



Employee Handbook & Subcontractor Standards

SOLP0001 v1.1

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SOL SERVICES EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK & SUBCONTRACTOR STANDARDS

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Introduction

I am pleased to welcome you to our Company. This handbook contains the rules, policies and procedures relating to your employment with the Company and explains what you can expect from us as your employer and what is expected from you in return. Unless otherwise specified, contents of section one of the Handbook are general information and do not form part of your contract of employment. Unless otherwise specified the policies found in section two form part of your employment contract.

We reserve the right to review, revise, amend or replace the contents of this Handbook and introduce new policies from time to time reflecting the changing needs of the business.

Unless the context requires otherwise, employees are usually referred to in the masculine for brevity and convenience. This is intended to include female employees.

If you have any queries on any aspect of this Handbook or on any other matter relating to the terms of your employment, you should raise them immediately with your manager.

We wish you every success in your career with us.



Equal Opportunity Statement

The Company is committed to the principle and practical implementation of equal opportunity in employment. Accordingly, management will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development, redundancy consideration and promotion procedures result in no job applicant or employee receiving less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, religious or philosophical belief, age, disability, trade union membership or non-membership, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, maternity or pregnancy, marital status, or being a part time worker.

The objective is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, and otherwise treated solely based on their relevant aptitudes, skills, and abilities. Management has the primary responsibility for successfully meeting these objectives by:

- not discriminating unlawfully in the course of employment against employees or job applicants;
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination; and
- bringing to the attention of employees that they will be subject to disciplinary action for unlawful discrimination of any kind.

You have the responsibility of ensuring that you assist the Company in successfully achieving these objectives by:

- not discriminating unlawfully in the course of employment against fellow employees, customers, suppliers or members of the public with whom you come into contact during the course of your duties;
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination; and reporting any unlawful discriminatory action to your manager or the Company's human resources advisors.

The successful achievement of these objectives necessitates a contribution from everyone, and all employees have an obligation to report any act of unlawful discrimination known to them.



Section One

Your Employment with Sol Services

Probation

For the period of your probation your manager will keep in touch with you to ensure you are being given all necessary assistance to perform your job well. Your manager will review your progress at the end of your probationary period at which point your position may be confirmed. If at the end of the probationary period you have not reached the required standards, we may either extend the probationary period in order that remedial action may be taken or terminate your employment. If after an extension of a probationary period, you continue to underperform to Company expectations and standards your employment by the Company will be terminated.

Other Employment

You are required to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities during your hours of work to your duties with the Company and may not undertake any other work during this time.

You may not without the prior consent of a director (which will not be unreasonably withheld) engage in any business or employment which could be considered to impair your ability to act at all times in the best interests of the Company, outside your hours of work.

If you do engage in any other employment, you must notify your manager in writing of hours worked elsewhere to enable the Company to comply with its statutory obligations.

You shall not at any time during your employment, either on your own behalf (whether alone or in partnership), or as an employee, agent, director or consultant of any other person, partnership, business, firm or corporation, engage in any other trade, business, profession, or fee earning activity, without the prior written permission of a director of the Company, such consent not to be unreasonably withheld.



Sickness Absence

Notification Procedure

Absence for reasons of sickness must be notified as soon as possible, by telephone and in person. Notifications by text, email or third party are not acceptable unless there are exceptional circumstances. Contact must be made before 7.30am on the first day of your absence to your manager. Unless otherwise agreed, this procedure should be followed on a daily basis for each day of absence in the same absence period.

In cases of sickness of less than seven days' duration (including non-workdays), you must complete a self-certification form immediately upon return to work. This can be obtained from your manager. Where the absence is expected to continue or lasts for a period in excess of seven consecutive days (including non-workdays) a Fitness to Work Statement will be required. Thereafter the requirement for a Fitness to Work Statement will continue throughout your period of ill health absence until your return.

Where more than three periods of "uncertified" absence occur in any 12-month period, you may be required to obtain, at your own expense, a private medical certificate from your doctor. This must be made available to your manager at the earliest possible time.

Where the Company is concerned by the level of your absence, it may require you to undergo a medical examination to determine your continued suitability to carry out your contractual duties. If you attend a medical examination at the Company's request, you acknowledge and agree that you will sign a release form for the final report within five working days of the completion of the report.

Where the reason for your absence is known prior to the absence occurring (e.g. hospital treatment/day care), you must provide your manager with written supporting documentation.

During any illness the Company reserves the right to telephone you, or to make pastoral visits from time to time.

Please note that falsification of sickness or unauthorised absence will lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the established procedures and, in extreme cases, may result in dismissal.

Statutory Sick Pay

Provided that you meet the qualifying criteria, you are entitled to receive SSP.

SSP is only paid for a day or days that you normally work. For example, if you work Monday to Friday and not at weekends, SSP will only apply to those five days. Employers cannot pay SSP for the first three days of your sickness, therefore payment starts on the fourth day and continues for as long as you are absent, subject to a maximum of 28 weeks.

This will be paid to you in exactly the same way as your normal wages/salary. The rate of payment depends on the State Benefit rate currently in force.

Where company sick pay (CSP) is paid it includes your right to SSP. CSP therefore has the effect of topping up SSP.



Example 1

If you were absent from work for three days, you would get no SSP. However, if you are eligible for CSP you would receive CSP in relation to those days.

Example 2

If you were absent from work for five days, you would get SSP on days four and five.

The payment you would receive for the week would be made up as follows. Payment for days one to three would be purely CSP. Payment for days four and five is a combination of SSP and CSP equalling the payment our current policy permits.

Company Sick Pay

CSP may be paid at the absolute discretion of the Company but is not a contractual right.

Periods of sickness which occur during holiday absences will be treated as sickness absence on the condition that you comply with the usual notification requirements and provide a medical certificate covering the dates claimed. In these circumstances the Company reserves the right to confine any payment to SSP only.

CSP is not payable in respect of:

- failure by an employee to fully meet sickness notification requirements;
- refusal to attend a welfare meeting, failure or refusal to attend a medical examination, failure to sign a medical report release form within the stipulated time;
- sickness arising during the first year of employment;
- elective surgery;
- ill health arising during emergency leave for dependents;
- ill health arising during a period of holiday;
- absence on grounds of ill health pending, during or immediately after a disciplinary or grievance investigation or hearing; or
- where notice of termination has been given or received.

Once CSP has been exhausted, sick pay will be paid in accordance with the Statutory Sick Pay Regulations (SSP). For the purposes of SSP, your qualifying days are the days you normally work. Employers cannot pay SSP for the first three days of your sickness absence, therefore payment starts on the fourth day, and continues for as long as you are absent, subject to a maximum of 28 weeks.



Employee Benefits and Rights

Holiday Entitlement

You are entitled to 30 days' holiday per year, inclusive of public and bank holidays.

The Company reserves the right to treat public holidays as normal working days. If this is the case, you will be entitled to take the day's holiday at another time.

Part time employees accrue annual holiday entitlement on a pro rata basis.

You will be awarded an extra day of holiday after five years of continuous service. The additional day will be added to the start of the next holiday year. Holiday entitlement will increase by an additional day thereafter to a maximum of 33 days at ten years' service. This is inclusive of public and bank holidays.

The Company's holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

Conditions Relating to Annual Holidays

On the termination of your employment any holiday accrued in that final leave year but not taken will be paid on a pro rata basis in proportion to each complete month of service in the holiday year prior to such termination. If you have taken more annual holiday entitlement than you have accrued during the final holiday year, the balance will be deducted from any outstanding pay.

For operational reasons you may be required to take up to four working days' holiday between Christmas and New Year.

Unless previously agreed with your manager you must not take more than ten working days' holiday at once. Holiday pay will be paid based on your normal weekly pay. You may be required to take any accrued holiday during any period of notice.

The Company encourages its employees to take holiday in the year in which it accrues and therefore unused holiday will only be carried forward to the next year by exception and with the written agreement of a director. Such holiday must be taken by the end of April and dates must be agreed with your manager in advance. There will be no payment for holiday accrued in one year but not taken.

All annual holiday entitlement must have prior approval and written authorisation from your manager on a first-served basis and the Company will respond as soon as possible to any holiday requests.

The Company may require you to take unused holiday during your notice period.



Family Friendly Rights

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave and Pay

You may be entitled to maternity/paternity/adoption leave and pay in accordance with the current statutory provisions. If you (or your partner) become pregnant or are notified of a match date for adoption purposes, you should notify your manager at an early stage so that your entitlements and obligations can be explained to you.

Right to Request Flexible Working

Employees with six months' continuous service have the statutory right to request to work flexibly. The request may be for a change in hours and/or times of work and/or to work from home. You may make only one request in a 12-month period and once it has been made the change is permanent. There is no right to go back to the original job terms unless it is mutually agreed between the parties.

If you wish to apply for flexible working arrangements in line with the current statutory provisions, you should apply in writing to your manager in the first instance explaining your request, its reasons and how you feel the Company could adapt to the impact of your proposed change. Please ask your manager for the Company guidance on flexible working. A meeting will be arranged within reasonable time to discuss and attempt to accommodate your request so that it suits both parties. Requests will be considered on a 'first come, first served' basis.

Time Off for Dependants

Employees are entitled to reasonable time off for unforeseen incidents involving a human dependant. This may be a member of your immediate family, a person for whom you are the primary carer, or where you are the only person who can provide assistance in a serious emergency.

The entitlement to time off in such circumstances is limited to what is reasonable to deal with the immediate problem and sort out any longer-term arrangements. This time off is unpaid. You are required to notify your manager at an early stage if you need to take time off for dependants.

Parental Leave

Parental leave is a right for parents to take unpaid time off work to look after their child's welfare. To qualify, you must have one year's service. Parents may take up to a maximum of 18 weeks unpaid leave up to the child's 18th birthday. You are required to give at least 21 days' notice before the intended start date. Entitlement to parent leave is per child born or adopted.

Shared Parental Leave

You may be entitled to take shared parental leave in line with the current statutory provisions. Shared parental leave allows the parents / adopters of a child to a maximum of 50 weeks of shared leave following the birth / placement of a child.

If you intend to take shared parental leave, you should notify your manager at an early stage so that your entitlements and obligations can be explained to you.



Time Off

Appointments

You are normally expected to ensure that any routine appointments made to visit the doctor, dentist, optician, and hospital are made in your own time, and outside normal working hours. In the event that this is not reasonably practicable, paid time off work will be allowed providing that the timing of the appointment causes as little disruption as possible (i.e. at the beginning or end of the working day). In some circumstances, the Company may require you to substantiate the appointment with an appointment card.

For health and safety reasons the Company recommends that if you have an appointment at the beginning of the day you ensure your manager is aware of the pre-arranged absence and is provided with an approximate time of arrival at work.

Extended Leave

When considering authorisation of extended leave, your timekeeping, attendance, and disciplinary record, as well as the needs of the business, which will be paramount at all times, will be taken into account. You must undertake to return to work by an agreed date. Failure to return as agreed (unless in exceptional circumstances) will be considered to be a fundamental breach of your contract of employment which will result in dismissal.

Public Duties

Under current employment legislation employees who hold certain public positions are entitled to reasonable time off during normal working hours to perform the duties associated with the position such as magistrates, local councillors, Statutory tribunal members etc. Employees are not, however, entitled to payment for this time.

Jury Service

Employees are entitled to time off work to fulfil their obligations with regard to jury service. In the event that you are summoned to attend for jury service, you must notify management as soon as you receive the jury summons, giving details of dates that you are required to attend court. In the event that you are retained on jury service for a prolonged period of time, you have an obligation to notify management and should keep in regular contact with your immediate manager throughout this period.

You are expected to return to normal working as soon as you are released from your duties. You are reminded to ensure that expense claims are submitted to the Court in accordance with the available allowances. You are not entitled to payment for this time off as you are allowed to claim expenses from the Court to cover your costs, and also compensation for loss of earnings.

Military Reservists

There is no right for military reservists to take additional time off to participate in military activities during peacetime.

Government legislation will apply where an employee, who is a registered member of the Army Reserves, is called to serve the country in time of war.



Lay-Offs and Short Time Working

The Company reserves the right to lay-off or introduce short time working as a way of handling temporary work shortages. A lay-off is where employees are not provided with work by the Company because there is a reduction in the requirements of the employer's business for work of the kind which the employee is employed to do and the situation is expected to be temporary. No payment will be made in these circumstances.

Short time working applies where the employee works for some of the week but is laid-off for the rest of the week. In these circumstances, the employee will only be paid for the hours actually worked.



General Rules and Procedures

Timekeeping

You are responsible for attending punctually for work in accordance with the hours defined within your Statement of main terms of employment.

If you are running late and anticipate that you will not arrive at work until after your start time you are required to telephone your manager and inform the Company of your reason for lateness and your expected time of arrival. Notifications by text, email or third party are not acceptable unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you are driving when you make the notification you are reminded that any notifications must be made safely and in accordance with legal requirements.

You may not leave work prior to your normal finishing time without permission from your manager. In the event that you require time away from work during your normal working period, you must report to your immediate manager upon leaving and returning to work. Persistent unauthorised lateness will result in disciplinary action. Your salary may also be reduced accordingly.

Data Protection

You acknowledge and agree that the Company will hold certain information about you in your personal file. You are entitled under statute to access copies of certain information contained in the file and to other information which the Company holds about you pursuant to your employment hereunder (whether in computerised or manual record form) subject to certain restrictions imposed by law.

It is a condition of your employment that you provide the Company with current and accurate contact information, including your home phone number and address and the home phone number and address of the person you would wish to have notified in the event of an accident, illness or other emergency affecting you whilst at work.

No Smoking Policy

In accordance with the law our premises are no smoking zones.

Breach of the rules is considered to be gross misconduct and can lead to summary dismissal.

This includes the use of e-cigarettes and vaporisers.

The same rules apply if you are working on client sites.

Dress Code

Employees who are provided with a uniform are required to wear it at all times whilst working. It is your responsibility to keep the uniform clean and in good repair.

For all other employees our normal dress policy is business smart casual. This promotes a relaxed work environment, which should be more conducive to the type of work we do. Whilst we enjoy a business casual environment, we do regard our dress to reflect respect for the daily interaction among staff, clients, prospects, and other visitors.



Management reserves the right to require employees who work in highly visible departments or those employees who are in close contact with our customers to wear more formal business attire rather than permitting casual dress.

Men

We regard as smart-casual:

- Business suits
- Chinos, or gabardine trousers
- Black jeans
- Shirts with collars
- Polo shirts
- Sweaters with collared shirts underneath
- Jackets

What you should not wear:

- T-shirts, vest tops, sweatshirts
- Denim
- Shorts
- Sports clothes, track suit bottoms, sport socks
- Logo clothing
- Hiking boots, deck shoes, trainers or sandals
- Hats or caps of any kind
- Torn or ripped clothing

Women

We regard as smart-casual:

- Business suits and dresses
- Tailored trousers, chinos, skirts
- Black jeans
- Blouses, semi-formal tops
- Sweaters or cardigans
- Jackets

What you should not wear:

- T-shirts, vest tops, sweatshirts, crop-tops
- Denim
- Shorts and very short skirts
- See through materials, bare shoulders, or any kind of glitter
- Sports clothes, track suit bottoms, sport socks
- Leggings and combat trousers
- Logo clothing
- Trainers, deck shoes, flip-flops or any other beach type sandals
- Hats or caps of any kind
- Torn or ripped clothing

Management reserves the right to require employees who are inappropriately dressed to change their clothing.



Alcohol, Drugs and Psychoactive (or mind altering) Substances

If your ability to perform your normal duties at work is significantly impaired, or if there is a risk of you endangering yourself or others as a result of the effects of either alcohol, drug abuse or psychoactive substances; or if you have either alcohol, illegal drugs or psychoactive drugs in your possession at work, you may be summarily dismissed or be subject to disciplinary procedures. In this context "drug abuse" refers to the use of illegal drugs and the misuse, whether deliberate or unintentional, of prescribed drugs, legal highs, psychoactive (or mind altering) substances and substances such as solvents.

The Company reserves the right to implement drug screening as part of the medical examination process.

Expenses

You are expected to use the most cost-effective transport methods and routes when conducting business. The Company will reimburse you for approved expenses wholly and necessarily incurred in the course of your work.

Any special ad hoc arrangements made to suit particular circumstances will not be considered to set any form of precedent.

Payment of expense claims will be delayed or withheld where they are not properly substantiated. Fraudulent claims will result in dismissal.

Business Travel

Travel should be undertaken by the most cost-effective method possible. Rail travel should be on standard fare only.

Travel between your home and place of work is a personal expense and is therefore not reimbursable. If you are required to use your own car for travel on Company business, the Company will reimburse you for an agreed rate per mile for journeys undertaken as well as all necessary parking charges. Mileage claims should be calculated as if the journey had commenced/finished at your normal place of work.

Meals

If you are required to be away from home overnight on Company business, an evening meal is chargeable to the Company.

If you have sought the prior approval from your manager to entertain a guest at lunch, the cost of this will also be reimbursed to you provided that it is reasonable.

Accommodation

In the event that you are required to stay overnight on Company business and this is agreed prior to your departure, you are expected to choose accommodation that is of a reasonable standard and cost. The Company will not cover the cost of accommodation in a luxury or deluxe hotel unless this has been expressly agreed before the expense is incurred.



Making a Protected Disclosure

Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as “qualifying disclosures”. Disclosures are qualifying disclosures where it can be shown that the Company commits a “relevant failure” by:

- committing a criminal offence;
- failing to comply with a legal obligation;
- creating a miscarriage of justice;
- endangering the health and safety of an individual
- causing environmental damage; or
- concealing any information relating to the above

These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen.

If you become concerned about some breach in relation to the matters listed above, you should in the first instance report any concerns to your manager who will treat the matter with complete confidence.

If you are still not satisfied with the explanation or reason given, you should raise the matter with the appropriate organisation or body, e.g. the Police, the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive or Social Services Department.

The Company encourages employees to use the procedure if they are genuinely concerned about any wrong doing at work. However, if the procedure has not been invoked in the public interest, or the employee’s belief as to the scale of wrong-doing cannot be said to be a reasonable belief, then it will make employees liable to the disciplinary process. Such behaviour will be treated as gross misconduct and will, if the case is found to be substantiated, result in a disciplinary sanction up to and including summary dismissal.



Termination of Employment

Notice Periods

If you have committed an act of gross misconduct, you may be dismissed without notice. In other cases, you are entitled to receive the following minimum periods of notice from the Company:

Continuous Service	Notice
During the probationary period	One week
Upon the successful completion of your probationary period but under five years'	3 Months

For details of the notice you are required to give, please see Appendix 1 of your individual statement of main terms and conditions of employment.

The Company reserves the right to pay wages in lieu of notice which will be your normal salary for the relevant notice period after deduction of Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions.

During your notice period the Company may in its absolute discretion take any one or more of the following steps in respect of all or an unexpired period of notice:

- Require you to comply with such conditions as it may specify in relation to attending at or remaining away from your place of work or the Company's other places of business.
- Assign you to other duties.
- Withdraw any powers vested in, or duties assigned to you.
- Require you to take Garden Leave.

During all, or any part of an unexpired period of notice, you should not work for any other party without the prior written consent of the Company. In the event of Garden Leave, you will make yourself available during office hours to carry out any work the Company shall request you to undertake.

You shall not, under any circumstances, have any right to require the Company to make payment in lieu of notice.

You must return all property belonging to or relating to the Company or its clients in your possession or control when requested to do so and in any event immediately at the end of your employment. For example, this will include vehicles, tools, phones, documents, correspondence, equipment, computer discs and software, specifications, reports, records, credit cards, keys, passes, lists of clients, address lists, address books, files, books, and data of any kind including copies of these things.

During or at any time after the employment ends, you agree that you will co-operate with any request from the Company to provide access (including passwords) to any computer, mobile device or other equipment in your possession or under your control which contains information or materials relating to the Company or any of its clients, employees or suppliers. This obligation applies to equipment owned by the Company, by you or anyone else. You will permit the Company to inspect, copy or remove any material relating to the business of the Company.

Section Two



Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

Introduction

The Company is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in its business activities. This policy outlines the Company's position on preventing and prohibiting bribery, in accordance with the Bribery Act 2010. The Company will not tolerate any form of bribery by, or of, its employees, agents or consultants or any person or body acting on its behalf. Senior management is committed to implementing effective measures to prevent, monitor and eliminate bribery.

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to all employees and officers of the Company, and to temporary workers, consultants, contractors, agents and subsidiaries acting for, or on behalf of, the Company ("associated persons"). Every employee and associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the Company is responsible for maintaining the highest standards of business conduct. Any breach of this policy is likely to constitute a serious disciplinary, contractual and criminal matter for the individual concerned and may cause serious damage to the reputation and standing of the Company.

The Company may also face criminal liability for unlawful actions taken by its employees or associated persons under the Bribery Act 2010. All employees and associated persons are required to familiarise themselves and comply with this policy, including any future updates that may be issued from time to time by the Company.

The Company is committed to complying with the Bribery Act 2010 in its business activities. Under the Bribery Act 2010, a bribe is a financial or other type of advantage that is offered or requested with the:

- intention of inducing or rewarding improper performance of a function or activity;
- knowledge or belief that accepting such a reward would constitute the improper performance of such a function or activity.

A relevant function or activity includes public, state or business activities or any activity performed in the course of a person's employment, or on behalf of another company or individual, where the person performing that activity is expected to perform it in good faith, impartially, or in accordance with a position of trust.

A criminal offence will be committed under the Bribery Act 2010 if:

- an employee or associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the Company offers, promises, gives, requests, receives or agrees to receive bribes; or
- an employee or associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the Company offers, promises or gives a bribe to a foreign public official with the intention of influencing that official in the performance of his/her duties (where local law does not permit or require such influence); and the Company does not have the defence that it has adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery by its employees or associated persons.
- All employees and associated persons are required to comply with this policy, in accordance with the Bribery Act 2010.



What is Prohibited?

The Company prohibits employees or associated persons from offering, promising, giving, soliciting or accepting any bribe. The bribe might be cash, a gift or other inducement to, or from, any person or company, whether a public or government official, official of a state-controlled industry, political party or a private person or company. The bribe might be made to ensure that a person or company improperly performs duties or functions (for example, by not acting impartially or in good faith or in accordance with their position of trust) to gain any commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for the Company in either obtaining or maintaining Company business, or to gain any personal advantage, financial or otherwise, for the individual or anyone connected with the individual.

This prohibition also applies to indirect contributions, payments or gifts made in any manner as an inducement or reward for improper performance, for example through consultants, contractors or sub-contractors, agents or sub-agents, sponsors or sub-sponsors, joint-venture partners, advisors, customers, suppliers or other third parties.

Records

Employees and, where applicable, associated persons, are required to take particular care to ensure that all company records are accurately maintained in relation to any contracts or business activities, including financial invoices and all payment transactions with clients, suppliers and public officials.

Due diligence should be undertaken by employees and associated persons prior to entering into any contract, arrangement or relationship with a potential supplier of services, agent, consultant or representative in accordance with the Company's procurement and risk management procedures.

Employees and associated persons are required to keep accurate, detailed and up-to-date records of all corporate hospitality, entertainment or gifts accepted or offered.

Facilitation Payments

The Company prohibits its employees or associated persons from making or accepting any facilitation payments. Facilitation payments are distinct from an official, publicly available fast-track process. Facilitation payments, or offers of such payments, will constitute a criminal offence by both the individual concerned and the Company under the Bribery Act 2010.

Where a public official has requested a payment, employees or associated persons should ask for further details of the purpose and nature of the payment in writing. If the public official refuses to give these, this should be reported immediately to the Operations Director.

If the public official provides written details, the Operations Director will consider the nature of the payment. Legal advice may be sought by the Company.

If it is concluded that the payment is a legitimate fee, for example part of a genuine fast-track process, the Company will authorise the employee to make the payment.

Where the Operations Director considers that the request is for a facilitation payment, the employee or associated person will be instructed to refuse to make the payment and notify the public official that the employee or associated person is required to report the matter to the Company and relevant authority.



The Company will seek the assistance of the relevant employee in its investigation and may determine that the matter should be referred to the prosecution authorities.

If an employee or associated person has any other concerns about the nature of a request for payment, he/she should report it to The Operations Director using the reporting procedure set out in this policy.

Corporate entertainment, gifts, hospitality and promotional expenditure

Principle

The Company permits corporate entertainment, gifts, hospitality and promotional expenditure that is undertaken:

- for the purpose of establishing or maintaining good business relationships;
- to improve the image and reputation of the Company; or
- to present the Company's [goods/services] effectively.

This is subject to the requirement that such expenditure is:

- arranged in good faith, and
- not offered, promised or accepted to secure an advantage for the Company or any of its employees or associated persons or to influence the impartiality of the recipient.

The Company will authorise only reasonable, appropriate and proportionate entertainment and promotional expenditure.

This principle applies to all employees and associated persons.

Procedure

Employees and, where relevant, associated persons should submit requests for proposed hospitality and promotional expenditure well in advance of proposed dates to the Operations Director.

Employees are required to set out in writing:

- the objective of the proposed client entertainment or expenditure;
- the identity of those who will be attending;
- the organisation that they represent; and
- details and rationale of the proposed activity.

The Company will approve business entertainment proposals only if they demonstrate a clear business objective and are appropriate for the nature of the business relationship. The Company will not approve business entertainment where it considers that a conflict of interest may arise, or where it could be perceived that undue influence, or a particular business benefit was being sought (for example, prior to a tendering exercise).



Any gifts, rewards or entertainment received or offered from clients, public officials, suppliers or other business contacts should be reported immediately to The Operations Director. In certain circumstances, it may not be appropriate to retain such gifts or be provided with the entertainment and employees and associated persons may be asked to return the gifts to the sender or refuse the entertainment, for example, where there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest. As a rule, small tokens of appreciation, such as flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

If an employee or associated person wishes to provide gifts to suppliers, clients or other business contacts, prior written approval from the line manager is required, together with details of the intended recipients, reasons for the gift and business objective. These will be authorised only in limited circumstances and will be subject to a cap of £50 per recipient.

Employees and, where applicable, associated persons must supply records and receipts, in accordance with the Company's expenses policy.

Charitable and Political Donations

The Company considers that charitable giving can form part of its wider commitment and responsibility to the community. The Company supports several charities that are selected in accordance with objective criteria, following a risk assessment. The Company may also support fundraising events involving employees.

Employees and associated persons are not permitted to make any charitable and political donations to organisations on behalf of the Company without prior authorisation from The Operations Director.

What Practices are Permitted?

This policy does not prohibit:

- normal and appropriate hospitality and entertainment with clients (please see the Company's expenses policy); and
- the use of any recognised fast-track process that is publicly available on payment of a fee.

Any such practices must be proportionate, reasonable and made in good faith. Clear records must be kept.

Risk Management

The Company has established detailed risk management procedures to prevent, detect and prohibit bribery. The Company will conduct risk assessments for each of its key business activities on a regular basis and, where relevant, will identify employees or officers of the Company who are in positions where they may be exposed to bribery.

Procedure

The Company will identify high-risk areas, for example projects undertaken in high-risk countries, tenders for work and those working on high-value projects. Employees and associated persons are required to complete a bribery risk assessment form with The Operations Director when commencing a new project.



The Company will:

- regularly monitor "at risk" employees and associated persons;
- regularly communicate with "at risk" employees and associated persons;
- undertake extensive due diligence of third parties and associated persons; and
- communicate its zero-tolerance approach to bribery to third parties, including actual and prospective customers, suppliers and joint-venture partners.

Reporting Suspected Bribery

The Company depends on its employees and associated persons to ensure that the highest standards of ethical conduct are maintained in all its business dealings. Employees and associated persons are requested to assist the Company and to remain vigilant in preventing, detecting and reporting bribery.

Employees and associated persons are encouraged to report any concerns that they may have to [name of individual/the line manager/the compliance officer] as soon as possible. Issues that should be reported include:

- any suspected or actual attempts at bribery;
- concerns that other employees or associated persons may be being bribed; or
- concerns that other employees or associated persons may be bribing third parties, such as clients or government officials.

Procedure

A form is available at the 'Head Office' to allow employees to record any incidents of suspected bribery. Any such reports will be thoroughly and promptly investigated by the line manager in the strictest confidence. Employees and associated persons will be required to assist in any investigation into possible or suspected bribery.

Employees will also be required to comply with the Company's whistleblowing policy.

Employees or associated persons who report instances of bribery in good faith will be supported by the Company. The Company will ensure that the individual is not subjected to detrimental treatment as a consequence of his/her report. Any instances of detrimental treatment by a fellow employee because an employee has made a report will be treated as a disciplinary offence. An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, employees and associated persons should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to [name of individual/the line manager/the compliance officer].

Action by the Company

The Company will fully investigate any instances of alleged or suspected bribery. Employees suspected of bribery may be suspended from their duties while the investigation is being carried out. The Company will invoke its disciplinary procedures where any employee is suspected of bribery, and proven allegations may result in a finding of gross misconduct and immediate dismissal. The Company may terminate the contracts of any associated persons, including consultants or other workers who act for, or on behalf of, the Company who are found to have breached this policy.



The Company may also report any matter to the relevant authorities, including the Director of Public Prosecutions, Serious Fraud Office, Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office and the police. The Company will provide all necessary assistance to the relevant authorities in any subsequent prosecution.

Review of Procedures and Training

The Company will regularly communicate its anti-bribery measures to employees and associated persons. The Company will set up training sessions where applicable. The Operations Director is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Operations Director will monitor and review the implementation of this policy and related procedures on a regular basis, including reviews of internal financial systems, expenses, corporate hospitality, gifts and entertainment policies.

Employees and those working for, or on behalf of, the Company are encouraged to contact The Operations Director with any suggestions, comments or feedback that they may have on how these procedures may be improved.

The Company reserves the right to amend and update this policy as required. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy does not form part of employees' contracts of employment.



Adverse Weather Conditions

The Company recognises that adverse weather conditions can prevent employees from reaching their normal place of employment.

You are expected to make every reasonable effort to attend for work, but without compromising your health and safety. You should not put yourself at unnecessary risk and should use your own judgement and give due consideration to severe weather warnings.

Managers are expected to ensure that the safety of employees is not compromised in any way. A manager's decision will take account of any advice issued or sought from the police; weather centre; public transport and motoring organisations in relation to prevailing weather conditions and the advisability of travel. Managers also need to consider individual requests from people with a disability and/or caring responsibilities that may present additional barriers to attendance at work in bad weather conditions.

If you are unable to attend for work because of the poor weather conditions, you should report this as early as possible and no later than one hour after the time you would normally be expected to start work.

The following options will be considered.

- Working from home. In certain circumstances your manager may agree that you can work from home. This would be on the understanding that you can perform your normal duties.
- To take the day/s as annual leave
- To take the day/s as lieu time
- To work the appropriate extra hours unpaid
- To take unpaid leave
- A combination of the above
- Flexitime (where a scheme is operating)

Time Keeping

Where your manager is satisfied that you have genuinely been prevented from attending work punctually as a result of adverse weather, any lateness will not be penalised in term of sanctions.

Your manager will be responsible for deciding whether any request to leave early as a result of adverse weather is warranted, bearing in mind all available information including the infrastructure, home address and mode of transport of the employee concerned.

The loss of time will be managed by giving consideration to use of the appropriate options detailed above.



Communications

Using Company Systems

You should not use e-mail or Internet access to store, display, generate and/or pass on to others any material, which may be regarded as inappropriate, offensive or disrespectful to others, on grounds of race, sex, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity or because they advocate intolerance of others. The Company reserves the right to determine what it considers inappropriate.

The Company understands that it is not always possible to control the flow of such materials inwards from external e-mail users, but this does not remove the responsibility of internal users for any such material they pass on. Lack of knowledge of the contents of an attachment will not be accepted by the Company as an acceptable reason for the distribution of offensive material. You should therefore check all attachments before forwarding them on within the Company.

You may access the Internet for personal use before or after work or during your lunch break.

You may not shop online. Inappropriate and unauthorised use of Internet or email (this includes high levels of personal use) will be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

Internet

Where appropriate, duly authorised staff are encouraged to make use of the Internet as part of their official and professional activities. Attention must be paid to ensuring that published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in the Company's name. Where personal views are expressed, a disclaimer stating that this is the case should be clearly added to all correspondence. The intellectual property right and copyright must not be compromised when publishing on the Internet. The availability and variety of information on the Internet has meant that it can be used to obtain material reasonably considered to be offensive. The use of the Internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material, or material that is not work-related, leaves an individual liable to disciplinary action which could include summary dismissal.

General Use of E-mail

Company systems must be used for conducting the Company's business or for purposes authorised by management. The Company recognises that employees may sometimes also use emails for personal use. This will be tolerated, only where it is kept to a minimum, and does not, in the Company's judgement, encroach unreasonably on working time. Unauthorised bulk mailings are forbidden.

An email message, (however confidential and damaging), may be required to be disclosed by the Company, for example, in connection with litigation. Accordingly, employees must exercise caution in both what is said and the people to whom the e-mail is sent. You should not send potentially defamatory e-mail messages which criticise other individuals or organisations. Bear this in mind when composing e-mails; they should be factual, accurate and respectful.

Offers or contracts transmitted by e-mail are as legally binding on the Company as those sent on paper.



Though email, whether internal or external, may be a substitute for conversation, it must be remembered that things can look very different when in the written form. Therefore, emails should be written in a civil and professional tone. The Company will not tolerate bullying by email or "flame-mail". The use of capital letters, for example, is considered to be the equivalent of SHOUTING, the use of obscene language, swear words, or any offensive material is strictly prohibited.

External E-mail - Specifically Prohibited Activities

You may be authorised to access external networks (any external system or network, to include but not limited to, the Internet) using the Company's computer systems. This may include access using personal or home computer systems. In such cases, you may not send or permit to be sent, on behalf of the Company, any email, attachment, or posting which:

- uses unlicensed or specifically licensed software or other material that infringes the intellectual property rights of a third party for example, copying files or data onto your own machine or copying to a third party;
- contains information that is commercially sensitive or may have legal implications for the Company;
- constitutes on-line gambling;
- may damage the Company's reputation or its relationships with its clients;
- is defamatory about any company or individual;
- is illegal, obscene, pornographic, offensive, or damaging, or which may be considered by others to cause distress, sexual, racial, or other harassment or discrimination;
- may introduce viruses into the Company's system; and/or
- constitutes "junk" email or is posted to multiple news groups.

In addition, you may not use the Company's systems to search for, obtain or store information from any external network, which falls into the categories above. The above list is not exhaustive.

Monitoring

The Company reserves the right to monitor all traffic (including content, whether generated for business or personal reasons) passing through its systems. However, the Company will not invoke this right without a good reason to do so, for example if we have cause to believe that there has been a breach of the Company's policies or procedures (such as the downloading and distribution of pornographic material from the Internet), or that there has been criminal activity, or during the course of a disciplinary investigation, for training purposes, or where employees are on holiday or absent because of sickness. This list is not exhaustive.

Security

If you are away from your desk for any period and wish to avoid any risk of abuse of your PC, you should log off while you are absent and ensure that your PC is password protected. If you are using a laptop, ensure that it is locked away or secured using a password.

Otherwise there will be an assumption, in the first instance, that any material coming from or via your email address was generated and/or passed on by you.



Telephone Calls

The Company reserves the right to monitor or intercept all telephone calls passing through its systems, including content and usage, and whether business or personal. The Company will not invoke this right without good reason to do so.

The misuse of the Company's telephone systems will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

Company Mobile Phone

Employees issued with a Company mobile phone or those who have a mobile phone allowance must ensure the mobile phone is fully operational during working hours. It should be kept on your person and an answer phone service in use for times at which you are unable to take calls.

Mobile phones are issued for business use only. You may not, without the prior consent of the Company, use a mobile phone for personal calls or messages during working hours.

In accordance with the law you must not answer telephone calls or respond to messages whilst driving unless appropriate hands-free devices are being used.

Should the mobile phone be lost or stolen a senior manager should be notified immediately.

Personal Calls

The Company's telephone systems are provided for business purposes; however, the Company recognises that employees may sometimes also use telephones for personal calls. This will be tolerated, only where such calls are kept to a minimum, and do not, in the Company's judgement, encroach unreasonably on working time or build up any significant costs.

Personal mobile phones should not be used during working hours. Breach of this rule may lead to disciplinary action.

Close Circuit TV

At some Company locations employees should note that there are a number of close circuit TV cameras, but they are not situated in any private areas such as toilets or changing rooms. Outputs from these cameras are recorded and the information retained for appropriate security purposes.



Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure

Introduction

Many people in our society are harassed as a result of a protected characteristic i.e. race, religion or belief, gender, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, disability, pregnancy or maternity.

We are committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all staff and customers. No one should have to tolerate harassment at work for any reason, at any time. No one has the right to harass anyone else, at work or in any situation related to employment. If you are suffering harassment in the workplace, you should raise it in the first instance with your manager or with the Company's human resources advisors.

We recognise that bullying and harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that this can seriously affect employees' working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant working environment.

Policy

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment is against the law. It occurs where a person engages in unwanted conduct or language which has the purpose or effect of violating another's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him. It may be related to age, sex, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, nationality or any other personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. Remember that one person's joke is another person's harassment.

Harassment can be hidden in questions or remarks that seem positive. Here are some examples of racial harassment:

- "You are really pretty for a black girl."
- "Tell me what it's like to always have your head and hair covered."
- "Women from the Philippines are better at that than Canadian women."
- "Native people are so good at crafts."



Examples of what may constitute bullying or harassment:

- inappropriate and/or degrading words or pictures (like graffiti, photos, or posters);
- inappropriate physical contact;
- sexual demands;
- spoken or written putdowns;
- gestures;
- jokes;
- nicknames;
- insults;
- overbearing or abusive behaviour towards staff with intellectual disabilities;
- spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of a protected characteristic);
- copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know;
- ridiculing or demeaning someone — picking on them or setting them up to fail;
- exclusion or victimisation;
- unfair treatment;
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position;
- unwelcome sexual advances — touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials;
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation;
- deliberately undermining a competent employee by overloading and constant criticism; and/or
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

We deplore all forms of harassment and bullying and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all our employees.

Managers have a right to manage and it is not bullying or harassment for them to ask employees to do their jobs according to the required standards.

We have published these procedures to inform you of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide employees who are the victims of personal harassment with a means of redress.

We recognise that we have a duty to implement this policy and all employees are expected to comply with it.

Employees' Responsibilities

All employees have the responsibility to treat each other with respect and to speak up if they or someone else is being harassed.

Staff should take the following actions if they consider that bullying or harassment has taken or is taking place:

- Use appropriate behaviour and language in the workplace and not perpetrate or perpetuate acts or language which may be harassment.



- Report harassment to your manager or to the Company's human resources advisors. You should respect the confidentiality of anyone involved in a harassment complaint.

Note that allegations of harassment which are not made in good faith will be treated as gross misconduct.

Managers must set an example for appropriate workplace behaviour and must deal with situations of harassment immediately on becoming aware of them, whether or not there has been a complaint.

Managers should:

- treat complaints seriously;
- investigate each complaint;
- support the parties; and
- take action to resolve the matter, based on the outcome of the investigation.

Disciplinary action will be taken where the Company considers it appropriate to do so.

The Company views all incidents of harassment very seriously. All complaints will be investigated, and action taken to ensure that they are resolved quickly, confidentially, and fairly. Anyone who has harassed a person or group of people or who retaliates in any way against anyone who has complained of harassment, given evidence in harassment investigations, or been found guilty of harassment will be taken through the disciplinary process and may be summarily dismissed for gross misconduct.

Complaining About Bullying or Harassment

Informal complaint

We recognise that complaints of harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper. This person cannot be a director.

If you are the victim of minor harassment you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser and your confidential helper can assist you in this.

Formal complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of a director as a formal written complaint and again your confidential helper can assist you in this. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include: -

- the name of the alleged harasser;
- the nature of the alleged harassment;
- the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
- the names of any witnesses; and
- any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.



On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with pay until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will invite you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by your confidential helper or another work colleague of your choice and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

On conclusion of the investigation which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting with you, a draft report of the findings and of the investigator's proposed decision will be sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged harasser.

If you or the alleged harasser are dissatisfied with the draft report or with the proposed decision this should be raised with the investigator within five working days of receiving the draft. Any points of concern will be considered by the investigator before a final report is sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged harasser. You have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator in accordance with the appeal provisions of the grievance procedure.

General Notes

If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. An employee who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal.

If you bring a complaint of harassment you will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent disciplinary action will be taken against you.

Managers have a right and a duty to manage employees to help ensure that employees meet the Company's reasonable requirements. For the avoidance of doubt, where a manager provides guidance to you about your conduct or performance it does not constitute bullying or harassment, providing that it is carried out in reasonable way.



Dispute Resolution: Grievance Procedure

The purpose of this procedure is to provide a fair and effective method of resolving individual grievances within a reasonable time of any particular issue being raised.

All formal grievances taken up under this procedure must be put in writing. If you have difficulty in expressing your views in writing for any reason, please contact the Company's human resources advisors, confidentially, and they will help you prepare your written grievance. Notes arising from any grievance issue will be retained on your personal file.

The grievance procedure is non-contractual and can be amended and updated as required.

Informal Discussions

If you have a grievance about your employment, you should discuss it informally with your immediate manager. We hope that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage. There is no right to be accompanied by a companion at such informal discussions.

Stage 1

If you feel that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, you should put your grievance in writing to your immediate manager. If your grievance concerns your manager, the grievance should be raised with a more senior manager. Your manager will convene a meeting as soon as possible and, in any event, within five working days to discuss your grievance. The purpose of the meeting is to understand your complaint and investigate all the options. The manager may need to carry out additional investigations outside the meeting. At this stage (and at the appeal stage), you may, if you wish, be accompanied by a companion (that is a work colleague or a trade union representative), and your manager may be accompanied by another manager or a human resources advisor.

You will be notified in writing of the outcome within five working days, or as soon afterwards as is reasonably possible. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may appeal against your manager's decision to the managing director.

Appeal Stage

You may request a meeting with the managing director. If appropriate, the managing director will be accompanied by an independent third party. Again, your grievance should be expressed in writing. It is the managing director's responsibility to try to resolve the matter and provide an answer within five working days. He will review the facts and carry out any additional investigation if appropriate, before reaching a conclusion. You will be notified in writing of the outcome. The managing director is the ultimate authority in all grievance matters and his decision is final.

Note

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to explore genuine concerns connected with employment. The Company takes this duty very seriously. However, in certain circumstances, the Company reserves the right to review or refuse to hear grievances.

The Company reserves the right not to hear grievances where the matters related to the grievance took place three or more months before the date of complaint.



Where an employee raises a grievance that has already been addressed, the Company will ask the employee to provide new evidence which justifies the re-opening of the matter. If on an initial assessment, the grounds for the grievance seem weak, the Company will require the employee to submit his evidence for further investigation before convening a grievance meeting.

Where the employee raises a grievance which in the reasonable opinion of the Company is frivolous or vexatious or has already been resolved (or is likely to be resolved very shortly) the Company reserves the right not to pursue such grievances unless the employee provides relevant evidence.

Where a manager is seeking to manage an employee because he is not meeting conduct or performance standards, the Company reserves the right not to pursue grievances connected to this matter unless the employee can provide evidence that improper conduct has taken place.

Please note that where a manager seeks to correct an employee's conduct or performance in a proper and appropriate fashion, this does not constitute bullying or harassment and the Company will not treat a complaint about such correction as a grievance.

Where the Company has reasonable grounds for belief that an employee is using the grievance procedure to make deliberately false allegations, or as a form of bullying against a colleague or manager, it will be treated as a misconduct matter.

The Company reserves the right to refuse to participate in Early Conciliation until it has had the chance to explore and attempt to resolve matters through its internal grievance procedure.

Dispute Resolution; Disciplinary Procedure

Purpose and Scope

The disciplinary procedure provides for disciplinary sanctions to be given for failure to meet the Company's standards of job performance, conduct (whether during working hours or not) and attendance, or for breach of any terms and conditions of employment.

The disciplinary procedure has three main objectives:

- To protect in an equitable way the safety and interests of all employees.
- To protect the legitimate interests of the Company.
- To promote good relationships at all levels by ensuring that where action is carried out, it is done promptly, consistently and comprehensibly.

The Company's aim is to encourage improvement in individual conduct. This procedure sets out the action which will be taken when disciplinary rules are breached. Where it is necessary to take disciplinary action to protect either the interests of the Company or its employees, the procedure followed will relate to the nature of the offence committed.

In your first year of employment the Company reserves the right to apply a short form of the disciplinary process.

The disciplinary procedure is non-contractual and can be amended and updated as required.



Principles

The procedure is designed to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated. Where the Company uses CCTV or other recording equipment, it reserves the right to use the data so captured in the disciplinary and grievance procedure process as it deems appropriate.

At every stage employee's will have the opportunity to state their case and, in formal disciplinary hearings, be accompanied by a fellow employee or accredited trade union representative if they wish. The companion can help the employee prepare his case, help him present his case, ask questions and sum up on behalf of the employee. He may not answer the questions on behalf of the employee. There is no right to be accompanied in an investigation meeting or at an informal counselling meeting.

Disciplinary penalties will be proportionate to the offence committed. It is open to the Company to issue a first sanction at the final warning or dismissal stage where the disciplining officer reasonably believes that the nature of the offence requires it. An employee has the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty.

Managers are authorised to deal with any disciplinary matter to Stage 2. Only a director (or person nominated by a director) may authorise a dismissal.

Any appeal will be heard by a director (if not previously involved with the disciplinary process) or an independent third party nominated by the Company.

Wherever possible, the investigation will be carried out by one person and the disciplinary hearing will be chaired by a second person. However, in cases of less serious conduct or capability, the Company reserves the right for the investigating officer to chair the meeting.

The Procedure

Informal Discussions/Counselling

Other than in a matter of serious misconduct, where an employee's standard of conduct or performance is considered lacking, or a breach of contract is believed to have occurred, his manager will normally draw the matter to the worker's attention in a private and informal way.

In most cases this informal discussion should resolve any difficulties identified. If the employee fails to improve, or sustain improvement, the formal procedure will commence.

The Formal Procedure

Notification

If conduct or performance fails to meet acceptable standards, the employee will be given 48 hours' notice in writing of a disciplinary meeting in the form of a letter in which he will be advised of the details of the alleged breach of discipline.

Where appropriate the letter will enclose supporting documents e.g. copies of paperwork, details of performance. All staff have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or an accredited trade union representative.



The Hearing

A manager who may be accompanied by another manager or the Company's human resources advisor, will conduct the disciplinary hearing.

Throughout the hearing, minutes will be taken for the record. At the hearing the following will occur:

- The employee will be advised of his rights.
- The employee will be advised of all known facts relevant to the case.
- The employee will be given every opportunity to put forward his case and views.
- His companion will be invited to make representations on his behalf.
- There will be an adjournment to consider the facts.
- At the end of the hearing, the employee will be advised of the decision of the manager.
- If a disciplinary penalty is awarded, the manager will advise the employee of his right of appeal.

Sanctions

Stage 1 - First Warning

If conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the employee will be given a first warning which will be recorded. The warning will be disregarded after six months satisfactory service.

Totting Up

If the matter under consideration is a misconduct matter the employee will be advised that further repetition of this, or any other misconduct, during the life of the warning will result in an escalation to the next stage of the disciplinary process.

If the matter under consideration is a poor performance matter the employee will be advised that further repetition of this, or any other poor performance during the life of the warning, will result in an escalation to the next stage of the disciplinary process.

This applies at every level of the disciplinary procedure.

Stage 2 - Final Warning

If conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory, a final warning will be given making it clear that any recurrence of the offence or other misconduct will result in dismissal. The final warning will remain live for twelve months. If there is no repetition or other offence, it will be disregarded after that time.

In exceptional circumstances, if the Company considers it appropriate to do so, the Company reserves the right to extend the warning or to impose a longer final warning to a maximum of 24 months.

Note that these periods are not necessarily the same as the period over which performance improvements are to be made and which will be specified in warning letters.

Individuals will not normally be eligible for any pay review falling during a period of a live warning.



Stage 3 - Dismissal

If there is no satisfactory improvement or if further misconduct occurs, the employee will be dismissed.

Examples of unsatisfactory performance or conduct:

- Unsatisfactory job performance;
- Persistent lateness;
- Minor negligence;
- Unauthorised absence from work;
- Unacceptable level of sickness absence;
- Unauthorised use of personal mobile phones during working hours.

Examples of gross misconduct:

- Persistent unauthorised absence from work;
- Dishonesty, theft or fraud;
- Damage to the Company's property;
- Incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Physical assault, violent, abusive or intimidating conduct;
- Gross insubordination;
- Gross indecency;
- Failure to comply with relevant statutory or regulatory requirements;
- Sexual, racial or other harassment;
- Unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information;
- Falsification of Company records;
- Working for a competitor or setting up a competing company while still an employee, without prior permission from the Company;
- Actions such as to seriously offend a client/customer and/or a work colleague;
- Reckless or serious misuse of a Company vehicle;
- Carelessly, recklessly or dangerously using a mobile phone while driving;
- Rudeness to customers;
- Accepting a gift which could be construed as a bribe;
- Breach of health and safety rules which endanger the health and safety of others in the opinion of the Company;
- Refusing to allow a search to be carried out in accordance with Company rules;
- Failure to disclose correct information on your application form;
- Conviction for any serious criminal offence while an employee of the Company;
- Downloading of or sending of inappropriate material in contravention of the Company's E-mail and Internet Policy;
- Loading or downloading unauthorised software, or any other action likely to allow a virus on to the system. Unauthorised use of CD-ROMs;
- Behaviour whether inside or outside work which may bring the Company into disrepute;
- Publishing material in any form in which the Company is identified or capable of being identified and comments are made about the Company or any of its employees which in the reasonable opinion of the Company are detrimental. This includes content offered on social networking sites;
- Breach of the Company's Social Media Policy.



Note that if, after investigation, it is confirmed that an employee has committed an offence of gross misconduct (the list is not exhaustive), the normal consequences will be summary dismissal without notice.

Format of Warnings

To avoid any inconsistency or uncertainty, all written warnings will conform to a standard, showing clearly:

- the nature of the offence;
- the seriousness of the offence;
- which stage of the procedure is operating;
- the remedial action required and the review period;
- the penalty for non-compliance;
- details of any previous unexpired warning;
- the duration of the warning;
- the right of appeal and to whom it should be made (if appropriate to the stage of disciplinary procedure); and
- details of the next stage of the procedure.

Appeals

An employee who wishes to appeal against any disciplinary decision must do so within five working days of the receipt of the letter. A director will hear the appeal or arrange for an independent third party nominated by the Company to hear the appeal. The named person will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible.

Where new evidence comes to light during the appeal which was not available at the original hearing, the person hearing the appeal will be permitted to hear the new evidence as part of the appeal.

The decision of the appeal officer is final and there is no further right of appeal, even where new evidence has been heard at the appeal stage.

Suspension

The Company reserves the right to suspend an employee on full pay during a disciplinary investigation. The decision to suspend will be confirmed in writing. This letter will set out the terms of the suspension.

The suspension will be for as short a time as is reasonably possible in the circumstances. The employee must remain available to answer the Company's questions at all times during a period of suspension.

During the period of suspension, the employee will be paid the normal hourly rate. Where an employee falls sick during a disciplinary suspension the Company will pay Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) in accordance with the usual SSP rules.

Hearing in the Absence of an Employee

While the Company will make every effort to ensure that an employee is able to attend a disciplinary hearing, the Company reserves the right to hear a case in his absence if, after two attempts to reschedule, he has failed to attend the hearing.



Levels of Disciplinary Action

There are several potential levels, these are:

- first warning;
- final warning;
- dismissal/demotion; or
- summary dismissal.

Grievance

Where a grievance is raised during any part of the disciplinary procedure (whether informal, investigating or formal), then the Company reserves the right to deal with the grievance concurrently with the discipline process.



Driving on Company Business

Requirements and Responsibilities

Whether you are driving a Company vehicle or driving your own vehicle on Company business, it is a requirement for all drivers to provide an up-to-date copy of their driving licence every three months (or at all other times when requested), as well as any medical/eyesight certificates. These must be certified and dated. Failure to do so could jeopardise the Company's insurance and the business element of your motor insurance cover could be withdrawn.

All staff must drive slowly, safely and courteously while on Company premises or premises at which the Company is carrying out work. You must observe the Highway Code and be conversant with the legal obligations of driving in relation to the type of vehicle driven. Never leave the vehicle unlocked when unattended. Always remove the keys from the ignition and keep them on your person, and out of sight.

If it is required, you will undergo training and where necessary retraining to improve safety awareness and driving skills. The Company may use outside agencies, tachographs and other recording equipment to monitor driving behaviour. Adverse reports will be fully investigated.

Under certain conditions, other people may be allowed the use of a Company vehicle. If you require further details of this, you should contact your manager.

The Company reserves the right to require you to surrender any vehicle you have been issued at any time in the event of absence from work. (This does not apply to situations such as maternity leave). If the car is a contractual benefit the employee continues to receive the benefit. If it is a tool for the job, then there is no right to keep it.

If using vehicles not owned or hired to the Company, you must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy (with a valid MOT if appropriate), road taxed and insured appropriately for the purpose of the journey undertaken. If in doubt, please consult a director.

Servicing and Maintenance of Company Vehicles

Drivers of Company vehicles are responsible for checking the vehicle for roadworthiness and compliance with legal requirements. You will be responsible for ensuring that servicing, maintenance and repairs are carried out. Services must be done on time and the service record must be completed and stamped by the garage. Servicing should be booked and carried out whenever possible at a time when it will cause least disruption to the employee's working day. Any vehicle defects must be reported to a manager or director immediately.

In the event of the vehicle requiring any repair work, prior authorisation must be obtained from the Company and/or its insurers with the required quotes. Likewise, if it is necessary to hire a replacement vehicle whilst repairs are being carried out, you must not do this without prior authorisation from your manager.

You must ensure that the vehicle is kept in good condition. This includes keeping it clean and ensuring that the tyre pressure, lights, oil, water etc. are up to the required standard.



They must also ensure that the correct fuel type is used at every re-fuelling, e.g. diesel or petrol, depending on the engine type.

If using vehicles not owned or hired to the Company, you must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy (with a valid MOT if appropriate), road taxed and insured appropriately for the purpose of the journey undertaken. If in doubt, please consult a director.

Driving Offences and Fines

As all vehicles are insured through the Company, any conviction for driving offences, any driving endorsements and any fines incurred whilst you are in possession of the vehicle must be reported immediately. Authority must be obtained prior to making a statement to either the police or other authorities.

All fines, including parking offences and congestion zone penalties and related costs are your personal responsibility and will not be paid by the Company.

In cases where fines incurred are not paid by the employee, and we are notified or involved in any legal action, we reserve the right to deduct the amount of the fine plus any additional costs arising out of any proceedings or internal administrative costs from the employee's pay. If you are convicted of a driving offence which results in disqualification for any period and the holding of a licence is an essential requirement of the job, you will be dismissed.

If an accident in a Company vehicle is proven to be your fault, you agree to pay up to £500 towards the cost of damage repair or any excess on the insurance policy. You will be informed of the amount of excess at the time of the accident or your manager can be contacted for further details. In the event of failure to pay, we reserve the right to deduct such costs from your pay.

If you are considered to be acting carelessly or recklessly in your use of the vehicle, you will be subject to disciplinary action (and this may involve the withdrawal of this benefit).

Driving while in excess of the legal limits for alcohol and/or under the influence of drugs or other substances is viewed as gross misconduct. If the Company finds that a disciplinary case had been made out, the penalty could be a sanction up to and including dismissal.



Mobile Phones

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving and is subject to a ticket with a fine of £200 initially and 6 points on your licence. Drivers that have passed their test within 2 years will lose their licence. Driving includes periods when a vehicle is stationary (e.g. at traffic lights, in traffic jams). "Hand held" effectively includes everything except keeping the handset in a purposely designed cradle, fixed securely to the vehicle. Using a headset alone, for example, would still be an offence.

The Company takes the view that using any mobile phone, whether hand held or even hands free can be regarded as an act of careless or dangerous driving as there is the presumption that it distracts from the driver's concentration. It is not necessary for an accident to have occurred for the police to bring charges. Fines are much heavier, and points are added to your licence, depending on the severity of any conviction.

The Company does not require you to make or answer calls while you are driving. If you wish to make or receive calls you are advised to park your vehicle safely before using your phone. To avoid distraction caused by ring tones, you are advised to turn the handset onto "silent" mode during the journey.

Please note that texting or using the internet on your mobile phone whilst driving is also prohibited.



First Aid and Safety Policy

Introduction

To comply with statutory requirements, first aid facilities must be available to all employees whilst they are at work. These facilities must be under the control of an appointed person or a trained first aider.

Appointed Person

In the absence of a first aider, a person must be appointed by the employer to take charge of the situation, (e.g. to call an ambulance) if serious injury or major illness occurs at the workplace.

First Aider

A first aider is a person who has been trained by, and holds, a current First Aid Certificate issued by an organisation or employer whose training and qualifications for first aiders were, at the time the Certificate was issued, approved by the Health and Safety Executive for the purposes of the Regulations.

The person carrying out any treatment must record the details of that treatment immediately on completion of that treatment or as soon as is reasonable thereafter.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 imposes statutory duties on employers. To enable these statutory duties to be carried out it is the policy of our Company, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure that responsibilities for safety and health are properly assigned, accepted and fulfilled at all levels within our Company.

We also ensure that all practicable steps are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all employees and visitors to the premises or operations under our control.

All employees must comply with the following duties:

- take reasonable steps for the health and safety of yourself and other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work; and
- co-operate with our Company so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.

Fire

The Company will co-operate with the local fire authority and take adequate steps for fire prevention; ensure all staff are safeguarded in the event of a fire; appoint and train fire stewards; ensure there are regular fire drills, and that the alarm systems are checked.

Information

The Company will circulate knowledge of current relevant legislation and guidance material. Contact will also be maintained with designated medical and legal advisors, and outside advisory services, e.g. Health and Fire Authorities.



Accidents

The Company will maintain records of accidents; ensure all injury accidents are investigated to establish the cause and to prevent recurrence and carry out reporting procedures required by statute, health and other authorities.

Reviews of Regulations

The Company will make the Company Statement on Health and Safety known to all employees, review from time to time, revise if necessary and involve all management and staff in any review.

Organisation and Arrangements

The overall policy is the collective responsibility of the Board of Directors which is responsible for implementing and carrying out the policy and aims set in this document. All members of staff are expected to observe all hazards, which should be immediately reported to the manager concerned.

Health and Safety Rules

All members of staff must acquaint themselves and comply with the following rules:

- Report any faulty or hazardous fixtures, fittings, furniture or equipment or vicinity, especially electrical equipment.
- Report all accidents involving injury to the manager and observe all hazards, which should be immediately reported to the manager concerned.
- Isolate and report any faulty electrical equipment immediately.
- Switch off electrical equipment before leaving the office.
- Keep all emergency exits, stairs and corridors free of obstruction.
- Smoke in the designated areas only.
- Ensure the restroom, kitchen and washrooms are kept as clean and tidy as possible.



Social Media Usage Policy

Introduction

The Internet is provided for business use. The Company recognises that many employees use the Internet for personal purposes and that many employees participate in social networking on websites such as Facebook and Twitter.

This policy outlines your responsibility in using the Internet to access social media websites.

Personal Use of the Internet

The Company permits employees to access social networking websites on the Internet for personal use during certain times (provided that they are not undertaking overtime). These times are before and after work hours and during the designated lunch break.

Please note that there is no right to access non-work websites and the Company reserves the right to restrict or remove access to such websites at its absolute discretion.

Personal Conduct

While the Company respects an employee's right to a private life, it must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected. It therefore requires employees using social networking websites to refrain from identifying themselves as working for the Company and ensure that they do not conduct themselves in a way that is detrimental to the employer.

You must take care not to allow your interaction on these websites to damage working relationships between members of staff and clients of the Company.

Disciplinary Action

If the Company exercises its right to monitor employees' Internet use (see Employee Communications Policy), access to the web may be withdrawn in any case of misuse of this facility.

If you make a remark, are responsible for, or in any way are involved with posting material which in the opinion of the Company brings the Company into disrepute or otherwise damages the Company's interests, disciplinary action may be taken in line with the Company's disciplinary policy.

Security and Identity Theft

You should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if you are part of a "network". You should not assume that your entries on any website will remain private. You should never send abusive or defamatory messages.

You must also be security conscious and take steps to protect yourself from identity theft, for example by restricting the amount of personal information that you give out. Social networking websites allow people to post detailed personal information such as date of birth, place of birth and favourite football team, which can form the basis of security questions and passwords. In addition, you should ensure that no information is made available that could provide a person with unauthorised access to the Company and/or any confidential information, and refrain from recording any confidential information regarding the Company on any social networking website.



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