6.6 Work Health and Safety Procedure

**Procedure**

<Insert Organisation Name> is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for staff and volunteers and seeks to achieve this through management and staff working together to create a safe workplace. A safe and healthy workplace is one key to ensuring both staff and <Insert Organisation Name> are able to work to their maximum potential. <Insert Organisation Name> also has particular responsibilities under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012.

<Insert Organisation Name> is also committed to ensure the safe return to work for any staff injured in the workplace. <Insert Organisation Name> will initiate rehabilitation programs for any staff member who is injured or becomes ill as a result of their work for <Insert Organisation Name>.

* All new staff will be made aware of both their own and <Insert Organisation Name>’s obligations in terms of Work Health and Safety;
* A discussion of WHS awareness should also be covered in the induction process. Information should include evacuation procedures, access to first aid, accidents and injuries in the workplace, as well as preventive information such as safe work practices;
* Any WHS issues will be communicated to the <Insert Position> who will determine the appropriate course of action, if any is required. Depending on the issue the CEO and/or Board may also be involved or informed;
* All staff should be aware of WHS in the workplace and issues should be discussed during supervision and fortnightly team meetings. These forums can be used to ensure all staff are aware of issues and ensure staff have appropriate work practices. Discussion also helps ensure that outstanding WHS issues are identified and where necessary resolved;
* <Insert Organisation Name> will also provide relevant training where identified in any prevalent WHS issue.

**(i) Emergencies**

In the case of an emergency, the First Aid Officer or Fire Warden outranks all other staff but may, out of necessity, delegate tasks to other staff. It is in the interests of safety that every staff member cooperates to the best of his/her ability and does not waste time and put lives at risk by questioning orders and directions given by those in authority.

Personal emergency information for all staff is kept in a secure but easily accessible location. This is maintained by the Senior Administration Officer who will require staff to complete a new form at least once a year.

**First Aid**

The First Aid Officer at each Office must possess a current Workplace Level 2 – Senior First Aid Certificate. Annual re-accreditation is recommended. Refer to <Insert Organisation Name>’s Staff First Aid Policy and Procedures.

If an accident occurs in the workplace staff need to complete an incident report form (located on the shared drive) and forward to the <Insert Position>.

**Fire Safety**

The Fire Warden’s primary responsibility is to take charge of all staff and visitors in the case of a fire or emergency alert/incident in either of <Insert Organisation Name>’s premises or those of one of its neighbours.

In case of fire or any other such physical danger to staff and visitors, the warden should:

* Evacuate the premises by blowing a whistle repeatedly and issuing calm but loud and clear instructions for people to evacuate by the nearest emergency exit and assemble in the emergency assembly area.
* Ensure all rooms have been evacuated, closing doors behind them as they proceed through the building. (Put out the fire with a fire extinguisher only if it is easily manageable and the warden has been trained to do so. Alternatively, if safe, close off the area in which the fire has broken out so that draughts do not inflame the fire.) The fire warden is responsible for incident control until the fire brigade arrives and must keep well clear so that they are in the best position to take care of the safety of others.
* Ensure the fire brigade has been called. (Even if the fire has been put out, the fire brigade should be asked to attend and confirm the premises are safe.) Also call for an ambulance if there are any injuries beyond the ability of the qualified first aider. Anyone showing symptoms of smoke inhalation (such as coughing) or head injury should be directed to professional medical attention such as an ambulance officer (even if they assert that they are quite well) ASAP – let a medical professional make the assessment.
* Account for all staff and ensure no one re-enters the building until the fire brigade has given the all-clear.
* Inform occupants of the neighbouring premises that there is a fire in the building and advise them also to evacuate.

**Vandalism or Suspected Terrorism**

If the incident is a case of vandalism or suspected terrorism, the police should also be informed immediately on 000 and their instructions followed. Full cooperation must be given to emergency services.

All staff, volunteers and visitors should assemble at the designated meeting place and should not under any circumstances return to the building until official authorisation has been given. This is to ensure all staff and visitors are accounted for.

**(ii) Everyday Workplace Safety**

All new staff and volunteers should be provided with access to a copy of the Welcome to the Workplace Kit as part of their Orientation Manual / information package.

**Workplace Safety Inspections**

Will be conducted on or before the beginning of each quarter, ie February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1. These will be conducted by the Senior Admin Officer or delegate, and they will take place with at least one other staff member or volunteer. These inspections will be carried out using a Workplace Safety Inspection Checklist, located in the shared drive.

**Accommodation / Ergonomics**

Staff will be provided with appropriate training prior to the use of any equipment. The arrangement of furniture and equipment will, furthermore, minimise risk of injury or strain. However, it is the responsibility of individual staff to make adjustments according to their own needs and use the equipment in such a way to prevent eyestrain, muscle fatigue, and repetitive strain injury. This includes alternating tasks and not sitting in the same position for large blocks of time. Staff should also ensure they move about regularly to minimise the risk of deep vein thrombosis. Any staff who do not feel competent to assess their workstation and work habits should ask for advice from the <Insert Position>.

**Equipment**

Equipment with inherent hazards, such as the photocopier and server, will be placed in a room away from workstations. When using the photocopier, staff and volunteers should ensure there is adequate ventilation and always close the cover before copying so eyes are not exposed to the light used for scanning. Work in close proximity to the server should be limited to half-hour periods alternated with tasks elsewhere so the ears are not exposed to the constant noise of the fan.

**Smoking**

Smoking is a health hazard, and <Insert Organisation Name>’s premises are therefore smoke-free. Staff who choose to smoke may do so outside and downwind of open doors and windows and far enough away from walkways that non-smokers do not inhale smoke as they go about their tasks.

**Breaks / Rest Periods**

All staff, paid and volunteer alike, are entitled to and expected to take regular breaks for their health and well-being. As a general guide, staff should take one ten minute rest period during every three hours worked, but in the case of highly repetitive, stressful or strenuous work this may be more frequent. Staff should, furthermore, take micro-breaks at their workstations to minimise the risk of eyestrain, backache, DVT etc. Staff should also take a meal break of at least one half-hour every five hours, but this will not count as time worked. A common area, such as a kitchen, will be provided for staff to use during breaks and staff are responsible for keeping this area clean and tidy.

**Stress Management**

In order to minimise stress, <Insert Organisation Name> will:

* make good working conditions a priority;
* clearly define job descriptions, responsibilities and the structure of accountability;
* establish support systems for all staff; and
* ensure work plans and timelines are realistic.

Divergence from these practices should be raised with the <Insert Position>. Staff are also encouraged to read the Hidden Hazards Guide. Managers should also direct their attention to Hidden Hazards for Employers.

**Discrimination / Harassment / Bullying**

As part of <Insert Organisation Name>’s commitment to a safe working environment, staff will actively discourage workplace discrimination, harassment and bullying in the following ways:

* Managers will monitor the atmosphere in the work environment for signs or symptoms of discrimination, harassment or bullying and regularly review workplace practices to ensure they do not encourage unacceptable behaviour of this sort.
* All staff will report incidents that constitute any threat to health or safety, including discrimination, harassment or bullying, to the <Insert Position>, the WHS representative or the CEO.
* All staff are required to exhibit behaviour towards others that is respectful. Breaches of this requirement should be reported, if not appropriately dealt with by speaking directly to the person in question.
* Managers dealing with incidents will act sensitively, with the understanding that ignorance rather than malice might be the source of the problem. Potential problems in this area will be addressed by training.

In the case of witnessing an incident of discrimination, harassment or bullying, staff should offer support to the victim, and report it immediately to the appropriate supervisor and <Insert Position>.

**Threats from External Sources**

Staff are not expected to put up with abusive, violent or threatening behaviour from customers or visitors to <Insert Organisation Name>. Training in dealing with difficult customers is available, and volunteer staff will at no time be responsible to deal with threatening situations – paid supervisors are to deal directly with the customer or visitor in all threatening situations. Staff should follow the following procedure if faced with a situation they do not feel comfortable handling themselves:

* Acknowledge the customer’s concerns by politely explaining that someone with more authority should deal with the issue and ask the customer to wait while you summon your supervisor or manager.
* Call your supervisor by telephone/in person and explain that there is a customer in Reception/other area with a serious concern who needs the attention of a senior staff member.
* The supervisor should then advise another senior staff member of the situation and ask him/her to monitor from a distance before attending the customer and attempting to resolve the matter calmly.
* If the customer is abusive or unreasonable they should be asked to leave the premises immediately.
* If the matter is clearly beyond the best attempts of the supervisor, the third staff member should call the police and inform all staff of the situation by yelling to announce “All staff are advised that there is a security problem in Reception and Police assistance is required immediately.” Staff to retreat from any dangerous situation and manager to relieve the staff members dealing with the situation.
* If the situation is out-of-hand or deemed dangerous, the building should be evacuated as if conducting a fire drill.

Staff who are working alone during opening hours are advised to lock the front door so they have control over who enters the building. Alternatively, staff may close the office temporarily until joined by another staff member at their discretion.

**Unsolicited and unexpected suspicious packages**

Should be treated with caution. With unexpected deliveries, whether postal or by courier, sender details should be checked thoroughly. If there is no sender, or any other means of identifying the course or contents, staff are to place the object in a remote location for the opening/disposal at the discretion of the Manager. If the sender is known to <Insert Organisation Name> as sending regular mail of a safe nature the package may be opened normally. If the sender is unknown, and the package seems suspicious contact the sender to confirm they sent the package and ascertain its contents.

**Hawkers**

Should be treated with respect but asked politely to leave the premises with the explanation that <Insert Organisation Name> is not in a position to make any purchases. The same procedure is to be used for over the phone for unknown people soliciting for donations or sales.

**Abusive phone calls**

Should be reported to the <Insert Position> with as much detail as possible. No reply or response should be made to such calls, and the telephone should be hung up as soon as it is clear it is an abusive call. The <Insert Position> or CEO will report persistent calls to the police.

**Hygiene**

Staff should observe basic hygiene and infection control measures in their work. If uncertain as to what this involves, staff should consult the First Aid Officer. In addition, the Senior Admin Officer will ensure disposable paper towels are available for the drying of hands, tea towels are changed daily, and cleaning of the premises occurs once a week. Staff should report any hygiene concerns to the Senior Admin Officer as soon as possible. Staff are responsible for their own immediate workstations and personal hygiene is to be of an appropriate acceptable standard in the workplace.

**Manual Handling**

Staff should never risk injury in order to lift or move an object. If something is too heavy or awkward – and this will vary according to individuals and their physical capacity – staff should either ask for assistance or report it to their supervisor as being too heavy or difficult. Even when a staff member assesses an object as being within their capabilities, they must observe good manual handling techniques. If staff are unfamiliar with these, they should refer to the Manual Handling information located at the back of the Policies and Procedures manual. All staff are urged to read these documents regularly to refresh their understanding of manual handling and recommended limits.

**Hazards Awareness**

All staff are expected to watch for workplace hazards and report them at the earliest convenience. Hazards that are easily eliminated, such as power cords that can be relocated, or could be dealt with easily by either the staff member identifying the hazard or the WHS representative should be acted on. Furthermore, staff are encouraged to participate in the Workplace Safety Inspections each quarter and be aware of potential hazards.

**Application**

This procedure applies to all staff and volunteers; its application lies with the <Insert Position> in conjunction with the CEO, WHS Officer and supervising staff.

**Standards**

1.1-1.4, 2.1-2.3, 3.3, 4.3, 5.1-5.5, 6.1-6.3, 8.1, 8.2

**Related Policies and Procedures**

* Work Health and Safety Policy
* Volunteer Incident Reporting Procedure
* Commitment to Volunteer Involvement Policy
* Risk Management Policy and Procedure
* Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedure
* Volunteer Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy and Procedure
* Volunteer Training and Development Policy and Procedure
* Documentation and Records Policy and Procedures
* Confidentiality and Privacy Policy and Procedure
* Volunteer Induction and Orientation Policy and Procedure
* Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedures
* <Insert Organisation Name> Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
* <Insert Organisation Name> Board Workplace Health and Safety Policy

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| Approved | CEO, | Signature |  |
| Review | Annual | Next Review Date |  |