

RCVS Knowledge Health and safety policy

Overview

RCVS Knowledge believes that a safe work environment is fundamental and as such acknowledges the responsibility placed on it by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other legal requirement in respect of health & safety. The general intentions, approach, criteria and principles upon which it bases its action are reflected in the RCVS Knowledge Health & Safety policy.

Policy statement

RCVS Knowledge is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for its staff and anyone who may be affected by its activities. The CEO is responsible for ensuring that risks to health and safety are properly identified and controlled in conformity with RCVS Knowledge policy.

Key objectives are to:

- assess and control risks
- inform staff of the risks and to provide training where necessary
- ensure that adequate resources are allocated
- involve all staff in the management of health and safety risks
- review the effectiveness of the arrangements
- record all staff health and safety training.

Staff procedures

Whilst RCVS Knowledge will make every effort to meet its legal and policy obligations, it can only be fully effective with the support and co-operation of all staff. The Health and Safety at Work Act places a legal responsibility on all members of staff to do everything possible to prevent accidents and injury to themselves and others.

Detailed below are a number of ways in which you can help in the implementation of this policy by:

- Using office machinery and safety equipment in a proper manner and complying with instructions on its use.
- Reporting accidents to the safety officer (RCVS facilities manager) immediately they occur.
- Familiarising yourself with the facilities provided by RCVS for your health and safety at work e.g. safety equipment, identity of the safety officer and first aiders and location of emergency exits and fire extinguishers.

Lone/home working

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Definition: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone working as ‘those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision or contact with others’. Lone working is deemed to be working in a situation where there are no other people who could reasonably be expected to give immediate assistance in the event of accident or emergency.

Examples include:

- A person working alone for long periods where they are physically isolated from colleagues and without access to immediate assistance.
- Someone who works alone outside of normal office hours.
- Mobile working away from the office, i.e. at another location or at an event.

Classification of lone working activity:

1. Basic: Where the lone working is confined to conventional desk work at the usual place of work, outside of normal hours, a basic risk management assessment should suffice including arrangements for confirming satisfactory arrival and departure from premises.
2. Advanced: Where activity is more involved or may include an element of physical or other manual activity, including circulation within the premises, then a more formal risk assessment should be carried out by the responsible line manager with advice from the facilities department, if necessary, to ensure the scope of the activity and the procedures involved are fully understood. In this instance the risk assessment, which should be suitable and sufficient, and look at all ‘reasonable foreseeable risks’.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, employers have a responsibility to manage the risk to lone workers, and a risk assessment may be required where staff are exposed to risk because there is no one to assist them in the event of an emergency. This applies to all employees, permanent or temporary, and relates to lone working on RCVS Knowledge premises (or other approved locations) or at night or at weekends. Where extended periods of authorised lone working take place at home, staff should complete the home working self-assessment questionnaire.

Other controls are also employed where RCVS Knowledge staff are engaged in attendance on exhibition stands or similar events, where venue organisers also exercise their own health and safety requirements.

When authorising lone working activities, managers should first satisfy themselves as to the reason for the lone working requirement with a record kept of the scale and frequency of the activities undertaken to help identify any developing trends that need attention.

Contact & Reporting Procedures:

1. For senior team members, communication should be via senior team MS Teams group, while all other staff should liaise with their line manager or an alternative if not available.
2. We will maintain a reporting system for staff working alone on our premises, at events and at night or at weekends.
3. Staff working alone at Hardwick Street premises are required to maintain regular contact with their line manager.
4. Staff designated as home or hybrid workers will be required to complete a self-assessment questionnaire addressing issues including physical health and safety arrangements.

Version control			
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03.2026	DRAFT 2026 V.01	Amended format and small changes to links and text, added version control	Approved by Board March 2026