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Workplace Hazards

VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS:

The College will be guided by the Labour Department's "*Code of Practice – For the Use of Visual Display Units – in the Place of Work*" Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. A copy of this Code of Practice is held with the Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

Employees who work continuously at VDUs should be given relief by variations in work or by regular spells of 10 minutes in every hour.

The Collective Employment Contract (CEC) for Support Staff in Schools, (clause referring to Technology – Eye Tests) states "*Employees working on a VDU for at least 50 per cent of their normal working time shall be entitled to an eye test biennially or as required at the employer's expense. If the test discloses that prescription spectacles are required for the normal viewing distance of a VDU, or that an eyesight problem has been created or worsened by a VDU, then the cost of single vision spectacles will be met by the employer.*"

Macleans College accepts the spirit of this clause for occupational safety and health reasons.

OCCUPATIONAL OVERUSE SYNDROME (OOS):

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Identify and solve problems in the work place which may contribute to the causes of OOS.
- Provide support for staff who have OOS symptoms.
- Facilitate the full return to work of affected staff members at a pace consistent with the needs of the individual, balanced with the needs of the college.

Employee Responsibilities

Everyone is required to take responsibility for their own health and safety in the work place. This includes following ergonomic work practices. It may require changes to personal habits and work practices to prevent the occurrence of OOS or to aid recovery.

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During treatment and recovery from OOS symptoms, the employee has these responsibilities:

- Follow the OOS “*Guidelines for Prevention and Management.*” A copy is held on file with the Health and Safety Co-ordinator.
- Complying with ergonomic work practices.
- Monitoring and keeping their manager informed of their progress/regress.
- Jointly and voluntarily participating in the development of their recovery and rehabilitation plan.

In addition, they need to be aware how any decisions they make could effect their rehabilitation.

Reporting

Symptoms of OOS are to be reported using the “*Record of Accident or Incident Not Causing Serious Harm.*” This form is to be completed with the assistance of the School Nurse, with a copy to the Safety Officer to be held on file.

MANAGER’S RESPONSIBILITIES:

If a staff member advises their manager of symptoms that may potentially be diagnosed as Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS), the manager is to advise the Safety Officer. The form - “*Record of Accident or Incident Not Causing Serious Harm.*” - is to be completed, with a copy forwarded to the Business Manager. The Business Manager is to retain a copy on staff personnel files.

Investigation of Causes

The manager is to advise the Safety Officer who should then investigate, focusing on the symptoms being experienced and the possible cause. If further assistance is required, the matter will be referred to the Health and Safety Committee.

Maintaining Proper Records

The Safety Officer, in liaison with the School Nurse, is to ensure that a record is kept of all medical treatment undertaken by the employee, in accordance with accident insurance requirements and the Privacy Act. Information should also be documented on staff personnel files held with the Business Manager.

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TREATMENT:

It is strongly advised that the staff member who complains of OOS should:

- Be seen as soon as possible by either the employee's own doctor or a college nominated Doctor or Specialist in the treatment of OOS.
- Attend physiotherapy if necessary.
- Be seen by other professionals as appropriate.
- If a doctor prescribes time away from work (either full or part-time) or restricted duties, an ACC medical certificate is required.

The above action should be taken only if the staff member agrees. If there is disagreement over the course of action to be taken, then the senior manager must be referred to.

REHABILITATION PROCESS:

The college will support rehabilitation for an agreed period of time. This period will be determined by taking into account the factors for each individual, their recovery and rehabilitation plan, the severity of their condition, and relevant conditions in the employee's employment contract.

A staff member's condition will be reviewed at least once every four weeks during the rehabilitation period to assess progress. A record of these meetings is to be taken.

The college is aware that lengthy periods away from work are physically and psychologically difficult. When this occurs or the employee fails to make a recovery within the expected time frame, other options may be examined with the employee and the ACC Case Manager.

Consultants and OOS Specialists

Where necessary, the college will engage the services of specialists in work place practices and the treatment of OOS, to provide advice and help and ensure a safe environment in any work place.

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY:

The policy follows the provisions of the Smoke-free Environments Act 1990. A copy of the Smoke Free Act 1990 is held on file with the Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

Purpose

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The purpose of this policy is to eliminate the detrimental health effects of smoking on people who do not smoke.

Policy

No smoking is permitted in college workplaces or vehicles.

Complaints Procedures

Anyone who believes, on reasonable grounds, that the Smoke Free Act 1990 has been contravened may complain in writing giving full details to the Health and Safety Committee.

Under the terms of the Smoke Free Act 1990, all complaints will be addressed within 20 days of being received. If a complaint cannot be resolved within the college by agreement, it will be referred to the local Department of Labour (OSH).

If the Health and Safety Committee calls a meeting with an employee in an attempt to resolve a complaint, the employee may elect to have the Staff Representative present.

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY POLICY:

The Motor Vehicle Safety Policy is intended to ensure staff and public safety. It is expected that everyone will follow the guidelines expressed in this policy at all times.

Vehicle Specifications

All new vehicles purchased or leased by the college will be fitted with a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit.

Guidance for Drivers

When driving a vehicle on college business, drivers and passengers are expected to:

- Concentrate on driving the vehicle at all times. For example, do not adjust the car radio, use a cell phone, or carry out personal grooming whilst driving.
- Do not drive if tired or ill or after taking performance impairing drugs, such as medicines and alcohol. Driving while under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances renders the college motor vehicle insurance policy void and will be regarded as serious misconduct.
- Ensure all loose equipment is either carried in the boot of the vehicle or placed on the floor and secured to avoid danger to the driver and passengers if there is an accident.

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- Ensure you hold a full current driving licence for the class of vehicle you are about to drive.
- Check the vehicle you are about to drive for road worthiness and a current warrant of fitness, before starting the journey.
- Adjust the seat, mirrors, steering wheel and any other equipment necessary to ensure you are comfortable and in full control of the vehicle, before you drive away.
- Ensure that passengers wear seat belts at all times.
- Ensure that the vehicle is not overloaded.
- Follow the Road Code and drive safely at all times.

Tyre Pressures

Drivers should note that the manufacturer's recommended tyre pressures are minimum pressures only and prolonged travelling at these pressures will result in accelerated or uneven tyre wear and loss of tyre grip. Incorrect tyre pressures also contribute to tyre blow-outs.

Tyre pressures in college vehicles should be two pounds per square inch above the manufacturer's recommended pressure for town driving and up to four pounds per square inch higher for long distance highway travel or driving heavy loads.

Vehicle Accidents

The action drivers are to take if they are involved in a Motor Vehicle Accident is set out in the Motor Vehicle Policy and the Macleans College Insurance Manual.

Managers are to review the causes of all motor vehicle accidents involving their staff and vehicles to find out the causes and decide whether preventative measures are necessary. An "*Accident Investigation*" form is to be completed by the staff member involved with the assistance of his/her manager, if necessary. Once completed, a copy must go to the Business Manager for insurance purposes, with a copy held on file with the Safety Officer.

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NEW EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYEES NEW TO A JOB:

An employee who is not properly trained is more likely to have an accident. The employee's manager and immediate supervisor are responsible for ensuring that everyone (including temporary and part-time employees) receive proper training for any job before they are asked or permitted to do it.

Any employee new to a work area is to be properly briefed (by the manager reported to) on:

- The layout of the area.
- The safe operation of all equipment.
- Any hazards.
- Safety procedures and emergency plans (these must be read and understood) by the employee.
- The location of safety and emergency equipment.

This training is to be undertaken as part of every new employee's induction programme.

It should be documented following the procedures "*Check List : Safety Induction for Staff New to a Work Area*" of this manual and placed on their personal file. A copy of the this form is held by the Health and Safety Co-ordinator.

The Safety Officer is to show every new employee where the "*Macleans College Health and Safety Policy and Procedures*" can be found.

Managers who are new to a position have a special responsibility to understand the health and safety issues in their area of work. They are responsible for the health and safety of their staff and must pay special attention to the section of this policy relating to accident reporting.

The manager is to ensure an action plan is drawn up to correct any deficiencies identified in the reports. If assistance is required, the manager is to liaise with the Safety Officer.