



Risk assessments and training requirements for litter picking along dual and single carriageway roads

To: All Chief Executives, Main Contacts and APSE Contacts in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales

Key Issues:

The topic for this briefing was originally circulated as an APSE network query from a member local authority. 7 authorities responded sharing their policies. This briefing provides a summary of the measures in place in those authorities to provide others with a useful insight while developing their own policies.

Please note that this briefing does not constitute legal advice and that all local authorities undertaking litter picking along dual and single carriageway roads should consider how to manage the unique risks associated with the location and design of their carriageways, the type of nearby traffic and the landscape where litter picking is being undertaken.

1.0 Introduction

The original APSE Network Query stated: "A member authority is looking at refreshing their risk assessment and safe working practices for litter picking along dual and single carriageway roads. They would like to know if any partners would be willing to share their documents with them on this issue. They are particularly interested in help in identifying any training requirements that operatives need with regards to litter picking along dual and single carriageway roads."

7 local authorities responded sharing policies, risk assessments and a range of other documents outlining their systems of work.

2.0 Control methods

Local authorities have a range of control methods in place. These vary from authority to authority with some having more detailed control methods for different types of risks:

- Working on pavement - road speed limit up to 40mph
- Working on grass verge - road speed limit up to 40mph
- Working on road – areas with no pavement and no safe standing, road speed limit 30mph
- Working on road – areas with no pavement and no safe standing, road speed limit greater than 40mph

Traffic management assessments should be carried out prior to the commencement of works with adequate cones and signage where it is appropriate. It is advised that route specific risk assessments are carried out in order to identify any hazards that are unique to that location so that necessary additional controls can be implemented. Slip and trip hazards should also be identified and managed.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is of great importance with safety footwear, a high visibility jacket or vest, gloves and eye protection (where there is a risk of injury). Other personal protective equipment such as waterproof clothing, a woolen/fleece hat, etc should be worn as required. Some policies also noted that workers should only wear the relevant personal protective equipment that has been provided and not make substitutions without approval. Other items such as sunscreen may also be provided depending on the time of year.

Equipment to be used and carried should include litter pickers along with items such as a yellow sharps box, a first aid kit, refuse sacks, antibacterial wipes, a mobile phone, road cones, warning signs and sunscreen. Carrying hand wipes in vehicles for personal hygiene is recommended. Any machinery used should be in accordance with relevant risk

assessments.

The training required includes manual handling, safety inductions, infection control (e.g. removal of hypodermic needles and syringes from open spaces), uplifting, transporting and disposing of waste on vehicles, reversing vehicle training, and recognising emerging or changing risks. Other training may be deemed appropriate depending on the type of litter picking being undertaken.

Signage is recommended to be placed on either side of the works area, ensuring that 'people at work' and 'people working in carriageway' signage is displayed around the work area and along approaching roads. Works vehicles should be positioned in front of this area with hazard warning lights and traffic cones deployed. The type of signage required will depend on the speed of the road. In heavier conditions, it may be required that a designated lookout person is posted.

Before the commencement of work, it is stated in several policies that a supervisor should give a toolbox talk. Employees should remain aware of their surroundings and of the public, other employees and other vehicles. Employees should work facing oncoming traffic wherever possible. Loading vehicles only from the kerbside is also recommended. Correct manual handling techniques should be utilised with employees instructed not to overfill litter bags or attempt to lift excessive loads. Staff should use gloves where appropriate, always clean their hands and ensure that any cuts or sores are kept covered at all times. Staff should be trained on how to deal with contact with sharps to avoid needlestick injuries, and the procedures for dealing with hazardous chemicals and substances they may encounter (e.g. flytipped asbestos materials).

As per the Department for Transport, no work should be conducted closer than 1.2 meters from the carriageway. It is recommended that central reservation work is only undertaken between protective barriers where full supervision is in place. Ideally operations should also be undertaken when the traffic flow is at its lowest. It is recommended that employees should not use earphones, headsets or any other telecommunications

equipment while undertaking litter picking; though all teams should carry mobile phones for emergencies.

The weather should be considered when undertaking litter picking, consideration should be given to terminating work for instance in foggy conditions. It is important that suitable personal protective equipment is used by employees during adverse weather conditions, and that sun protection cream is utilised in sunny conditions.

One final consideration is that during the vehicle procurement process, it would be wise to consider the need for vehicles to easily allow employees to move from the offside seat to the nearside door to ensure that they don't have to exit the vehicle on the side of the carriageway.

3.0 APSE Comment

APSE recommends that local authorities implement robust risk control measures that make litter picking along dual and single carriageway roads as safe as possible for workers.

The local authorities responding to this network query have developed a range of controls and understand the importance of training, utilising the right personal protective equipment, placing warning signs, carrying out individual risk assessments for works and instructing employees to follow the issued guidance while undertaking works.

APSE encourages our members to regularly review their policies and to share best practice at our advisory group meetings, which are free to attend for members. Litter picking along dual and single carriageway roads is a dangerous activity, and it should be taken seriously and made as safe as possible to protect your workers and the general public from injury.

Reminder: APSE has set up a COVID-19 Information Hub to deal with frontline service issues as they arise, ensuring greater resilience and learning between each other during this difficult time. You can access this hub by clicking [here](#) and you can also join our WhatsApp Support Network by clicking [here](#).

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