

## **SAVEM Work Health and Safety Standards**

### **Acronyms:**

<b>PCBU</b>	A Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking
<b>SAVEM</b>	South Australian Veterinary Emergency Management
<b>WHS</b>	Work Health and Safety

### **Purpose**

After reading these notes you will have developed knowledge about:

1. WHS Legal framework SAVEM works under
2. The SAVEM WHS system
3. SAVEM WHS Incident Reporting
4. SAVEM WHS Hazards and Risks

## **1. Introduction**

SAVEM has a robust WHS system which is designed to keep volunteers safe from harm. This system is built on legal responsibilities but is reliant on the volunteers to undertake their roles with a positive and strong safety culture.

The Work Health and Safety (WHS) system is focused on prevention of accidents and injuries. By preventing incidents and accidents, we can save time, effort and money on accident reporting and investigation, rehabilitation and psychological and physical impacts on volunteers.

SAVEM has strong safety culture and will always put people first. Throughout the previous training notes we have incorporated this theme as '**Safety First**' whereas this training note will explain the underlying frameworks and our responsibilities in reporting hazards and incidents.

## **2. WHS Legal framework**

1. In order to prevent, eliminate and avoid workplace injury, illness or death a **legal framework** has been established so that personnel have a responsibility of exercising a "**duty of care**" in the workplace. This framework includes WHS Acts, WHS Regulations, Codes of Practice and Australian Standards.

# VOLUNTEER TRAINING NOTE 10

## II. In South Australia this framework includes

- Work Health and Safety Act 2012
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012
- Animal Welfare Act 1985
- Veterinary Services Act 2023
- Controlled Substances Act 1984
- Dangerous Substances Act 1979
- Firearms Act 2015
- Codes of Practice
- Australian Standards
- National Codes and Standards

## III. What is “Duty of Care”

The WHS Act sets out clearly what is expected of PCBUs, volunteers and contractors. These responsibilities are known as “Duty of Care” responsibilities. As a supervisor, coordinator, volunteer or contractor you have a responsibility under the WHS Act to:

- Ensure the health, safety and welfare of all personnel
- Ensure the health and safety of others at worksites
- Promote improvements to the workplace environment
- Protect people’s physical and mental health

“Duty of Care” means **everyone in a workplace environment has an obligation to take care of themselves and others**. It involves a legal and moral obligation to anticipate possible causes of injury and illness and do everything **reasonably practical** to remove or minimize the possible causes of harm.

## IV. SAVEM Responsibilities

- Provide safe work area and equipment
- Provide information and training
- Identify hazards and assess risks
- Control the risks
- Consult with volunteers on safety issues and changes

## V. Volunteer Responsibilities

- Follow safety instructions (policy & procedures)
- Use equipment carefully (must use PPE provided)
- Report hazards and injuries
- Take reasonable care not to put themselves or others at risk
- Be fit and healthy for work – no drugs or alcohol
- Know your responsibilities for WHS

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## VI. Supervisor/Team Leader Responsibilities

Supervisors must:

- Be aware of emergency procedures
- Be aware of the location of first aid stations
- Know the location and risks of workplace hazards
- Observe health and safety workplace responsibilities by wearing the necessary protective clothing and/or using the correct equipment, and report injuries or accidents
- Have input to WHS management

Through direct supervision you can:

- Monitor volunteer behaviour and activity
- Note behaviour that has the potential to threaten the health and safety of the volunteer and others
- Allow precautions to be taken against threatening or hazardous behaviour or activities
- Make sure work practices are being carried out safely
- Guide volunteers in non-hazardous behaviour or practices
- Make sure the required PPE is worn
- Allow fast and appropriate action to prevent or control damage, accidents or incidents that do occur
- Allow assistance to be provided in the event of an emergency

**Everyone** in a workplace environment has an obligation to take care of themselves and others.

Emergency response **does not allow any exemptions** from WHS responsibilities

## 3. SAVEM WHS System

### i. SAVEM WHS Policy Manual

- This includes all policy statements
- Contains forms and the process for reporting incidents

### ii. SAVEM WHS Risk Management Manual

- Contains a list of hazards common to SAVEM activities and the various controls that have been implemented and expected standards
- Details of the controls that are procedural

# VOLUNTEER TRAINING NOTE 10

- Details of the SAVEM infection control plan
- iii. **SAVEM Induction to an incident**
  - Will include details on hazards specific to that incident
- iv. **SAVEM training**
  - Will always contain elements of WHS relevant to that training
  - Level 1 training includes details of the SAVEM WHS system

## I. Incident Reporting

### I. **Reporting Incidents**

All hazards and incidents **must be reported as soon as practicable** after the event through chain of command. Where it is a notifiable incident the SAVEM Coordinator and Commander must be informed immediately (e.g. by phone or in person) **DO NOT USE RADIO** unless absolutely necessary to maintain privacy.

### II. **Recognise and Respond**

- Assess the situation and at no time put yourself or others in danger
- Inform a supervisor if possible
- Assess the need to trigger an Emergency Response
- Immediate actions may include raising alarm or evacuation
- Initiate response for rescue, medical intervention, fire, security and to isolate and/or contain the risk
- Consider site preservation and data gathering for investigation phase
- Consider debrief, counselling, psychological support for those potentially affected

### III. **Completing a hazard and incident report.**

The details on how to report hazards and incidents can be found in the SAVEM WHS Policy Manual. The form must be submitted to the responsible supervisor.

### IV. **Incident investigation**

The supervisor responsible for the person who reported the hazard or incident must carry out an investigation.

The supervisor, along with the person who reported the hazard/incident, need to identify corrective actions and the supervisor must ensure these are implemented where necessary. This should be reported to the SAVEM Coordinator or Commander.

Report all hazards and incidents as soon as reasonably practical to supervisors and chain of command

Complete a hazard/incident report.

# VOLUNTEER TRAINING NOTE 10

## 4. WHS hazards and Risks

### I. Prevention through identifying hazards

Prevention in occupational health and safety focuses on:

- the identification of hazards
- the assessment of risk
- the control of hazards and risks

Hazards refer to anything that has the potential to cause illness, injury or harm to persons; to damage property or a combination of both. Hazards are usually grouped into seven different types as listed in the table below.

**No environment is hazard free**

### II. Identifying a hazard

The table below can be used as a checklist to identify hazards. It is important to think about the hazards WELL BEFORE we undertake any activities so that risks can be reduced and controls can be identified and implemented.

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>What to look for</b>
<b>Physical</b>	Hazards that could cause trip, falls, slips, cuts, bruising, strains and similar effects, for example wet floors, objects in walkways, sharp edges, unprotected knife blades, poor lighting, high noise levels, poor ventilation.
<b>Ergonomic</b>	Hazards that could cause strain injuries or illness. For example, lifting aids that are in poor condition, stores and supplies that require you to stretch or twist your body to reach them.
<b>Psychological</b>	Hazards that may affect mental health, for example, verbally abusive public, large numbers of injured animals, dealing with traumatized community members
<b>Hazardous Substance</b>	Hazards that are caused by chemicals, materials or other substances, for example fumes from solvents, burns from acids, flammable materials, run-off that contaminates water supplies.
<b>Biological</b>	Hazards that may result in contamination or disease. For example, Salmonella or Q fever carrying animals or materials
<b>Radiation</b>	Hazards from a light, heat or energy source, for example eye damage from welding flashes, poor protective clothing when working in the sun.
<b>Electrical</b>	Hazards that could result in electrocution or electrical damage, for example exposed wires, power leads lying in water, too many leads plugged into a single outlet/

# VOLUNTEER TRAINING NOTE 10

## III. Assessing the risk

Once you have identified the hazards, you can assess whether or not those hazards pose a risk to yourself, other workers or the location.

**Risk** is the chance of anything happening that will result in injury or damage and is measured in terms of the:

**Probability or likelihood** of its occurrence and  
**consequence** of the injury or damage

By assessing the likelihood of an injury occurring and the severity of the injury, a risk rating for the WHS issue is determined.

To help you assess the risks SAVEM uses a risk assessment tool that is detailed in the WHS Management Manual. Risk assessment tools give each hazard a rating. The higher the risk rating, the more serious the hazard.

## IV. Implement actions to keep SAVEM members safe

Risk controls are actions specifically designed to manage the risk associated with a hazard that you have identified. These controls and associated actions are designed to eliminate or reduce the risk to a level that is acceptable.

### **The Hierarchy of Risk Controls**

The hierarchy of control is a system applied to design controls for risks. The hierarchy of control ranks risk controls from the highest level of protection and reliability through to the lowest and least reliable protection.

Eliminating the hazard and risk is the highest level of control in the hierarchy, followed by reducing the risk through substitution, isolation and engineering controls, then reducing the risk through administrative controls. Reducing the risk through the use of protective personal equipment (PPE) is the lowest level of control.

The following element shows the structure of the hierarchy of control, from most effective control to least effective.

1. **Elimination** – eliminate the risk completely for example by discontinuing the use of a hazardous materials or equipment or discontinue work practices.
2. **Substitution** – Replace the work practice, materials or equipment with a less hazardous alternative. E.g. isoflurane instead of ether as an anaesthetic gas
3. **Isolation** – Remove the person from the source of the hazard or provide barriers between the personnel and the hazard e.g. pedestrian walkway over road

## VOLUNTEER TRAINING NOTE 10

4. **Engineering Controls** – Isolate the equipment by disconnections or turning the equipment off when employees are in the area. Design equipment to eliminate hazards e.g. hand guards on machinery
5. **Safe Operating Procedures** – Administrators introducing changes to operating procedures, training, routine maintenance schedules and additional supervision
6. **Personal Protective Equipment** –Use personal equipment to help reduce the risk of injury. – such as respirators, protective clothing, steel capped boots, eye protection etc.

### 5. Risk Controls

Some risk controls that SAVEM use to manage our risks include:

- Training in the safe use of equipment and substances
- Personal protective equipment and clothing
- Access to counselling and debrief process
- Procedures to responsibly identify and report possible hazard exposure situations
- Policy and procedures manuals
- The use of the Dynamic Risk Assessment process on incident grounds
- Limiting hours of work to minimise the risk of fatigue