

## HEALTH & SAFETY

The health and safety of our volunteers is very important to WRAS and we are committed to looking after their welfare. We comply with relevant legislation, regulations and codes of practice and we regularly monitor and assess all areas relating to the health and safety of our volunteers.

WRAS recognises and accepts responsibility to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of all volunteers.

We aim to promote, set and maintain high standards for health and safety. To achieve this, we:

- undertake and review risk assessments;
- address concerns raised by employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors and members of the public;
- provide and maintain a safe working environment;
- ensure safe handling and use of substances;
- provide information, instruction and supervision for volunteers;
- provide and maintain suitable protective equipment;
- provide and maintain safety of equipment; and
- review and revise our approach to health and safety as necessary.

WRAS will endeavour to eliminate hazards which may result in injury, illness, fire, security losses, property damage or harm to the environment.

The persons responsible for health and safety arrangements within WRAS are listed on the Health and Safety Law Poster which is displayed in the Volunteer Area of the Casualty Care Centre and behind the till in the Charity Shop. Other members of staff also have responsibilities for health and safety in respect of the staff and volunteers under their immediate control and specific operations.

If you are in any doubt regarding the safety of your work or the Charity's premises, please speak with your Volunteer Manager without delay.

In turn, each and every volunteer has responsibility to take reasonable care in respect of their own health and safety and that of all other persons who may be affected by their actions or omissions whilst carrying out any activities on behalf of WRAS. When attending events, you should familiarise yourself with fire and evacuation procedures, including locations of fire extinguishers, fire exit points and meeting points in case of an emergency.

Please report any accidents, incidents or near misses to your Volunteer Manager.

Suitable risk assessments will be prepared by the Charity for all activities being carried out in the name of the WRAS, as required. You should familiarise yourself with the relevant risk assessments and the risks associated with working in your particular working environment. WRAS appreciates feedback and suggestions as to how our risk assessments might be improved.

We suggest that, having started volunteering with WRAS, you notify your GP when you next see them. This will ensure they are aware of the environment you are working in.

If you do not feel well after undertaking volunteering activities, please seek medical advice and assistance and ensure you advise any treating nurse or doctor of your voluntary work and the fact that you come into contact with sick and injured wildlife.

During your volunteering you may come into contact with hazardous substances such as chemicals, waste products, excreta, bodily fluids and more, so it is important that good personal hygiene is followed. You must always wash your hands after handling bodily fluids and especially before and after eating or using the toilet.

If you have a cut, burn, graze or other injury when the skin is damaged, a plaster or similar item should be placed over the damaged tissue, in addition to wearing gloves.

Please ensure you wash any injuries and follow instructions given by first aiders when injured,

Always ensure that items of equipment are disinfected to avoid cross contamination from patient to patient or to personnel.

Ensure you use the correct dilution for disinfectants.

If you spill seed, grit or other items on the floor please clear them up straight away to avoid accidents and injuries as a result of slipping. If water is spilt on the floor, please mop this up and dry the floor as best you can. Please do not unnecessarily mop the floor whilst people are still using the area. Wait until they have finished before doing so. Use the yellow slip hazard sign while the floor is wet or a slip hazard exists.

You should never operate machinery or equipment unless you have been provided with adequate training, instruction and information regarding the safe use of that equipment. You must not use any equipment unless you are conversant with its safe operation or are undergoing supervised training and you must first obtain permission from your Volunteer Manager. When using machinery or equipment you must conform to all safety requirements including those relating to PPE, use of guards and safe operation. Any defects should be noted and must immediately be reported to your Volunteer Manager who will assess the damage and arrange for equipment to be taken out of action and repaired or replaced.

Electrical repairs are to be undertaken solely by a WRAS approved electrician. Do not touch damaged electrical equipment unless you have been specifically trained. It is important that you examine all portable electrical equipment before use, especially checking the plug and cable connections before use. Any faults must be reported to your Volunteer Manager for assessment and repair by a competent person.

PAT testing of all electrical equipment is undertaken on an annual basis. All electrical contract work has been signed off and an electrician safety certificate received. All fuse boards have suitable RCD protection.

If you are unable to reach an item or need to stand on anything to be able to reach whilst working it is important that you do so safely. Before attempting any work at height ensure that you have been trained in the proper safe working procedure and are familiar with the safe use of the equipment being used. Please ensure that any step ladders being used are in good working order, are on a level surface and that you are wearing suitable footwear while using them. Avoid leaning too far in any direction which could cause you to become unbalanced.

Do not handle any chemicals, substances or materials unless you have received authorisation to do so from senior staff. Always read and follow instructions on labels or hazard sheets for each item you are about to use. Familiarise yourself with the COSHH symbols and raise any questions about any aspect of health and safety relating to hazardous substances with a Casualty Manager.

General precautions to be observed when handling or working with substances include:

- Read the appropriate Hazard Data Sheets before use and any warning labels on containers.
- Make sure you are familiar with the warning signs and symbols.
- Do not swallow substances or breathe in fumes or dust.
- Do not smoke near substances.
- Take care when opening containers and wear suitable PPE when necessary.
- Do not 'sniff' substances.
- Store all substances away from sources of heat.
- Clean up any spillages immediately.
- Wash your hands both before and after using the toilet.

- If any substances are splashed on the skin, wash with soap and water.
- Do not use solvent type materials in confined spaces.
- Should a person be overcome by fumes of any nature remove them to fresh air, keep them warm and seek medical advice.
- Do not eat or drink in or near to areas where substances are being used.
- Always wash your hands before eating or drinking.
- Protective clothing should be cleaned and inspected regularly.

Please observe any signs or notices displaced around the Charity's premises and ensure you comply with them as they are there for your safety.

If you think something related to your volunteering role is causing you illness or making an existing condition worse, please speak with your GP and inform your Volunteer Manager.

The unauthorised consumption of alcohol and/or unlawful drugs on WRAS' premises is prohibited. Carrying out voluntary duties while under the influence of alcohol or unlawful drugs is extremely dangerous and therefore forbidden.

If you fall pregnant while carrying out voluntary work for WRAS, you should inform us immediately so that potential risks can be minimised.

#### **FIRE SAFETY**

WRAS has carried out a Fire Risk Assessment. A Fire Officer from East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has visited the centre and all suggestions made have been acted upon. If you believe we have missed a fire-related risk please bring to our attention.

On discovering a fire raise the alarm by either activating the nearest red break unit where installed or by shouting 'FIRE'. The emergency services should be contacted and management informed. Only attempt to extinguish a fire where there is no risk of personal injury either from the fire, toxic gases, fumes produced or the structural failure of the building. Ensure you have a clear emergency exit at all times.

WRAS has two types of Fire Extinguisher in the building. ABC Dry Powder extinguishers can be used in relation to all fires except flammable metals and fires involving cooking oil or fat. We have more than are required to ensure easy access at all times in the building. Fire Blankets are located in the Volunteer Kitchen and can be used to smother fires involving cooking oil and fat.

Please familiarise yourself with the emergency exits and spend time looking around and working out the quickest way out from each room. In accordance with fire regulations, WRAS has measured the distance from each area within WRAS' premises and the exits fall within the required maximum distance permitted. It is important that these escape routes are kept clear of any obstructions to aid with evacuation. Any concerns over these routes and potential problems with these routes should be raised with senior staff.

In the event of an emergency the following procedures should apply:

- Ensure your own safety at all times.
- Take immediate action to alert others of the emergency.
- Only use a fire extinguisher if you have been trained to do so.
- Fight the fire or contain any spillage only if safe to do so.

There is a building wide fire alarm. Within the Casualty Care Centre, we only have one audio alarm located in the Meeting Room. The rest of the alarms are a white flashing light emanating from the base of the fire detectors. You will still be able to clearly hear the audio alarms in the neighbouring units. A monthly fire alarm test takes place, normally around the beginning of each month. Unless you have been told it is a test, please evacuate the building.

Fire safety inspections must take place regularly by designated staff. These inspections must include checking the fire extinguishers, fire escape routes, the fire alarm system and the location and storage of hazardous or flammable chemicals.

### **DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE)**

If a volunteer carries out work via a desktop or laptop computer, they must complete a DSE Self-Assessment which is available from WRAS' Health and Safety Representatives.

Users are recommended to adjust the screen setting where necessary to ensure a sharp and focused image which can be read easily. Do not sit in the same position for long periods of time and take frequent short breaks away from the computer.

### **X-RAY**

WRAS has a designated X-ray room and uses X-ray generators and processors. Please read and ensure you have understood the following information. The room has been checked and signed off by our Radiation Protection Advisor Peter Cockett MRCVS. The Health and Safety Executive has been notified. WRAS' Radiation Protection Supervisors are listed on the wall of the X-ray room and the Volunteer Room.

The only persons authorised to use the X-ray and processing equipment are WRAS' vets, WRAS' Radiation Protection Advisor, WRAS' Radiation Protection Supervisors and WRAS' appointed X-ray engineers.

It is important for all volunteers and staff to be aware that we now have a Controlled X-ray Zone which is the X-ray room off theatre next to Casualty Room 1.

Volunteers are not permitted to enter Theatre or the X-ray room unnecessarily. When the red light is lit by the X-ray Room Door this means the Controlled Zone is in use and no unauthorised persons are allowed to enter this zone.

Whilst X-rays are being taken people should ensure they are outside the X-ray Controlled Zone. Only the person taking the X-ray or persons manually handling the casualty are allowed in Theatre or the X-ray Room whilst the red light is turned on.

Any person assisting with manual handling and restraint of casualties must be wearing full PPE leaded gowns and guards. All 'local rules' are displayed on the wall of the X-ray room and must be followed when the room is in use.

There is now a need for volunteers to inform WRAS in writing if they are pregnant as we have X-ray facilities in the building. No pregnant women should be in the Controlled Zone or assisting with X-rays.

The heavy sliding door to the X-ray Room must be closed when X-rays are being taken.

The walls to Casualty Room 1 and to Theatre are Lead Lined and protected as advised by our Radiation Protection Advisor. They meet legal requirements and working in this room poses no risk to volunteers and staff.

If you enter Theatre or the X-ray Room and any warning lights are on or an audio alarm is sounding please leave the X-ray Room or Theatre immediately and inform a member of staff straight away.

The emergency fuse power supply is clearly marked at the Fuse Board just to the left of the double Prep Room Doors.

If anyone has any questions or concerns they should speak directly to a senior member of staff or one of the Radiation Protection Supervisors.