

### Safe use of tools and equipment

#### General

- Take care when using and handling tools, especially when learning new techniques. If you are unsure how to use a tool please ask for assistance from your session leader.
- Maintain a safe working distance between people using tools, e.g. for spades, keep a distance of at least one and half times the length of the tool's handle.
- Choose appropriate tools for the height and strength of the user.
- Carry tools handle-end upwards, e.g. point fork prongs downwards. Don't carry tools over the shoulder and never run.
- Don't use broken tools. Always check condition before use.
- If using a power tool you must be fully aware of how to operate the tool, be wearing all necessary safety equipment, e.g. gloves, safety goggles.
- Wear appropriate clothes and footwear.
- When tools are not in use for short periods in the garden, store safely.
- Do not leave tools lying around on the ground where they could cause a hazard for yourself or others.
- Close tools with blades when not in use, e.g. use locking mechanism on secateurs.
- Push digging tools like spades and forks upright into a piece of spare ground or facing downwards and out of the way of people.
- Lean long-handled tools (non-digging) upright against a fence or shed with the handle touching the ground, i.e. the head of the rake should touch the fence or shed. Otherwise the handle could flick back if trodden on and hit the user in the face.
- Always wash your tools and return them to the tool shed when you have finished working with them.
- When lighting a fire ensure the fire site is suitable for the size of the fire, make sure a fire blanket, bucket of water and a hose are nearby. In no circumstances are any kind of accelerants to be used to light the fire – only paper and matches. Ensure any children or vulnerable adults on site are kept a safe distance from the fire and their parent/carer is with them at all times.

#### Handling and lifting technique

Always make sure:

- ✓ The load is not too heavy for you to safely lift on your own – ask for help if it is too heavy
- ✓ The area and route are clear of obstacles
- ✓ Use the appropriate equipment to help move the load if necessary e.g. a wheelbarrow or for heavier loads ask for use of a small tractor and trailer
- ✓ You have a good grip on the load
- ✓ Your hands, the load and any handles are not slippery
- ✓ Be careful if there are any sharp edges

#### Manual handling

Always make sure you:

- ✓ Place your feet evenly either side of the load, with your body as close as possible to the load
- ✓ Bend at the knees
- ✓ Grasp the load firmly
- ✓ Keep your back straight
- ✓ Pull the load as close as possible to your body
- ✓ Use your leg muscles to push upward into a standing position
- ✓ Keep your back straight
- ✓ Pull the load as close as possible to your body

**Do not**

- ✘ Twist or bend your back
- ✘ Bend at the waist
- ✘ Try to lift items that are too heavy on your own
- ✘ Rush when lifting heavy loads
- ✘ Grab heavy loads with one hand, such as half-full bag of compost

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**Change Record**

Date of Change:	Changed By:	Comments:
29/01/20	Nicola Chinn	Policy approved by the Trustees
30/1/21	Nicola Chinn	Reviewed and reissued
27/5/21	Nicola Chinn	Reviewed and reissued – power tools
21/2/22	Nicola Chinn	Reviewed and reissued
23/2/23	Nicola Chinn	Reviewed and reissued
29/2/24	Kate Newton	Reviewed and reissued