

# WORKING IN THE CARAVAN INDUSTRY



## Name

Sarah House

## Job Title

Health and Safety Advisor/  
General Manager

## Company

Holiday Resort Unity

### What are your main responsibilities?

Ensuring the safety of customers and staff and overseeing human resources. It can be quite tricky as there is a lot of new legislation to keep up with. I develop policies to do with staff, discipline etc. and write the staff handbook. I carry out a monthly inspection of the park and am responsible for ensuring all daily and weekly checks are carried out and that we keep a record of them.

### Do you work alone or in a team?

I work alone as my position is unique within the organisation, but I also work with other departmental managers. There are 18 departments and in the summer we have up to 250 employees. In the winter we have around 120 employees.

### What would a typical day contain for you?

There isn't really a typical day in this job. I arrive in the morning and see what new things I have to deal with; it could be a job application, a complaint or maybe an accident. I also have a list of regular tasks which includes risk assessment, fire procedures and inspection of the site. I don't know what I will have to cope with from one day to the next, I have a plan I work to but anything can happen.

It's different in winter as we are closed from November to March. There are no customers about and my day is shorter.

In summer I work longer hours, and sometimes six days a week. As I live on-site I don't waste any time in travelling to and from the park. I'm also 'on call' two nights a week to deal with any issues that arise, but I am expected to come in if something happens that I am responsible for overseeing, like health and safety. I take my holidays sometime between November and March. If you are working in the leisure industry you have to accept that you can't have holidays at the most popular times and during school holidays.

### How many members of the public do you meet on a day-to-day basis?

I meet around 20 to 30 customers a day, to deal with enquiries, problems and complaints.

### Why did you choose a career in the caravan industry?

I fell into it as it is the family business. I did apply to university but decided not to go. My dad suggested that I take on the health and safety role. My family have run the park for 50 years and I have grown up with it. It's very much a family business, for example, my cousin runs the arcade and my aunt is a duty manager.

### What is your educational background?

I took a NEBOSH (National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) general certificate in occupational safety and health and then the national diploma in occupational safety and health. I have undertaken a training qualification from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health to allow me to run food handling, fire prevention, and manual handling courses in-house. I'm also now an NVQ assessor so I can assess our staff.

### What do you enjoy most about your job?

The variety of work and the chance to meet new people. It's very satisfying to see a customer enjoying their holiday. The park has a fun and lively atmosphere and this kind of work attracts people who want to have fun and enjoying working with people.

### What do you like least?

Changes in legislation often make it hard for operators to run their park and can place financial constraints on them. Also customers seem to be getting more demanding and complaints can sometimes get you down.

### What skills are important in your job?

Organisational skills, listening skills and definitely IT skills.

### What can managers in the caravan industry expect to earn?

A departmental manager would probably earn around £18,000 a year and would then be able to work up from there. There are good prospects for promotion in our park if an opportunity arises, otherwise staff could move to a more senior position at another park.

### What is the strangest thing you have ever been asked to do?

We used to keep three cows on spare land on the site so they could graze on the grass, but one night they escaped! I was up at 3am trying to chase them back into their field before they could cause any major damage. That's certainly not in my job description but sometimes these things happen!

### What is the best way to get into the caravan industry?

I would encourage young people at college or university to get a holiday or part-time job so they can gain experience whilst they are studying. There are many different kinds of job available in the caravan industry; lifeguard, plumber, chef etc. It's a fun and lively industry and there is lots of variety. Many companies offer their staff vocational training. When I employ someone I look for relevant qualifications along with experience.

### Organisation overview

Holiday Resort Unity is a large, family-run caravan park in Somerset. Covering over 200 acres, the park has a mixture of privately owned caravans, caravans for hire and pitches for touring caravans and tents. The park has lots of entertainment on-site, including bars, a fairground, swimming pools, pony trekking and much more. Sarah's father is the managing director, her mother the catering director and her brother is also a manager. The site was originally a farm owned by Sarah's grandfather, and has been run as a caravan park for 50 years.

### Key Facts

#### Average Salary

Managers can receive from £18,000 upwards, depending on park size

#### Entry level

Relevant personal qualities and customer facing experience

#### Relevant Qualifications

Generic qualifications in customer service, sales or management  
For supervisory roles Operation and Development NVQ 3 National Certificate in Park Management from CITO

#### Websites

SkillsActive:

[www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)

Caravan Industry Training:

[www.cito.org.uk](http://www.cito.org.uk)

British Holiday & Home Parks Association:

[www.ukparks.com](http://www.ukparks.com)

The National Caravan Council

[www.nationalcaravan.co.uk](http://www.nationalcaravan.co.uk)



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