

Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group (FSARG)

Health and Safety Policy and Practice

1: Excavation and other site activities

1 Area of responsibility

FSARG accepts responsibility for the health and safety (H&S) of volunteers only while they are engaged in the designated areas of research and under the supervision of a person (a supervisor) appointed by FSARG. All volunteers will be at least 16 years old except in exceptional circumstances approved by the FSARG Director Dr. Patricia (Pat) Reid.

When young people between 12 and 16 years of age are invited to take part in excavation work it will be with parental/guardian written agreement. In addition, the designated FSARG member accompanying the young person/s will have the necessary clearance, e.g. a current CRB clearance, registered with the Faversham Society, or alternatively a parent/guardian must be in attendance.

2 Who has responsibility for H&S?

It must be recognised by all involved in FSARG projects that in the first instance each individual has a common-sense responsibility for their own H&S.

The FSARG supervisory team is responsible for the day-to-day H&S of all volunteers while they are taking part in the designated FSARG projects. Overall responsibility lies with the Board of the Faversham Society under whose auspices FSARG operates. All project participants must be members of the Faversham Society. An H&S officer will be appointed. All participants will be required to attend a training session, which will cover H&S as well as archaeological issues.

Volunteers with specific H&S requirements, such as skin complaints, disabilities or prescribed drug requirements, must make these known to the FSARG Director and as appropriate to the FSARG H&S officer and relevant supervisor.

3 Reporting incidents

All incidents involving the H&S of volunteers (including supervisors) must be reported to the H&S officer immediately. All incidents must be entered in the accident book. This entry will be countersigned by the supervisor present witnessing the entry as a true record of the incident.

4 First aid kits

Each group of volunteers will have a basic first aid kit and first aid check-sheet with them in the site box.

5 Areas and activities of risk

5.1 Excavation

5.1.1 Trench edges

Where it is necessary to delineate between FSARG activities and the general public, lines of hazard tape will be erected, or laid out as appropriate, at least 2 metres from the accessible edges of the keyhole-pit / open-area excavation. Members of the public will not be allowed to cross these lines. FSARG volunteers will be warned during their induction about the dangers of standing near and sitting on pit edges. In areas where it is deemed a hazard for the general public to view excavations at pit side, viewing areas will be made available if possible especially in public areas.

5.1.2 Sharp edged finds / stones

These are a constant potential hazard on site. Gloves will be provided for volunteers who wish to use them and/or when the supervisor advises for Health and Safety reasons. Antiseptic washing facilities are available in case of cuts as are first aid materials. (See 3 and 4 above.)

5.1.3 Deep excavations

For the foreseeable future, no excavation of 1 metre square keyhole pits will be deeper than 1.2 metres or attempt to go lower than the water table, whichever level is the higher. Separate arrangements will be made where excavation is proposed for greater than 1.2 metres or the water table is to be entered, and the policy and risk assessment will be updated as appropriate.

5.1.4 Manual Handling (includes non-excavation work on site and at the FSARG base)

Volunteers will be given instruction in manual handling, lifting, carrying for example buckets of soil, and finds trays, and in the safe use of a wheel-barrow.

5.1.5 Hazardous Substances

During excavation and finds processing it is possible that a hazardous substance, such as asbestos (white or blue), chemicals, munitions etc., may be exposed. In such circumstances work shall stop and the relevant supervisor shall identify the hazard and as appropriate notify the H&S officer. They shall seek knowledgeable advice as necessary. The supervisor or H&S officer shall then take whichever of the following is the most appropriate action either:

- (a) Stop the excavation, notify the appropriate authorities and the owner of the property, or
- (b) Remove and safely contain the substance and then arrange, with the property owner, its safe disposal using the appropriate protection throughout.

5.2 Finds processing at all locations

In general, all cleaning, dry brushing and sorting will take place in well-ventilated areas to minimise immediate or subsequent breathing difficulties and damage to eyes and skin. Masks, eye protection and gloves will be available for those who foresee difficulties. See also 2 above.

5.3 Use of equipment and protective clothing

Current plans do not involve the use of heavy tools or machinery. All volunteers, however, will be instructed during induction in the use of hand tools and other basic equipment and asked to wear robust footwear and appropriate clothing for the weather conditions.

Note: This section will be revised in the future if plans include more risk-associated equipment and / or conditions. (This document is current for activities during 2017).

5.4 General

5.4.1 Smoking

Smoking will not be permitted in or near excavations or finds processing work. No smoking if excavating in people's gardens or in a public place.

5.4.2 Alcohol and drugs

No volunteer will be allowed on site under the influence of recreational drugs or excessive alcohol.

With prescribed drugs, their potential for causing a risk to the user or others, e.g. causing drowsiness, will be separately considered as detailed in 2 above.

5.4.3 Environment

The countryside code will be followed in field situations especially where damage to trees or their roots is to be avoided. Clearing up and tidying tasks will be shared between all volunteers and is the responsibility of the relevant supervisor.

5.4.4 Security

Personal possessions remain the responsibility of the individual owner volunteer. FSARG cannot be responsible for loss or damage to personal possessions.

5.5 Review

The policy will be reviewed each year and a copy of the H&S Policy and Risk Assessment signed and dated.

Nick Wilkinson