

EMPOWERING YOU DISABILITY SERVICES
3/9 BOYS AVENUE, MARYBOROUGH QLD 4650

07 4120 5400



WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

POLICY & PROCEDURES

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This Workplace Health and Safety Booklet has been developed to provide you with the information you require to work safely. It addresses the general hazards that you might encounter and the safe work procedures that are required when working for Empowering You Disability Services (EYDS)

Applicability

When

- Applies throughout the term of employment

Who

- Applies to all employees

Policy statement

EYDS believes that all employees have the right to work safely and without risk. Our policy is built on the following beliefs:

- As an employer, EYDS is accountable for safety. This means providing, as far as practicable, a safe work environment, safe systems of work, and equipment in safe conditions. Supervision, information and training will be provided to assist the health and safety of each employee
- The objectives of providing real homes and safe workplaces are compatible and achievable
- Everyone is personally responsible for working safely and preventing injuries. Working safely is a condition of employment

Management responsibilities

Key responsibilities of management and supervisors:

- Match individual participant needs with a suitable employee, with appropriate level of training.
- Ensure employees have the appropriate training, supervision and qualifications to work safely, minimising the risk of injury/illness to both employees and participants.
- Investigate all work related incidents and keep records. Take action to correct any identified hazards or safety issues.
- Consult with employees on matters relating to health and safety. Where required this consultation may include participants and their families.
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Ensure all homes have an emergency evacuation plan in place.

Employee responsibilities

Key responsibilities of employees:

- Become familiar with the participants they provide support for, and in particular, follow the individual care plans and risk assessments developed for the health and safety of both employees and participants
- Care for and maintain equipment and vehicles in safe working order, and operate all equipment safely
- Report all hazards and work related injuries and incidents promptly
- Wear personal protective equipment as required, in particular for infection control
- Consult with EYDS on matters relating to health and safety and obey any health and safety directive
- All staff must ensure that they are aware of the evacuation plan.

Employee input into the WH&S effort

You may have ideas as to how your job, or the jobs of your fellow employees can be made safer. We welcome your involvement and suggestions. Please discuss them with your supervisor as something occurs to you or bring it up at team meetings.

Creating a safer working environment has the following benefits:

- Less human suffering and impact on the families of employee and participants.
- Compliance with the law
- Cost savings that will strengthen the sustainability of the organisation

Disciplinary procedure for non-compliance with WH&S procedures

Working safely is a condition of employment. Failure to comply with the health and safety requirements set out in this booklet, or with any other safety directions, will result in disciplinary action. Depending on the offence this could range from a verbal warning through to the termination of employment.

Drugs, alcohol and tobacco

Do not come to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs. You create a danger to yourself, the participants, and your fellow employees. If you are taking medication that is making you feel drowsy, please talk to your supervisor about it so it can be determined which duties you can safely perform whilst taking medication.

Non-smokers should be able to work in a smoke free environment. Where the requirements of smokers come into conflict with non-smokers, the rights of non-smokers will prevail.

Smoking is not permitted:

- Inside homes
- In enclosed areas such as in work vehicles
- When a non-smoker asks that a smoker not smoke near them

- Any area designated as non-smoking
- In front of participants

If you must smoke whilst at work, please do so outside in the designated area and limit smoking to your scheduled breaks.

This smoking policy does not apply to participants. A management plan will be developed for each participant who smokes.

Reporting hazards

A hazard is any unsafe condition or act that can, if not attended to, result in property damage, injury, or death.

If you are able to fix the hazard yourself then do so. If not, let your team leader or case manager know so they can rectify the hazard.

Employees have a duty of care not only to themselves but also to other employees. If you see a fellow employee working unsafely, do something about it. Speak to them about it, reminding them how the job should be done safely. Doing nothing may result in them or someone else being seriously hurt.

Serious injury

- Do not panic.
- Do not move injured persons unless they are in a life-threatening situation.
- Make sure injured persons are in no further danger and make them comfortable.
- Phone 000.

Reporting and investigating injuries and incidents

If you or a participant require first aid treatment, use the first aid kit kept in the vehicle, or at your work location.

If it is an injury to yourself, do not drive yourself to the hospital or doctor if your injury is too serious to do so.

If the injury is to a participant, assess the situation and ask the participant how they are feeling. Perform first aid if required.

If the situation is an emergency which you believe requires the ambulance service then dial 000. You can dial from a locked mobile phone and tell them that you want to be connected to the Ambulance Service. They will want to know:

- Your name
- How many people are injured and the type of injuries you suspect
- Your location. Be as specific as you can. Give the street number, street name, area and the closest intersection
- The number of the phone you are calling from

Employees are required to report:

- All injuries
- All property damage
- All near misses

There are three reasons for compulsory reporting:

- It is required by law
- What starts out as a minor injury could develop into something more serious
- A minor injury or a near miss can be a warning signal of a more serious problem

For first aid injuries, let your team leader know, including date, name, part of body treated, type of injury, cause of injury and the treatment given.

Near miss incidents, and injuries should be reported through an Incident Report Form.

The purpose of reporting and investigating injuries and incidents is to identify what caused the problems and put something in place to prevent them happening again.

Fire emergency procedures

Staff should know:

- How the alarm systems work.
- Where the fire extinguishers, fire blankets and slide sheets are kept.
- How to use fire extinguishers, fire blankets and slide sheets.
- Where the emergency exits are.

In the event of a fire:

- If the fire cannot be contained, evacuate the home/location in an orderly manner and go to the assembly point.
- Evacuate the area according to the participants Emergency Evacuation Plan.
- Call 000.

When phoning for help be prepared to answer the following questions:

- The address of the emergency.
- Who is calling.
- What is happening.
- What is being done.
- Do not hang up before being told what to do.

Missing client:

- Quickly check the general area.
- Call 000 if the person is not in the general area.

Call the Team Leader or Case Manager.

The Case Manager will decide:

- What further action may be necessary
- Who else will be called and who will do the calling.

Vital tips for the evacuation in the event of a fire:

- If you have to pass through smoke, hold a towel or handkerchief, wet if possible, to your face
- Smoke rises so get down low and move quickly
- Close windows and doors as you go. This helps confine the smoke to the original area
- Alert any fellow employees who may not be aware that the fire or smoke is coming their way
- Go to the assembly area designated for your location. Refer to the Emergency Evacuation Plan in the participants home folder.
- Do not attempt to re-enter the home/location until advised to do so by an authorised fire fighter
- Account for and supervise the participant at the assembly point
- Don't leave the scene without telling someone
- As soon as you have seen to everyone's safety phone your team leader or case manager.

Manual handling and manual assistance

Manual handling refers to any activity requiring people to lift, lower, carry ,push, pull or restrain any object. Many tasks involve manual handling. Some examples of manual handling are making beds, mopping floors, vacuuming, and carrying groceries and so on. When the manual handling involves assisting people, it is also known as manual handling or manual assistance. Some examples of manual assistance tasks are showering, toileting, and moving participants in and out of wheelchairs. Risk factors that can increase the risk of injury when handling objects and assisting people are:

- Postures involving the flexion (bending) and rotation (twisting) of the spine in standing, sitting, and lying positions
- Lifting weights while assuming these postures
- Carrying out repetitive work while assuming these postures
- Lifting weights that are too heavy or of an awkward shape
- Being unfit and/or poor health
- Poor communication between lifters when doing team lifting

Objects do not have to be excessively heavy to present the risk of injury:

- In seated work, it is advisable not to lift loads in excess of 4.5kg
- From the standing position it is advisable to keep loads below 16-20kg
- As weight increases from 16-55kg the risk of injury increases. Mechanical assistance or team lifting techniques should be adopted for these weights

- No one should manually handle loads exceeding 55kg. mechanical assistance or team lifting techniques should be adopted

Reducing the risk of injury:

- Use mechanical equipment (e.g. hoists) to do the lifting or moving
- Do not carry too many items at once. Break larger loads down into smaller, lighter loads
- Park the vehicle as close to the house door as possible when unloading groceries or heavy items
- Try to work in the “safe zone” between mid-thigh and shoulder height. For example, if you are unpacking a bag of groceries place it on a table or bench so that it is at waist height, and inside the “safety zone”. If you place the bag on the ground it is below your knees and outside the “safety zone”
- Do not lift above shoulder height as this is outside the “safety zone”
- Use a stepladder or commercial step if working at heights
- Do not stand on chairs or boxes
- Do not climb on shelves

Vacuuming and mopping:

- Do not over reach when mopping or vacuuming
- Get down on one knee rather than bend when vacuuming under beds
- Place your spare hand on the bed for improved balance

Bed making:

- Encourage participants to have the sides of their beds positioned away from a wall so you can access both sides
- Retain a straight back when leaning over a bed

Lifting or moving:

- Plan the lift by estimating the load and knowing exactly where it is to be placed
- Ensure that access to the area is clear
- Stand with your feet apart
- Get as close as possible to the object you wish to lift
- Bend your knees, not your back
- Keep your back straight and if possible, maintain a lordosis (i.e., a hollow rather than a rounded back)
- Brace your stomach muscles to support your spine
- Change direction by using the muscles and joints of your legs rather than twisting and bending your spine
- Overall physical fitness, warm-up activities, and a gradual build up to a heavier work load will help you to avoid strain injuries

Team lifting or moving:

- Plan the lift by estimating the load and knowing exactly where it is to be placed

- Ensure that access to the area is clear
- Have one person assume control to direct the lift/move by giving verbal instructions when to “move” and “lower”
- Ensure everyone involved has a common understanding of when to exert effort
- No individual is to drop their part of the load when others are not expecting this to happen and are not ready to take on the increased load. If you feel the load slipping let the person in charge of the lift know so they can control the load and have it lowered by the team

Assisting participants:

- While developing a participants care plan, the EYDS case manager will work with the support coordinator to determine whether a client will require manual assistance with daily activities. If this is necessary, a Manual Assistance Care Plan will be written for that client. This plan will indicate the facilities and equipment required for the assistance techniques. Each support worker at that location will receive training in how to carry out the techniques.
- The Manual Assistance Care Plan is kept in the participants home folder.
- Adhere to the techniques listed in the plan. They have been determined as the most appropriate for both employee and participant safety
- Do not change them of your own accord. If you notice a change in a participant’s abilities (whether an improvement or deterioration) which you believe requires a change to the manual assistance plan, speak with your team leader or case manager and they will determine if any changes are required.
- Speak to your team leader or case manager if there is a change in your own physical condition, which means you are having difficulty providing manual assistance. They can then consider options such as alternative techniques and equipment or relocation to other teams.

There are several “traditional” lifts, which are now recognised in the care industry as being potentially unsafe. The following techniques are not permitted unless there is an emergency situation such as the need to evacuate clients:

- Shoulder lift
- Cradle lift
- Top-and-tail lift
- Lifting a resident up from the floor on one’s own

Warm up and stretching exercises

Going for a walk and performing stretching exercises before you commence work and at regular intervals throughout the day can help safeguard your body against discomfort and injury. When performed correctly, stretching exercises:

- Relieve muscle tension
- Increase circulation
- Restore muscle balance
- Reduce muscle fatigue
- Improve relaxation

To improve flexibility this should be done prior to commencing work at the beginning of the day or after a rest break. A particularly good time is prior to providing manual assistance to a participant. To ease muscle tension, exercises should be done after being in one position for extended periods.

Warning – if you have suffered any injury or illness that may be aggravated by stretching exercises then seek advice from your treating practitioner prior to commencing stretching exercises.

Motor vehicles

Employees are expected to follow the rules of the road set out in the Traffic Act and Regulations.

Ensure all items are adequately secured so they will not be dislodged in the event you have to brake suddenly or are involved in an accident. In station wagons, unless there is a cargo barrier fitted, do not stack items above the top of the back seat.

Do not use a mobile phone unless a hands free facility is available.

Do not use a mobile phone when refuelling at a service station.

Electrical safety

- Regularly inspect both equipment and electrical leads to make sure they are not damaged. Do not use equipment if it is damaged
- Do not tamper with wires or conduct your own repairs, unless you are a qualified electrician
- Keep electrical leads away from water. Be particularly careful with equipment such as hair dryers and electric shavers when used in the bathroom
- Keep electrical leads tucked out of the way when not in use to reduce trip hazards
- Turn off the equipment by the switch first before pulling out the plug
- Do not plug equipment into a general power outlet while the switch is on
- Do not leave an appliance turned on when not in use
- Do not have leads running across doorways

Wet floors

- Clean up spills immediately
- Arrange floor mopping when there are fewer people around

Infection control

- Infection control is the responsibility of the employee
- Always work to the principle that all blood and body fluids are potentially infectious
- Employees must adhere rigorously to measures which minimise exposure to these agents

- Pay attention to hand washing as an essential safety precaution. Thorough use of moisturising hand cream is also recommended to prevent skin from drying out and cracking

Wash hands:

- Immediately if they are contaminated with blood or bodily fluids
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, or leaving the workplace
- After using toilet facilities

How to wash your hands in an infection control situation:

- Use soap and warm running water
- Rub your hands vigorously as you wash them – counting to ten
- Wash your hands all over including the back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails
- Rinse your hands well, counting to ten
- Turn off the tap with a single use towel
- Discard the towel in the bin
- Press dry your hands with a single use, disposable towel
- Discard the towel in the bin

Exposure to blood or bodily fluids

- Use protective clothing as a barrier to exposure. For example, use an apron if rinsing soiled linen
- Wear gloves when direct contact with blood or bodily fluids is expected. Gloves should be readily available, well-fitting and disposable
- Wear safety glasses if there is a risk of blood or bodily fluids being splashed into your eyes
- Cover all skin defects (e.g. cuts or abrasions) with a waterproof dressing
- Soak up the blood or bodily fluid with an absorbent cloth and use a detergent to thoroughly clean the spill
- Wipe the spill site with disposable towels soaked in disinfectant solution
- Dispose of all contaminated waste material in a leak proof bag
- Place the leak proof bag in the outside rubbish receptacle

Washing contaminated clothes and linen

- Do not sort linen or clothes in the same work area that is used for folding clean clothes and linen
- Do not carry soiled linen against your clothing
- Soak fabrics stained with blood in cold water

Laundry

- Use the trolley if available when hanging out the washing. Even if the load is a light one, placing the wash basket in the trolley puts it in the manual handling “safe zone”
- Remove lint from the dryer each day the dryer is used

Needle stick injury

In the event of a needle stick injury, the following procedures are recommended:

First aid:

- Remove the needle if necessary
- Let the wound bleed freely for a few seconds
- Immediately flush the area with running water
- Wash the wound well with soap and running water. Do not use any other solution other than soap and water
- Thoroughly pat dry the area
- Apply a sterile waterproof dressing, as necessary. If the wound appears to be bleeding, apply pressure through the dressing
- Retain the needle/syringe involved in the injury for medical assessment. Ensure that it is placed in a rigid, puncture resistant container with a lid
- Seek immediate medical attention from an emergency department, clinic or doctors surgery
- If you are at work, notify your team leader or case manager as you will need to fill out an incident form. Most injuries are low risk for acquiring infections, but they must be reported, documented and assessed by a medical professional.
- Delay or failure to seek medical attention may compromise the effectiveness of post exposure treatment.

Occupational rehabilitation policy

It is the intention of EYDS to provide a safe working environment for employees, and to encourage all employees who sustain a work related injury, illness or disability to return to work through the process of occupational rehabilitation.

The aim of this policy is to assist employees to return to their pre-accident position as early as possible or alternatively access the services of approved rehabilitation providers. EYDS makes the following commitment in regard to occupational rehabilitation:

- To establish a systematic approach to occupational rehabilitation services for all employees
- To ensure that the occupational rehabilitation process is commenced as soon as possible after an injury or illness, in a manner consistent with medical advice
- When an employee will be off work for at least 14 days a Return to Work Plan will be developed within 5 days after that 14 day limit
- To develop and encourage the expectation that it is normal practice following work related injury, illness or disability for people to return to meaningful, productive employment at the earliest possible time
- To provide, whenever practicable, suitable duties/employment for an injured employee as an integral part of the rehabilitation process. This may involve working in teams that require different work possibilities.
- To consult with the injured employee to ensure that our rehabilitation program operates effectively

- Any employee undergoing rehabilitation is expected to participate fully and cooperatively

Employee support service

EYDS provides employees with access to a private and confidential, professional counselling service. Contact details can be sought from your supervisor or the manager.

The service can be used in the following way:

- An employee can make direct contact with the service and receive one free private and confidential consultation
- If the employee and counsellor agree on the need for another or subsequent sessions, the manager will need to be informed by the employee, counsellor or both. This will then be discussed between the employee and management.

Workers compensation

An overview of the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 (QLD) can be found at <https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2003-027>

Useful information can also be found at <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workers-compensation-laws>

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Life threatening emergencies – 000 (Police, Ambulance, Fire)

Poisons information centre – 13 11 26

If in doubt call 000