

Occupational Health and Safety

INTRODUCTION AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

PURPOSE

This manual has been prepared to assist Managers and those with a Health and Safety responsibility to further develop effective health and safety programmes, and to implement the University's Occupational Health and Safety Policy and related policies and procedures. This section lists the objectives of the Health and Safety Manual, provides a brief summary of the Health and Safety legislation and defines accountabilities.

OBJECTIVES

The University's health and safety programme aims to:

- promote excellence in health and safety management;
- continually improve current health and safety performance;
- provide a safe and healthy work environment;
- identify and control actual and potential hazards;
- establish and maintain communication on health and safety;
- support staff participation in health and safety matters;
- identify needs and provide training on health and safety;
- demonstrate a commitment to the accurate reporting and recording of health and safety matters; and
- comply with legal and organizational obligations.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Health and Safety in Employment Act (1992) requires employers to take all practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of staff members at work by:

- providing a safe working environment;
- providing and maintaining facilities for staff members' safety and health;
- ensuring plant and equipment on the premises are safe;
- ensuring staff members are not exposed to hazards;
- developing emergency procedures; and
- ensuring that no action or inaction by staff members is likely to cause harm to themselves or any other person.

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Other people who have duties under the Act include persons in control of places of work; self-employed people; principals to a contract; contractors and subcontractors and staff members.

The Health and Safety in Employment Regulations (1995) impose duties on employers in respect of the workplace, certain staff members, and types of work. The Resource Management Act, the Building Act, the Fire Service Act, the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, and the Injury Prevention Rehabilitation and Compensation Act also include health and safety elements.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Vice-Chancellor, as the employer, has ultimate accountability for the health and safety of all University staff. This is provided for by:

- demonstrating continuous improvement through a systematic approach to occupational health and safety matters that includes setting specific objectives, systems and programmes in partnership with senior managers and relevant others;
- documenting and communicating the Health and Safety Policy and holding staff members responsible for supporting the policy and related procedures;
- taking appropriate actions (including disciplinary actions) in the event of unacceptable performance or behaviour, consistent with normal operational practice;
- incorporating health and safety as an element in position descriptions and as a measurable outcome of an individual's performance appraisal where appropriate; and
- expecting all staff to share the responsibility for meeting the requirements of health and safety legislation and maintaining ongoing accountability through the roles and responsibilities defined below.

Senior Managers have key responsibilities for developing, implementing and improving the University's health and safety management system as an integral part of day-to-day operations. These include the following:

- providing leadership and direction in matters of health and safety;
- developing staff commitment to achieving excellent health and safety standards;
- developing a clear chain of responsibility for health and safety matters through normal line management channels;
- establishing and achieving overall health and safety goals and objectives as part of the business and/or strategic plans for their areas of responsibility;
- including measurable health and safety objectives (based on responsibilities) in the overall performance objectives of staff;
- demonstrating a commitment to continually improving health and safety performance;

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- demonstrating a commitment to the accurate reporting and recording of health and safety matters;
- electing, (or selecting), and supporting a Health and Safety Representative for the School / Division / Faculty;
- participating in regular, documented health and safety management audits and taking steps to remedy any deficiencies;
- sustaining interest in and communications about health and safety throughout the organisation;
- supporting staff member participation in health and safety activities;
- formally acknowledging excellence in such activities or initiatives when appropriate; and
- allocating the necessary human and financial resources to achieve the goals.

Line Managers are responsible for taking all practicable steps to create a safe and healthy work environment. These include the following:

- implementing hazard management procedures in every work area under their control. This includes formalising regular reviews of currently identified hazards and arranging for new processes, equipment or chemicals to be assessed for actual or potential hazards prior to use;
- taking all practicable steps to ensure that hazards identified are eliminated, isolated or controlled;
- informing staff, students (and contractors in appropriate circumstances) of any hazards to health and safety which are known to be associated with the work they perform and the steps to be taken to control any such hazard;
- ensuring that all staff members receive appropriate training, and are involved in the improvement of systems and practices where relevant;
- ensuring that unsafe acts and unsafe conditions are appropriately addressed;
- conducting regular health and safety inspections;
- participating in health and safety audits and taking steps to remedy deficiencies as recommended;
- ensuring all accidents and incidents are recorded accurately, investigated and reported to the Health and Safety Co-ordinator, and for taking steps to prevent any recurrence of a similar event; and
- encouraging good health and safety performance by suppliers and contractors.

Staff Members are responsible for:

- becoming familiar with and abiding by all applicable University policies and guidelines, and relevant statutory obligations;
- following established procedures to ensure safe performance of a given task;

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- reporting all occupational injury, illness, near miss incidents, environmental spills or fire, regardless of its severity, to a supervisor;
- reporting hazards which may result in an injury, illness, spill or fire to a supervisor;
- advising colleagues and relevant staff members when unsafe acts and/or conditions occur;
- correcting unsafe conditions when appropriate, possible and safe to do so; and behaving in a manner which does not endanger the health and safety of themselves, other employees or students.

Health and Safety Representatives have delegated responsibilities for:

- supporting senior and other line managers with the day to day management of the health and safety programme in accordance with legislative requirements and University policies and procedures;
- participating in meetings with other health and safety representatives on campus and the Health and Safety Co-ordinator, and attending health and safety training courses where appropriate; and
- participating in health and safety audits in partnership with the Senior Manager.

The University Health and Safety Co-ordinator reports directly to the Director of the Human Resource Management Division and is responsible for:

- providing specialist support by acting as a consultant to managers and staff members where necessary; dealing proactively with health and safety matters;
- conducting regular internal health and safety audits in partnership with senior managers and Health and Safety Representatives;
- analysing audits, injury trends, and hazards and reporting results to the Vice-Chancellor and senior managers;
- advising on new processes or equipment relative to their health and safety impact;
- maintaining up to date information on changes to health and safety legislation, regulations, Codes of Practice and Standards;
- assisting in the formation and implementation of University wide policies, plans, and procedures; and
- providing strategic direction and oversight of all health and safety initiatives.