

APPENDIX Q – AWARENESS OF LITTER PICKING ON HIGHWAYS

Introduction

Appendix Q gives awareness of some of the risks which may be encountered during litter picking, whilst it is not exhaustive it does give an indication of the hazards, controls, minimum training and suggestions for equipment and disposal etc.

This section has been produced to give an indication of some of the risks involved with litter picking to employers whose staff and operatives are engaged in litter picking. Employers are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that operatives have an adequate level of health, safety and environmental awareness to carry out the role.

Litter picking on the hard shoulder and road side verges on Roads and Highways is a hazardous activity. The selection of the actual method of work should be made by a competent person/organization and should reflect the risks and location specific circumstances of the work.

Training

It is the employers' responsibility to ensure anyone working as a litter picker is adequately trained, competent in all related areas of his job role and hold a LISS/CSCS Blue Skills Card.

Suitable training has been developed in association with Lantra Sector Skills Council and it is the requirement of this scheme that operatives complete the following to be eligible for a LISS/CSCS Blue Skills Card:

- E-Learning Lantra LISS/CSCS Litter Picking and Environmental Maintenance Course
- ROLO Health, Safety and Environmental Awareness Course
- CITB Operative Health, Safety and Environmental Test (Touch Screen Test)

In addition is recommended that employers ascertain the risks and enhance these courses by other relevant formal training, such as:

- Manual Handling training (recommended)
- First Aid training (to provide adequate cover)
- Temporary Traffic Management Awareness Basic Course (recommended)
- Other appropriate practical skills training e.g. sharps, identifying plants etc. recognised by your organization or Risk Assessment.

Note 1: The organization will need to appoint a Supervisor who is qualified to an appropriate Supervisory level required by the contract in addition to the above. This may be a level 3/4 and/or SSSTS. The Supervisor shall have a sufficient knowledge to identify injurious, invasive and protected flora

Note 2: For those organizations working on Highways England sites they should be aware that a "Passport Scheme" is in development and is currently at "Proof of Concept" stage. Targeted to end November 2019.

See Appendix C for details on how to apply for your LISS/CSCS Skills Card.

Understanding the Hazards

Exclusions:

Employees need to understand the type of litter/debris that they may need to clear. Employees must also be instructed on what they must not approach, for example:

- Accident debris required for investigation or forensics.
- Firearms and ordnance
- Radioactive materials
- Asbestos containing materials
- Unidentified materials
- Size, weight etc. (normal manual handling considerations)
- Out of reach (understand the work area boundaries – see below)
- Materials identified by dynamic risk assessment as being hazardous

Possible Hazards

Litter that will need to be picked has other considerations that must also be addressed, and the workforce trained in the required control measures, for example:

- Sharps
- Bio hazards/Biosecurity (See Appendix R)
- Hazardous plants
- Broken or open containers that may spill unidentified contents
- Protected flora and fauna
- Uneven ground and uncovered cavities

If in doubt the operatives need to be reminded to ask a supervisor for guidance

Controls

Work area boundaries:

A highway presents hazards which should be clearly identified via generic and dynamic site risk assessments.

Employers are reminded that the workforce must be provided, as far as is reasonably practicable, with a safe place of work, the boundaries of which must be clear. Operative must be told of the site boundaries, for example:

- Fence
- TTM
- Hedgerow
- Roads and Highways

- Structures

Operatives must not be allowed to encroach on to the live carriageway or near electrical apparatus without a full safe system of work being developed. Other circumstances may require this but this should be identified via a risk assessment before work commences in the normal way.

Equipment

The employer/organization needs to consider what type of equipment is to be provided and determine how instruction in the use of that equipment is to be given prior to its use. This may include:

- PPE as required to work on a highway
- Gloves and other PPE suitable for the litter picker to pick litter
- Litter collection bags and collection bag framework
- Litter Picking Graspers
- Yellow animal carcass collection bags
- Rigid containers for sharp or jagged litter such as broken glass etc.
- Sharps box and associated tongs/graspers and PPE if litter pickers have been trained to handle sharps, such as syringes

Disposal of Litter

Disposal of litter is regulated and operatives and other staff will need to be appraised how this is carried out by the organization. As a minimum, relevant instruction should be provided in respect of the following:

- Consideration for environmental law of waste management
- Sharps boxes disposal procedures
- Bio hazard bags disposal procedure

Records of disposal should be kept in accordance with regulations.

Health of Operative

The health of personnel is paramount and as part of an organization's responsibility appropriate risk assessment and protection measures should be implemented. In particular consideration should be given to the need for inoculation against specific risk identified diseases such as:

- Hepatitis (contact from blood and body fluids or faecal-oral transmission)
- Tetanus (exposure to the spores of the bacterium *Clostridium Tetani* which are universally present in the soil)

Diseases can be naturally transferred between animals and humans (Zoonosis) some examples are:

- Lyme Disease (bites from ticks - deer and mice are a major source)
- Weil's Disease (notably urine from rodents)
- Avian (Bird) Influenza (e.g. H5N1 & H9N2)
- Rabies (contact from infected animals)

- Leptospirosis - there are two main forms of this disease (mild or severe; Weil's disease is a severe form of Leptospirosis)

Supervisors and their litter pickers should be made aware of these potential hazards and the necessary precautions that should be taken.

Note - Information about these diseases can be found on the National Health Services web-sites (e.g. www.nhs.uk and www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk) [the World Health Organization web-site (www.who.int) also provides a useful source of information]. Guidance on precautions to be taken and best practice should conform to national practices, based on advice from the national health services.