**GUIDE TO WORK HEALTH & SAFETY – GENERAL POLICY TEMPLATE**

**ABOUT THIS POLICY AREA**

This policy guides how the organisation delegates and manages their responsibilities to comply with the *Work Health and Safety Legislation*.

**Policy checklist**

The following checklist will help you check that an existing policy covers this area adequately.

The policy should:

* indicate who is responsible for managing work health and safety issues in the organisation
* list the organisation’s workplaces and the work health and safety issues that need to be managed
* list responsibilities of management and staff in relation to WH&S, including training
* Show how WH&S is built into overall risk management and continuous improvement
* Identify procedures and actions you take to manage each WH&S issue for your organisation
* contain clear procedures and actions
* indicate the timing of any actions
* show when it was approved
* show when it was last reviewed.

**COMPLETING YOUR ORGANISATIONAL AUTHORITY POLICY**

**Using the policy template**

The template provides some example statements. You can adapt these statements and include them in your policy or write your own statements to better suit the operations and services of your organisation.

The policy templates include **red text** prompts to insert information that is specific to your organisation.

**Guidelines for each section of your policy**

***1. Purpose***

When identifying the purpose of the policy, consider whether, beyond the requirement to comply with the Act, there are any other particular benefits to your organisation of having clear work health and safety expectations and practices, such as costs and productivity, duty of care to staff. Are there any specific risks you have identified for your organisation which can be managed/minimised by having clear WH&S processes?

***2. Scope***

In determining the scope of the policy, consider whether there are any specific limitations in its application. In most instances, this policy will apply to all staff, volunteers and members of boards or management committees in a consistent way. However, organisations may have a number of “workplaces” – as defined under the Act, and there may be different requirements or risks to manage ( eg: office-based and in-home services). Also consider whether there are people or organisations outside of yours that may also need to comply, such as contractors.

***3. Policy statement***

If you are adopting the policy statement in the template, consider whether there any additional commitments your organisation wants to make.

In identifying the actions your organisation will take to implement this policy, you should include the following:

* The organisation takes its duty to provide anyone who attends our service or participates in any way in any of our services, with a safe and healthy working environment seriously.
* Workplace health and safety practices and processes are continuously reviewed to ensure that they comply with all relevant State workplace health and safety legislation.
* Workplace health and safety guidelines are designed to prevent accidents, injuries and illnesses in the workplace.
* All new employees and volunteers must be made aware of workplace health and safety regulations and procedures during their induction program and ongoing training is provided for all staff, both in relation to changes in regulations, and safe work practices.

***4. Procedures***

The procedures describe how your organisation achieves the aims and goals you have outlined in your purpose, scope and policy statement.

*4.1 Management of Work Health & Safety*

* Who will be responsible for managing WH&S?
* Is your organisation required under the Act to elect WH&S Officer/s?

Describe key WH&S responsibilities, for example:

* All issues and queries relevant to workplace health and safety (WH&S) should be referred to the **insert responsible position/s**.

**Management must:**

* Undertake an environmental risk assessment at least annually using the **insert the name or names of audit/checklists you use (you may have different ones for certain workplaces)*.***
* Caution staff that are reported to be conducting hazardous or unsafe work practices.
* Assist Workplace Health and Safety inspectors in relation to any requests for information or inspections of premises they may wish to undertake.
* Investigate breaches of WPH&S and remedy the situation where possible.
* Investigate workplace incidents and accidents.
* Organise WH&S training for employees.
* Promote health and safety in the workplace.
* Discuss WH&S issues and provide information and advice to the staff.
* Review workplace incidents and make recommendations.

**Employees must:**

* Follow all WH&S legislation, regulations and guidelines including emergency procedures and drills.
* Immediately report any breach in WH&S and any resulting injury or illness to the Coordinator.
* Complete a *Work Injury/Incident Report* within 24 hours of the injury or incident.
* Identify potentially unsafe equipment, unsafe work practices, risks or hazards and ensure that other employees are aware of any potential danger/s.
* Make area safe in the short term.
* Complete the *WH&S* *Employee Feedback Form* to advise management of risks or hazards.

List your workplaces, and possible WH&S issues that must be managed, for example:

**Workplace locations:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of organisation operates at the following workplace locations:** | **WH&S Monitoring and Risk Assessment Processes:** |
| Main Office | Routine WH&S Inspections  Annual Fire Safety Inspections  Electrical testing and tagging |

**Specific Workplace Issues (might include):**

* Workplace amenities
* Violence in the Workplace
* Infectious diseases
* Stress
* Shift work
* Manual Handling
* Manual handling- of people
* Use of cleaning products and other hazardous substances
* Operation of equipment and vehicles
* Transport
* Working in a cross-cultural environment

*4.2 Risk Assessment and continuous improvement*

Wording is included in the policy template which essentially covers the inclusion of WH&S in your organisation’s risk management and continuous improvement processes – as this is a key aspect of WH&S management. You may wish to add any additional actions or details pertaining to your organisation’s practice, such as responsibilities for particular aspects of WH&S within the overall process.

*4.3 Training*

Describe how your organisation provides training to staff, volunteers and contractors or others who attend your workplace, with regard to WH&S, for example:

* All staff and volunteers will undertake WH&S induction training on commencement.
* The Safety Officer will receive an initial 5 days of accredited WH&S training, and refresher training every twelve months thereafter.
* Any subcontractors or trades people undertaking work within our premises will also receive a WH&S site induction.

Other regular training for staff will include:

* Safe Working Guidelines – particularly in those areas you have listed as relevant in 4.2, such as manual handling, hazardous substances.
* Ongoing Workplace Training
* Specific Training Needs

*4.4 Workplace assessment and monitoring*

Describe the tools you routinely use to monitor WH&S issues and practices: These might include:

* Workplace Assessment Checklist
* Incident Report/ Workplace Injury Reports
* Annual Safety Reviews
* Staff Performance Reviews

Any other actions you take to assess or monitor WH&S, such as:

According to the *Workplace Health and Safety Act ,*  a Safety Officer will be elected. Any safety issues may be referred by staff and volunteers to this person, and necessary actions negotiated with management to address the issue.

Your organisation may have a WH&S Committee that deals with any concerns raised and negotiates with management about suitable actions to respond.

*4.5 Reporting injuries and incidents*

There are specific responsibilities under the WH&S Act for reporting injuries and incidents so it is important to outline organisational systems that support these responsibilities. A simple process may include:

Employees who are injured or involved in a workplace incident must:

* Notify the **responsible person** as soon as possible or ask a co-worker to notify the **responsible person** as soon as possible following the event.
* Complete a *Workplace*/*Accident/Incident Report* with the Coordinator as soon as possible.

The **insert title of responsible person** must:

* Complete the *Workplace Injury/Accident/Incident Report* if the employee cannot do so within 24 hours of the incident.
* Investigate the injury/incident to identify what can be done to prevent the incident occurring again.
* Record any required preventative action on  *the Work Injury/Incident Report form.*
* Note any risks or improvements which need to be entered in the *Risk Management Plan* and/or the *Continuous Improvement Plan.*

*4.6 Other WH&S Issues*

Create separate headings for WH&S issues relevant to your organisation and describe the actions you take to manage these issues. Here are some examples:

**Hazardous substances**

* When hazardous substances are received by the organisation, the details should be forwarded to the **responsible person**.
* A risk assessment must be completed to identify any hazardous substances.
* These hazardous substances should be added to the *Register of Hazardous Substances* by the **responsible person**.
* All hazardous substances are provided with a *Material Data Safety Sheet*. Copies of these are kept with the *Register of Hazardous Substances*.
* Training should be provided to employees who are exposed to hazardous substances.
* The *Register of Hazardous Substances* and the MDSS must be referred to when there is an incident involving hazardous substances.

**Spills and leaks**

Employees must:

* Remove spills as soon as possible to minimize incidents and risks to others.
* If a hazardous substance is involved, contact the Coordinator to identify the methods for removing the spill safely.
* Remove the spill according to instructions.
* Complete a *Accident/Incident* Form.
* If possible, repair leaks immediately, generally, using a qualified tradesperson.
* If it is not possible to fix the leak, notify the **responsible person**.
* Some leaks, such as gas, may need to be reported as a notifiable incident to Workplace Health and Safety.

**Manual handling**

All new employees or volunteers who are expected to lift or carry loads should receive training by an accredited trainer before commencing their duties.

* Keep the load as close as possible to the body.
* Avoid lifting:
* With the back fully bent
* With a twist or sideways bend to place the load
* For long periods with your back bent
* Use mechanical handling aids (trolleys, jacks) wherever possible.
* Modify the handling task to make it easier if mechanical aids are not available.
* Ask another employee or volunteer for assistance.

All work processes that require regular manual handling should be risk assessed to minimize the risk of injury to employees.

**Fire Safety**

**Name of organisation** will maintain necessary fire fighting and prevention equipment on the premises. The premises will be audited annually by an accredited provider to ensure compliance with fire safety requirements, including testing of all equipment. Staff will receive regular training regarding use of the equipment.

**First Aid**

Name of organisation will maintain at all times a fully stocked first aid kit which meets current standards for the nature of the workplace. Staff and service users will be informed about its location and process to access it.

At least one member of staff present at the Centre at any time during operating hours, will possess a current First Aid Certificate.

All staff working in client’s homes or other venues outside of our office will receive first aid training.

Emergency numbers for Ambulance, Hospital and Poisons Information Centre are displayed in Reception.

**Infection Control**

**Name of organisation** will exercise the highest standards of hygiene in its facility. This applies to:

* Provision of clean and adequate toilet and handwashing facilities
* Provision of food preparation facilities meeting all necessary standards
* Promotion of good personal hygiene practices such as handwashing posters
* Display of information regarding proper food handling practices
* Provision of a suitable waste collection and removal facilities, particularly for needles and medical supplies.

Staff, volunteers and, if necessary, clients, will be provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to minimise infection risks.

Staff and volunteers receive training regarding infection control practices.

At times when an identified major infection risk (such as a pandemic) is identified, further professional advice may be sought from Department of Human Services regarding any precautionary measures to be taken. This may include temporary closure of the service or exclusion of infected clients or staff.

***5. Other related policies and documents***

List the other policies related to the work health and safety policy. The policy should be linked to:

• work health and safety –emergencies policy

* Employee and volunteer induction policy
* Employee and volunteer training and development policy
* Risk management policy
* Continuous improvement policy

List other relevant organisational documents, including relevant position descriptions, incident/injury report forms, WH&S feedback forms, WH&S audit checklists, risk management register, continuous improvement plan, staff/volunteer induction kits/checklists, site induction sheets/checklists ( used for visitors/contractors etc.) any factsheets, resources or written WH&S material given to staff

***6. Review processes***

Consider how often this policy should be reviewed and the process for doing this:

• **frequency of review:** Most policies benefit from an annual review. The experience of implementing the policy is used to decide which changes are necessary. Consider reviewing your work health and safety - general policy as part of an annual review of governance or human resources policies or, if your organisation is small, perhaps over a three-year period. Critical incidents or legislative changes may prompt you to review the policy ahead of schedule.

• **responsibility for the review:** In most organisations, the WH&S Officer (or person with delegated WH&S responsibility) would be responsible for reviewing this policy, in conjunction with the senior staff person (manager or coordinator).

• **process for the review:** Decide which particular staff, volunteers, external people and organisations will provide input to the policy review.

• **decision-making process:** Who will review draft changes to the policy and approve changes? What will be the timeframe for the review process?

• **documentation and communication:** What records of the policy review process are needed? How will changes to the policy be communicated to staff implementing the policy? In a small organisation, this may be as simple as noting the changes at a staff meeting. In a larger organisation, an email memo may be needed.

• **key questions for the review:** Is the policy being implemented? Are procedures being followed? Is the policy clear? What has changed that may prompt a change to the policy? Have particular stakeholders had difficulty with any aspect of the policy? Can their concerns be resolved? How does the policy compare with that of similar organisations?