

Air Ambulance NI Volunteer Health and Safety General Policy Statement Updated: November 2020



Introduction

Air Ambulance NI regards the promotion of health and safety measures as mutual objectives for management, employees and volunteers. The safety of staff, volunteers and visitors is paramount and necessary steps are taken to ensure accidents do not occur.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we are adhering to government guidelines for the safety of staff, volunteers and visitors. For current guidelines in Northern Ireland see:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

Advice specific to volunteering is available at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/volunteering-during-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

It is Air Ambulance NI's policy to do all that is reasonable to prevent personal injury and damage to property and to protect everyone from foreseeable hazards including the public, insofar as they come into contact with Air Ambulance NI.

In particular, Air Ambulance NI has a responsibility:

- To provide and maintain safe and healthy volunteering conditions taking account of statutory requirements.
- To provide appropriate training and instructions enabling volunteer to perform their role safely.
- To make available all necessary safety devices and protective equipment and to supervise their use
- To maintain a constant and continuing commitment to health and safety matters applicable to Air Ambulance NI activities. In particular, by consulting and involving volunteers wherever possible.
- To ensure volunteers are aware of the contact details for the Head of Operations and Finance. This information is held in the charity office and will be distributed regularly.

Employees and volunteers have a duty to co-operate with this policy by:

- Carrying out their volunteer role safely.
- Reporting incidents that have led to, or may lead to injury or damage, to the Head of Operations and Finance.
- Adhering to Air Ambulance NI's procedures for securing a safe workplace.
- Assisting in the investigation of accidents with the objective of introducing measures to prevent a recurrence.

The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of all employees, volunteers and visitors while engaged on Air Ambulance NI business and this policy will be reviewed regularly. This responsibility is delegated through the Trustees to the Head of Operations and Finance who is entrusted with the implementation of all statutory requirements arising from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963, together with the application of all Air Ambulance NI's health and safety arrangements.

The Head of Operations and Finance, and Executives, are responsible for the consideration and revision as necessary, of all health and safety matters and procedures.

All volunteers have a responsibility to follow the rules and procedures on health and safety and to take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves and others.

Health and Safety Arrangements

1. Accidents - Prevention and Reporting

Maintenance of property and equipment to ensure personal safety is the overall responsibility of the Head of Operations and Finance. All employees and volunteers are responsible for the correct and safe use of all property and equipment in the office and at events as well as for reporting any faults or hazards to the Head of Operations and Finance.

The following areas require special attention:

- All electrical equipment must be safe.
- Windows and doors must be closed and locked every evening.
- Filing cabinets must not be overloaded.
- Offices should be kept tidy and safe. Corridors and stairs clear to ensure free access.
- Fire doors must not be wedged open.
- Event equipment must be safely stored in the van and in the office.

An accident book is kept by the Head of Operations and Finance. All accidents resulting in personal injury and those that could have done so must be recorded, as well as incidents which have caused concern.

Every volunteer has a duty to report any such incidents, to assist the Head of Operations in determining the cause and to help in any subsequent investigation with the aim of preventing a recurrence. Prevention of accidents is of paramount importance and therefore incidents which might have resulted in personal injury must also be reported so that appropriate action can be taken.

Falls

Falls are the most common form of accidents. Trailing cables, objects left lying around, and rucked carpets are all common tripping hazards. The area or event site must be kept tidy. Wear sensible shoes and be careful on stairs, use handrail provided. Always use steps or ladders where necessary (not chairs, etc). Finally, do not run. Walking is safer for everyone.

Tidiness

Floors, passages and stairs should be kept clear of goods, litter etc. and litter bins should be placed where they cannot be fallen over. Do not put broken glass or dangerous waste in litter bins.

Lifting

It does not necessarily need a great weight to strain a back – it is the way items are lifted that causes the damage - as thousands of people find out every year.

The correct way to lift is as follows: -

- Keep the back straight
- Bend the knees
- Place feet slightly apart
- Grip firmly (with palms not fingertips)
- Hold the load as close to the body as possible. Then lift slowly
- Split loads/use the trolley and ask for help where appropriate

You are not expected to lift items which you feel are too heavy for you to manage. *Please split loads and ask for assistance.*

Liquids

Chemicals are widely used for a variety of processes and some may be hazardous. All containers must be **clearly** and **correctly** marked and the instructions on the label read before use. Chemicals must be stored safely and great care taken with flammable materials. If there is any doubt the Head of Operations and Finance should be consulted.

2. Alcohol and Drug Use

Air Ambulance NI has a policy which states that no one should be drinking alcohol or misusing drugs whilst volunteering, or volunteer under their influence. This is for the safety of yourself and of others. All representatives are expected to adhere to this. Breach of this policy will result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual and we retain the right to dismiss on the grounds of gross misconduct.

We recognize that there may be circumstances when a volunteer has an addiction problem that requires specialist help. The charity would be supportive if the volunteer was undergoing treatment as long as this did not compromise the safety of the volunteer, other volunteers, staff and service users of Air Ambulance NI.

3. First Aid Facilities

A First Aid box and a Health and Safety notice is kept in the office. First Aid boxes and accident books are held in the van, and in the office. The First Aid boxes are checked regularly but if you notice or use anything which needs replacing please let the Head of Operations and Finance know.

4. Fire / Bomb Alert

Air Ambulance NI has a no smoking policy. If smoking outside then ash trays must be used **NOT** the waste paper bin. Volunteers and staff are not allowed to smoke at or near an AANI stand.

Clothing, tea towels etc., must be kept away from heaters. It is important that all corridors, stairs and other routes to fire exits are kept clear of obstructions. Colleagues should get to know the Fire and Evacuation procedure for the location that they're volunteering (remember - lives may depend on it) and they should keep refreshing their memories. Where their role takes a volunteer or employee to other locations - other procedures may apply, so he/she should look out for these on notice boards.

In the event of fire:

- Don't panic
- Follow the Fire Procedure
- Do not use a lift

If a fire can be tackled - then staff should do so, but **ONLY** if it can be done without risk. **REMEMBER** the important thing is to save lives, not property. The same procedure is to be followed to evacuate the building if there is a suspicious package/bomb alert.

5. Specialist equipment

All staff should use specialist equipment provided when undertaking relevant tasks. This may include:

- Disposable gloves and resusci shields in the first aid box
- Rubber gloves and aprons for cleaning

In addition, suitable clothing for the task being undertaken should be worn e.g. not open toed sandals where there is a risk of injury

6. Stress

Air Ambulance NI has a duty and an intention not to allow people to volunteer under undue stress. However, each person is an individual and how people cope with pressures will vary, and as a consequence, individuals will experience stress in different ways and as a result of different triggers. It is also acknowledged that not all stress is created by your role alone but may be caused by the impact of other areas of life.

Individual volunteers and staff members have a responsibility to talk through these issues as they arise, and to seek support and guidance on how to manage their role from the Area Fundraising Manager or Head of Fundraising.

7. Induction/Training

All staff and volunteers should be given a copy of this policy as part of their induction programme. The Head of Operations has a duty to ensure they are aware of current legislation and disseminate relevant information to appropriate staff.