

GUIDELINES for WORKING CONDITIONS

The following guidelines are issued to indicate the standard of working conditions a professional gardener should expect in their place of employment. Under the Health & Safety at Work regulations every employer has a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees. Your workplace and systems of work should be safe and without risk to health.

At the very least your employer should provide the following:

- A formal, written job description and contract of employment, detailing hours of work, pay, holidays and any 'extra' duties required.
- The appropriate equipment for any task that you may be required to undertake.
- The appropriate training and protective equipment for any machinery to be used or chemicals to be applied in the course of your work.
- Access to clean toilet facilities, with hot water for washing hands.
- Somewhere warm and dry, with a table and chair where you can eat lunch.
- Safe storage for any chemicals to be used, and washing facilities for cleaning of equipment, suits etc.
- First Aid facilities.



In addition, any good employer should provide:

- Somewhere to change boots/wet, dirty clothing before going home.
- A rest room separate from the potting shed or greenhouse, where you can take your breaks, with facilities for making a hot drink.
- Access to a telephone for emergencies.
- Reasonable time off for training and visits to other gardens.
- Paid holidays.

In addition, the best employers will provide:

- A shower, especially if employees are expected to work with chemicals or drains.
- A drying area for wet clothes and boots.
- A fridge for storage of milk, cold drinks etc and a microwave to make a hot meal.
- Reference books and/or Internet access.
- Telephone.
- Subscription to relevant horticultural magazines and societies.

Other things to consider when applying for a job may include the following:

- Pension provision and paid sick leave over and above statutory sick pay.
- Many gardeners work alone for much of their working week. There should be systems in place to ensure the safety of 'lone workers' eg. reporting procedures, 'buddy systems', mobile phones.
- Be aware that tied accommodation may come with added, 'out-of-hours' duties.