

West Preston Baptist Church
WORKPLACE SAFETY POLICY

West Preston Baptist Church recognises its moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for its employees, voluntary workers, parishioners, visitors and subcontractors, and to protect from harm those who engage with WPBC in any way.

WORKPLACE SAFETY is one part of our broader "Safe Church" framework and policies, as described below.

Workplace safety responsibilities - WPBC will:

- **have safe programs, and undertake appropriate risk assessment for all activities.** These programs also have had permission to proceed from the Leadership team.
- **have a safe facility,** that is adequate for its purposes, well-maintained and physically and not likely to lead to danger or harm;
- **maintain essential health and safety features of our building** and keep records of when the maintenance or inspection of each safety feature or measure took place and by whom.

Other Safe Church responsibilities are to:

- **have safe leaders,** who have been through an appropriate recruitment and screening process, understand their responsibilities, are properly supervised and have clear expectations of appropriate and inappropriate behaviours. This is detailed in the Safe Church Policy.
- **effectively and efficiently manage emergency incidents.** This is detailed in the Emergency Management Policy
- **have clear appropriate processes for responding when allegations of harm,** such as bullying or harassment occur. This is detailed in Misconduct and Conflict Management policy and the Responding to allegations of child abuse or risk of harm procedure document.

SCOPE OF POLICY:

The Workplace Safety Policy applies to all paid staff and all volunteer leaders and helpers associated with the ministries in our church. Where relevant, it also applies to contractors who work on the premises, and other casual or regular hall users, as well as church attendees.

Responsibilities of employees, voluntary workers and attendees:

- Follow all work health and safety policies and procedures
- Report all hazards identified to the Duty of Care Officer, a deacon or the Minister.
- Not behave in a willful and reckless manner

Work safe Policy and Procedures.

1. APPROVAL FOR CHURCH ACTIVITIES OR MINISTRIES.

At the start of each year, the Deacons will document which activities we will be undertaking. New initiatives are brought to the deacons for approval before commencing and there must be appropriate risk management assessment undertaken as part of the planning.

2. RISK MANAGEMENT.

Risk is the exposure to the possibility of loss or harm as a consequence of pursuing or not pursuing a particular course of action, or events that may cause disruption to normal operations (see Business Continuity Plan). It can be assessed using a risk assessment matrix.

An *Activity Risk assessment* will be conducted for each of the church's programs and ministry areas, including one-off special events such as fundraisers, church camp, playgroup picnic. This will be done by the deacons in consultation with the program leaders, and reviewed each year.

Risks might include:

- × risk of injury or harm to workers, congregation and general public
- × risk of property damage
- × public liability
- × professional risk – for example, breach of copyright, inappropriate counselling
- × risks associated with transport
- × social media and online risks including breaches of privacy,
- × failure of policy procedure and compliance with regulations.

Good risk management involves:

- a) identifying risks- finding out what could cause harm
- b) assessing those risks – understanding the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening
- c) make decisions about the extent and nature of the action required to reduce the risk
- d) implement strategies
- e) monitor and review.

Evaluation of risk assesses the level of risk (likelihood – ranging from almost certain to rare) and the consequences (ranging from extreme to insignificant). A risk matrix (attached) will be used to determine the actions required for different risk evaluations.

3. DUTY OF CARE OFFICER and Safety Reporting Requirements: The church will appoint a Duty of Care Officer each year at their AGM. They are responsible, on behalf of the church, for the administration of the church's Safety reporting requirements (SRR), a self-auditing system which covers Building Code compliance, Work Health Safety and Safe Church practices.

The duty of care officer has a set of inspection record forms that indicate which tasks are required and how often they should be completed. It is a legislative requirement of the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) that owners of buildings prepare and hold an annual Essential Safety Measures (ESM) report, formatted to VBA requirements. Formatted ESM reports must be available for inspection on notice by local council authorities.

The responsibilities of the Duty of Care Officer include:

- Monitoring the annual SRR Schedule and initiating scheduled checks
- Liaising with relevant contractors to complete safety checks and/or repairs (or overseeing delegates who manage this)
- Ensuring SRR checks are completed and signed off
- Initiating the updating of SRR forms where relevant
- Completing an annual ESM report and submitting to the WPBC Secretary in October each year.

The Secretary is responsible for:

- Reviewing the annual ESM report.
- Ensuring that the annual ESM report is uploaded to the WBPC Compliance Team archive on Microsoft Teams (Compliance Team > Essential Safety Measures > Annual Reports)
- Ensuring that the annual ESM report is uploaded to BeSafe, the Baptist Union's online ESM tool.
- Performing an annual review of SRR processes with the Duty of Care of Officer

4. **INDUCTION CHECKLIST:** All volunteer workers and employees of the church are to complete an *Induction checklist*. This provides details about the property, facilities, first aid and fire fighting equipment, and other OHS issues.

The induction checklist applies to the following groups:

- the congregation –the induction checklist is presented at a Congregational meeting each year, and Duty of Care officer notes attendance. If there have been many newcomers to the church, it may be appropriate to have an induction presentation every 6 months.
- Regular groups using the church halls such as Play Groups.
- Contractors working on the premises.
- People hiring the hall on a casual basis (e.g.: for functions or meetings), who are provided with a hall hire document outlining the relevant aspects.
- Other visitors not being escorted at all times by an appropriate church member (that has been inducted).

Exception to an Induction: If an ad-hoc contractor remains with, and under the supervision, of an appropriate church member (that has been inducted), during their stay on the premises, then an exception may be made to this visitor. However, if the ad-hoc visitor attends the church premises on a more regular basis, they should undergo the induction.

The checklist forms are kept in a folder on the bookcase in the foyer. The Induction Checklist is attached below.

5. **HEALTH & SAFETY INCIDENTS OR ACCIDENTS.** If a Health and Safety incident occurs, an *Incident report* should be written and submitted to the Duty of Care Officer, Pastor, or other church Leader. All incident reports are to have accompanying action taken in response to the report, in order to reduce or eliminate the risk or hazard. These are to be kept with the report. Incident reports and actions are to be kept in a secure location on the church premises.

Blank forms (Incident reports) are to be located next to the Induction Checklist book.

The INCIDENT REPORT FORM is attached below.

6. **EMERGENCY RESPONSE:** A site plan outlining escape routes, assembly points and location of the fire extinguisher and fire blankets is to be displayed on the notice boards in the hall, foyer and meeting rooms. The *Emergency Management policy* outlines our emergency response in more detail.

7. **HEALTH AND SAFETY RULES:** The following Health and Safety rules are to be adhered to at all times while on the church premises. A copy of the Health and Safety rules will be placed on the notice board in the church foyer.
 1. No smoking in church buildings.
 2. No alcohol on church property except in accordance with the Hall Hire policy on alcohol, or with the specific approval of the diaconate
 3. No illicit drugs to be used or stored on church property
 4. Know and observe all emergency response and evacuation plans.
 5. Follow *food safety procedures* (attached below)
 6. Follow the *ladder use guidelines* when undertaking work at heights
 7. Report all accidents and incidents to the Duty of Care officer, and complete an Incident Report form. Report potential hazards verbally to the Duty of Care Officer as soon as possible.
 8. Follow sensible manual handling guidelines when lifting heavy objects. Use two or more persons when lifting loads exceeding 16kg.
 9. For contractors and anyone doing maintenance work, clean your working area when finished, and keep all work areas neat and tidy
 10. Dirty nappies to be removed from the building as soon as practical.

Policy Attachments:

- Activity Risk assessment (blank)
- Induction checklist
- Incident report and guidelines for completion
- Health and Safety Rules
- Safe Ladder Use guidelines
- Food Safety rules

CONTROL SHEET

Document revision				
Review period:	12 months			
New review due:	August 2024			
Document Control				
Version	Description	Reviewed by	Position	Diaconate approval date
	This policy was originally developed in April 2011. It was incorporated into the Safe Church policy in July 2016.			
1	Separated out from Safe Church policy into stand-alone policy.	Elizabeth Williams	Secretary of Deacons	6/8/18
2	Review and clarification added re. relationship to other safe church policies	Kirsty O'Donohue	Deacon	5/8/19
3.	Added name/signature/date fields for ministry leader and deacon endorsement in the "Approval For Church Activity or Ministry Form" Attachments moved to individual files in folder "3. Workplace Safety policy – attachments"	Jonathan Mynard	Secretary of Deacons	10/2/22
4.	Update to Duty of Care and Essential Safety Measures description	Jonathan Mynard	Secretary of Deacons	3/6/23
5.	Removal of additional Health & Safety Rules for the children's programs, which were put into the new Children's ministry guidelines	Elizabeth Williams	Compliance Team	13/6/23
6	Update to Safety Reporting requirements	Paul Huglin	Minister	14/8/23