

CHaOS Health and Safety Policy

Version 2.4.1

1. Background and General Principles

- CHaOS (the Society) acknowledges that it has a duty of care to those affected by its activities. This consists of three primary groups: the public in attendance at CHaOS events, CHaOS volunteers, and the CHaOS Committee.
- This document outlines the steps CHaOS takes in order to fulfil its commitment to ensuring, insofar as it is reasonably possible, the safety of these parties at CHaOS events and in the normal running of the Society.
- This policy acts as a written code of practice relating to health and safety for CHaOS volunteers and Committee members, circulated annually to the Committee and available to volunteers and the public via the CHaOS website.
- CHaOS events are defined, for the purposes of this policy, as the public and school events the Society runs (i.e. excluding Committee meetings or gatherings). Where specific health and safety practices are relevant to other parts of the normal running of CHaOS, this is specified.
- The below is laid out in accordance with the *Notes for the Guidance of University Clubs & Societies (Issued by the Junior Proctor)*, and with the advice regarding health and safety (hereafter H&S) and voluntary organisations provided by the Health and Safety Executive.
- The Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Health and Safety Policy is properly implemented and reviewed. This policy was last reviewed on 21/12/2025 and will next be reviewed before 31/12/2026.

2. Responsibility for Health and Safety

- Responsibility for ensuring H&S in the Society is shared between different members of the Committee.
- Every CHaOS volunteer and Committee member has a responsibility to comply with this policy, and to take reasonable care of themselves and their fellow volunteers whilst taking part in CHaOS activities.

- All volunteers and Committee members have a duty to report anything which they believe to be in breach of this policy to one of the listed members who share in the responsibility for H&S.
- Listed below are the members of the Committee whose roles incur significant responsibility for safety, details of which are given alongside the role:
 - Co-Presidents – Timothy Wong and Isobel Gilham
 - Co-Presidents have ultimate responsibility for ensuring this policy is adhered to and reviewed once annually.
 - They oversee the running of the Society and should ensure the Safety Officer, Experiments Officers, and Venue Safety Officers are aware of their responsibilities regarding H&S.
 - They should also make sure that a Venue Safety Officer (VSO) is present at all CHaOS events.
 - Safety Officer – John Leung
 - The Society's Constitution requires that a Safety Officer (SO) is appointed each year at the Annual General Meeting.
 - The SO is responsible for ensuring that VSOs are trained each year, and for maintaining a list of trained VSOs.
 - They also ensure that risk assessments are checked annually by two Committee members, and that all new experiments and talk demonstrations are risk assessed.
 - All risk assessments are sent by the SO to the University via the Chemistry Department for approval each year ahead of "Crash, Bang, Squelch!".
 - The SO also organises PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) for all electrical experiments annually.
 - CHaOS's safety equipment (first aid kits and the contents of the safety box) are checked at least twice a year by the SO, ahead of the Winter and Summer Roadshows, and checks are recorded on a tick sheet.
 - Experiments Officers – Max Lian, Ada Kirczenow
 - The Experiments Officers are responsible for maintaining CHaOS's experiments.

- They should retire any experiments that are unsafe and work with the Safety Officer to ensure risk assessments are written for new experiments.
- Venue Safety Officers
 - These are members of the Committee who are trained in performing a venue risk assessment.
 - A record of VSOs is kept on the shared Committee SharePoint, maintained by the Safety Officer.
 - VSOs are the appointed persons in charge of safety at CHaOS events, and are responsible for performing a venue risk assessment, briefing volunteers, and ensuring they have read and signed their experiment's risk assessment before they demonstrate it to the public.

3. Risk Assessments

- Venues
 - CHaOS's events take place in a variety of venues. As such, a new risk assessment must be performed at each new venue. If CHaOS returns to a venue, **a new risk assessment is still required** for each visit.
 - A VSO is appointed to each event, who uses the venue risk assessment sheet to identify hazards, risks and mitigations, as well as fire exits, extinguishers and first aiders.
 - Volunteers are briefed with this information by the VSO before the event begins. Latecomers receive a later briefing, and the VSO may pass the responsibility to another trained Committee member should they have to leave at any point.
 - The risk assessments are then filed and destroyed after 4 years.
- Experiments
 - Every CHaOS experiment has its own risk assessment.
 - These risk assessments are annually checked and double checked (and amended if necessary) by two Committee members, before being passed by the Safety Officer to the University as detailed in Point 2.
 - Before demonstrating any CHaOS experiment, **all demonstrators** must read their experiment's risk assessment and sign an experiment sign-up sheet to confirm this. It is the VSO's responsibility to ensure this happens. These sheets are

then filed and retained for four years, in accordance with [CHaOS's Privacy Policy](#).

- During CHaOS events, it is the responsibility of the Committee members present (especially those who are not allocated to an experiment and whose role is to take care of other volunteers) to help any inexperienced volunteers to avoid unsafe practices. They should remain vigilant and stop any practices they know to be unsafe or not in accordance with experiment risk assessments.
- Accommodation
 - During the CHaOS Summer Roadshow, volunteers and Committee members are accommodated at campsites.
 - Upon arrival, an appointed VSO should perform a risk assessment of the campsite and brief the rest of the CHaOS party. Volunteers due to arrive later should be briefed upon arrival.
 - This VSO is the appointed person in charge of H&S, and should keep relevant information or items with them, for example defibrillator keys or first aider contacts. They must also ensure the safety box is accessible and its location known.

4. Equipment and Experiments

- Ultimate responsibility for maintaining experiments lies with the Experiments Officers. The Officers organise meetings of the Committee specifically to check over experiments **at least three times each year**, ahead of CHaOS's large events (the Winter Roadshow, "Crash, Bang, Squelch!", and the Summer Roadshow), where any issues of experiment safety should be raised and rectified promptly in so far as is practicable.
- PAT is performed annually by the University's PAT technician. Certificates are stored on the CHaOS shared SharePoint. The Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring this.
- Each experiment is individually risk assessed, as are any new experiments or talk demonstrations.
- All equipment is securely stored in a locked cupboard when not in use.

5. Travel

- The nature of CHaOS's roadshows requires travel primarily by road with both Committee members and volunteers.
- CHaOS drivers need not be members of the CHaOS Committee, provided they are comfortable driving for the Society.
- In order to drive for CHaOS, drivers must hold a UK driving licence. The SO will check that drivers hold a current licence, and perform a check through the DVLA to ensure the driver has not exceeded their penalty points. A log will be kept of this information. CHaOS drivers are also required to read, understand, and comply with [CHaOS's Driving Rules](#).
- Some volunteers choose to bring their own vehicles to CHaOS events. In this case, they do so at their own risk, and are not obliged to drive their vehicle for CHaOS unless they are happy to do so.
- If any CHaOS volunteer is uncomfortable with the driver or vehicle offered by the Society, they may refuse it and the Society should do its best to find an alternative mode of transport.
- All CHaOS drivers must be fit to drive (for example, not exhausted or unwell). Should a driver be incapacitated in any way, they may refuse to drive and should make Committee members aware of their situation. CHaOS Committee members present may prevent anyone from driving if they believe they pose a risk to H&S.
- Furthermore, CHaOS should endeavour where possible to have multiple drivers allocated to its events (particularly the Summer Roadshow) in order to share driving responsibilities.
- The vehicles CHaOS uses are primarily rentals. They should, therefore, be well maintained and roadworthy. At CHaOS events, particularly longer events such as the Summer Roadshow, it is the responsibility of the present Committee members and appointed drivers to ensure the vehicles CHaOS uses remain legal and safe. **Any vehicle that is, or is suspected to be, in an unsafe or illegal condition should not be used until all necessary repairs have been made.**
- In the case of the use of a personal vehicle, responsibility for maintenance falls to the driver of that vehicle at the CHaOS event (i.e. the person who brought the vehicle along).

6. First Aid

- CHaOS events usually take place in public venues or schools, or as part of larger events (such as the Cambridge Festival, or Institute of Physics outreach events), all of which should provide their own first aid.

- As part of the venue risk assessment, venue first aiders are identified by the VSO and information about how to contact them in the event of an accident is shared with all volunteers present.
- CHaOS has a safety box, containing two first aid kits, which may be used in the event of an injury if using a venue's first aid supplies is not appropriate or convenient. The box also contains other relevant items (such as a fire extinguisher and a fire blanket). This is taken to **all** CHaOS events, and its location is shared in the volunteer safety briefing.
- CHaOS members who have first aid training through St John Ambulance or equivalent may act as CHaOS first aiders, provided they are comfortable to do so. CHaOS first aiders have no legal responsibility, nor standing as workplace first aiders. They are identified as part of the venue risk assessment as good people to go to in a first aid emergency, but a venue first aider should always be contacted.

7. Manual Handling

- CHaOS's volunteers are highly likely to be required to help carry experiment boxes when volunteering at events.
- Committee members present should strongly encourage volunteers to use a safe lifting technique when doing so. If a present Committee member notices practices they know to be unsafe (for example, one person attempting to carry a box or item that requires two people), they should advise the volunteer to stop.
- Any volunteers suffering health conditions that may be exacerbated by or that prevent them from taking part in this kind of activity may be excused.
- The Committee is also responsible for ensuring that heavy boxes are clearly marked as such.

8. Food Preparation

- CHaOS prepares its own food during its events and over the course of its Roadshows.
- In order to do this safely, volunteers are asked for their dietary requirements (including allergies), and necessary steps should be taken to accommodate these.
- Basic food hygiene practices should **always** be observed when preparing food.

9. Training

- In order to be effective in implementing this policy, certain members of the CHaOS Committee are required to undertake training courses provided by the University.
- As a **minimum requirement**, the following Committee members should attend the following courses:
 - The Safety Officer should attend both Manual Handling Training and Risk Assessment Training.
 - The Experiments Officers should attend both Manual Handling Training and Risk Assessment Training.
 - At least one member of the Core Committee (i.e. the Co-Presidents, Secretary, or Treasurer of the Society) should attend Manual Handling Training.
- All of the above courses should be offered to the whole Committee, and Venue Safety Officers should be particularly encouraged to attend both training sessions.
- These sessions will be organised by the Co-Presidents and Safety Officer, at a time that is convenient for the Safety Office and as soon as possible in the academic year.
- It will then be the responsibility of the Safety Officer to ensure key points from the training are passed on to the Venue Safety Officers and the remaining Committee wherever relevant.

10. Accident Reporting

- Should an accident or near miss occur at a CHaOS event, or during the normal running of the Society, it should be recorded in CHaOS's [incident reporting form](#) on the SharePoint. This should be done by the person attending the casualty, or the VSO. The contents of the accident book should be used to inform the review of the Health & Safety policy at the Annual Health & Safety Meetings.
- Whilst CHaOS is neither an employer nor in control of the premises where the Society's events take place, information about any incidents CHaOS reports should be shared with the appointed person in control of the venue to facilitate any necessary reporting under the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013* to the Health and Safety Executive.

- Any incident occurring on University premises should be reported through the University Reporting System.

11. Reviewing and Monitoring of the Policy

- CHaOS will hold an Annual Committee Safety Meeting in Michaelmas Term. At that meeting, this policy must be annually reviewed and updated with the names of incoming Committee members.
- The reported incidents from the year should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy, and any changes necessary may be made and approved by the Committee upon annual review.
- Should an incident highlight a significant shortcoming in this policy at any point between annual reviews, changes may be made and approved by the Committee.