

Pine Street Allotments Association Health and Safety Guidelines

Allotment gardening is relatively risk free providing people are aware of the potential hazards and take steps to ensure that they, other people and wildlife are not put at risk. The Committee of the Association has a responsibility to ensure the safety of all members of the public while they are on the site. The Committee carries out it's responsibilities by:

- a) Taking action to reduce the risk from hazards that are reported to them.
- b) Carry out Health and Safety reviews twice a year.
- c) Issuing instructions for the use of equipment owned by the Association.
- d) Keeping a log book of Health and Safety issues. The log book will be kept in the **Red Folder** in the Allotment Toilet so that members can report any issues in writing in the appropriate loose pages or report them verbally to a member of the Committee, whose names are listed in this folder.
- e) Ensuring that all members are aware of their own responsibilities regarding Health and Safety.

All members have a duty of care towards themselves, fellow plot holders and members of the public who enter the site, whether by invitation or otherwise.

All members should:

- a) Ensure that on their own plots, the risk of injury to themselves and others is minimised.
- b) Follow the guidelines when working on the rest of the site.

All members are expected to carry out their own Health and Safety checks on a regular basis. They need to identify hazards and risks. A hazard is defined as something with the potential to cause harm while a risk is the likelihood that the hazard will cause damage. Broken glass is a hazard. If it is covered and stored safely the risk of it causing damage is much less than if it was left exposed near to where children play. In addition they should:

- a) report any hazards elsewhere on the site by recording them in the Red Log Book provided or by informing a member of the Committee.
- b) ensure that any children for whom they are responsible are made aware of potential dangers and are properly supervised.

All members should be aware of the following advice and requirements:

1 Physical exercise

Digging the soil is one of the most physically demanding tasks in gardening as it involves continued bending and straightening of the back. It needs to be approached with care, particularly if you are not used to heavy work.

Sensible footwear is a basic essential if you want to minimise the chances of an accident happening.

2 Hazardous rubbish

Ensure no broken glass and other hazardous materials are not left on the site, lying around or obstructing members and visitors as to cause injury.

In line with the Tenancy Agreement (paragraph 3.5 to 3.20 inclusive) plot holders are responsible for removing such hazards.

3 Tetanus and lockjaw

Tetanus and lockjaw are very serious infections caused by Bacteria that live in the soil and especially manure. It enters the body through the tiniest of scratches and within a few days the illness hits. Please make sure you have a vaccination to protect you against Tetanus.

4 Skin Irritations

Wear gloves and long sleeved clothing when pruning plants, trees and shrubs that can cause skin irritations. Examples of such plants are Ivy, Euphorbia and Rue.

5 Garden Tools

Garden Tools can be a hazard if they are not used and stored correctly or left lying around when not in use. Please ensure you store your garden tools safely.

6 Pesticides, Fertilisers and Fuel

When using pesticides or fertilisers make sure you wear suitable protective clothing.

Ensure chemicals are kept securely locked in a safe cupboard in your shed, away from children and in clearly marked containers. Do not keep them in drinks bottles, other food containers or leave them lying around your plot.

Please ensure that pesticides and fertilisers are disposed of responsibly. Pesticides should never be disposed of in household rubbish, should never be burnt, placed in

skips or poured into any kind of drainage system or watercourse. Contact Harrogate Council for advice.

Ensure that any fuel or other combustible items are stored safely.

7 First Aid Kit

The Association has a first aid kit which can be located in the site toilet, near to the old shop, marked First Aid.

The following items can be found:

- *a small selection of adhesive plasters
- *antiseptic ointment
- *Pair of small tweezers for removing thorns and splinters
- *a gauze or lint pad to use as a compress to stop bleeding if you are badly cut

A first aid kit is a very wise addition to a Garden/Allotment and all Association members should have a small one in their shed.

8 Power Tools

Most power tools need specific safety and handling training. The Committee requires all members who use power tools owned by the Association to read the instructions provided for each piece of equipment before using them for the first time and then sign the log book to show that they have done so (instructions in this folder). Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Members who bring their own tools onto the site do so at their own risk and should take the sensible precautions when using them. The wearing of strong footwear is essential when using all power tools. If members for whatever reason need to bring heavy equipment onto the site (e.g. Mechanical Diggers) they should inform the Committee well in advance as the Committee have the responsibility to inform other members of any potential inconvenience.

Please also be aware that Members who do bring heavy equipment on site do so at their own risk and are also liable for any damage to the structure of the site and to other member's plots.

9 Legionella

In very hot weather, especially in greenhouses, it is possible, although very rare, for Legionella (legionnaire's disease) to multiply in warm water to potentially harmful levels. Avoid storing potting media in greenhouses and spraying fine mists in hot weather.

10 Ponds and Water

Ponds that are planned and maintained properly pose very little risk, far outweighed by the numerous benefits to wildlife and enjoyment to people of all ages.

Those most at risk of drowning in ponds are children under the age of 3. Risk of drowning decreases as a child grows older. However all young children should be supervised at all times while on site and must not go onto other members plots without express permission.

Members wanting to build their own pond on their own plots, should not make them more than 50 centimetres in depth, should build them with sloping sides and should consider covering them if they are judged to be a potential hazard.

11 Hazards for Wildlife on Allotments.

Hazards for wildlife include, litter, low level fruit netting not secured properly, use of pesticides, open drains, use of slug pellets, mowing and strimming, broken glass, and pre-stacked bonfires. Certain wildlife, e.g. Badgers, Slow worms, some birds of prey and Reptiles have specific legal protection concerning their management. Contact English Nature (www.naturalengland.org.uk) for advice on protected species.

12 Vermin

Rats carry 70 (seventy) diseases including Weil's disease which can cause human death via contaminated water, Plot holders must be vigilant and report any sign of infestation, which includes burrows, tracks droppings and actual sightings, Particular attention should be paid to waste storage area's and compost bins.

13 Risk of infection

Humans are at risk when handling animal manure. Fresh manure should be heaped for a period of six months, giving time for e.coli to break down. Plot holders must ensure they follow basic hygiene guidelines and they keep vaccinations up to date. Hand washing is important before consuming food and drink after working on the site. Using hand-sterilising gel is recommended. Fruit and Vegetables should be thoroughly washed before being eaten.

14 Personal Safety

Allotment Gardeners often spend long periods of time on their own site and should therefore take precautions to ensure their personal safety. It is important to tell another person where you are and what time you will be back. Take a mobile phone with you. Be aware of weather conditions that can effect walking surfaces such as hard core and grass. Use sunscreen where necessary. Always lock the gate behind you when you leave the site if you think no one else is around.

15 Bonfires (see paragraph 3.13 of the Tenancy Agreement)

Individual bonfires are allowed on our site between 10am and 4pm on Tuesday of each week during the period beginning 1st October and ending 31st March in any year. This is providing that any smoke from any fire shall not become a nuisance to the local houses and other Tenants on the site. All fires must be attended at all times and fully extinguished before leaving the Allotment.

Before lighting check for hedgehogs.