



# WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

## **Introduction**

Northern Occupational Support Service Inc (NOSS) is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tasmania).

Achieving safety in the workplace relies on management and staff working together to create a safe working environment through the prompt reporting and investigation of potential and existing hazards and the strict adherence to safe working practices.

## **NOSS Responsibilities**

NOSS will ensure that all steps are taken to:

1. identify hazards and risks related to NOSS operations in accordance with the NOSS Risk Assessment Policy
2. remove or reduce identified health and safety risks associated with the operation of NOSS so far as is reasonably practicable and in a timely manner
3. regularly review the operation of this policy through workplace inspections and audits.
4. facilitate the election of a Health and Safety representative
5. identify and provide all appropriate information, instruction and training to equip employees, contractors and visitors with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet their Work Health and Safety responsibilities.
6. Provide and maintain procedures for the safe use, handling, storage and transportation of plant, equipment and substances.

## **Employee/Contractor Responsibilities**

All NOSS employees/contractors will:

1. take reasonable care of their own health and safety
2. take reasonable care that their conduct does not adversely affect the safety of others
3. comply with all NOSS health and safety policies, procedures, guidelines and other instructions.
4. follow all reporting procedures relating to work, health and safety issues in a timely manner, including Incident Reports, Hazard Reports and risks assessments in accordance with the NOSS Reporting Policy.

## **Manager's Responsibilities**

In addition to their duties as employees, all NOSS Managers will proactively exercise due diligence in their area of control through the following:

1. Acquiring and updating their knowledge of work, health and safety matters, in particular the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tasmani) and associated Codes of Practice.
2. Gaining an understanding of the operations of NOSS and their associated hazards and risks, including carrying out risk assessments of all processes within their area of authority.
3. Identifying, documenting and recommending strategies and resources required to, so far as is reasonably practicable, remove or reduce identified health and safety risks.
4. Identifying and documenting the underlying causes of any accident or incident and implementing strategies to reduce the risk of reoccurrence.
5. Maintaining the workplace in a safe condition at all times and ensuring the implementation and monitoring of all workplace procedures relevant to each workplace.
6. Ensuring that all subordinate staff are aware of their obligations and responsibilities under this policy.
7. Identifying the training needs of subordinate staff and ensuring that training is carried out whenever there is an assessed risk, including the following areas:
  - Orientation on NOSS work health and safety policy and procedures, upon commencement
  - Emergency evacuation procedures, including annual fire drills
  - Manual Handling
  - First Aid
  - Any necessary certificates, licences and/or training to ensure that duties can be carried out safely including the administration of medication and safe operation of machinery, equipment and vehicles.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **1. Training**

1.1 All new employees will undergo an orientation which will include, but not limited to:

- Workplace rules and any specific hazards
- Protective equipment and practices
- First Aid procedures
- Reporting of incidents, accidents and hazards.
- Manual handling
- Bullying and Harassment
- Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs
- Emergency evacuation procedures

- 1.2 All staff will satisfactorily complete and maintain First Aid Training (Level 2).
- 1.3 All staff required to administer medication will satisfactorily complete an accredited course in Administration of Medication and subsequent refreshers.
- 1.4 All staff will complete a manual handling refresher annually
- 1.5 All crew members will carry out basic First Aid and manual handling training annually.

## **2. Workplace Safety Audits and Assessments**

### ***Safety Audits***

- 2.1 Six monthly workplace safety audits will be carried out at both the NOSS Office and the Bluegum workshop. Inspections will be undertaken by the General Manager and Health and Safety Representative and cover an extensive range of areas within the work environment, including fire safety, electrical lighting, storage, chemicals, first aid, floors, machines and equipment etc. The audit will be documented on a Work Health and Safety Audit form (OHS06).
- 2.2 The Bluegum Manager is responsible for ensuring that the workshop is maintained in a safe condition at all times and complete a Workplace Inspection Form (OHS05) six monthly (three months prior to safety audits).

### ***Risk Assessments***

- 2.3 The Bluegum Manager will undertake a safety assessment for each significant job undertaken and/or piece of machinery operated. The safety assessment will identify perceived risks and measures taken to alleviate those risks. Safety assessments will be recorded and signed by all employees carrying out that work.
- 2.4 The Bluegum Manager and Community Access Manager will complete annual risk assessments of safety needs for each client upon commencement and arrange appropriate training for staff. Risk assessments will be reviewed annual at IEP/Personal Plan meetings. The assessment will be recorded on a Client Risk Assessment form (OHS10). Areas of risk may include:
  - Behaviour management
  - Manual handling
  - Dietary issues
  - Medication
- 2.5 NOSS will arrange an independent annual audit of Essential Safety and Health Features for the NOSS Office and Bluegum workshop in accordance with the Building Act, 2000 and regulations and display a current Annual Maintenance Statement (Form 56) at each workplace.
- 2.6 All audit and assessment results will be documented and actioned through the Quality Assurance Database.

## **3. First Aid**

- 3.1 After completing their probation, community access staff will be issued with a basic first aid kit to be kept in the support worker's vehicle whenever transporting clients and

used only for work related incidents. This kit remains the property of NOSS and will be returned to NOSS upon leaving the Service.

- 3.2 A first aid kit will be kept in the foyer of the NOSS Office, at the Bluegum Workshop and in each NOSS vehicle. When items are used from these first aid kits, it will be noted in the book provided in the kit and an Incident Report (OHS02) completed.
- 3.3 All employees will ensure that all kits under their care are replenished when necessary.

#### 4. Accidents and Incidents

##### **Immediate Action**

- 4.1 In the event of a minor injury to any person, employees will administer first aid and notify the office.
- 4.2 In the event of a serious injury (including any admission to hospital) or fatality:
  - (i) the NOSS employee will first notify urgent medical services (ie Ambulance) and then NOSS Management.
  - (ii) the surrounding area must be isolated and remain untouched, except where it is necessary to apply first aid or to prevent further injury to person or damage to property, until the incident has been investigated by the Workplace Standards Authority and the Police.
  - (iii) NOSS Management will notify the next of kin, Board of Governance, the Workplace Standards Authority and the relevant funding body
- 4.3 In the event of a dangerous incident as a result of which a person could have been killed or could have suffered serious injury or illness NOSS will notify a Workplace Standards Tasmania inspector immediately.

##### **Injuries to Workers**

In the event of injury to an employee:

- 4.4 Following the administering of immediate first aid, the employee will immediately contact the Return to Work (RTW) Coordinator.
- 4.5 The RTW Coordinator will arrange an appointment with the Treating Medical Practitioner and accompany the employee to that appointment.
- 4.6 Should medical treatment not be required at the time, but significant symptoms develop later, the employee should contact the RTW Coordinator to arrange an appointment with the Treating Medical Practitioner.
- 4.7 If time off work is required, then the NOSS Rehabilitation Policy will take effect.

##### **Reporting**

In accordance with the NOSS Reporting Policy:

- 4.8 All accidents or injuries, including near misses, will be reported to your supervisor immediately.
- 4.9 All incidents and accidents must be recorded on an Incident Report by the responsible staff member and submitted to NOSS Management within 24 hours in accordance with the NOSS Reporting Policy.

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- 4.10 All Incident Reports relating to employee injuries will be signed off by the Health and Safety representative.
- 4.11 Failure to report accidents immediately may prejudice any Workers Compensation claim.

#### **Investigation of Accidents and Incidents**

- 4.12 Upon receipt of all Incident Reports, the supervisor will assess the factors which contributed to the incident and recommend strategies for prevention. The actions put in place to prevent a reoccurrence will be documented on the Incident Report and actioned through the Quality Assurance Database.
- 4.13 In the event of any serious incident (including all incidents resulting in time off work):
- (i) a risk assessment will be carried out by the General Manager to identify the underlying causes of the accident or incident and identify strategies to prevent reoccurrence. The risk assessment will be documented on a Risk Assessment Form (OHS03).
  - (ii) Identified strategies to prevent reoccurrence will be actioned through the Quality Assurance Database.
  - (iii) Relevant stakeholders will be informed of the outcome of any Risk Assessment.
- 4.14 Work Health and Safety meetings will held fortnightly between the Health and Safety representative, Community Access Manager or Bluegum Manager and General Manager to discuss and review all active Incident Reports.

#### **5. Protective Equipment and Practices**

- 5.1 NOSS will provide employees with any protective clothing, equipment and practices necessary to safely carry out their duties. It is the responsibility of all employees to wear or use any such protective clothing, equipment and practices.
- 5.2 Employees will use appropriate means to protect themselves and others from infectious diseases such as the flu, including safe cough methods, hand washing, distancing etc.
- 5.3 Employees will follow any specific guidelines issued as a result of a pandemic.
- 5.4 All hazards will be recorded on a Hazard Report Form (OHS09) and submitted to NOSS Management in accordance with the NOSS Reporting Policy. Hazards include:
- unsafe equipment
  - unsafe environment
  - unsafe work practices
- 5.5 All staff will ensure that clients/crew members are appropriately protected with respect to the sun, including the use of sunscreen, if authorised.
- 5.6 All employees will ensure that both they and their clients consume adequate fluids during the day.

- 5.7 Any concerns relating to personal health issues, in particular stress, must be reported to NOSS Management immediately. Management will treat all such concerns with the utmost confidentiality and work with the employee to achieve a positive outcome.

## **6. Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

- 6.1 NOSS will ensure that Emergency Evacuation procedures are in place for the NOSS Office and Bluegum Workshop and ensure that all employees made aware of that information.
- 6.2 All employees accessing the NOSS office and/or the Bluegum workshop will familiarise themselves with the relevant Emergency Evacuation Plan and Procedures displayed on notice boards at each site.
- 6.3 The following items will be included in the Emergency Evacuation Procedures and Plan.
- Emergency contact number for Fire Brigade, Police and Ambulance
  - Location of exit points from the building
  - Location of outside assembly point following the evacuation
  - Instructions for evacuation including the nominated firewardens who will contact emergency services if required, ensure that all people have left the building and assembled in the designated area
- 6.4 The Bluegum Manager and Community Access Managers will ensure that all emergency exits are kept clear of obstructions.
- 6.5 NOSS management will be notified immediately upon discovery of a fire or other threatening situation.
- 6.6 All fire extinguishers located in the NOSS office and those at the Bluegum workshop and each Bluegum Vehicle will be tested and tagged on a six monthly basis.
- 6.7 A fire evacuation drill will be conducted at the Bluegum workshop and the NOSS office annually.

## **7. Smoking**

NOSS does not support smoking and strongly encourages staff to quit. Details of the Quit program are available at the NOSS Office.

- 7.1 The duration and number of any smoke breaks should be kept to a minimum.
- 7.2 Employees will not smoke in the proximity of clients ie keep a safe distance (at least 3 metres) from any client whilst smoking. If this is not feasible, then smoking should be stopped until it is possible to do so.
- 7.3 Smoke breaks away from clients must only be taken when it is safe for another support worker to supervise the client.
- 7.4 Support workers will avoid accessing unhealthy environments and ensure that clients are not subjected to passive smoking.
- 7.5 There will be no smoking:
- (i) during organised client programs such as music, compic bingo, bowling or Independent Services programs

- (ii) whilst at the NOSS Office, inside or out, including the car park area and Vincent Street.
- (iii) at public pick up and drop off points
- (iv) in vehicles whilst a client is in the vehicle.
- (v) at the Bluegum workshop except in those areas designated by the Workcrew Manager.
- (vi) at Bluegum worksites except when authorised by the Workcrew Manager.

## **8. Alcohol and Drugs**

To promote the safety of both clients and employees, alcohol and 'recreational' drug use will not be tolerated during support hours (with the exception limited alcohol at authorised work functions).

- 8.1** During support hours, staff must not consume, distribute or be under the influence of alcohol (ie a blood alcohol level of 0.0) or other 'recreational' drugs. An employee will not be permitted to work whilst taking any prescription drugs which have the potential to compromise safety. Employees must advise Management of the use, type and possible side effects of any such drug.
- 8.2** If any employee believes another person may be unsafe or unable to properly perform their duties because of alcohol or other drug use, Management must be informed immediately.
- 8.3** Any proven allegations may result in termination of employment.
- 8.4** Any employee under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will not be permitted to work.
- 8.5** If an employee appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, Management will take the following action:
  - (i) conduct a test for alcohol or other drugs (see below).
  - (ii) make arrangements for the employee's safe transport home (transport to be at the employees' expense);
  - (iii) suspend the employee for the remainder of the shift (on personal leave).
  - (iv) conduct an investigation and follow disciplinary process in accordance with the NOSS Counselling and Discipline Policy.

### ***Drug and Alcohol Testing***

- 8.6** NOSS may require an employee to be tested for alcohol or other drugs if the employee appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, or at any other time requested by Management.
- 8.7** Testing will be undertaken at the Launceston Police Station (blood, breath or urine testing). The employee may choose to have another person present during testing provided that waiting for such a person does not hold up the testing procedure.
- 8.8** An employee must consent to testing unless the employee admits that they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. If an employee refuses testing, and does not admit

that they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, NOSS will act on the evidence of witnesses.

- 8.9** Any tampering with test equipment or samples given for the purpose of testing will result in dismissal.

#### **Authorised Work Functions**

**8.10** The consumption of alcohol may be permitted at functions authorised by Management. Authorised functions (both on and off the premises) are considered to be part of the work environment, and therefore, staff must adhere to all NOSS policies during work functions. This extends to NOSS' duty of care obligations in relation to safe levels of alcohol consumption by employees. Therefore at any authorised work function:

- (i) staff must at all times drink responsibly
- (ii) non alcoholic alternatives and adequate food must be available
- (iii) staff who intend to drive must ensure they do not exceed the legal blood alcohol limit for driving (.05)
- (iv) staff must ensure that they arrange safe transport
- (v) the authorised function will end at a time designated by Management prior to the function and those employees who choose to continue to consume alcohol following the function shall do so at their own risk.

- 8.11** This does not limit in any way the responsibility of the employee to ensure that they only consume safe amounts of alcohol.

### **9. Manual Handling**

- 9.1** No employee will be required to lift a load heavier than they can safely do so. It is the responsibility of each employee to inform their supervisor if they consider they are required to lift a load which is too heavy.
- 9.2** Individual risk assessments will be carried out in relation to the manual handling needs of each client upon commencement (see clause 2.4 above).
- 9.3** Any support workers working with clients requiring specific manual handling skills will undergo appropriate training.
- 9.4** All employees will undergo an annual manual handling refresher.

### **10. Plant, Machinery and Vehicles**

- 10.1** All areas are to be kept clear of slipping and tripping hazards, eg, waste materials or electric leads.
- 10.2** All machinery will be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and Australian Standards. The Workcrew Manager will arrange for all vehicles and equipment to be regularly serviced to ensure their safe operating condition.
- 10.3** The Bluegum Manager will ensure that Safe Operating Procedures are available for each item of machinery. All employees will follow the Safe Operating Procedures.



- 10.4 Any machinery or equipment found to be defective, unsafe, or in need of repair must be reported to a supervisor immediately, who will arrange for it to be tagged and placed in the designated repair bay to prevent its use.
- 10.5 A Maintenance Log will be maintained at the Bluegum workshop for all pieces of machinery and vehicles, including the date, details, repairer and cost of each service and repair. The Bluegum Manager will regularly analyse the Maintenance Log and make recommendations for replacement or repair of machinery to ensure optimum performance and safety.
- 10.6 Workcrew members will not perform maintenance on machinery unless supervised by staff member.
- 10.7 Employees will not wear loose clothing around machinery.

## **11. Hazardous Substances**

- 11.1 A register will be kept at the Bluegum workshop and NOSS Office of all hazardous substances that are used and stored on the premises.
- 11.2 All hazardous substances will be kept in a locked storage cabinet.
- 11.3 Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) will be available for every hazardous substance used on the premises and attached to the substance storage container.
- 11.4 Employees must follow manufacturer's instructions on the product and refer to MSDS before using a hazardous substance.

## **12. Electrical Safety**

- 12.1 All electrical equipment will be inspected, tested and tagged in accordance with Australian Code of Practice.
- 12.2 Any electrical fault or damage to cables or equipment (including contamination by water) must be tagged and reported immediately to a supervisor to be sent for testing and repair.
- 12.3 Electrical cables must not be left where they can be damaged or be subjected to hazards such as water.

## **13. Contractors**

- 13.1 All contractors working on a NOSS worksite are required to do so in accordance with NOSS policies and in a manner which does not adversely affect their own health and safety or that of others. They must immediately report any matter which may affect their own or other persons' health and safety to the appropriate contact person.
- 13.2 All Managers who engage a contractor to work on site will ensure that they undergo an induction which covers:
  - (i) all risks they may encounter at NOSS, including the unexpected behaviour of the client group
  - (ii) NOSS Work, Health and Safety Policy
  - (iii) the name of a contact person to deal with any health and safety issues which may arise

(iv) Contractors will sign to confirm their understanding.

**13.3** All contractors will report to the contact person prior to commencing work, and at the completion of the works, or when leaving the site.

#### **14. Health and Safety Representative**

**14.1** NOSS will facilitate the election of a Health and Safety Representative as follows:

- (i) Call for nominations for the position of Health and Safety Representative, giving at least two weeks notice, by placing a notice on the notice boards at each workplace.
- (ii) If there is more than one nominee:
  - nominate a closing date for ballot papers to be returned and a returning officer
  - distribute ballot papers to all employees
  - the returning officer will count all ballots and inform the nominee and all other employees of their election in writing

**14.2** NOSS will arrange appropriate training for the Health and Safety Representative.

#### **15. Related Policies**

- Client Support Policy
- Pandemic Policy
- Rehabilitation Policy
- Reporting Policy
- Risk Management Policy