

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Type:	Council Policy – Work Health and Safety		
Owner:	Workplace Health and Safety Coordinator		
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive Officer		
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Legislation Reference:	<i>Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011</i>		

1 PURPOSE

Katherine Town Council values the health, safety and wellbeing of all its employees, members of the community and any person that may visit, transact business or use the many facilities it manages and controls.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the commitment of Council to:

- **provide** a workplace that is free from risks to health and safety by implementing the highest possible standards to protect workers' health, safety, mental and social wellbeing.
- **engage** and consult with all workers and others affected by Council's business and activities to ensure hazards are identified and the risks associated with them removed or reduced to the greatest degree.
- **create** a workplace environment where workers and others affected by Council's business and activities are encouraged and supported to raise health and safety issues and help reduce and manage them.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to Elected Members acting in their official capacity, and all employees of Council including all persons performing work under the direction of, or on behalf of Council (for example, employees, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, work experience, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors and their employees, agents, consultants, full time, part time, casual and temporary workers).

It covers all of Council's workplaces, including offices, the library, Visitor Information Centre, waste management facilities, operations centre, vehicles, plant, machinery, and any place where workers may be representing Council, for example, when visiting a customer, client, or supplier.

It covers all work-related functions, for example work lunches, conferences, workshops, work-related celebrations, end-of-year parties and client functions.

3 DEFINITIONS

Employee means a person paid by Katherine Town Council on a full time, part time, casual or contract basis, or a volunteer engaged by Council.

HR manager means the person responsible for human resource (HR) matters at Katherine Town Council.

Hazard means a situation that has the potential for harm to life, health, property, or the environment This includes any existing or potential condition in the workplace that can result in injury, damage or other losses.

Notifiable incident means an incident arising out of the conduct of a business or undertaking, in which there is death, serious injury or illness or a dangerous 'near-miss'. The incident may relate to any person – whether an employee, contractor or member of the public.

PPE means Personal Protective Equipment, which is clothing or equipment designed to be worn by someone to protect them from the risk of injury or illness and generally provided by your employer (either directly or through an allowance).

Reasonably practicable means doing what is reasonably able to be done to ensure the health and safety of workers and others, taking into account:

- the likelihood of the hazard or risk occurring
- the degree of harm that might result from exposure to the hazard or risk
- what the person concerned knows, or ought to reasonably know about the hazard or risk, and about the ways of eliminating or minimising the risk
- the availability and suitability of controls and the cost associated with controls, and
- after assessing the risk and available means to eliminate or minimise the risk, whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

WHS means work health and safety.

Worker means the same as section 7 of the Northern Territory *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*.

4 DETAILS

Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and to, as far as reasonably practicable, eliminate conditions and incidents that could result in personal injury or ill health. Council will endeavour to pursue the highest possible standard of workplace health and safety management in all its operations.

Council is committed to ensuring compliance with the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*, Regulations and all relevant Codes of Practice, Australian Standards and WorkSafe Guidelines.

Council seeks continuous improvement in WHS performance through identification of hazards, investigating reports of incidents, monitoring and evaluating activities and practices and implementing initiatives to promote best practice for health and safety. Council encourages reporting of incidents and supports suggestions to create a safe working environment and ensure all possible preventative measures are being taken.

Council seeks the co-operation of all employees, workers, visitors, and others who may be affected by Council's business or undertakings in making the workplace safe. All employees, workers, visitors, and others have a responsibility to ensure they do not undertake activities that put themselves and other people in the workplace at risk of harm. They must also ensure they do not undertake activities in the workplace that puts the employer's reputation, viability and or profitability at serious risk.

HAZARD / INCIDENT REPORTING

All employees and contractors are required to complete an Incident Report and Investigation Form if a hazard/injury/incident occurs because of work undertaken on behalf of Council, on Council premises or whilst on a work break or work travel.

What is to be reported?

All Injuries are to be reported, including events that cause an illness or injury requiring medical action.

All Incidents including events that cause a minor injury of a first aid nature.

All Near-Misses, including events that do not cause injury but have the potential to do so.

All Hazards, which is anything that has the potential to cause ill health or injury.

Action to be taken

Council employees and contractors who experience a hazard/injury/incident are required to take the following action:

- advise their manager of the incident, hazard or near-miss as soon as reasonably able
- complete the relevant incident form through the applicable WHS Platform and send through to your direct line manager. If necessary a supervisor or manager may submit the relevant form on their behalf.

The Workplace Health and Safety Coordinator will record all reports and will advise, assist and investigate where required. Incidents may be escalated to the WHS Committee for comments, input and resolutions as necessary.

The internal reporting of incidents, hazards and near-misses is separate from reporting notifiable incidents to NT WorkSafe.

WHS INDUCTION

All new employees are required to be provided with WHS information regarding the workplace as part of their overall induction to Council. Refer to the Employee Induction Policy.

Contractors or visitors to any Council workplaces are required to be provided with information, so far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure a safe working environment and that they work in ways to maintain that safe working environment. Refer to the Contractor and Visitor Induction Policy.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

Council is required by legislation to be proactive in identifying hazards in the workplace which may affect the health and safety of employees, workers, visitors, and members of the public, and eliminating or minimising the risks arising from those hazards.

A WHS identification and assessment process should be undertaken for all activities where there is potential for harm including:

- before activities commence
- before the introduction of new equipment, procedures, or processes, or
- when equipment, procedures or processes are modified.

Step 1: Identify the Hazard

A hazard is a source or potential source of injury, ill health, or disease. Hazard identification is the process of identifying all situations and events that could cause injury or illness by examining a work area/task for the purpose

of identifying all threats which are 'inherent in the job'. Tasks can include but may not be limited to using tools or machinery, hazardous chemicals, dealing with people or animals, or lifting/moving items.

Step 2: Assess the Risk

A risk assessment involves considering what could happen if someone is exposed to a hazard and the likelihood of it happening. A risk assessment can help determine:

- how severe a risk is
- whether any existing control measures are effective
- what action you should take to control the risk
- how urgently the action needs to be taken.

A risk assessment can be undertaken with varying degrees of detail depending on the type of hazards and the information, data and resources available. It can be as simple as a discussion with workers or involve specific risk analysis tools and techniques recommended by safety professionals.

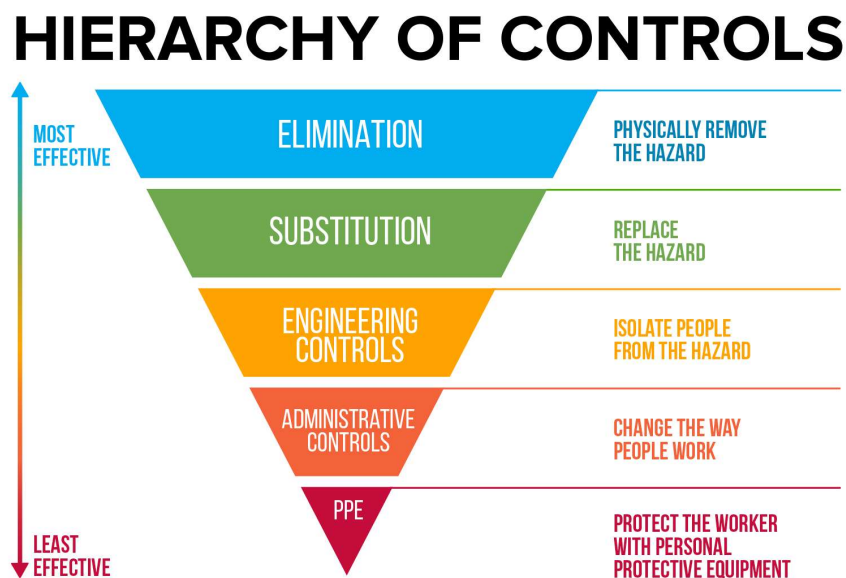
Step 3: Control the Hazards

The most important step in managing risks involves eliminating the risk so far as is reasonably practicable, or if that is not possible, minimising the risks so far as is reasonably practicable to prevent death and serious injury, in line with the Hierarchy of Risk Control (figure below).

The aim in this step is to implement the most reliable controls to create a safe workplace rather than simply relying on people to behave safely, follow processes or use protective equipment. In many cases, a combination of several control strategies may be the best solution.

The control measures that Council will put into operation will usually require changes to the way work is carried out due to new or modified equipment or processes, new or different chemicals or new personal protective equipment (PPE). Control measures will be supported with:

- policies, procedures, or Standard Operating Procedures
- training, instruction, and information in a form that can be understood by all workers or other that enter the workplace, and
- supervision depending on the level of experience of workers.



Step 4: Review

Council will continuously review its WHS approach to monitor and improve control measures and find safer ways of doing things. Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) will be consulted accordingly.

Control measures will be reviewed:

- when the control measure is no longer effective in controlling the risk
- before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control
- if a new hazard or risk is identified
- if the results of consultation indicate that a review is necessary, or
- if a health and safety representative requests a review.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone has a role in workplace health and safety.

Katherine Town Council

Council will provide and maintain:

- work environments that remove or reduce risks to health and safety
- suitable facilities such as toilets, drinking water, dishwashing, and eating facilities and first aid equipment
- safe plant and structures
- safe systems of work.

Council will ensure there are procedures for the safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures, and substances.

Council will provide relevant information, training, instruction, or supervision necessary to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety arising from work carried out as part of the conduct of Council business.

Council will monitor the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace for the purpose of preventing illness or injury of workers arising from the conduct of Council business.

Council will conduct incident investigations to prevent the recurrence of incidents and near misses and to monitor control measures to ensure objectives are achieved.

Council will consult with workers on all matters relating to health and safety.

Senior management of Katherine Town Council

Senior management, including the Chief Executive Officer and Directors, are considered 'persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)' under the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011* and they must:

- exercise due diligence to ensure Council complies with WHS legislation
- establish, understand, implement, and maintain this policy, and ensure it is available and communicated to all levels within Council
- provide adequate information, instruction, and training to ensure that each worker is safe from injury and risks to health
- ensure all notifiable incidents are reported to NT WorkSafe, and
- identify, assess, and manage hazards and risks.

Senior management will seek to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and wellbeing of:

- all workers engaged, or caused to be engaged by Council, and
- all workers whose activities are influenced or directed by Council, and
- the public,

so they are not put at risk from work carried out as part of Council business.

Senior management will advocate for and encourage a safety-first culture, and a workplace free from bullying and harassment.

Workers

Workers will:

- take reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing and that of other people
- pay attention to any training they receive, including workplace induction training
- take reasonable care that what they do, or what they do not do, does not adversely affect the health and safety of themselves and other people
- report all incidents, injuries and near misses immediately, no matter how minor, and
- report all known or observed hazards to their supervisor or manager as soon as possible.

Workers are required to comply, so far as reasonably practicable, with any reasonable instruction given by management, including wearing PPE where and when required and know the health and safety procedures in their workplace, including emergency procedures.

Workers are asked to always follow the health and safety procedures in their workplace and ask for training or supervision when starting a task for the very first time or using / operating new tools or machinery and talk to their supervisor if they think a task is too dangerous or difficult.

Workers should discuss any safety concerns with more experienced workers or their supervisor, and always be respectful of work colleagues, supervisors, management, and the general public.

Elected Members acting in official capacity

Elected Members must be aware of Council's WHS policies to ensure their acts, or omissions to act, do not adversely affect the health and safety of themselves or others.

Contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers and visitors in the workplace

A person at a workplace, whether they fall under the above categories or not, must comply as reasonably able with any instruction given by Council employees to allow Council to comply with their legal obligations.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Council will establish a Health and Safety Committee in accordance with Division 4 of the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*.

HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES (HSRs)

If requested by an employee, Council will support the negotiation and election of HSRs to facilitate the flow of information about health and safety between Council and its employees. HSRs are elected to represent a work group. Refer to the Health and Safety Representative policy.

BREACHES

The Code of Conduct for Employees requires all employees to ensure workplace safety practices are followed, that discrimination is not part of the workplace and that bullying and harassment are prevented.

Any breach of this policy, or related work health and safety policies, is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct for Employees and could constitute grounds for disciplinary action, which may include an issue of a warning, reprimand, suspension, termination, or legal action.

5 ASSOCIATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

- Elected Members Code of Conduct
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Alcohol and Drug Policy
- Chemical Handling and Storage Policy
- Complaint Handling Policy
- Contractor and Visitor Induction Policy
- Emergency / Evacuation Policy
- Employee Induction Policy
- Firearms and Tranquiliser Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health and Safety Representative Policy
- Immunisation Policy
- Incident Report and Investigation Form
- Manual Handling Policy and Procedure
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy
- Prevention of Bullying, Discrimination, and Harassment Policy
- Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy and Procedure
- Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) Policy
- Safe Operations in Public Places
- Safe Travel Policy
- Safe Working in Hot Environmental Conditions Policy
- Smoke Free Workplace Policy
- Vehicle Operations Policy
- Working Alone Policy
- Workplace Ergonomics Policy
- Form – KTC Incident Report and Investigation

6 REFERENCES AND RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2019*
- Local Government (General) Regulations 2021
- *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*
- Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011
- Safe Work Australia – Code of Practice – How to manage work health and safety risks

Revision History

Version	Approval date	Details of change	Responsible officer
1	28/02/2017	Created	
2	26/07/2022	Revised and new template	CEO

