

# **OCCUPATIONAL 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 Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 and Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 1998.

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.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **1. Orientation**

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

- Reporting of incidents, accidents and hazards.
- First Aid procedures
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Manual handling
- Workplace rules and any specific hazards
- Details of protective equipment, including job-specific requirements

### **2. Occupational Health and Safety Representative**

In accordance with the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 and Workplace Health and Safety Act 1998, NOSS will:

1. Facilitate the election of an Occupational Health and Safety representative.
2. Arrange appropriate training for the Occupational Health and Safety representative.

### **3. Workplace Inspections**

1. Regular (six monthly) workplace inspections will be carried out at both the NOSS Office and the Bluegum workshop.
2. Inspections will be undertaken by the Employee OH&S representative and the General Manager 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.
3. Inspection results are documented and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

### **4. Hazard Reporting**

To ensure safety in the workplace, employees should act promptly to identify both potential and existing hazards within the work environment and complete a Hazard Report Form. Hazards may include unsafe work practices undertaken by co-workers.

NOSS employees will follow the hazard identification and control process set out below:

### Hazard Identification And Control Process

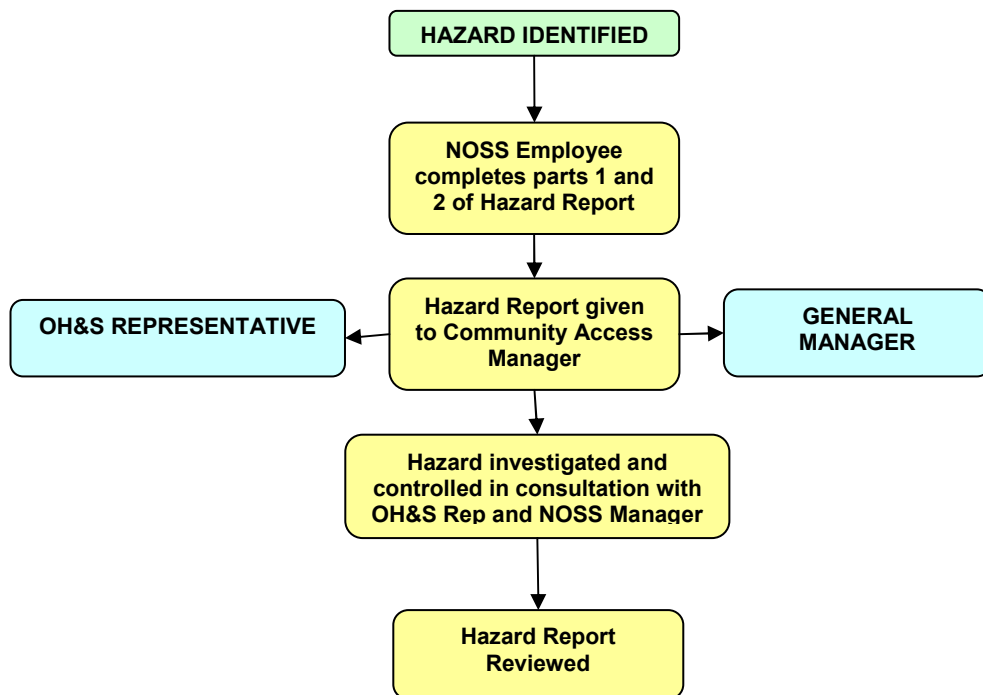


Figure 1: Hazard Reporting and Control Process

## 5. First Aid Kits

1. NOSS will provide first aid kits to Community Access Staff for use when supporting clients.
2. First aid kits will be carried in all NOSS vehicles and replenished when necessary.
3. All employees will notify NOSS management in order to ensure that kits in private vehicles are replenished when necessary.

## 6. Accidents and Incidents

1. In the event of injury, employees will administer first aid, and if necessary seek medical help, by the quickest possible means.
2. All accidents or injuries, including near misses, must be reported to your supervisor immediately.
3. All incidents and accidents must be recorded on an Incident Report Form by the staff member and submitted to the NOSS Management within 24 hours in accordance with the NOSS Reporting Policy.
4. All Incident Report Forms will be signed off by the Occupational Health and Safety representative.
5. Failure to report accidents may prejudice any Workers Compensation claim.
6. In accordance with the NOSS Rehabilitation and Compensation Policy, NOSS Management will inform the relevant workers compensation insurer of any injury which causes partial or total incapacity for work.
7. In the event of a serious **injury (including any admission to hospital) or** fatality:

- the NOSS employee will notify, firstly, medical services (ie Ambulance, doctor) and secondly, NOSS Management.
- 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.
- NOSS Management will notify the next of kin, Board of Governance, the Workplace Standards Authority and the relevant funding body
- 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.

## **7. Investigation of Accidents and Incidents**

An investigation will be carried out by either the NOSS Community Access Manager (for day support issues) or the Workcrew Manager (workcrew issues) to identify the underlying causes of the accident or incident.

Occupational Health and Safety meetings are held fortnightly between the Occupational Health and Safety representative, Community Access Manager and General Manager to discuss and review all active incident/accident reports.

Recommendations for appropriate action are made (including time lines and nomination of the person responsible for carrying out the recommendations).

## **8. Work related stress**

NOSS clearly recognises how debilitating stress related illnesses can be and strongly encourages employees to report any concerns to NOSS Management immediately. Management will treat all such concerns with the utmost confidentiality and work with the employee to achieve a positive outcome.

## **9. Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

1. All employees accessing the NOSS office and/or the Bluegum workshop will familiarise themselves with the relevant Emergency Evacuation Plan displayed on notice boards at each site.
2. Upon discovery of a fire or other threatening situation, notify management immediately.
3. The following items are included in the Emergency Evacuation Plan.
  - Emergency contact numbers for Fire Brigade, Police and Ambulance
  - Location of exit points from various areas of the building
  - Location of outside assembly points following the evacuation
  - The nominated person responsible for contacting the Emergency Services if required
  - The nominated person or persons to ensure that all people have left the building and assembled in the designated area
4. All fire extinguishers located in the NOSS office and those at the Bluegum workshop and each Bluegum Vehicle will be checked and tagged on an biannual basis.
5. A fire evacuation drill will be conducted at the Bluegum workshop and the NOSS office on an annual basis.

## **10. No Smoking Policy**

Smoking will not be permitted

- at 49 York Street (including grounds).
- at pick up and drop off venues
- during client activities such as music, compic bingo, bowling or Independent Services programs
- in the close proximity of clients.
- in vehicles whilst a client is in the vehicle.
- at Bluegum except in those areas designated by the Workcrew Manager.

Passive smoking can be hazardous. Support workers will avoid accessing unhealthy environments and ensure that clients are not subjected to passive smoking.

When taking a break a support worker must ensure that their client is supervised by another support worker if it is safe to do so.

NOSS does not support smoking and encourages staff to quit and will assist staff by providing details of the Quit program.

## **11. Alcohol and Drugs**

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

For safety reasons, whilst supporting clients, 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.

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.

Any employee under the influence of alcohol or other drugs will not be permitted to work. NOSS reserves the right to request an employee to undergo a drug/alcohol test.

If an employee appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, Management will take the following action:

- conduct a test for alcohol or other drugs (see below).
- make arrangements for the employee's safe transport home (any taxi to be at the employees' expense);
- suspend employee for the remainder of the shift (on personal leave).
- conduct investigation and follow disciplinary process in accordance with NOSS Counselling and Discipline Policy.

Any proven allegations may result in termination of employment.

### **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

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. An employee must consent to testing unless the employee accepts that they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

Testing will be undertaken by a registered medical practitioner (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.

If an employee refuses testing and does not accept that they are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, NOSS will act on the evidence of witnesses.

Any tampering with test equipment or samples given for the purpose of testing will result in dismissal, which could include dismissal without notice.

### **Authorised Work Functions**

The consumption of alcohol is not permitted during working hours unless at a function 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:

- staff must at all times drink responsibly;
- non alcoholic alternatives and adequate food must be available;
- staff who intend to drive must ensure they do not exceed the legal blood alcohol limit for driving (.05);
- staff must ensure that they arrange safe transport; and,
- 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.

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

## **12. Manual Handling**

No employee will be required to lift a load heavier than they can safely do so. Individual risk assessments will be carried out if required. Any support workers working with clients requiring specific manual handling skills will undergo appropriate training.

All workcrew employees will undergo regular manual handling training.

## **13. Protective Clothing and Equipment**

1. Gloves and plastic car seat covers are available at the NOSS Office if support workers require them when transporting clients or attending to their personal care.
2. Protective clothing and equipment (including safety glasses, ear plugs and safety boots) will be provided and must be worn or used by workcrew employees when directed by the Workcrew Manager.
3. Employees will not wear loose clothing around machinery.

## **14. House Keeping**

1. All areas are to be kept clear of slipping and tripping hazards, eg, waste materials or electric leads.
2. All materials are to be stacked or stored in their designated locations.

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

1. All machinery must be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and Australian Standards and maintenance recorded in the Maintenance Log.
2. NOSS will ensure that all persons required to operate machinery, equipment and vehicles have the necessary licences and/or training to ensure safe operation.
3. Safe Operating Procedures are available and will be followed for each item of machinery or equipment.
4. Faulty equipment must be reported to the Workcrew Manager or supervisor immediately.
5. Any machinery or equipment found to be defective, unsafe, or in need of repair will be tagged and placed in the designated repair bay to prevent its use.
6. No workcrew member is to use or perform maintenance on machinery or equipment without the permission of the workcrew supervisory staff.
7. The Workcrew Manager will arrange for all vehicles and equipment to be regularly serviced to ensure their safe operating condition.

## **16. Hazardous Substances**

1. A register must be kept at the Bluegum workshop and NOSS Office of all hazardous substances that are used and stored on the premises.
2. All hazardous substances are to be kept in a locked storage cabinet.

3. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be kept for every hazardous substance used on the premises and attached to the substance storage container.
4. Employees must follow manufacturer's instructions on the product and refer to MSDS before using a hazardous substance.

## **17. Electrical Safety**

1. All power leads will be tested and tagged in accordance with Australian Standards.
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.
3. Electrical cables must not be left in places where they can be damaged by vehicles or be subjected to any other hazards such as water.

## **18. Heat stress / sunburn**

1. All staff will ensure that clients and crew members are appropriately clothed with respect to the sun, including the use of sunscreen, if authorised (see Client Support Policy).
2. Bluegum employees will wear a hat, long sleeved shirt, trousers and sunscreen.
3. Bluegum employees will ensure that they consume adequate fluids during the day. NOSS will provide each crew with additional drinking water.
4. Bluegum employees will take adequate rests on hot days as required.
5. During extreme weather, the Bluegum Manager may authorise an early return to the workshop.

## **19. Job Safety Assessment**

1. A safety assessment will be undertaken for each job undertaken. The safety assessment will identify perceived risks and measures taken to alleviate those risks.
2. Safety assessments will be recorded and signed by all supervisors for all major new jobs.
3. When acting as a contractor, Bluegum employees will adhere to the OH&S policies of the relevant business.