

Health and Safety

10 easy steps

for congregations

Getting started

The way we care for our employees, volunteers and visitors is an expression of God's love. Whenever people connect with us they should be safe and able to feel confident they are in a safe and caring environment. We can demonstrate our care for others by planning for, and addressing issues that might be harmful. Because health and safety is so important, there are also laws that govern the processes we need to adopt.

Managing health and safety however doesn't need to be complicated costly or time-consuming. In fact, it is probably easier than you think. This guide has been developed to help you meet your moral and legal obligations.

Make a commitment

STEP 1

Writing a health and safety policy puts your commitment in writing and shows everyone you take health and safety seriously.

Commit to action:

Click [here](#) to access the making a commitment manual to develop a health and safety policy statement.

Consult with staff, volunteers and those impacted by the policy.

Display the policy prominently in the church.

Resources: [Making a commitment manual](#), [sample health and safety policy statement](#)

Plan for emergencies

STEP 2

The actions taken in the first minutes following an emergency can save lives. Planning for emergencies can help minimise harm to people and property.

Commit to action:

Click [here](#) to access the first aid manual.

Click [here](#) to access the emergency planning manual and follow the steps to develop an emergency plan.

Ensure emergency evacuation plans are displayed.

Undertake emergency drills at least annually.

Resources: [First aid manual](#), [emergency planning manual](#), [video clip emergency procedures](#).

Schedule inspections

STEP 3

Inspections are an important tool to proactively examine the workplace and identify hazards.

Commit to action:

Develop a workplace inspection schedule.

Inspect the workplace using the church inspection checklist found [here](#).

Resources: [Workplace inspection checklist](#)

Risk Management

STEP 4

To prevent harm a proactive approach to managing risks must be adopted. Risk management involves identifying hazards, assessing and controlling risks.

Commit to action:

Identify hazards that could impact people.

Follow the risk management process for all identified hazards.

Apply the risk management manual found [here](#).

Resources: [Risk management manual](#), [video clip on risk management procedure](#).

Consider others

STEP 5

It is important to establish ways volunteers are selected, supported and monitored in the workplace. We could also be responsible for an injury caused to or by a contractor.

Commit to action:

Click [here](#) to follow the congregation volunteer policy.

Ensure others that hire our facilities have safety plans in place.

Resources: [Congregation volunteer policy](#), [guide on managing volunteers](#).

Consultation

STEP 6

It is easier to maintain a safe workplace when we consult and communicate with everyone involved. Health and safety inductions and training also help ensure employees and volunteers know how to work safely.

Commit to action:

Follow the consultation and communication manual found [here](#) to develop a consultation procedure.

Follow the issue resolution manual found [here](#) to develop an issue resolution procedure.

Resources: [Consultation and communication manual](#), [issue resolution manual](#).

Disclaimer:

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Consider children and vulnerable adults

While all people should be protected from harm, there are additional legal and ethical considerations for protecting vulnerable people.

STEP 7

Commit to action:

Ensure areas for children can be supervised and are safe. Have systems for permission, registration, sign-in and out and planning for safety of children's programs.

Ensure volunteers who work with children (and vulnerable adults) have appropriate checks and training

Complete risk assessments for children's and youth programs.

Resources: guide on managing volunteers, risk management tool for youth programs and church camps.

Manage workplace injuries

STEP 8

The health and safety of our employees (and others) is of utmost importance. If an injury does occur, there are benefits for helping people return to work and recover in the workplace.

Commit to action:

Follow the incident and injury notification manuals for NSW found **here** and ACT found **here**.

Follow the workers' compensation and return to work manuals for NSW found **here** and ACT found **here**.

Resources: first aid manual, incident, injury and notification manual, workers compensation and return to work manuals.

Think about records and reporting

There are a number of benefits of keeping health and safety documentation. Not only does it demonstrate you are meeting your legal requirements, it can save time and frustration.

STEP 9

Commit to action:

Complete and update your health and safety risk register.

Keep incident records for at least five years.

Keep records of first aid provided. A sample template is found **here**.

Report insurance matters to the Synod and more serious matters to the Presbytery.

Keep records of consultation.

Resources: First aid, hazard, incident injury record

Ask for help

STEP 10

Should you have any questions or need assistance, the Presbytery or the Synod Office can help provide practical advice to help you meet your requirements.

To contact the Synod Risk Manager

Phone: 0472 802 795

Email: belindar@nswact.uca.org.au

Additional resources: Our guides, manuals, tools, templates, videos, legislation and codes of practice.

Where to now?

If you didn't have much in place when you first began to use this guide, and have worked through the activities outlined to this point, you have come a long way. **Congratulations!**

By reducing hazards in your workplace, you have taken steps to prevent injuries and keep your employees, volunteers and visitors safe. As you are now no doubt aware, health and safety is not a one-time project, but an ongoing activity.

This guide was designed to not only get you started, but also to help you continue to make improvements. Now that you have a plan in place it is important it is regularly reviewed and again when something goes wrong. It is important to build safety into the things we do every day and encourage others to do the same. Since things are constantly changing, you must monitor and modify what you have in place to ensure it remains effective.

Commit to action

Plan when to do your next inspection.

Decide when you will again formally review your health and safety program (the 10 steps).

Schedule when Church Council will next look at the health and safety risk register.



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