



Work Health & Safety Policy 1.0¹

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¹ This document is based with permission on the St Kilda Mums ‘OH&S Policy 2.1’

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1. Purpose of this Work Health and Safety Policy

We Care Connect, referred to as “the organisation”, recognizes that it has a legal obligation to provide all volunteers and employees with a working environment that is both healthy and safe.

The purpose of this Policy is to state how the organisation will meet its work, health and safety obligations ensuring compliance with legislative requirements and current industry standards. In fulfilling these responsibilities, all the organisation’s managers and team leaders have a duty to provide and maintain, as far as practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.

Applicable health & safety legislation for NSW, is found on <http://workplaceohs.com.au/legislation/nsw-legislation>

2. Scope

This policy covers all the organisation’s volunteers, employees, contractors, agency staff and visitors. It applies to all the organisation premises, vehicles and any other areas where volunteers, employees, contractors or agency staff are performing authorised work for the organisation. It is the responsibility of all volunteers or employees to understand and comply with this policy.

3. Phases of Effective Management of WH&S

The four phases of effective management of accidents or injuries to be observed are:

- a. Prevention - taking steps to reduce or eliminate sources of risk.
- b. Preparation - planning, training and education.
- c. Response - prompt implementation of effective actions and mobilisation of appropriate resources.
- d. Recovery - providing support and rehabilitation plans for individuals to assist recovery and return to work.

4. WH&S Committee

- a. WH&S Safety Officer: the Executive Officer (EO) will appoint a WH&S Safety Officer responsible to the EO for the management of WH&S activities across the organization.
- b. Representatives: volunteers and staff responsible for different areas of activities will be selected as 'WH&S Representatives' for workplace health and safety matters within their respective areas.
- c. Committee: the WH&S Committee will be comprised of the EO, WH&S Officer and the WH&S Representatives. The committee will be chaired by the WH&S Officer and be able to co-op as needed.
- d. All WH&S Representatives receive a copy of this Policy and the relevant procedures.
- e. All WH&S Representatives will undertake appropriate training in the organisation's policies as required.

5. General Responsibilities

5.1 WH&S Representatives

All WH&S Representatives are to:

- a. acquaint themselves with the various Acts and Regulations as they apply to the overall activities of the organization and their areas of responsibility. Any queries should be directed to the EO;
- b. ensure the workplace is in a safe and healthy condition;
- c. undertake training programs as required;
- d. ensure all volunteers, employees, contractors and visitors their areas of responsibility or direction are aware of and comply with this policy; and
- e. advise the WH&S Safety Officer of breaches of this policy.

5.2 WH&S Safety Officer

The organisation's WH&S Safety Officer is to:

- a. Conduct checklist inspections at a frequency determined by the WH&S Committee or at least quarterly;
- b. Together with the EO identify and implement improvements to work, health and safety;
- c. Establish and maintain Accident and Injury Response Procedures and ensure that volunteers and employees are aware of these procedures;
- d. Provide information, training and supervision as appropriate for all volunteers and employees, so that they can work in a safe and healthy manner; and
- e. Maintain information and records relating to the health and safety conditions of volunteers and employees;
- f. Chair the WH&S Committee.

5.3 EO

The EO has the overall responsibility for the effective implementation of the organisation's Health and Safety Policy. They must:

- a. Ensure that the requirements under the various Acts and Regulations are adhered to;
- b. Ensure that the agreed procedures for regular consultation with employees or volunteers who have designated health and safety responsibilities, are followed;
- c. Ensure that all relevant policies and procedures operating within the organisation are periodically revised and are consistent with the organisation's health and safety objectives;
- d. Ensure that all volunteers and employees receive information, training and where appropriate, supervision in the correct use of equipment used by the organisation; and
- e. Be informed of incidents and accidents occurring on any the organisation premises or to the organisation volunteers and employees so that health and safety performances can be accurately gauged.
- f. Ensure that there are appropriate managerial and administrative procedures for responding promptly and effectively to an accident or injury;
- g. Ensure that all volunteers and employees have appropriate support and relevant plans (suitable duties) available to assist their return to work;
- h. Maintain an Accident and Injury Register, and Employees Compensation Claims Register/Files.
- i. Work in consultation with a trained Return-To-Work Coordinator on any Employees Compensation matters.

6. WH&S Committee

Role

A Work Health and Safety Committee is an advisory group made up of management and volunteer/employee representatives whose primary role is to monitor the health, safety and welfare of employees and volunteers in the workplace. Health and Safety Committees are required to meet at least once every three months during regular working hours, record and maintain minutes of all meetings as well as monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Work Health and Safety. The primary role of the organisation's WH&S Committee is to improve health and safety in the workplace by assisting in the development, implementation, and promotion of safe work practices and procedures.

6.2 The WH&S Committee has the following legislated responsibilities:

- a. To identify aspects of the workplace that may be unhealthy or unsafe.
- b. To make recommendations to protect the health, safety, and welfare of volunteers and employees in the workplace.
- c. To receive complaints from volunteers and employees as to their concerns about the health and safety of the workplace and their welfare.
- d. To establish and promote health and safety educational programs for volunteers and employees.
- e. To maintain records as to the receipt and disposition of complaints received from volunteers and employees.
- f. To meet during regular working hours at least four times a year. Committee Meetings

6.3 WH&S Committee meetings

Will be conducted at least four times a year either via teleconference or in-person meetings. Minutes of each meeting are kept tracking safety problems, record all recommendations, and serve as a permanent record of the committee's activities. At least half of the members of the committee are to be persons representing the volunteers/employees at the organisation who are not connected with management.

At all WH&S meetings they are to:

- a. review the Minutes of previous meeting for WH&S issues;
- b. consider any WH&S items, issues, notices or reports for the period;
- c. review and report on any progress on issues from the previous period;
- d. establish agreed actions and set action targets;
- e. briefly outline items for consideration at the next scheduled meeting; and
- f. ensure that applicable Minutes are taken, distributed and displayed in accordance with normal practice.

Meeting Agenda. To ensure effective WH&S committee meetings, an agenda will be developed and distributed to each WH&S committee member prior to the meeting and include at least the following:

- a. Attendance.
- b. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting.
- c. Consideration of unfinished business; for example, follow-up on recommendations.
- d. Review of accident/incident investigation reports, workplace inspection reports, complaints from employees or volunteers, work refusals, and reports from subcommittees.
- e. Review the status (development, implementation, and evaluation) of the WH&S program elements.

7. Volunteer/Employees' WH&S Responsibilities

The organisation's volunteers and employees:

- a. have a duty to take all reasonable and practicable steps for their own health and the safety of others affected by their actions at work;
- b. are to comply with the safety procedures and directions agreed to between management and the WH&S Representatives;
- c. are not to wilfully interfere with or misuse items or facilities provided in the interest of health, safety and welfare of the organisation's volunteers and employees; and
- d. are to report workplace hazards or potential hazards to an WH&S representative, in accordance with the organisation's procedures for accident and incident reporting.

8. Hazard Reporting

8.1 Purpose:

To provide a mechanism for all volunteers and employees to report and record any incident, near miss, hazardous work practice or workplace hazard which is identified as having the potential to cause injury or damage.

8.2 Procedures.

If employees experience a near miss or identify an unsafe act or condition, the event or condition must be reported within 72 hours to the EO, WH&S Safety Officer or a WH&S Representative and be recorded, and an Accident or Incident Report should be completed if appropriate. WH&S Representatives are responsible for ensuring that:

- a. Hazard reporting procedures are known and understood by employees,
- b. Hazard reporting procedures are followed, and
- c. Follow-up action is prompt and effective.

9. First Aid

The organisation will assess First Aid requirements and ensure that First Aid arrangements and facilities meet the current requirements in the workplace. The following matters apply to First Aid:

- a. An appropriate number of First Aid Attendants with the adequate level of competency are to be available at all times to provide assistance in the event of an accident or incident. Determination of these requirements is the responsibility of EO.
- b. The provision of First Aid equipment and the location of First Aid cabinets will be appropriately matched with the nature of the likely hazards.
- c. A current list of trained First Aid Attendants will be maintained at all the organisation's premises.
- d. A current list of the location and contents of all First Aid Cabinets is to be maintained at the organisation's premises.

10. Accident and Incident Reporting

Workplace injuries, illnesses and incidents are to be recorded as required by legislation. Records of injuries, illnesses and incidents can be used to identify trends. This will enable action to be taken to prevent recurrence or more serious consequences.

WH&S Representatives must ensure that all incidents are recorded using the organisation's Accident and Incident Report form. Accident and Incident Reports must be raised for any incident occurring during the organisation's operations or at an organisation's workplace, including those involving volunteers, employees, contractors, customers and visitors. WH&S Representatives must identify and implement immediate corrective action to prevent recurrence or more serious consequences and record this action in the Accident and Incident Report Form. The EO and the WH&S Safety Officer are responsible for ensuring an investigation is carried-out on all incidents.

A Register of Injuries will be maintained by the EO.

10.1 Critical Incident Procedures.

A critical incident is defined as a major occurrence that could have a long-term effect on staff. Examples of a critical incident include armed hold-up, bomb threats and violence in the workplace. Where an event such as these occurs, the following will apply:

- a. A Crisis Management Action Plan will be developed and implemented by the EO and the Board
- b. The EO will organise appropriate medical and psychological counselling to be available for affected staff as soon as possible after the event has occurred.
- c. The EO will continue to provide staff with counselling and any other support that will assist the staff member to return to work through a planned rehabilitation programme.
- d. All other Accident and Incident Reporting procedures as required by this policy still apply.

10.2 Incident Investigation.

The organisation is to maintain procedures for the investigation of reported injuries, illnesses and incidents. Injuries, illnesses and incidents are to be investigated to determine the contributing factors so that future similar occurrences can be prevented. The accident reporting and investigation procedure is to be designed to ensure all accidents are recorded and reported (internally and externally) as required by State legislation.

- a. Incident Investigation Procedures.
All incidents must be investigated within 72 hours of reporting. Investigations are to be carried-out by the WH&S Safety Officer and/or the EO.
- b. Health and Safety Inspections.
Planned inspections are to be conducted of work areas using a Health and Safety Inspection Checklist at least every quarter. The inspections are to be conducted to identify any changes in the workplace that impact on health and safety to enable corrective action to be taken before an accident or incident occurs.
- c. Ongoing Hazard Identification.
All volunteers and employees are expected to take notice of their surroundings and immediately report any hazards and unsafe acts and conditions to a WH&S Representative. WH&S Representatives are expected to be continually on the lookout for workplace hazards and any unsafe acts and conditions.

11. Manual Handling

Manual handling involves any activity that requires the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain an object. A manual handling hazard is a load (i.e. object) which needs to be moved and has the potential to cause harm

Where it is reasonably foreseeable that a manual handling task may cause injury, then the Risk Assessment form (Appendix 1) must be completed in consultation with the volunteer or employee performing the task and a Health and Safety Representative.

Common manual handling examples within the organisation include:

- a. Transfer of stock from one place to another
- b. Inspection/maintenance of cots, prams and similar

11.1 Manual Handling Risk Control

(Refer to section 5 of Risk Assessment Form)

Control hazards in accordance with the hierarchy of controls. Control measures may include one, or a combination of the following:

- a. Eliminate the task
- b. Job design e.g. modify workplace layout, rearrange work flow, modify actions, movement and forces
- c. Setting maximum weights for filled containers
- d. Displaying warning signs on heavy items
- e. Modify the task e.g. break the load into smaller packages, team lifting
- f. Mechanise the process or provide mechanical assistance
- g. Ensure training is provided – including induction training
- h. Administrative controls, e.g. signage, rotation of tasks.
- i. Personal protective equipment, e.g. protective clothing

A combination of control measures may be required for effective control of manual handling hazards and must be evaluated and monitored for effectiveness.

12. Tagging

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

13. Smoking in the Workplace

It is the organisation policy that all volunteers, employees, contractors and visitors are provided with a smoke-free workplace in all the organisation's premises. The purpose of the organisation's commitment to a smoke-free workplace is:

- a. To provide everyone with a safe and healthy workplace;
- b. To minimise the risk to volunteers, employees, to the organisation and to the general public;
- c. To minimise the risk of disruption to the organisation's operations;

- d. To ensure that all volunteers and employees are aware of their responsibilities regarding a smoke-free workplace;
- e. To inform volunteers and employees that disregard and abuse of this policy will lead to disciplinary action; and
- f. To ensure compliance with relevant State and Federal legislation.

14. Return to Work

Under the Accident Compensation Act, volunteers are not eligible to claim Workers Compensation. All paid employees who sustain injuries at the organisation will be encouraged to return to work as soon as practicable.

Return-to-work programmes will be determined on a consultative basis between the employee, the organisation and employees' medical practitioner and, where appropriate, an insurance representative. Each employee's circumstances will be treated individually. According to an individual's tailored needs, return-to-work programmes may take the form of reduced hours, reduced activities or a change of position with appropriate re-training for the relevant time frame to aid recover and resumption of pre-injury duties.

Employer Obligations

The organisation will support all injured employees to return to safe and sustainable work as soon as possible to increase productivity and benefit the employee by reducing the financial, health and emotional impacts on them and their family. Working within the relevant regulations the organisation will meet the following obligations:

- a. Nominate and appoint a Return to Work Coordinator who has an appropriate level of seniority to assist in meeting return to work obligations.
- b. The Return-To-Work- Coordinator will plan for the employees return to work, consulting and communicating with the employee and other appropriate parties on a regular basis.
- c. Consult directly with the employee about their return to work, with their treating health practitioner (subject to the consent of the employee) and occupational rehabilitation provider (if involved).
- d. For a period set out by the regulations, provide the injured employee with suitable employment if they have an incapacity for work and/or pre-injury or equivalent when they have returned to full capacity
- e. Make information about return to work available to all employees

Authority and Accountability.

The organisation recognises that it has the overall responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace and that the workplace is under the control of the organisation. The

EO and WH&S Management Representatives are accountable for implementing this policy and responsible for:

- a. Facilitating the successful rehabilitation of employees by assisting line managers to carry out rehabilitation programmes and supporting alternative duties for injured or ill employees in their department;
- b. Ensuring that employees in their department are fully trained in the safe performance of their duties;
- c. Ensuring that all workplaces in their department are maintained in a safe and healthy condition;
- d. Providing adequate resources to meet the organisation's health and safety policy and rehabilitation programmes;
- e. Notifying EO about employees who are experiencing physical difficulties at work or who are expected to be absent from work for more than five days, as a result of injury or illness (Return-to-Work Coordinator will need to establish whether the injury or illness is work-related);
- f. Ensuring that employees understand and follow the organisation's accident and incident reporting procedures;
- g. Ensuring the early reporting of symptoms and injuries by employees to EO. Assisting in the planning and implementation of the employee's rehabilitation programme;
- h. Modifying the employee's work site if required, and taking into account the work restrictions recommended by the employee's treating medical practitioner; and
- i. Assisting in the monitoring and review of the employee's rehabilitation programme.

Return-to-Work and Rehabilitation – Employees' Responsibilities.

Employees have a duty of care to protect not only their own health and safety, but also that of their colleagues, customers and the community. They are responsible for the following:

- a. Adhering to all the organisation's health and safety practices and procedures,
- b. Reporting all incidents that result in personal injury or illness or damage to property to their manager, and
- c. Participating in rehabilitation programmes organised by the organisation. (Note: failure to do so may result in termination of employees' compensation benefits where a claim has been lodged and accepted.)

Return-to-Work and Rehabilitation: the Return-to-Work Coordinator

The organisation's Return-to-Work Coordinator is responsible for:

- a. Ensuring compliance with current legislative requirements regarding rehabilitation;
- b. Assisting in the development and implementation of rehabilitation programmes;

- c. Ensuring that a return-to-work is effected as soon as possible and that this, in turn, is the normal practice and expectation for injured or ill employees; and
- d. Assisting line managers or team leaders in providing suitable duties for an injured or ill employee, as an integral part of the rehabilitation process.

General Guidelines.

The following general guidelines apply:

- a. The rehabilitation process should begin as soon as possible after an injury or illness and continue until a safe, permanent return to work is achieved, unless medical evidence indicates that this is not possible.
- b. Under some circumstances, it may be necessary to rehabilitate an injured or ill employee in another job classification. Also, there may be circumstances where suitable alternative duties will not be available and other options regarding return to work must be explored.
- c. The cost of an injured or ill employee's medical and like expenses will only be covered where liability for the employees' compensation claim is accepted by the organisation and where the payment of reasonable costs is accepted. Where liability for a employees' compensation claim is not accepted by the organisation, the cost of medical and like expenses will not be covered by the organisation and the employee will be responsible for payment of these costs.
- d. Usually, the injured or ill employee's treating doctor will issue a employees' compensation medical certificate if time-off-work or specific work restrictions are necessary. However, this does not necessarily mean that the employee has actually lodged a employees' compensation claim or that the claim has been accepted by the organisation. The duties undertaken by the employee on return to work, however, must comply with the specific work restrictions provided in the medical certificate.

Resolution Process.

The Return to Work Issues Resolution Process is to be used for issues arising out of the return to work process. It is not designed for complaints about other matters such as Worksafe, the Insurance Agent, claim liability, or payment of a claim.

The following procedure is used for resolving Return-to-Work issues within the workplace.

15. Legislation

The following legislation relates to the organisation workplace or occupational health & safety:

Australian Federal Legislation

- Fair Work Act 2009
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985
- Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail. Edition 7.5, 2017

NSW State Legislation

- Work Health & Safety Act 2011
- Work Health & Safety Regulation 2017
- Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998
- Dangerous Goods Act 1985
- NSW Test and Tag Regulations

16. Related Policies and Documents

Other Policies, procedures and documents that have an impact on Health and Safety Policy include:

- a. Volunteer Policy and Procedure Manual
- b. Code of Conduct
- c. Privacy Policy

17. Acknowledgements

This document is based with permission on St Kilda Mums 'OH&S Policy 2.1', drafted by Nyree Fiddes