

Work Health & Safety (WHS) Policy & Procedures

WEA Sydney is committed to providing a safe and positive working environment for its staff members, trainers, tutors and students; acknowledging that staff well-being is a major factor in enabling them to perform their duties to the best of their ability.

The association has established a Health & Safety Committee (HSC). Its role and function is to:

- Facilitate co-operation between the PCBU and staff to instigate, develop and carry out WHS measures
- Assist in developing health and safety standards, rules and procedures for compliance at the workplace
- carry out such functions as prescribed by legislations and as agreed with management
- provide feedback and recommendations to the WEA Board and Council regarding WHS issues which may require their attention.

Compliance with Legislations

In pursuance to the (Commonwealth) Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011, WEA Sydney acknowledges its obligation as an employer to provide safe working conditions and work practices. These include:

- providing or maintaining equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health;
- making arrangements for ensuring the safe use, handling, storage and transport of equipment and substances;
- providing the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of employees, volunteers and users of WEA House;
- maintaining places of work under their control in a safe condition and providing and maintaining safe entrances and exits;
- making available adequate information about research and relevant tests of substances used at the place of work. Material Safety Data Sheets will be kept on all substances used within the workplace and the implication of their use will be thoroughly examined before application. A copy of all MSDS information will be also kept centrally in conjunction with accident/incident information;
- identifying potential risks and hazards and reducing the potential for same;
- developing safety procedures for paid and unpaid staff, tutors and users of WEA House eg. Fire & Emergency Evacuation procedures, equipment storage and the establishment of an WHS committee.

Employers must not require employees to pay for anything done or provided to meet specific requirements made under the Act or associated legislation.

Under the legislation employees must take reasonable care of the health and safety of others. Employees must co-operate with employers in their efforts to comply with occupational health and safety requirements. They must:

- take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of others;
- co-operate with their employer in ensuring that the workplace is safe and healthy and report to the employer any situation at the workplace that could constitute a hazard;
- follow the instructions and training provided by their employers, use the personal protective equipment provided and not interfere with anything set up in the interests of health and safety.

The legislation also recognises that employees have certain rights with regard to health and safety in their workplaces. These include the right to:

- be informed, i.e. know about potential hazards;
- be represented on matters relating to occupational health & safety.

Health and Safety in WEA Sydney

In accordance with the requirements of the legislation, information and relevant training will be provided to all staff on the causes and prevention of work related illnesses and injuries.

Furniture and Equipment

Staff will be provided with relevant training prior to the use of any equipment.

WEA Sydney will purchase furniture and equipment which minimises the risk of injury or strain – particularly for staff working on keyboards. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure that they use equipment appropriately and follow the procedures recommended to protect keyboard users from muscle fatigue and repetitive strain injury.

Photocopiers will be placed in a separate room where possible and/or in a position with good ventilation. Staff should ensure that they protect their eyes from the light emitted by the photocopier, and should take care when filling the machine with toner.

All electrical equipment will be checked as statutorily required by a qualified electrician.

Visual Display Unit and Eye Strain

Staff whose duties require them to use a visual display unit for at least 60% of the time will need to have an eye test (at their own expense) prior to their appointment.

Stress

WEA Sydney recognises that stress is an occupational hazard and aims to minimise stress for staff by:

- making good working conditions a priority;
- clearly defining job responsibilities and accountability structures;
- establishing support systems for all staff
- ensuring work plans and timelines are realistic.

Abusive Behaviour

Staff are not required to put up with any abusive, violent or any form of unbecoming behaviour from Board members, Council members, students, trainers, tutors or any other persons in the workplace. In dealing with a person with abusive behaviour, the staff member must, in the first instance refer the matter to his/her immediate supervisor. In the absence of the immediate supervisor or if the matter is not resolved, then refer to the Executive Director then to the Police for attention if necessary.

Smoking

WEA Sydney recognises the dangers of passive smoking and has made WEA House a smoke free environment. Staff are not permitted to smoke in any of WEA facilities or vehicles.

Hazards

Staff will be trained to identify any WHS hazards in the workplace and should report, in writing, any hazards to the Executive Director as soon as possible. Please report any 'near-miss' accidents or incidents as they may identify potential hazards. In case of spillage or mishap MSDS information will be accessed to obtain appropriate clean-up. In the event that this is not available either Emergency Services or professional advice should be sought. Employees should protect themselves at all times e.g. gloves for bodily fluids, sharps containers for needles etc., masks for fumes.

Critical Incident

In the event of a critical incident occurring involving staff members, volunteers, students, participants or members of the public, staff should contact Emergency Services immediately. Employees should not place themselves at risk. If necessary the building should be evacuated. (See Emergency Evacuation Procedure). An Incident/accident report form should be filled out as soon as practicable.

Accidents/Incident

An accident/incident report form as provided by WorkCover Authority must be completed by any staff involved in an accident (however minor) either at work or on the way to or from work and given to their supervisor as soon as possible. A copy of the Accident/Incident Report is included below.

An accident/incident report must also be provided when volunteers, clients or participants are involved in an accident or an incident where welfare or safety is compromised.

Communicable Disease

Staff should be trained in and observe basic hygiene and infection control measures in their work to avoid communicable diseases.

Staff who suspect that someone in their work place (office or consumer's home) has a communicable disease should report this immediately to the Executive Director who will advise them of the appropriate action.

First Aid

In line with the First Aid Regulation of the Work Health & Safety Act, 2011, the following policy in relation to first aid applies in WEA Sydney.

1. First aid kits are located at:
 - Ground Floor Reception,
 - 1st Floor Office.

Where appropriate the staff will be trained so that assistance can be rendered in an emergency. This does not take the place of seeking professional advice or assistance in any emergency situation.

2. The Education Manager is in charge of the First Aid Kits in WEA Sydney and is responsible for their proper maintenance.
3. The Education Manager is responsible for ensuring that a Register of Injuries and Treatment is maintained up-to-date. The Register must include:
 - a. the name, age, address and occupation of the injured person,
 - b. the industry in which the person was working,
 - c. the operation in which the person was engaged at the time of injury,
 - d. the date and time the injury occurred,
 - e. a brief description of the type, cause and location of the injury and the treatment given,
 - f. the name of the first-aid person in attendance,
 - g. any referral for further treatment if required.
4. The Register must be kept for at least 5 years.

Employee Rehabilitation Program

In line with the Workers' Compensation Act, 1987, WEA Sydney has adopted the following Employee Rehabilitation Policy:

WEA Sydney's Commitment to the Rehabilitation of Injured Workers

WHS Commitments

To prevent injury and illness by providing a safe and healthy working environment.

Occupational Rehabilitation Commitments

To manage the process of rehabilitation in the workplace to ensure that all injured workers have the opportunity to recover and return to work by:

- ensuring that a return to work as soon as possible is a normal expectation,
- ensuring early access to rehabilitation services eg. Accredited rehabilitation providers for all who need them,
- consulting with workers and where applicable any industrial union representing them to ensure that the rehabilitation programme operates smoothly and effectively,
- informing workers of their rights in relation to a Workers Compensation Claim including the choice of doctor and accredited rehabilitation provider,
- providing access to Interpreter services,
- ensuring no dismissal solely or principally because of the at injury, unless permanently unfit to return to that job or any other suitable job in the organisation,
- advising employees that participation in rehabilitation is optimum.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of rehabilitation records shall be maintained.

Procedure for the Rehabilitation of Injured Workers

1. If any injury or work related illness occurs

Work related injury or illness shall be reported, an accident form completed and treatment arranged.

2. Recovery and return to work

WEA Sydney shall arrange for a suitable person in the organisation or, where this is not practicable, their workers compensation insurer and/or WorkCover advisory officer, who will provide advice to:

- assist in filling out Workers' Compensation forms,
- explain rights, obligations, benefits and rehabilitation procedures to the injured worker,
- ensure that the worker is offered the help of an accredited rehabilitation provider who shall be given reasonable access to the workplace,
- where appropriate arrange return to work on the advice of the treating doctor or the accredited rehabilitation provider in consultation with the treating doctor.

The injured worker, in consultation with the employer, may select the provider to be used.

3. Providing suitable duties/employment

When the injured/ill worker is, according to medical judgement, well enough to return to work on suitable duties the employer shall, as far as practicable, provide suitable duties/employment. Suitable duties/employment shall be approved by the treating doctor or by the accredited rehabilitation provider in consultation with the treating doctor.

Consultation

The employer is required to consult with the injured worker and other workers on the rehabilitation process.

4. Resolving disputes

Rehabilitation disputes which cannot be resolved by mediation in the workplace may be referred to a rehabilitation mediation officer at the WorkCover Authority.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

1. Students are to proceed carefully down the fire stairs, preferably in single file holding the guard rail. Take valuables only. **Do not use the lifts.**
2. Take care when exiting via the fire stairs at the emergency exit doorways (in case an upper/lower floor is being evacuated).
3. Do not loiter directly outside WEA House, but to proceed to the recommended Assembly Point as instructed by your tutor or by a warden.

Day Evacuation

Tutor to check that all class participants leave before they do.

WEA Staff to check that all tutors and participants leave before they do.

Night/Weekend Evacuation

Tutor to supervise safe exit of all participants including those in toilets.

Evening Attendant to check that above has been done and call Emergency Services 000.