



WHS

NEWS BULLETIN

www.meercroft.org



to the 51st edition of the **Work Health Safety News Bulletin**.

NEW APPOINTMENT COMPLIANCE OFFICE

CONSULTING WITH WORKERS

Consultation is not only paramount for an organisation's success, it is also a legislative requirement as stated in the following ACT's and the code of practice;

Workplace Health and safety Act 2012 PART 5
Division 2- Consultation with workers
47. Duty to consult worker

(1) The person conducting a business or undertaking must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, in accordance with this Division and the regulations, with workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a matter relating to work health or safety

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY
CONSULTATION, CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION Code of Practice

Furthermore, to the WHS legislative requirements, Meercroft Inc. embrace its role in its obligations and requirements taken from **Fair Work Act 2009**, which affirms all modern awards are to include the provision for employers to consult with workers as in **Section 54 of the Meercroft Care Inc. 2015 EBA**:

CONSULTATION 54.1 This term applies if the Employer: (a) is seriously considering introducing a major change to production, program, organisation, structure or technology in relation to its enterprise that is likely to have a significant effect on the Employees; or (b) proposes to introduce a change to the regular Roster or Ordinary Hours of Work of Employee.

To ensure successful meaningful consultation all stake holders must have reasonable opportunity to share and receive information. All views must be considered before making decisions that affect their health and safety at work.



Pictured above: Compliance Officer, Jodi Towns (new position)

Jodi has been appointed to the new role of Compliance Officer and comes to Meercroft Care Inc. with 25 years' experience in Age care. Jodi will be responsible for Work Health Safety and Risk Management.

The Compliance Officer role is designed to assist staff and the organisation with Workplace Health and Safety, whilst working closely with staff and management to support Meercroft Care Inc. in meeting overall compliance. Furthermore, to ensure we have a safe home and workplace environment for our residents and staff.



MANAGING HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE



Pictured above: a hazard in the workplace

Staff identified this hazard which consequently resulted in the incidence of individuals hitting their heads on the shelf above the sink as it encompassed their work area when attending to care needs.



The hazard was able to be controlled by reducing the chance of hazardous contact by engineering controls. This was achieved by the shelf size being minimised to limit the overhang into the vanity space.



STORAGE HAZARD



Pictured above: a hazard in a resident's room

A hazard has been identified which has occurred due to inappropriate storage space within a resident's room.



By substitution, we have minimised the hazard with purchasing a safer and more appropriate storage choice.

The hazard was subsequently reduced by applying the hierarchy of controls method.

Health and Wellbeing

It is commonly known as acknowledged by the World Health Organisation 'One of the priority settings for health promotion into the 21st century is in the workplace'. Most importantly, Meercroft Care Inc. is committed to not only the safety of their staff but their health and wellbeing similarly. Therefore, we will be taking a holistic approach to staff wellbeing, which will be a continuing focus each month in our WHS News Bulletin.



Numerous researches have focused on the mental health of Age Care Workers over the years.

There are psychological hazards in every industry, however health care has some unique mental health hazards that other industries may not encounter.

To help minimise these hazards Meercroft Care Inc. have engaged with Choose Life Services (CLS), who provide confidential free support and counselling for all staff.

Staff in the health industry often have an unofficial culture of placing more emphasis on the care needs of residents and their family's before the needs of their own.

CLS provide us with the following strategies to assist us towards positive mental health and ensuring to take time for self-care:

- Eat Well
- Exercise Regularly
- Deal with problems before they become overwhelming
- Learn to relax with hobbies and interests
- Plan ahead
- Accept mistakes as a part of learning
- Talk about problems with someone you trust or a professional
- Learn to challenge negative thinking
- Get regular health checks and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.



With the influenza season imminent it's the perfect time to familiarise ourselves with the symptoms and signs as per the;

Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Public Health Management of Influenza Outbreaks in Residential Care

Influenza can be difficult to distinguish from other viral respiratory tract infections on clinical signs alone.

Symptoms and signs of influenza may include the following:

- Sudden onset of fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$)
- Respiratory symptoms:
 - New or worsening cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sore throat.
- Systemic symptoms:
 - Headache
 - Myalgia (muscle soreness)
 - Malaise.

In the elderly, symptoms may also include:

- Onset of, or increase in, confusion.
- Worsening of underlying conditions including exacerbation of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or congestive heart failure.

Of note, elderly residents may not necessarily have an elevated temperature with influenza, due to medical conditions or medications masking rises in temperature.

It is essential that all members of the organisation are familiar with these symptoms and signs and the process of reporting. This will help assist in the prevention of the spread of influenza. Statistics show that people over the age of 65 are at a higher risk of complications with the contraction of the influenza virus. Thus, early identification is paramount



INCIDENT REPORTING

Reminder: As per OHS003 policy, Staff incident reports are to be documented on the staff accident and incident hard copy report form, which is in each nurse's station and the staff room. In contrast, all resident incidents are to be on the computer via iCare Health.

Legislation specifies all workers under the WHS Act 2012 have a duty of care which must always be adhered to:

The WHS Act: Part 2- states

28 Duties of worker

While at work, a worker must:

- (a) take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety; and
- (b) take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons; and
- (c) comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking to allow the person to comply with this Act; and
- (d) co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the person conducting the business or undertaking relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers.



Wear personal protective equipment

As stated directly from the *Safe work Australia website* "PPE refers to anything used or worn to minimised risk to workers' health and safety. This may include, but is not limited to:"

- Non-slip covered in shoes/ Safety shoes
- face masks/ or eye protection
- gloves
- Aprons
- safety harnesses
- sunscreen.

it is the legal duty of any worker to comply with legislation and ensure they wear the correct PPE for each task they are completing every time.

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012

46. Duties of worker

- (1) This *regulation* applies if a person conducting a business or undertaking provides a worker with personal protective equipment.
- (2) The worker must, so far as the worker is reasonably able, use or wear the equipment in accordance with any information, training or reasonable instruction by the person conducting the business or undertaking.
- (3) The worker must not intentionally misuse or damage the equipment.
- (4) The worker must inform the person conducting the business or undertaking of any damage to, defect in or need to clean or decontaminate any of the equipment of which the worker becomes aware.

"Safety doesn't happen by accident".

Reynolds Training Services

Work Health Safety Committee 2018