



Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Health & Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

Birtley Community Aquatic Centre (BCAC) is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all employees, volunteers, visitors, and customers. This policy outlines the framework and responsibilities for maintaining a safe and healthy environment at Birtley Community Pool. We are committed to complying with all relevant health and safety legislation and to continually improving our health and safety performance.

2. Policy Statement

BCAC recognises its duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations. We are committed to:

- Providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment.
- Ensuring that all equipment and systems are safe and properly maintained.
- Identifying hazards, assessing risks, and implementing appropriate control measures.
- Providing adequate training, information, and supervision to ensure safe working practices.
- Regularly reviewing and improving our health and safety procedures.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is based on the following key pieces of legislation and codes of practice:

- 3.1. Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASAWA):**
Sets out the general duties employers and employees to ensure the safety of the workplace.
- 3.2. Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR):**
Requires employers to carry out risk assessments and implement measures to manage identified risks.
- 3.3. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH):**
Requires control of exposure to hazardous substances to prevent ill health.
- 3.4. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER):**
Ensures that work equipment is suitable, properly maintained, and used by competent individuals.
- 3.5. Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (MHOR):**
Requires employers to reduce the risk of injury from manual handling activities.
- 3.6. Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPER):**
Mandates the provision of appropriate PPE to protect against risks to health and safety.
- 3.7. Work at Height Regulations 2005:**
Aims to prevent death and injury from falls during work at height activities.
- 3.8. HSG 179 – Health and Safety in Swimming Pools:**
Provides guidance on managing and operating swimming pools safely.
- 3.9. PWTAG Code of Practice and Swimming Pool Water Book:**
Provides standards and guidelines for maintaining pool water quality and safe pool operations.
- 3.10. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR):**
Requires reporting and recording of certain workplace injuries, diseases, and dangerous occurrences.
- 3.11. Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER):**
Ensures that lifting equipment is safe to use and regularly inspected.
- 3.12. Pressure Equipment and Pressure Systems Regulations 1999 (PER):**
Governs the safety of pressure equipment and systems.
- 3.13. HSE ACOP L8 and HSG 274 – Control of Legionella:**
Outlines measures to control the risk of Legionella in water systems.
- 3.14. RoHS3 Directive 2019:**
Controls the use of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of all activities at BCAC. They must ensure that all health and safety policies are in place, regularly reviewed, and effectively implemented.

4.2 Senior Operations Manager

The Senior Operations Manager is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the health and safety policy. This includes conducting risk assessments, ensuring staff receive appropriate training, and maintaining compliance with relevant health and safety legislation.

4.3 Business Support Officer

The Business Support Officer is responsible for supporting the implementation of health and safety policies by ensuring accurate record-keeping, coordinating training sessions, maintaining documentation, and assisting in the communication of health and safety information to all staff and volunteers.

4.4 Duty Managers

Duty Managers are responsible for ensuring that all safety procedures are followed during their shifts, including opening and closing procedures, emergency responses, and pool operations. They are also responsible for conducting routine safety checks and reporting any issues to the Senior Operations Manager.

4.5 Employees and Volunteers

All employees and volunteers have a duty to take care of their own health and safety, as well as that of others affected by their actions. They must follow safety procedures, use equipment safely, and report any hazards or incidents to their supervisor or manager.

5. Risk Assessment

5.1 General Risk Assessments

BCAC will conduct and maintain comprehensive risk assessments for all activities, equipment, and areas. These will be regularly reviewed and updated, especially following significant changes or incidents.

5.2 Specific Risk Assessments

In addition to general risk assessments, BCAC will conduct specific assessments for hazardous substances (COSHH), manual handling, working at height, and any other activities that present significant risks.

6. Safe Systems of Work

6.1 Office/Reception Area Safety

The office and reception areas at Birtley Community Pool must be kept safe and free from hazards. This includes:

- **Electrical Safety:** All electrical equipment in the office/reception area must be PAT tested annually, and any damaged cables or faulty equipment should be reported immediately and removed from use.
- **Ergonomics:** IAW HSE DSE Guide. Workstations should be set up according to ergonomic principles to reduce the risk of repetitive strain injuries. Staff should be trained on proper posture and the use of adjustable chairs and desks.
- **Fire Safety:** Fire extinguishers should be accessible, and staff must be trained in their use. Regular fire drills should be conducted, and clear escape routes should be maintained at all times.
- **Security:** Reception staff should be trained on security procedures, including dealing with difficult or aggressive members of the public and the proper use of alarm systems.
- **First Aid:** First aid kits and AEDs must be available and maintained regularly, with designated staff trained in first aid procedures.
- **Working at Height:** Employees must prevent doing unnecessary work at height wherever possible. Staff must be trained before working at height. Correct and safe equipment must be used for this type of work.

6.2 Pool Area Safety

The pool area presents unique risks that must be managed through diligent safety practices:

6.2.1. Pool Water Quality and Testing

- **Water Quality Monitoring:** Regular testing of pool water is essential to maintain safe swimming conditions. Pool water must be tested for chlorine levels, pH balance, and temperature at intervals defined in the Safe Systems of Work document. Testing must be conducted by trained staff, and results should be logged. If chemical levels are found to be outside the recommended safety range, immediate corrective actions should be taken, including adjusting chemicals and temporarily closing the pool if necessary.
- **Response to Contamination:** In the event of contamination (e.g., faecal, vomit), staff must follow the specific contamination response procedures outlined in the Emergency Operations Procedure document, which includes guidelines for cleaning, disinfection, and re-testing of water before the pool/s can be used again.

Broken Glass in Pool: Pool must be emptied of people. If glass is shattered into fine shards, pool should first be left to settle with no activity for an hour or more. Larger pieces may be removed manually with PPE, and the pool bottom swept with a pool brush. Sweep water and any remaining fragments through the pool outlet for them to be collected on the filter bed. A pool vacuum cleaner may be used to pick up fine shards.

6.2.2. Safe Use of Pool Equipment

- **Handling and Storage:** All pool equipment, such as inflatables, ladders, and cleaning tools, must be handled with care. Equipment should be stored securely in designated areas when not in use to prevent accidents or unauthorised use.
- **Maintenance Checks:** Regular inspections and maintenance of all pool equipment are required to ensure they remain safe and functional. Any defects or damage should be reported immediately, and equipment should be taken out of service until repairs are made.

6.2.3. Supervision and Lifeguard Duties

- **Lifeguard Requirements:** Lifeguards are responsible for the safety of all swimmers and must be positioned to have a clear view of the entire pool. The number of lifeguards on duty should correspond to the number of swimmers, with ratios outlined in the Normal Operating Procedures. Lifeguards must be trained and NPLQ certified, with their certifications kept up to date, and monthly training hours.

- **Swimmer Safety Rules:** Swimmer safety is paramount. Rules such as no running on wet surfaces, no diving in shallow areas, and the appropriate use of swimming aids must be enforced consistently. Signage displaying these rules should be clearly visible around the pool area.
- **Slips, Trips, and Falls:** The poolside should be kept clear of obstacles, and non-slip mats should be used where appropriate. Staff should be vigilant in keeping the area dry and clean, and warning signs must be used when cleaning is in progress.

6.2.4. Lighting and Visibility

- **Pool Lighting Standards:** Adequate lighting is necessary to ensure both the safety of swimmers and the effectiveness of lifeguards. Lighting must meet the standards specified in the Safe Systems of Work document and should be regularly checked and maintained. Special attention should be given to early morning or evening hours when natural light is limited.
- **Emergency Lighting:** Emergency lighting systems must be installed in the pool area to provide visibility in case of power failure. These systems should be tested regularly as part of the routine maintenance schedule.

6.3 Plant Room Safety

The plant room contains equipment critical to the operation of the pool, and safety in this area is paramount:

6.3.1. Access Control

Only trained and authorised personnel should have access to the plant room. The room is kept locked at all times with a passcode locked door.

6.3.2. Chemical Handling and Storage

- **Chemical Safety Procedures:** The plant room contains various chemicals essential for maintaining pool water quality. These chemicals must be handled and stored according to the procedures detailed in the Safe Systems of Work document. Staff must wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when handling chemicals and follow proper procedures for mixing and applying them.

Chemicals that should not mix together are stored in different areas away from each other.

- **Ventilation:** The plant room must be well-ventilated to prevent the buildup of hazardous fumes. Ventilation systems should be inspected regularly to ensure they are functioning correctly. Any issues with ventilation must be addressed immediately to prevent potential health risks.

6.3.3. Machinery and Equipment Maintenance

- **Regular Maintenance:** All machinery and equipment within the plant room, including pumps, filters, and heating systems, must undergo regular maintenance to ensure safe and efficient operation. Maintenance schedules should be strictly adhered to, with all actions logged for record-keeping purposes.
- **Lockout/Tagout Procedures:** To prevent accidental startup during maintenance, lockout/tagout procedures must be followed. This involves shutting down machinery, locking it off from operation, and tagging it with information about the maintenance work being performed.

6.3.4. Spill Response and Cleanup

- **Spill Kits and Procedures:** Spill kits must be readily available in the plant room, and staff should be trained in their use. Procedures for cleaning up chemical spills, including containment, neutralisation, and disposal, must be followed as per the Safe Systems of Work document.
- **Emergency Shutdown:** In case of a significant chemical spill or other emergencies, the plant room must be safely shut down following the Emergency Operations

Procedure document. This includes turning off equipment and evacuating the area if necessary.

6.3.5. Noise and Vibration Control

- **Noise Management:** If equipment in the plant room produces high noise levels, noise assessments must be conducted to ensure compliance with safety standards. Where necessary, hearing protection should be provided to staff, and noise levels should be monitored regularly.
- **Vibration Control:** Equipment that causes significant vibration must be securely fastened and inspected regularly to prevent any loosening or damage that could lead to hazardous situations. Staff should be trained to recognise the signs of excessive vibration and report them promptly.

6.3.6. Additional Training and Competency

- **Specialised Training for Plant Room Operators:** Staff working in the plant room must receive specialised training on the operation and maintenance of equipment, chemical handling, and emergency procedures specific to this area. Only trained and competent staff should be allowed access to the plant room.
- **Certification and Competency Checks:** Regular certification and competency checks should be conducted for all staff responsible for operating or maintaining critical pool and plant room equipment. This ensures that all personnel remain up to date with the latest safety practices and operational procedures.

6.3.7. Emergency Procedures Specific to Pool and Plant Room

- **Evacuation Routes:** Clearly marked evacuation routes must be established for both the pool area and the plant room. These routes should be regularly reviewed and practiced as part of emergency drills.
- **Emergency Shutdown Procedures:** Detailed emergency shutdown procedures for the plant room should be included in the Emergency Operations Procedure document. These procedures must cover the safe deactivation of all machinery and equipment, isolation of chemical supplies, and evacuation of personnel in the event of an emergency.

7. Employee and Volunteer Health and Safety

7.1 Induction and Ongoing Training

All employees and volunteers will receive a comprehensive health and safety induction on their first day. This induction will cover:

- Basic safety principles relevant to their role.
- Specific hazards associated with their working environment, such as chemical handling in the plant room or dealing with the public in the reception area.
- Emergency procedures, including evacuation routes and the location of first aid kits.
- Monthly lifeguard training

Ongoing training will be provided regularly to ensure that all staff remain aware of health and safety best practices and any changes to procedures or legislation.

7.2 Health Surveillance

BCAC is committed to monitoring the health of its employees, particularly those involved in high-risk activities such as handling chemicals or repetitive manual tasks. Health surveillance will include:

- Regular medical check-ups for staff exposed to hazardous substances are encouraged.
- Ergonomic assessments are encouraged to prevent musculoskeletal disorders.
- Support in accessing health services for employees who require additional support if required.

7.3 Mental Health and Well-being

The well-being of BCAC employees and volunteers is a priority. Support will be provided to help manage stress and mental health issues, including:

- Support in accessing counselling services for those who need it.
- Mental health awareness training for all staff.
- Encouragement of a healthy work-life balance to reduce stress and burnout.

8. Maintenance and Housekeeping

8.1 General Maintenance

Regular maintenance of all facilities and equipment is essential to prevent accidents and ensure smooth operations. This includes:

- **Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM):** A schedule will be maintained for regular inspections and servicing of all critical equipment, including pool pumps, boilers, and air handling units.
- **Reactive Maintenance:** Any defects or faults reported by staff should be addressed immediately. A log will be kept of all maintenance requests and their resolution.

8.2 Housekeeping

Good housekeeping practices are vital for preventing accidents, especially in areas like the poolside, changing rooms, and plant room. These practices include:

- **Daily Cleaning:** The entire facility, including offices, reception, changing rooms, and the pool area, must be cleaned daily. Particular attention should be paid to areas prone to wet floors to prevent slips and falls.
- **Waste Management:** Waste should be disposed of regularly and appropriately, with recycling encouraged wherever possible. Hazardous waste, such as used chemical containers, must be disposed of in line with environmental regulations.
- **Storage:** All materials, including cleaning supplies and pool chemicals, should be stored safely and securely, with heavy items stored at lower levels to prevent injury in the COSHH store.

9. Incident Management

9.1 Accident and Incident Reporting

All accidents, incidents, and near misses must be reported immediately using the BCAC incident reporting system. This includes:

- **Minor Incidents:** Any slips, trips, or minor injuries should be recorded, and immediate action should be taken to prevent recurrence.
- **Serious Incidents:** Serious incidents, such as chemical spills or injuries requiring medical attention, must be reported to the Senior Operations Manager and Trustees immediately, and a detailed investigation must be conducted.
- **Near Misses:** Potential hazards. Can help improve safety systems and reduce risk. Can help identify patterns that lead to problems and promote a positive safety culture.

9.2 Investigation and Follow-Up

Each reported incident will be investigated to determine the root cause and identify any necessary corrective actions. The investigation process includes:

- **Root Cause Analysis:** Identifying underlying issues, such as procedural failures or equipment defects, that contributed to the incident.
- **Corrective Actions:** Implementing changes to prevent a similar incident from occurring in the future, such as updating procedures, retraining staff, or repairing faulty equipment.
- **Communication:** Sharing lessons learned from incidents with all staff to raise awareness and improve safety practices.

10. First Aid and Emergency Procedures

10.1 First Aid Provision

BCAC will ensure that adequate first aid provision is available at all times. This includes:

- **First Aid Kits:** Fully stocked first aid kits will be available in key locations, including the reception area, poolside, and plant room. These kits will be checked and restocked regularly by the Duty Manager on shift.
- **First Aiders:** A sufficient number of trained first aiders will be on duty at all times. Their names and contact details will be clearly displayed around the facility.

10.2 Emergency Procedures

In the event of an emergency, such as a fire, chemical spill, or medical emergency, BCAC's Emergency Operating Procedures (EOP) will be followed. These procedures include:

- **Evacuation Plans:** Clear evacuation routes will be maintained, and staff will be trained on how to guide the public to safety. Evacuation drills will be conducted regularly.
- **Emergency Contacts:** A list of emergency contacts, including local emergency services and key staff, will be readily available and regularly updated.
- **Crisis Management:** The Senior Operations Manager and Trustees will lead the crisis management team, coordinating the response to any major incidents.

For more information on emergency procedures, refer to the Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Pool Safety Operating Procedure – Normal Operating Procedures & Emergency Operating Procedures document.

11. Fire Safety

11.1 Fire Risk Assessment

A comprehensive fire risk assessment will be conducted and regularly reviewed to identify potential fire hazards and ensure that appropriate control measures are in place. This includes:

- **Fire Detection Systems:** Smoke detectors and fire alarms will be installed and maintained in all areas of the facility. These systems will be tested regularly to ensure they are in working order.
- **Fire Extinguishers:** Appropriate fire extinguishers will be provided in key locations, including the reception area, poolside, and plant room. Staff will be trained in their use.
- **Fire Exits:** Fire exits will be clearly marked and kept free from obstructions at all times. Regular checks will be made to ensure that escape routes are accessible.

11.2 Staff Training

Staff will receive fire safety training, including:

- **Evacuation Procedures:** Training on how to evacuate the building safely and how to assist members of the public during an evacuation.
- **Use of Fire Extinguishers:** Fire Wardens will receive practical training on the use of fire extinguishers for small fires.

11.3 Fire Drills

Regular fire drills will be conducted to ensure that all staff and visitors are familiar with evacuation procedures. These drills will be documented, and any issues identified will be addressed promptly.

12. Contractor Management

12.1 Contractor Selection

BCAC ensures that all contractors working on-site are thoroughly vetted for their health and safety practices. We require contractors to have their own health and safety policies and procedures in place, along with providing risk assessments and method statements (RAMS) for the work they will perform.

12.2 Site Induction

Before commencing any work, all contractors must undergo a site-specific induction covering emergency procedures, site hazards, and restricted areas. This induction ensures that contractors are fully aware of and comply with BCAC's health and safety policies.

12.3 Monitoring and Supervision

We regularly monitor contractor activities to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. A designated staff member is responsible for overseeing contractors and ensuring their work does not pose a risk to others within the facility.

13. Accessibility and Inclusion

13.1 Accessible Facilities

BCAC is dedicated to providing a fully accessible environment for individuals with disabilities. All areas of our facility, including the pool, are equipped with wheelchair access, accessible changing rooms, and appropriate signage. We regularly review our accessibility features to ensure they comply with the latest standards and meet the needs of all users.

13.2 Staff Training on Inclusion

All staff members receive training on how to support individuals with disabilities, including safe assistance during emergencies. Our customer service practices are designed to be inclusive, ensuring that we cater to the diverse needs of our community.

14. Health and Well-being Programs

14.1 Mental and Physical Health Support

BCAC recognises the importance of mental and physical well-being. We encourage an open-door policy where staff can discuss any concerns or stressors with management confidentially. We are committed to supporting our team by providing resources and information on managing stress, mental health, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

14.2 Physical Health Initiatives

We promote a healthy lifestyle among our staff by encouraging participation in physical health activities, such as swimming, fitness challenges, and other wellness programs available within our facility. Information and resources on nutrition, exercise, and general well-being are made available to all staff members.

14.3 Stress Management

BCAC is dedicated to creating a supportive environment where stress is minimised. We offer resources such as mindfulness guides, relaxation techniques, and access to stress management workshops. Regular check-ins between staff and management help identify any potential stressors and provide timely support.

15. Continuous Improvement

15.1 Regular Audits

BCAC conducts regular health and safety audits to ensure compliance with all procedures and to identify areas for improvement. The findings from these audits are used to update policies and procedures, ensuring they remain current and effective.

15.2 Feedback Mechanisms

We have established a system for staff, volunteers, and visitors to provide feedback on our health and safety practices. Feedback is regularly reviewed to identify trends or recurring issues, which are promptly addressed to maintain a safe environment.

15.3 Policy Review and Update

BCAC reviews this Health and Safety Policy on an annual or biannual basis, or whenever significant changes occur in the workplace or relevant legislation. Staff members are involved in the review process to ensure the policy remains relevant and effective.

16. Documentation and Record Keeping

16.1 Health and Safety Records

BCAC maintains accurate records of all health and safety training in accordance to Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. These records are stored securely and are easily accessible to authorised personnel for review and compliance purposes.

16.2 Document Control

We have implemented a document control system to manage the creation, approval, distribution, and revision of all health and safety documents. This system ensures that all staff have access to the most current versions of policies, procedures, and guidelines.

17. Communication

BCAC is committed to promoting a positive health and safety culture. Health and safety information, including this policy, will be communicated to all employees, and volunteers. Regular meetings will be held to discuss health and safety matters and encourage open communication.

18. Contact Information

For more information or to report a health and safety concern, please contact:

Lewis Herbertson

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19. Approval

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees of Birtley Community Aquatic Centre on 04/02/2025.

Signatories:

Yvonne Probert

Chairperson, Birtley Community Aquatic Centre Board of Trustees

Lewis Herbertson

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