

ECONORTH LTD.

# Health & Safety

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## Policy and Procedure

John Thompson

Next Review Date: 10.02.27



**This policy applies to all EcoNorth Staff / Internships / Consultants / Placements who work on behalf of the company and is reviewed annually to ensure its continuing suitability.**

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## Health & Safety Policy and Procedure

### A. Statement of Intent

EcoNorth is a professional consultancy that provides a complete ecological service for projects across the UK and Ireland. Services include botanical and protected species surveys, licencing and mitigation, all ecological assessment, land management, Ecological Clerk of Works and GIS mapping.

In order to consistently deliver a high quality service as well as managing and reducing risks associated with our facilities and operations, EcoNorth is dedicated to maintaining our robust H&S management system in accordance with the requirements of ISO 45001 and SSIP Acclaim.

EcoNorth is fully committed to the H&S of its employees, interns, placements, volunteers, subcontractors and suppliers, and those who use our facilities, sites, services and products, through the prevention of injury and ill health, promotion of physical and mental health and wellbeing, and monitoring and continual improvement of H&S performance. Furthermore, we commit ourselves to complying with best professional practice, relevant legislation, client requirements and applicable compliance obligations in all that we do. Our team contributes to the development and implementation of H&S improvement objectives and KPIs, which are authorised and reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

EcoNorth is committed to:

- Promoting positive and proactive behaviours in relation to H&S at work, in line with our Behavioural Safety Policy.
- Providing adequate control of the H&S risks arising from our work activities.
- Providing and maintaining safe equipment.
- Ensuring safe handling, storage, use and eventual disposal of substances.
- Providing information, instruction and supervision for employees, interns, placements and subcontractors.
- Ensuring all employees are competent to do their tasks and to give them adequate training and resources to do so safely.
- Consulting with our employees on matters affecting their H&S.
- Preventing accidents and cases of work related ill health.
- Promoting physical and mental health and wellbeing, and activities and measures which support these.

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- Maintaining a culture of reporting of accidents, near miss incidents and positive and negative observations of H&S behaviours and practices.
- Maintaining safe and healthy working conditions.
- Developing H&S Objectives, Targets and Management Programmes.
- Setting and exceeding H&S Key Performance Indicators.
- Delivering quarterly H&S updates to the Board.
- Reviewing and revising this policy as necessary as a result of changes in activity and on an annual basis.

## **B. EcoNorth Health and Safety Policy Structure**

The EcoNorth Health and Safety Policy is divided into twenty two sections:

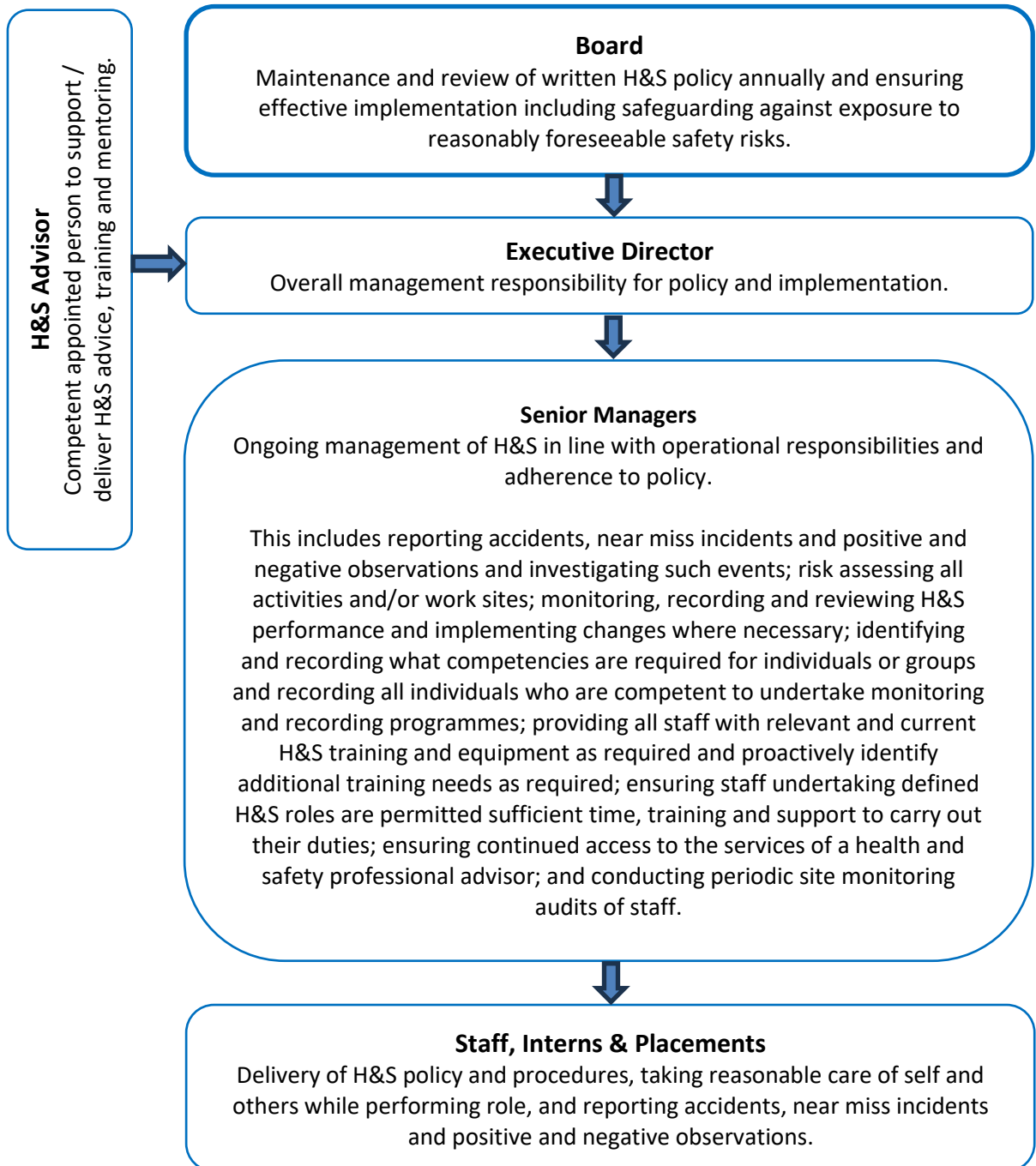
1. Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities
2. Contractors
3. Construction Design Management Regulations 2015 and Building Safety Act 2022
4. Fire
5. Physical and Mental Health, including Fatigue
6. Hygiene and Welfare
7. Drugs and Alcohol
8. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)
9. Lone Working
10. Risk Assessment
11. Accidents, Near Misses and Observations
12. Accident Reporting and Investigation
13. First Aid
14. The Workplace
15. Provision and Use of Equipment
16. Manual Handling
17. Children and Vulnerable Adults
18. Out of Control Behaviour
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20. Infectious Diseases
21. Smoking and Vaping
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## 1. Health & Safety Roles and Responsibilities

### 1.1. Roles and Responsibilities

All personnel working within EcoNorth have a role to play in ensuring that the organisation meets its H&S responsibilities.



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EcoNorth has appointed a number of H&S Responsible Persons (RPs) who fulfil the role as described under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (S2(4)). These roles are voluntary and are not part of Trade Union negotiations. Responsible Persons' duties are designed to assist EcoNorth's Executive Director and other Senior Managers. The H&S RPs do not reduce the legal requirement to manage good H&S practice on the part of the Board or Executive Director of EcoNorth.

Name	Role	Responsibilities
John Thompson	Executive Director (Senior Management Team Member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall management responsibility for establishing, implementing and reviewing the company policies, objectives and targets and management programmes, KPIs and business planning.</li> <li>Regularly report to the Board.</li> </ul>
	Health and Safety Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility for establishing, implementing and maintaining core H&amp;S processes, standards and specifications in accordance with ISO 45001 and SSIP Acclaim to ensure intended outputs are delivered.</li> <li>Act as EcoNorth's appointed person as required under health and safety and first aid legislation.</li> <li>Act as principal Fire Safety Manager and ensure that EcoNorth complies with the requirements of our fire policy.</li> <li>Liaise with Auditors/Consultants on advice and support and work alongside the H&amp;S Officer to provide advice and guidance on H&amp;S documentation, reporting and function.</li> <li>Regularly report to the Senior Management Team on H&amp;S performance for review and as a basis for improvement of H&amp;S issues.</li> <li>Maintenance of the integrity of the IMS when changes are implemented to H&amp;S policies and processes.</li> </ul>
	Responsible Person (RP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility for undertaking duties in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Contractors.</li> <li>~ Building Safety Act and CDM Regulations.</li> <li>~ Fire.</li> <li>~ Physical and mental health, including fatigue.</li> <li>~ Hygiene and Welfare.</li> <li>~ Drugs and alcohol.</li> <li>~ COSHH and DSEAR.</li> <li>~ Lone working (specifically for EcoNorth personnel).</li> <li>~ Risk assessment.</li> <li>~ Accidents, near misses incidents and observations.</li> <li>~ Accident reporting and investigation.</li> <li>~ First aid.</li> <li>~ Out of control behaviour.</li> <li>~ Infectious diseases.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Regularly report to the Senior Management Team and at whole team meetings.</li> </ul>
	Health and Wellbeing Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce one significant Health and Wellbeing initiative per year or a number of smaller initiatives throughout the year.</li> </ul>
Claire Snowball	Responsible Person (RP) (Senior Management Team Member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility for undertaking duties in relation to CVA.</li> <li>Regularly report to the Senior Management Team and at whole team meetings.</li> </ul>
Sandi Davison	Health and Safety Officer (Senior)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of a coordination function for all IMS documentation, reporting and monitoring. This includes:</li> </ul>

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	Management Team Member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Maintenance of all documentation in an accessible format.</li> <li>~ Contribution to the review of EcoNorth's documentation.</li> <li>~ Assistance with the development of EcoNorth's policies and processes.</li> <li>~ Collation and dissemination of all reporting to the management team.</li> <li>~ Displaying all relevant certification and health and safety law information.</li> <li>~ Responsibility for managing the internal and external audit process including scheduling of audits.</li> <li>• Liaise on EcoNorth's behalf with EcoNorth's Specialist Advisor.</li> <li>• Liaise with Auditors/Consultants on advice and support and work alongside the H&amp;S Manager to provide advice and guidance on H&amp;S documentation, reporting and function.</li> </ul>
	Responsible Person (RP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility for undertaking duties in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ The workplace.</li> <li>~ Provision and use of equipment.</li> <li>~ Manual handling.</li> <li>~ Smoking.</li> <li>~ Vaccinations.</li> <li>~ PPE/safety equipment maintenance and annual audit.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Regularly report to the Senior Management Team and at whole team meetings.</li> </ul>
	Mental Health Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce one significant Mental Health initiative per year or a number of smaller initiatives throughout the year.</li> </ul>
Mark Fletcher	Responsible Person (RP) (Senior Management Team Member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility for conducting personal risk assessments.</li> <li>• Regularly report to the Senior Management Team.</li> </ul>
Thomas Wilson	Responsible Person (RP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility for checks and maintenance of tree climbing equipment and ladders.</li> <li>• Responsible for undertaking duties in relation to vehicles and driving.</li> <li>• Regularly report at whole team meetings.</li> </ul>
Sam Graham	Responsible Person (RP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for undertaking duties in relation to vehicles and driving.</li> <li>• Regularly report at whole team meetings.</li> </ul>
Ellesse Janda	Mental Health First Aider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point of contact who can provide early intervention support for an employee who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress.</li> </ul>

#### 1.4.2 Non-compliance

Any failure by an employee to comply with any aspect of EcoNorth's H&S policy, procedures or duties specifically assigned to them will be regarded by EcoNorth as misconduct which will be dealt with under the terms of EcoNorth's disciplinary procedure, as set out in the Staff Handbook.

Any failure by a subcontractor or supplier to comply with any aspect of EcoNorth's H&S policy, procedures or duties will be thoroughly investigated and may result in their removal from the company's approved supplier list and termination of their current contract.

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### 1.4.3 Meetings

Senior Management Meetings are held monthly. Nominal periodic dates are assigned to specific elements of the H&S policy, as shown below. Urgent matters will be addressed through specific meetings and actions as required by the circumstances.

- Monthly
  - ~ Accidents, Near Miss Incidents, Observations and Investigation Reports – RP report, review of reports.
  - ~ Vehicles and Driving – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Site Monitoring Audit Reports – report any issues.
  - ~ Risk Assessments – report any issues.
  
- Quarterly (each March, June, September, December)
  - ~ Fire – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Physical and Mental Health, including Fatigue – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Hygiene and Welfare – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Non-conformities and Complaints – any issues.
  
- Annually (each May)
  - ~ COSHH and DSEAR – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Lone Working – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Risk Assessment – RP report, any new competency records/other RAs to be approved.
  - ~ The Workplace – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Provision and Use of Equipment – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Manual Handling – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Children and Vulnerable Adults – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Contractors – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ CDM and BSA – RP report, any issues
  - ~ Out of Control Behaviour – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Infectious Diseases – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Drugs and Alcohol – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Smoking – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Any other health and safety business.
  
- Annually (each September)
  - ~ First Aid – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Vaccinations – RP report, any issues.
  - ~ Training and Database/Matrix – any issues.
  - ~ Objectives, Targets and Management Programmes - extent to which they are being met.
  - ~ Internal Audit Programme – progress report, any issues.
  
- Annually (each December)
  - ~ Employee Satisfaction Survey – results.
  - ~ Mental Health Risk Assessment of Team – results.
  
- Annually (each January)
  - ~ Annual H&S Management System Review.

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Monthly Team Meetings and an Annual Team Consultation are held for the whole team to discuss H&S matters as well as less formal weekly meetings.

## 2. Contractors

### 2.1. Definitions

Contractor means anyone brought in by EcoNorth to work in any area for which EcoNorth assumes some responsibility, who is not an employee, volunteer or visitor of EcoNorth.

### 2.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Enter all routine or call-out contractors onto EcoNorth's approved contractors and/or subcontractors list before they are allowed to start work for EcoNorth.
- Include only contractors deemed competent in the approved contractors list.
- Have all contractors working to an agreed contract.

### 2.3. Method

All contractors must be approved by EcoNorth (through registration/assessment) and have a signed contract in place prior to any work being conducted EcoNorth's behalf. All contractors will lodge relevant documentation (insurance details, risk assessments health and safety record etc) with EcoNorth.

All contractors on the approved list who may be called out for immediate or emergency work will have pre-lodged contracts held at EcoNorth. No contractor may send out a subcontractor or member of staff who is not fully aware of the conditions described in that contract.

All projects or work carried out by contractors will follow a safe system of work agreed by the contractor and EcoNorth. All contractors who cannot supply written safe systems will work to an agreed method statement and risk assessment provided by EcoNorth.

All contractors undertaking single projects will work with a competent Project Manager, with the assistance of their health and safety representative if necessary, to create a risk assessment which identifies safe systems of work.

Where a competent member of staff is to supervise contractors directly at all times, records and written safe systems of work may not be required.

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### 3. Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) and Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA)

#### 3.1. Definitions

The **CDM** is relevant to everyone controlling construction site work who has health and safety responsibilities. Checking that working conditions are healthy and safe before work begins and ensuring that the proposed work is not going to put others at risk requires planning and organisation, whatever the size of the site.

The CDM is divided into five parts:

- Part 1 deals with the application of the CDM and definitions.
- Part 2 covers the duties of Clients for all construction projects. These duties apply in full for Commercial Clients, however, the duties for Domestic Clients normally pass to other Duty Holders.
- Part 3 covers the health and safety duties and roles of the other duty holders.
- Part 4 contains general requirements for all construction sites.
- Part 5 contains transitional arrangements and revocations.

The **BSA** is applicable to England and Wales and stands as the primary legislative framework that legally establishes building safety standards throughout the design, construction, management and occupation of buildings with the emphasis on everyone involved throughout the building's life cycle prioritising and evidencing safe working practices.

A defining element of the BSA is the legal obligation for all individuals and organisations to be **competent** to ensure compliance with the Building Regulations. This obligation applies to all new buildings across all sectors from the smallest of residential alterations to the largest most complex mixed use development.

The BSA also puts specific additional controls in place for **higher-risk buildings** (HRB) ie buildings over 18m in height or have 7 or more storeys and which contain 2 or more residential units, typically high-rise apartment blocks, student accommodation, hospitals and care homes. Relevant hospitals and care homes are only controlled through their design and construction phases. Hotels, prison and military accommodation are not included in the scope of HRBs. The **gateway process** for all HRBs is an approvals process established to ensure building safety has been taken into account throughout the design and construction phases:

#### **Gateway 1 Planning -> Gateway 2 Pre-construction -> Gateway 3 Pre-occupation**

The **golden thread** is the recording, developing, collecting, organising and sharing of information in a comprehensive digital record by Duty Holders or Accountable Persons in accordance with prescribed standards to facilitate building safety throughout the lifecycle of a building.

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**Secondary Legislation:** The Building Regulations Act (amendments) England Regulations 2023 introduced new amendments to the 2010 Building Regulations regarding Duty Holders and competence. It outlines the responsibilities of Clients in ensuring compliance and competency throughout the supply chain with all relevant requirements, including suitable arrangements for planning, managing and monitoring a project, and provides a clearer structure for Duty Holders to follow in relation to general competence and considerations they should be making before any work commences.

**Duty Holders** involved in a building project including the Client, Principal Designer, Principal Contractor, General Designers and General Contractors. All Duty Holders must ensure work is designed, planned, managed and monitored to comply with the Building Regulations and have a responsibility to share information, support and cooperate with other Duty Holders in achieving compliance. Everyone must be able to evidence the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours to carry out their work safely and without risk to health, and organisations must be able to demonstrate their organisational capabilities.

A General Contractor is anyone who directly employs or engages construction workers or manages construction work and may include subcontractors, any individual self-employed worker or business that carries out, manages or controls construction work. They have an important role in planning, managing and monitoring their work to ensure any risks are controlled. EcoNorth will typically be in the role of General Contractor contracted to attend pre-, active, and post construction / development sites to undertake ecological assessments, operate as Ecological Clerk of Works and implement ecological or arboricultural mitigation requirements. These sites are managed by our Clients who are normally the Principal Contractor or, on occasion, the Principal Designer. On occasion, EcoNorth can operate on site as a Subcontractor to the Designer. At times we may subcontract other workers to support our work eg other professional Ecologists.

### 3.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Adhere to the CDM, BSA, secondary legislation and industry best practice.

### 3.3. Method

Ensure EcoNorth's workers act ethically and contribute to safe outcomes by:

- Respecting life, the law, environment and public good.
  - ~ Prioritising the health and safety of others and drawing attention to hazards.
  - ~ Ensuring any work undertaken by EcoNorth is lawful, ethical and justified.
  - ~ Respecting and protecting personal data and intellectual property.
  - ~ Preserving and improving the built and natural environment.
  - ~ Utilising limited natural resources appropriately.
  - ~ Optimising public good and social value.

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- Behave with honesty and integrity by:
  - ~ Behaving in a reliable manner, treating others equally and fairly.
  - ~ Recognising how our work and behaviour may affect others, and respecting their privacy, rights and reputations.
  - ~ Respecting confidentiality.
  - ~ Declaring and managing conflicts of interest.
  - ~ Preventing and reporting corrupt practices and professional misconduct.
  - ~ Rejecting bribery and improper influence.
  
- Conducting work with accuracy and rigour by:
  - ~ Always acting with care.
  - ~ Only performing work for which we are competently trained or with competent supervision.
  - ~ Ensuring knowledge and skills remain up to date.
  - ~ Supporting others in their professional development.
  - ~ Presenting and reviewing information and evidence honestly, accurately and objectively, and respecting the alternative views of others.
  - ~ Identifying, mitigating and managing risks.
  - ~ Avoiding misleading or allowing others to be misled.
  
- Being responsible for direction, conduct and communication by:
  - ~ Raising awareness with other duty holders about the latest industry advances, and their impact and benefits.
  - ~ Being objective and truthful in all communications.
  - ~ Challenging statements or policies that cause concern.
  - ~ Championing equality, diversity and inclusion and the prevention of modern slavery.
  - ~ Communicating unambiguously to avoid misunderstandings.
  - ~ Holding regular project meetings with relevant duty holders, employees and subcontractors.
  
- Adhering to relevant legislation, regulations, codes and standards of practice by:
  - ~ Keeping up to date with the latest legislation, regulations, codes and standards of practice to ensure compliance.
  - ~ Seeking updates from external advisors eg HSE.
  - ~ Maintaining our register of legislation.
  - ~ Reporting any instances of non-compliance immediately.

Demonstrate effective leadership, teamwork and communications by:

- Promoting a strong, proactive safety culture throughout the company and all our activities.
- Assisting effective communication within and between teams and organisations and between individuals.
- Coordinating work with others in the project team and promoting effective teamwork.

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- Cooperating and complying with the parts of the construction phase plan relevant to our work and any directions given by the Principal Contractor or Principal Designer.
- Communicating through oral, written, drawn or graphic information, in a range of accessible formats.
- Communicating technical information to non-technical audiences eg via toolbox talks.
- Listening and providing appropriate feedback.

Manage individual competence and contribute to organisational competence by:

- Ensuring as far as practicable that employees and subcontractors always act within the limits of their own competence and seek advice when necessary.
- Proactively developing employees' and subcontractors' competency and maintaining this through training and professional development activities.
- Ensuring appropriate competency of employees and subcontractors when making appointments and allocating tasks within the team.
- Providing suitable instructions and information to and supervision of employees and subcontractors.
- Notifying the Client/Principal Contractor should any employee or subcontractor cease to satisfy the required competencies.
- Monitoring, recording and analysing behaviours in order to identify and implement continuous improvements.
- Maintaining ISO 45001, 9001 and 14001 certification and SSIP Acclaim accreditation.

Demonstrate personal responsibility and accountability by:

- Managing the scope of employees' and subcontractors' responsibilities and communicating these effectively to others.
- Identifying areas which may be unsafe such as standards, procedures, systems, processes, equipment.
- Identifying, promoting and reporting safe and appropriate behaviours of internal and external individuals/organisations.
- Identifying and challenging unsafe and/or inappropriate behaviours of internal and external individuals/organisations.
- Escalating concerns via regular reporting procedures or whistleblowing procedures.
- Providing feedback on unsafe and/or inappropriate practices.

Understand and comply with duty of care to others by:

- Understanding our duties and responsibilities to protect ourselves.
- Understanding our duties and responsibilities to protect others eg colleagues, other contractors, first responders, public.
- Consulting, listening and engaging with those who are or could be affected by our work and responding appropriately.

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Demonstrate safety by:

- Understanding and contributing to the development and application of fire strategies, practices and technological systems on construction sites, where applicable.
- Contributing to establishing and maintaining public health and safety on construction sites, where applicable.
- Ensuring, where appropriate, that all work to be carried out by EcoNorth and our workers is designed, planned, managed and monitored to comply with the CDM, BSA and Building Regulations.
- Documenting arrangements to assess and manage safety risks of work activities under our control (such as the processes to be followed, the choice of materials to be used on site including the use of any solvents, the potential spreading of fire, the risks to anyone who might be affected by it, offsite risks including the impact on the local neighbourhood and possible emergency escape routes) and the measures needed to protect them via the completion of comprehensive site-specific risks assessments (RAs), which must be approved by Senior Managers, shared with relevant employees and subcontractors who must formally acknowledge they have read and understood the RA, and issued to the Principal Contractor and other General Contractors as required, prior to carrying out a survey or other work. Where specific tasks require additional RAs and method statements, they should be drafted in collaboration with the Client/Principal Contractor/Subcontractors and circulated once jointly agreed. RAs are monitored through our regular team meetings; any new risks are flagged and incorporated as appropriate into future risk assessments.
- Ensuring all employees and subcontractors have completed relevant safety training prior to attending site.
- Ensuring all employees and subcontractors receive a site-specific induction and are aware of site rules and requirements, including fire and emergency procedures, prior to work commencing.
- Ensuring safety precautions identified in the RA (eg suitable welfare facilities and prevention of unauthorised access) are in place prior to work activities starting, maintained throughout and periodically reviewed.
- Requiring subcontractors and employees to inform EcoNorth when they arrive at and depart from site in line with project specific sign in and out procedures, and to give regular updates on their progress during site works and on the project as a whole.
- Instructing employees and subcontractors to take an active role in maintaining safety on site, report unsafe conditions or aspects of work which could be improved, leave site if they are not comfortable with the approaches in place to manage safety risks or health and safety generally, and report examples of best practice.
- Auditing employees and subcontractors periodically to ensure that safety procedures are being followed correctly. A number of senior staff have been trained as supervisors through the SSSTS training and accreditation scheme.
- Reporting and documenting all safety incidents and observations eg inadequate fire precautions onsite.
- Conducting thorough investigations of accidents and near miss incidents to identify their root causes and prevent reoccurrence. Findings are recorded and fed back to staff at team meetings to drive improvements.

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Demonstrate knowledge management and communication by:

- Confirming that all parties understand their duties with regard to the CDM, BSA and Building Regulations.
- Identifying how safety information will be collected, maintained and shared.
- Obtaining, contributing to, recording, updating, sharing and safeguarding information with other Duty Holders about the project's design, construction, maintenance and refurbishment throughout its lifecycle.
- Effectively communicating risks and safety issues to all relevant parties in an appropriate and timely manner, particularly for higher-risk buildings.
- Highlighting any missing or inaccurate information relevant to building safety and making efforts to obtain such information.
- Ensuring robust data protection and IT security measures are in place to protect building safety information effectively.
- Ensuring EcoNorth's data retention policy is kept up to date and followed.
- Maintaining H&S policies which support all current legislation.
- Ensuring EcoNorth's policies are shared with new employees during their induction and with current employees periodically.
- Ensuring employees are made aware of training courses run by the company, in addition to mandatory training.
- Holding weekly and monthly team meetings at EcoNorth, and on an ad hoc basis if new information is received.

Demonstrate management of systems and products by:

- Contributing (where appropriate) to design, management or activities to ensure holistic safety.
- Carefully choosing suitable work systems, processes and products to maintain safety.
- Maintaining quality management and quality assurance processes.
- Minimising risks during activities through testing, assessment and maintenance information and procedures (where appropriate) throughout the project's lifecycle.
- Maintaining safety systems and processes throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- Reporting any system or product failures to relevant parties.
- Identifying and implementing measures to safely dispose of products which have reached end of life status and to replace them.

Demonstrate general competence and management of duties by:

- Ensuring management policies, procedures, systems and resources are in place to ensure our workers can meet the required competencies.
- Identifying behavioural, education, training and experience requirements during the tender process. A range of mandatory and task specific training requirements are utilised to support a suitably trained workforce.
- Identifying training gaps which need to be filled, the timeline for doing so and the format required.
- Communicating H&S information to EcoNorth employees and subcontractors.

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- Arranging annual personal risk assessments for all employees, to cover any and all risks which they may personally face in working for EcoNorth.
- Arranging relevant internal/external training for all employees and subcontractors.
- Providing employees and subcontractors under EcoNorth's control with appropriate supervision, instructions and information.
- Ensuring all employees and subcontractors receive a suitable site-specific induction.
- Requiring EcoNorth employees and subcontractors to inform their colleagues upon arrival/departure from site and provide regular updates on their activities.
- Holding individual meetings with employees and subcontractors to discuss their progress and address any concerns.
- Maintaining documentation for all training completed and renewal requirements.
- Periodically reviewing EcoNorth's Training and Personal Development Policy and sharing it with all relevant parties.
- Holding regular Senior Management Meetings to manage, monitor and review the team's competencies and performance, devise strategies for implementing continuous improvements, and document all decisions and actions.
- Holding wider team meetings regularly to plan, monitor and make changes to project activities and resourcing, as well as monitoring our RAs, flagging any new risks and incorporating them as appropriate into future risk assessments.
- Holding project team meetings periodically with other duty holders to ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities prior to any work commencing, to share information, advice and support throughout the duration of the project and cooperate with the other duty holders to achieve compliance throughout our work.

Other parts of the CDM Regulations 2015 which do not apply to EcoNorth as an ecological consultancy (for information only):

- Where a contractor is **the only contractor working on a construction project**, they must ensure a construction phase plan is drawn up before setting up the site.
- When working as the only contractor for a domestic client, the contractor takes on the client duties, as well as their own as contractor. However, this should involve them doing no more than they will normally do to comply with health and safety law.
- Where a domestic project involves more than one contractor, the principal contractor normally takes on the client duties and the contractor will work to the principal contractor as the 'client'. If the domestic client does not appoint a principal contractor, the role of the principal contractor must be carried out by the contractor as principal contractor and the client duties must be carried out by the contractor in control of the construction phase and the client duties must be carried out by the contractor as principal contractor. Alternatively, the domestic client can ask the principal designer to take on the client duties (although this must be confirmed in a written agreement) and the contractor must work to them as the 'client'.

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## 4. Fire and Carbon Monoxide

### 4.1 Definitions

Fire is any hazard relating to the combustion of any material, or emission of gases of whatever type or for whatever reason that results in an adverse change in environmental conditions to the work place.

Carbon monoxide (chemical formula CO) is a poisonous, flammable gas that is colourless, odourless and tasteless. Carbon monoxide poisoning is the most common type of fatal air poisoning in many countries.

Fire and carbon monoxide safety practices are intended to prevent or reduce the ignition of an uncontrolled fire and/or the spread and impact of a fire or carbon monoxide leak.

### 4.2 Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Maintain all fire and carbon monoxide prevention, fighting and evacuation procedures as recommended by Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and independent advisors as appropriate and in accordance with insurance requirements and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- Deal with fire and carbon monoxide hazards related to work activities under specific risk assessments.

### 4.3 Method

A Fire RP will be appointed to report any incidents or issues to the Senior Management Team at their monthly meetings and take appropriate actions.

The Fire RP will maintain communication with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and act upon any recommendations and advice they provide as required.

If at any time, the Fire RP suspects a fire or carbon monoxide hazard in the office, they should undertake whatever actions they deem necessary to either remove the hazard or protect all people from the hazard.

EcoNorth's fire alarm system and all fire blankets and extinguishers and carbon monoxide alarms will be maintained as per requirements, and all fire escapes will be checked to ensure they are working effectively and clear of obstructions.

All responsible staff and volunteers will be aware of their duties in the event of a fire or carbon monoxide leak, including introductory talks and emergency evacuation procedures for meetings.

Fire warden training is arranged for all employees at EcoNorth every three years. General fire and carbon monoxide safety training will be arranged for all employees during periodic fire

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drills and appropriately documented. Subcontractors will be required to read and adhere to risk assessments where there is a risk of fire.

Whilst EcoNorth does not operate sites and are contracted to work on sites by our Clients / their Principal Contractor, fire risks are managed through our risk assessment process. Onsite safety risks, such as the use of chemicals and the risk of fire spread, must be assessed and managed and should take into consideration the size of the site, number of people present and the nature of the work being done. During a long term project, safety risks and their control measures will be reviewed at least annually.

Project Managers should make relevant employees and subcontractors aware of site rules and requirements in relation to fire, carbon monoxide and emergency procedures at sites other than EcoNorth's office prior to commencement of works. EcoNorth employees and subcontractors are instructed to leave site if they are not comfortable with the approaches in place to manage fire and carbon monoxide risks.

Individuals not in EcoNorth's employment (such as clients, other contractors and the general public) who may be affected by the scope of work under our control, will be made aware of any fire and carbon monoxide hazards and precautionary safety measures put in place to counter these.

Any accidents, near miss incidents or safety observations (positive or negative) will be reported immediately, internally and externally, in writing.

All employees and subcontractors will receive a site induction from the Principal Contractor, OR on pre-construction sites EcoNorth's senior staff will provide briefings developed for relevant pre-construction operations, and will be aware of site rules and requirements, including fire, carbon monoxide and emergency procedures, prior to work commencing.

Communication of fire and carbon monoxide safety to all parties involved in a project (including but not limited to Clients, Principal Designers, Principal Contractors, other Contractors, Subcontractors and Employees, General Public) will be achieved through oral, written, drawn, digital or graphic information and provided in accessible formats to suit individual needs.

Project Managers should report breaches of any fire and carbon monoxide requirements, such as inadequate fire or carbon monoxide precautions, while working on a project by raising their concern with their Line Manager and Client/Principal Contractor then taking appropriate actions to remedy the situation. An H&S observation form or non-conformity report, depending on the severity and impact of the breach, should be completed at the time of the breach which will be reviewed during the next Senior Management Meeting.

Project Managers and Senior Managers will proactively identify higher risk settings in relation to fire and carbon monoxide (and other gases) such as confined spaces and identify suitable and appropriate training for staff as well as securing and utilising appropriate PPE, monitoring and where relevant rescue apparatus.

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EcoNorth's fire and carbon monoxide policies, procedures and risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually or when there is any significant change in EcoNorth's activities.

## 5. Physical and Mental Health, including Fatigue

### 5.1 Definitions

Physical health and wellbeing is the normal or typical functioning of the body. This can vary greatly for any given individual depending on a range of factors such as age, however, most authors describe physical health as comprising 5 aspects which are:

- Muscular strength.
- Muscular endurance.
- Flexibility.
- Cardiovascular endurance.
- Body composition.

Maintaining physical health and wellbeing includes promoting physical health and avoiding preventable fatigue, injuries, diseases and conditions which can reduce levels of staff sickness and increase their energy and concentration levels.

Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and wellbeing that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders - it exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of difficulty and distress and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes. There are many types of mental health issues. An issue can happen suddenly, because of a specific event in someone's life, or it can build up gradually over time. Common mental health issues include stress, depression and anxiety. Less common issues include bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

Fatigue is a feeling of constant tiredness or weakness and can be physical, mental or a combination of both. It can affect anyone and may result in slower reactions, reduced ability to process information, memory lapses, absent-mindedness, decreased awareness, lack of attention, underestimation of risk and reduced coordination.

### 5.2 Policy

EcoNorth aims to promote physical and mental wellbeing in the workplace, by encouraging positive behaviour patterns and minimising work related stress, in order to:

- Make staff happier and healthier and feel valued and supported.
- Improve performance and make staff more productive.
- Reduce absence levels.
- Reduce workplace disputes.

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- Make the organisation more attractive to prospective employees.
- Be compliant with current health and safety regulations.

EcoNorth takes active steps to promote and support staff in making choices which are beneficial to their physical and mental wellbeing. This will include but not be limited to:

- Flexible working arrangements.
- A pet policy which allows staff to bring suitable pets into the office environment.
- Identification of suitable workplace health initiatives.
- Providing reasonable adjustments to workstations and wider working environment.

### 5.3 Method

- Staff are encouraged to work sensible hours, take breaks and to rest and recuperate after busy periods and avoid working at weekends. A healthy work/life balance is promoted and team members are encouraged to use their flexi/annual leave effectively.
- Staff are required to take minimum 'good quality rest times' in any given period, and to take adequate breaks when driving to/from site. This includes as a minimum:
  - ~ A minimum of 7 hours good quality sleep or rest between periods of work.
  - ~ A minimum 30 minute break for every 2 hours of driving where journey times reach 2 hours or more.
  - ~ A minimum of 11 hours break between periods of work on construction sites.
- Restrictions apply to the number of out of hours surveys which anyone can carry out per week; these will be adjusted in accordance with the overall workload required at any given time.
- EcoNorth facilitates flexible working options, including some provision for home / remote working. Accrued flexi time is used effectively to encourage effective control of workload and avoid burn out.
- All staff are encouraged to let the team know when we are 'offline' and in essence should not be contacted, especially following or in advance of out of hours work in order to have defined non-working time while flexible working may be being undertaken by other team members.
- Healthy eating is promoted in the workplace and a suitable and hygienic kitchen environment with essential cooking equipment is made available for healthy food preparation.
- Team members are encouraged to build activity into their working day and their commute to work eg exercising during lunchbreaks, cycling/walking to work.
- Activities, responsibilities, working relationships and planned changes in the workplace which are likely to cause stress to team members are minimised.

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- Regular screen breaks are encouraged.
- Upon request, EcoNorth will pay the cost for a standard VDU eye test at NHS recommended intervals for staff who use display screen equipment in the course of their work. This will be done through the use of e-Vouchers being distributed to staff for their use. Should it be identified that a prescription is required solely and specifically for VDU use, the employee will be able to select a pair of glasses from the £49 range, fitted with CR39 single-vision lenses plus scratch-resistant treatment, as standard. Alternatively, the £49 contribution can be used towards an upgrade to other frame ranges.
- Weekly team catch ups are held in person or via Microsoft Teams to discuss workload commitments and the delegation of work.
- Online spreadsheets highlighting staff workload commitments (including report writing and survey preparation) are maintained.
- Robust policies and processes are in place to ensure the right person is recruited for each job, to avoid stress on new employees and negative impacts on the company down the line.
- All staff involved in the recruitment process have undergone mental health and equality, diversity and inclusion training to ensure candidates are not discriminated against at any stage. EcoNorth's commitment to staff physical/mental health and equal opportunities are communicated during our recruitment processes.
- EcoNorth's robust policies ensuring team members are protected from discrimination, bullying and harassment are easily accessed and well publicised.
- Appropriate workplace adjustments are offered to candidates for the interview and/or the job itself.
- Candidates can disclose confidentially, and any health issue or disability is kept separate from the application form so the recruitment panel does not see it.
- Employees are provided with a clearly defined job description and an effective induction programme.
- Health and Safety training and mental health awareness are embedded in our induction process.
- The office environment is regularly checked to ensure it is suitable for all staff.
- Social events are encouraged and, where appropriate, EcoNorth will fund or part fund activities to boost staff health, wellbeing and teamwork.

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- Employees have an understanding of ways to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing, as well as being trained to identify signs of poor health and wellbeing and are aware of the support services available both within and outside EcoNorth.
- Employees are empowered to make decisions about how and when they complete the work for which they are responsible, so long as such timescales are clearly communicated and agreed and fit overall project and client requirements. Project resourcing is reviewed weekly to identify where work can be reassigned where necessary.
- Line Managers are trained on how to spot the signs of poor mental health among their team members and monitor their team members wellbeing, mental health, engagement and satisfaction levels through observation and regular 121s and team meetings.
- Regular 121 meetings are conducted where team members can raise any concerns or opportunities for improvements in a safe, supportive environment. Specifically, Line Managers can use 121 meetings or annual Personal Risk Assessments to identify changes to medical status or conditions, medication or sources of influence outside of work which may have a bearing on their health or wellbeing at work.
- Employees who are identified (or self-identify) as being at risk of fatigue and/or stress are provided with relevant support.
- Staff are encouraged to access medical services where relevant, including talking to a GP, and provided with access to Mind's Wellness Action Plans.
- Line Managers keep in touch with staff when they are off sick to stay aware of their situation and provide support where possible. 'Return to work' meetings between Line Managers and employees are held to ensure any physical and mental wellbeing issues are addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- A confidential annual survey of staff satisfaction levels is conducted.
- Employees are consulted to identify what they see as a good working environment.
- Employees are actively consulted about planned changes to the organisation and all agreed changes are effectively communicated to team members in a timely manner.
- Changes in EcoNorth activities, requirements, responsibilities and working relationships which may help ease or avoid stress are identified and implemented in a timely manner.
- Changes to team members' physical and mental wellbeing eg fatigue, stress, injury or medical conditions, are reviewed and their workload/responsibilities/physical environment amended accordingly.

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- Staff are provided with an individual training budget each year to develop their career, in addition to their mandatory H&S training, as well as on the job training from highly skilled and experienced colleagues.
- A Health and Wellbeing Champion and Mental Health Champion have been appointed to identify and implement initiatives, and provide reliable physical and mental health information, in order to promote staff wellbeing. Key dates in the mental health calendar such as Mental Health Awareness Week will be celebrated annually.
- Mental Health first aider training will be arranged for one team member where relevant.
- Issues causing physical or mental health concerns are reported at monthly Senior Management Meetings and relevant actions identified.
- The H&S RP/Adviser will monitor changes in HSE regulations and report to the Senior Management Team.
- EcoNorth's Health and Safety Manager reports to the Board on a quarterly basis on health and safety matters, including the physical and mental wellbeing of the team.
- EcoNorth's Mental Health At Work Plan has been implemented.

## 6. Hygiene and Welfare

### 6.1. Definitions

For EcoNorth, hygiene and welfare provision relate only to the built premises and surrounds that it owns, leases or operates. For site-based activities, hygiene and welfare provision will be dealt with by specific task and site risk assessments.

Hygiene refers to conditions or practices conducive to maintaining health and preventing disease, especially through cleanliness.

Welfare facilities are those that are necessary for the wellbeing of EcoNorth staff, interns, placements and subcontractors.

### 6.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Provide and maintain a suitably hygienic environment and all welfare facilities at our office, as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), achieved through the appointment of the H&W RP who will report any issues and appropriate action taken to the Senior Management Team at their monthly team meetings.

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### 6.3. Method

Line Managers will be responsible for ensuring employees are familiar with the hygiene practices and welfare facilities provided by EcoNorth.

Employees will be actively consulted about planned changes to the office environment and all agreed changes are effectively communicated to them in a timely manner.

The H&W RP will be responsible for ensuring:

- There are suitable eating and rest areas for team members to use during breaks.
- Suitable drinking water and other refreshments, as well as kitchen equipment, are provided.
- Changing facilities are available at all times.
- Suitable and sufficient toilet and washing facilities are provided and are in full working order where recommended.
- All staff are working in safe and suitable workplaces including adequate space, lighting, ventilation, heating, workstations and noise levels.
- All office areas are easily accessed with no obstructions on the floor or to traffic routes.
- All staff and interns/placements are aware of relevant welfare facilities and regulations.
- Regular office checks are conducted to ensure hygienic environment and welfare facilities continue to be fully operational.
- Changes in EcoNorth's activities and requirements are reviewed by the H&W RP and the Senior Management Team.
- Changes in HSE regulations will be monitored and report to the Senior Management Team.

A suitably qualified cleaning provider will be appointed. Effective communications will be maintained with them and issues addressed in a timely manner.

Regular office checks will be conducted to identify issues and required changes. Any problems with hygiene and welfare facilities will be reported to the H&S RP.

## 7. Drugs and Alcohol

### 7.1. Definitions

Drug and alcohol misuse can have an adverse effect, not just on an individual but on their colleagues, customers and the public. Having a safe working environment, providing excellent customer service by maintaining productivity levels and avoiding days being lost to illness are all critical to our success.

### 7.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

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- Promote a zero tolerance to drinking alcohol before reporting to work (including at lunchtimes).
- Remind staff of the dangers of drinking the night before attending work. Note: Many sites where EcoNorth conducts work operate random drug and alcohol testing which may detect alcohol from consumption on the previous night.
- Ensure that all employees comply with our Drug and Alcohol Policy. Breaches of the company policy will be taken very seriously and may be dealt with under the appropriate company disciplinary procedure.

### 7.3. Method

When employees are prescribed medication or are taking over-the-counter medicines or herbal remedies that may affect their work performance or the safety of themselves or others, they must advise their Line Manager.

The use, possession, storage, transportation, promotion and/or sale of illegal drugs of drug equipment is forbidden during working time, in the workplace or at any clients' site.

Employees must ensure that they are free of any illegal drugs when they report for work.

Employees must not drink alcohol during working time or in advance of attending work for any given work shift. Working time is any time between when an employee reports for work and the time when they finish work. It includes any period of call out done whilst on standby duty or overtime working.

Employees must be aware of what they drink and take into account how long it takes for the alcohol to clear their system, especially when partaking in surveys which commence in early morning periods.

Employees must be aware of relevant legal limits in relation to alcohol consumption – this is especially relevant as staff are regularly required to work within Scotland which has a lower legal limit.

Employees may be required to undergo testing for alcohol or illegal drugs in their system in certain defined circumstances.

Line Managers should report any drug or alcohol related matters at Senior Management Meetings.

If EcoNorth suspects that an employee's work performance or conduct has been impaired through drug or alcohol abuse, it reserves the right to deal with the matter under the terms of EcoNorth's disciplinary procedure.

If an employee refuses to undergo a medical examination in such circumstances, their refusal will constitute gross misconduct in accordance with EcoNorth's disciplinary procedure.

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If, having undergone a medical examination, it is confirmed that the employee has positively tested for a controlled drug or alcohol, or they admit there is a problem, EcoNorth reserves the right to suspend them from their employment to allow EcoNorth to decide whether to deal with the matter under the terms of EcoNorth's disciplinary procedure or to require them to undergo treatment and rehabilitation.

If they are offered rehabilitation, EcoNorth will determine in consultation with a medical advisor an appropriate period of time during which they will be required to undergo medical treatment. During the period of rehabilitation, EcoNorth will determine whether they are fit to return to work. If they are not judged fit to return to work, they will take unpaid leave.

If at any time an employee disobeys an instruction given to them by EcoNorth with regard to the rehabilitation or suffer a relapse during or following treatment, the company reserves the right to withdraw support and to proceed to deal with the matter under the terms of EcoNorth's disciplinary procedure.

On an employee's return to work after having been declared fit for work by a qualified medical advisor, should there be any recurrence of the original problem or their performance has been impaired by the problem and they can no longer perform at the required level, they will be subject to disciplinary action under EcoNorth's disciplinary procedure.

EcoNorth reserves the right to inform the police of any suspicions we may have with regard to the use of controlled drugs or alcohol by an employee on EcoNorth's premises.

## **8. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR)**

### **8.1. Definitions**

COSHH and DSEAR are precautions relating to the purchase, transport, use, storage and disposal of chemicals, fuel and other substances potentially hazardous to health.

### **8.2. Policy**

EcoNorth aims to:

- Assess the risks that arise from the use of hazardous substances.
- Prevent, or if this is not reasonably practicable, control exposure to such substances.
- Ensure all hazardous substances purchased or generated by EcoNorth are transported, used, stored and disposed of securely and safely and that staff and interns are trained in their safe usage.
- Substitute any substances covered under COSHH and DSEAR with substances without a potential hazard to health, where possible.

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### 8.3. Method

A COSHH and DSEAR RP will be appointed to report any issues to the Senior Management Team.

The COSHH and DSEAR RP will carry out an annual audit of all chemicals and other hazardous substances used by, transported or stored by EcoNorth.

Chemicals and other hazardous substances being stored on the EcoNorth's premises will be checked weekly.

All new product orders will be accompanied by a COSHH data sheet; if any staff are in doubt as to the COSHH status of a product they must not make a purchase or purchase order.

A COSHH assessment will be completed, and approved by a Senior Manager, for each relevant substance and accompanied by its safety data sheet.

Relevant staff and interns will be trained and certified in the safe use of any COSHH products by a competent person. All EcoNorth's ecology staff will complete annual asbestos awareness training.

All employees must carry out spillage risk assessment of chemical storage (not near rain water drains etc) and have an action plan in place in the event of spillage.

All chemicals and other hazardous substances must be stored in a secure location.

All employees must ensure all chemicals and other hazardous substances are disposed of according to COSHH guidelines.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be supplied and worn where applicable.

Any unattended chemicals and other hazardous substances should be made safe immediately by a competent person and reported to the relevant H&S RP.

All COSHH reports will be stored centrally and reviewed at least annually.

The COSHH and DSEAR RP will make a COSHH report to the Senior Management Meeting bi-annually.

## 9. Lone Working

### 9.1. Definitions

Lone working is where any EcoNorth employee or intern, or other person for whom EcoNorth accepts a level of responsibility, is working by themselves without close or direct supervision, including home working.

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Exceptions are where employees are travelling between projects, commuting or attending meetings where they know other attendees.

While travelling to meetings is not part of 'lone working' as defined within this policy, staff are encouraged to communicate their whereabouts with colleagues or relevant emergency contacts as a matter of course.

Specific project risk assessments where longer journeys are required will stipulate the frequency of breaks and associated check ins with a buddy.

## 9.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Prohibit lone working where applicable, including where site or activity risk assessments have identified risk associated with hazards such as isolation, water, heights, and/or confined spaces which cannot be mitigated for, or where competencies are not recorded.
- Prohibit students, young people, trainees, interns and placements from undertaking lone working until assessed as competent to do so.
- Ensure the Lone Working Procedure is adhered to where lone working cannot be avoided.

## 9.3. Method

Appoint a Lone Working RP who will report to the Senior Management Meetings.

Where lone working is unavoidable, the requirement for lone working must be acknowledged within a task specific risk assessment. Risk assessments will include what activities the lone worker will be undertaking, the location of lone working and what safe systems have been put in place and what emergency procedures have been identified.

Lone working will only be permitted after Line Managers have agreed risk assessments and competency records.

Anybody undertaking lone working will carry a fully charged mobile phone, whistle and an emergency pack (eg first aid kit) appropriate to the activity.

Anybody wishing to undertake lone working must identify an emergency procedure, which includes a named competent person/buddy who has clear guidelines to follow, as set out in the Lone Working Procedure, in the event of a failure of the lone worker to report in at suitable periods. Where the contact is not a core employee, they will need to have access to senior staff contact details.

Lone workers must also notify their named emergency contacts about planned lone working arrangements.

Where routine lone working in low risk environments takes place, staff, volunteers and contractors will be expected to follow a set of guidelines developed with their Line Manager.

## 10. Risk Assessment

### 10.1. Definitions

A Risk Assessment (RA) is a considered examination of the hazards that could cause harm to people, to weigh up whether sufficient control measures are in place to prevent harm, the aim of which is to ensure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.



### 10.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Promote the use of RAs as the tool by which EcoNorth's staff and volunteers identify hazards and plan for safe activities through introducing relevant controls to ensure the safety and wellbeing of any people for which the company accepts a level of responsibility.

### 10.3. Method

Site-specific RAs contain introductory information including a description of the activity/task, date of assessment, date range of activity, nearest hospitals, person in charge of activity,

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person with first aid training, and others involved. They also identify the location of available welfare when operating for short periods on pre-construction sites / non-construction sites, typically publicly available facilities. Where the duration / location of works requires it, EcoNorth will consider hiring welfare facilities appropriate to the task.

The main part of the RA has four columns:

- Hazard or hazardous events (both physical and health hazards).
- Who is at risk.
- Typical uncontrolled outcome.
- Control measures.

Site-specific RAs also provide reference to staff wearing the right clothing for the weather, carrying the right kit and knowing how to use it, as well as taking food and drink, a fully charged mobile phone and whistle to ensure their own welfare.

Site-specific RA must be authorised by a Senior Manager prior to undertaking survey (or other) work on third party land. EcoNorth will also comply with mitigation requirements outlined in Landowners' / Managers' own RAs. All events and activities which are not covered by competency records, existing generic RAs or other suitable safe systems will require separate RAs. RAs will be subject to review at least annually.

Upon authorisation, the RA is distributed by the Project Manager to all EcoNorth's employees and subcontractors who are participating in the activity on the site with a request to read the RA and formally acknowledge that they have read and understood the RA. Where relevant, EcoNorth's RAs and method statements are issued to the Principal Contractor and other Contractors as required so that our work can be coordinated with the work of others.

All employees and subcontractors are provided with a safety briefing at the start of the survey in advance of works taking place which sets out the requirements of the RA; no one is permitted on site without written receipt of this acceptance.

The RA will ensure that all groups and individuals seeking permission to visit places for which EcoNorth accepts a responsibility without a member of EcoNorth staff present, will be issued with a site or task RA and guidelines, which they will be expected to adhere to, unless the group or individual has provided their own risk assessment which has been submitted to and approved by EcoNorth in advance of site attendance.

All contractors will work to site and task RAs agreed with EcoNorth.

All staff will be encouraged to be hazard aware and identify any unforeseen risks not identified in site or activity risk assessments. These will be reported as a negative observation and works will stop until safe means of working is established.

All staff and volunteers will be trained in generating and assessing RAs commensurate with their roles, and how to act upon them before they are permitted to take charge of any sphere of activity for which RAs takes responsibility.

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All staff and interns will have competency records, identifying what equipment, training, experience and degree of competency they possess, as part of their routine work with EcoNorth. This will be subject to regular review and include an action plan for additional training / update requirements.

RA will be a standing agenda item at every Senior Management Team meeting, where issues relating to RAs are discussed.

## 11. Accidents, Near Misses and Observations

### 11.1. Definitions

Accidents, near misses and observations relate to any sites or activities where EcoNorth accepts an area of responsibility and are defined as:

- An accident is an incident where an unforeseen injury or loss occurs.
- A near miss is an incident that had the potential to result in an accident.
- An observation is a proactive approach to (i) prevent workplace incidents by identifying potential hazards and at risk behaviours including unsafe actions and conditions through systematic observation of the work environment and activities and (ii) promote best practice by highlighting behaviours and conditions where H&S policies and procedures have been followed and led to positive outcomes.

### 11.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Ensure the risk of accidents or exposure to hazards of any kind is as low as reasonably foreseeable, through training and the creation of risk assessments.
- Ensure the appropriate number of first aiders will be present and appropriate first aid equipment is provided at relevant locations.

### 11.3. Method

An H&S RP will be appointed who will report to the Senior Management Team meeting about any accidents, near misses or observations. Senior Managers will consider all accident, near miss and observation reports at monthly meetings with outcomes disseminated and lessons learned applied.

All accidents, near miss incidents and observations must be reported and documented in line with the accident / near miss / observation procedure and all major accidents reported to the H&S Executive (RIDDOR).

Staff and volunteers should be trained in how to fill in the accident book and near miss / observation forms and be aware of the location of their location.

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Subcontractors should be made aware of the requirement and process for accident, near miss and observation reporting.

All first aid kits must be checked regularly and clearly labelled.

All accidents will be followed up by an EcoNorth Senior Manager to ensure procedures are put in place/adhered to where necessary in order to prevent the accident reoccurring (see Section 12: Accident Reporting and Investigation).

Sufficient health and safety information and tool box talks will be given by a competent person on site before every task, event or activity.

Health and safety information will be supplied in EcoNorth vehicles and offices.

Where an accident has occurred, the location will be reviewed and signage put in place or the area improved as necessary.

If anyone identifies a hazard, they should implement whatever action they deem necessary to either remove the hazard or protect all people from the hazard.

## **12. Accident Reporting and Investigation**

### **12.1. Definitions**

Accident reporting is a collection and documenting of details about an accident including the type and how it happened.

Accident investigation is the analysis of the facts that occurred during an accident, the purpose of which is to identify the root cause of an accident in an effort to make recommendations or take corrective actions to prevent the future occurrence of the same or a similar event.

### **12.2. Policy**

EcoNorth aims to:

- Investigate all accidents and near miss incidents with the aim of ensuring they do not happen again and findings will be used to update safe working practices/procedures.

### **12.3. Method**

All staff, subcontractors, volunteers, interns and placements will report on all minor accidents, near misses and observations to the Senior Managers using the accident book and near miss/observation reporting forms.

For accidents and near miss incidents, a Senior Manager will investigate and report on them; for serious accidents (RIDDOR notifiable or not), an investigation team might be required involving some/all of the following: Line Manager, Senior Manager, H&S Advisor, Chair of

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the Board, Relevant HSE Officer or Technical Expert. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to assess the level of investigation required and guidance from Senior Managers may be sought before reaching a decision.

When accidents or near miss incidents occur, the investigation procedure will be followed (ie gather information, analyse findings, review risk control measures then plan and implement required changes) and an accident/near miss investigation form will be completed.

The detailed accident/near miss incident report will be submitted to the Senior Management Team meeting and discussed under the health and safety standing agenda item.

All EcoNorth Line Managers are aware of their duties under RIDDOR and will follow the procedures under these regulations.

## **13. First Aid**

### **13.1. Definitions**

First aid is the procedure followed when someone is injured or becomes ill.

For EcoNorth, first aid precautions relate to all people, buildings and any activity or event for which EcoNorth accepts any responsibility.

### **13.2. Policy**

EcoNorth aims to:

- Ensure that a suitable number of people are trained in first aid at any event or activity where EcoNorth accepts any responsibility.
- Ensure that all EcoNorth staff have up to date first aid training which is commensurate with their role.
- Maintain all first aid procedures as recommended by the HSE.

### **13.3. Method**

A First Aid RP will be appointed to report to Senior Management Meetings bi-annually and maintain communication with St John's Ambulance or other suitable training body to keep up to date with new guidelines and equipment.

All first aid kits and equipment will be maintained as per requirements.

All responsible staff and volunteers are aware of their duties in the event of a first aid incident.

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All staff are required to complete first aid training every three years – Emergency First Aid At Work training for office based employees and Remote First Aid training (including Forestry and Emergency First Aid At Work) for ecology and arboriculture employees.

First aid procedures are reviewed at least annually and if any significant changes in activities occur.

A Mental Health First Aider will be appointed. All EcoNorth employees complete Mental Health Awareness training as part of their induction when joining EcoNorth.

## 14. The Workplace

### 14.1. Definitions

The workplace relates to the EcoNorth premises: 11 Enterprise Court, Crosland Park, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 1LZ.

### 14.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Ensure that the workplace is a safe working environment for all staff, visitors and volunteers.

### 14.3. Method

EcoNorth will appoint a Workplace RP to routinely check for hazards throughout the buildings and grounds and report to the Senior Management Team meeting monthly.

If at any time a WP RP suspects a hazard, as defined previously, they should undertake whatever actions they deem necessary to either remove the hazard or protect all people from the hazard.

The WP RP will assist all employees within their area in COSHH management, training identification and Personal Protective Equipment.

## 15. Provision and Use of Equipment

### 15.1. Definitions

Equipment is any item that does not fall into one of the following categories:

- Driving on the highway is covered under section 19 below.
- Substances and materials are covered under COSHH.
- The fabric or fittings of any buildings.

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Equipment does include: personal protective equipment, climbing equipment, hand and power tools, furniture, gazebos, computers, photocopiers, dispensers, bins, microscopes, binoculars, ladders, fridges, cookers, microwaves, stationery (this non-exhaustive list should help people define whether what they are considering is equipment or not).

Provision involves making available any item for use by any person for whom EcoNorth accepts responsibility.

## 15.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Ensure that all equipment provided for use is:
  - ~ Suitable for the intended use.
  - ~ Safe for use, maintained in a safe condition and where necessary, inspected to ensure this remains the case.
  - ~ Used only by people who have received adequate information, instruction and training.
  - ~ Accompanied by suitable safety measures.
- Provide eye and eyesight tests and spectacles, on request, if they are specifically necessary for the use of display screen equipment.

## 15.3. Method

EcoNorth will maintain an inventory of all significant pieces of equipment and a register and record of health and safety checks, including Portable Electrical Appliance Testing.

The WP RP will include equipment checks within their routine workplace inspections.

All staff and volunteers will be trained, commensurate with their roles, to recognise hazards that may arise from faulty or incorrectly used equipment.

All staff and volunteers will be trained in the safe use and care for equipment they use or are responsible for.

Where practicable, in order to ensure that all equipment is suitable for its intended use:

- All office equipment and tools will be purchased from an approved trade supplier.
- All personal protective equipment will be purchased from an approved supplier of health and safety equipment.
- All equipment used for working with children will be purchased from a specialist education supplies outlet.
- Where this is not possible due to the supply of goods in kind, second-hand equipment, donations or for any other reason, permission will be sought from a Senior Manager prior to making equipment available for use.

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The WP RP will arrange and organise portable electrical appliance testing and create a record of maintenance schedules for all equipment under their responsibility.

EcoNorth WP RPs will check that equipment within their area of concern is maintained as per maintenance schedules. However, overall responsibility for maintenance remains with the Health and Safety Manager.

The Fire RP will ensure all fire safety equipment is tested and maintained at EcoNorth.

## 16. Manual Handling

### 16.1. Definitions

Manual handling involves a person moving or lifting any object from one place to another without the use of fully automated equipment designed expressly for the purpose.

### 16.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Have a procedure in place to ensure that every employee has relevant training to evaluate and be competent in manual handling.
- Ensure that any employee who does not feel fully competent to lift, or in any way handle, an object will not be required to do so.
- Reduce manual handling wherever practicable or remove the need for it altogether. However, many tasks are valued because of the exercise potential offered through manual handling tasks and these will be retained where appropriate.

### 16.3. Method

A WP RP will be appointed to report any issues to the Senior Management Team.

The WP RP will have a good understanding of manual handling procedures (via formal training where required) and will assist other members of staff and volunteers in risk assessing manual handling tasks.

All WP RP area checks will include identification of handling risks such as high storage, heavy and/or bulky products, unbalanced or difficult to grasp products, ground conditions and who is doing the handling.

All EcoNorth staff and volunteers must have an understanding of safe manual handling commensurate with their tasks.

All job descriptions, risk assessments and competency records will include manual handling requirements, where appropriate.

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Where any items or procedures are identified as posing a manual handling risk, alternatives will be sought.

## **17. Children and Vulnerable Adults (CVA)**

### **17.1. Definitions**

CVA includes any child from 0–16 and/or vulnerable adult deemed by law or a guardian as not totally capable for assuming responsibility for themselves (including young people between 16 and 18) for whom EcoNorth has accepted responsibility for their care, or where EcoNorth has provided opportunities for these groups to participate in an activity or to visit sites for which EcoNorth has some responsibility. Vulnerable adult also includes pregnant women.

### **17.2. Policy**

EcoNorth aims to:

- Provide an environment where children and vulnerable adults will be safe from harm.
- Adhere to legislation and good practice as provided by the various agencies involved in children and adult welfare and safety.
- In normal circumstances, prohibit the recruitment of employees, interns or subcontractors who are under the age of 18. In some circumstances, where appropriate supervision is available, under 18s may undertake work for EcoNorth. Any under 18 workers must be approved by the Senior Management Team.
- Refuse to accept volunteers under 18 unless accompanied by an appropriate adult.

### **17.3. Method**

A CVA RP will be appointed to keep the Senior Management Team informed of any issues and changes in practice.

Staff and volunteers will be suitably inducted and trained and aware of their duties and responsibilities as well as having the necessary training and experience to deal with any H&S incident. Training will be reviewed and updated at all levels on a regular basis.

DBS checks and references will be undertaken for staff and volunteers who will be involved in working with CVAs to ensure their suitability.

Activities, venues and equipment will be risk assessed and deemed to be suitable, or made suitable, for their intended purpose prior to being used.

Equipment will be correctly purchased and checked as suitable for their intended purpose.

Situations that pose an identifiable risk will be acted upon immediately.

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## 18. Out of Control Behaviour (OCB)

### 18.1. Definitions

OCB occurs where a person's behaviour goes beyond that of the 'reasonable person' and as a result may put themselves or another person at risk. This may be because of dishonest or aggressive behaviour or purely through innocent stupidity or inability, possibly due to drugs or alcohol.

### 18.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Provide an environment where people are safe from harm.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are suitably trained to deal with OCB that they may be expected to encounter.

### 18.3. Method

All staff and volunteers are aware of their likely level of contact with OCB and EcoNorth's baseline requirement for dealing with OCB; this will be recorded on competency forms together with required and achieved training where applicable.

Training will be reviewed and updated for staff, volunteers and groups during annual appraisal, due to a change in activity or as the result of an incident.

All risk assessments for sites, activities, groups and individual competencies will include OCB.

Situations that are identified as posing an unacceptable risk will be acted upon immediately.

All incidents involving OCB are recorded as negative observations and will be reviewed to see if action is required.

## 19. Vehicles and Driving

### 19.1. Definitions

Vehicles are any road going machine supplied by EcoNorth for the use of any member of staff or volunteers, or owned, rented or leased by a member of staff or volunteer and used while on EcoNorth business. Only vehicles registered for use on the public highway are covered by this policy.

Driving, as defined by this policy, is any journey undertaken by car / minibus / van / motorcycle or any other vehicle licensed for road or off road use which an employee is suitably licenced and insured to operate. It does not include employees' normal journey to work.

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## 19.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Administer all vehicles for which it is responsible. Any member of staff or volunteer using any EcoNorth vehicle will ensure that they conform to all EcoNorth requirements.
- Ensure that where EcoNorth requires staff or volunteers to use their own vehicles all aspects of that use will conform to Road Traffic Law and they will have their own insurance for business use.
- Take measures to minimise the extent of driving required by considering their means of accessing works locations.
- Ensure that all employees are suitably trained for driving, where relevant.
- Maintain records of driving licences, MOT, tax and insurances for all staff undertaking journeys for work purposes.

## 19.3. Method

All EcoNorth staff and volunteers will be issued with the vehicles guidelines and/or receive appropriate training, including a suitable induction, before they can use any of EcoNorth's vehicles.

EcoNorth will assure itself of the competency and legality of any staff or volunteers using company vehicles before they permit their use.

A register of competent vehicle users and training competencies will be maintained.

All staff or volunteers using EcoNorth vehicles are required to inform the Vehicles RP if there is any change in their circumstances that might affect their legal situation or level of competency when driving.

All staff or volunteers using their own vehicles are expected to conform to all relevant road traffic legislation and ensure they are fully licensed, insured and competent to do so.

EcoNorth will take measure to minimise the extent of driving required by considering their means of accessing works locations.

EcoNorth will arrange Driver Awareness Training for all members of staff, where relevant.

EcoNorth will maintain an up to date 'generic risk assessment' for driving required by work which will include specific parameters on levels of rest between work shifts / vehicle inspections.

Journey specific risk assessments will be completed as part of project or site risk assessments.

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## 20. Infectious Diseases

### 20.1. Definitions

Infectious diseases, also known as communicable diseases or transmissible diseases, are illnesses that result from the infection, presence and growth of pathogenic (capable of causing disease) biologic agents in an individual human or other animal host. These diseases can be viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic - each is different in how they spread and how they affect the body. Examples are Covid-19, SARS, Influenza, tuberculosis (TB), Hepatitis, Whooping Cough and Norovirus.

### 20.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:

- Protect employees, clients, suppliers and visitors from the risk of infection from infectious diseases.
- Provide employees, clients, suppliers and visitors with an infectious disease secure work environment.

### 20.3. Method

- EcoNorth employees must be aware of the symptoms of infectious diseases and the actions to take if they become infected, in line with the latest government guidance. If an employee records a positive lateral flow test or equivalent test (whether symptomatic or not), has symptoms of an infectious disease or has been in contact with someone who has tested positive or is symptomatic, they must inform their Line Manager immediately and stay out of the workplace until they have fully recovered or the necessary quarantine period has elapsed. If an employee becomes ill at work, they must leave immediately and advise their Line Manager they have done so; the Line Manager will ensure the rest of the team are advised that the employee has gone home and all necessary precautions should be taken. Any area where an ill or potentially ill employee or visitor has been in the workplace must be fully sanitised.
- The office risk assessment and site-specific risk assessments for live projects must be reviewed and updated to include infectious disease safety measures to mitigate identified risks of infection.
- Employees' personal risk assessments must be reviewed and updated where necessary.
- EcoNorth must help employees to work from home wherever possible, particularly those with identified health risks, taking into account the impact on their mental and physical wellbeing. DSE assessments for home working must be conducted.
- Employees will be encouraged to take regular lateral flow tests or equivalent tests (if displaying symptom of disease) prior to attending the office or site work or before travelling out of the area, in line with prevailing conditions at the time. Anyone who

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receives a positive lateral flow test must inform their Line Manager and self-isolate immediately, in line with government guidelines. During an outbreak of an infectious disease, this may become mandatory.

- In the event of an infectious disease related outbreak, employees must aim to maintain 2m social distancing and, where this is not possible, they must manage the transmission risk. To minimise an excess of people in the office at any one time, all staff will indicate on the workload planner their intended work location (site, home or office based) where there is no 'work from home' government guidance in place. Start and finish times and lunch breaks must be staggered. Workstations must be moved apart where necessary. Effective communication within the team regarding their movements is essential to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Team meetings will be conducted via Microsoft Teams rather than face to face.
- In the event of an emergency situation occurring such as fire or injury, it may not be possible or safe to observe social distancing. However, once the emergency is over, those people involved should wash or sanitise their hands.
- Employees may car share the company vehicles or their personal vehicles, except during an outbreak of an infectious disease. All parties will be strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test or equivalent test earlier that day and only car share/attend work if they have received a negative result. The vehicle must be washed down and disinfected after each use and supplies of protective disposable blue gloves, hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes and face masks will be provided in the vehicle. This guidance may be subject to periodic change depending on risk level.
- In the event of an infectious disease related outbreak, EcoNorth must implement additional cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures. The cleaning programme will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Equipment which is shared between various employees must be disinfected between each use. Signage will be placed in key areas to encourage employees to hand wash correctly and regularly. Supplies of hand sanitiser, anti-bacterial wipes and disposable blue gloves will be made available in key areas of the premises and for taking to site as required. Additional supplies of personal protective equipment will be held to ensure supplies do not run out.

## 21. Smoking and Vaping

### 21.1. Definitions

Smoking is the action or habit of inhaling and exhaling the smoke of tobacco by sucking on the end of a lit cigarette, cigar, pipe etc.

Vaping is the action or habit of inhaling and exhaling an aerosol (mist) created by an electronic cigarette or other vaping device.

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Second hand smoke comes from the tip of a lit cigarette and the smoke that the smoker breathes out. Breathing in second hand smoke, also known as passive smoking, increases the risk of suffering the same health conditions as smokers.

Smoking is the biggest cause of preventable death and illness in the UK. Every year around 64,000 people in the UK die from smoking, with many more living with debilitating smoking-related illnesses. Smoking increases a person's risk of developing more than 50 serious health conditions, some of which may be fatal and others may cause irreversible long-term damage to health.

## **21.2. Policy**

EcoNorth aims to:

- Protect employees, clients, suppliers and visitors from the risks from smoking and vaping.
- Provide employees, clients, suppliers and visitors with a smoke and vape free work environment.

## **21.3. Method**

EcoNorth has a duty to ensure compliance with the Health Act 2006, therefore, employees are prohibited from smoking or vaping in any of EcoNorth's premises, vehicles or whilst on any customer's property. To smoke or vape on EcoNorth's premises will be a criminal offence. Employees are asked not to smoke or vape whilst displaying EcoNorth's logo.

## **22. Vaccinations**

### **22.1. Definitions**

Vaccination is the act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce protection from a specific disease.

A vaccine is a preparation that is used to stimulate the body's immune response against a disease or diseases. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but some can be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Immunisation is the process by which a person becomes protected against a disease through vaccination.

Tetanus is a serious but rare condition caused by bacteria getting into a wound. Tetanus bacteria can survive for a long time outside the body and are commonly found in soil and the manure of animals such as horses and cows. If the bacteria enter the body through a wound they can quickly multiply and release a toxin that affects the nerves, causing symptoms such as muscle stiffness and spasms.

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European Bat Lyssaviruses (EBLV) are rabies viruses carried by some bats in the UK, transmitted via a bite or scratch from an infected animal, or from its saliva coming into contact with a person's mucous membranes (eyes, mouth or nose).

## 22.2. Policy

EcoNorth aims to:


- Protect employees from the risks of rabies during work involving the handling of bats and from tetanus during general work activities.
- Provide employees, clients, suppliers and visitors with an infectious disease secure work environment.

## 22.3. Method

EcoNorth employees are prohibited from handling bats before being fully vaccinated against rabies. These vaccinations are paid for in full by the company and can be booked at local GPs or health centres.

EcoNorth encourages employees to be vaccinated against tetanus as a preventative measure, due to the regular outdoors work conducted by most of the team. A log of rabies and tetanus vaccinations is maintained by the Office Manager. The log is reviewed periodically. Access to the log is restricted, in line with current data protection laws.

Please refer to section 20 above regarding Infectious Diseases.



John Thompson  
Executive Director  
12.02.26