

Dunnet Forest Trust

Health and Safety Policy Statement

Executive Summary

This document comprises the Health and Safety Policy Statement for the Dunnet Forest Trust (DFT). It is based on HSE guidance and supercedes all previous policy statements and safety handbooks.

The health and safety policy statement is in three parts. The first part is a statement of intent, the second part provides details on who is responsible for safety and third part covers the arrangements for health and safety.

The risk assessments for generic and specific tasks flow from this policy statement as separate documents. The Golden Rules for Safety are included in this statement. These cover key aspects of all work in the forest in an easy to read manner.

Part 1 Statement of Intent

This is the health and safety policy statement of Dunnet Forestry Trust.

Our health and safety policy is to:

- prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- manage health and safety risks in our workplace
- provide clear instructions and information, and adequate training, to ensure employees and volunteers are competent to do their work
- provide personal protective equipment
- consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety
- provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- ensure safe handling and use of substances
- maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- recognise and act on the challenges posed by the location and nature of the work in the forest, including issues such as welfare and lone working.
- recognise and act on factors brought by our volunteer workforce, such as age (old and young), health and disability
- review and revise this policy regularly

Part 2 Responsibilities for health and safety

Overall and final responsibility for health and safety lies with the Dunnet Forest Trust board of directors.

Day to day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice lies with the specific board member nominated for this purpose, whose name is displayed on the HSE notices located in the office and the woodshed.

All employees and volunteers should:

- co-operate with directors on health and safety matters;
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of their colleagues;
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed above).

Part 3 Arrangements for health and safety

Risk Assessments

We will complete relevant risk assessments and take action.

Where work is not covered by an existing risk assessment, a specific risk assessment must be drawn up and approved. A register of all current risk assessments and a copy of these assessments will be kept at the main work area in the forest.

We will review risk assessments when working habits or conditions change. This may include dynamic 'point of work' risk assessment and review in light of changing environmental conditions in the forest.

Training

We will give staff, volunteers and subcontractors health and safety inductions and provide appropriate training. This may be a combination of in-house training, external training or on-the-job training while working under supervision.

We will keep a record of staff and volunteer training.

Equipment

Equipment will be routinely inspected and maintained to keep it in good working order. Defective equipment will be taken out of use until repaired or disposed of.

Registration of Volunteers

Every volunteer must fill in a Volunteer Registration Form. This will provide information the Trust needs to be aware of, such as emergency contacts and an relevant medical details. Information given will be kept confidential and only for as long as the volunteer is actively working in the forest.

Consultation

We will consult staff routinely on health and safety matters as they arise.

Halting Unsafe Work/Evacuation

We will stop unsafe work, giving reasons why it has been stopped. We will evacuate the forest where extreme environmental conditions or other conditions pose an unacceptable risk to employees and volunteers.

Lone Working

We will aim to minimise lone working, while recognising at times it may be unavoidable. Where lone working must be carried out, we will put suitable controls in place.

Volunteer lone working using chainsaws is prohibited. All volunteers working with chainsaws must be accompanied. The accompanying person does not need to be chainsaw qualified.

Adverse Weather

Work in the forest is prohibited during periods when an amber warning for wind is in place. During other periods of adverse weather, the board will implement temporary controls considered necessary for the conditions on the day.

Fire Prevention

No fires are permitted in the forest unless agreed by the board of directors. Prohibition notices are placed at the forest entrances.

Fire extinguishers will be kept in accessible locations in the woodshed, containers where flammables are present and in the forest vehicles. Fire extinguishers will be routinely checked (quarterly) for condition.

First Aid

First aid kits are held in the woodshed and in the forest vehicles.

Reporting of Accidents and Near Misses

All accidents/near misses that occur while carrying out work for the Dunnet Forestry Trust must be recorded in the Accident Book stored in the wood shed. Anyone can record an incident in the book. The detail of what must be recorded is given in the inside cover of the book.

Completed accident reports are kept in the DFT offices at Castletown. They are legal documents and it must be kept secure and not made available to others unless requested to do so by the HSE.

If the accident is such that it must reported under RIDDOR- 'Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences,' details of reporting this are given in the inside cover of the book.

Although it is not a legal requirement, if made aware of an accident or near miss to a member of the public sustained while they were in the forest, this should also be recorded.

All accidents/near misses recorded must be reported to the DFT Board. All accidents or near misses are investigated to see what lessons can be learnt for the prevention of any reoccurrence. When investigating, use is to be made of the proforma sheet appended. On completion, the report will be forwarded to the DFT board for discussion and further action.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

The working policy for control of substances harmful to health will be to make use of the technical information supplied with the substance for its safe use and storage. Where information is not supplied, a Safety Data Sheet will be obtained.

A COSHH risk assessment will be drawn up for hazardous substances in use and kept at the point of use.

Before using any substance listed, the user must have read and understood the assessment, taken any precautions required, including any PPE needed.

Children and Young Persons

Children are any person under the age of sixteen. A young person is any person who is 16 or 17 years old.

Children and young people are more vulnerable and at risk of injury for reasons such as:

- lack experience or maturity
- not have reached physical maturity and lacking strength
- be eager to impress or please people they work with
- be unaware of how to raise concerns

Therefore, extra consideration must be given when carrying out a risk assessment for any activity involving them.

Due to the severity of the hazards, children are not permitted to take part in or assist with any of the following: felling operations, chainsaw operations of any kind, timber extraction operations using the powered winch and ropeworks.

Young people are permitted to assist in these operations only if directly supervised by an suitably qualified and experienced adult who is not taking part in the operations (i.e. solely focussed on one to one supervision of the young person).

HEALTH AND SAFETY LEAFLET FOR VOLUNTEERS

(To be given to all new volunteers and up-dated as needed)

- Every volunteer must fill in a **Forest Volunteer Registration Form**. Any information given will be kept confidential and only for as long as the volunteer is still actively working in the Forest.
- **Report all injuries.** Use the Accident Book located in the wood shed to do this. First aid kits are located in the woodshed and in the forest vehicles. Use them when needed. Always summon medical help in an emergency.
- Risk Assessments for all work in the forest are on our website and in the woodshed in paper copy.
- **DO NOT CARRY OUT ANY CHAINSAW OPERATIONS YOU DO NOT HAVE A CERTIFICATE FOR, UNLESS WORKING UNDER SUPERVISION. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**
- **VOLUNTEERS MUST NOT CARRY OUT CHAINSAW WORK ON THEIR OWN. ALWAYS HAVE SOMEONE WITH YOU. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS RULE.**
- **Do not carry out any work or operate any machinery you are not suitably qualified and experienced for, unless working under supervision of someone who is trained and qualified for the task. This is especially important for work with power tools.**
- **Do not carry out any work you feel is unsafe or you are unsure about. STOP AND SEEK ADVICE. IF IN DOUBT ABOUT IT, ASK ABOUT IT.**
- **Work with a buddy.** If you are working alone, tell someone where you are going and carry a mobile phone. Make sure someone has the number.
- **Always check your tools and equipment are in good order before you use them.**
- **Always wear the Personal Protective Equipment required for the job.** If in doubt, ask or refer to the risk assessment for the job. . Hard hats with face shields and ear defenders are kept in the Log Shed and are available for use by all volunteers.
- **Dress for the weather and be aware of conditions around you.** Stop work if conditions become hazardous. Take a break if you're becoming tired, too hot, too cold or soaked.
- **Be aware of the public.** Protect them from the risks of the work you are doing. Use barriers, signs and stop work if members of the public enter your work area. Be polite but firm in directing members of the public away from hazards. **Where work encroaches on an established path, it must be closed off.**
- **When you go home, CHECK FOR TICKS.**
- Do not work during severe weather ie: if an amber warning for wind is in place.
- No smoking in the woodshed or when fuelling.
- Children (people under 16 years old) are not permitted to take part in or assist with any of the following: felling operations, chainsaw operations of any kind, timber extraction operations using the powered winch and ropeworks.

Young people (16 to 17 years old) are permitted to assist in these operations only if directly supervised by an suitably qualified and experienced adult who is not taking part in the operations (i.e. solely focussed on one to one supervision of the young person).

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT PRO-FORMA

Accident Report Number:
Date of accident
Background
Findings
Lessons Learned & Changes To Be Made

**FIRE PREVENTION NOTICE
(To be displayed in office)**

The fire prevention and fire emergency actions of the Castlehill Heritage Centre are applicable to this office.

In addition

Smoking is not allowed in the office.

Keep the office tidy – do not allow the accumulation of combustible material.

No flammable liquids or gases are to be stored in the office.

Record of Review

Date	Changes	Reviewed By
June 2025	None	S Frame