



# Occupational Safety and Health Policy

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## 1. Background

The WA Country Health Service (WACHS) has a legislated obligation under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* (the OSH Act) to provide a safe place of work for its employees.

WACHS has published a stated commitment to ensuring that it meets these obligations and commits to providing a safe workplace to achieve required standards in safety and health for its employees, contractors and visitors.

The OSH Act, together with the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 (the OSH Regulations), provide the legislative context for occupational safety and health within Western Australian workplaces.

The *Code of Practice - Occupational safety and health in the Western Australian public sector 2007* outlines further responsibilities on public sector employers to take specific actions to ensure compliance with the OSH act and the OSH Regulations.

## 2. Policy Statement

The WACHS is committed to providing a safe workplace to achieve high standards in safety and health for its employees, contractors and visitors.

All areas of the WACHS will comply with, or exceed, OSH legal requirements and will develop and implement safe systems and work practices that reflect its commitment to safety and health.

WACHS promotes safety and health activities and encourages the election of safety and health representatives and/or formation of safety and health committees in workplaces, in accordance with legislative obligations.

Information about safety and health is communicated regularly and often to ensure that all staff have access to current and relevant information about health and safety, particularly as it applies to their roles and the healthcare environment.

WACHS applies a consultative approach to safety risk reporting and investigation in order to promote a positive safety culture, in which a team-based approach is adopted to the resolution of problems and prevention of recurrences.

WACHS works with other agencies to further the understanding, implementation and development of effective safety, health and risk management.

The policy is supported by an Occupational Safety and Health Management Framework, which outlines the governance model for the effective management of occupational safety and health across WACHS.

This policy is supported by a number of additional policies, procedures and guidelines that provide practical guidance regarding the management of occupational safety and health within WACHS.

### 2.1 Occupational Safety and Health Management Framework

The WACHS Occupational Safety and Health Management Framework outlines key principles and strategies for OSH achievement and improvement under each of the elements, as follows:

We ensure that our **Management Commitment** is demonstrated through our:

- Statement of Commitment
- OSH Policy
- Safety leadership by Executive
- Prioritisation of OSH tasks
- Implementation of safety improvements
- Measurement of safety performance.

We ensure effective Occupational Safety and Health **Planning** which includes:

- Strategic priorities which incorporate safety objectives
- Assessments
- Safety being included in regional planning
- Safety assessment being included in capital and minor works
- Contractor safety being managed
- Legal compliance obligations being identified.

We demonstrate effective **Consultation and Reporting** by ensuring:

- OSH Committees are established
- Safety and Health Representatives are elected
- Consultation is undertaken on decisions affecting safety
- Reporting to regional and WACHS Executive is undertaken
- WorkSafe improvement notice resolution occurs
- Due diligence reports are prepared and communicated.

We ensure effective **Hazard Management** through:

- Hazard identification
- Workplace inspections
- Hazardous substance management
- Risk assessment and controls
- Hazard management process being reviewed
- Ensuring incidents are reported and investigated.

We ensure suitable and appropriate **Training and Supervision** through:

- OSH for Managers program
- OSH awareness for all staff in induction
- Staff training needs / employee development
- Training / supervision by staff with relevant skills
- Ensuring staff can use equipment safely.

We aim to continually improve through **Monitoring and Evaluation** including:

- Management reporting / review
- OSH performance in the Annual Report
- Safety risk / lost time injury trends analysis
- Assessments / audits
- Policy and training program reviews.

### 3. Definitions

<b>Contractor</b>	Means a person who is engaged to provide a service to WACHS through a contract for services.
<b>Employee</b>	Means a person who is employed directly by WACHS through a contract of employment.
<b>Line Manager / Supervisor</b>	Means a person who has responsibility for management and supervision of employees.
<b>Risk</b>	The possibility of an unwanted event occurring measured in terms of the possible consequences and likelihood of the event occurring.
<b>Safety and Health Committee</b>	Means a Committee comprising managers and employees that has been established to monitor safety and health issues in a workplace.
<b>Safety and Health Representative</b>	Means an employee who has been properly elected to represent other employees in the interest of safety and health at the workplace for which they were elected.
<b>Safety Risk</b>	Means an event, occurrence, state or condition that has the potential to inflict injury or harm to a person.
<b>Work Health and Safety</b>	Has the same meaning as Occupational Safety and Health.
<b>Workplace</b>	Means a place where employees are, or are likely to be, during the course of their work. This includes attendance at off-site locations and travel in a government vehicle during the course of work.

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 4.1 Duties of WACHS as the employer

The OSH Act requires that employers so far as is practicable, provide and maintain a working environment in which the employees of the employer are not exposed to hazards and in particular are to:

- Provide and maintain workplaces, plant and systems or work such that, so far as is practicable, employees are not exposed to hazards
- Provide such information, instruction, and training to, and supervision of, the employees as is necessary to enable them to perform their work in such a manner that they are not exposed to hazards

- Consult and cooperate with safety and health representatives, if any, and other employees at the workplace, regarding occupational safety and health at the workplace, and
- Where it is not practicable to avoid the presence of hazards at the workplace, provide the employees with, or otherwise provide for the employees to have, such adequate personal protective clothing and equipment as is practicable to protect them against those hazards, without any cost to the employees
- Make arrangements for ensuring, so far as is practicable that the use, cleaning, maintenance, transportation and disposal of plant; and the use, handling, processing, storage, transportation and disposal of substances, at the workplace is carried out in a manner such that the employees are not exposed to hazards.

The duties of WACHS to its employees also apply to contractors engaged to undertake work for WACHS as if they were employees.

### 4.2 Responsibilities of employees

The OSH Act requires that employees take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and health at work and to avoid adversely affecting the safety or health of any other person through any act or omission at work.

An employee must:

- use protective clothing and equipment provided, or provided for, by the employee in the manner in which he or she has been properly instructed to use it
- take reasonable care for their own safety and health at work
- avoid adversely affecting the safety and health of others at work
- follow all instructions and safe working procedures established to protect their safety and that of others
- wear personal protective equipment as required and avoid misuse or damage to any equipment provided in the interests of safety or health
- report all identified hazards and accidents/incidents in the workplace to their line manager.

An employee must cooperate with the employer in fulfilling its obligations under the Act.

### 4.3 Responsibilities of line managers

Line managers at all levels within WACHS are responsible for ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of all employees under their control.

Line managers must ensure that they are familiar with policies, procedures, processes and practices relating to occupational safety and health within WACHS.

These responsibilities include:

- assessing health and safety risks associated with work performed and ensuring that staff are provided with adequate training, supervision, equipment and support to complete their duties safely
- investigating the workplace and actively identifying workplace safety and health risks, assessing those risks, and applying risk controls

- using the WACHS Safety Risk Report (SRR) Form to record action taken in response to reported occupational safety and health risks and issues
- notifying the employee reporting the occupational safety and health risk of the outcome of the investigation and the action to be taken
- ensuring that staff complete Core Essential Training programs designed to protect their health and safety e.g. Emergency Code Awareness, Manual Handling and Aggression Management
- consulting with employees and their safety and health representatives about safety and health matters
- familiarising themselves with their responsibilities for completing workplace inspections and maintain a record of inspections conducted
- confirming that all employees have been provided with occupational safety and health induction and relevant training to enable them to undertake their work safely
- keeping records of all occupational safety and health risk events that may become subject of a claim, complaint, grievance or resolution
- making a report to the Regional Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator as soon as possible where a safety risk event results in a workers' compensation claim
- completing OSH for Managers training.

#### **4.4 Responsibilities of senior managers and Executive leads**

Provide executive level leadership for occupational safety and health.

- Actively pursue opportunities to increase occupational safety and health performance within areas of responsibility.
- Ensure safety risks are identified, assessed and managed and that controls are documented.
- Oversee safety risk reporting to identify trends in safety risks at an organisational level.
- Oversee the occupational safety and health performance of line managers in their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure that safety and health reporting and analysis is included as a regular item on agendas for WACHS Executive meetings and forums.
- Ensure that safety implications are assessed when making adjustments to the way that work is performed and that any significant changes are referred through consultative forums e.g. Safety and Health Committees.
- Support line managers in implementing safety and health measures, and in resolving safety and health issues within their areas of responsibility.
- Ensure staff within their area of responsibility meet their OSH training requirements.

#### **4.5 Responsibilities of Central Office OSH team**

The Central Office OSH team includes the Executive Director of People, Capability and Culture, the Work Health and Safety Manager, Senior Injury Management Consultant and Injury Management Consultants. The role of the Central Office OSH team is to:

- provide leadership in the progress of occupational safety and health management across WACHS
- facilitate the completion and reporting of the OSH Action Plan
- facilitate the Regional OSH network
- maintain policies, procedures and guidelines relating to Occupational Safety and Health within WACHS
- facilitate WACHS-wide reform of Occupational Safety and Health systems and processes
- provide effective supporting tools and resources for regional OSH teams
- provide expert advice where required on OSH matters
- act as a subject matter expert in the development of training programs and other staff learning materials relating to Occupational Safety and Health
- ensure external compliance reporting requirements are met e.g. WA Health Annual Report.

### 4.6 Responsibilities of Regional OSH Coordinators

Regional OSH Coordinators are responsible for:

- coordination of occupational safety and health matters for their region
- managing the establishment of safety and health committees including election and training of safety and health representatives
- undertaking regular safety inspections, audits and risk assessments of regional sites and promote compliance with legislative and accreditation requirements
- assisting with the coordination and delivery of OSH and related training for their region
- recording and monitoring safety incidents within the safety information management system and maintaining accurate records
- fulfilling regional performance data collection, collation and analysis and the preparation of management reports
- evaluating and recommend strategies for resolution of Worksafe Improvement Notices
- providing expert advice to the region on occupational safety and health matters.

Note: These responsibilities are to be read in conjunction with the relevant JDF as amended from time to time.

### 4.7 Functions of Safety and Health Representatives

Safety and Health Representatives are members of staff elected to perform the functions of Safety and Health Representatives in accordance with the OSH Act. The position is voluntary, however, there is a requirement for training to be undertaken and for time to be allocated for the safety and health representative to meet their responsibilities which includes to:

- inspect the workplace at times agreed with the employer; or if the workplace has not been inspected in the preceding 30 days, upon giving reasonable notice
- inspect the workplace immediately in the event of an accident, a dangerous occurrence, or where there is risk of imminent and serious injury or harm to the

health of, any person, to carry out any appropriate investigation in respect of the matter

- report hazards or potential hazards that comes to their notice
- refer relevant matters to the Safety and Health Committee
- consult and cooperate on all matters relating to the safety or health of people in the workplace
- liaise with other staff on matters concerning the safety or health of people in the workplace.

A safety and health representative may accompany an inspector during an investigation.

A safety and health representative incurs no civil liability arising from their performance of, or their failure to perform, any function of a safety and health representative under the OSH Act.

### 4.8 Responsibilities of Safety and Health Committees

Consistent with the OSH Act, the functions of OSH Committees are:

- to facilitate consultation and cooperation between the employer and employees in initiating, developing, and implementing measures designed to ensure the safety and health of its employees
- to keep itself informed as to standards relating to safety and health generally recommended or prevailing in workplaces of a comparable nature and to review, and make recommendations to the employer on, rules and procedures at the workplace relating to the safety and health of the employees
- to recommend to the employer and employees the establishment, maintenance, and monitoring of programmes, measures and procedures at the workplace relating to the safety and health of the employees
- to keep in a readily accessible place and form information provided by the employer regarding the hazards that arise or may arise at the workplace
- to consider, and make recommendations to the employer about any changes or intended changes to or at the workplace that may affect the safety or health of employees at the workplace
- to consider matters referred to the committee by a safety and health representative
- to perform other functions as per the regulations or requested to be undertaken by the employer.

## 5. Compliance

This policy is a mandatory requirement under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*.

Failure to comply with this policy may constitute a breach of the WA Health Code of Conduct (Code). The Code is part of the [Integrity Policy Framework](#) issued pursuant to section 26 of the [Health Services Act 2016](#) (WA) and is binding on all WACHS staff which for this purpose includes trainees, students, volunteers, researchers, contractors for service (including all visiting health professionals and agency staff) and persons delivering training or education within WACHS.

WACHS staff are reminded that compliance with all policies is mandatory.

### 6. Records Management

All WACHS corporate records must be stored in the approved Electronic Documents and Records Management System.

[Records Management Policy](#)

### 7. Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy is to be carried out by the Work Health and Safety Manager, who will provide the Executive Director People, Capability and Culture with a report of key safety performance indicators, each month, for reporting to the WACHS Executive.

### 8. Standards

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards – 1.29-1.33](#)

### 9. Legislation

*Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*

Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996

Code of Practice - Occupational Safety and Health in the Western Australian Public Sector 2007

*Workers' Compensations and Injury Management Act 1981*

### 10. References

[WACHS Occupational Safety and Health Statement of Commitment](#)

### 11. Related Forms

WACHS [Safety Risk Report Form](#)

### 12. Related Policy Documents

WACHS [Learning and Development Policy](#)

WACHS [Emergency \(Disaster\) Management Arrangements Policy](#)

WACHS [Staff Support Post Critical Incident Guideline](#)

### 13. Related WA Health System Policies

Nil



## 14. Policy Framework

### Risk, Compliance & Audit

**This document can be made available in alternative formats  
on request for a person with a disability**

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