



Health and Safety Policy

Document number: PO2022-005

Approval

Policy owner	Executive Director, Corporate Services		
Approved by	State Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society (NSW); St Vincent de Paul Society Board Executive Leadership Team		
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Purpose

1. The Health and Safety Policy (the policy) supports the health and safety management system within the Society of St Vincent de Paul (NSW) and within the company titled the St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (together, the Society) and describes the relevant responsibilities and accountabilities under this system to ensure compliance with the [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#) (the Act).
2. The Act sets out the broad responsibilities of a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (a PCBU), officers, workers, and others. Whilst task related to fulfilling these responsibilities may be performed by others, the responsibilities themselves cannot be delegated, transferred, or contracted out.

Scope

3. This policy applies to all staff, members, volunteers, affiliates and contractors ('workers'), officers of the Society, and visitors to the Society when undertaking work, activities and or attending functions at, or on behalf of the Society.
4. Officers of the Society, for the purpose of this policy, are members of the Board and members of the Senior Executive. Other senior managers may be found to be an officer, and this will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Officers of the Society must exercise due diligence (defined in section 27(5) of the Act) to ensure the Society complies with its duties or obligations.
5. This policy applies to all workplaces owned and managed by the Society, including any activities undertaken offsite as part of Society operations, such as home visitations. It also includes remote work, attendance at work-related conferences or functions, and attendance at client or other work-related events, including retreats and social events.

Related policies and procedures

6. Related Society policies and procedures include:
 - Code of Conduct for Members, Volunteers and Employees
 - Incident Management Policy
 - Records Retention Policy
 - Risk Management Framework and Risk Register.

Policy principles

7. The Society is committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of its workers, the people we assist, and visitors, in line with our mission, values and strategy.
8. The Society will manage risk to prevent serious injury that impacts the health, safety and wellbeing of workers, the people we assist, and visitors.
9. The Society recognises its responsibilities to comply with the requirements of the Act and aims to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers, the people we assist and visitors by:

- complying with all applicable legislation
- integrating health and safety risk management practices into its operations, and functions with a focus on continuous improvement
- ensuring that effective consultation and communication mechanisms are implemented, monitored, and improved to ensure general understanding of the health and safety management system
- providing a safe environment for work (including safe plant, structures, and safe systems of work)
- ensuring the safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures, and substances
- providing adequate facilities for the health and safety at work of workers, the people we assist and visitors
- monitoring the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace as part of an illness and injury prevention strategy
- providing relevant information, training, instruction, or supervision to workers and where appropriate, the people we assist and visitors
- managing any accidents and incidents that occur, in order to minimise harm and prevent recurrences
- allocating appropriate resources to facilitate the fulfilment of the Society's health and safety responsibilities.

10. The Society does not tolerate adverse treatment of or discrimination against anyone who raises any health and safety concerns.

Health and safety management system

11. The Society will establish and maintain a health and safety management system to meet our legislative responsibilities and manage our risks in consultation with our workers.

12. The system comprises:

- planning
- information, procedures, and guidelines
- training
- incident investigation and continuous improvement
- monitoring, reporting, and auditing.

13. Health and safety hazards and incidents will be reported and managed through our online Incident Risk Management System.

14. The Work Health and Safety Management Committee has been established to provide a coordinated, strategic, and consultative approach to the management of health and safety within the Society, by:

- acting as the highest level of consultation, ensuring that issues that require high level input and attention are appropriately considered and addressed
- managing health and safety related strategy, policy and Society-wide hazards and issues.

15. The Safety and Emergency Management team has primary responsibility for facilitating and coordinating the health and safety management system, including:

- establishing, monitoring, auditing, and improving the system
- supporting all business areas in meeting their health and safety objectives
- providing a workplace injury management and return to work program that assists employees to promptly return to safe work following injury or illness
- managing the Society's workers compensation function
- monitoring compliance through regular auditing of all business areas
- providing information and training resources to assist managers and supervisors
- providing advice and guidance to key stakeholders across the Society to strengthen awareness of safety compliance requirements and of the Society's health and safety management system.

Roles and responsibilities

16. Officers of the Society (Directors of the Board, the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Directors) must:

- promote a whole-of-organisation positive safety culture
- acquire and maintain a general knowledge of the Society's operations, associated risks and hazards and of the health and safety management system used to manage risks and hazards
- ensure that appropriate resources and processes are allocated to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety that may arise as part of the Society's operations
- ensure that the Society has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding incidents, risks and hazards and responding in a timely way to that information
- ensure that the Society has processes for complying with any duty or obligation under the Act such as:
 - reporting notifiable incidents
 - consulting with workers and the people we assist
 - ensuring compliance with notices issued under the Act
 - ensuring the provision of training and instruction to workers about work health and safety
- verify the provision and use of appropriate health and safety resources and processes.

17. The People and Culture Committee of the Board will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the Society's health and safety governance and risk management frameworks for the prevention of injury, illness, and accidents
- receive reports on work health and safety
- verify the work health and safety information they receive.

18. Executive Directors, the Chief Financial Officer, Regional Directors, Directors, and Managers (in addition to any responsibilities as Officers of the Society) must:

- ensure compliance with this policy

- integrate health and safety risk management into operations, business activities and work environments
- ensure that all workers are aware of their responsibilities under this policy
- ensure that all workers complete mandatory health and safety training requirements
- ensure that health and safety risk management controls are in place and are operating effectively
- allocate resources to ensure effective hazard identification and risk management
- provide operational support for the delivery and implementation of safety systems and processes
- ensure the timely reporting of all hazards, accidents and incidents and implement mitigation strategies to prevent reoccurrence
- assist in the development, implementation and maintenance of a return to work program for injured employees
- actively promote and engage in safety conversations
- model responsible safety behaviours.

19. Managers and supervisors must:

- do whatever is reasonably practicable to ensure that both the workplace and the work itself are safe
- ensure that workers are made aware of their safety responsibilities
- ensure that workers are appropriately trained prior to undertaking high risk tasks
- identify, assess and manage health and safety risks
- consult with workers:
 - about issues or changes that affect their health or safety
 - during health and safety risk assessments (and when these are reviewed)
 - when decisions are made about the measures to be taken to eliminate or control these risks
- encourage and support hazard, incident, accident, and near-miss reporting
- investigate and respond to all hazards, accidents and incidents and take action to control risk
- assist in the development, implementation and maintenance of a return to work program for injured employees
- model responsible safety behaviours.

20. Workers must:

- be familiar with this policy
- be aware of and fulfil their health and safety responsibilities
- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care for the health and safety of others
- comply with any reasonable instructions, policies and procedure given by their manager or supervisor
- report any hazard, incident, accident or near-miss, in accordance with this policy
- comply with workplace injury management and return to work programs

- follow the emergency evacuation procedures and any instructions given by emergency personnel.

21. The Work Health and Safety Management Committee will oversee and review:

- the Society's approach to safety
- strategic frameworks and practices dealing with health, safety, and wellbeing
- the Society's compliance with relevant safety legislation, regulations, standards, and accreditation requirements
- direction and oversight of Society's safety related risks, controls, and assurance processes
- significant safety incidents or hazards and processes for responding to them
- safety related issues that have strategic, business, or reputational implications for the Society and monitor management of those issues.

22. The Director, Safety and Emergency Management will:

- provide state-wide direction and leadership on health and safety
- implement strategies to improve the safety, health, and wellbeing of the Society workforce
- provide specialist advice in relation to risk identification and management strategies, and strategic and operational safety issues
- deliver, maintain and review safety systems and processes
- monitor organisational, and industry safety risks
- develop, review, and authorise safety documentation
- ensure the Society maintains legislative and compliance currency.

Review

23. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed every three years, or on a needs basis as required to align with legislative or practice changes.

Further assistance

24. Any questions about the implementation of this policy can be addressed to the Director, Safety and Emergency Management.

25. Feedback regarding the implementation of this policy can be provided to the Executive Director, Corporate Services.

References

26. Legislation, regulations and guides relevant to this policy include:

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (NSW)
- *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017* (NSW)
- *Workers Compensation Act 1987 No 70* (NSW)
- *State Insurance and Care Governance Act 2015* (NSW)
- *Work Health and Safety Codes of Practice*

Approval and amendment history

Version	Approval authority	Date	Amendment summary
Doc #SVDP WHSMS P001, Version 2	President, State Council and CEO	March 2017	Updated and replaced WHS Policy Statement, 2013
Doc #: PO2019- 005	Board and State Council	October 2019	Updated and replaced WHS Policy Statement, 2017
Doc #: PO2019- 005 Version 2	Executive Director Corporate Services	27 July 2020	Ownership updated to align with organisational structure changes
Doc #: PO2022- 005	Executive Leadership Team Board State Council	9 February 2022 6 April 2022 11 April 2022	Revision to update, simplify and fully align with WHS legislation.

Appendix 1: Definitions

Relevant definitions include:

<p>Officer of the Society</p>	<p>An ‘officer’ is defined in the Corporations Act 2001 s 9 as: ·</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a director or secretary; or • a person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole or a substantial part, or the business; or ▪ has the capacity to affect the organisation’s financial standing. <p>Officers of the Society include: Directors of the Board, Company Secretary, Chief Executive Officer, Executive Directors and the Chief Financial Officer. Other senior leaders, including Regional Directors and Directors may be considered to be an officer on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)</p>	<p>As a ‘person conducting a business or undertaking’ (PCBU) under the <i>WHS Act 2011</i> (NSW), the Society must:</p> <p><i>ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of: workers engaged, or caused to be engaged by the person, and workers whose activities in carrying out the work are influenced or directed by the person, while workers are at work in the business or undertaking. (WHS Act 2011 (NSW) s19)</i></p>
<p>Reasonably Practicable</p>	<p>The <i>WHS Act 2011</i> (NSW) defines what is ‘reasonably practicable’ in relation to a duty to ensure health and safety as what could reasonably be done at a particular time to ensure health and safety measures are in place.</p> <p>In determining what is reasonably practicable, there is a requirement to take into account and weigh up all relevant matters including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring (in essence the probability of a person being exposed to harm) • the degree of harm that might result if the hazard or risk occurred (in essence the potential seriousness of injury or harm) • what the person concerned knows, or ought to reasonably know, about the hazard or risk and ways of eliminating or minimising it • the availability of suitable ways to eliminate or minimise the hazard or risk, and • the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the hazard or risk. (<i>WHS Act 2011</i> (NSW), s18)

Society Personnel	Any person (or group of people) engaged by the Society to assist in its works. This includes members, volunteers, employees, contractors, consultants, office holders and Board Directors.
Volunteer	A person undertaking unpaid work for the Society. For the purposes of legislative compliance all requirements of volunteers in this policy apply to members as well as interns, student placements, mutual obligation participants and mandated court orders.
Worker	Any person who carries out work for the Society, including: an employee, member, volunteer, contractor, subcontractor, self-employed person, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, and employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer'.
Workplace	A workplace is any place where a worker goes or is likely to be while work is carried out. This may include offices, warehouses, shops, services sites, and vehicles.