1 Summary

The Management of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1995 requires the company to provide its employees with understandable and relevant information on the risks to their health and safety and on the precautions to take to avoid these risks.

Understanding English where changing conditions often require quick reactions through verbal communications may be critical and the inability to speak or understand English will create a high risk to health and safety. However, a blanket refusal to consider non-English speaking applicants for any vacancies or activities will almost certainly be in breach of the provisions of the race relations legislation, which is fully recognised by the company.

This policy/procedures document is therefore intended to protect the health and safety of non-English speaking personnel employed by the company and others who may be affected, including staff, visitors and members of the public.

Whilst ensuring that they are not unfairly discriminated against, it should be noted that this policy does not only apply to foreign nationals, as British nationals may also experience difficulties with literacy and their communication skills may also be poor.

Information will be provided by the company to take account of any language difficulties. This will be provided in whatever form most suitable to the circumstances to ensure that it is understood by everyone, special arrangements will be made for employees or workers with little or no understanding of spoken or written English.

2 Risk Assessment

2.1 As with all health and safety hazards, the first step is to carry out a risk assessment. This will assess the risks of the task associated with the fact that the individual does not speak and/or understand English. The company will identify any individual that does not speak English, or does not understand English. The company accepts that these are two very different issues, many people find it easier to understand a second language before they can speak it with a degree of fluency. From the consequences of not being able to understand the safety induction to the inability to communicate danger to others on site, the company intends to assess the risk of each activity identified where the ability to understand and speak English is critical and where it is not.

2.2 The company will monitor the new and unexpected potential dangers and ensure that they are communicated to those individuals that do not speak or understand English.

3. Risk Reduction

3.1 The company have identified that the most effective method of reducing the risk is to have all non-speaking English workers in small groups with a supervisor to act as an interpreter. Where this procedure is implemented the supervisor will remain with the group at all times to deliver routine instructions and briefings, and generally act as the liaison officer with the rest of the team. Where possible, the groups will be on a one to one basis allowing for any absenteeism of the interpreters/team supervisors which would mean that the teams could double up and still be at a manageable level.

3.2 Many of the company’s activities are of low risk; where this is the case risk assessments and method statements will be produced in English and passed to the interpreter/supervisor for translation and briefings to the non-speaking personnel. Where the risk is significantly greater, risk assessments and method statements will be translated into the appropriate languages.
4. **Integration of Non-English Speaking Personnel**

4.1 The company, as a policy, will not allow lone working or allocate safety critical roles for non-English speaking personnel.

4.2 All non-English speaking personnel will be allocated low risk work wherever possible. Internationally recognised pictorial warning signs will be used within the work area wherever possible.

4.3 Additional training will be given and time allowed for the training of Non-English speaking personnel.

4.4 Non-English speaking personnel will receive a greater degree of supervision. This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the company in line with its general procedures.