



POLICY STATEMENT No. 60
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

1. OBJECTIVES

To:

- communicate the commitment by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) to ensuring a safe and healthy workplace;
- establish the department's work health and safety (WHS) management system in accordance with legislative requirements and the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Code of Practice in the Public Sector; and
- provide employees with sources of information and guidance.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all DEC employees, volunteers and contractors, all DEC workplaces and includes all places where DEC employees carry out work.

Employees (Public Sector): are those people employed by the State Government as a public service officer or under a contract of service under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* or people employed under other DEC-administered legislation.

Contractors: are those people employed under a contract of service to the department.

Managers: are those people who direct and supervise other people within a work unit.

The Director General and Corporate Executive are responsible for providing, maintaining and promoting a safe working environment to ensure that employees are not exposed to hazards. The DEC OSH committees, OSH representatives, directors, managers supervisors and all employees are to ensure that DEC's OSH policies, programs and procedures are followed.

3. CONTEXT

The department promotes a strong culture of workplace health and safety. As an employer DEC embraces the duty of care responsibility prescribed in the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* (OSH Act) to ensure the safety and health of employees and others in the workplace.

DEC's commitment to OSH excellence is underpinned by a duty that is shared by senior management, supervisors and employees to establish and implement management systems and safety management practices. OSH management is integrated into DEC's

core values and corporate planning processes and clear management accountability has been established for OSH performance.

Other relevant DEC policies are:

- Policy Statement No 43 Injury Management April 2007
- Policy Statement No 56 Risk Management July 2011
- Various People Services Branch policies such as:
 - Alcohol and Drugs Policy
 - Health and Fitness Policy
 - Critical Incident Stress Management Policy.

4. STANDARDS

The standards that are required to be met in order to attain the highest achievable departmental performance in OSH are prescribed in the legislation, regulations and codes administered by relevant Western Australian government agencies (Worksafe, WorkCover, RiskCover) and the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health (see section 5 below).

Departmental standards are also set out in various OSH and related guidelines, procedures and codes that can be found in the *Risk Management Section Policies and Procedures Manual*. The *Work Health and Safety Management Plan* contains a range of standards and indicators for the five key elements of the plan (Management commitment; Planning; Consultation and reporting; Hazard management; and Training and supervision).

5. LEGISLATION

The principal legislation that underpins this policy is the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* (OSH Act). The OSH Act provides for the promotion, coordination, administration and enforcement of occupational safety and health in Western Australia. The OSH Act places certain duties on employers, employees, manufacturers, importers and suppliers. It also places emphasis on the prevention of accidents and injury.

The OSH Act is supported by a further tier of statute - the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996*. The regulations prescribe minimum standards and they define specific requirements related to hazards or a particular type of work. They also allow licensing, granting of approvals and certificates.

Section 57 of the OSH Act requires a Code of Practice that provides practical advice on preventive strategies and explanatory information to assist the achievement of OSH standards. A Code of Practice does not have the same legal force as a regulation. The Western Australian Public Service published a Code of Practice: Occupational Health and Safety in 2007. The Code can be found at:

http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/PDF/Codes_of_Practice/CodePublicSector.pdf

The *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981* makes provision for the compensation of employees who suffer a work-related injury or illness and the management of employees' injuries or illness with the objective of enabling a return to work.

Harmonised OSH laws – Work Health and Safety legislation

In 2008 the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments agreed that a model Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act and model regulations would be developed which each jurisdiction would then seek to enact to deliver more consistent OSH laws across Australia. These model laws would be supported by model Codes of Practice which similarly would be adopted by each jurisdiction.

At the point in time when Western Australia adopts the model WSH Bill provisions, the current OSH Act will no longer exist. The agreed timetable for the commencement of the model WSH Bill and the model regulations is 1 January 2012. The model WSH Bill will create the same duties and responsibilities as the current OSH Act. The final content of the model WSH Bill in WA will be determined by Parliament. This policy may need revision when the new laws come in to force.

6. POLICY

- 6.1 Managers will demonstrate their commitment to the highest achievable standards of OSH through effective leadership, fostering of teamwork and the facilitation of expert advice, services and resources.
- 6.2 DEC will establish, maintain, monitor and review programs and procedures at the workplace relating to OSH.
- 6.3 Managers will regularly consult and collaborate with employees on OSH at the workplace, through effective OSH committees.
- 6.4 Managers will provide and maintain workplaces, equipment and systems of work such that, so far as practicable, employees are not exposed to hazards.
- 6.5 Managers will provide induction, instruction, supervision and training to their employees as is necessary for them to perform their work safely.
- 6.6 DEC will provide employees with approved personal protective clothing and equipment for OSH purposes in the workplace. Employees will use and maintain such protective clothing and equipment as provided.
- 6.7 Managers will make arrangements for the safe use, handling, maintenance, storage, transportation and disposal of hazardous materials and substances.
- 6.8 Managers will ensure prompt reporting and investigation of lost time and medical treatment accidents, injuries or diseases in the workplace and remedial action implemented.
- 6.9 All employees will maintain a responsibility to identify and report hazards, assess risks, and undertake corrective action.
- 6.10 All employees shall take reasonable care to ensure their own safety and health, and to avoid adversely affecting the safety and health of others through any act or omission while at work.
- 6.11 Employees will (so far as is practicable) comply with instructions for safety and health in the workplace.

- 6.12 DEC will encourage and assist all personnel to attain and maintain improved physical and mental health and positive lifestyle behaviours.
- 6.13 DEC may assess the ability of individual employees to safely undertake work required as part of their employment in accordance with departmental guidelines.
- 6.14 Managers will audit the standards and indicators in the Work, Health and Safety Management Plan annually and will undertake actions to improve performance, as required.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The strategies that have been formulated to implement the policy statements above are contained in DEC's *Work Health and Safety Management Plan* and *Risk Management Section Policies and Procedures Manual*.

Some of the key strategies in the plan are to:

- provide information on desirable safety management practices;
- identify the strengths and weaknesses of management systems;
- provide measures for safety and health performance;
- implement a cycle of continuous improvement;
- compare performance with organisations in the same industry; and,
- gain recognition for standards achieved in the management of the department's safety and health system.

8. CUSTODIAN

Director Corporate Services

9. KEY WORDS

Occupational Safety and Health; OSH; OSH Act; workplace safety; hazards; Work Health and Safety Management Plan; WHS laws

10. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed following the passage of model WHS laws scheduled for January 2012 and thereafter no later than June 2016.

11. DIRECTOR GENERAL APPROVAL

Approved on 16 December 2011

By

Keiran McNamara
Keiran McNamara
DIRECTOR GENERAL