

Occupational Health & Safety – On-Hire Staff

VNS Nursing Agency (VNS) is committed to providing and maintaining so far as is reasonably practicable a safe and healthy work environment for our employees, in accord with the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Legislation.

VNS is also committed to a risk management program so far as is reasonably practicable that includes; identification, elimination and or control of risks. Incident, accident and near miss investigation occurs to identify the cause/s and where possible prevent recurrence. All employees must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and of others who may be affected by their action or inaction.

You are responsible for observing safety to ensure the health and safety of all your patients, co-workers and others in the work place. Please ensure that during your Placement you comply with the Health Services Policies and Procedures relating to OH&S and Risk Management.

Incidents

If you are involved in a work related incident, accident, complaint or dispute please notify your Nurse Manager immediately and contact VNS within 24 hours and supply us with a copy of any related documentation e.g. incident report.¹ Nurses on the VNS payroll are covered by our Workers Compensation Insurance and should an injury occur we need to be notified within 24 hours.

Hazards

Report any hazards or safety concerns to the Nurse in Charge/Manager. Manual Handling - apply the techniques & equipment in the workplace where practicable. Where it is not possible to apply the techniques or utilise the equipment seek advice from the Nurse in Charge/Manager. Attend available training programs in manual handling

Manual Handling

Manual handling of patients is the main cause of musculoskeletal injury in nurses. Some of the factors that contribute to the strain of the musculoskeletal system include heavy physical work, frequent bending and twisting of the back, and awkward static postures held for long periods, e.g. when supporting a limb during surgery. **'No lifting'** policies should be implemented. This means that:

- ✓ the need for manual handling is eliminated wherever possible
- ✓ lifting equipment is used in place of manual handling
- ✓ where manual handling cannot be avoided, aids such as slip sheets, slats and boards are used to reduce the risk of injury
- ✓ strict procedures for patient handling and other handling activities are implemented and actively supported by management
- ✓ staffing levels are sufficient for team lifting and transfers
- ✓ sufficient suitable equipment is provided
- ✓ staff are trained in manual handling and the use of equipment.

Infection Control

Observe universal precautions. Gloves should be used whenever you anticipate contact with blood and body fluids; gloves are changed and hands washed between clients and for the same client when different procedures will be performed. Wear further protective equipment and clothing such as goggles, mask and gown where appropriate. Place all sharps in sharps containers & do not recap needles.

Equipment & Machines

Some equipment & machines may be new to you. Do not operate any piece of equipment unless you are competent in its use. If you require instruction inform the Nurse in Charge.

¹ The Accident Compensation Act 1985 clearly states that all injuries must be reported to VNS within 30 days after you become aware of the injury.

Under section 102 (5) of the Accident Compensation Act 1985 an employee is not entitled to recover compensation under the Accident Compensation Act 1985 unless the injury was reported within 30 days.

Fire Safety & Evacuation

The Safety of all patients, Employees and visitors, in the case of fire or emergency, is of the utmost importance. It is vital that all Employees are aware of the Fire and Emergency Procedure in the Facility that they are working in, where equipment is kept and how to use it. Before commencing work in any Health Facility the Employee must ask the workplace RN/Supervisor for the Fire Evacuation Procedure and position of Fire Exits. A fire or emergency can happen at any time and all VNS Employees must be prepared to carry out the appropriate procedure for the Facility they are working in.

Fire Safety

In the event of a fire remember the RACE drill. Your first response will be:

- ✓ Remove all non-essential personnel from immediate danger
- ✓ Alarm Fire Brigade/Switchboard and nearby staff
- ✓ Contain fire and smoke by closing doors and windows if practicable
- ✓ Extinguish fire but do not take unnecessary risks

Stages of Evacuation

- ✓ Remove from immediate danger
- ✓ Remove to a safe area
- ✓ Complete evacuation of a building

Order of Evacuation

- ✓ Ambulatory patients
- ✓ Semi ambulant patient
- ✓ Non ambulant patients

The above advice is for general guidance. VNS Employees will follow the Fire and Emergency Procedures of the Health Facility they are working in.

Security

Take care of your personal security especially if working alone, familiarise yourself with the facilities security plans. Take the time to consult Co-workers and /or the locals regarding the Community and any safety issues. Take care of your personal belongings such as wallets, bags & purses whilst on shift. Mobile phones should not be carried whilst working on shift.

Smoking

To protect the health of employees, all on-hire staff for VNS will need to adhere to the smoking or non-smoking policy of the host employer.

Grievance or harassment

If you have a complaint, grievance, are being bullied or harassed please notify us, we will inform you of the correct procedure and process to follow.

I agree that I understand and will co-operate with:

- *The procedures for reporting work related injuries / incident.*
- *The Occupational Health and Safety policy given to me on commencement of employment.*

Nurses Signature:	Print Name:	Date:

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Obligations

VNS recognizes its moral and legal responsibility as an on-hire service to provide a safe and healthy work environment for our employees. This commitment extends to ensuring that our organisation's operations do not place the local community at risk in injury, illness or property damage.

Objectives:

VNS will:

- Ensure written procedures and instructions are in place that provides safe systems of work.
- Ensure compliance with legislative requirements and current industry standards.
- Provide information instruction, training and supervision to employees to ensure their safety.
- Provide support and assistance to employees.
- Ensure a safe work environment.

Responsibilities:

Each management representative is accountable for implementing this policy in their area of responsibility which includes:

- Eliminating or reducing risks to health and safety so far as is reasonably practicable
- The provision and maintenance of the work place in a safe condition.
- Providing staff with orientation ongoing supervision related to health and safety
- Training employees in the safe performance of their assigned tasks.
- Involvement in the development, promotion and implementation of health and safety policies and procedures.
- The provision of resources to meet the health and safety commitment.

Employees are to:

- Follow all policies related to OH&S at the relevant hospital.
- Report all observed potential or actual hazards to their immediate supervisor and to VNS

Application of the policy:

This policy is applicable to VNS in all its operations and functions including those situations where employees are required to work off site.

Consultation:

VNS is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. VNS will consult with employees in any workplace in regards to the health and safety of any of its employees.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE RESOLUTION STATEMENT

The following issue resolution procedure has been implemented by VNS. This procedure aims to achieve the speediest and effective resolution of all health and safety issues, as and when they arise. It is the responsibility of all management levels to resolve issues in the workplace. This procedure is applicable to all employees in the organisation.

Standard (including relevant legislation)

Eg. OHS Act 1985 Section 21 (4) (ca), 26, 29 (11) & 31 (2) (c); OHS (Issue Resolution) Regulations 1999.

Procedure

The agreed procedure is as follows:

1. Issue resolution procedure of relevant organisation is to be followed.
2. In the event of this procedure failing the OH regulation 1999 applies.
3. The issue should be dealt with as soon as possible after being reported. If the issue cannot be resolved immediately practical interim measures shall be put into place to prevent and adverse consequences from occurring.
4. Solutions should be recorded as well as communicated to relevant employees for their information in accordance with OHS 007.