Health and Safety Policy

Harwich Festival and Harwich Arts & Heritage Centre
Policy 01 | Version 2.0 | Revised 25 October 2026
Owner: General Manager | Scheduled review: 25 October 2027

Our commitment

The Harwich Festival, registered charity 1171712, operates Harwich Arts & Heritage Centre (HAHC). We are committed to protecting staff, volunteers, trustees, artists, contractors, hirers and visitors, and to providing a safe working and public environment. This policy covers the centre throughout the year, the annual festival, events away from the centre and work carried out on our behalf.

We will assess and control risks, prevent injury and work-related ill health, provide safe equipment and working methods, and comply with applicable health and safety law. We will provide suitable information, instruction, training, supervision and welfare facilities. Resources and controls must be proportionate to the risks and meet the standard required by law.

Responsibilities

The trustees retain overall oversight. They approve the policy and resources, scrutinise significant risks and incidents, and check that responsibilities are carried out. Delegating tasks does not remove their oversight responsibilities.

The General Manager coordinates day-to-day safety, maintains the centre's risk assessments and inspection records, arranges competent advice and training, and reports material concerns to trustees. A named event or activity organiser must coordinate safety for each HF event. Contractors must be competent for their tasks and cooperate with centre procedures.

Staff and volunteers must follow instructions, use equipment correctly, report defects and incidents promptly, and take reasonable care of themselves and others. They must stop and seek advice if work presents an uncontrolled serious risk. Nobody should undertake work beyond their competence.

Risk assessment and safe working

The General Manager will maintain suitable assessments for the premises and HF activities, and review them when activities, occupancy or circumstances change, after an incident, and at scheduled reviews. Assessments must identify people at risk, existing controls, further action, owners and deadlines. Consult the people doing the work and consider disabled people, children, adults at risk, lone workers and inexperienced helpers.

Controls must address relevant risks, including slips and trips, manual handling, work at height, electricity, fire, chemicals and cleaning materials, equipment, noise, crowd movement, lone working and welfare. Building responsibilities must include maintenance, asbestos and water hygiene where applicable. Specialist work must be referred to competent contractors. Unsafe equipment must be taken out of use and clearly identified.

Hirers and permanent users

We retain duties relating to matters within our control, including the premises and equipment we provide. Independent organisers remain responsible for their activities and their own workers. Responsibilities, including emergencies and first aid, must be agreed through hire or occupancy terms and induction. Shared areas and simultaneous activities require coordination. We must not assume that a hirer's assessment covers risks arising from the building itself.

Emergencies and first aid

Maintain a written fire risk assessment and practical evacuation arrangements. Keep escape routes and emergency access clear. Provide a first-aid needs assessment, accessible equipment and personnel arrangements appropriate to the risks and times of use. There is no blanket requirement for a qualified first aider at every hire; the assessment, applicable rules and agreed terms determine the provision. Hirers must know what cover is actually available, especially outside staffed hours. Call 999 in an emergency.

Incidents and reporting

Report accidents, near misses and hazards to the General Manager promptly. Record facts, immediate action and any treatment, while protecting personal information. Investigate causes and complete remedial actions. The responsible dutyholder must make any report required by RIDDOR and notify insurers, safeguarding agencies or the Charity Commission when their reporting criteria are met. Reporting to one body does not replace another duty.

Monitoring and review

Maintain inspection, servicing, training and incident records. Trustees will review material safety matters and outstanding actions. Review this policy at least annually and sooner after a significant change, incident or change in requirements. Communicate amendments to the people affected and check that procedures work in practice.

Prepared for adoption. Record authorised approval in the master register. Review sooner after a significant change or incident.

Reference guidance
hse.gov.uk - index.htm
hse.gov.uk - village and community halls.htm
hse.gov.uk - legislation.htm