid based cleaning products should **not** be used to unblock the drain as there is a risk of toxic gases forming through mixing acids with other chemicals. Competent contractors **must** be used to unblock drains in these circumstances.

SITE MAINTENANCE: LITTER

Hazards

Hazards that are associated with clearing litter are:

- Skin punctures caused by discarded needles, syringes etc. Needlestick injuries can cause Hepatitis, HIV and Tetanus viruses
- Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) caused by excessive use of e.g. tongs to pick up litter

Controls

- Appropriate PPE, e.g. gloves, should be worn.
- If discarded needles, syringes or lancets are found on the site, the procedure contained in Section B25 of the Health and Safety manual should be followed.
- Use tongs to clear litter for only relatively short periods at a time to minimise possibility of RSI.

SITE MAINTENANCE: SNOW AND LEAF CLEARANCE AND SALT SPREADING

Within Children's Services premises the caretaker is responsible for clearing the main access/egress routes from snow, ice and leaves. When severe weather is forecast the caretaker may be required to lay salt and grit in advance.

Hazards

Hazards associated with snow, leaf clearance and salt spreading are:

- Slips, trips and falls
- Manual handling injuries from lifting e.g. bags of salt or grit

Controls

- Suitable footwear and clothing
- Extra care should be taken in moving about on snow covered or slippery surfaces
- Use of suitable lifting and handling methods - see Section B1 of the Health and Safety Manual and earlier guidance in this document.

INCINERATORS

It is recognised that incinerators are in use on a number of Children's Services premises. In general the authority does not recommend the use of incinerators and regards them as an unwelcome feature on Children's Services premises. Where incinerators are used a written risk assessment should be carried out for both usage

and location. The assessment will dictate a safe system of work for the operation of the equipment.

SCHOOL CARETAKING

BOILER HOUSES AND SWITCH ROOMS

INTRODUCTION

Boiler houses and switch rooms are high fire risk areas and therefore the control measures outlined below should be complied with strictly.

BOILER HOUSES

Hazards

The hazards associated with boiler houses and heating plant are:

- Fire or Explosion
- Contact with fuel oil
- Electricity
- Lone working

Controls

Housekeeping

Boiler and plant rooms should always be kept clean and tidy.

Combustible Materials should never be stored in these areas. Boiler houses must not be used as e.g. offices, rest rooms, kiln rooms, storage or for any other purpose.

Never obstruct gangways - you or somebody else may have to get out quickly. Emergency situations may require immediate access to mains switches, gas isolation etc. so it is important that access and egress is maintained.

Air vents should always be kept open, clean and free from obstruction.

Boiler houses should be adequately lit. Steep steps should be fitted with a handrail.

Fire shut off valves and wires should be regularly checked for easy running. Never obstruct wires by using them to dry cleaning cloths on.

A 'No Admittance' Sign should be placed on the door to the boiler house. If you leave the boiler room you must ensure the door is locked. A spare key should be given to a responsible person in case of emergencies. Oil tank rooms should always be kept secure and a 'No Smoking' sign should be displayed.

Fire extinguishers should be provided and should be sited near but not too close to the hazard. See Section B19 of the Health and Safety Manual for detailed guidance on fire precautions.

Cleaning, Servicing, Maintenance and Operation

All instructions issued for the boiler plant must be displayed on a wall opposite the system to which it refers and must be complied with strictly.

Cleaning and servicing of electrical or moving parts must not be done without first switching off and then isolating them. A warning sign must be attached to isolation switches and the switches locked off if possible while repairs are being carried out. The sign and locks must remain in position until these have been completed.

Do not attempt to undertake work which is beyond the scope of your accountabilities or competence. Consult your school/establishment Property Surveyor for advice.

If any build up of fumes or smells occurs within the boiler room or elsewhere involving the heating plant, this must be reported at once to Property Services.

Personal Protective Equipment

Handling fuel oil requires protection for the hands, so always use rubber gloves or barrier creams.

SWITCH ROOMS

Rooms containing switch gear and control boxes should be kept free from combustible materials and must never be used as storage spaces.

Access to the switches must be maintained at all times and the area should be kept clean and well lit.

Switch gear rooms should be kept locked and only authorised persons should be allowed access. Similarly, electrical control boxes or points should be secured from unauthorised interference.

Lone Working

When working in these areas caretakers may work alone for some periods of time. See Section B30 of the Health and Safety Manual for more detailed guidance on the precautions that need to be taken when working alone.

SCHOOL CARETAKING
SWIMMING POOL MAINTENANCE

Hazards

The hazards associated with swimming pool maintenance are:

- Storage of chemicals
- Covering and uncovering pool
- Mixing of chemicals
- Storage of pool equipment

Controls

The Operational guidance 'Health and Safety in Swimming Pools, has been issued to all schools/establishments with pools.

This document is primarily concerned with the maintenance of the pool and the treatment of pool water. It should be referred to for detailed guidance on control measures required for all activities carried out by the Pool Manager.

SCHOOL CARETAKING

CLEANING AND FLOOR CARE

INTRODUCTION

Caretakers carry out a variety of general cleaning and floor care activities. These include cleaning of surfaces and fixtures as well as polishing and mopping of floors. This involves use of certain equipment, cleaning materials and cleaning products.

Hazards

Hazards associated with cleaning and floor care activities are:

- Slips, trips and falls
- Handling chemicals/preparations and cleaning products
- Chemical spillages
- Inhalation of fumes
- Electric cleaning equipment
- Fire

Controls

Slips, Trips and Falls

Slippery floors are dangerous so it is essential to follow the correct type of treatment as laid down in the 'Caretakers Manual' using appropriate products/equipment.

Areas that have been recently treated should be sectioned off where possible. 'Cleaning in Progress' signs should be placed in such a position to warn people of dangerous wet or soft areas of polish and seal.

Wet floors should be avoided as much as possible. Cleaning times should not conflict with periods of heavy traffic, e.g. at particular times during the school day or when the school is used for lettings or after school activities.

Handling Chemicals/Preparations and Cleaning Products

Before using any materials read the label on the container. All materials, whether chemicals or preparations, must only be used in the authorised way and for the approved purpose for which they are supplied and in accordance with the safety data sheets issued with them.

If you have any doubts about how to use a material do not use it until you have received advice from your NCC Technical Adviser.

Empty containers should never be used to store any material or liquid other than those stated on the label.

All materials should be kept in a locked store when not in use and the containers must be properly closed with no leaks. This prevents a situation where leaking containers combine their contents to produce toxic fumes in a closed room.

Containers should be kept upright and never stored on top of each other, they should never be stored in direct sunlight or next to a heater or heated pipes. A stock rotation of first in first out should be adopted and empty containers or old stocks of withdrawn lots should be disposed of safely.

Spillage of any chemicals should be mopped up immediately. Wet mops be washed daily and hung to dry and dry mops should be vacuumed after use.

Where polishes etc need to be thinned before use take proper care and refer to the label or any manufacturers leaflets which are supplied. Always add the product to water. If in doubt, seek advice.

Appropriate protective clothing must be worn. Gloves, goggles etc. should be worn depending on the hazard and in accordance with the COSHH instructions on container labels. See Section B15 of the Health and Safety Manual for more detailed general guidance on personal protective equipment.

Inhalation of Fumes

Floor treatments often have low flash points or toxic vapour dangers. Adequate general ventilation is essential.

Electric Cleaning Machines

No one should be allowed to use the machines unless properly trained. If training or instruction is required, contact your NCC Technical Adviser.

All cleaning machines supplied by Authority must have earth wires - check that they are not loose in the plug. The appropriate fuses must be used. If in doubt seek advice from a competent electrician. The items in most common use are: -

Floor Scrubber Polisher	13 amp
Floor Dryer	13 amp
VK 177 Vacuum	3 amp
Hoover 912 (industrial vacuum)	5 amp
All other industrial vacuums	13 amp

Electric cables should have no temporary joints or inner wires exposed. Trailing cables can be a hazard when machines are in use. Make sure that the cable is visible to others when you are unable to keep it out of the way of doors etc. by placing a warning sign where it will draw attention to the cable.

In wet areas, ensure that machine cables are not exposed to the wet.

Machines should not be left plugged in when unattended and when you leave a site you should always take the machine away with you and lock it in the appropriate store.

Any faults found which in the caretaker's opinion are beyond their competence to repair must be reported immediately. The faulty machine must be locked away and a warning sign fastened securely to the machine.

When replacing fuses and frayed cables always switch off and remove plug before touching anything connected to electricity. For more detailed guidance on general electrical safety refer to Section B3 of the Health and Safety Manual.

Fire

Cleaning and applicator cloths used with low flash point liquids are fire hazards if they are left screwed up. Wash them out and place in a closed tin if they are to be used again.

Machines also present a fire hazard and must be kept clean. Vacuum bags should be emptied regularly. A dirty machine with blocked air vents can overheat.

SCHOOL CARETAKING

STORAGE

INTRODUCTION

Storerooms, i.e. caretaker's storeroom or general storage areas, can present many hazards if not structured, located or maintained properly.

Hazards

The hazards associated with storage areas are: -

- Fire
- Manual handling injuries
- Objects falling onto feet

Controls

Storeroom Maintenance

Storage spaces should be equipped with appropriate means of keeping items in a tidy and accessible manner. Adequate lighting and ventilation should be installed.

If cleaning or combustible materials are stored a Haz Chem sign should be displayed.

Store rooms should be kept locked when not in use.

Waste or rubbish should not be kept inside but moved to a secure collection area as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Storeroom Size

Storerooms should be of a sufficient size to allow adequate storage of materials also taking into account other activities which may be carried out in that room e.g. moving and handling.

Racks and storage units should be easily accessible. Heavy or frequently used objects should not be stored at height and a safe means of access should be provided. These materials are best stored at waist height to allow easy handling, reducing the need to bend or reach.

Storage of Flammable Liquids

Flammable liquids should not be kept in large quantities. They should be stored in closed metal boxes that are clearly labelled.

Quantities of up to 50 litres of highly flammable liquids (flash point of less than 32°C) or 250 litres of flammable liquids (flash point of 32°C to 55°C) may be kept in any one room in an approved fire resistant bin or cupboard marked 'Highly Flammable' or 'Flammable'. The floor and shelves of the fire resistant cupboard should be lipped to contain leakage i.e. 110% volume of the vessel's normal storage capacity.

Petroleum based products with a flash point below 22°C are subject to the Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928 and require a petroleum licence for storage. A total quantity of no more than 15 litres (3 gallons) can however, be kept without a licence if it is kept in glass, metal, or earthenware containers with not more than 570mls (one pint) in each container. All containers of highly flammable liquids and mixtures should be stored away from combustible materials.

Storage of Hazardous Substances

All corrosive and toxic chemicals, including cleaning fluids must be kept in secure stores. Quantities in use should be restricted to the minimum necessary. Procedures for disposal and action in case of an emergency must be clearly set out where chemicals are used or stored.

SCHOOL CARETAKING

HEALTH AND SAFETY MONITORING

In order to ensure that Caretaking activities are as safe and risk free as reasonably practicable, there are a number of responsibilities placed on the Headteacher/Head of establishment. For example:

- Annual general risk assessments
- Annual inspection of equipment and plant, such as:-
 - Machinery
 - Ventilation Systems
 - Electrical Equipment

In addition to these annual inspections and checks there will also be a requirement to ensure the premises are safe and risk free by carrying out termly general inspections.

RECORD OF PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS (SCHOOL CARETAKING)

It will be necessary for the Headteacher to complete the form 'Record of Procedural Arrangements (School Caretaking)' at the start of each school year.

This document will list all staff with specific responsibilities and should be retained on the premises and produced if requested by external monitoring officers.

RECORD OF PROCEDURAL ARRANGEMENTS (SCHOOL CARETAKING)

1. COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

This form should be completed by the Headteacher/Head of Establishment

Initial

a) All caretaking staff have read Code of Practice.

b) All caretaking staff have received appropriate training/instruction for the activities in which they are involved.

2. RISK ASSESSMENT

a) The control measures described and associated texts are in place or alternative control measures/variations are outlined in section 4.

3. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

a) Potential emergency situations have been identified and appropriate procedures adopted.

4. ALTERNATIVE /ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES/VARIATIONS

These arrangements and assessments will be reviewed annually and whenever there is a significant change in the work activity or personnel.

Name: _____ (Headteacher/Head of Establishment)

Signature: _____

Date: _____