

# RISK News

Issue 47

July 2011

## Are you on the low carb diet yet?

**From April 2011, NCC has a legal requirement to pay for every tonne of carbon emitted. If we don't wean ourselves off our carbon-rich diet, our unhealthy habits could cost us a massive £850,000 a year. On top of this, the cost of energy continues to rise, putting further strain on our budgets.**

However, there's no need to despair yet – the future is in our hands. Commit to our low carb diet and help us achieve our target weight - we must slim our carbon footprint by 25% by 2014.

NCC has already committed to completing 245 projects as part of the Carbon and Energy Reduction Fund (CERF) to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, such as increased insulation. This is already saving us an estimated £100,000 a year off our energy bill.



But there is so much more to do. There is lots of useful information on the NCC intranet at [http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/csandc/carbon\\_campaign/carbon\\_campaign.htm](http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/cex/csandc/carbon_campaign/carbon_campaign.htm) together with tips on what you could do to help, how some of our departments are already making contributions, who to contact, etc.

**Some of the key areas where significant savings can be made are:**

- Travel
- Printing
- Lighting and heating
- Switching off PCs
- Reducing business and domestic waste

Continued on page 8 . . .

Produced by the Risk and Insurance Section of Norfolk County Council

# Comment

Welcome to the latest issue of Risk News.

Our lead article this time is the recently launched campaign to reduce the Council's carbon output and energy costs. If managed well, not only will we make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions, but the large financial savings will also help us meet our overall budget savings proposals.

If you feel you want to help, why not join up as part of the Green Dream Team - to get involved, or find out more, contact them at: [climate.change@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:climate.change@norfolk.gov.uk)

We also feature some timely summer risks. There is a reminder to schools to help them ensure that they minimise the chances of suffering problems during the summer holidays. At the end of a long term it is very tempting to just walk away from school but with a little simple planning, many of the potential issues can be managed or avoided. Then everyone can enjoy their break.

There are also smaller articles about where you can get advice and guidance about the safe running of fetes and outdoor events, bouncy castles and coastal risks.

As ever, if you have any ideas for future articles, awareness raising activities or would like to contribute, please contact us.

## Contacts:

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# School fire warning

**Recently, the Risk and Insurance section dealt with a claim for a fire at one of our schools.**

This was caused by a pillar candle left burning unattended over the weekend – luckily the fire was contained in the school hall, but it still ended up causing over £30,000 worth of damage!

It could also have been a lot, lot, worse.



**The damage caused by the candle fire**

In 'light' of this incident, please always comply with the following advice:

- Always place candles on a stand rather than directly onto a table or cloth
- Always ensure that a member of staff has checked that the candle has been properly extinguished at the end of each use – do not rely exclusively on a pupil, even if they are trusted

Norfolk Fire Service also has a useful online guide on the safe usage of candles - [http://www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk/UG - Safety with Candles and Ceramic Burners .html](http://www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk/UG_Safety_with_Candles_and_Ceramic_Burners.html)

# Fatality involving hazardous substances

A County Council was recently prosecuted and fined £50,000 after six adults with learning difficulties drank dishwasher fluid, having confused it with orange juice. One person died. Five were seriously ill and suffered internal burns.

The Health and Safety Executive investigation discovered the dishwasher fluid was kept in a bottle similar in appearance to orange squash. It was marked as a dangerous liquid and left out in an unlocked kitchen.

If you are using or storing hazardous substances the following steps will reduce these risks:

- Carry out an assessment using the guidance on PeopleNet for hazardous substances. Search for “Hazardous substances and chemicals”.
- Use the NCC e-learning course available on the NCC Learning Hub.
- Label and store hazardous substances securely and away from people, especially vulnerable people such as the young, elderly or those with learning difficulties.
- Never transfer hazardous substances into old bottles and containers.



## Health and Safety training

Health and Safety training has always been important but is even more so in the current climate. Ways of operating and providing services are changing, people are taking on new or enhanced roles, locations are being used by differing teams – all of which will require new skills to be effective.

To help you manage the changes, the following courses are available over the next few months:



General Risk Assessment	8 September
Manual Handling	21 September
Display Screen Equipment risk assessment	27 July
Personal Safety	20 July, 19 August
Premises Management Refresher	6 October
Premises management - General (part 1)	19 July, 17 August
Premises management - Asbestos (part 2)	15 July, 23 September
Premises management – Fire safety	12 July - Great Yarmouth, 13 July - Thetford, 13 September - Dereham

Bookings and details of other training courses and dates can be made online by self service using the Learning Hub or if you don't have access please contact HR Direct on 222212.

N.B. – all courses without venues specified are held at the Annexe, County Hall.



# Continuous Vehicle insurance is now Law!

The new vehicle insurance law came into force on the 20 June 2011.

## ***What it means for everyone***

If your name is on the V5 registration document, you must arrange insurance for the vehicle in question, unless you have declared it off-road with a SORN (Statutory Off-Road Notification).

This is the case even if you do not use the vehicle. If you have a classic car tucked away in your garage, that is only insured and used for a few months in the summer, you still have to insure it all year round. If you do not take out insurance for cars you have not declared SORN, you face prosecution and risk losing your car.

In the first instance, an Insurance Advisory Letter (IAL) will be issued, informing you there's a risk of prosecution if you do not take out insurance. Ignore this, and a £100 Fixed Penalty will be issued. If you still take no action, there is the risk of your car being clamped, so you cannot use it. Or, worse still, it could be seized and crushed.

The most serious penalty is court prosecution. Here, people who still refuse to take out insurance risk a court appearance and a fine of up to £1,000. Registered keepers thus have two options: take out insurance, or declare a vehicle SORN.



Full details can be found on the DirectGov website at: [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/OwningAVehicle/Motorinsurance/DG\\_186696?pro=stayinsured](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/OwningAVehicle/Motorinsurance/DG_186696?pro=stayinsured)

## **A fete worse than . . .**

**The summer time is when many organisations hold fetes and outdoor events. Most of these will run with no problems at all and everyone will have a good time. However, injuries can occur.**

We are often asked for advice on how to make sure that your event takes place safely and without incident. By carrying out basic checks and procedures, your event will not only still be fun and a success, but also safer.

A previous issue, Risk News 35, contained helpful guidance. You can find it on pages 4 and 5 of: [http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Business/Risk\\_and\\_insurance/Risk/NCC087765](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Business/Risk_and_insurance/Risk/NCC087765)



# Managing (partly) unoccupied premises

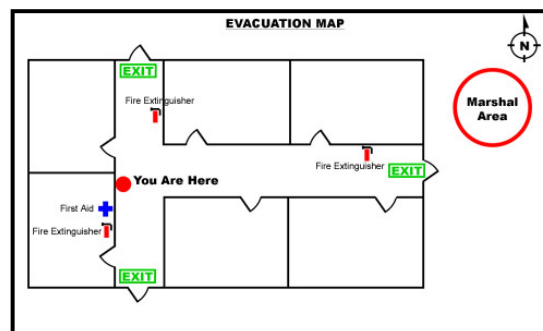
The previous issue of Risk News contained detailed advice on how to manage unoccupied premises.

**But what if the building is only partly unoccupied or decommissioned? Should you do anything differently? – the short answer is Yes.**

**All aspects of the premises' safety arrangements should be reviewed:**

## Review the building's fire risk assessment

- Check that fire escape routes are not compromised because certain doors are now secured for security or segregation reasons
- Ensure evacuation diagrams are updated to represent the latest way the building operates
- Check whether there remains an active fire detection system in those parts of the building that are now unoccupied or out of bounds. If not, how will the remaining occupants know if a fire starts in one of these areas?
- Check that as much as possible of the loose combustibile material has been removed from the unoccupied part of the building, or arrange for it to happen



## Review the existing legionella risk assessment

- There may now be parts of the water system that are used much less frequently than before and a change of control measure may be needed

## Water and heating systems

- Ensure where possible that water services and heating systems in the unoccupied areas are either drained or kept on a frost protection setting

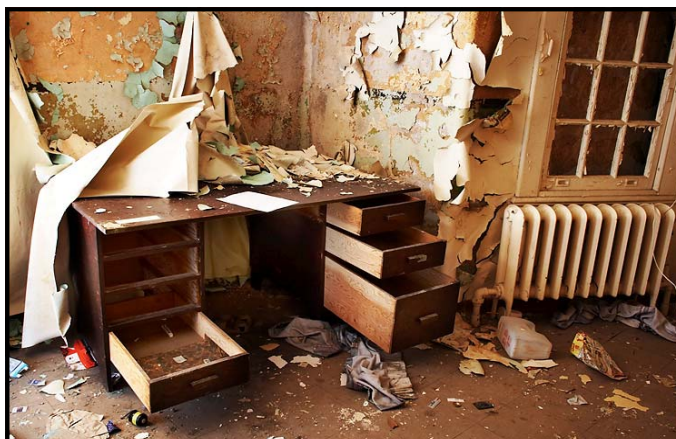


## Storage

- Check the unoccupied area is not used for unauthorised or hazardous storage, thereby increasing the fire loading

## Regular inspections

- Carry out regular visual inspections of the decommissioned part of the building, ensuring there is nothing that could impact on the occupied part.
- Look for signs of unauthorised entry, flood, water or weather damage, vermin, a build up of combustibile materials or rubbish, damp or mould, etc.



# School holiday checklist

For those of you who work in schools, it can be very tempting to walk away from school at the end of the summer term and not to think about the place until you come back next term. By carrying out certain tasks before the school breaks up, however, you can reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring during the break.



## Summer storms and flooding

Storms during the summer can often involve very heavy rain over a relatively short time, leading to flash flooding. This in turn can cause drains and drainpipes to back up, gulleys to overflow and water to flow into buildings.

**All premises managers, but especially those at schools that will be shut during the summer holidays, should carry out these basic checks.**

- Ensure all external drains and surface water gulleys are clear of debris, silt, etc so that water can flow as freely as possible.
- Check that all downpipes and gutters are clear and free flowing.
- If there are doors where water has flooded under before, consider putting down sandbags outside if no-one is likely to be in the building.
- If you have flood boards, put them in place before the school breaks up and leave them there all summer if the particular doors will not need to be used.
- If basements or other rooms are vulnerable, do not store anything valuable on the floor. Remove such items to another higher part of the building or if not possible, store the items in place but on racking, pallets or some other means of raising them off the floor.
- **Note** - It is an insurance condition that contents must be a minimum of 300mm above the floor.
- Some of our newer or recently refurbished premises now have rain-sensitive louvered windows in roofs. Please check they operate properly and close when required.



**If you are unfortunate enough to still experience a flood, make early contact with the Insurance section at County Hall on 01603 222839.**



## Contractors on site

If contractors will be on site during the holiday, be aware they can cause all sorts of problems. Procedures need to be agreed with them as a condition of allowing them on your site. Understand what they will be doing, before they start.

**Painters** - Painters are often in the habit of leaving doors open to let paint dry quicker. This not only means anyone can walk in, but also that all external doors need to be checked and relocked each night.

**Builders** - Skips must be placed at least 8 metres away from buildings. Where possible, they should have a lockable lid, which is used each night.

**Key control** – Ideally, keys should not be given to contractors. However, if you have no practical alternative, be aware that if a loss arises because the premises were not secured properly by the contractor, that loss is not insured. It is not appropriate to give alarm codes to contractors. Areas that do not need to be used by contractors should be kept locked if possible to prevent access.

**Hot work** – Hot work should not take place on any of our premises unless specifically agreed with NPS beforehand and only then if a permit system operates.



## General site security

**Site inspections** - Site inspections should carry on as normal. Flash flooding and lightning strikes can occur during summer – premises should be inspected soon after if such an event is suspected.

**IT equipment** - If there are no secure storage areas in the school, laptops can be taken home by staff. They will still be insured.

Deliveries of new kit often happen during the holidays. These should ideally be placed in alarmed, secure areas. They should be security marked as soon as they arrive on the premises. Take care when disposing of the packaging that you do not leave it on display, advertising your school's new additions to the neighbourhood.



**Outdoor items** - Goalposts and nets should be brought indoors to prevent them being vandalised. Benches, tables etc should be permanently fixed in place or moved indoors. Unsecured furniture is a target for thieves, especially during the barbeque season!



# Are you on the low carb diet yet?

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## Travel

- Business mileage claims cost NCC over £5 million a year. Before you book a meeting, think about whether you could have a phone conference instead.
- If you decide you must travel, think about whether you could car share with someone, use public transport or (if you are at County Hall) use one of the pool bikes.
- If you must drive, you could reduce your fuel consumption by up to 20% using eco-driving techniques. Log onto the Eco Driving e-learning module on the County Council's Learning Hub and learn how to use your car engine more efficiently and save yourself some money – it really does work.

**Did you know?** If you cycle to meetings, you are entitled to claim 20p a mile.

## Printing

- Do you really need to print emails? Does every person in your meeting really need a copy of the agenda? Try to have a paper free meeting instead.
- Think before you send to print and always print doubled sided if your printer has this setting.

**Did you know?** NCC spends **£116,500 a year** on printer and copier paper and a further **£30,000 a month** on toner cartridges and printer spare parts.



## Lighting and heating

- The Carbon Trust estimates that we could considerably trim our energy bill by £345,000, by simply turning off lights when leaving the office, corridor, kitchen or toilets.
- If you can control the heating in your office, turn it down. If the air conditioning is on, make sure you keep doors and windows closed.

**Did you know?** Every one degree reduced on a thermostat could lower your building energy costs by 8-10%.

## Switch off your PC

- Make sure you switch your PC to hibernate mode when away from your desk for over 10 minutes and turn it off properly (including the screen) when leaving for the day.

**Did you know?** If everyone shut their PC down when they went to meetings or lunch (approximately two hours a day) we would save around £25k a year. A PC left on overnight wastes enough energy to print 800 pages of A4. A PC shut down overnight can save £30 per person per year. PCs and laptops draw electricity if not switched off at the plug. Our calculations show that if you can switch off at the plug you will help save NCC £40,000 a year.



## Reducing waste

- Think before you chuck things in the bin. Could it be recycled? And if not recycled, could it be reused or reduced?

**Did you know?** NCC spent a staggering **£10.7 million** sending Norfolk's waste to landfill in 2010-11.



# Business Continuity Management

## – are you ready?

In the last Risk News we featured an article about business continuity management in schools. Well, the project is still ongoing and will be for the rest of this term, during which time you can access free help and advice from BC Officer Elizabeth Walne, based in NCC's Resilience Team in the fabled 'bunker' under County Hall.

To date, over half the County's high schools and some primaries are actively involved in completing their plan and several have successfully completed it. High Schools are advised to have a plan in place by the end of the summer. Academies are as welcome to support as other schools, which is free for the rest of this term.

### Why do I need a complete and up to date plan?

Having a plan will save valuable time in the event of an incident. Staff will be clear on their roles, where to meet, and what should be done. Keeping important numbers together, and up to date, will ensure that you can contact key people and organisations efficiently and accurately. Having checklists ready ensures that you can undertake actions logically – it can be difficult to think straight when something suddenly does wrong.

Remember, you may be dealing with an event that would not normally be covered by the usual critical incident procedures.



### I already have a plan

Brilliant! If you already have a plan, please let business continuity know by emailing a copy to the address below and we will return your certificate. If you need help updating your plan to comply with the new guidance Elizabeth will be happy to help.

### Support

Elizabeth has been visiting schools across the County, in some cases renewing acquaintances – having previously worked as the travel plan officer for west Norfolk – and advising on how best to complete the guidance which is available to download at [http://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/page\\_102.cfm](http://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/page_102.cfm). The web pages now also have curriculum links, knowledge sharing information and support details.

To arrange a visit or to complete your plan remotely, either call 01603 223437 or email [elizabeth.walne@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.walne@norfolk.gov.uk)

If you need this newsletter in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact us on 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.



# What is the Well-Being Programme?

**The Well-Being Programme is the main stress risk assessment tool for all teams within Norfolk County Council. It aims to promote the health and well-being of all employees, by working in partnership with existing support networks and initiatives, in order to provide a better all-round working environment.**



The programme is an active preventative strategy aimed at finding out how staff feel about their work and what ideas they have for improving well-being in their workplace.

All areas of NCC are involved in restructuring teams and reducing staffing levels in order to achieve efficiency savings. Therefore, maintaining the health and well-being of our employees is vital to ensure we are able to continue delivering the quality of service the public expect. The Well-Being Programme has been put in place specifically to help you and your team achieve this.

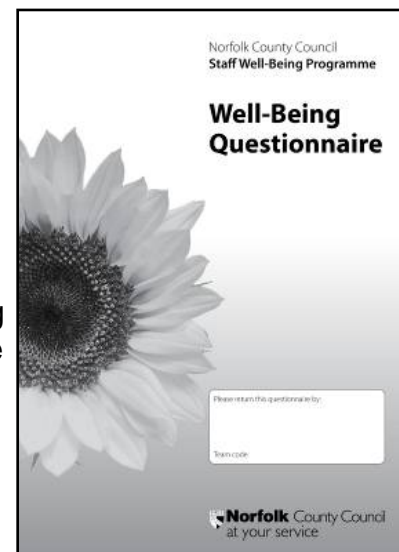
## New look questionnaire

On 1 February 2011, the Well-Being Team launched their 'new look' well-being questionnaire which contains fewer questions and more space to include your constructive comments. Teams that have used the new questionnaire have commented on how much easier it is to use.

By completing the questionnaire, teams can identify the primary sources of stress within their workplace and start taking steps to address problem areas or making improvements. By participating in the programme you and your team will also have access to the support offered by the Well-Being Team, including team workshops, networking sessions, health events and much more.

The Well-Being Questionnaire is based on the Health and Safety Executive 2004 Management Standards for work related stress and covers six key areas of work. These are: Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change. A definition of these can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards>. These areas if not properly managed are associated with poor health and well-being, which can lower productivity and increase sickness absence.

So, whether your team is new or established, why not contact the Well-Being Team at [well-being@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:well-being@norfolk.gov.uk) for details on how to become more actively involved in the Well-Being Programme.



# Data Protection - 'Another Fine Mess'

**It's not just Laurel and Hardy who get in a fine mess. This state of affairs seems to apply more and more as organisations across the United Kingdom get in a mess with the personal data they hold.**

**And 'fine' is the operative word now that the Information Commissioner has begun to fine some organisations for their misdemeanours with personal data. The highest fine so far is £120,000.**

Unfortunately Norfolk County Council has recently had to report a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 to the Information Commissioner because of the seriousness of the potential consequences. We await the verdict and hope it isn't a fine.



## Careless

This breach of the Data Protection Act 1998 resulted from carelessness. This 'human error' is unfortunately a common theme of the breaches that have occurred at Norfolk County Council.

Please, everyone, think before you act. One of the most common acts of carelessness is sending highly confidential and personal information to the wrong person. Always double-check names and addresses. A little extra care can avert a disaster.



## Portable devices

As for portable devices such as laptops and memory sticks, remember that we may only copy personal data to portable devices that (1) belong to Norfolk County Council and (2) are encrypted. Under no circumstances may any of the Council's personal data be copied to employees' or Members' own equipment.



## Further information

Every member of staff with access to the Learning Hub should have completed the *Data Protection Essentials* e-learning course. Managers should ensure that any new staff complete this course within two weeks of joining. If there is anyone out there who has not completed this course, they should do it now.

Even if you have completed the course, it would be well worth doing it again as a refresher. There is also a lot of information about data protection on the intranet at <http://intranet.norfolk.gov.uk/im/dataprotection>.

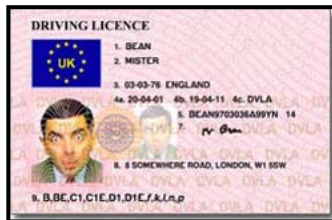


# Risky business



## What do points make?

Whenever a driver receives points on their driving licence they are required to send their licence to the DVLA in Swansea to have it endorsed. In the past, drivers were given a 12 month period of grace to send it in but that is no longer the case.



The law has now changed and drivers only have 28 days in which send in their licence.

## What happens if a licence is not sent in?

If the licence is not sent in within the 28 day time limit it will be revoked straight away. Once someone has their licence revoked it becomes an offence for them to drive a vehicle.

If a fleet manager knows that one of their employees has had their licence revoked they have a responsibility to stop that person driving. It is an offence under the Road Traffic Act to allow someone to drive if they do not have a licence so Norfolk County Council could be guilty of an offence themselves if they knowingly allow the person to keep driving.

## Coastal safety

### Planning to take the family to the coast this summer?

Nearly half of parents do not know that the coastguards is an emergency service and like the fire brigade, police and ambulance, can be called by dialling 999 or 112, according to a survey by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Despite an increasing number of people needing rescuing or assistance at the seaside, the survey revealed that 55% of the parents interviewed would not dial 999 / 112 and ask for the coastguard. Half of these would call but not know which service to ask for, leading to delays in getting help.



Also, if they saw someone in difficulty, a quarter of those surveyed would put themselves at risk by trying to rescue the person. As the chief coastguard says, "This might be the instinctive thing to do but this is actually the worst course of action they could take."

For advice and guidance on staying safe at the coast, look at the Directgov site— search for 'Keeping safe at the coast'.

## Bouncy castles

Bouncy castles and other inflatables are often present at events or fetes during the summer months. They're a popular attraction and when used properly are safe but still fun. However, they can also lead to injuries if not set up or supervised appropriately.



**It is thought that each year over 200 children are admitted to hospital with injuries caused while using bouncy castles.**

If you will be involved with an event that includes a bouncy castle or similar, guidance on the safe use and operation of them can be found at

<http://www.pipa.org.uk/publicBestPractice.pdf>