

UCA - Gungahlin Uniting Church

WHS Policy

Approved by Church Council

Date of Meeting	Chairperson	Secretary
06-06-2022	Bronwyn Asquith Jenelle Martin	Bruce Warren

Purpose

At UCA - Gungahlin Uniting Church (GUC) the health, safety and wellbeing of our people is a priority. We will take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the working environment for our employees, contractors, volunteers, members and visitors.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- employees;
- contractors;
- volunteers;
- members; and
- visitors¹ to GUC premises, to the extent it is relevant to them.

In this policy, 'workplace' includes working onsite or offsite, attendance at work-related conferences, functions or visits and attendance at other work-related events.

Background

The UCA guiding principles in relation to WHS are outlined in ["Workplace Safety Services WHS Policy and 10 Key Principles"](#) prepared by the Uniting Church Synod of NSW and ACT.

Policy

Overview

¹ Visitors includes all people attending GUC premises including those comprising the congregation at worship, participants in GUC events and those present during events coordinated by tenants. The policy only applies to visitors to the extent it is relevant to them.

GUC supports the rights of all persons covered by the policy to work in an environment that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health.

GUC is committed to the promotion of a joint and united approach to consultation and resolution of health and safety issues.

GUC is committed to improving health and safety and will work collaboratively with members and all other persons covered by the policy for the management of systems and procedures to ensure we can, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- identify, assess and control workplace hazards;
- reduce incidents and the cost of occupational injury and illness; and
- provide for anyone affected by occupational injury or illness at GUC.

We believe all injuries and incidents are preventable. Our goal is zero injuries and incidents. Proactive hazard identification and risk control are vital to realising our goal.

Commonwealth and ACT legal requirements are our minimum standard. However, regular review of this policy may deem it necessary to adopt higher standards in order to achieve our goal.

Within the scope of their individual roles, each and every employee, contractor and volunteer share responsibility for implementing and influencing achievement of this policy and its objectives.

This policy will be reviewed annually. Following review, changes will be fully communicated to all employees, contractors, volunteers and other stakeholders.

Bullying and violence at work

GUC is committed to reducing bullying and occupational violence so far as is practicable in the workplace.

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward a person, or a group of persons, that creates a risk to their health and safety.

Examples of bullying can include:

- verbal abuse;
- excluding, ignoring or isolating a person;
- psychological harassment;

- intimidation;
- assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to a person's job;
- giving a person impossible assignments and deadlines;
- unjustified criticism or complaints;
- deliberately withholding information vital for effective work performance; and
- constant taunting, teasing or playing practical jokes on a person who is not a willing participant.

Bullying can be verbal, or in writing (including online).

Occupational violence refers to any incident where a person is physically attacked, abused, assaulted or threatened in the workplace.

Breach of this Policy

Any breach of this policy may result in counselling and/or disciplinary action, which, in the case of employees or contractors, may lead to dismissal, or, in the case of volunteers, may lead to the cessation of their engagement.

WHS Reporting, Performance Monitoring and Rehabilitation

In accordance with our goal for zero injuries and incidents, GUC will ensure that all injuries and incidents are effectively reported, investigated promptly, root causes identified, risks assessed and appropriate effective corrective action implemented to prevent recurrence.

If injury occurs, we will arrange effective medically approved workplace rehabilitation programs to maximise recovery and prompt return-to-work of injured employees.

Duties

Church Council members will:

- be committed to consultation and the provision and maintenance of a healthy and safe workplace;
- use risk identification, assessment and control principles to reach GUC's health and safety objectives;
- ensure that all employees receive appropriate training in this policy and related procedures, and their obligations under occupational health and safety laws;
- participate in GUC's inductions and implement all safety procedures;
- appoint a suitable person as WHS Coordinator from the Church Council or the wider congregation.

The WHS Coordinator appointed by Church Council will:

- coordinate the identification, development, implementation and review of work health and safety policies and procedures;
- assist supervisors/managers in the identification, assessment and selection of measures to control hazards and risks to health and safety;
- provide regular reports to the Church Council on GUC's work health and safety performance as required; and
- maintain an incident register.

Managers/supervisors/leaders of groups will:

- be committed to the provision and maintenance of a healthy and safe workplace including consultation on WHS matters;
- use risk identification, assessment and control principles to reach GUC health and safety objectives;
- inform and train all employees in relevant policies, procedures and health and safety obligations;
- participate in GUC inductions and implement all safety procedures; and
- complete relevant checklists on instruction from the WHS Coordinator and Church Council.

Employees/contractors/volunteers will:

- participate in health and safety training, actions and activities and support GUC in its efforts to reach its health and safety and, where relevant, rehabilitation objectives;
- follow reasonable health and safety instructions from managers or supervisors;
- report any serious incidents, accidents, injuries or hazards in the workplace to supervisors or designated representatives;
- aim to work in a way that does not endanger the health or safety of themselves or others;
- properly use and maintain safety equipment;
- make sure visitors follow safety rules in the workplace; and
- participate in GUC induction programs and implement all detailed safety procedures.

How will this policy be implemented?

In accordance with the WHS policy of the NSW and ACT Synod:

1. by 31 January each year, Church Council members must familiarise themselves with the NSW and ACT Synod WHS Policy (["Workplace Safety Services WHS Policy and 10 Key Principles"](#));
2. Church Council members must provide access to incident and relevant ACT Worksafe information and forms in the Church Office and ensure relevant information is included in volunteer forms;

3. Church Council members must coordinate the completion of the 10 hazard checklists (<https://nswact.uca.org.au/media/3578/wss-congregation-handbook-for-whs-v3.pdf> see p. 4) annually by 30 June and implement relevant follow-up actions;
4. Church Council members must complete and action the GUC risk register (to be reviewed annually by 30 June).
5. Church Council members must identify and implement current baseline WHS training package for employees, volunteers etc.

Procedures if an incident occurs

All incidents must be reported to Synod at wss@nswact.uca.org.au as follows:

- notifiable incidents² immediately, with written advice within 48 hours;
- significant incidents requiring professional medical assistance, within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident or that it could lead to a claim (where not obvious in first instance, but arises after);
- minor incidents (e.g. minor cuts, scrapes, twists not requiring attention by a medical professional), send a copy of the incident report on an annual basis;
- minor but frequent, send an email to Synod with to consult on whether there are patterns that could be addressed.

All notifiable incidents must also be reported to WorkSafe ACT (see <https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/home/workhealthandsafety/worksafeact>)

Additional reporting for employees:

- advise Synod and Allianz immediately (and at least within 48 hours);
- non-notifiable incidents (but more than minor) should be reported to Allianz and Synod within 48 hours of becoming aware of the incident or that it could lead to a claim (where not obvious in first instance, but arises after).

Additional reporting for volunteers:

- Report any incidents/obtain claim forms from Synod at insurance@nswact.uca.org.au.

Additional reporting for visitors:

² The death of a person, a 'serious injury or illness', or a dangerous incident. See the Safe Work Australia Information Sheet for further information.

- report to Synod at insurance@nswact.uca.org.au within 48 hours of us becoming aware of the incident or that it could lead to a claim (where not obvious in first instance, but arises after);
- do not admit negligence - consult with Synod first.

All incidents should be logged in GUC's incident register.

Attachments

- Allianz Information Sheet
- Safe Work Australia Incident Notification Information Sheet
- GUC incident register

Version Tracking

Version #	Date	Authors
1	09.11.19	Brooke Kilah and Ian Bartholomew
2	06..6.2022	Approved by Church Council