



OAA Health and Safety Policy

All activities carry an element of risk and allotment gardening is no exception. Everyone needs to take health and safety seriously but it is also important to remember to enjoy your plot! Good gardening is safe gardening, and many risks to both ourselves and others can be easily prevented.

Our Obligations

Under civil law, and as set out in the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957, all plot-holders have a duty of care to anyone accessing their plot, and the pathways for which they are responsible. This includes both authorised and unauthorised visitors. As an association, we have a communal duty to ensure that common areas are safe. The law requires that in all these areas we exercise at least a 'reasonable' level of care regarding safety. Although unlikely, a claim could be made for negligence if we do not take reasonable precautions and someone gets hurt. We are also obliged to comply with other laws, such as those regarding environmental and wildlife protection.

Our Policy

Our Health & Safety Policy, although summarised in this document, is implemented through our Constitution, our Rules and Regulations, updates to Association members, and an introduction to the site by the membership Secretary or another nominated Association member. In addition, at least once per year, a risk and hazard assessment will be carried out by the Committee or designated persons, and appropriate actions taken both to minimise hazards and risks, and to update this policy. These actions will be taken in agreement with Association members.

Injuries and "near-misses", and any other safety-related issues must be reported to a member of the Committee so that any existing hazard or risk¹ can be eliminated and prevented in the future.

All plots will be assessed to ensure all avoidable hazards are removed on leasing to new plot-holders, and/or to advise new plot-holders of any known hazards and how to reduce any risks that they may cause.

Here are some safety rules:

- It is recommended that, particularly at quiet times, plot-holders inform someone where they are, and their likely return time.
- Plot-holders should ensure they conduct dynamic risk assessments when on the allotment site.
- Plot-holders should ensure that their plot and associated accesses are free from hazard: hazards may include sharp edges, exposed nails, improperly stored tools, hazards hidden within undergrowth such as discarded tools, improperly stored dangerous materials such as those listed below. Please remember that we are legally responsible for the safety of anybody who may enter our plots.
- Plot-holders must acquaint themselves with, and adhere strictly to, the guidelines regarding storage, usage and disposal of hazardous materials such as glass,

¹ A hazard is something that can cause injury, for example the road access, the parking area, power tools, exposed sharp edges. Hazards can sometimes be removed, but may be inevitable. Risks are the potential threats caused by the hazards, for example injury from a hidden sharp edge, a vehicle accident. Risks can usually be avoided.



pesticides, fertilisers, asbestos cement, oil, and fuel. These must be securely stored in the proper containers, and well away from possible reach by children.

- Plot-holders should acquaint themselves with the safe use, and storage, of tools, particularly power tools.
- Plot-holders should be vigilant for rats, rabbits and other vermin, and inform the Site Manager if evidence of vermin is observed.
- Plot-holders should report vandalism or other evidence of intruders to a member of the committee for reporting to the police.
- Plot-holders should ensure that any gates to the site are kept closed at all times.

Risk Assessment

At least once per year, the Site Manager and at least one other Committee member (or nominated Association member) will carry out a risk assessment of the site to identify hazards, assess risks², and decide on remedial actions.

² Risk assessment involves listing potential risks caused by these hazards, assessing the frequency that people are exposed to those hazards, the probability of injury and the impact of such injury. Some risks are so great that immediate action must be taken, some are severe enough that some action needs to be considered, and others may need no action.