UK
Health and Safety Policy (Small Animal)

2022

VERSION 1.1

IVC EVIDENSIA

Contents

Section 1 – Policy Statement	
Policy Statement, Scope, Roles and Responsibilities & Evaluation	4
Section 2 – Arrangements	
Accident Reporting and Investigation	9
Anesthetics	9
Asbestos	9
Consultation and Communication	10
Control of Contractors	10
Controlled Drugs	11
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)	12
Display Screen Equipment	13
Driving and Vehicle Safety	13
Electrical Equipment	14
Fire Safety	14
First Aid	15
Gas Safety	15
Harassment, Violence and Aggression	15
Hygiene and Biosecurity	15
Induction	17
Legionella	17
Lone Working	18
Manual Handling	18
Monitoring	19
Notifiable Diseases in Animals	20
Pregnant Persons	20
Radiation	21
Risk Assessments	22
Safeguarding	22
Safe Premises	23
Slips, Trips and Falls	23
Stress	24
Training	25
Unexpected Emergencies	25
Waste	26
Zoonotic Disease	27

Section 3 – Risk Assessments
General Risk Assessments
Fire Risk Assessment
Radiation Risk Assessment
Section 4 – Group Registration Forms and Licenses
Including: radiation registration, course booking forms
Section 5 – Template Forms
Including: Employee Induction, Fire Procedures, Audit

Date of Issue	Devised by	Approved by	Review Date
01/09/2022	Ian Morley	Adam Rowley	31/08/2024

Policy Statement

IVC Evidensia has a vision to build the world's best veterinary group. Ensuring we provide a safe and compliant work environment for all our people contributes to meeting our vision. This commitment extends to anybody who may be affected by our operations including customers, contractors, visitors and members of the public.

We are committed to continuously evaluating the company's efforts in the work environment, that effective management of health and safety is an integral and essential part of a successful business and that the co-operation of staff, at all levels, is vital in achieving the continual health and safety improvements, for which we strive. We recognise that the requirements of the work must be adapted to the human conditions in both physical and psychological terms and that measures are carried out to improve the positive effects of the work environment, for both the individual and the company, to providing a consistent standard of health and safety across the IVC Evidensia Group.

We will ensure we meet our commitment to provide a safe and compliant work environment by implementing the following:

- Develop a positive safety culture throughout the business to create an environment which promotes safe working practices
- Identify and implement clear and simple arrangements to meet requirements of this policy
- Ensure that our employees are clear on their roles and responsibilities for health and safety
- Identify significant hazards and control risks through the development of suitable and sufficient risk assessments
- Minimise the number of accidents and incidents that occur by creating and implementing safe working practices
- Ensure accurate accident and incident reporting with robust investigations designed to identify root causes to prevent reoccurrence
- Provide the necessary training, that is clear and concise, to ensure our employees are competent to do their jobs safely
- Maintain safe premises which meet statutory requirements
- Drive the implementation of the policy requirements from all levels of the business
- Measure the effectiveness of the policy regularly through proactive and reactive monitoring
- Reviewing the health and safety arrangements periodically to ensure that the content remains current, valid and ensuring that any lessons learnt are applied

Duncan Phillips
Chief Executive, UK and Ireland
IVC Evidensia

Signed:

Date: 18 Nov 2022

Scope

This policy applies to all colleagues, consultants, contractors and third parties providing services to, or working for, IVC Evidensia.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

Roles and Responsibilities

UK & Ireland Chief Executive Officer

The UK and Ireland CEO is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the health and safety policy. The CEO may delegate responsibilities to a member(s) of their team who form part of their management team however the CEO will remain accountable for ensuring these responsibilities are met. The CEO will ensure:

- Suitable arrangements are developed and implemented to fully meet the requirements of the Group health and safety policy whilst meeting the requirements of any health and safety legislation. These arrangements must be reviewed periodically to ensure they remain current
- The health and safety arrangements are communicated clearly to everybody with clearly documented responsibilities for the operations and clinical functional teams
- The operations and clinical functional teams fulfil their responsibilities as determined by their documented responsibilities, regulated requirements and health and safety arrangements
- Suitable health and safety training is available and provided to ensure people can perform their roles safely and in line with the health and safety arrangements and ensure, where relevant, continued professional development relating to health and safety matters is completed and adhered to in full
- Sufficient resources are made available to fully implement the health and safety policy
- Ensure that adequate resource is available to provide competent advice on health and safety
- The premises within which we operate are safe and meet the local statutory requirements with documentation retained to support this compliance
- Arrangements are in place to meet the local regulations for managing Ionising Radiation
- Accurate reporting of all accidents and incidents that have occurred including any reportable incidents
- Measures are in place to routinely monitor the effectiveness of the health and safety arrangements and that this monitoring is documented
- That safety performance is delivered to the standard required by the health and safety policy and ensure any recommendations that are made as a result of audits, risk assessments or inspections are actioned within the timescales provided
- Report any significant health and safety issues to the Group COO in a timely manner.

Health and Safety Team

- Provide the necessary information and statistics to the CEO with regards to Health and Safety.
- Assisting with the implementation of the Health and Safety Management System and Health and Safety queries from practices.

- Completing health and safety audits at practices throughout the UK when requested or required.
- Investigating health and safety incidents or concerns as directed by the Operations Team and practice members, providing the practices in question with support.
- Ensure the accident reporting system is monitored and provide reports if required.
- Assist practices with queries regarding the internal online health and safety training and provide reports when required.
- Liaise with external health & safety consultants in the provision of training programmes and health and safety services.
- Reviewing H&S Audits undertaken and ensuring that appropriate actions are taken, supporting where necessary.
- Support Health and Safety Management, Operations Team and Practice Health and Safety Representatives in practice as required.

Chief Operating Officer

- Ensure that the Regional Operations Directors are aware of their Health and Safety duties and responsibilities.

Regional Operations Directors

- Ensure that the Area Directors are aware of their Health and Safety duties and responsibilities.

Area Director / Regional Veterinary Directors

- Ensure that the Area Support Managers are aware of their Health and Safety duties and responsibilities.
- Provide the Regional Operations Directors with any Health and Safety information when required.

Area Support Manager

- Provide practices with the necessary contact details for the Health and Safety Team.
- Support Health and Safety Management, Operations Team and Practice Health and Safety Representatives in practice as required.
- Advise practices that our Health and Safety provider will be in touch to arrange and conduct fire risk assessment of every branch, H&S audit of main branch, asbestos surveys when required within 3 months of acquisition.
- Identify any areas within the practice that may be an urgent Health and Safety concern and inform the Health and Safety Team if required.
- Complete the Area Support Manager Health and Safety Audit (template in section 5) on an annual basis and send the Health and Safety Team a copy of the results.

Clinical Director

The Clinical Director has a responsibility to ensure IVC Evidensia safety procedures within practice are being adhered to. They must ensure that the operations which they are responsible for, fully meet the requirements of the health and safety arrangements and in particular must ensure:

- Oversee the effective management of health and safety within their area of responsibility including implementing the health and safety arrangements within practice.
- Delegation of H&S responsibilities to either the Practice Manager or Local H&S representatives.

Practice Manager

The Practice Manager should have the ability to actively manage their teams and directly influence the safety standards within practice, in particular:

- That employees understand, implement and adhere to their responsibilities as contained within the health and safety policy.
- That employees attend and/or complete the health and safety training outlined within the health and safety policy within the required timescale which includes refresher training where applicable.
- That all premises comply with the relevant statutory compliance requirements.
- That safety performance is delivered to the standard required by the health and safety policy and ensure any recommendations that are made as a result of audits, risk assessments or inspections are actioned within the timescales provided.
- All accidents, incidents and near misses are recorded, investigated, and reported as soon as possible from the incident occurring.
- Suitable risk assessments are developed and maintained for all activities within their control
- Controls are implemented to ensure the management of ionising radiation meets the regulations and that measures are implemented to audit these controls regularly.
- Controls are implemented to ensure the management of controlled drugs meets requirements and that measures are implemented to audit these controls regularly.
- Vehicles used on company business are legal and drivers of these vehicles hold the required licence for operating those vehicles.
- Report any significant health and safety issues to the relevant operations team.

Local Health and Safety Representatives

The Health and Safety Representatives and support are key to supporting the business to meet the legal requirements and health and safety policy. Key responsibilities for the health and safety representatives includes:

- Ensuring the health and safety policy remains current and is reviewed every two years or in the event of any significant changes.
- Providing and supporting practice health and safety representatives to clarify their health and safety policy requirements and how these can be achieved.
- Suitable measures are in place for monitoring health and safety performance against the health and safety policy.
- Report periodically on key health and safety metrics as required.

Employees

All employees must:

- Complete the mandatory health and safety training for their role within the timeframe provided as required by the company health and safety arrangements.
- Comply with health and safety arrangements including any safety instructions and controls listed within risk assessments which are designed to safeguard their own health and safety whilst at work.
- Ensure the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as required by the health and safety arrangements.
- Take all possible care of their own health and safety, and of the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by their actions.
- Inform their line manager of any defects or irregularities which might endanger the health and safety of themselves or others.

- Immediately inform their line manager of any accidents, incidents or near misses whilst carrying out their duties whilst at work.
- All clinical team members registered to practice are personally accountable for their place of work, their colleagues and their clients in line with veterinary regulations and other regulations relating to health and safety.

Evaluation

An evaluation of our Health and Safety Policy will be completed every two years or sooner where there are legislative changes in the event of a significant incident. Regular monitoring will also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the policy.

Arrangements

Accident Reporting and Investigation

- All accidents and incidents that occur must be recorded within two working days. This must include any incidents where no injury occurred and near misses where potentially somebody could have been injured.

- Major incidents must be reported immediately to the UK and Ireland IVC Evidensia Health and Safety Team (H&S@independentvetcare.co.uk) and the practice Area Support Manager to allow for an investigation to be conducted.

- Each accident and incident must be recorded on the online accident reporting system.

- Each accident and incident should be investigated by the local H&S representative to identify the root cause and action required to prevent a reoccurrence. The findings of that investigation must be documented.

- Accidents and incidents must also be reported to the relevant authority if required.

Anesthetics

- Only those that have been sufficiently trained in anaesthetics (such as a veterinary surgeon or RVN who are trained as part of their vocation) should use the equipment. Those that are not trained must follow instructions from trained personnel.

- Anaesthetic and piped gas systems should be regularly maintained (usually annually) by technicians and service paperwork should be provided.

- Any defective equipment should be reported immediately to the Clinical Director or Practice Manager to ensure they are rectified. Where equipment is deemed as unsafe it should be isolated to prevent use until repaired.

- Monitoring of anaesthetic gas levels should be arranged annually by the local H&S representative using anaesthetic monitoring badges provided by the practices' preferred external contractor.

- There are risks involved with anaesthetics and pregnant persons. Please see the Pregnant Persons section of this policy for more information.

Asbestos

- Buildings constructed pre-2000, requires an Asbestos Management Survey which should be conducted by a competent person to identify if there are any Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's).

- A copy of the asbestos management survey should be held on site and on the risk management platform.

- The practice representative should relay any information regarding asbestos to the relevant personnel (i.e. external contractors due to carry out any works) to prevent the inadvertent disturbance of ACMs before any work is carried out to confirm any asbestos will not be disturbed.

- Any ACM's identified should be monitored at least annually and a record made as to its condition. This should be recorded in the Asbestos Management Plan in section 5 of this policy.

- Any Employees should be made aware of the location of any ACMs during their induction to the practice.

- For any refurbishment works the IVC Evidensia property team should be consulted to ascertain if a more in-depth Refurbishment and Development Survey is required.

Consultation and Communication

- There should be suitable arrangements in place to allow employees to raise any health and safety concerns to their Line/Practice Manager or Clinical Director.

- There should be suitable arrangements in place to that any concerns raised are investigated and measures are taken to rectify. The IVC Evidensia Health and Safety team should be consulted if required (H&S@independentvetcare.co.uk).

- Communication and consultation to employees may also involve meetings, as and when appropriate, the company intranet, internal bulletins and via email.

- In order to develop, maintain and promote measures that ensure health and safety at work and check the effectiveness of such measures, regular consultation will be undertaken through the IVC Evidensia Health and Safety Committee, which consists of the CEO, Health and Safety Team, Operations Team Members and Practice Members. Minutes of which will be available regularly on the IVC Evidensia Intranet.

Control of Contractors

- To ensure that the contractor is competent to do the job safely and without risk to health and safety, they must complete the Contractor Induction Form found in Section 5 which covers any qualifications, if required, and a suitable level of insurance cover in the event of accident, injury, damage, or interruption caused to the business. Consideration must also be given to the aspects and the impacts of any of the works carried out on the environment. Thus, ensuring there are no breaches to Environmental Law.

- Contractors should provide Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) in advance of any works and provide a copy to the Practice Manager.

- Photographs may not be taken without consulting the client's representative.

- The contractor should also provide a permit to work for the following:

- Drilling or penetration of walls and flooring
- Use of naked flame (i.e. welding) or other 'hot works'
- Use of potentially hazardous substances
- Sawing or cutting using mechanical apparatus which could cause risk of injury
- Undue noise likely to present a hazard or significant inconvenience
- Disruption to any of the site's utilities (water, electricity, gas).
- Alterations to agreed methods or additional work will require a new the contractor to provide revised risk assessments and method statements where required.
- All contractors and visitors (excluding clients) should sign in using the visitors book.

Controlled Drugs

Veterinary professionals involved in the prescription, use and storage of controlled drugs must comply with the law on the misuse of drugs and veterinary medicines. All practices are subject to spot inspections from the VMD, or the RCVS if the practice is accredited.

- Schedule 2 and 3 drugs are subject to safe custody requirements. Controlled drugs must be kept in a locked cupboard that is attached to the fabric of the building to prevent unauthorised access. It should be 3mm steel with a multiple point lock mechanism and be fixed by substantial bolts. Avoid labelling the cupboard to indicate its contents

- Schedule 2 and 3 drugs which are transported to a client's premises must be transported in a lockable receptacle and must be locked when not in use. Controlled drugs should not be left unattended in a vehicle

- There are no Schedule 1 drugs therefore we have no authority to store or prescribe these.

- Drugs cupboards must only be opened by veterinary surgeons and those authorised by a veterinary surgeon. Cupboards should be in a room not accessible to clients and must remain locked whilst not in use

- Create a list of those authorised to access the controlled drugs cupboard within each practice

- There must be a key control system in place for the controlled drugs cupboard with a key register with regular checks with key holders

- A controlled drugs register must be implemented for all schedule 2 drugs which should be located where the drugs are stored at each individual practice. For schedule 2 drugs that are transported, a separate register must be maintained which will remain with the transported drugs until the drugs are signed back into practice

- The prescribing veterinary surgeon may delegate the task of completing the register however they remain responsible for the supply of the controlled drug

- The controlled drugs register must be maintained and remain accurate. A controlled drugs register has been provided within the forms and checklists to confirm the contents of a register. This document should be retained for 5 years post-date of last entry.

- Daily audits of schedule 2 drugs must be conducted by a veterinary surgeon in the presence of an RVN, or the senior nurse/receptionist at each practice. Any discrepancy must be investigated using the discrepancy reporting template (greater detail in CD policy).

- Where no clinical work has occurred over night the daily audit should be conducted at the end of the working day, where clinical work has been conducted over night then the audit should be conducted at the start and end of the working day

- Daily audits must be recorded in the controlled drugs register and signed by the veterinary surgeon who conducted the audit

- The Clinical Director will review the daily audits on a weekly basis to confirm the entries are correct, the register is being completed in full and that the usage, orders and stock held all balance

This section of the policy contains a summary of a more detailed controlled drugs policy due to the extensive level of information required. For further details regarding out-of-date stock and wastage, ordering, prescriptions, supply, import and export and the procedure following any discrepancies, please refer to the separate controlled drugs policy which is available on the intranet.

COSHH

- All employees must be provided with relevant safety information for the hazardous chemicals and substances they use as part of their role and complete the H&S training on the Learning Hub.

- The practice H&S representative should review the COSHH Risk Assessment template in Section 3 and amend to suit their practice if required.

- All substances used in the practice should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions so it is important that you read the labels on products and take appropriate precautions.

- Ensure that the poster (in Section 5) is displayed with the QR code link to the latest Material Safety Datasheets (MSDS) for all hazardous chemicals and substances that our preferred drug suppliers provide. A 'Safe Handling of Chemicals' poster usually accessed via the H&S Executives website should also be displayed.

- Veterinary Material Safety Data Sheets can also be found on the NOAH compendium website: NOAH Compendium | Home

- Ensure that the relevant personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided and worn as required by the MSDS and risk assessment.

- High-risk substances such as those of a controlled nature or cytotoxic/cytostatic medicines, must be handled and disposed of with extreme care. The COSHH assessment form template (found in Section 5) should be utilised for high-risk substances if required.

- Any member of staff who suspects they may be pregnant should inform the appropriate person in the practice before being involved with any high-risk substances.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

- A DSE user is defined as 'people using a Visual Display Unit (VDU, i.e. a monitor) more or less continuously on most days'. This applies to those who:
    - normally use a VDU for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time
    - use VDU's in this way more or less daily
    - have to transfer information quickly to or from the display screen equipment

- All DSE users are required to complete the online H&S training, which contains DSE information, on the IVC Evidensia Learning Hub accessed via the Intranet.

- Where applicable, users should complete a workstation assessment utilising the template 'DSE Assessment' form. The outcome of the assessment should be discussed with their line manager and, if required, the H&S team can provide assistance: H&S@independentvetcare.co.uk.

- In the event that an employee highlights concerns with their workstation or indicates that they are experiencing pain or discomfort following a DSE assessment, then reasonably practicable improvements such as; foot rests, wrist rests, screen risers, should be implemented.

Driving and Vehicle Safety

- Please refer to the Driving and Vehicle Policies provided by the IVC Evidensia insurance team (insurance@independentvetcare.co.uk). Summarised points from the policy are as follows:

  Drivers should:
    - be competent, capable and healthy to drive safely without placing themselves and others at risk.
    - behave in a safe and considerate manner, obeying all applicable road safety legislation and showing respect for other road users.
    - take appropriate routes, take regular breaks and take account of adverse weather.
    - hold a full current license for the class of vehicle that they drive on Company business.
    - Ensure that evidence of suitable insurance is demonstrated for all privately owned vehicles used for Company business.
    - complete the annual driver declaration form provided by the insurance team.
    - be reminded that smoking is not permitted in company vehicles.

  Vehicles should:
    - be fit for use and maintained in a safe condition.
    - have a valid MOT certificate if one is required.
    - Be regularly inspected/maintained. Those that are owned or operated by the Company are subject to regular servicing and, utilising the vehicle checklist in the template forms section, routine examinations should be completed by a competent member of staff.

- It is the responsibility of the Practice Manager and to manage these checks and controls on behalf of the Clinical and Company Directors.

Electrical Equipment

- Portable appliances should be inspected by the user before use. Defective equipment should be removed from use until repaired/replaced.

- Employees are not permitted to bring electrical items from home to use in the workplace.

- Portable appliance testing (PAT) must be carried out every 2 years by a competent person – (preferred supplier for the UK is NTS - info@nts.uk.net).

- Electrical installation must be inspected by a competent person every 5 years or at the frequency suggested on the current electrical installation condition report.

- Records of portable appliance and fixed wiring testing must be loaded onto the risk management platform.

Fire Safety

- A Fire Risk Assessment should be completed annually using the template found in Section 3 and loaded onto the risk management platform.

- A suitable Fire Action Plan should be implemented using the template document found in Section 5.

- Routine in house inspections should be completed and recorded by the appointed representative using the following documents found in Section 5 as follows:
    - Weekly – Fire/Smoke Alarm Testing (Fire Alarm checklist)
    - Monthly – Complete the Fire Safety Checklist which includes; Emergency Lighting testing, Fire Door checks, Fire Extinguisher visual checks
    - Annually – Fire Drill and Fire Risk Assessment Review

- As well as routine inspections, a practice appointed local external supplier should carry out fixed fire alarm, emergency lighting and fire extinguisher servicing ANNUALLY.

- Housekeeping standards within premises must be maintained to prevent the obstruction of fire escape routes and exits to promote safe exit in the event of a fire. Any alterations and modifications to buildings must meet the local fire safety legislation to which the IVC Evidensia Property Team should be consulted (property@independentvetcare.co.uk).

- Fire Marshal/Warden training is required for ALL sites with a team of 5 or more people which needs to include 'hands on' extinguisher training. This can be arranged through St. Johns Ambulance using the booking form in Section 4 to receive an IVC Evidensia discount or using a local supplier if preferred.

- All staff must also complete the H&S training on the Learning Hub, which contains information on Fire procedures, accessed via the intranet as part of their induction.

First Aid

- Employees should be made clear on what first aid arrangements are in place as part of their induction.

- If a building has up to 25 staff, a first aider must be appointed. If there are 25 staff or over there should be at least one emergency first aid at work (EFAW) one day trained member of staff. However, IVC Evidensia recommend that you have at least one EFAW trained member of staff for each site. This can be arranged through St. Johns Ambulance using the booking form in Section 4 to receive an IVC Evidensia discount or using a local supplier if preferred.

- A first aid kit should be provided at each site (minimum of one) and should be checked on a regular basis (recommended monthly) by the appointed staff member to ensure any supplies used are replenished.

- The location of first aiders and first aid box shall be clearly displayed throughout the building.

- The storage or supply of medicines for human use is not permitted.

Gas Safety

- A gas safety inspection should be completed by a local preferred gas engineer ANNUALLY.

- Carbon monoxide detectors should be present in areas where fixed appliances (such as a boiler) and tested regularly and recorded as part of the monthly fire checklist.

- Where faulty appliances are detected, these should be isolated, not used and a Gas Safety Engineer should be instructed as soon as possible.

- Vents, flues, air bricks are to be always kept clear.

Harassment, Violence and Aggression

- IVC Evidensia is dedicated to creating a workplace for all employees where we respect and value each other as individuals. Our code of conduct outlines standards for all employees, to allow us to work in an environment of trust and integrity, which ultimately allows us to fulfil our shared goal of providing the best quality support to patients and clients.

- If an employee believes they are being harassed by a staff member or client, they can make a complaint to their manager so that they can take steps to prevent this from happening again.

- For more information, please refer to the HR policies on Harassment, Violence and Aggression found on the HR Section of the Intranet.

Hygiene and Biosecurity

Biosecurity refers to all hygienic practices designed to prevent occurrences of infectious disease. This includes preventing introduction of infectious agents, controlling their spread within the population

or facilities, and containment or disinfection of infectious material. Personal hygiene is extremely important to prevent risk to yourself as you may be dealing with infectious diseases or other high-risk materials.

The following is an indication of how to try to prevent the spread of infectious diseases in practice:

- Good hand hygiene. Hands should be washed or an antibacterial hand gel should be used after handling each patient.
- All tabletops should be washed down after each patient using disinfectant.
- Daily clean down of all areas should take place following strict dilution rates for disinfectants, using the correct buckets and mops, PPE should also be worn.
- All floors should be cleaned at least daily using the correct dilution rates for disinfectants.
- Any area soiled should be cleaned down immediately and disposed of in correct waste bin.
- Main cleaning should be carried out in all areas on at least a weekly basis.
- Wear the correct PPE when required:
    - Gloves - wear gloves when handling hazardous material and an animal with a suspected infectious disease. After use, gloves should be removed promptly and disposed of. Hands should be washed immediately after glove removal.
    - Facial protection - wear facial protection when required.
    - Protective outerwear - Wear a protective outer garment such as a non-sterile gown and adequate footwear when required.
- Take precautions to prevent bites and other injuries. Identify aggressive animals and alert clinic staff. Use physical restraints, muzzles, bite-resistant gloves and sedation or anesthesia in accordance with practice protocol.
- Use the correct general and clinical waste bins provided.
- When bites or scratches occur, wash the site with water immediately. Record all bites and other injuries via the accident reporting system and seek medical advice if required.
- Do not rely on owners or untrained staff for animal restraint. Notify a senior member of the team if there is a concern for personal safety.
- Avoid taking aggressive or infectious animals where members of the public reside.

Needle stick injury prevention

Do not bend needles unless absolutely necessary, pass an uncapped needle to another person, or walk around with uncapped needles. Do not recap needles except in rare instances when required as part of a medical procedure or protocol. Dispose of all sharps in designated sharps containers.

Isolation of infectious animals:

Animals with a contagious or zoonotic disease (see Zoonosis Policy) must be housed in the practice isolation ward. See Zoonosis Policy for further information.

Decontamination and spill response

Immediately spray spills or splashes of potentially infectious substances with disinfectant and contain it with absorbent material. Put on gloves and protective outerwear before beginning the clean-up. Seal the contaminant in a leak-proof container and clean and disinfect the area. Keep clients, patients and employees from the area until disinfection is complete.

Food preparation

Ensure there are designated areas for eating, drinking, smoking and similar activities. These activities should never be done in clinical areas. Do not keep food or drink for human consumption in the same refrigerator as animal food, biologics, or laboratory specimens. Dishes for human use should be cleaned and stored away from animal care and animal food preparation areas.

Respiratory Infections such as COVID-19

Any restrictions that are set out by government guidance should be adhered to. Practices must still review and update their risk assessment to ensure the measures identified take account of the public health regulations and guidance for the nation they are based, with extra consideration of the following control measures:

- Adequate ventilation
- Sufficient cleaning protocols
- Good hand hygiene

A template COVID-19 risk assessment can be found in Section 3 and the national government website should be referred to for any further information.

Induction

- When employment commences, new colleagues are required to complete the H&S induction checklist and read and acknowledge the IVC Evidensia H&S Staff Handbook as part of employee induction.

- Within one month of joining, employees should complete the H&S e-learning courses located on the IVC Learning Hub.

- Induction documents can be found in Section 5 and if there are any issues accessing the online training, please contact the Learning Hub team: learninghub@ivcevidensia.com.

- Remote/Hybrid workers are also required to complete the above induction process and, in addition, complete the 'Working from Home' Risk Assessment found in Section 3. For more information on remote working, please refer to the 'Working from Home' Policy, which can be provided from the IVC Evidensia HR team (hrsupport@ivcevidensia.com).

- For temporary workers (such as; locums, volunteers and work experience) a part induction of the induction checklist and acknowledgement of the H&S handbook should apply (templates of both can be found in Section 5).

Legionella

- A risk assessment should be conducted (template in Section 3) for each building to help identify any control measures required for managing the risk associated with legionella. The responsible person should have basic knowledge of the water system within the premises to enable them to undertake a valid initial assessment.

- For low-risk systems, i.e. systems which comprise of a minimal water systems (i.e toilet, hand wash basin and mains fed then the following should be considered:
  - Daily emptying of dental reservoir and cleaning of equipment.
  - Weekly flush of low use outlets (taps and showers that are not used every day)
  - Monthly temperature testing as follows:
    - cold water outlets temperatures should be below 20 degrees Celsius after 2 minutes (random taps rotating over the year so that all taps are checked across the year). Please note it may run warmer in extreme heat as mains water temp increases.

        - Hot water outlets temp should be between 50-60 degrees Celsius after 1 minute or between 39-43 if thematic mixer valve (TMV) (include sentinel taps which is the one nearest and furthest the source of hot water)
        - Hot water for stored water in clarifier above 60 degrees Celsius (can be taken from outlet pipe if no gauge)
    - 3 monthly shower head descale
    - Legionella sampling to be carried out as where the above controls have not been maintained to determine levels of legionella in water system

- For medium/high risk systems, i.e. systems which include stored cold water, complex pipework, the following control measures should be considered in addition to the above:
    - 6 monthly microbiological analysis of any drinking water which is tank fed
    - 6 monthly tank temperature is 20 degrees Celsius or less
    - Annual inspection of cold-water storage tanks (looking for sediment, debris, the tank is clean and has a lid to prevent dirt/pests/birds entering tank
    - Annual inspection of clarifiers

- Once the initial assessment is completed, this should help ascertain the risk. Low risk system control measures should be able to be managed in house with a record maintained (template in Section 5). For medium/high risk systems, instructing a competent external consultant is recommended.

Lone Working

- Whenever possible, lone working should be avoided, however, IVC Evidensia recognise that this is not always practicable. It is essential that employees feel safe and secure, so that they can undertake and perform their duties free from the fear of a risk to their health & safety.

- It is the responsibility of line managers of employees who work alone to ensure that procedures are implemented, monitored and adhered to. This includes:
    - That a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is conducted to identify appropriate control measures.
    - Any necessary physical measures are put in place, such as a 'buddy system' whereas the lone worker has regular contact with another member of staff, appropriate technology is made available, such as a mobile phone or alarm system, and, where the safety of lone workers is threatened, that alternative arrangements can be made.
    - Regular reviews of the arrangements should be carried out to ensure that all measures are effective and continue to meet the requirements of the lone worker.
    - After any incident, the risk assessment and procedures should be reviewed as soon as possible.
- Lone workers also have a responsibility to follow these procedures for their own safety. This section of the policy contains a summary of a more detailed policy due to the extensive level of information required. For further details please refer to the separate policy which is available on the intranet.

Manual Handling

- Manual handling means transporting or supporting a load by hand or bodily force. It includes lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving loads. A load can be an object,

person or animal. The following should be assessed before carrying out a Manual Handling activity:

- Can the activity be avoided?
- If it cannot be avoided, assess the risk of injury
- Reduce the risk of injury to as low as reasonably practicable

- You can avoid hazardous manual handling operations by:
  - Redesigning the task to avoid moving the load
  - Automating or mechanising the process (i.e. by utilising a trolley or stretcher for a large dog)

- To assess the risk of injury you should consider the task, the load, the working environment and individual capability, for example:
  - the postures adopted, how far the load is lifted, lowered or carried
  - the frequency of the task
  - the weight of the load
  - the nature of the load (i.e. size of a dog, is the animal conscious)
  - cramped work areas
  - poor floor surfaces
  - poor lighting, extremes of temperature
  - workers' strength, fitness and underlying medical conditions

- Measures to control risk will vary depending on the task. If manual lifting is the only option then there are things you can do to reduce the risk, including:
  - make the load smaller or lighter and easier to grasp (if possible)
  - break up large consignments into smaller loads (if possible)
  - modify the workplace to reduce carrying distances, twisting movements, or the need to lift things from floor level or above shoulder height
  - change the work routine to avoid excessive work rates and tight deadlines
  - improve the environment – more space, better flooring, extra lighting or changing the air temperature can make manual handling easier and safer
  - make sure the person doing the lifting has completed the necessary manual handling training

- All staff are required to complete the online H&S training, which contains information on manual handing, on the IVC Evidensia Learning Hub accessed via the intranet. A Manual Handing Risk Assessment found in Section 3 can also be utilised if required.

Monitoring

- The practice H&S representative should complete an annual review of the Management System which should include a H&S audit (utilising the template form Section 5). To remain effective, audits should create an action plan to identify the actions that are required to fully meet the health and safety arrangements.

- As well as H&S audits, regular in-house safety checks and servicing should be completed. These include:
  - inspections of fire, gas and electrical equipment and machinery
  - annual servicing to veterinary equipment used in practice such as; autoclaves, anaesthetic machines and x-ray.

Notifiable Diseases in Animals

There are certain animal diseases that you're legally obliged to report, or are 'notifiable', to the local relevant authority, even if you only suspect that an animal may be affected.

Notifiable diseases can be:

- endemic – already present in the UK, such as bovine TB
- exotic – not normally present in the UK, such as foot and mouth disease

Some endemic and exotic diseases are zoonotic which means they can pass between animals and humans, such as rabies.

If you suspect an exotic notifiable disease:

- Report it to the relevant authority.
- The relevant authority should investigate – they usually visit the premises.
- If the relevant authority a notifiable disease, they will take samples for testing (this may involve killing the suspected animal before taking samples).
- They may put restrictions on your premises.
- If certain diseases are suspected a temporary control zone may be introduced at the premises.
- Restrictions remain in place until the investigation is complete and an exotic notifiable disease is ruled out.

If a notifiable disease is confirmed:

- Action will be taken on the infected premises to reduce the risk of the disease spreading, including movement restrictions.
- The government investigates where the disease came from and whether it has spread.
- The government puts restrictions on all premises where the disease is likely to have spread from or to (for example when animals have been moved).
- Further restrictions in a wider area may be introduced, depending on the risk of the disease spreading. In the case of foot and mouth disease in particular, animal movements would be restricted throughout the country. For some diseases control zones are automatically applied. The relevant authority will tell you what action to take – this depends on the nature of the disease and EU requirements.
- The following activities that could spread disease may be banned:
- hunting or shooting
- animal gatherings (like shows)
- exports

A list of specific notifiable diseases can be found on the local government website.

Pregnant Persons

The Company has a general duty to take care of the health and safety of employees and will carry out a risk assessment to assess workplace risks to women who are or suspects they may be pregnant, have recently given birth or who are still breastfeeding.

- On becoming pregnant, an employee should notify their Line Manager as soon as possible. This is important for mother and baby's safety and because there are health and safety considerations and obligations for the Company.

- Once notified, the practice principal should carry out the following:
    - Provide the employee with maternity information obtained from the IVC Evidensia HR team (HRSupport@ivcevidensia.com), which includes a pregnancy risk assessment.
    - The pregnancy risk assessment should then be completed to identify any risks whilst carrying out their normal job role.
    - Suitable and sufficient control measures should be implemented if any risks are identified following the assessment (i.e. adapting the employee's working conditions or working hours). If there are any disagreements following the assessment, the IVC Evidensia HR and H&S team should be consulted.

- Risks apply to the unborn child or child of a woman who is still breastfeeding, not just to the mother, so the pregnancy risk assessment should be reviewed regularly (at least every trimester), if anything changes or if the pregnant person is struggling with their day-to-day tasks. There should also be a review, or a new assessment completed if they are a breastfeeding mother.

- Further information such as procedures and drugs to avoid can be found on the Pregnancy Risk Assessment, a copy of which can also be found in Section 3.

Radiation

- Where a practice carries out radiography activities, as per the Governing Radiation Regulations, a Radiation Protection Advisor (RPA) must be appointed in writing before radiation equipment is used.

- Practices must appoint, in writing, an in-house Radiation Protection Supervisor/Officer whom can be a veterinary surgeon or registered veterinary nurse and training is provided regularly by our group RPA.

- The in-house radiation representative must create local rules in consultation with their nominated RPA which must be displayed adjacent to the equipment (template in Section 5). This must provide a clearly designated controlled area to restrict unauthorised persons accessing this area whilst radiation equipment is in use.

- The name and contact details of the in-house representative must be displayed clearly adjacent to the equipment.

- The in-house radiation representative must create a suitable and sufficient radiation risk assessment (template in Section 3) which must be completed before radiation equipment is used. This should be reviewed and approved by their RPA.

- The RPS must create a contingency plan to identify the necessary steps required in the event of a radiation accident (template in Section 5).

- Clear signage must be displayed at every entrance to a controlled area which are clearly visible by persons approaching the area.

- All entrances to radiation Controlled Areas must have appropriate warning lights as recommended by your RPA.

- Designated persons must be provided with and wear a personal dosimeter when operating the radiography equipment.

- All colleagues should complete the basic radiation safety training on the IVC learning hub.

This section of the policy contains a summary of a more detailed radiation policy. For further details regarding the management of radiation including; in-house representative duties, safe working practices, risk assessments and local rules content, please refer to the separate radiation policy which is available in the Section 5 or provided by your RPA.

Risk Assessments

The purpose of a risk assessment is to identify areas of operations and work-related tasks which present a risk to the company and/or its employees and then to formulate priority action to eliminate these risks or reduce them to a level which is reasonably acceptable.

- Template risk assessments are provided in Section 3 for the practice H&S representative to adopt to suit their practice requirements.
- The following process when completing a Risk Assessment should be followed:
- Identify the hazards (i.e. equipment hazards)
- Decide who might be harmed and how (i.e. colleagues, visitors)
- Evaluate the risks - utilising the risk rating formula found on each assessment
- Record your significant findings utilising the templates provided
- Review your assessment and update if necessary
- Key findings of a completed risk assessment should be communicated to those employees performing those roles/tasks. Risk assessments must be reviewed periodically (annually), if anything changes, such as equipment, or following an incident to ensure that the findings remain current.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting the health, wellbeing and human rights of young people and adults at risk, to live free from abuse, harm and neglect. This includes employees, volunteers, clients, supporters and other individuals whom we may come into contact with to which IVC Evidensia is fully committed.

It involves the process of reporting worries or concerns and taking the appropriate action to keep young people and adults at risk safe from all forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual harm. The term safeguarding also encompasses preventative measures that are put in place such as recruitment protocols, working practices and guidance and reporting mechanisms.

We all have a moral responsibility for Safeguarding, especially the welfare and safety of young people and adults at risk. Colleagues at all times are expected to show respect for, and understanding of, the rights, safety and welfare of the children and adults at risk they engage with and will conduct themselves in a way that reflects the values of IVC Evidensia. Where colleagues have worries about suspected abuse, either an external threat to IVC Evidensia or suspicions about the actions of another IVC Evidensia colleague, they must speak up and report this as soon as possible. IVC Evidensia and its people have a duty of care to help, protect and safeguard the welfare of young people and adults at risk whom they may encounter during the course of their activities.

For further information, please consult the Safeguarding Policy which can be obtained from the IVC Evidensia HR team.

Safe Premises

- Electrical installations, electrical appliances, gas equipment and appliances must be maintained / inspected to ensure these are in a safe condition as per the relevant sections of this policy.

- Where passenger lifts, goods lifts or hoists are used, arrangements must be in place to ensure these are maintained in a safe condition which meets the local requirements. Such maintenance must be documented.

- Suitable and sufficient control measures should be implemented to ensure the safety of staff from criminal activity and abuse. A security assessment template can be found in Section 5, which helps identify if additional controls such as CCTV, lockable internal doors and lone working should be taken into consideration.

Slips, Trips and Falls

- Slips, trips and falls can happen for a number of reasons and one or more of these factors may play a part in any slip accident:
    - Contamination (i.e. spillages)
    - Cleaning (i.e. cleaning walkways)
    - People – (i.e. someone rushing)
    - Flooring - (i.e. uneven surfaces)
    - Environment (i.e. adverse weather)
    - Footwear (i.e. shoes not fit for purpose)

- The local H&S representative should ensure risk assessments include slips, trips and falls and the required controls for minimising the associated risk. Examples to consider in the risk assessments are as follows:
    - Housekeeping hazards such as spillages and leaks must be addressed immediately by employees. Wet floor signs must be used until the affected area is safe to use.
    - Is the floor suitable for the environment, fitted correctly and properly maintained?
    - Are stairs suitable, are risers consistent, are nosings highlighted where necessary and are usable handrails available?
    - Environmental factors such as is the lighting good enough for employees to see hazards.

- The practice H&S representative should ensure that suitable arrangements must be in place prior to inclement weather including gritting any external pedestrian walkways, steps and car parks which are the responsibility of IVC Evidensia.

- All staff are required to complete the online H&S training, which includes information on slips trips and falls, on IVC Evidensia Learning Hub accessed via the Intranet as part of their induction.

Stress

While the Company is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of all employees whilst at work, employees must also take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing by adopting good health behaviours and informing the Company if they believe work or the workplace poses a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers will be treated with confidence.

Details of particular responsibilities are as follows:

The Company is responsible for:

- ensuring workplace risk assessments are conducted periodically if required (template in Section 5)
- identifying arrangements to remove or reduce (as reasonably practicable) the risk of workplace stress
- consulting with staff on arrangements for reducing workplace stress
- monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress
- ensuring that appropriate stress awareness training is made available
- ensuring that appropriate support is provided to employees who have been off sick with stress
- ensuring a positive culture in which stress is not regarded as a sign of weakness

Line Managers are responsible for:

- conducting and implementing recommendations of risk assessments within their area
- ensuring good communication between management and staff
- monitoring workloads and hours to ensure that staff are not overloaded / overworking
- ensuring employees understand their role within the team and are provided with the necessary information and support for them to perform their job roles
- reviewing job descriptions to identify tasks that may involve stressors and safety critical roles
- identify employees within their area who may be affected by workplace stress
- reviewing workplace conditions to ensure that they do not, as far as is practicable, contribute to workplace stress
- consulting employees in their area on arrangements for reducing workplace stress
- monitoring holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement
- attending training as requested
- ensuring that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their area
- encourage employees to inform them of any concerns regarding workplace stress
- being vigilant and offering additional support to members of staff who are experiencing stress outside work e.g., bereavement or separation
- raising any issues of stress with an employee who may be exhibiting behaviours which are stress related

Employees are responsible for:

- raising any issues of concern with their Line Manager
- accepting opportunities to alleviate stress when offered
- accepting opportunities for support when recommended

The company is committed to ensuring that its employees are able to work in a harmonious and productive environment conducive to promoting a stress-free workplace.

Training

IVC Evidensia is aware of the need to make provision for adequate training in order that employees are competent to discharge their health and safety responsibilities. Where there are identifiable training needs, arrangements will be made to provide suitable training.

Examples of training that IVC Evidensia arrange/recommend are as follows:

- Health and safety arrangements
- Manual handling
- Display Screen Equipment
- Fire safety
- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
- First Aid
- Fire Marshals
- Key radiation requirements
- Personal protective equipment
- Accident reporting
- Safe use of electrical equipment
- Driving a vehicle on company business

- All employees are required to complete a proper H&S induction which includes H&S e-learning on the IVC Learning Hub accessed via the Intranet.

Unexpected Emergencies

- IVC Evidensia recognise that not all emergency situations can be identified or planned for. Which is why it is recommended for practices to produce a Contingency Plan developed by the local team according to the specific needs of the practice. A template can be found in Section 5.

  A Contingency Plan is intended to help the practice overcome any unexpected incident affecting its premises, key personnel or any important systems that it relies upon in its day-to-day operations. The aim is to ensure the business continuity of the practice in the event of such an incident. Examples of unexpected emergency situations are as follows:

  - Closure or loss of main premises
  - Loss of computer hardware or essential data
  - Loss of telephone system
  - Loss of electricity supply
  - Loss of gas supply/gas heating
  - Loss of water supply
  - Loss of essential supplies/stock
  - Incapacity of staff
  - Adverse Weather

- Once completed, the contingency plan for unexpected emergencies should be reiterated to all practice personnel.

Waste

General Waste

- All non-clinical waste with no risk attached can be disposed of as general waste.
- Recyclables must be separated out such as cardboard, all paper, envelopes, newspaper, magazines, catalogues and placed in the recycling bin.
- Confidential waste such as bank details and credit card slips should either be shredded or separated and collected by a preferred confidential waste supplier.

Veterinary or Clinical Waste

- This consists of any waste which consists wholly or partly of animal tissue, blood or other body fluids, excretions, drugs, pharmaceutical products, swabs or dressings, syringes, or any other waste arising from veterinary practice or treatment.
- Sharps containers are provided and MUST be used for all needles, scalpel blades, catheters, insulin syringes/needles and broken glass ampoules. Do not put the needle cases and syringes in the sharps container. Sharps must be put into containers at the point of productions, not put back in needle case or carried around or into another room. Keep containers away from public, especially children.
- All empty glass bottles or other containers contaminated with medications etc. should be disposed of with the Clinical Waste going into the plastic bins provided. This can include out of date drugs and other remaining medicines for disposal.
- The preferred clinical waste supplier should remove this to which there should be a contract in place held locally at the practice. Our clinical waste contractor also collects cadavers, which are usually stored in plastic bags in freezers.

Waste Transfer

- IVC Evidensia do not hold the necessary licensing to transport hazardous waste between branches (i.e. via ambulance or company/private vehicle). Our group waste provider, will collect hazardous waste from all sites if instructed.
- Colleagues visiting and providing services off site, such as farms or home visits, ensure the waste is placed in appropriate containers provided.

Hazardous Waste

- If anything is contaminated with cytotoxic pharmaceuticals then it must go as hazardous waste. This can include syringes, masks and gloves, glass bottles. We are registered with the environment agency for the disposal of this waste.

Waste Pre-Acceptance Audit

- The local Environment Agency usually requires producers of healthcare waste to conduct a pre-acceptance waste audit every 24 months to which your waste supplier should be able to assist with.

Waste Exemption

- To comply with the Misuse of Drugs Regulations, veterinary practices are required to submit a waste exemption regarding the sorting and denature controlled drugs for disposal to their local Environment Agency. IVC Evidensia submit group applications on behalf of practices on a regular basis and registration certificates can be found in Section 4.

Waste Licenses

- A copy of all waste licenses for the group can be found on the intranet: Waste Management - IVC Evidensia

Zoonotic Diseases

Zoonotic diseases are those that can be transmitted from animals to people or, more specifically, a disease that normally exists in animals but that can infect humans. In the case of suspected exposure to a zoonotic disease (for example Brucella canis) the individuals exposed or who develop any of the signs or symptoms of infection should seek advice from an appropriate healthcare professional and if advised undertake the appropriate testing. If testing confirms infection you should take advice from their healthcare professional or Public Health Authority ensuring that they are made aware that you may have been exposed to a zoonotic disease. Any confirmed human case of a zoonotic disease should be reported to the relevant authority.

Routes of Transmission

- Contact Transmission - when pathogens from animals or their environments enter the human host through ingestion, cutaneous/percutaneous and mucous membrane exposure.
- Aerosol Transmission - when pathogens travel through the air to enter the host. Aerosols may be large droplets deposited on the mucous membranes or smaller particles.
- Vector-borne Transmission - when vectors such as fleas or ticks that can transmit pathogens are brought in to contact with veterinary personnel, usually by animals.

Standard Precautions

- Veterinary personnel should take all necessary precautions to prevent animal-related injuries. including the use of physical restraints, PPE, muzzles, engagement in for example fear free initiatives or sedation.
- Request that owners notify veterinary personnel if the animal is aggressive and aggressive tendencies and bite history should be noted.
- Avoid bringing aggressive or potentially infectious animals in through the reception area.
- Wash hands before and after examination of individual animals or animal groups.
- Potentially infectious animals will be examined in a designated room.

Isolation of Infectious Animals

- Animals with a contagious or zoonotic disease will be housed in isolation as soon as possible.
- Clearly mark the room or cage to indicate the patient's status and describe additional precautions.
- Keep only the equipment needed for the care and treatment of the patient in the isolation room, including dedicated cleaning supplies. Disassemble and thoroughly clean and disinfect any equipment that must be taken out of the room. Discard gloves after use. Leave other personal protective equipment (i.e., gown, mask) in the isolation room. Clean and disinfect or discard protective equipment between patients and whenever contaminated by body fluids.
- Place potentially contaminated materials in a bag before removal from the isolation room. Use a disinfectant footbath before entering and leaving the room.
- Limit access to the isolation room. Keep a sign-in log of all people (including owners or other non-employees) having contact with an isolated patient.
- Monitor ventilation daily while the room is in use.
- Cleaning and disinfecting procedures should be followed as per the Hygiene Policy.
- Wear gloves when handling soiled laundry.
- Seal entry portals, eliminate clutter and sources of standing water and keep animal food in closed metal or thick plastic containers and dispose of food waste properly to keep the facility free of wild rodents and arthropods.

The Zoonotic Disease Policy should be used in conjunction with the Hygiene and Biosecurity Policy.