

Health and Safety Guidelines

1. Summary

Although Hamnet, as an organization, is not bound by the Occupational Health and Safety act, nevertheless every member of Hamnet has a legal duty of care towards each other and members of the public.

To encourage good practices, Hamnet has drawn up the following rules for the guidance of all members.

The Hamnet group will provide radio backup communications for many different organizations and participate in training events in order to be prepared for emergency situations. Personal safety is a very important aspect when planning any of these events.

Each emergency situation will be different and we will try and involve members in a variety of situations in order to try to anticipate the type of situation in which members may be required to participate.

2. Introduction.

During the course of your duties, Hamnet members may be dealing with a wide variety of situations, i.e. adverse weather conditions, a.c. voltages, generators and fuel, and crowds of people. Every situation should be evaluated for risks as early as possible and the appropriate controls put in place. This is called a risk assessment and involves identifying the hazards associated with it and the likelihood of an accident or incident happening.

3. Health and Safety Guidelines.

Masts – Erecting and Dismantling

When erecting a mast consider the suitability of the ground,

- soft or firm
- sloping or level
- check for any overhead power lines
- and consider existing and forecasted weather conditions.

Mast erection & dismantling

- Does the mast have a base-plate?
- What guying is needed, if necessary?
- Is each section in good condition?
- Are the members familiar with the method used to raise and lower the mast?
- Will all the guyropes and ground pins be clearly identified to avoid someone tripping?
- If the mast should collapse, what damage could occur?

4. Generators

- Place the generator at least 1 metre away from any building, tent, vehicle, etc
- Allow for adequate ventilation and NEVER use a generator in a confined space.
- Always operate a generator on a level surface.
- Never operate a generator with wet hands, and protect it from the rain.
- All those members who operate the generator are aware of the dangers involved.
- Ensure unauthorized people are kept away from the generator.
- NEVER refill a generator whilst still in operation.
- Always keep fuel in a clearly marked container and stored in a safe place.
- Always have a small (4.5kg dry powder) fire extinguisher located nearby.

5. Installing radio equipment in a vehicle

Batteries should be secured to prevent an accident

- All cables should be properly protected
- All flexible cables should be free from strain
- All mobile radio equipment should be connected to the power supply by a fuse in both lines.
- Make sure the radio equipment is secure
- The operation of the radio equipment should not affect the drivers' operation of the vehicle.

6. Safety checks for portable electrical equipment.

External examination:

- examine the power cables for damage (cuts, abrasions etc)
- examine the plug for damage (cracks on the casing or bent pins)
- look for signs for overheating (burn or scorch marks)
- ensure that the cables is gripped properly in the plug

Internal examination:

When opening the plug, check the following:

- the cable is gripped tightly in the cord grip
- the wires are connected to the correct terminals
- no bare wires are visible except at the terminals
- the terminals screws are tight
- check for any signs of internal damage (overheating, water, dirt or dust)

7. Setting up and maintaining equipment at temporary locations.

- Always check that no cables are trailing across walkways, if the cables have to be run across a walkway, they should be taped to the floor.
- Aerial cables should have a suitable point of entry into the building.
- Check that the location of the equipment does not impede the passage way through doorways, emergency exits, etc.

8. Personal Responsibilities.

Members are responsible for their own safety and for the safety of others.

Health & physical condition:

- Hamnet members should not accept duties beyond their physical capabilities. Controllers should take into account the age, state of health and any other factor which might affect the members' capabilities to do that duty in a safe manner.
- you may decline a duty which you feel is beyond your capability
- for your own protection carry a card stating important information such as:
 - name and address of next of kin
 - details of any physical condition which might be important
 - details of any allergies
 - blood group

9. Contents of a basic first aid kit

- Assorted dressings
- Bandages
- Crepe bandages
- Adhesive tape
- Cotton wool balls
- Second skin (good for burns & blisters)
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antiseptic cream (Germolene or similar)
- Sling
- Survival blanket (if available)
- Scissors
- Safety pins
- Disprin

All these items can be packed in a small box or waterproof bag.

10. On an Emergency site

You are a radio operator and should become involved in no other activity. You shall maintain and operate your station until you are instructed otherwise by the net control.

Identity Cards.

Identity cards serve as a means of identifying members of Hamnet. These should be worn at each event that involves Hamnet personnel and should be available on demand by officials in control of emergency sites.

You enter into emergency operations at your own risk and privately owned equipment is the responsibility of the owner. Equipment borrowed from Hamnet or other operators is the responsibility of the user at all times.

11. Recommendations

It must be that every Hamnet member has a duty to care for himself/herself and others. If more than one Hamnet member is involved in an activity at a particular location, the person appointed to co-ordinate the activity has the overall responsibility of the safety of the group.