

1999
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SAFETY & WELFARE POLICY

FOREWORD

Through its OHS&W Policy, the Department of Education, Training and Employment aims to effectively implement the SA Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act (1986) throughout all its work locations. This will ensure that these sites offer a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, students and visitors.

The Department for Education and Children's Services and Department of Technical and Further Education first developed their Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Policies in the early 1990's in consultation with employees, employer and union representatives. These policies were endorsed by major union groups. With the formation of the new department this 1999 version was developed by a sub committee of the State OHS&W Consultative Committee, and now provides a uniform approach to occupational health and safety across the department. This policy has been endorsed by the Executive Policy and Priorities Advisory Council and the State OHS&W Consultative Committee.

The policy has as its objectives those requirements , which must be satisfied in order to provide a safe and healthy work environment. The policy indicates where responsibilities lie and where consultation is required with regard to its implementation.

I endorse this policy which will provide a structured and effective approach to the issues of occupational health, safety and welfare within all departmental worksites.

Geoff Spring
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Date :

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH,
SAFETY AND WELFARE POLICY**

SCOPE

The Department of Education, Training and Employment is committed to ensuring that all employees, students and visitors are safe from injury and risk to health and welfare while on duty or in attendance at any departmental facility.

The department is committed to ensuring that all legislative requirements are met and to achieving a position of excellence in the management of health, safety and welfare.

The department is committed to the integration of health, safety and welfare into all workplaces and work practices.

The department is committed to consultation and cooperation between management, employees, health and safety representatives, relevant unions, visitors, volunteers and students on health and safety matters.

The department considers the health, safety and welfare of employees to be of primary importance and ranks it equally with all other operational and financial considerations.

PURPOSE

The department aims to achieve the highest possible standard in the management of health, safety and welfare. To meet this objective the department will, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain:

- a safe workplace and a safe and healthy working environment
- safe systems of work
- plant/equipment and substances in a safe condition
- adequate facilities in accordance with regulations and accepted Australian Standards
- information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure all employees are safe from injury and risk to health
- information to employees (in appropriate form and languages) on health, safety and welfare in the workplace (including system wide contact points)

and will,

- monitor the health and welfare of employees in so far as that monitoring is relevant to the prevention of work-related injuries
- consult with employees at workplaces and across the department through the established three- tier consultative structure
- consult with registered associations on OHS&W issues affecting their members.
- provide a copy of the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare (OHS&W) Act, the OHS&W Regulations, a list of codes of practice and guidelines and other relevant resource material to

each worksite and ensure that these are made available to each elected Health and Safety Representative

- keep information and records relating to work related injuries (retaining that information and records for such period as prescribed in the OHS&W Regulations), and use the data to develop preventative strategies
- ensure that any employee who could be put at risk by a change in workplace, work or work practice, any activity or process, or any plant (equipment), is informed and consulted before the change occurs.
- ensure employees receive information, instruction, training and supervision where changes have occurred in their work or workplace
- ensure that any employee who undertakes work of a hazardous nature for the first time receives proper information, instruction, training and supervision before he/she commences that work
- ensure that managers and supervisors at all levels are provided with such information, instruction and training as are necessary to ensure that each employee under her/his management or supervision, while at work, is safe from injury and risks to health
- monitor working conditions at any workplace that is under the management and control of the department.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive

Responsible Officer is responsible for:

- ensuring the provision and maintenance of safe and healthy work environments for staff, students and visitors
- ensuring the provision of adequate resources to meet legislative requirements and the aims and objectives of this policy
- ensuring effective implementation of the objectives of this policy by monitoring performance and ensuring accountability of management at all levels.

Under Section 62 of the OHS&W Act (1986) the implementation of the requirements of the Act are delegated to the Executive Directors, Departmental Directors, Institute Directors and District Superintendents.

Executive Directors, Departmental Directors and Institute Directors are responsible for:

- integrating the Occupational Health Safety and Welfare Policy with all departmental policies within their area of responsibility
- ensuring that all levels of management receive appropriate OHS&W training
- ensuring effective implementation of the objectives of this policy by monitoring performance and ensuring accountability of management at all levels within their area of responsibility
- the provision of adequate resources to meet legislative requirements and the aims and objectives of this policy
- ensuring that employee representatives within their area of responsibility are consulted on issues affecting health and safety.

District Superintendents are responsible for:

- supporting and monitoring the work of site managers in implementing the management of OHS&W systems at each worksite
- ensuring that worksite managers provide resources to enable health and safety representatives to perform their duties under the Act.

Manager, Occupational Health Services Unit is responsible for:

- providing, monitoring and reviewing the prevention, claims management and rehabilitation functions
- initiating programs to support the OHS&W Policy and associated policies
- analysing data to identify actual or potential hazards and to determine priorities for prevention programs - including an advisory function to State Executive
- providing a system for monitoring and reporting accidents/incidents in all workplaces
- assisting worksite managers and employees to meet their responsibilities under the Act
- liaising with health and safety practitioners and Health and Safety Representatives on issues relating to health and safety
- maintaining a process for consulting employee representatives at department and worksite level
- ensuring that effective communication occurs between relevant functional groups within and beyond the department.

Principals, Pre-School Directors, Line Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring the occupational health, safety and welfare of all employees, students, visitors and the public who are in their area of operation
- ensuring that employees are conversant with those relevant policies and procedures which may affect their health and safety, and are aware of how they are applied to their specific site
- identifying, assessing and controlling hazards in the workplace
- maintaining a cooperative and constructive relationship with relevant Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Committee/s, elected representatives and employees, ensuring consultation occurs prior to changes to work practices and/or the work environment
- ensuring that accidents/incidents are reported using the reporting procedure outlined in the department's accident/incident reporting and investigation policy
- ensuring that resources and time are provided for the health and safety representative to perform his/her duties under the Act
- maintaining their level of knowledge in line with current OHS&W practices by undertaking initial and on-going training provided by the department.

Employees are responsible for:

- acting in a manner which protects their safety and that of other employees, students, visitors and the public
- using and maintaining appropriate safety equipment provided by the department
- obeying any reasonable instruction and comply with any policy that applies to occupational health, safety and welfare at the workplace
- informing their manager and/or Health and Safety Representative of any factor which may cause their own, or the health and safety of others, to be compromised
- promptly reporting to their line manager accidents, injuries and dangerous occurrences at the workplace
- being conversant with and actively support the department's occupational health safety and welfare policies and programs.

REPRESENTATION AND CONSULTATION

Health and Safety Representatives

Work groups are encouraged to elect Health and Safety Representatives to represent the interests of the work group in matters affecting health and safety. The term of office is three years.

Health and Safety Representatives have legal rights and functions to assist them to carry out their role effectively, and are protected from discrimination by the employer (OHS&W Act: Sections 34, 35, and 56). A Health and Safety Representative can only take action on health and safety issues affecting employees in the representative's own work group.

Major elements of a Health and Safety Representative's function are to:

- raise any issue affecting the health, safety or welfare of the members of the work group with the manager
- be consulted about any proposed changes that may affect the health, safety or welfare of the members of the work group
- use the reporting procedure outlined in the department's accident/incident reporting and investigation policy, to inspect the workplace if there is an accident, dangerous occurrence, imminent danger or risk to the health, safety or welfare of a member of the representative's work group
- investigate complaints on health, safety or welfare made by employees in the work group
- inspect the workplace as a routine or preventative measure after giving reasonable notice to the manager
- issue a default notice to initiate external action to resolve a health and safety problem if all avenues of resolution through line management have been unsuccessful
- direct that work cease if there is an immediate and significant threat to the health and safety of an employee in their work group
- be provided with facilities and assistance to enable them to perform their functions under the Act.

The functions, rights and responsibilities of a Health and Safety Representative are described in full under Section 32 of the OHS&W Act.

Health and Safety Committees

To meet the objectives of the OHS&W policy the department has established a three tier consultative structure. This provides a forum for employees and management to work cooperatively to resolve health and safety issues, and to assist in the provision of a safe and healthy work environment.

The three levels of the structure are:

- Level 1 worksite/workgroup committees, (these are established on request of either the Health and Safety Representative or a majority of employees)
- Level 2 district or institute committees
- Level 3 state consultative committee.

The term of office for members of each of these committees is three years.

Where a health and safety committee is formally established, membership must have at least 50% employee representation. The functions of health and safety committees are detailed in Section 33 of the OHS&W Act, 1986.

The major roles of the departmental consultative committees are:

Level 1 (worksite/workgroup) committees:

- provide assistance and recommendations to management relating to health, safety and welfare issues within their area of responsibility
- consult with management on changes to policy and practices which affect health, safety and welfare
- assist in formulating, reviewing and monitoring the distribution and implementation of procedures and practices to be followed in the workplace.

Level 2 (district/institute) committees:

- consider and respond to issues referred to them by level 1 (worksite) and level 3 (state) committees
- monitor and report on OHS&W issues within their area of responsibility
- monitor accident/incident statistics relevant to their area of responsibility
- provide advice on OHS&W issues which cannot be resolved through normal procedures
- provide a link between level 1 (worksite) and level 3 (state) committees in matters such as policy development and implementation

Level 3 (state) consultative committee:

- identify and prioritise OHS&W issues, and develop objectives, goals and strategies
- consider issues referred by State Executive or level 2 (district) committees, and provide recommendations or response to these issues
- review and monitor the effectiveness of current policies and develop new policies which meet identified needs and ensure compliance with legislation
- help resolve OHS&W issues that will have significance for the future departmental policies and procedures, and issues referred to by the level two committees
- monitor accident/incident reports, statistics, and any other relevant information provided by the OHS Unit
- monitor and review issues associated with the rehabilitation of injured employees

NON EMPLOYEES

Contractors and Sub-Contractors

All contractors and sub-contractors have a responsibility to:

- read, sign and comply with occupational health, safety and welfare policies and procedures, detailed in the department's Contractors' Code of Practice, and with all site specific requirements
- ensure that all work practices do not put their own or others' health and safety at risk. This includes site employees, students, and visitors
- meet all relevant legislation (including Regulations and Approved Codes of Practice) as a minimum standard and ensure that the contract costs include this.

Visitors, volunteers and students

Persons who are not employees have a responsibility to:

- abide by all occupational health, safety and welfare policies and procedures set down in relevant documents
- take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and others
- utilise the resources provided by the department in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

INTEGRATION WITH OTHER POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Occupational health, safety and welfare policies and procedures will continue to be developed to ensure that this policy is implemented. These policies will be consistent with, and complement this policy and relevant legislation, and will be integrated into all mainstream management operations, work practices and decision-making processes.

REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy shall be reviewed in June of each year by a standing sub-committee of the Level 3 Consultative Committee.

Steve Kelton
CHAIRPERSON
OHS&W CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Geoff Spring
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Date :

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