



Work Health & Safety Handbook

*A guide for all staff working with
Direct Care Australia*

2022





A copy of this handbook is given to all at Direct Care Australia (DCA) employees as part of the induction procedure prior to them commencing work with the organisation.

Direct Care Australia is accountable and responsible for the safety of all people in its workplace and is committed to integrating work health and safety policies into the day-to-day business of the organisation in the belief that accidents are preventable, and that work health and safety is a priority. Direct Care Australia is committed to ensuring the well-being of its employees and clients.

This handbook briefly outlines your role in accident prevention and provides a general guide to hazards in the workplace. Specific regulations do apply to certain types of work, and Direct Care Australia has the responsibility to clearly define and implement standard operating procedures for tasks carried out.

More detailed information on policies and procedures can be obtained from Direct Care Australia's WHS Officer.

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ACCIDENTS AND ACCIDENT REPORTING

An accident may be defined as an unplanned, unexpected event in a sequence of events occurring as a result of some combination of contributing factors. An accident may have various outcomes:

- a "near miss"
- loss of work / client support
- physical damage
- personal injury
- or a combination of the above.
- Or death

The factors that contribute to accidents should be identified and risks should be either eliminated or reduced to an acceptable level.

You are required to follow all reasonable instructions given to you and report any incidents or perceived risks or hazards to a coordinator or People & Culture as quickly as possible. Where possible, ensure that you undertake some temporary control measures to eliminate or lessen the risk.

Accident reporting is a legal obligation. Report all accidents on the day of the accident or as soon as possible after the accident. An after-hours telephone number is available on the last page of this booklet, and on the back of your ID badge.

CONSULTATION

Consultation involves the sharing of information and exchange of views between Direct Care Australia, its employees and/or their representatives. Although the responsibility for work health and safety decisions rests with Direct Care Australia, consultation provides the opportunity for employees' experiences and ideas to be considered in the decision-making process, and for resolving health and safety problems.

WORK, HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Direct Care Australia aims to provide a healthy and safe workplace to all employees which is not always easy to do when working in other people's homes.

Direct Care Australia has a Work, Health & Safety policy, which is available on Cognology and from Head Office. Under the legislation Work Health & Safety Act 2012 (and Regulations), employees have a duty of care to take all reasonably practicable steps to care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons at or near the workplace. Employees can be involved by participating in WHS training, and by reporting any hazards, near misses or incidents soon after they occur.

Work, Health & Safety training can be completed online by accessing the HCA [Sign in | Direct Care Australia \(learnupon.com\)](https://learnupon.com) The People & Culture Department will provide you with a username and password and can answer any questions you may have.

EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITY

Employees are required under the Act to take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety and the health and safety of any other person who may be affected by their actions.

Employees are required to:

- use equipment provided to protect health and safety
- obey reasonable instructions that may be given
- comply with any policy that applies at the workplace
- ensure, that they are not, by the consumption of alcohol or drugs, in such a state as to endanger themselves or others.
- participate in site inspections on a regular basis.

RESOLUTION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Should any matter occur which gives you cause for concern, you should raise the matter with the WHS Officer or People & Culture Team. If the matter is not addressed within an agreed and reasonable time span, the matter will be referred to the ODM or another appropriate senior staff member at Direct Care Australia.

The intent should always be to resolve the issues "in house", in a cooperative manner, seeking advice as appropriate, to ensure that the identified risks are eliminated or controlled, as far as is possible.



CHEMICALS

Chemical products (detergents, degreasers, paints, oils, herbicides, etc) vary greatly in their hazardous nature, and can affect each person differently. Some substances used in people's homes may be hazardous to your health and consideration must be taken when transporting, handling and using them.

These substances can take different forms, for example:

Vapour - the evaporated or gaseous form of a substance that is normally in a liquid state.

Dust - Tiny solid particles that do not tend to diffuse in the air, but eventually settle under the influence of gravity.

Fumes - created when a vapour is formed above the surface of a liquid, which immediately reacts with the oxygen in air.

Mist - suspended liquid droplets generated when a gas or vapour condenses to the liquid state, or by breaking up a liquid into a dispersed state (splashing or spraying).

Aerosol - Tiny pieces of solid matter or droplets of liquid in the air derived from activities such as spraying. Because of their small particle size, aerosols stay suspended in air longer and are more likely to be inhaled.

If you have any issues or an accident with chemicals, ring the

1: Poisons Information Centre on 131126

2: Ambulance 000

3: Direct Care Australia 08 83368861/All Hours

CHEMICAL HAZARDS

Chemicals can affect the body by entering it through inspiration (breathing), ingestion (eating/drinking), absorption (skin) or injection (penetration) of the skin. Some effects may be a minor irritation only, whilst others may cause more serious injuries. The degree of injury depends on the concentration of the chemical and the duration of exposure to it.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The principal objectives for healthy and safe work are to prevent personal and property damage, and to promote the health, safety and well-being of persons in the workplace. All employees must wear protective equipment whilst engaged in activities where it has been determined they should be used:

1. Where hazards from harmful substances or processes cannot otherwise be prevented or suitably controlled.
2. Where complete protection is essential because of the nature of the hazard and uncertainty about the level of danger.
3. Where infection is (or there is a high likelihood of being) present.
3. Where legislation, mandates or emergency management directions require it.

Protective equipment must be kept clean and in good repair and should be stored in a clean place when not in use

FOOTWEAR

All employees should wear shoes that fully enclosed the feet and with appropriate anti-slip soles. Open-toed shoes or thongs must not be worn.

FIRST AID



It is the policy of the organisation that all employees have access to first aid in the event on injury or health problems. You are required to have a first aid kit in your car which is provided to you by DCA on induction and can be replenished by making an appointment with head office. You are required to have completed a first aid course (Apply First Aid) prior to commencing employment with Direct Care Australia, and to update your first aid and CPR training before it expires.

INFECTION CONTROL

Direct Care Australia will aim to provide a safe and healthy working environment which includes the control of risk from exposure to infection and infectious diseases. All employees are to ensure that appropriate practices and procedures are followed to prevent the spread of any infections. Standard precautions must always be followed, such as hand washing prior to attending to and on leaving a client. Gloves are to be worn as per infection control procedures, as indicated on a care plan, and as requested by a coordinator.

MANUAL HANDLING

Where possible, Direct Care Australia encourages a 'no lift' policy, which means that you must follow the care plan, and use slide sheets and lifting machines where and how indicated

You should make every effort to identify risks associated with manual handling tasks performed in the workplace and take action to control the risks identified. All staff are required to attend yearly manual handling updates, and to provide Direct Care Australia with evidence of having updated manual handling training.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

All staff working in the community setting where they need to use a client's electrical equipment will be issued with a portable residual current device (RCD)*. An RCD is to be plugged into the client's power point whenever an appliance is used. The appliance is plugged into the RCD to protect staff from any potential electrical faults.

Other safety considerations must also be followed:

- **Place** cables so they cannot be damaged or become a trip hazard. Damaged cables due to crushing can result in serious risk of injury.
- **Inspect** all electrical equipment before plugging it in to the power source. If the equipment is found to be damaged or faulty, do not use it and report it to a coordinator.
- **Visually check** electrical tools before commencing work
- **Report** ALL electric shocks
- **Never assume** that another person will ensure your safety
- **ALWAYS turn off** the power before making any adjustments.
- **Never** use a power lead that has been repaired with tape.
- **Never** let electrical leads or tool contact water, and never stand in water whilst using electrical tools or equipment

* Employees are asked to pay a \$35 deposit for an RCD issued by Direct Care Australia. This deposit will be refunded when an employee ceases to work for DCA and the RCD is returned to the office. All RCDs issued are tagged and tested regularly.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

A person whose performance at work is impaired by drugs and/or alcohol use puts work colleagues, clients, and the public at risk of accidents and/or injury.

Direct Care Australia will provide information on alcohol and other drug use if necessary and will encourage those with problems to seek help.

Alcohol and illegal drugs are banned from the workplace.

Prescription medication may affect your performance at work or on the roads and may place you or others at risk of an accident. If you think the prescription medication you are taking may be of concern, you should notify Direct Care Australia immediately.

Remember: you have an obligation to do all that is reasonable to protect your own safety, and that of others.

SMOKING IN THE WORKPLACE

Direct Care Australia staff must **NOT** smoke while working with clients. Furthermore, special consideration needs to be given to aged and/or clients with a disability who may be sensitive to the smell of cigarette smoke on a person's breath and/or clothing. Do not assume that you are allowed to smoke because the client may be smoking or that you are outside a client's home.

SECURITY

Ensure that you always wear your photo identification badge. Employees should always carry a mobile phone, or ensure they can access outside assistance. Employees should ensure that all personal possessions are secure and out of sight.

EMERGENCIES

While with a client, always be aware of your environment: note all exits so that you are prepared for an evacuation should there be a fire or other emergency.

HOUSEKEEPING

Good housekeeping is a primary requirement for safety. Rubbish, food scraps and lunch wrappers should be placed in the containers provided. Walkways, floors and steps must be kept clear of objects and must be free of oil, water or greasy substances. Particular attention must be paid to any spillages of liquid, which must be cleaned up immediately. Always keep your work area clear of tripping hazards.

If the environment appears to have any hazards to your safety, call a Direct Care Australia Coordinator immediately. All hazards must be reported.

COVID19

Coronavirus or COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus. The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing. You can protect yourself by washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your face, and avoiding close contact (1.5 meters) with people who are unwell.

Confirmed case

A person who tests positive to a validated PCR or RAT confirmed by a laboratory or SA Health.

What is a Casual contact?

Is where a person has less than 15 minutes face-to-face contact with a symptomatic confirmed case or shared a closed space for less than two hours with a symptomatic confirmed case. Where there has been casual contact, self-isolation is not required. Rather people should continue to self-monitor and otherwise follow the general advice of health authorities.

What is a Close contact?

- a household member or intimate partner of a COVID-19 case during their infectious period
- someone who has had close personal interaction with a COVID-19 case during their infectious period:
 - for 15 minutes or more and
 - where masks are not worn and
 - in close physical proximity and
 - in an indoor setting
- someone who has been notified by SA Health that they are a close contact
- someone who has been to an [exposure site](#) during the exposure period for that site.

COVID-19 cases are considered infectious two days before their symptoms started or if they didn't have any noticeable symptoms, they are considered infectious two days before they had their positive COVID-19 test taken. The infectious period ends 10 days after they had their positive test taken.

Most close contacts will receive an SMS from SA Health. However, if you know you are a close contact, please do not wait for the SMS – get tested and quarantine immediately.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing means avoiding close contact and crowded places whenever you can and aiming to keep approximately 1.5 metres distance from those around you in the community, in the workplace and at home.

Absences

All staff are encouraged to report any illness or association and to follow the guidelines for self-isolation for 14 days should they have any concerns of potential contamination. This will not be recorded negatively on their personnel file. Accrued annual and personal leave may be drawn down, otherwise leave is unpaid.

A medical certificate is appreciated.

PPE is available at Head Office – please call ahead and make a time to collect.

Screening Protocol – Frontline Staff

All staff are required to report weekly, via online survey, that they are fit for work.

Before Entering a Home

The Frontline Worker is required to ask a series of questions relating to the travel history and wellbeing of a client and the other people living with them in the home.

The questions are:

1. Have you or anyone in your home recently returned a positive Covid19 test in the past 5 days.
 2. Is anyone in your home in a period of isolation?
 3. Are you prepared to remain socially distanced while I complete my tasks? (not applicable for personal care shifts)
- If the answer to all questions is negative the Frontline Worker may enter the home and complete their shift.
 - If the answer to any question is positive the Frontline Worker must report this to the office.
 - If the client is NOT self-isolating the Frontline Worker may complete their shift wearing the appropriate PPE (mask, gloves).
 - If the client is self-isolating, the Frontline Worker may complete their shift wearing the appropriate PPE (mask, gloves) AND ask the client to remain in self-isolation in another room or outside.

The Frontline Worker is required to report to Head Office any client who has received a positive Covid19 test or is self-isolating.

The Frontline Worker is required to ventilate the home.

New gloves are to be worn at every service

Hand Hygiene is to be practiced, before and after every individual service.

A mask is to be worn when the client has flu like symptoms or has been travelling

A client who is self-isolating must not have more than 15 mins face to face interaction with a worker nor be in the same room as the worker whilst they complete their service.

In the case of personal support, both the worker and client will wear masks – only if the client has flu like symptoms.

Hot Weather Policy

When Temperature is Between 35 and 37 Degrees

Employees are only able to be working in an area unaffected by heat (i.e. air conditioned premises).

If this is not possible, only Personal Care / medication shifts will continue where there has been consultation with the client to discuss WH&S concerns.

If, after consultation, it is agreed that the shift be discontinued or cancelled, then the affected employee will be permitted to go home and the client will be notified.

Extended periods of Extreme Heat

Where there is an extended period of heat as published by the Bureau of Meteorology, the WHS Officer, People and Culture Team and the Operations & Development Manager will meet to discuss the rescheduling of services and publish a directive to all department to follow.

As Temperature Reaches 35 Degrees

Work Continues as normal however, action should be taken to minimise discomfort and monitor conditions. Discomfort minimisation actions should include, where possible:

- Rescheduling Garden and Home Maintenance shifts so that tasks are performed in cooler parts of the day
- Job rotation to reduce the amount of direct exposure to heat
- Windscreen shades for vehicles
- Scheduled hourly drink breaks of approximately 5-10 minutes in shade
- Drinking cooled water
- Air-conditioned workspaces
- Provision of extra and regular work breaks in cooler areas
- Provision of extra PPE such as, sunscreen, wide hat brims
- Use of mechanical aids to reduce physical exertion
- Employees should not become thirsty. Employees should drink between 100-200ml of water approximately between every 15-20 minutes.

Employees should avoid drinks that might dehydrate them, such as coffee, tea, coke and other caffeinated soft drinks.

Employees should wear light coloured, loose fitted clothing made of natural fibres.

The People & Culture Team will remind all workers (either by email, text, or phone calls) to park in the shade, where available, drink water and to ask clients to turn on air conditioners and fans.

Should an employee complain of heat exposure symptoms before the extreme temperatures have been reached, the employee has a legal duty and obligation to report this to Head office so that arrangements are able to be made to remove the employee from the site and seek medical attention.

Completing a Service

Used gloves are required to be disposed of in the client's garbage bin.

Hands to be washed with soap and water and dried with paper towel.

Hand sanitiser to be used once outside the premises.

Staff to adopt social-distancing guidelines when using office spaces with the option of remote work being considered should the infection rate in the community reach 500 confirmed cases or if a staff member is required to self-isolate.

Hygiene Protocol

All Frontline workers have been distributed with the appropriate amounts of PPE for their workload.

The PPE Kit includes

- Gloves
- Face Masks – cloth or surgical
- Plastic Aprons
- Hand Sanitiser
- Eye Protection
- Shoe coverings
- Beard coverings
- First Aid Kit

These can be replenished by appointment with the People and Culture Team.

Instructions for the correct use and procedure for donning and doffing PPE have been provided to all staff <https://www.ausmed.com.au/cpd/articles/donning-doffing-ppe>

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Police, fire & ambulance	000
Non-urgent Police attendance	131 444
Head Office /Coordinators (8am-5pm)	8336 8861
After hours Coordinator	8336 8861