OFFICE HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURE

***SECTION 4*** *Operational Procedures and Guidelines*

PURPOSE

This procedure provides guidance and information to enable the health and safety management of hazards associated with working in office environments.

***PROCEDURE***

The objective of the procedure is to ensure a systematic approach ensure risks are assessed and controlled as far as reasonably practicable.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Office workers shall be consulted in matters that may affect their workplace health and safety. Workers shall be included in activities to identify hazards and develop suitable controls.

Outcomes of inspections, incident investigations, including details of corrective/preventative actions shall be communicated to workers.

There shall be appropriate representation of office workers on the organisation’s health and safety committee.

Details on consultation, communication and health and safety committees are contained in specific model procedures. These may be found in the Consultation and Communication section of the Water New Zealand health and safety guidelines.

### HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Health and safety hazards associated with working in the organisation’s office environments shall be identified and recorded in the health and safety risk register.

The levels of risks shall be assessed and identified/implemented controls detailed in the register. Further controls, established

in accordance with the hierarchy of control shall be developed where unacceptable risk levels remain with current controls implemented.

Office hazards may be identified by inspection and workplace reviews and/or by holding a workshop with representative workers. Information about potential controls, specific to office activities is contained in this procedure.

Hazard identification should look as aspects such as:

 Workstation ergonomics

 Storage and access arrangements

 Paths of travel

 Lighting and thermal comfort

 Amenities and worker facilities

 Security, building access and car parking

 Emergency evacuation points and equipment

Details and tools for completing risk assessments and developing risk registers are contained in the “Hazard, Identification, Risk Assessment and Control” section of the of the Water New Zealand health and safety guidelines.

### CONTROLS FOR OFFICE WORK ACTIVITIES

The information below is provided to enable organisations to develop controls and where appropriate, work instructions relating to typical office duties. The hazard identification process will provide further information about organisational specific hazards. Detailed information and further examples of good practice risk controls are contained in the “Office Wise” document referenced at the end of this procedure.

### TYPICAL OFFICE ACTIVITIES

Activities undertaken within the office environment include:

 Use of computers.

 Use of photocopiers and fax machines/telephones.

 Use of document shredders.

 Storage of materials, documents and general office supplies.

 Document collation and binding/ stapling.

 Archiving.

 Driving.

 Preparation of drinks and food (for personal use).

 Office cleaning.

 Window cleaning.

 Air conditioner servicing and building maintenance.

### EXAMPLE CONTROLS FOR COMPUTER

### / SCREEN BASED WORK

 All workers shall complete an assessment of their computer workstation using guidelines contained in attachment one to this procedure.

 Workstation and computer equipment shall be adjustable to enable workstations to be correctly set up following an assessment.

 Workers shall take regular breaks from their workstation, ideally at intervals not less than one hour apart. Breaks can include getting documents from printers, making drinks or other activities that provide opportunity to stand/walk and stop screen based work.

 LCD screen shall be provided to reduce eye strain and potential eyesight damage.

 Ergonomic, wireless accessories, such as mouse, shall be provided where required by workers, or where identified through the risk assessment process.

Full details of safe and healthy work practices associated with computers is referenced at the end of this procedure.

### USE OF ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

 All electrically operated equipment including kitchen appliances and utility room machines are to be tested and tagged at yearly intervals. Tests are to be conducted by a competent person. Tags are to display the `Test Date’ and the `Next Due Test Date’.

 Electrical cords and power boxes are to be placed in such position that the likelihood of damage is minimised and in addition, to eliminate the risk of slip, trip and fall incidents.

 Damaged electrical leads and equipment are to be removed from use.

### USE OF SHREDDERS AND GUILLOTINE

 Do not lean over the shredder or guillotine when in use if wearing loose jewellery, necktie or if you have long hair as entanglement may occur.

 Switch off and unplug the shredder before removing any paper jams.

 Always ensure the guillotine bed is lying flat on the table or bench.

 Do not leave the guillotine blade half way past the vertical position as this increases the risk of it dropping on your fingers or hand.

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 Use guillotine in an un-congested area to prevent accidental bumps from passing personnel.

 Use the swivel clamps to hold the paper on the guillotine when cutting.

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### USE OF PRINTER AND COPIERS

 Do not photocopy material with the lid of the photocopier in a raised position as the photocopier scanning beam may damage the eyes.

 When removing jammed paper beware of hot surfaces and follow all directions and warning signs printed on the unit.

 Care is to be taken when refilling/replacing print toner, in order to avoid spills and the inhalation of toner powder. The MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) for each type of print cartridge shall be available at the printer/copier location.

### STORAGE, ACCESS AND LIFTING

 Stepladders are only to be used for access to shelving above head-height and for the purpose of removing individual files from archive boxes. Full archive boxes are not to be lifted or removed from archive shelves via stepladder access.

 Ask for assistance in lifting items from upper shelves (if necessary).

 Do not lift beyond your capacity.

 Do not stack above head height.

 Do not overfill boxes and if necessary ask for assistance when lifting and carrying.

 Use flat or sack trolleys to move boxes or office supplies to storage areas.

 If the load requires using both hands, then use either/or a trolley of elevator, rather than using the stairs.

### GENERAL OFFICE HOUSEKEEPING AND PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT

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 Arrangement shall be made for regular inventory management and re-organising of stationary storage rooms and cupboards as necessary. This should be repeated in meeting rooms and lunch areas.

 Minimise material stored on the floor and keep walkways and passageways clear of slip, trip and fall hazards.

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 Ensure that paths of travel to all emergency exits are marked and remain free of obstacles and storage areas.

 Maintain a tidy workstation, keep folders and documents off the floor and neatly stored at your workstation.

 Do not run in the office, walk at a safe pace and remain alert for others. Take care when walking around blind corners.

 Where appropriate fix convex mirrors to blind corners in high traffic areas.

 Do not run or jump on the stairs, take one step at a time.

### CAR PARKING

 Vehicle drivers must be made aware of pedestrian crossing and paths of travel. Speed limits and restriction devices shall be used to an appropriate safe travelling speed (walking pace) within car parking areas.

In addition, drivers using the car park must:

 Exercise extreme care when backing vehicles – may require assistance to guide vehcile.

 Stop vehicle, check before backing around lifts, stair wells and other access points that enter the car park area.

 Be aware of possible afternoon sun glare which from time to time may impair driver vision when leaving the car park.

 Be aware of traffic entering and exiting car-park.

### VISITOR MANAGEMENT

To maintain security of the premises and to be able to account for visitors in the event of an emergency:

 All visitors, contractors, delivery drivers (entering office areas) are to be directed to report to the reception desks and sign-in to the visitors log before commencing work activities.

 Employees who receive visitors are to ensure that their visitors sign in upon arrival and sign out in the visitors log upon departure.

OFFICE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

An emergency response plan (ERP) shall be developed for office work areas by the HS manager and/or coordinator, in conjunction with representatives from office work areas and teams. Where appropriate neighbouring businesses, and potentially emergency services, shall be consulted to ensure common understanding alignment of response plans.

The ERP shall include, as a minimum the following emergency scenarios:

 Fire

 Medical

 Building Structure Damage

 Suspicious Object

 Bomb Threat

 Adjacent operations and businesses.

 Natural disasters, e.g. earthquakes, flooding etc.

Copies of the ERP shall be made available at prominent locations, including health and safety notice boards and the organisations Intranet.

All workers and visitor inductions shall include an explanation of the ERP and where it may be accessed.

The ERP, evacuation alarm, emergency exit lights, fire extinguishers and fire hose reels shall be checked at 6 monthly intervals during routine office inspections. The outcome of inspection is to be recorded. An evacuation drill will be carried out twice each year.

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The health and safety manager/coordinator shall ensure that there is an office emergency response team, comprising of first aiders and fire wardens to meet the requirements of the emergency response plan.

During a medical emergency, appropriately trained First Aid personnel will respond to the emergency and render assistance as required.

During an event that requires building evacuation the floor warden will respond to, or activate the Evacuation Alarm and advise personnel to evacuate the building and go to the evacuation assembly point as identified in the ERP.

Upon arrival of external emergency services the Floor Warden will relinquish his/her duties, hand the emergency situation over to attending emergency services. The warden should remain available at the building evacuation assembly point until external emergency services have deemed the building safe for re- occupancy.

The Floor Warden is to inform Senior Management of all events or emergencies that occur within the immediate area and surrounds of the building.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Floor Warden

The Floor Warden is identifiable by a Yellow Warden High-Viz Vest and will be in command of all emergency situations in the offices until the handover of the emergency situation to

external emergency service personnel. The Floor Warden will be responsible for the following:

 Reporting directly to the most senior manager on the status of the emergency.

 Maintaining an accurate timetable and log of events that take place during an emergency situation or emergency exercise.

 The safe and orderly evacuation of the premises by all occupants, when required.

On becoming aware of an emergency, the Floor Warden will take the following actions:

 Ascertain the nature of the emergency and determine appropriate actions.

 Commence building evacuation if alarm sounds.

 Ensure that the appropriate emergency services have been notified.

If an Emergency situation requires building evacuation, the Floor Warden shall:

 Ensure that all personnel have been advised of the emergency situation and commenced evacuation and take control of building entry.

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 Obtain the names and location of employees still remaining within the building.

 Brief the emergency services upon their arrival of the emergency status and number of employees still within the building.

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 Act on advice and instructions given from external emergency services personnel.

 On notification from external emergency services, communicate and co-ordinate building re-entry with Building Emergency Warden.

#### First Aid personnel

First Aiders, on being advised of a medical emergency shall take the following actions:

 Render first aid to injured persons (only when safe to do so).

 Communicate with the Floor Warden regarding the actions to be taken.

 Record any first aid actions taken.

 Assist the Floor Warden with mobility impaired persons during an evacuation (only when safe to do so).

 In addition, First Aiders (as part of their routine duties) are to ensure that the First Aid Kits are replenished as necessary.

MANAGEMENT OF CONTRACTOR ACTIVITIES

Contractors completing maintenance or repair work shall be engaged and managed in line with the process contained in the Contractor Health and Safety Management Procedure.

It is important that proposed activities and work methods are reviewed prior to work commencing. Workers in the vicinity of work may require temporary relocation. A physical delineation shall be established around any repair or maintenance work area.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

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All visitors’ workers shall receive information about the emergency response plan as part of health and safety induction.

The HS manager/coordinator shall ensure that nominated first aiders and floor wardens shall receive appropriate initial and refresher training.

***PROCEDURE***

### OTHER GUIDELINES

Guideline 1: Office Wise Guide to Health and Safety:

[*http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/pdf\_file/0016/3634/*](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/3634/Officewise_web.pdf)[*Officewise\_web.pdf*](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/3634/Officewise_web.pdf)

Guideline 2: ACC Guidelines for Using Computers

[*http://www.acc.co.nz/PRD\_EXT\_CSMP/groups/external\_ip/*](http://www.acc.co.nz/PRD_EXT_CSMP/groups/external_ip/documents/guide/wpc090196.pdf)[*documents/guide/wpc090196.pdf*](http://www.acc.co.nz/PRD_EXT_CSMP/groups/external_ip/documents/guide/wpc090196.pdf)

Attachment 1: Workstation Self-Assessment Check

REFERENCES

### WATER NEW ZEALAND PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES:

#### Health and Safety Procedures:

 Health and Safety Communication and Consultation

 Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and Control

 Health and Safety Training Program

 Contractor Health and Safety Management

### LEGISLATION, REGULATION AND STANDARDS

 Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

 Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995