



**Community Housing**  
Federation of Victoria  
*Incorporated*

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# **Community Housing Occupational Health and Safety Kit**

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2010 Update

# Community Housing Occupational Health and Safety Kit

## ***Preface***

The Community Housing Occupational Health and Safety Kit is an essential guide to OH&S responsibilities and is tailored to the community housing environment. This updated kit is based on our OHS Contractors kit of 2002. This upgrade is timely because of the advent of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and the fact that community housing providers are now registered under the Housing Act 1983, and as such need to display their adherence to OH&S legislation through policy and procedure.

The Kit continues to deal extensively with the OH&S aspects of engaging contractors. Contract work is becoming increasingly common in the modern workplace and has been a feature of Community Housing employment for some years. Organisations have the same legal obligation to ensure the health and safety of contractors as they do to their own employees.

This Kit has been written as a resource for community housing in Victoria to assist organisations to develop their own processes for fulfilling their OHS obligations towards both employees and contractors.

## ***How to Use this Kit***

The Introduction defines OH&S and describes the various legal obligations that Community Housing Organisations have in this area. The remainder of the Kit looks at OH&S management in general and then all the particular hazards that exist in the community housing work environment. In each case the Kit provides model Policies and Procedures forms and checklists. Your organisation can then adapt each of these according to your own circumstances and develop your own set of OH&S Management Resources.

## ***Acknowledgements***

The kit was developed with the assistance of members of the Community Housing Federation of Victoria. In particular, thanks must go to the CHFV OHS Reference Group:

Joy Tansey (Port Phillip Housing Association Ltd)

Greg Flynn (South East Housing Cooperative Ltd)

David Toma (Yarra Community Housing Ltd)

## ***Further Information & Feedback***

For further information about the kit or other OHS resources contact the CHFV on 03 9654 6077 or email: [chfv@chfv.org.au](mailto:chfv@chfv.org.au)

### **General Disclaimer**

The suggested policy and procedures are not a substitute for professional advice on specific issues facing Community Housing organisations. They are designed to assist organisations plan and prepare for their OHS obligations and as such are a general resource and are not intended to provide specific legal or other professional advice.

### **Production**

This resource was compiled by Helen Kierce and Karen Sherry and produced by the Community Housing Federation of Victoria in 2009. CHFV: Level 5, 128 Exhibition St, Melbourne.

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## ***Part 1: Introduction***

### **What is OHS?**

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) refers to the legislation, policies, procedures and activities that aim to protect the health, safety and welfare of all people at the workplace.

Every worker has a right to a healthy and safe work-life and to a work environment that enables them to live a socially and economically productive life.

### **What is Significant About the OHS Act 2004?**

The OHS Act 2004 is the result of a substantial review and overhaul of the OHS Act 1985. The current Act extends key themes of the 1985 Act, emphasising:

- Responsibilities and duties of employers, employees, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers and installers
- Prevention of injuries and illnesses
- Elimination of hazards and minimization of risks
- Co-operation and consultation between employers and employees
- Having in place a systematic approach to OHS
- Involving employees in OHS through elected OHS Representatives

The OHS Act 1985 itself came about after many years of agitation and lobbying by workers and community groups. The 1985 Act set up a statutory framework to encourage employers to take a proactive approach to workplace health and safety, one with a strong focus on the prevention of work-related injuries and diseases.

The Victorian government was the first in Australia to implement an Occupational Health and Safety Act, reflecting a new approach to OHS regulation which provided a general duty of care for employers to maintain good health and safety practices in the workplace. Employers are expected to make use of current knowledge and techniques, standards and compliance codes and guidelines to ensure that people at work are safe and free from the risk of ill health. The OHS Act 1985 focused on prevention of injuries and illnesses through the application of a systematic approach to workplace health and safety and that also recognised the critical role employees had in identifying hazards and coming up with solutions.

Much of the impetus for this 'new' approach was driven by unions, workers and community groups. During the 1960's and 1970's many workers took class actions against employers for injuries and illnesses resulting from participation in the workforce (eg, repetitive strain injury was the result of poor occupational health and safety practices in office typing pools and led to compensation payouts to many workers).

## **Who Has Responsibilities Under The OHS Act 2004?**

**Employers and Management Committees** – in terms of the community housing sector, management committees have the same responsibilities or duty of care as employers. This responsibility includes eliminating or minimising health and safety risks through finding hazards, assessing risks and fixing problems. Employers are expected to consult with workers on OHS issues and ensure that a system is in place to manage workplace health and safety.

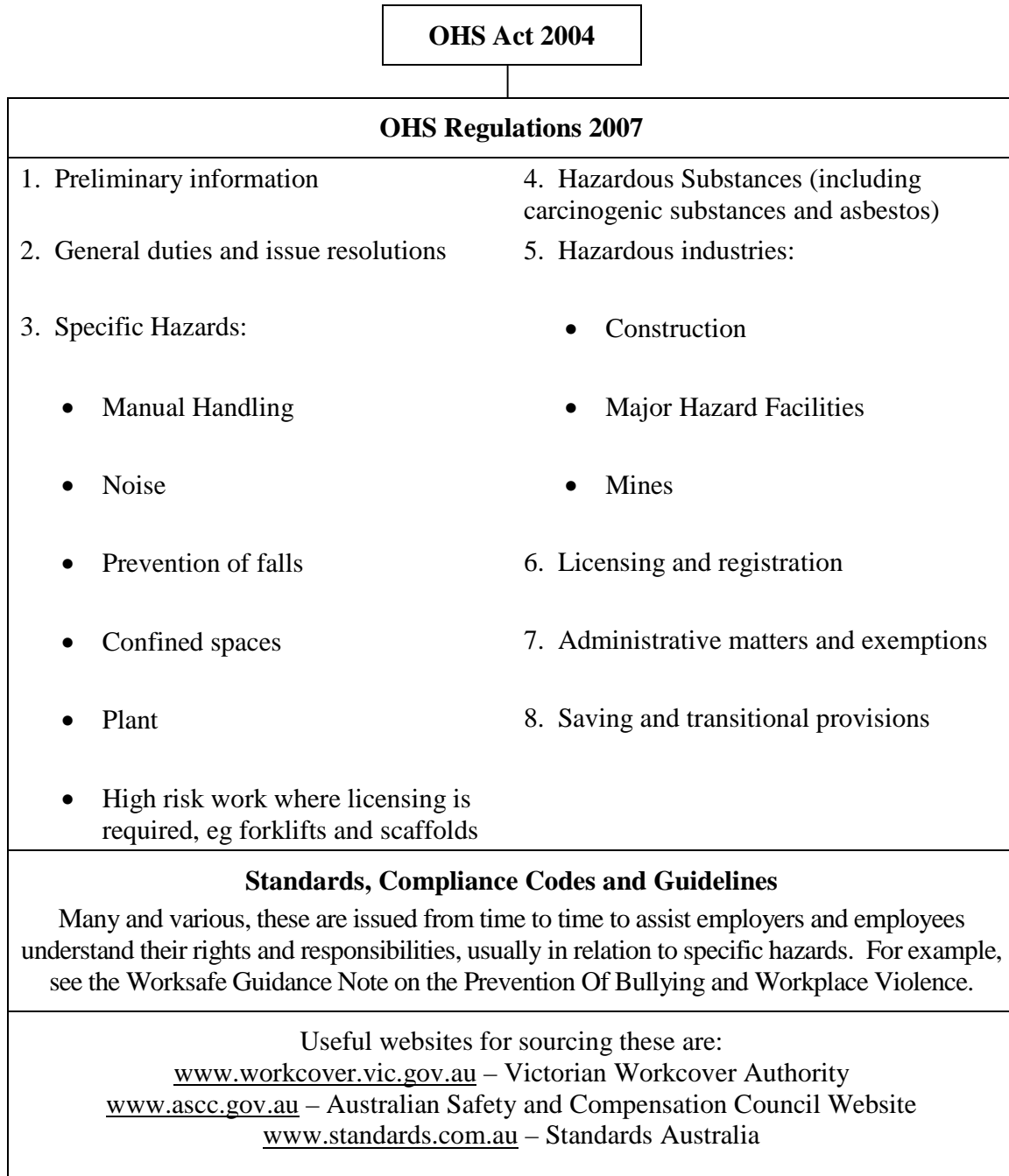
**Employees** (and this includes **contractors**) must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others in the workplace. This duty extends to cooperation with the employer to comply with health and safety requirements, reporting potential hazards and not interfering with anything at the workplace that has been provided for health and safety.

**Volunteers** must be given the same training and rights to a safe workplace as employees.

**Manufacturers, suppliers and installers** all have specific duties under the Act when it comes to the manufacture, supply or installation of goods and services.

## The Regulatory 'Pyramid'

The OHS Act 2004 is also supported by regulations, standards, compliance codes and guidelines:



Note: over time new Compliance Codes will be released by the Victorian Workcover Authority.

## Other Relevant Acts

- Accident Compensation Act 1985
- Accident Compensation and Transport Accident Acts (Amendment) Act 2003
- Accident Compensation (WorkCover Insurance) Act 1993
- Accident Compensation (Occupational Health and Safety) Act 1996
- Dangerous Goods Act 1985
- Equipment (Public Safety) Act 1994

## Community Housing Standards

Those working in the Community Housing Sector are also impacted by the health and safety requirements of the **National Community Housing Standards**, in particular: **Standard 6.4** - The organisations' office premises and equipment provide a safe, secure and appropriate work environment for staff and tenants.

**Standard 7.4** – Staff and volunteers work in a safe and healthy environment.

Reference to safety and security requirements is also made in **standards: 2.1.1, 2.2.2, 2.3.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.6.**

## Housing Provider Framework

All Community Housing Organisations that manage long-term housing operate under the Housing Provider Framework (or similar contractual arrangements for Housing Associations). They are therefore contractually obliged to comply with clauses of the Housing Provider Framework that bear on OH&S. These are:

### 14.5 Storage of Dangerous Goods

The Agency must not store chemicals, inflammable liquids or dangerous substances upon or about the Premises except such chemicals, liquids or dangerous substances that would reasonably be required to be stored on the Premises for cleaning.

### 14.6 Fire Protection and Safety

The Agency must have for the Premises an emergency control organisation and procedures that meet *AS3745-2002, Emergency Control Organisation and Procedures for Buildings - Standards Australia*.

### 14.7 Endanger Premises

The Agency must not do or permit anything to be done in connection with the Premises which, in the reasonable opinion of the Director, may endanger the Premises or be a risk to any person or property.

## **Insurance**

Community Housing Organisations are also constrained by their insurance policies. All organisations must have property, public liability, and directors' and officers' liability insurance. Such insurances are taken out by either the Community Housing Organisation itself or the Office of Housing on their behalf. Each Community Housing Organisation must ensure that OH&S practices do not prejudice any insurance policies.

## Part 2: Managing Workplace Health and Safety

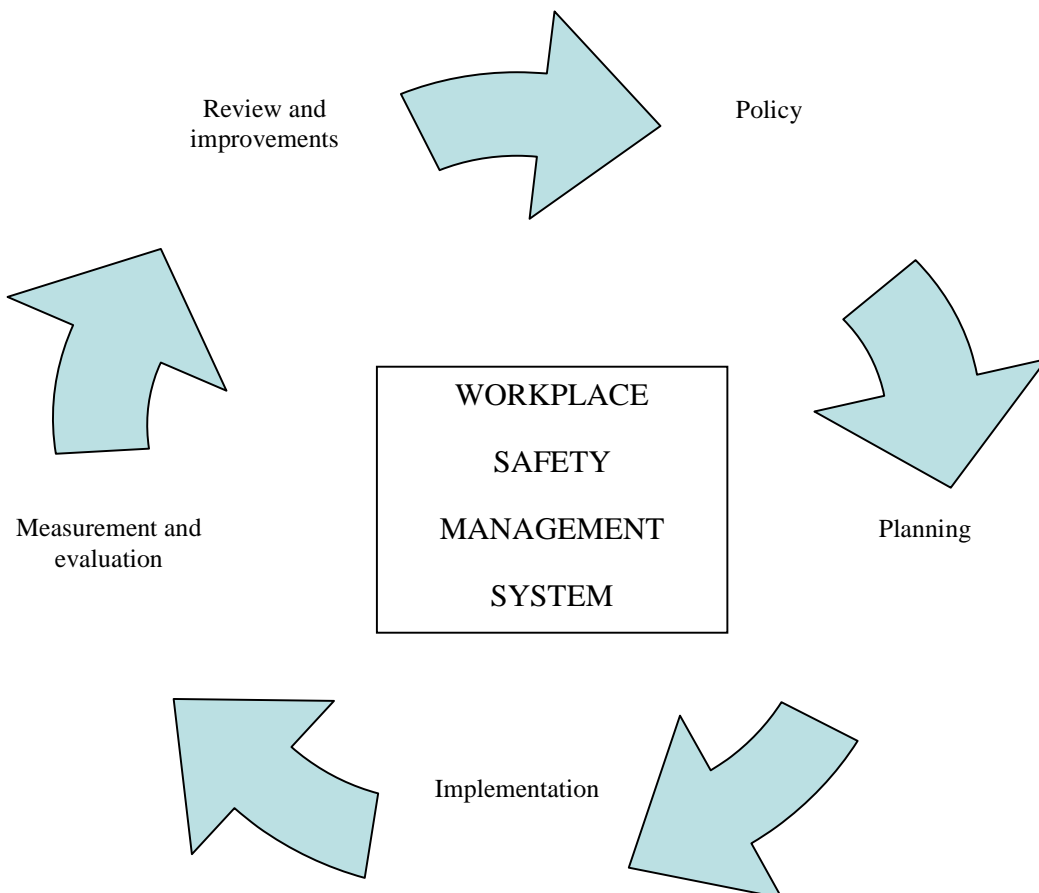
### Developing a Systematic Approach to Workplace Safety

The OHS Act 2004 provides a general duty of care for employers and Committees of Management to:

- **Eliminate** risks to health and safety, as far as reasonably practicable
- Where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate a risk, then, **reduce** the risk so far as is reasonably practicable

**What is Risk?** – the likelihood of illness, injury or even death occurring following exposure to a hazard.

To meet this duty of care, and the requirements of the Housing Registration Standards, employers or CoMs should have in place a documented systematic approach to OHS, otherwise known as an OHS management system. OHS management systems have these core elements:



## Managing Workplace Hazards

**What is a Workplace?** – any place where an employee (including a contractor) conducts the work of that agency. This includes the office, a tenant's home, meetings at other locations, and travelling en route between the office and meetings or properties.

**What is a Hazard?** – something with the potential to cause harm, injury or illness, eg, a work process, chemical or equipment.

Managing hazards in a workplace involves:

### THINKING

1. Hazard identification – knowing what hazards exist in the workplace.
2. Risk assessment – knowing the level of risk associated with a hazard, that is, high, medium or low level of risk, by conducting a risk assessment.

### DOING

3. Application of Controls – determining what can be done to control the risk associated with the hazard and putting those controls in place.

### REVIEWING

4. Monitoring and reviewing the selected controls to ensure they are having the desired effect. If the controls are effective they should have eliminated or minimized the risk associated with the hazard.

These steps provide the basic framework for dealing with workplace hazards and underpin the approach to the hazards cited in this kit.

For **Employers** and **CoMs**, Think, Do, Review involves:

- Being aware of the hazards that are present in your workplaces – including having systematic means of identifying hazards before they cause injuries or illnesses
- Attending to hazards that are brought to your attention – for example, when hazard or incident reports are lodged they should be dealt with expediently
- Assessing the level of risk associated with the hazards – by carrying out risk assessments on all identified hazards
- Doing all that is reasonably practicable to control the hazard – either eliminating it entirely or minimizing the risk associated with hazard
- Ensuring that control measures are effective
- Consulting staff about the above

For **employees** this includes:

- Reporting hazards when they are identified
- Taking steps to address the hazard if this is your responsibility, that is, eliminating the hazard or reducing the level of risk associated with the hazard
- Cooperating with whatever control measures your employer has in place to deal with the hazard, including complying with policies and procedures and using safety equipment

**Note:** a more detailed explanation of the steps involved in Think, Do, Review is contained in Appendix B.

***Checklist for Managing Workplace Health and Safety***

	Yes/No	Action Required
1) Does your organisation have an OHS management system?		
2) Does your organisation have an OHS Policy?		
3) Does the policy make clear the OHS responsibilities of management and staff?		
4) Have OHS goals or targets been identified?		
5) Have plans been made to meet these goals or targets?		
6) Are the goals or targets regularly reviewed?		
7) Are workplace hazards systematically identified?		
8) Do you have a procedure or means of reporting hazards?		
9) Is risk assessment undertaken?		
10) Are hazard/risk control measures implemented?		
11) Are there ways of measuring the effectiveness of the control measures?		

## ***Part 3: Workplace Hazards***

### **Bullying and Harassment**

WorkSafe Victoria defines workplace bullying as repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed to an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety.

Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person would expect, having regard to the circumstances, would expect to victimize, humiliate, undermine or threaten.

Examples include:

- Abusive, insulting or offensive language
- Excluding, isolating or marginalising others, deliberately or otherwise
- Behaving in a way that frightens or intimidates
- Humiliating others through sarcasm, belittling someone's opinions or unjustified criticism, including criticism delivered by yelling or screaming
- Spreading misinformation or malicious rumours
- Participating in 'collective bullying', that is, aggressive group behaviour as a deliberate strategy to isolate or drive an individual from the workplace
- Setting impossible tasks or deadlines, allocating meaningless tasks or unfairly assigning unpleasant tasks

### ***Responsibilities***

**Employers** and **CoMs** have the primary legal duty for providing a healthy and safe workplace under the OHS Act 2004. The duty applies to their own employees and to others in their workplace, including contractors and volunteers.

**Employees** have a responsibility to abide by safety standards and to co-operate with their employers actions to ensure a healthy and safe workplace is maintained.

Worksafe Victoria has developed a Guidance Note on the prevention of Bullying and Violence at work to assist both employers and employees deal with this issue. The Guidance note includes advice on the steps to take.

### ***Preventing Bullying and Harassment***

Steps to prevent bullying and harassment include:

- Having a no bullying policy – which includes means of dealing with bullying and harassment incidents
- Prominently displaying the policy at the workplace and in public areas
- Raising awareness – through training sessions, at induction and including amongst contractors and volunteers
- Identifying risk factors – for example, through staff surveys
- Having reporting procedures and encouraging reporting of incidents
- Treating all reported incidents seriously

### *Useful references*

- OHS Act 2004
- Bullying and Workplace Violence at [www.ohsreps.org.au](http://www.ohsreps.org.au), website of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, accessed May 2008
- “Bullying in the Workplace – A Guide to Prevention for Managers and Supervisors”, Comcare, Publication no OHS 65, published July 2007, accessed at [www.comcare.gov.au](http://www.comcare.gov.au) May 2008
- “Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work”, Guidance Note published by WorkSafe Victoria, February 2003

### *Sample policy*

#### **ABC Housing Cooperative Policy on the Prevention and Management of Bullying**

ABC Housing Cooperative is committed to providing all employees with a healthy and safe workplace free from bullying and intimidation. Bullying is not an acceptable part of our work culture. Bullying can harm a person’s health and wellbeing.

Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety. It can include behaviour such as:

- Deliberately changing work rosters to victimize particular employees
- Verbal abuse
- Intimidation
- Sabotaging someone else’s work
- Humiliating someone through sarcasm or insults

Anyone who experiences or witnesses bullying should report it as soon as possible. When bullying is reported, it will be investigated quickly and in accordance with our procedures. Where necessary, a formal investigation will be undertaken and disciplinary action may result.

Every manager and employee has responsibility to comply with this policy and to treat everyone who works here with dignity and respect.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ The employer

## Hazardous Substances

Unsafe use and handling of hazardous substances or chemicals can cause cancer, skin disease, poisoning and respiratory illness.

Did you know? “A quarter of all Victorian employees regularly use hazardous substances such as chemicals, flammable liquids and gases in their work.” WorkSafe Victoria

Hazardous substances are substances that have the potential to harm people’s health. They can be solids, liquids or gases, and when used in the workplace, they are often in the form of fumes, dusts, mists and vapours.

Examples of hazardous substances include:

- **irritants** such as ammonia
- **acute toxins** such as cyanide
- **corrosives** such as sulphuric acid and caustic soda
- **carcinogens** (cancer causing substances) such as benzene and vinyl chloride.

### *Responsibilities*

**Employers and/or CoMs:** Obtain and provide information to employees on the hazardous substances that are present in your workplaces. This means:

- Be aware of the chemicals or hazardous substances that are used in your workplaces – most commonly this will be cleaning chemicals or maintenance materials eg, paint or solvents
- Obtain current Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for each hazardous substance
- Keep a register of all hazardous substances supplied to your workplace – an MSDS register (an example can be found at Appendix C)
- Keep the MSDS accessible to employees – so that they know what they are handling and what precautions for use are required
- Provide training where appropriate
- Ensure that containers in which hazardous substances are supplied are labelled
- Identify containers of waste

**Manufacturers and suppliers of hazardous substances** are required to determine whether the substance is hazardous and provide information, including accurate MSDS's to users or purchasers.

**Employees** - Your employer is required to protect you from the risk of exposure to hazardous substances in the workplace. At the same time, you have a general duty to take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and that of others who may be affected by your work, and to cooperate with your employer’s efforts to make the workplace safe.

This may include:

- following workplace **safety policies** and procedures

- using **control measures** provided, eg, safety gear such as gloves and masks
- attending health and safety **training**
- helping to **identify hazards** and risks

### ***Material Safety Data Sheets***

A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is a document that describes the hazardous substance and provides vital information to assist people with the safe use and storage.

Occupiers are required to obtain from the manufacturer or supplier the current version of the MSDS for all hazardous substances held on the premises. The MSDS must be readily accessible to all employees, other persons on the premises and emergency services personnel. It must be supplied before the hazardous substance is used for the first time at a workplace.

A sample MSDS register is provided at **Appendix C**.

To see an example of an MSDS for WD40<sup>1</sup>, a product commonly used in households and for commercial use, go to [www.wd40.com.au/msds/ChemWatch](http://www.wd40.com.au/msds/ChemWatch)

### ***Useful References***

- OHS Act 2004
- OHS Regulations 2007 – Chapter 4 Hazardous Substances
- Your Health and Safety Guide to Hazardous Substances (WorkSafe Publication – March, 2006)

### ***Quick Checklist***

	Yes/No	Action to be taken
1) Are Hazardous Substances used at the workplace?		
2) Are risk assessments of hazardous substances conducted?		
3) Is information on hazardous substances provided to employees? That is, are MSDS available and are containers correctly labelled?		
4) Is training on hazardous substances provided or available to employees who use hazardous substances?		
5) Is a register of Hazardous Substances and Material Safety Data Sheets kept?		
6) Are results of risk assessments kept?		
7) Are chemicals or hazardous substances a routine part of any workplace inspection?		

<sup>1</sup> WD40 is used as a lubricant, corrosion inhibitor – it displaces moisture and is used as a cleaner.

## **Ergonomics & the Office Environment**

A range of hazards may exist in the office environment including manual handling, hazardous substances, slips/trips/falls, bullying and occupational violence. The hazards most often associated with the office are those that arise from the ergonomic design of the environment.

**National Community Housing Standard 6.4.3** requires that organizations have adequate and appropriate office equipment and furniture that is well-maintained.

### ***What is Ergonomics?***

Ergonomics is the art of fitting the task to the person. Ergonomists study human characteristics to determine how the living and working environment can be better designed to suit the needs of people. Poor ergonomics can lead to a range of overuse injuries known as Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS).

### ***What is OOS?***

Ergonomic hazards in offices most often arise from computer based work, where long periods in front of the screen can lead to back, neck and shoulder pain. This can manifest itself as Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) injuries such as Carpel Tunnel Syndrome and Tenosynovitis.

OOS injuries are usually caused or aggravated by poor work processes and unsuitable working conditions that involve repetitive or forceful movements or the maintenance of constrained or awkward postures.

OOS is not just found in office environments, it can happen anywhere that people are required to work with poorly designed workstations, use the same joints and muscles over and over again in repetitive movements and work using awkward postures or movements over sustained periods of time.

### ***Early Reporting and Intervention***

A key to dealing with OOS is to early reporting and early intervention. Early reporting of the symptoms allows identification and treatment while the condition is still reversible. Employees should be encouraged to report symptoms and take action at the earliest sign of discomfort.

### ***Quick Checklist***

	Yes/ No	Action to be taken
1) Is appropriate equipment and workstation provided for the job, such as ergonomically designed, adjustable furniture, chairs, desks and computers?		
2) Is the work area is arranged so that materials, equipment and controls can be easily reached without stretching or twisting?		
3) Are hand tools for repetitive tasks a comfortable size, shape and weight, are well-balanced with a comfortable grip and require no more than reasonable force to operate?		
4) Is training and information provided to employees about safe working practices, for example correct work methods and postures and the correct use of tools, machinery and other equipment.		
5) Is equipment regularly maintained and replaced as needed and that new equipment is assessed on health and safety grounds before purchase?		
6) Are workers consulted about job design and organization?		
7) Can working positions be changed frequently?		
8) Is work organised to mix repetitive and non-repetitive tasks?		
9) Where a job cannot be varied or rotated, are short rest breaks utilized? 5 to 10 minutes every hour is generally suggested, which may be broken up into half of this time every half-hour.		
10) Are workers allowed an adjustment period when they return to work after an absence for holidays or illness to allow for a gradual return to a regular work pace? This could be achieved by a slower work rate, more frequent breaks or job rotation.		

### ***Useful References***

- “Officewise – A Guide to Health and Safety in the Office”, Worksafe Publication no. VWA023/02/12.05
- Checklist – Internal Environment from “Working Safely in Community Services”, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oct 2006, published by WorkSafe Victoria.

## Manual Handling

Manual Handling is any activity that requires the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any object<sup>2</sup>. Manual handling injuries can be exacerbated by work activities that involve awkward postures, repetitive actions, bending, twisting or overextending the body.

### *High Risk Work Practices*

Seemingly mundane activities can have dire consequences in terms of the types of injuries that can arise. Most people are involved in some form of manual handling most days of their lives.

Examples of manual handling situations include:

- Moving furniture
- Carrying computers/televisions
- Pushing a trolley
- Lifting a ladder
- Restraining a person
- Typing reports using a notebook computer in an awkward posture
- Stretching to reach a high shelf
- Separating fighting residents
- Standing on a table and/or chair to pin up notices
- Bending to a bottom shelf to reach a carton
- Lifting 25 litre containers of cleaning chemicals with one hand
- Moving rocks, digging etc at a gardening bee
- Poor workstation layout or design

### *How Much Can a Worker Lift?*

There is no legal limit now on how much a worker can lift in Victoria. Risk of injury depends on a number of factors in the task not just the weight of the load. However, the following limits are recommended by the Workers Health Centre<sup>3</sup> to avoid injury:

Workers Position	Lifting Load
Standing	< 16 to 20 kg
Seated	< 4.5 kg

<sup>2</sup> Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 Part 1.1.5 Definitions

<sup>3</sup> From the Workers Health Centre Fact Sheet “Manual Handling – Preventing Back Pain and Injury”, 2004

### ***What Can Employers and CoMs Do To Minimise Manual Handling Risks?***

- Check injury records to find out the areas and tasks where injuries have occurred
- Consult with employees and/or OHS representatives about their concerns
- Monitor the condition of the workplace, looking at factors such as adequate lighting, slippery floors and rough ground
- Identify the correct posture to be used when performing particular tasks.
- Identify risk factors associated with particular tasks
- Ensure workers engaged in manual handling tasks are adequately trained at induction
- Refresher training and reminders to reinforce the message

### ***Possible Means of Minimising Manual Handling Risks***

- Redesign the task to eliminate or reduce the risk
- Change workplace layout, for example provide tables with an adjustable work height
- Prevent unnecessary handling and use smaller containers to package loads
- Provide mechanical aids for lifting and moving heavy materials and loads
- Provide the appropriate training and education to perform the task
- Provide training for proper manual handling and the prevention of back injury
- Reduce repetitive tasks by introducing variation in work patterns

### ***Useful References***

- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 Part 3.1 Manual Handling
- “Manual Handling – Preventing Back Pain and Injury” Fact Sheet published by the Workers Health Centre at [www.workershealth.com.au](http://www.workershealth.com.au)
- Code of Practice for Manual Handling, VWA003/01/12.02, found at [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)
- “Manual Handling - Risk Management In A Small Organisation”, a guidance note from Worksafe found at [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

## *Sample Policy and Procedure (1)*

### **Affordable Community Housing Inc Manual Handling Policy**

**Purpose:** To ensure that safe working methods for lifting and movement of weights are developed, promoted and implemented.

**Method:**

1. The relevant statutory requirements concerning manual handling are to be complied with
2. Site Managers are to ensure that all employees who are likely to be engaged in lifting are trained in manual handling procedures. Wherever possible, mechanical aids are to be used when lifting heavy weights
3. Training in lifting procedures is to be a part of employee induction and includes reference to:
  - OHS Regulations 2007 Chapter 3 Manual Handling
  - Code of Practice for Manual Handling, VWA003/01/12.02
4. Site supervisors are to ensure compliance with the following regulations:
  - No one under 18 should lift more than 16 kg on their own
  - It is advisable not to lift loads above 4.5 kg whilst seated
  - Wherever possible, use mechanical assistance for lifting
  - No person should be required to lift, lower or carry loads above 55 kg unless mechanical assistance or team lifting arrangements are provided to lower risk of injury
5. Site Managers are to report any situations in which these procedures cannot be implemented

## *Sample Policy and Procedure ( 2)*

### **ABC Housing Cooperative Manual Handling Policy and Procedure**

#### **Purpose and Scope**

The purpose of this policy is to set out specific manual handling procedures and performance standards to reduce the risk of accident, injury or illness of organisation employees, volunteers and other unpaid persons involved in organisation business (e.g. work experience participants).

This policy provides for the:

- Identification of potential risks and hazards to which employees may be exposed in the course of their manual handling duties
- Implementation of appropriate procedures to minimise manual handling work related accidents, injuries or illness
- Development and delivery of specific training programs to educate employees regarding good manual handling practices
- Investigation and documentation of work-related manual handling incidents or lost hours with a view to future risk minimisation

#### **Policy**

ABC is committed to ensuring that all employees, volunteers and other unpaid persons are properly educated and adequately resourced so as to minimise the risk of illness, accident or injury related to manual handling at work. This commitment is an integral part of promoting good occupational health and safety practices which are consistent with legislative requirements.

#### **Procedures**

The following procedures are to be implemented to ensure that the ABC meets its policy objective of ensuring that all employees are properly educated and adequately resourced so as to minimise the risk of illness, accident or injury related to manual handling at work.

ABC will:

- Provide all organisation employees with appropriate information about, and training in, manual handling practices
- Take all reasonable steps to determine the appropriate manual handling method for staff with specific manual handling needs. Methods will be determined by appropriate professional consultants (i.e., physiotherapists, occupational therapists) in consultation with the staff member
- Ensure employees have access to equipment necessary to effect safe manual handling practices
- Promptly investigate, remedy and document any employee grievance regarding any manual handling matter

**Performance Standards**

The following performance standards must be met to ensure that the procedures specified in this section are implemented effectively:

- All employees have been provided with a copy of the ABC's Policy on Manual Handling Procedures and a copy of the policy is kept in each service outlet
- All employees and volunteers have attended and successfully completed approved training in manual handling (where appropriate to their duties)
- All employees have been provided with the appropriate equipment necessary for safe manual handling
- Any grievances that are lodged are addressed in accordance with the manual handling principles outlined in this policy and the Policy on Staff Grievances
- All employees and volunteers are made aware of the contents of the Policy on Manual Handling Procedures

**Review of the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.

### ***Sample Manual Hazard Checklist***

The following sample checklist is suitable for an initial assessment of whether a task or job is a manual handling risk. Should this assessment show that the job or task does involve manual handling risks then a more extensive risk assessment can be conducted using the Manual Handling Risk Assessment Work Sheet provided in the WorkSafe Victoria Publication “Working Safely in Community Services”

#### **Generic Manual Handling Checklist**

Description of Workplace -----

Date of Assessment -----

Assessed by -----

O.H. & S. or Staff Representative (*Signature*) . . . . .

*The existence of any of the following key risk factors indicates the need for further assessment.*

#### ***Movements, Postures and Layout***

1. Is there frequent or prolonged bending down where the hands pass below mid-thigh height?
2. Is there frequent or prolonged reaching above the shoulder?
3. Is there frequent or prolonged bending due to extended reach forward?
4. Is there frequent or prolonged twisting of the back?
5. Are awkward postures assumed or over prolonged periods (that is, postures that are not forward facing and upright)?
6. Are work tasks difficult to see with having to assume awkward postures?
7. Is work performed in sitting or standing postures only?
8. Is it difficult for the employee to vary working posture or position during the day?

#### ***Manual Handling***

9. Is manual handling performed frequently or for long time periods by the employee?
10. Are loads moved or carried over long distances?
11. Is there need to place the load accurately or precisely?
12. For lifting, carrying or lowering, does the weight/mass of the load exceed mandatory or recommended limits?
13. For pushing/pulling, are high pushing or pulling forces involved?
14. Is the load difficult to handle due to its weight?
15. Is the load difficult or awkward to handle due to its size, shape, temperature, instability or unpredictability?
16. Is it difficult or unsafe to get an adequate grip on the load?
17. Are gloves required during the manual handling?

18. Does the employee have any other difficulty handling the load?

***Work Environment***

19. Is the task performed in a confined space?

20. Is the lighting adequate?

21. Is vibration involved?

22. Is the climate in the workplace particularly hot or cold?

23. Are the floor surfaces cluttered, uneven, slippery or unsafe in any other way?

***Individual Factors***

24. Is the employee new to the work or returning from leave or any period away from work?

25. Are there age related factors or disabilities that may affect performance?

26. Does the employee's clothing or personal protective equipment interfere with manual handling performance?

## **Motor Vehicles and Driver Safety**

Driving a motor vehicle is an essential part of many jobs. The main risks associated with driving relate to poor vehicle maintenance and poor driving skills.

### ***Responsibilities***

Unlike other workplaces, the road is not a closed environment. Preventing work-related road crashes requires strategies that combine traffic safety principles and sound safety management practices. Although employers cannot control roadway conditions, they can promote safe driving behaviour by providing safety information to workers and by setting and enforcing driver safety policies. Crashes are not an unavoidable part of doing business.

**Employers** can take steps to protect their employees and their organisations:

- Assign a key member of the management team responsibility and authority to set and enforce comprehensive driver safety policy
- Enforce mandatory seat belt use
- Do not require workers to drive irregular hours or far beyond their normal working hours
- Do not require workers to conduct business on a mobile phone while driving
- Develop work schedules that allow employees to obey speed limits and to follow applicable hours-of-service regulations
- Document and investigate accidents

### **Fleet Management**

- Adopt a structured vehicle maintenance program
- Provide company vehicles that offer the highest possible levels of occupant protection

### **Safety Programs**

- Teach workers strategies for recognizing and managing driver fatigue and in-vehicle distractions
- Provide training to workers operating specialized motor vehicles or equipment.
- Emphasize to workers the need to follow safe driving practices on and off the job

### **Driver Performance**

- Ensure that workers assigned to drive on the job have a valid driver's license and one that is appropriate for the type of vehicle to be driven
- Check driving records of prospective employees, and perform periodic rechecks after hiring
- Maintain complete and accurate records of workers' driving performance

### **Employees Responsibilities**

At a minimum **employees** have a responsibility to:

- take all reasonable care when driving

- carry their driver's license at all times
- report any faults to the responsible person
- provide assistance at any accident scene
- wear a seat belt at all times

## *Sample Policy and Procedure*

### **Affordable Community Housing Inc Motor Vehicle and Driver Safety Policy**

#### **Purpose and Scope**

To establish guidelines that ensure the safe operation of motor vehicles while on Affordable Community Housing Inc (ACH) business.

This policy affects and applies to all ACH employees who drive agency vehicles or transport clients.

#### **Policy Statement**

To ensure the safe operation of ACH-owned vehicles, personally owned vehicles used for ACH business, and vehicles rented at ACH expense, employees are to adhere to the following policy. Failure to do so will result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

- Staff will abide by all road rules and safe driving principles at all times
- Staff will drive the car in a safe way at all times
- Staff will act in a courteous way towards other drivers on the road at all times
- All traffic and parking infringements will be the responsibility of the driver
- There is to be a limit of four hours driving on any one day for any trip. On long trips, when possible, two or more people shall share the driving
- An incident report form will be kept in the car and used to record information pertaining to any accident or traffic infringement that may occur
- No staff member shall admit liability for any accident or infringement to any third party
- All trips shall be entered in the log book with a record of the date, purpose, kilometres travelled and the driver
- Employees will be physically fit at all times when operating any vehicle
- Employees may not operate a vehicle within eight hours of consuming any alcohol
- Employees taking a prescription or over-the-counter medication, which may affect their ability to drive, will not drive
- Employees may never take illegal drugs and operate a vehicle
- Employees who violate this policy will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination
- All employees will maintain a current, valid driver's license. All commercial drivers will maintain a current, valid commercial license. Proof of valid driver's license may be required by ACH
- Employees receiving mileage reimbursement are to obtain and maintain motor vehicle insurance as required by applicable state law. Proof of such coverage must be submitted to ACH every twelve months
- Employees are to conduct visual inspections of vehicles prior to operation, in accordance with the instructions received in the safety training courses

- Each vehicle shall be equipped with the safety equipment listed in the training material

**Administration and Review of the Policy**

The Executive Officer will administer this policy.

This policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.

***Sample Vehicle and Driver Safety Checklist<sup>4</sup>***

Workplace \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date for review of agreed actions \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Yes	No	Comment/Action by Date
Employees hold valid driver's licences for the class of vehicle they use. Licences are recorded and verified annually.			
Vehicle records (registration, insurance, fuel, kilometrage, servicing and parts) are maintained and checked.			
A roadside assistance scheme is in place for all vehicles owned by the organization.			
Drivers are instructed to check fuel records and visually inspect tyres before leaving base.			
All vehicles owned by the organization are routinely serviced and a procedure for reporting faults is in place and known to all employees.			
Random checks are conducted at appropriate periods to check vehicle condition and safety.			
An incident kit is kept in each vehicle, with instructions, report form, first aid advice and emergency phone numbers.			
An incident reporting and investigation system is in place and is implemented following all car incidents.			
Incidents reports are compiled, eg, in a database.			
Crash test ratings and safety devices (eg, front and side air bags, anti-lock braking systems) are considered when buying or leasing new cars.			
Cargo barrier is in place in station wagons and hatchbacks			
Consideration given to wiring daytime running of headlights to ignition.			
Policies/Procedures in place regarding fatigue management, alcohol and drug use,			

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from "Working Safely in Community Services" a WorkSafe Victoria publication.

driver safety.			
Hands free mobile kits are installed in vehicles and employees are instructed that vehicles must be pulled over and stopped before dialling.			
Consideration is given to equipping vehicles with first aid kits, safety vests and triangles, fire extinguishers.			
Consideration is given to driving performance review as part of overall work performance review.			

## Occupational Violence

WorkSafe Victoria defines occupational violence as “any incident where an employee is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace”.

“Physical attack” includes the direct or indirect application of force by a person to the body or, or to the clothing or equipment worn by another person, where that application creates a risk to health and safety.

“Threat” means a statement or behaviour that causes a person to believe they are in danger or being physically attacked.<sup>5</sup>

The threat or attack may come from clients or residents but the term occupational violence also extends to colleagues and third parties known to the organization such as family members and intruders.

### *Responsibilities*

Employers have a duty under the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004) to provide and maintain for employees, as far as practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health. This includes providing a safe system of work, information, training and supervision. The employer has the duty to take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk to employees. The employer must consult with the OHS reps and the workers in these situations. This includes taking all practicable measures to reduce the risk of occupational violence.

The employer's duty of care to employees under common law covers more than the work they are doing and workplace conditions to include potential exposure to risk from the foreseeable conduct of third parties.

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<sup>5</sup> All definitions are from “Guidance Note on the Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work”, a WorkSafe Victoria Publication

## ***Addressing Occupational Violence***

Employers and CoMs should:

- Talk to staff, particularly those who have to work alone for at least some of the time, as they may be more vulnerable
- Ensure a risk assessment is done to identify risk factors such as: lone working on and off site and other potential hazards
- Investigate if jobs can be re-organised to provide a safer system of work, including ensuring there are adequate numbers of staff
- Conduct a *Workplace Violence Safety Audit*
- Encourage and ensure that workers report and document all incidents

Employees should:

- Raise any concerns or issues of security with your employer as soon as possible
- Follow procedures and policies to minimize the risk of occupational violence
- Report and document all incidents

## ***Useful References***

- “Guidance Note on the Prevention of Bullying and Violence at Work”, WorkSafe Victoria
- The Australian Nursing Federation - Zero Tolerance Policy at [www.anf.asn.au](http://www.anf.asn.au)
- The Australian Education Union's “Your Rights To A Safe Workplace - Guide For AEU Representatives On Dealing With Violence In The Workplace” at [www.aeuvic.asn.au/ohs/resources.html](http://www.aeuvic.asn.au/ohs/resources.html)

## *Sample Occupational Violence Policy and Procedure*

### **Affordable Community Housing Inc. Policy and Procedure for the Prevention and Management of Occupational Violence**

#### **Purpose and Scope**

This policy aims to prevent the risk of foreseeable occupational violence, or threats of violence through the identification, evaluation and control of the potential for occupational violence occurring.

This policy applies to all persons in the workplace and includes employees, visitors, volunteers, contractors and the organizations community.

#### **Policy**

Affordable Community Housing Inc. (ACH) is committed to ensuring that all employees, volunteers and others are properly educated and adequately resourced so as to minimise the risk of illness, accident or injury related to occupational violence. This commitment is an integral part of promoting good occupational health and safety practices which are consistent with legislative requirements.

#### **Responsibilities**

Executive Officer – It is the responsibility of the EO in consultation with employees to identify and assess potential situations in which occupational violence may occur. The EO is responsible for the application of suitable controls where a risk has been identified. The EO will ensure that a system for recording all incidents of occupational violence is implemented and there is access to support services following a violent situation.

Employees – Are responsible for promptly reporting any incidents involving threats or physical attack to the EO.

#### **Procedure**

ACH will assess the level of risk from occupational violence by:

- Conducting an audit of the workplace
- Identifying categories of violence that could occur, eg, aggressive residents, robbery, etc
- Reviewing incident and injury reports
- Consulting with employees

ACH will implement risk control measures that may include:

- Training staff at induction and at regular intervals as required. Such training may include: interpersonal skills to diffuse potentially violent situations; dealing with

difficult or aggressive people; cash handling procedures; emergency procedures; reporting procedures

- Restricting or deterring the opportunity for aggression
- Removing and / or limiting the opportunity for interaction between an aggressor and employee
- A system for alerting co-workers or police

Risk control measures may include modification to the workplace including:

- Strong interior lighting and exterior security lighting
- Personal or fixed duress alarms
- Surveillance, eg, security cameras
- Clearing cash frequently and randomly from cash drawers
- Counting money in a secure area away from public view
- Clearly documenting emergency contact numbers

#### **Post Incident Response**

ACH will ensure that any incident is documented and investigated. Employees will be provided with support and guidance.

#### **Administration and Review of the Policy**

The Executive Officer will administer this policy. This policy will be reviewed on a two yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly.

***Sample Checklist for Occupational Violence<sup>6</sup>***

Workplace \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date for review of agreed actions \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Yes	No	Comment/Action by Date
Are persons of the organization likely to be distressed or aggressive?			
Could aggressive or difficult persons be likely to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol?			
Have employees been threatened in the past?			
Have employees received training on how to deal with aggressive or difficult behaviour?			
Do employees have appropriate workplace knowledge and skills to deal with aggressive behaviour?			
Are employees working alone or in isolated locations?			
Is relevant information about difficult or aggressive persons is appropriately communicated to relevant staff?			
Are services reduced or discontinued for clients who present a level of risk which cannot be managed using existing resources?			
Are procedures in place and followed for referring clients to appropriate services for treatment of psychiatric, illicit drug and alcohol issues?			
Are residents/tenants rights and obligations documented and clearly communicated at the start of the service?			
Are inexperienced employees are paired with experienced employees?			
Are procedures in place and followed for resolution of disputes and grievances between employees, volunteers and management?			

<sup>6</sup> This sample checklist has been adapted from the Occupational Violence Checklist found in “Working Safely in Community Services”, a WorkSafe publication.

Are items that could be used as weapons removed where practicable and without risk to employees?			
Are there procedures in place for handling client cash and personal items?			
Are procedures in place and followed to ensure that clients/residents are never given employees personal telephone numbers or home addresses?			
Are employees working with high risk client groups encouraged to consider silent private telephone numbers?			
Are employees/volunteers prohibited from sexual or other personal relationship with clients/residents?			
Is there a cash handling system in place?			
Is limited cash kept on premises?			
Is cash stored in secure location out of sight of public and clients?			
Is there a procedure in place for safe transport of cash when bank deposits or withdrawals are made?			
Are there procedures in place for defusing threats, back up, reporting, retreat to safe areas and calling police?			
Is there a person nominated to take charge in case of any violence related emergency?			
Are there home visits and emergency call-out procedures in place?			
Is first aid and access to medical care provided for anyone injured?			

## Slips, Trips and Falls

As with many other industries, slips, trips and falls are a significant cause of injury in community housing services.

Did you know? “While falls occur in all industries they are most common in construction, manufacturing, community services, trade, communications, transport and storage” Victorian Worksafe Authority website, sourced May 2008

What is the difference between a slip, trip and a fall?

- Slips, trips and falls are classified as the “mechanism of injury”, that is, how an injury occurred.
- Falls can occur from heights, such as ladders, furniture, work platforms, stairs etc
- Falls can occur at the same level, after slipping or tripping or stumbling. For example falls up stairs.
- Injuries can occur when stepping, kneeling or sitting on objects.

### ***Responsibilities***

**Employers and CoMs** have a duty of care to ensure a safe work environment and that includes prevention of falls.

Persons who **manage** or **control** workplaces must ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the workplace, including the means of entering and leaving it is safe and without risk to health.

**Manufacturers, suppliers and installers** must ensure any equipment, such as a ladder or work platform, is designed, constructed and tested to ensure it is safe when used for the purpose it was designed, manufactured or supplied.

**Installers or persons who erect plant or equipment**, eg scaffolding or work platforms, must ensure the equipment is erected or installed so when used properly it can be used safely.

**Employees** are responsible for carrying out work according to the information, instruction and training provided by their employer and for using any safety precautions put in place.

### ***Basic Steps to Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls***

**Identifying** the hazards includes considering all possible sources of information about how employees may be exposed to slip, trip or fall hazards.

Consultation with employees is critical, to identify any ‘hot spots’ within the organization and to gain information about any ‘near misses’

Workplace inspections will help to identify ‘hot spots’ as floors, stairs, lighting, tasks, etc are inspected.

Information sources such as injury records will also highlight any potential problem areas.

Eliminating or controlling the risks involves a range of measures that may include:

- Keeping hallways and corridors clear of obstructions, such as equipment, cords and rubbish.
- Repairing or replacing damaged steps
- Storing items at suitable heights so that there is no need to climb to reach them

All the above are examples of elimination. Risk reduction strategies include:

- Cordoning off areas while cleaning is in progress
- Replacing loose mats with secured slip-free coverings
- Applying non-slip coatings or edge strips to stairs
- Ensuring a stepladder is available and used when required
- Having a policy of cleaning up spills immediately after they have happened
- Providing adequate lighting, particularly in stairwells and over exits

### *Useful References*

“Basic Steps to Preventing Falls from Heights” 1<sup>st</sup> edition, June 2005. Published by the Victorian Worksafe Authority

“Guide to Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls” published January, 2002 by Comcare and accessed at [www.comcare.gov.au](http://www.comcare.gov.au), May 2008

### *Falls from Heights*

Prevention of falls from heights both above and below two metres is the responsibility of everyone in the workplace; however, specific responsibilities differ, depending on the specifics of the situation.

### *Responsibilities*

Responsibility rests with **employers (and CoMs)**; persons who manage or control workplaces; manufacturers, importers and suppliers of equipment; anyone who erects or installs plant for use at a workplace.

**Employees** are responsible for carrying out work according to information, instruction, and training provided by their employer and for using any safety precautions that are put in place.

### *How to Manage Fall Hazards*

Employers and CoMs should ensure that arrangements are made for the following:

- Identify the tasks and situations that involve the possibility of someone falling more than 2 metres. For example, working on the roof of a building or clearing the spouting. Identification should involve all relevant staff/OHS Representatives and may be conducted by using visual inspections or surveys

- Keep up to date with the state of knowledge about fall hazards, for example, monitoring information provided by WorkSafe Victoria, keeping abreast about developments through employer associations and reading information provided by suppliers and manufacturers
- Assess the level of risk associated with the fall hazards that have been identified in step one
- If the assessment shows a risk of a fall from height OR if work is conducted at more than 2 metres, then precautions must be put in place to prevent falls occurring. In the first instance, the fall hazard must be eliminated. If elimination of the risk is not possible then the measures to reduce the likelihood of a fall occurring must be put in place
- Implement safety measures to eliminate or minimize the likelihood of a fall occurring
- Have emergency procedures in place in the event of a fall occurring. This may involve having trained first aid officers, training staff in emergency procedures, publicizing emergency contact numbers, furnishing relevant staff with mobile phones
- Make sure that the plant and equipment used when working at heights is adequate and well-maintained. For example, are ladders provided appropriate to the job?
- Provide training for staff involved in working at height or who are likely to work with contractors who work at height. This includes training about fall hazards, safety measures and equipment, emergency procedures and first aid
- Periodically check that risk assessments are up to date and safety measures are addressing the hazards identified. This may involve including fall hazards on safety checklists and site inspections

### *Useful References*

- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007 Part 3.3 – Prevention of Falls
- “Basic Steps to Preventing Falls From Heights”, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, June 2005, WorkSafe Victoria

### **Stress**

In relation to workplace health and safety, **stress** may be defined as the **misfit** between a worker's needs and capabilities, and what the workplace offers and demands.

Stress has also been defined as "the reaction people have to excessive demands or pressures, arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their jobs, but find difficulty; strain or worry in doing so". (Health and Safety Executive, UK).

Stress is often exacerbated when workers feel they have little support from supervisors or colleagues or little control over work or how they can cope with its demands and pressures.<sup>7</sup>

Stress can arise from specific incidents such as occupational violence, bullying or trauma or it can emerge after exposure to stressors over a period of time.

### ***What Can Cause Stress?***

Workplace stressors may arise from physical, organizational or industrial factors:

<b>Physical Stressors</b>	<b>Organisational Stressors</b>	<b>Industrial Stressors</b>
Noise	Deadline pressures	Job insecurity
Constant exposure to extremes of temperature	Excessive workloads	Poor career opportunities
Poorly designed or un-ergonomic furniture	Meaningless work	Long hours
Poor accommodation	Change, especially without consultation	Inadequate pay and conditions
Inadequate physical security	Unnecessary monitoring of employees	
	Poor work or task design	
	Constant exposure to aggressive or difficult clients	
	Bullying or harassment	

### ***Effects of Stress***

Stress can have immediate or short term symptoms that if left unchecked can have longer term, chronic effects.

	<b>Short Term Effects</b>	<b>Long Term Effects</b>
Physical	Indigestion	Heart disease
	Cramps	Ulcers
	Headaches	Colitis <sup>8</sup>
	Increased susceptibility to colds and flu	Stroke
	High blood pressure	Heart attacks
	Fatigue	Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS)

<sup>7</sup> “Work Organisation and Stress” published by the World Health Organisation, 2003

<sup>8</sup> Colitis is a chronic digestive disease characterized by inflammation of the colon. Colitis is one of a group of conditions which are inflammatory and auto-immune, affecting the tissue that lines the gastrointestinal system (the large and small intestine). It is classed as an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), not to be confused with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

	Insomnia	
Psychological	Anxiety	Depression
	Low self-esteem	Neurosis
	Frustration	Anger, distrust, competitiveness
	Poor concentration	Memory loss
Behavioural	Smoking, drinking, drug-taking	Alcohol or drug dependency
	Impulsive, irrational acts	Work-aholism
	Withdrawal	Breakdown in relationships
	Conflict or aggression	Inability to hold down a job

### ***How to Manage Workplace Stress***

**Identify** the sources of stress in the workplace. This may involve reviewing a range of information and should include consultation with staff. For example the following information sources<sup>9</sup> will help identify the presence of workplace stressors:

- Incident reports and workers compensation claims
- Sick leave records. High usage of sick leave is often associated with work-related stress
- Absenteeism and staff turnover records
- Use of employee assistance programs (if these are in place)
- Employee surveys
- Talking to employees
- Current industry trends

Develop ways to **control the risks**. Depending on the source of the stress there are various strategies to reduce the risk to psychological health in the workplace. For example:

- Implementing an anti Bullying and Harassment Policy. See the section in this manual on Bullying and Harassment for suggestions
- Ensuring people take their leave entitlements. This may involve regular review of leave entitlements
- Undertaking employee surveys
- Providing appropriate security measures to deal with occupational violence or client aggression. See the section in this manual on Occupational Violence for more details
- Providing training on how to deal with stress
- Providing training on how to deal with difficult or aggressive clients
- Implementing regular de-briefing sessions or peer support programs for staff who deal aggressive or difficult clients or situations

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<sup>9</sup> Employee's rights to privacy should be observed when accessing these records.

**Review control measures** at regular intervals. Review sickness and absenteeism records and others mentioned in identifying stress hazards to determine if the control measures are working.

### ***Useful References***

“Stresswise – Preventing Work-related Stress: A Guide for the Public Sector and Community Services”, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, April 2007. Published by WorkSafe Victoria. Stress page at OHS Reps @ Work <http://www.ohsrep.org.au/hazards/stress/index.cfm>

“Working Safely in Community Services” as previously cited.

“Working Well: Strategies to Prevent Psychological Injury at Work – Easy Reference Guide”, Publication no. 57, published by Comcare, June 2005. Available at [www.comcare.gov.au](http://www.comcare.gov.au)

## *Sample Policy and Procedure*

### **Affordable Community Housing Inc Stress Policy and Procedure**

#### **Purpose and Scope**

This policy and associated guidance set out what Affordable Community Housing Inc (ACH) does to manage work-related stress. This policy will apply to everyone in ACH. Provide support for those who are suffering ill health due to work related stress and provide assistance to enable employees to recover their full potential as soon as possible.

#### **Policy**

ACH is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all staff and recognises that excessive levels of work-related stress are a potential cause of ill-health. ACH has a duty in law to ensure that the health of its employees is not adversely affected by their work.

ACH will take all reasonable and practicable steps to safeguard the health and safety of employees while at work. ACH recognises that excessive levels of stress especially if endured for long periods can lead to ill health. Harmful levels of stress can arise as a result of factors both in the workplace and from employees' personal and family lives. While it has no control over external factors, ACH objectives are to:

- Identify sources of harmful levels of stress and prevent, as far as is reasonable and practicable, employees being exposed to harmful levels of stress at work
- Enable managers, supervisors and individual employees to recognise, at an early stage, problems which might be related to harmful levels of stress
- Identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed
- Consult with staff on all proposed action relating to the prevention of workplace stress
- Provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices
- Provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors
- Provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement ACH Inc's agreed stress management strategy

ACH recognises that a policy on work related stress cannot sit in isolation. It must be supported by other ACH policies which address matters which might result in harmful levels of stress.

### **Definition**

Work related stress is the body's reaction to an actual, or perceived, imbalance between the demands of a job and an individual's capabilities (or more simply, the reaction when an individual feels that he/she cannot cope with the demands of a job).

It is the state of affairs that exists when the way in which a person attempts to manage problems taxes or exceeds his/her coping strategies. Stress is the body's natural reaction to a challenge. It is a survival mechanism, warning of danger and is essential as a stimulant to activity to overcome that danger. Only if stress is excessive and is endured for long periods can it sometimes lead to physical and mental ill health.

Symptoms of stress may be physical, for example:

- altered appetite
- changes in weight
- headache
- backache
- skin rashes
- general tiredness
- difficulty in sleeping.

Stress may also manifest itself in:

- anxiety
- depression
- indecision
- uncharacteristic irritability or impatience
- an inability to concentrate or remember

### **Causes of Work-Related Stress**

ACH has developed six standards to help assess and tackle the main causes of stress. ACH commits to using these standards in any investigation into the causes of stress. The standards focus on six aspects of work as follows:

1. Demands – Includes issues like workload, work pattern and the work environment
2. Control – How much say the person has in the way they do their work
3. Support – Includes the encouragement and resources provided by the organisation, management and colleagues
4. Relationships – Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
5. Role – Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles
6. Change – How organisation change (large or small) is managed and communicated

External factors, for example difficulties in an employee's personal life, can also make it difficult for an individual to cope with the demands of their job.

ACH will use the Management Standards to help identify sources of harmful levels of stress at work.

### **Procedure**

In the first instance a member of staff who feels they may be suffering from stress should speak to either:

- Manager
- Human Resources Officer
- GP
- Employee Assistance or Counselling Service
- Union Representative

#### *Work-related Stress:*

Wherever possible the Manager will hold an informal meeting with the member of staff to try to identify what is causing their stress. If it is clear that the cause of stress is work related the Manager will consult with the member of staff on ways of trying to reduce the cause – for example, a particularly heavy workload, problems with the workplace, bullying. He/she may well suggest the member of staff should seek advice from the Employee Assistance or Counselling Service or their GP on how to reduce levels of stress.

#### *Non work-related stress:*

Where the sources of stress are outside work this may still have an effect on the employee at work. The employee should seek advice from the Employee Assistance or Counselling Service. The employee may or may not wish to talk to his/her Manager about problems outside work.

### **Confidentiality**

Complete confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

### **Training and Development**

An awareness of the symptoms of stress and learning how to recognise and reduce individual stress levels will be incorporated into staff training where appropriate. Training will recognise that a certain amount of pressure will always be present and will focus both on preventing excessive stress and on coping strategies when the pressure becomes too much.

### ***Checklist of Stress Risk Factors***

Some warning signs that stress may be present in the workplace:

	Yes/No	Action to be taken
Change without consulting staff		
'Toxic' culture		
Poor or no communication between management and staff or between staff		
Poor work relations between staff, between staff and managers		
Critical incidents		
Customer/client aggression		
Staff lack or have little control over their work		
Bullying and harassment		
No or inadequate performance review and feedback mechanisms		
Limited career or training and development opportunities		
Occupational violence		
Poor work/life balance (usually related to overwork or understaffing)		
Boring, repetitive work or job design		
Inadequate physical work environment		
Shift work		

## **Part 4: Working with Contractors**

The OHS Act 2004 states that employers must take every reasonable action to ensure health and safety in their business activities, including the actions of contractors under their control.

### **What is a Contractor?**

WorkSafe Victoria defines a contractor as someone who “provides goods or services or performs work for a set price or rate.”<sup>10</sup> Any company, agency, or individual contracted to provide goods, services or carry out works of any type for your organization. Contractors may include (but are not restricted to):

Builders, architects, cleaners (general, trauma, hazardous or toxic waste), electricians, plumbers, gardeners, general handymen, painters, tilers, fencers, bricklayers, carpenters, office equipment servicers, office work outsourcers/contractors, removalists, fire equipment specialists, whitegoods servicers, phone technicians, utilities (energy) providers, locksmiths.

The contractor may be self-employed, have employees or their own or have business partners.

### **Who is Responsible for What?**

Employers, CoMs and contractors all have OHS duties.

**Employers** and **CoMs** have the same duties to contractors as they do to their own employees when it comes to workplace health and safety.

These duties include:

- Providing and maintaining safe plant and equipment
- Arranging safe systems of work
- Maintaining the workplace in a condition that is safe and without risk to health
- Implementing procedures for the safe use, handling, transportation and storage of plant and substances
- Providing adequate facilities for the welfare of employees
- Providing adequate information, training, supervision and instruction to do the job safely and without risk to health

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<sup>10</sup> “Information on Engaging a Contractor”, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, May 2005, published by WorkSafe Victoria and accessed at [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au) , June 2008

Duties extend to matters over which the employer or CoM would be expected to have control and the OHS duties cannot be 'contracted out' to the contractor.

#### Case Study – Employers Duty to a Contractor

A company hired a contractor to carry out electrical work at its factory. After arriving at the factory the contractor's manager instructed an employee to take the cover off the main electrical switchboard and to get ready for the installation of a single-phase circuit breaker. The manager left the switch room to take a call on his mobile phone. While he was absent, an explosion took place in the switch room. The employee was seen running out into the factory with his body and clothing on fire. He received severe burns to 60% of his body and died a week later in hospital.

The company owning the factory was subsequently prosecuted for breach of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983* (NSW). Although pleading guilty to the breach the company submitted in court that the risk had not been readily foreseeable.

The company had engaged the contractor company as a specialist in its field to design, supply, install, test, commission and warrant the safety of the electrical work, including the work on the main switchboard. The specialist contractor had not informed the factory that it would work on the main switchboard that day. If it had, a partial shutdown could have been effected. At the time of the accident, the factory had a "no live work policy" for its own employees, but the application of the policy had not been extended to contractors.

The court pointed out that the factory could not delegate its safety responsibilities to a contractor. The factory needed to be kept informed of the work carried out on its premises and had in fact accepted that it had inadequate systems in place to communicate with contractors.

The existence of the "no live work" policy proved that the factory had foreseen that people working on the switchboard were at risk. The simple step of extending the policy to third parties for the protection against the same risk would have prevented the accident.

The company fined \$112,000 under that states' OHS Act in a case involving the use of a contractor's services.

*(Inspector Stewart v Siemens Dematic Pty Ltd (formerly Mannesman Dematic Colby Pty Ltd) No 2 [2003] NSWIRComm 45, 4 March 2003).*

## Contractors Duties

Contractors have the same duties as employees under the OHS Act. They must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other people who may be affected by the way they carry out their work.

For example, if an employer provides a ladder or work platform for working at height and the contractor is instructed to use it, the contractor is obliged to abide by that direction. In the case study provided above, if the company had advised the electrician about their 'no live work policy' and the electrician had ignored the directive then the legal outcome may have been very different.

## **Construction Work Worth More Than \$250,000**

From 1 July, 2008, principal contractors doing construction work worth more than \$250,000 have the following duties:

- Display a sign with contact details where it will be clearly seen from outside the workplace
- Prepare a health and safety coordination plan, keep it up to date and make it available for inspection

## **Screening Contractors**

Some steps to take to when engaging contractors for the first time or reviewing arrangements with existing contractors include:

- Inform the contractor in writing they are required to abide by your organisation's OHS policy and requirements
- Obtain a copy of the contractors' current Workcover Policy and and/or proof of Public Liability Insurance cover
- Inspect the contractor's plant and equipment
- Provide the contractor with copies of relevant OHS procedures and policies in relation to the work they will be providing
- Including OHS provisions in any contract signed by the contractor
- Discussing with the contractor any hazards associated with the works they are contracted to undertake

More information about screening and selecting contractors can be found in "OHS and Contractors – Working With Contractors in the Community Housing Sector" published by CHFV in 2002.

## **Part 5: How to Develop OHS Policies and Procedures**

An OHS policy document is a useful tool that will:

- reflect your organisation's philosophy on OHS
- assist in day to day decision making and operations
- clarify management, staff and contractors OHS responsibilities
- set the climate for a proactive approach to OHS
- provide a high profile for OHS

What you include in your policies and procedures will depend on a number of issues, such as:

- the size and complexity of your organisation
- the type of activities managers, staff and contractors undertake

After developing an OHS policy it should be endorsed by the Committee of Management or relevant management team and then widely disseminated to staff.

Your organisation may also need to develop policies and procedures in relation to specific hazards or issues, such as contractors, challenging behaviours, stress and manual handling. In which case the policy may need to refer to the regulations and approved codes of compliance or other relevant guides.

### **Things to Consider When Writing an OHS Policy**

Some questions that need to be asked and answered include:

- What are the organisations' philosophy/aims in relation to OHS?
- What are the broad OHS responsibilities of the Board of Management/Directors, Management, Staff, Contractors and Suppliers (as per the OHS Act 2004)?
- Who has specific responsibility for what? e.g. Management Committee rep(s), Management rep(s), OH&S Rep(s), OH&S committee (if appropriate)
- How does the organisation communicate about OHS issues?
- What are the mechanisms for consulting on OHS issues?
- If you need to set up an OHS Committee, how will it operate? That is, who will be on it, what are the terms of reference and what meeting procedures will it adopt?
- How will OHS training be provided? Who will be trained? What will they be trained in?
- How will the organisation review and improve it's OHS arrangements? What specific policies and procedures will need to be developed? How often will safety inspections be carried out?
- How will this and other OHS policies be reviewed, and how often will they be reviewed?

## **Suggested Structure for an OH&S Policy**

### **1. Commitment to OH&S**

Begin with a broad statement of the organisations' philosophy/aims in relation to OHS.

### **2. Broad Responsibilities (as per OH&S Act 2004)**

Document the duty of care of:

- The Management Committee
- Senior Management
- Employees
- Contractors
- Suppliers

### **3. Assignment of specific responsibilities**

Specify the specific responsibilities and authorities of the following:

- The Management Committee rep(s)
- Management rep(s)
- Staff
- OH&S Representative/s (if appropriate)
- OH&S committee (if appropriate)
- Others as appropriate

### **4. Communication**

Begin with a statement about commitment to communication and then outline in specific terms how communication on OH&S matters will take place.

### **5. Consultation**

Again, begin with a broad statement committing the organisation to consultation on OHS matters then the specific forums and procedures that will be used.

### **6. Operation of OH&S Committee**

If there is to be an OHS committee, then specify who will be on the Committee and set some operational guidelines or terms of reference, eg, number of meetings per year.

### **7. Training**

State the organisation's commitment to providing staff with training in OH&S then specify the type of training and who will be trained when (e.g management, staff, OH&S reps, induction for new employees.)

### **8. OH&S Plan**

A statement needs to be made about the processes and procedures to continuously improve the organisations' OH&S performance.

List specific policies and procedures to be developed, including timing and frequency of OH&S inspections.

#### **9. Review**

Specify the process, and timelines, for a review of the OH&S policy, practices and procedures.

### **Document Management**

OHS policies and procedures need to be regularly reviewed and updated. Your organisation needs to delegate someone with the responsibility and authority to make amendments and issue revised versions. The currency of the information needs to be clearly noted in the documentation so that staff can be sure they are using the latest authorised version.

### **Record Keeping**

Arrangements also need to be made for appropriate recording keeping of original documentation.

The arrangements made for document management and record keeping should be formalised and documented in your organisations' OHS policy and procedures.

## *Sample OHS Policy*

### **Affordable Community Housing Inc. OH&S Policy**

This policy recognises that the health and safety of all employees within Affordable Community Housing Incorporated (ACH) is the responsibility of management. In fulfilling this responsibility, management has a duty to provide and maintain so far as is practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to workers' health and includes:

1. maintaining the workplace in a safe and healthy condition
2. providing adequate facilities to protect the welfare of employees
3. providing information, training and supervision for all employees enabling them to work in a safe healthy manner.

In fulfilling the objectives of the policy, management is committed to consultation with employees to ensure that the policy operates effectively, and that health and safety issues are regularly reviewed.

All ACH line managers are responsible for the health and safety of all employees who report to them.

The Chief Executive Officer / Site Manager, aided by the Management team have overall responsibility and accountability for Occupational Health & Safety at the site. The Chief Executive Officer aided by the Management team must ensure that the legal requirements of the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004 are observed and complied with and must encourage a safe and harmonious working environment for all staff, volunteers and public.

#### *Management Responsibilities*

- Management is responsible for the effective implementation of the AHC's OHS policy
- Management must observe, implement and fulfil its responsibilities under all relevant Acts and Regulations
- Management must ensure that the agreed procedures for regular consultation between management and those with designated and elected health and safety responsibilities are adhered to
- Management must make regular assessments of health and safety performance and resources in co-operation with elected health and safety representatives
- Management must ensure that all specific policies relating to ACH workplaces are periodically reviewed and consistent with ACH's health and safety objectives, eg first aid, smoke-free environment, work systems
- Management must provide adequate information, training and supervision for all employees in the correct use of equipment in ACH workplaces

- Management must be informed of incidents and accidents occurring on ACH premises or to ACH employees so that health and safety performance can accurately be gauged

#### *Employee Responsibilities*

- Employees have a duty to take the utmost care of their own health and safety and for the safety of others affected by their actions at work  
Employees are required to comply with the safety procedures and directions issued by management as agreed between management and elected health and safety representatives
- Employees must report potential and actual hazards to their immediate supervisor and elected health and safety representative
- Employees must report any accidents or incidents on the prescribed form immediately any such incident occurs

#### *Regular Review*

This Policy will be regularly reviewed according to legislative and work practice changes.

All changes to current occupational health and safety policies or arrangements for their implementation will be advised to employees.

#### *Communications*

All OHS communications and actions shall be transparent and consistent. ACH shall ensure that avenues are open for raising matters for consideration by the OH&S Committee.

Policies and procedures distributed to ACH staff shall be correctly approved and signed off by ACH's Chief Executive Officer.

Information, instructions, policies and procedures shall be distributed to all ACH staff as soon as possible after receiving/implementation.

All OH & S policies, procedures, minutes and other supporting documents shall be filed at a central point and available to all ACH staff.

#### *Risk Management by Objectives*

ACH line managers shall, after consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, and the OHS Committee, set agreed objectives in Occupational Health and Safety.

Site managers are to prepare a plan to implement the following tasks: Hazard inspections; induction training; ongoing training; emergency exercises; investigation of accidents; maintenance and storage of safety equipment including First Aid materials.

In subsequent years the program is to be reviewed annually.

The Chief Executive Officer with advice from the OHS Committee will review the program in the light of claims experience.

The successful achievement of OHS objectives will be noted as part of staff members' performance appraisal.

#### *Risk Identification*

Everyone in ACH has a legal responsibility to report any risk or hazard that they have identified in the workplace.

Housekeeping inspections should be carried out on a half yearly basis, using ACH.'s checklist as a guide. The Site Manager is responsible for ensuring that this is carried out.

It is appropriate that staff be engaged in this activity on a rotational basis, where available. The objective is to actively involve as many people as possible on risk management.

When a risk / hazard is identified, the person who has noted the problem should take necessary remedial action.

If the hazard is the responsibility of one of ACH's contractors, the matter is to be reported to the contractor and recorded as to time, date and nature of hazard and the information passed to the Site Manager.

If the hazard is ACH's responsibility, report it to the Site Manager. If the Site Manager cannot rectify the hazard / defect, the matter should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer for appropriate action.

All completed checklists are to be examined upon completion by the Site Manager and forwarded (by March 31<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>) to the OHS committee for review.

Hazards identified on the checklists as not being rectified are to be raised and actioned at the next committee or appropriate meeting.

#### *Risk Control*

Site Managers are responsible for developing specific policies, rules and guidelines appropriate to their centre and to the activities of that centre.

#### *OHS Training*

Management will ensure that all ACH employees are trained to understand thoroughly and always use safe procedures in all phases of their work. Managers shall ensure that staff has access to up to date information regarding OHS training.

#### Training for New Employees

1. All prospective employees are to be inducted in the OHS Policies & Procedures

2. The induction will include a briefing on the OHS program, employees' responsibilities and specific site hazards
3. Signed acceptance of the OHS program and legal responsibilities are conditions of employment
4. Managers are to identify additional training needs and to institute such training as required

#### Training for Health and Safety Representatives

Managers shall ensure that:

1. in consultation with staff shall provide backfill (if required) for representatives whilst on training or while representatives are attending OHS meetings
2. all training undertaken by the OHS representatives is recorded

#### *Workplace Accidents*

All accidents involving injury to people are to be recorded and adequately investigated to prevent a recurrence of accidents and loss or damage to property.

#### *Register of Injuries*

1. Employees are to record all accidents to employees and non-employees, which require first aid treatment
2. A register of each accident and treatment is to be maintained
3. These registers are to be reviewed monthly by Site Managers and forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer with normal monthly returns.

#### *OHS Policies & Procedures Review*

Management shall continually review Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures to determine and implement areas for improvement. This is to be achieved by the following measures:

1. OHS should be placed on the agenda of all ACH management and operational meetings
2. Site Managers are to ensure that all OHS activities are recorded and reviewed periodically to ensure that adequate action has been taken
3. All hazards identified, and actions implemented to remove or to control them, are to be recorded
4. All Site Managers will be required to participate in preparing quarterly and bi-annual returns under direction from the OHS Committee

#### *Issue Resolution*

ACH acknowledges that not all occupational health and safety issues may be resolved to the satisfaction of the employee or management. Every attempt will be made to ensure that issues are resolved.

Management will inform staff of avenues that are available where difficulties may occur in the resolution of occupational health and safety issues.

The Occupational Health and Safety representatives, OHS Committee and Management Team/CEO shall all document process and procedures undertaken.

A complainant may choose an Occupational Health and Safety Representative from another Affordable Housing Inc. office if they do not wish to proceed with a complaint through their own representative.

In considering time lines for responses for matters of extreme urgency, the OHS Committee will respond as soon as possible to matters of extreme urgency. In matters that are not urgent a written response will be provided within five working days.

*Definitions:*

**"Management Team"** refers to ACH's Managers/Co-ordinators and CEO or their duly appointed proxies

**"OHS"** refers to Occupational Health and Safety

**"Site"** refers to every Affordable Housing Inc. office location.

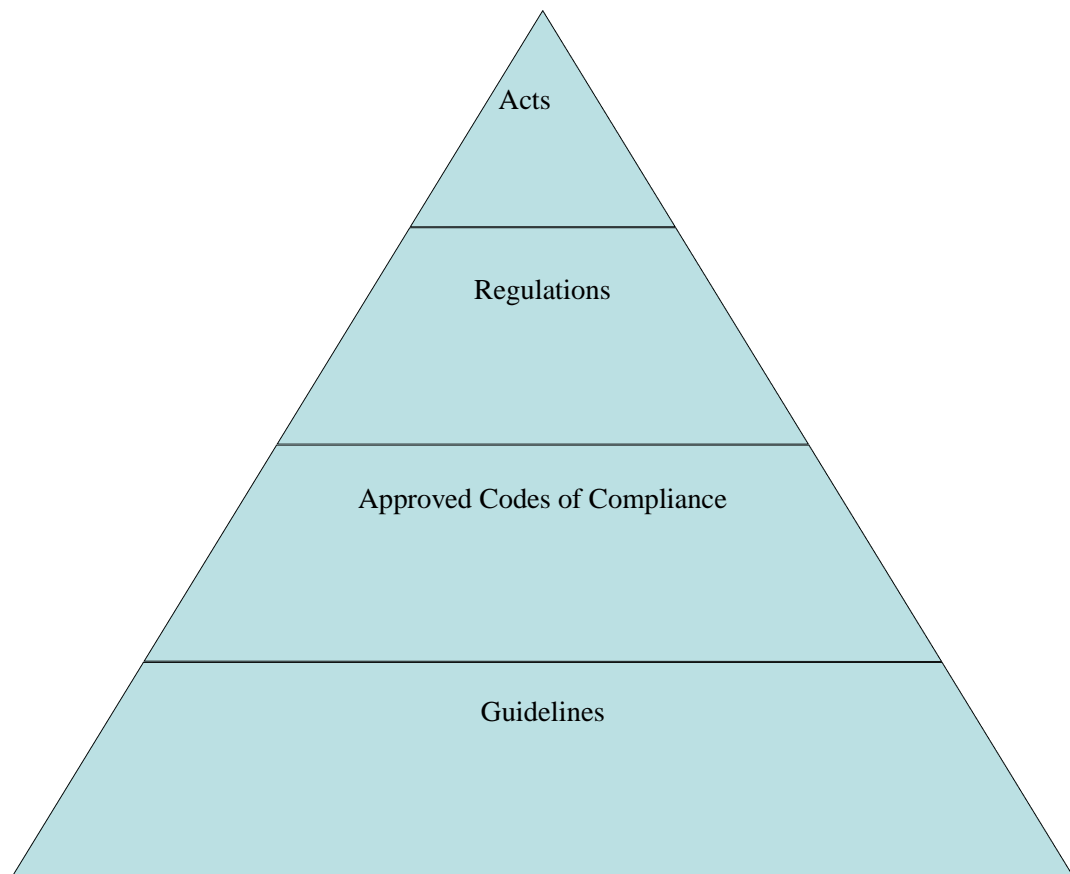
**"Site manager"** refers to the person in effective control on a day-to-day basis of a specified Affordable Housing Inc. site

**"Chief Executive Officer"** refers to the person who is in executive control of Affordable Housing Inc.

**"Duty of Care"** - involves the provision of a safe place and system of work, maintenance of proper plant and equipment and competent staff to manage and supervise the business.

## Appendix A -The Legal Framework for OHS

OHS is governed and informed by a legal and advisory framework that includes:



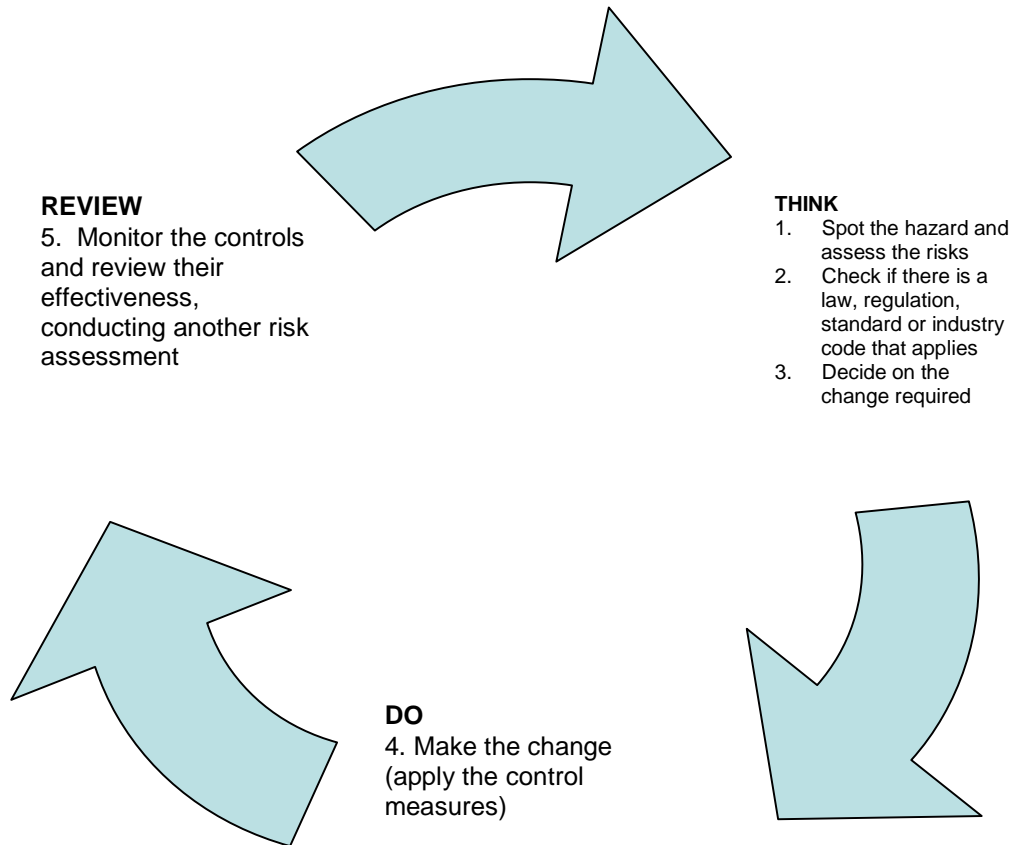
**Acts of Parliament** – otherwise known as statutory law, Acts generally set out the rights and responsibilities of the relevant parties. They may be enforced by a regime of penalties for non-compliance.

**Regulations** – these set out general principles in practical steps. Regulations have the same force of law as Acts of Parliament and must be followed.

**Approved Compliance Codes** – these supplement the Regulations, giving practical guidance on how to meet the legal requirements of the Regulations. Other solutions may be used but they have to be as good as, or better than, those contained in the Code.

**Guidelines** – issued from time to time to help employers and employees understand and deal with workplace hazards that may not be the subject of Regulations or Codes.

## Appendix B - The Hazard Management Process



### **THINK - Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment**

How can hazards be identified? Suggested below are some systematic methods. Consultation with employees is also critical to this step.

**Workplace inspections** – regular, systematic inspections to identify by observation what hazards exist in the workplace may be undertaken by Managers, Supervisors or OHS Representatives. They should be included in OHS plans and undertaken at least annually (or more often, depending on the nature of the hazards in the workplace). Responsibility for conducting the inspections should be designated in the OHS policy and procedures. The person doing the inspection should consult with other staff and report to management or the OHS sub-committee.

**Safety audits** – similar to the workplace inspection but usually undertaken by a workplace safety consultant or OHS professional who will focus on the OHS management system. A written report should be provided to the Committee of Management or OHS Sub-committee.

**Incident investigations and reports** – also known as accident reports, hazard reports, near misses and accident books. These will provide signs or symptoms of hazards that may require attention to eliminate or minimize risk.

**Consultation** – talking to employees, providing opportunities in relevant forums for OHS issues to be raised, having OHS as a standing agenda item at team meetings.

**Workplace Health Monitoring** – usually undertaken by ‘experts’ to monitor health levels in a workplace. For example, employees hearing may be tested on a regular basis to determine whether there has been any deterioration. Other examples include eyesight testing, measurement of exposure to radiation, asbestos, lead etc, employee well-being or morale surveys.

**Accident or incident investigations** – workplace hazards may come to light when someone has been injured or nearly injured at work. These investigations should be undertaken by a person with the designated authority, usually a management representative who will report to the CoM or the OHS sub-committee.

### Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment involves assessing the likelihood or probability of a hazard causing an injury or illness and the seriousness of the likely injury or illness that could be caused by the hazard.

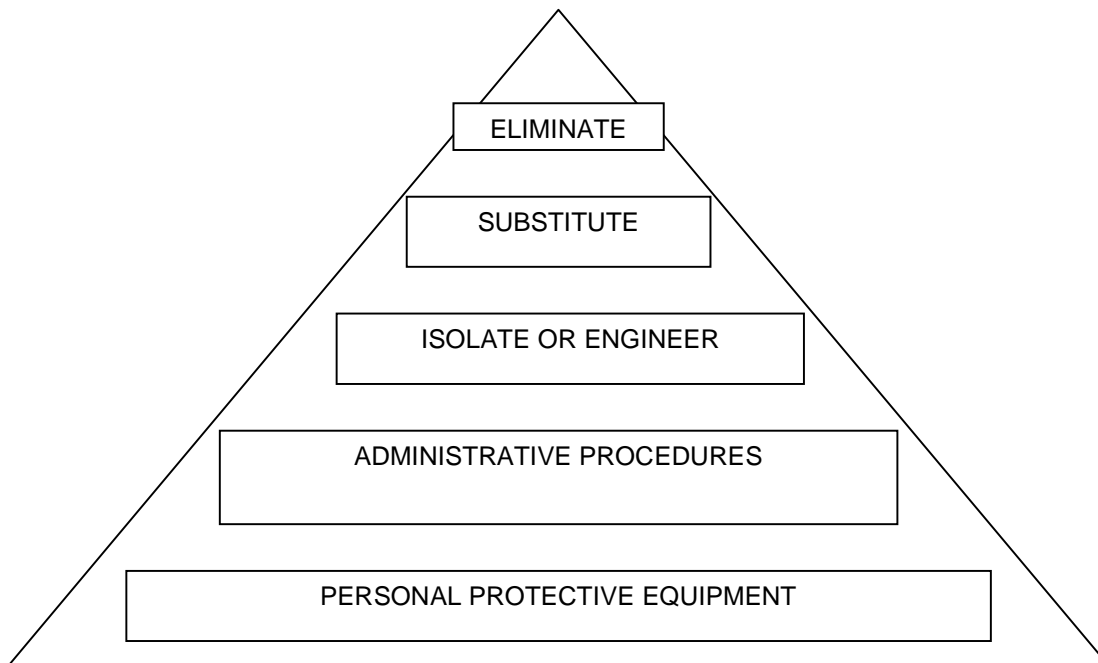
Example of a risk assessment table<sup>11</sup>:

		LIKELIHOOD			
		Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Highly Unlikely
CONSEQUENCES	Fatality	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK
	Major Injuries	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK
	Minor Injuries	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
	Negligible Injuries	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK	LOW RISK

<sup>11</sup> From “Identifying Hazards in the Workplace – A Guide for Hazards in the Workplace”, OHS10 published by Comcare Australia. Accessed at [www.comcare.gov.au](http://www.comcare.gov.au), June 2008

## DO – Control the Hazards

Having identified the hazards and assessed their risks, the hazards must be eliminated or their potential to cause harm minimized as far as is reasonably practicable.



### A 'hierarchy of control' applies:

**Eliminate** – remove the hazard from the workplace

**Substitute** – substitute a substance, method or material to reduce the risk associated with the hazard.

**Isolate** or apply **engineering** controls to the hazard – separate the hazard from the workplace, eg, chemical store room or cupboard or apply an engineering control such as a guard on cutting equipment.

**Administrative procedures** – develop work methods to reduce the risk associated with a task, eg, a policy that stipulates cash limits or training in dealing with aggressive clients or a policy includes mandatory breaks when using screen based equipment.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – a last resort that is almost always used in conjunction with other control measures, PPE includes gloves, masks, eye protection, steel-capped boots, anything that is worn by the person when dealing with the hazard.

## **REVIEW – Monitor the Effectiveness of Controls**

Hazard identification, risk assessment and control are an on-going process. After implementing control measures it is a good idea to re-assess the level of risk to determine if your control measures are being effective. If they are then your risk rating should be lower.

Employees should be consulted about the types of controls and their effectiveness. Hazard identification and risk assessment should also be undertaken whenever there is a change in the workplace that could affect the health and safety of employees, for instance, when introducing new equipment or procedures.

## Appendix C – Example of a Register of Chemicals or MSDS Register

### Smithton Volunteer Centre Chemical Register

Product	Typical health effects	Precautions for use	First Aid
<p><b>Baygon Surface Sprays</b></p> <p><b>MSDS Date of Issue:</b> <b>1 August 2002</b></p>	<p>If inhaled, spray may irritate the eyes, nose, throat and skin.</p>	<p><b>Swallowed</b> If sprayed in mouth, do not induce vomiting, give milk or water.</p> <p><b>Eye</b> If sprayed in eyes, irrigate with water for 15 minutes.</p> <p><b>Skin</b> If sprayed on skin. Wash with soap and water.</p> <p><b>Inhaled</b> If inhaled, remove patient to fresh air, keep warm and rested.</p>	<p>If poisoning occurs, contact a doctor or Poisons Information Centre (Telephone 131126)</p> <p>Advice to doctor Apply basic first aid and decontamination procedures. Propoxur is a carbamate. Transfluthrin, Cyfluthrin &amp; Pyrethrin are synthetic pyrethroids. Treat symptomatically and if necessary, administer antidote. For carbamate poisoning, antidote is Atropine sulfate.</p>
<p><b>Ajax Spray N' Wipe Ocean Fresh</b></p> <p><b>Company Name:</b> <b>Colgate-Palmolive Pty Ltd</b></p> <p><b>Customer Hotline:</b> <b>1800 809 282 (Australia)</b></p> <p><b>MSDS Date of Issue:</b> <b>February 2002</b></p>	<p><b>Swallowed</b> May cause irritation to the mouth, oesophagus and stomach. Symptoms can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and possible gastric irritation.</p> <p><b>Eye</b> May Cause moderate irritation in contact with the eyes.</p> <p><b>Skin</b> May Cause irritation in individuals with sensitive skin.</p> <p><b>Chronic</b> Repeated or prolonged exposure to this material may cause irritation in individuals with sensitive skin.</p>	<p><b>Swallowed</b> Wash out mouth with water and then give plenty of water to drink. If irritation develops and persists seek medical attention.</p> <p><b>Eye</b> If contact with the eye(s) occurs, wash with copious amounts of water holding eyelid(s) open. Seek medical attention if irritation persists.</p> <p><b>Skin</b> None required.</p> <p><b>Inhaled</b> None Required.</p>	<p>No exposure standards have been established for this material by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC).</p>

<p><b>Cussons Morning Fresh Dishwash Liquid – Original</b></p> <p><b>Company Name:</b> Cussons Pty Ltd (Australia).</p> <p><b>Customer Hotline:</b> 1800 809 282 (Australia)</p> <p><b>MSDS Date of Issue:</b> 12 February 2004</p>	<p><b>Swallowed</b> Considered an unlikely route of entry in commercial/industrial environments Ingestion may result in nausea, abdominal irritation, pain and diarrhoea.</p> <p><b>Eye</b> The liquid may produce eye discomfort causing smarting, pain and redness.</p> <p><b>Skin</b> The material is not thought to produce adverse health effects of skin irritation following contact (as classified by EC Directives using animal models).</p> <p><b>Inhaled</b> Not normally a hazard due to non-volatile nature of product.</p>	<p><b>Swallowed</b> If swallowed do NOT induce vomiting. If vomiting occurs, lean patient forward or place on left side (head-down position, if possible) to maintain open airway. Give water to rinse out mouth, then provide liquid slowly and as much as casualty can comfortably drink. Seek medical advice.</p> <p><b>Eye</b> If this product comes in contact with the eyes: Wash out immediately with fresh running water. If pain persists or recurs seek medical attention.</p> <p><b>Skin</b> Concentrate and diluted solution is readily removed with water.</p> <p><b>Inhaled</b> If fumes or combustion products are inhaled, remove person from contaminated area. If distressed seek medical advice.</p>	<p>Notes to Physician Treat symptomatically.</p> <p>If poisoning occurs, contact a doctor or Poisons Information Centre (Telephone 131126)</p>
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