

Managing Psychosocial Hazards

Procedure (18)



Catholic
Safety & Injury
Management
South Australia



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1. PURPOSE

This procedure is to increase understanding of psychosocial hazards in the workplace, outline the risk management approach to provide workers with a healthy and safe workplace, through the nurturing of a positive work culture based on encouragement, staff development, teamwork, and positive reinforcement.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all workers under the Catholic Church Endowment Society Inc. (CCES).

3. DEFINITIONS

Definitions can be found on the [Catholic Safety & Injury Management Website](#).

3.1. Information

Psychosocial hazards at work are aspects of work and situations that may cause a stress response and could lead to psychological or physical harm and injury/illness. These hazards can stem from:

- the way tasks or jobs are designed, organised, managed and supervised;
- tasks or jobs where there are inherent psychosocial hazards and risks;
- the equipment, working environment or requirements to undertake duties in physically hazardous environments;
- social and/or cultural factors at work, workplace relationships and social interactions.

Psychosocial hazards include (but are not limited to):

- high or low job demands;
- exposure to traumatic events or material;
- lack of role clarity;
- low job control;
- conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions;
- poor support;
- workplace violence and aggression;
- bullying and harassment, including sexual and gender-based harassment;
- inadequate reward and recognition;
- hazardous physical environment;
- remote or isolated work;
- poor organisational justice;
- poor physical environment;
- poor organisational change management.



4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific responsibilities for conducting certain actions required by the CCES, have been allocated to position holders within the organisation. Such responsibilities are consistent with the obligations that the legislation places on officers, managers, supervisors, workers, and others in the workplace.

Responsibility, authority, and accountability processes have been defined in [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Procedure \(12\)](#), and summarised in:

- [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Workers \(025G\)](#);
- [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Managers & Supervisors \(023G\)](#);
- [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Officers \(024G\)](#); and
- [Work Health & Safety and Injury Management Policy](#).

You are required to familiarise yourself with this procedure to understand the obligations that you may have in relation to its implementation and to carry out your assigned actions and responsibilities.

This Procedure is to be read in conjunction with your Organisational Policies and / or Procedures.

5. PROCEDURE

Psychosocial hazards and the appropriate control measures may vary between workplaces and between groups of workers, depending on the work environment, organisational context and the nature of work. The following gives a recommended approach, for the workplace to assess the appropriate controls for the hazards identified at their workplace.

5.1. Managing psychosocial hazards & risks

Psychosocial hazards/risks must be eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable. To achieve this as for any other hazard, you should apply the risk management process described in [Hazard Management Procedure \(14\)](#). This approach includes:

1. Understanding the key psychosocial hazards.
2. Undertaking a risk management process (identify, prioritise and control).
3. Undertaking meaningful consultation with workers.
4. Ensuring appropriate resources are available to control risks.
5. Maintaining, monitoring and reviewing control measures.

5.2. Identifying psychosocial hazards

Psychosocial hazards can be identified through, but not limited to:

- Surveys of worker satisfaction (such as the [People at Work](#) psychosocial risk assessment and survey tool and the [Psychosocial Hazard Work Re-Design Tool – PHReD-T](#)).
- Regular worksite safety inspections that involve discussion and consultation with workers.
- Consultation around planned or unplanned changes to work conditions (e.g. organisational change, unexpected workload changes).



- Observations of worker behaviour and workplace interactions.
- Leave patterns and turnover.
- Discussions with workers (e.g. team meetings and individual discussions).
- Complaints and grievances from workers.
- Incidents and injury data/reports.
- Issues raised at Work Health and Safety Committee meetings.

5.3. Assessing psychosocial hazards & risks

Where a psychosocial hazard is identified, the relevant manager must assess the level of risk. Consideration must be given to things that may give rise to hazards, influence the level of risk workers are exposed to, or could be changed to help control those risks, including:

- The design of work, including job demands and tasks involved.
- Systems of work including how work is managed, organised and supported.
 - Lack of appropriate work systems (lack of training, resources, role definitions, support systems, poorly designed rosters).
- The design of work, including how work is managed, organised and supported.
- The design and layout and environmental conditions of the workplace, including safe means of entering and exiting the workplace and welfare facilities.
- The design and layout and environmental conditions of workers' accommodation.
- Plant, substances and structures in the workplace.



5.4. Understanding psychosocial risks & controls

Descriptor	Potential Controls
High Job Demands Examples: Mentally and emotionally demanding work, time pressures, challenging work hours (e.g. shift work), physically demanding roles, poor environmental conditions	Regular team meetings to discuss projected workload, monitor workflow Address anticipated absences/leave Allocate appropriate resources Develop personal work plans Give realistic deadlines and workloads Review positions descriptions to ensure up to date Rotate staff through mentally/emotionally/physically demanding tasks Job design to ensure manageable workloads Ensure staff are taking allocated breaks and using annual leave entitlements Regular individual meetings incorporating well-being checks and provide avenues for support/professional supervision Ensure physical workplace complies with relevant safety requirements Ensure applicants are informed at pre-selection stage of nature of emotionally demanding roles
Low Job Demands Examples: Too little to do, or highly repetitive or monotonous tasks	Don't underutilise skills Rotate staff through repetitive tasks Staff development and skills building
Low Job Control Examples: Where workers have little say in how they do their work, take breaks, where workers are not involved in decisions that affect them or clients.	Engage staff and allow them to participate in making decisions about the way they do their work Provide opportunity for skills development Recognition and development processes can be an opportunity for staff to have input Consult with staff on changes, performance indicators and resources
Poor Workplace Relationships Examples: Conflict about responsibilities, relationship conflict (bullying and interpersonal) and/or lack of work & interpersonal boundaries	Ensure all staff aware of the Code of Conduct, organisational values, and expected behaviour Ensure managers have skills to identify and manage conflict and ensure managers know where to get support (e.g. HR) Be aware of systems and policies in place and how to access Monitor the work environment for potential disagreements- manage accordingly and swiftly Promote a positive team culture and build positive team relationships Ensure all workers have up to date position descriptions and are aware of expectations and individual/team responsibilities.



<p>Poor Support</p> <p>Examples: Organisational, supervisors, peers, lack of timely feedback, support and guidance from supervisors and / or support from co – workers, including work tasks</p>	<p>Clear reporting lines to ensure staff know to whom they are accountable and where they can go to for help</p> <p>Ensure supervisors are trained in people management and leadership skills</p> <p>Supportive leadership skills – open door, accessible, genuine</p> <p>Regular team and 1:1 meeting (e.g. weekly)</p> <p>Promote a positive and psychologically safe team culture</p>
<p>Poor Change Management</p> <p>Examples: Poorly managed changes to organisational structure, procedures, roles; lack of involvement in decisions, poor communication</p>	<p>Ensure appropriate framework for change management</p> <p>Robust consultation and engagement with staff</p> <p>Provide reasons and background to the change</p> <p>Keep staff informed</p>
<p>Low Role Clarity or Role Conflict</p> <p>Examples: Staff unclear about job's objectives, accountabilities, expectations and reporting lines</p>	<p>Provide up to date position descriptions, review regularly</p> <p>Provide up to date organisational charts</p> <p>Clear induction processes for new staff (organisational and work area)</p> <p>Develop personal work plans</p> <p>Discuss roles and work plans at team meetings and clarify any role conflict</p> <p>Establish clear expectations for the team and ensure these are clearly understood</p>
<p>Poor Organisational Justice</p> <p>Examples: Inconsistent application of policies and procedures, unfairness or bias in decisions about allocation of resources and work, or poor management of underperformance</p>	<p>Foster a culture of transparency, openness, respect and equity</p> <p>Implement appropriate performance monitoring and management</p> <p>Ensure there is a transparent grievance and appeal process</p> <p>Ensure workplace rules and decisions are applied fairly and consistently</p>
<p>Reward and Recognition</p> <p>Examples: A lack of positive feedback, an imbalance in recognition of efforts, lack of opportunity for skills development</p>	<p>Implement a regular review process with staff which ensures staff are provided with positive and constructive feedback</p> <p>Regular 1:1 meetings and team meetings where contributions are expressed and valued</p> <p>Understand that people like to be acknowledged in different ways, e.g. privately, within the team, with incentives (time, financial, etc.)</p> <p>Consider implementing a job rotation or mentoring system to enrich staff interest and motivation to broaden skill set</p> <p>Ensure workers are being provided with feedback that is timely, specific and practical.</p>
<p>Remote or Isolated Work</p> <p>Examples: Remote work locations or work where there are few or no other people around, where access to help from others may be difficult</p>	<p>Review workplace layouts to ensure access to safety and security systems</p> <p>Check in and check out procedures</p> <p>Maintain regular contact and communication both team and individual</p> <p>Ensure communication systems and emergency procedures are developed and in place</p> <p>Involve the remote area in consultation, decision making and provide access to resources, training and activities available to non-remote staff.</p>



Violent or Traumatic Events

Examples: Exposure to abuse, threat or actual harm that causes fear and distress and/or injury

Working in pairs or teams where possible

Ensure physical environment and security are appropriate and well-designed

Establish robust work systems and procedures, e.g. working in isolation, opening and closing, monitoring of remote or isolated staff.

File flagging, early warning systems

Training in violence prevention/de-escalation techniques

Zero tolerance of aggression towards workers

5.5. Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards

Strategies to address psychosocial hazards in the workplace can be addressed at the primary, secondary or tertiary levels of intervention.

Primary interventions are targeted at the organisational level, with an emphasis on the need to identify and manage causes and practices within the organisation that may be contributing negatively to worker well-being.

Secondary interventions are primarily aimed at improving worker strengths and capability, including education and training, as well as the provision of resources to assist with individuals with stress management, resilience, interpersonal skills and conflict management.

Tertiary interventions are supportive steps implemented after an injury or illness has occurred. Including facilitating appropriate rehabilitation or return to work programs, provision of an Employee Assistance Program etc.

The goal should be to manage the risk at the source, rather than rely only on interventions to assist workers after an injury has occurred.

Refer to [Job characteristics, design & management guideline \(046G\)](#) and [Harmful behaviours guideline \(047G\)](#).

5.6. Maintaining & reviewing control measures

Managers must review and maintain implemented control measures to ensure they remain effective over time. This includes ensuring control measures are:

- fit for purpose;
- suitable for the nature and duration of the work;
- implemented or set up, and;
- adopted, followed and used correctly.

5.7. Reporting psychosocial hazards & incidents

All workers have a responsibility for contributing to and maintaining a physically and psychosocially safe workplace ensuring reasonable care for the health, safety and wellbeing of themselves and others. This includes psychosocial and any other hazards and incidents.

All psychosocial hazards and incidents must be reported via the [Incident and Hazard Reporting System](#).



Workers should raise concerns with their immediate supervisor/manager, or if this is not possible, they should raise the concern with the appropriate representative from either:

- Catholic Safety & Injury Management Unit.
- People and Culture / Human Resources.
- Health and Safety Representative (HSR).

All incidents will be managed according to the [Incident Reporting & Investigation Procedure \(2\)](#).

Incidents that detail allegations of bullying, harassment, worker misconduct or other inappropriate behaviour will be escalated to People and Culture / Human Resources for the site/sector for review and investigation.

5.8. Records

Document used to manage psychosocial hazards as prescribed by this procedure will be produced in a format that allows tracking for verification and review and be in accordance with requirements detailed in [Document Control Procedure \(22\)](#).

5.9. Review

This procedure will be subject to a planned review by the document owner in accordance with the requirements outline in [Document Control Procedure \(22\)](#).

Other methods for reviewing and evaluating the performance of this procedure will include:

- audit activity.
- investigations.
- performance reports.

6. RELATED SYSTEM DOCUMENTS

6.1. Policies & Procedures

Document Control Procedure (23)

Hazard Management Procedure (14)

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Procedure (12)

WHS & Injury Management Policy

6.2. Forms & Tools

Group Legal Register (010T)

Managing Psychosocial Hazards Flowchart (057T)

7. REFERENCES

Legislation and other requirements related to this procedure are defined in the [Group Legal Register \(010T\)](#) which can be accessed via the Catholic Safety & Injury Management website.



7.1. Internal Resources

Job characteristics, design & management guideline (046G)

Harmful behaviours guideline (047G)

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Managers & Supervisors (023G)

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Officers (024G)

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Workers (025G)

7.2. External Resources

Preventing and Responding to Workplace Challenging Behaviour, Violence and Aggression Policy Guideline, SA Health (2015)

Work-related violence, Preventing and responding to work-related violence, SafeWork SA (2018)

[Challenging behaviour – from ambulance to bedside, Workshop resource list, SafeWork SA \(2018\)](#)

[SAPOL Safety and Security website](#)

8. AUDITABLE OUTPUTS

The following examples of records will be used to verify implementation of this procedure:

- Training needs identified
- Training provided where identified
- Site specific procedures
- Risk assessments
- Hazard reports
- Incident reports



9. VERSION CONTROL & CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approved Date	Reason for Development of Review	Next Review Date
V1	Director CSaIM	November 2024	New Procedure in line with new CoP, combined Bullying & Harassment (21) & Challenging Behaviours, Aggression & Violence (18) into procedure.	2029

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