



Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Steffen Welsch Architects recognises and is committed under Victorian legislation to provide and maintain a safe, healthy and comfortable work environment for its staff, consumers and other visitors.

Steffen Welsch Architects believes that a well-managed health and safety program is an integral part of good management practice.

Steffen Welsch Architects has a comprehensive OH & S Policy. Staff have an obligation to ensure that they are thoroughly familiar with its content. It is strongly suggested that the policy be carefully read and understood.

Steffen Welsch Architects Commitment to OH & S

In fulfilling its responsibilities, Steffen Welsch Architects will:

- Comply with all statutory rules and accepted codes and practices relating to health and safety.
- Set short and long term goals and specific responsibilities in the management of health and safety. - Develop OH & S policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Ensure all line managers understand and take responsibility for the health and safety process in each program area.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure that staff are aware of safe work practices, emergency procedures and any risks to health and safety in their work environment.
- Consult with staff and OH & S representative on issues relating to health and safety.

Steffen Welsch Architects will ensure that management or delegates have practical knowledge of a take responsibility for:

- Hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control.
- Health and safety legislation, regulations and recognised standards.
- Specific health and safety issues within the workplace.
- Investigation of all diseases, injuries, near misses and accidents and formulate appropriate preventative action
- Regularly monitor and review the implementation of and compliance with OH & S policies.

Steffen Welsch Architects is committed to providing:

- Safe equipment and working procedures including adequate ventilation, safe electrical connections, appropriate resources, clear passageways, etc.
- Good facilities for the welfare of workers such as ergonomically sound furniture, kitchen and dining area, washrooms, first aid kit.



Staff Responsibilities and Involvement in OH & S

The OH & S Act places obligations on employees to take care of their own health and the health and safety of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at the workplace.

It also provides for the involvement of employees in dealing with health and safety issues through the establishment of Designated Work Groups, the election of health and safety representative and the establishment of health and safety committees. Steffen Welsch Architects encourages and supports staff involvement through such mechanisms.

Staff will receive information, instruction and ongoing supervision on likely hazards stresses of the job.

If a staff member is inexperienced in the use of a piece of equipment, training will be provided.

All staff are expected to:

- Practice safe working habits.
- Report unsafe working conditions or equipment.
- Keep their immediate work area in a safe and orderly condition.
- Take care of others.
- Cooperate with Steffen Welsch Architects in meeting the requirements of the OH & S Act.
- Accord the health and safety of non-employees, visitors, etc. a high priority.
- Immediately report any hazards or faulty equipment to the Team Manager/CEO.

TEAM MANAGERS HAVE THE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING IN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY.

Staff should discuss any OH & S concerns with their line manager.

The observations and suggestions of all staff will be valued. Every effort will be made to address all issues.

OH & S Representative

Steffen Welsch Architects aims to support the functioning of the elected OH & S Representative.

Staff are encouraged to elect a workplace OH & S Representative. Steffen Welsch Architects is obliged to and will:

- Consult with the Health and Safety Representative on all proposed changes to the workplace and equipment and practices used in the workplace that may affect health and safety and welfare of staff.
- Provide the health and safety representative with access to any information on actual or potential hazards and the health, safety and welfare of staff.
- Permit health and safety representative to take such time off work with pay as is necessary for performing their functions or taking part in approved training courses.
- Provide such facilities and assistance as are necessary.



Training

Steffen Welsch Architects has a commitment to providing training on a yearly basis for all staff in safe work practices.

All team managers will be trained in the principles of OH & S management together with the appropriate hazard controls that are relevant to their area.

Such training and information will include:

- A legislative overview relevant to the workplace (including employer responsibility).
- Consultative processes and issue resolution.
- Hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control.
- Incident and accident investigation.

Occupational Stress

Steffen Welsch Architects recognises that hazards in the workplace are not just physical or chemical but can also exist in the way the organisation functions and the way in which its work is organised. Occupational stress is a major concern and one that Steffen Welsch Architects aims to minimise through good practice in management and operation of the organisation.

Staff are encouraged to do whatever is in their control to identify and manage potential stress risks.

Smoke Free Workplace

Steffen Welsch Architects shall be smoke-free in all public and individual work areas.

THE FOLLOWING AREAS SHALL BE SMOKE-FREE:

- a) Public areas, visitor reception areas.
- b) All work sites.
- c) All rooms in which meetings are regularly conducted, or in which meeting is in progress.
- d) Organisational Vehicles.

SMOKING IS ALLOWED ONLY IN:

- a) Designated areas.

A smoking policy aims to provide a healthy and safe workplace for employees, clients and visitors.

It also promotes and supports healthy choices in the workplace.

A smoke-free workplace policy will ban all smoking in the workplace or restrict smoking to a designated area that is enclosed and directly ventilated to the outside.



Office Safety

All work performed at Steffen Welsch Architects will be conducted using safe work practices. Office and administrative areas will be maintained free of recognized hazards.

Safe Work Practices:

- a. Guard the sharp edges of furniture to prevent personal injury.
- b. Practice good housekeeping. Keep floors free of items that might cause tripping. Keep waste cans out of the way; do not overfill them.
- c. Prevent slipping accident by cleaning up spills immediately.
- d. Report all defects such as loose tiles, broken steps, railings and doors immediately to the Health and Safety Representative/Finance and Administration Manager Officer.
- e. Keep razor blades, tacks, and other sharp objects in closed containers.
- f. Use the proper tool for the job at hand (e.g. a staple remover to remove staples).
- g. Do not overload electrical outlets. Do not plug a multiple outlet strip-- an extension cord with multiple electrical receptacles--into a second multiple outlet strip.
- h. Report immediately, any damaged electrical cords, broken switches, loose connections, or bare wires to the Health and Safety Representative/Finance and Administration Managers Officer.
- i. Unplug any office machine that smokes, sparks, or delivers an electrical shock. Have it inspected by the appropriate repair personnel.
- j. Avoid overloading the top drawers of filing cabinets to avoid the possible tipping of the cabinet when the drawers are opened. Open one drawer of the file cabinet at a time to prevent tipping. File cabinets should be placed where their use will not interfere with office traffic patterns.
- k. Keep file and desk drawers closed when not in use to help prevent tripping accidents.
- l. Be sure to use proper lifting techniques. Make arrangements with personnel skilled in moving to shift furniture and other heavy objects.
- m. Use only safety step stools or ladders for climbing. Don't stand on swivel chairs or use them as step stools.
- n. Be careful with flammable liquids. Only the quantity needed for use should be in the work place. They should be kept and used in a ventilated area, away from excessive heat or ignition sources.
- o. Office doors shall be free of obstructions at all times to permit exits in case of an emergency.
- p. If it is necessary to run a cable or electrical cord across the floor, a cable cover must be used to protect the wiring and prevent tripping.
- q. Do not cover air vents or obstruct airflow from registers. Do not place furniture, equipment, or materials in locations that will interfere with air movement around thermostats.
- r. Report any observed pest control problems to the Health and Safety Representative Finance and Administration Managers Officer:
 - Steffen Welsch Architects office and program environment will be as safe, non-institutional, accessible, comfortable and welcoming as possible.
 - Steffen Welsch Architects will also be mindful of creating an environment that will be non-threatening: consumers and staff have the right to be free from physical, emotional and verbal abuse.



- Staff should be sensitive to the needs and different behaviours of others without compromising the above.
- Noise should be kept to a minimum in situations where the office is a shared environment.
- Good facilities including a staff room and/or kitchen area and appropriate food stuffs (milk, sugar, tea and instant coffee) will be provided for staff amenities for rest periods and meals breaks. Any foodstuffs above and beyond what is mentioned in this policy will be purchased at staff members expense e.g. percolated coffee, biscuits and cakes.

Children in the Workplace

Steffen Welsch Architects has a flexible policy regarding children in the workplace.

In the event that a staff member is required to bring her/his children to work due to an emergency, she/he is encouraged to do so however approval needs to be sought from your supervisor/team manager. The staff member is responsible for the children and must keep them occupied and not distract other staff members. If children are not well they should not be brought into the office so as to minimise infection in the workplace. Staff can access carers leave for this purpose.

In extraordinary circumstances where the children need to be brought in for an extended period prior approval needs to be sought from the Team Manager or CEO.

Workplace Violence

- Violence in the workplace is totally unacceptable.
- All clients and staff have the right to feel safe and to participate in programs and services in a nonthreatening environment.
- A client who is violent will be asked to leave the workplace immediately. The incident may require making a report to the Police, if the act of violence amounted to a criminal offence.
- A staff member who is violent or abusive will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in this manual.
- Any behaviour, which constitutes a crime, is subject to legal remedy and criminal or civil justice.

Procedures for Infection Control of Infectious Diseases (Including Hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS)

Cases of infectious diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis B in workplaces will be very rare.

However, it is important to re-emphasise basic hygiene and first aid procedures. These are relevant to many diseases and should be generally applied - not only to deal with the HIV or Hepatitis virus.

Standard (Universal) precautions should be applied to all staff regardless of their infection status. These precautions should be regarded as good hygiene practices and routinely adhered to as the basic level of infection control.

They include:

- The routine washing of hands using soap and running water (including before and after the routine use of gloves).
- The use of protective barriers such as latex gloves when dealing with body fluids, appropriate disposal of soiled material and needles/syringes.
- And the cleaning of surfaces that have been in contact with bodily fluids.



The MRC NE has posted signs emphasising the need for staff and members of the public to wash hands carefully using soap and water:

- Before eating, drinking and smoking.
- Before preparing food/beverages.
- After using nasal tissues/handkerchiefs.
- After using the toilet.
- After touching animals or their environment.
- After contact with any bodily fluids.

Staff are encouraged to provide this information to their clients.

Team Managers should ensure that the workplace has its first aid cupboard stocked with a supply of 70% alcoholic chlorhexidine solution for disinfectant purposes.

- First aid boxes should also include disposable plastic or latex gloves and one-way mouthpieces suitable for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- All staff should be reminded of the need for care in dealing with blood/body fluids and cases of external bleeding.

The following routine precautions should be observed when assisting any client or another staff member who has sustained a cut or similar injury involving a blood spill or when dealing with any other body fluid such as vomit, saliva, urine and faeces:

- Use disposable latex gloves when handling blood or other body fluids. Thoroughly wash lower arms and any other parts of the body in contact with or splashed by blood or fluids. After removing gloves, thoroughly wash hands. Use soap and running water when washing. - Wipe down benches or other items in contact with blood or body fluids with cold water and detergent and then with an approved disinfectant, for example household bleach (sodium hypochlorite), freshly diluted to 0.5%.
- Wash/sponge carpeted areas with soap and cold water.
- Place disposable items and wastes after contact with blood or body fluids in a plastic bag and seal for disposal.
- Thoroughly wash instruments (e.g. scissors) in cold tap water to remove any blood. Instruments can be effectively sterilised by soaking them for 30 minutes in household bleach. If concern remains after dealing with spilt blood etc., then contact the MRC NE OH & S Officer.

Client and Staff confidentiality and Infectious Diseases

It is important that all employees understand what giving/receiving confidential information regarding a client or another staff member's medical condition or information of a personal nature means.

There is no legal obligation for persons infected with a contagious/infectious disease, such as HIV or Hepatitis B, to inform the workplace. However, some staff may choose to inform Team Managers of their condition.

The Team Manager must respect the confidentiality of such advice.



First Aid

Steffen Welsch Architects recognises that in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Legislation it has a responsibility to provide first aid assistance to staff that sustain an injury while on Steffen Welsch Architects premises.

To achieve these responsibilities, Steffen Welsch Architects shall, as far as is reasonably practicable, provide services such as:

- a) Trained and certificated first aiders.
- b) First aid supplies.
- c) Emergency/evacuation procedures.

All workers will be provided with practical instruction about the following:

- First aid facilities in the workplace
- The location of the first aid kit
- The names and work locations of trained first aiders
- Procedures to be followed when first aid is required

First Aid Kit

- A First Aid Kit is kept at Steffen Welsch Architects site.
- The director is responsible for ensuring it remains stocked and up to date.
- Kit contents must be replenished as soon as possible after use.
- Monthly inventory checks should be made and recorded to determine if the contents are as listed and have not deteriorated.

All first aid injuries and treatments must be recorded and reported immediately to the OH & S Representative.

Environmentally Sustainable Workplace

Sustaining the environment means organising ways of working ways minimise environmental damage. This includes minimising the use of non-renewable energy and resources.

Staff at Steffen Welsch Architects are encouraged to become actively involved in protecting their working environment and the health of the planet and to limit the use of resources such as paper, electricity and plastic in the workplace.

Care should be taken that products used at Steffen Welsch Architects are, wherever possible, environmentally friendly. Chemical cleaners and insecticides should be avoided. Plastic containers and bags should be used sparingly.

Steffen Welsch Architects will recycle all glass, plastic and paper waste where possible. Staff are encouraged to re-use and recycle as many resources as possible.

Staff are encouraged to minimise paper use through recycling paper in the workplace and using both sides of paper before disposal.



Steffen Welsch Architects will, wherever possible, purchase products with high recycle content.

Steffen Welsch Architects will conserve energy through:

- Checking energy ratings before buying new equipment.
- Turning off lights, office equipment when not in use (this also helps reduce greenhouse emissions).
- Reduce water use by installing dual flush cisterns.

In the kitchen staff are encouraged to use ceramic mugs not plastic cups.

Infectious Waste Collection and Disposal

All staff are advised that the handling of discarded syringes and potentially infectious waste should not be undertaken unless appropriate training has been completed.

Untrained staff should report the finding of discarded waste to the OH & S Representative as soon as possible.

In the event of a need stick injury, staff should follow these procedures:

1. Immediately wash the area with an approved antiseptic.
2. Flush area under running water for 3-4 minutes.
3. Squeeze the injury and cause it to bleed.
4. Report the injury immediately after above steps have been completed.
5. Seek medical advice.

Fire Emergency

Every employee must know the location of fire extinguishers and fire blankets and be familiar with the fire alarm system.

1. The first person to observe a fire should: 1. Immediately sound the fire alarm by activating nearest fire alarm pull station.
2. Report fire to the Fire Brigade 000.
3. If possible, use available fire extinguishers to extinguish or contain the fire. If the fire is fuelled by a natural gas or LP gas leak, the gas supply should be shut off prior to extinguishing the fire.
4. Immediately evacuate area should initial firefighting attempts fail. Shut off gas supplies, etc. Close door to area to contain fire.



General Emergency Guidelines

In the event of an emergency situation these two guidelines are as follows:

1. Assess Risk to Yourself and Others

a) Think before acting.

2. Protect Yourself and Others

b) If necessary, remove yourself and others from the area.

c) Immediately remove any contaminated clothing and wash any part of body contaminated by chemicals or radioactive materials. Do not spread the contamination to clean areas.

d) Attend to anyone injured.

e) Close off area to personnel (e.g. close doors, post warnings).

f) Turn off any potential ignition sources.

g) Cover spilled powders with suitable liquids to reduce dust.

h) Notify the Radiation Safety Office.