



Parliamentary
Counsel's Office

Policy

Workplace Health and Safety

Policy Reference: 13/22

Approved by Parliamentary Counsel: Annette O'Callaghan, 3 March 2022

Policy Statement

The Parliamentary Counsel's Office (PCO) is committed to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees and others affected by the work of PCO. PCO is also committed to providing a supportive environment for employees injured at work, ensuring effective treatment and management of the return-to-work process.

In meeting these commitments, PCO:

- complies with all relevant legislative requirements including the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017* and the *Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998*.
- supports the ongoing work of PCO's Work Health and Safety Committee.
- regularly consults with employees and others as necessary, to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that risks to health and safety are eliminated or minimised.
- develops, implements and regularly reviews a range of strategies, policies and procedures to support and continuously improve the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and others affected by the work of PCO, and the return to work of employees who are ill or injured.
- ensures work health and safety responsibilities of all staff at PCO are clearly documented, regularly communicated and reviewed.
- provides appropriate information, training and instruction to employees and relevant others to ensure all parties are aware of their rights and responsibilities and able to comply with their responsibilities.
- allocates appropriate human, financial and other resources as required to meet PCO's WHS responsibilities.
- facilitates a risk management approach to work health and safety and incorporates work health and safety into PCO's planning processes.
- regularly measures, analyses and reports on work health and safety performance and identifies and makes any improvements.
- regularly communicates this policy to all parties with WHS responsibilities.

Work Health and Safety (WHS) at PCO

As a part of meeting this commitment, PCO:

- ensures specific health and safety responsibilities are clearly documented, regularly communicated and reviewed, and
- provides appropriate information, training and instruction to ensure all parties are aware of their rights and responsibilities and are able to comply with their responsibilities.

All parties must act in accordance with applicable requirements of the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act), *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017* (WHS Regs), *Workplace Injury Management and Worker's Compensation Act 1998* and associated regulations, any other relevant legislation, codes of practice and PCO policies and procedures. Details about WHS procedures at PCO are contained in the 'Work Health and Safety Strategic Plan and Procedures' document located on

Gulbarra (PCO's wiki-style intranet). 'Printing Room Safety Guidelines' and 'IT OH&S Considerations' are also published on the intranet.

Coverage

This Policy applies to all those with responsibilities for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees and others affected by the work of PCO. In the context of this policy, *employee* has the same meaning as *worker* in the *Work Health & Safety Act 2011* and as such includes contractors, trainees, students and volunteers.

Risk identification and management

The application of this Policy within PCO is designed to control and/or mitigate the following risks:

- uncertainty or inadequate understanding by individuals of their health and safety responsibilities
- lack of awareness of health and safety issues
- unnecessary exposure of individuals to health and safety risks
- PCO and individual non-compliance with relevant legislation.

Key responsibilities and duties

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- exercise due diligence to ensure PCO and all parties with responsibilities in relation to health and safety comply with those responsibilities
- demonstrate management commitment to continuous improvement in WHS through clearly defined WHS policies and procedures
- ensure appropriate resources are made available to implement WHS
- establish and advocate a consultative approach to managing WHS
- ensure there is a systematic approach to managing workplace risks and injuries
- promote WHS training initiatives to all employees to facilitate a positive WHS culture
- ensure a system is developed to monitor WHS performance
- ensure review mechanisms are in place and feedback is provided about performance in relation to targets and objectives to all parties with health and safety responsibilities

Senior Management and Supervisors

- ensure the relevant policies and procedures are communicated to all employees and contribute to updates of policies and procedures
- contribute to and implement relevant plans
- identify WHS training needs in area(s) of responsibility
- participate in WHS training programs
- encourage employees to participate and attend WHS training.

Employees and others undertaking work

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety

- take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons
- comply, so far as they are reasonably able, and co-operate with any reasonable instruction, policy or procedure issued in relation to health and safety
- observe and contribute to updates of relevant policies and procedures
- contribute to and participate in WHS consultative arrangements
- contribute to risk management by identifying and informing management of any hazards in the work area
- ensure that staff are not bullied or subjected to violence and report any incidents of violence or bullying in accordance with PCO's *'Policy for Preventing and Dealing with Harassment and Bullying'*
- participate in any WHS training provided
- report all hazards/incidents to the manager/supervisor
- communicate ideas for WHS improvement to management or the WHS Committee
- co-operate in any return-to-work plan developed for injured workers.

Work Health and Safety Committee

The primary purpose of the Work Health and Safety Committee is to provide a consultative forum to effectively and constructively address relevant matters arising at PCO with particular reference to the requirements of the *WHS Act* and the *WHS Regs*. In doing so, the Work Health and Safety Committee has the following specific functions:

- to facilitate co-operation between management and employees in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure employees' health and safety at work
- to assist in developing standards, rules and procedures relating to health and safety that are to be followed or complied with at the workplace
- participate in, and as appropriate instigate, the investigation of any matter that may be a risk to health and safety at PCO
- contribute to the development and promotion of strategies and activities that create, protect and improve a healthy work environment, and the wellbeing of employees
- make recommendations on any work health and safety issues referred to the committee as an advisory body, and
- consult and disseminate work health and safety information to all employees.

Policy Breaches

A breach of this policy may lead to performance management or disciplinary action. Such action could range from counselling to dismissal. For example, breaches of this policy may include:

- not reporting hazards or incidents
- not co-operating with the Office's efforts to consult and/or provide relevant communication/training.

Individuals found to have committed an offence under the legislation may also be subject to penalties as prescribed by the legislation.

Reporting and review

Reporting

The WHS Committee proposes a strategic plan for consideration by management. That plan is reviewed on an annual basis. The WHS Committee monitors progress of WHS activities and the strategic plan by reviewing a WHS Management Report at its meetings.

An annual WHS Management Report is provided to management for review and due diligence purposes.

Quarterly reports are provided to the Audit and Risk Committee about WHS activities and compliance.

Internal audits are undertaken of the WHS Framework at PCO and updates on audit findings and management actions are provided to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Annual Report legislation requires PCO to provide a statement setting out WHS performance including details of injuries and prosecutions under *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (noting that, as a small department, PCO is only required to report on a triennial basis).

Review

This policy shall be reviewed every 2 years, or sooner if any information, incident, injury, illness or legislative or organisational change warrants a review of the policy.

Appendix A - Related legislation and publications

(Current as at the date of issue of this document)

Legislation

Work Health & Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017

Workplace Injury Management and Worker's Compensation Act 1998 and associated regulations

Internal Documents:

Work Health and Safety Strategic Plan and Procedures (December 2017)

PCO Training Documentation: IT Information - Occupational Health & Safety Considerations (23.3.10)

Policy for Preventing and Dealing with Harassment and Bullying (April 2017)

Other

Gulbarra page — 'Work Health and Safety at PCO'

Personnel Handbook

SafeWork NSW — www.safework.nsw.gov.au