

# COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

## WHS06

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Communicable Diseases		
<b>Policy Type:</b>	Work Health and Safety		
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Chief Executive Officer		
<b>Policy Custodian:</b>	Chief Operations Officer		
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Health, Safety and Risk Officer		
<b>Document ID:</b>	24954	<b>Version:</b>	2.0
<b>Approval Date:</b>	21/06/2024	<b>Next Review Date:</b>	21/06/2027

### Purpose

West Daly Regional Council Communicable Disease Policy aims to safeguard the health and safety of all workers, clients and visitors by establishing Protocols that will help prevent the transmission of infections at the workplace. This policy aims to educate employees about communicable diseases, their transmission, and prevention methods to enhance understanding and promote healthy practices. It is aimed at making sure that employees recognise their responsibility to reduce communicable diseases in the workplace by following guidelines from the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Australian Government Department of Health and the NT Health, and it offers guidelines on how to reduce transmission risks like proper hygiene practices; recommendations on vaccination and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). It also outlines steps to be taken in the event of a communicable disease outbreak, including reporting, isolation, and communication protocols to ensure a swift and effective response.

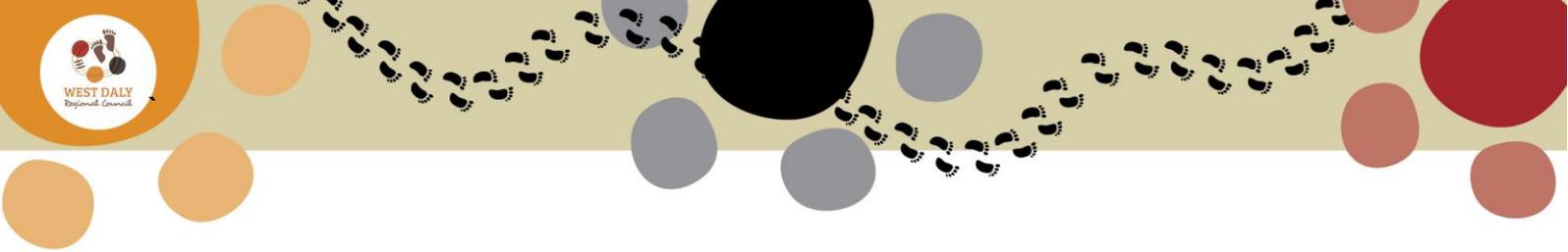
### Scope

This policy applies to all elected members, employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors of the West Daly Regional Council. It covers all workplaces that fall under the jurisdiction of the Council, including office buildings, outdoor work sites and elsewhere where Council business is conducted. This document lays down the principles as well as guidelines necessary for preventing and managing the vulnerability to highly infectious diseases, which may compromise safety and health standards at work for all staff.

### Policy Statement

#### 1. Duty of Care

The Council acknowledges its duty of care under the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (NT)* to ensure the safety of all personnel. In relation to communicable diseases, this includes:



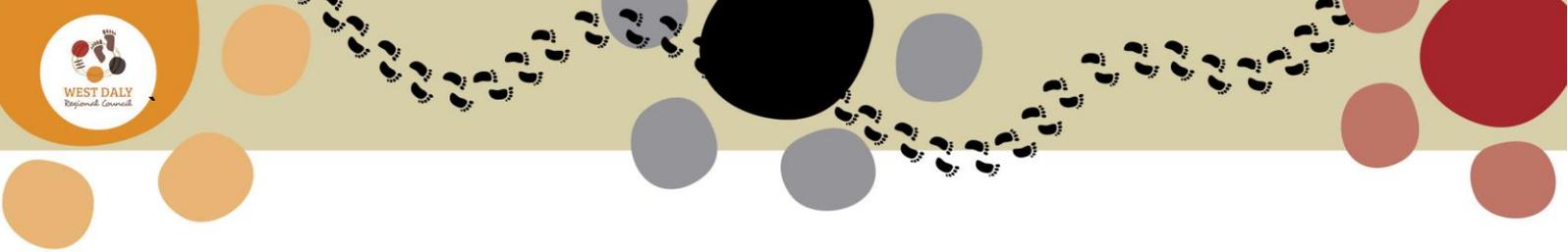
- 1.1. Knowing which diseases can be contracted in the workplace through exposure to people, animals, soil and plant matter.
- 1.2. Assessing the risk of these potential diseases being transmitted to employees.
- 1.3. Mitigating the risk of exposure from employees returning from travel in countries identified as being at high risk of communicable disease.

## **2. Prevention Strategies for Communicable Diseases**

- 2.1. The Council will follow the guidelines issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Australian Government Department of Health, and the Northern Territory Government to ensure that adequate infection prevention, control, and containment measures are adopted, monitored, and reviewed to eliminate or minimise the risk of communicable disease exposure to employees and other persons.
- 2.2. Management must ensure that employees and other persons, where appropriate, use personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimise the spread of communicable diseases. In cases where PPE is unavailable due to a lack of supply, employees will not be forced to undertake tasks where there is a risk of contracting a communicable disease.
- 2.3. Employees are required to follow standard hygiene practices to minimise the risk of infection and its spread throughout the workplace. These practices include:
  - a) Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or flexed elbow when you cough or sneeze.
  - b) Washing your hands or using a hand sanitiser after you cough or sneeze.
  - c) Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 30 seconds:
  - d) After coughing or sneezing.
  - e) Before preparing food or eating.
  - f) After using the toilet.
  - g) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- 2.4. Employees are required to self-manage under this policy. When unwell, employees can access leave provisions as outlined in the Council's Enterprise Agreement.

## **3. Procedures to minimise the spread of communicable diseases**

- 3.1. When the workplace is considered to be at risk of localised communicable disease, a human health risk assessment should be conducted to consider the following factors:
  - a) How the disease(s) can be transmitted
  - b) The current work practices and control measures
  - c) The adequacy of current control measures
  - d) The employee's exposure
- 3.2. If the risk assessment identifies any uncontrolled or inadequately controlled risks, the following control measures are to be implemented:
  - a) Eliminating employee exposure
  - b) Safe work methods, such as hand washing;

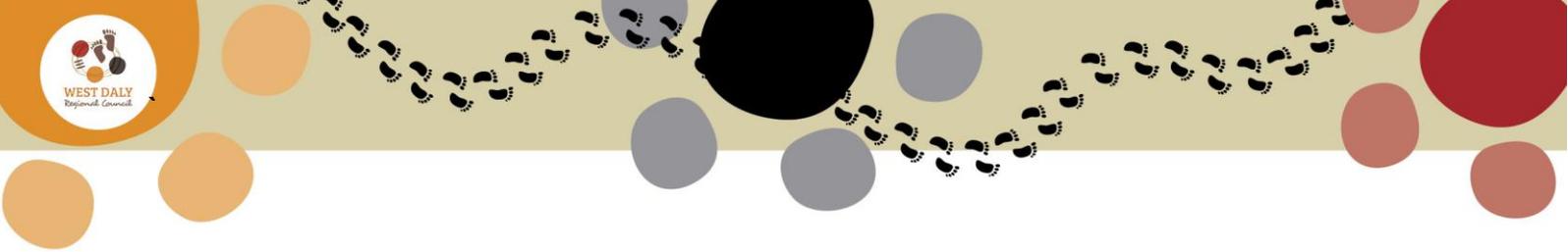


- c) Widespread disinfection protocols
- d) Vaccinations for at-risk employees
- e) Issuing of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- f) Education and training
- g) Exclusion
- h) Isolation

3.3. Employees have a responsibility to ensure their health and the health of others in their workplace is maintained, and therefore, they should be aware of their responsibilities and conscientious of minimising the risk of acquiring and transferring infections between people. The CEO may enforce exclusions in the workplace. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering the nature and exposure of the communicable disease. Communicable diseases change from time to time. Employees should refer to the Australian Government Department of Health, Northern Territory Government, and WHO websites for up-to-date information on communicable diseases.

#### **4. Travelling to or from a country at risk of highly communicable diseases**

- 4.1. When an employee is travelling to or from a country or city that is considered at risk by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Australian Government Department of Health, or the Northern Territory Government, they must:
  - a) Make themselves aware of all the risks associated with the country or city they are visiting or returning from.
  - b) Ensure they are familiar with the requirements of this procedure, including the need to seek a medical clearance before returning to work.
  - c) Advise their General Manager of destinations and transiting countries or cities before the commencement of travel.
- 4.2. The following process will be followed when an employee returns from a country or city where communicable diseases have been reported, and the country or city is considered at risk by the WHO, the Australian Government Department of Health, or the Northern Territory Government.
- 4.3. Before returning to work, the employee will be required to undergo a medical examination and produce a medical certificate at their own expense, confirming that they are not suffering from any of the symptoms associated with the communicable disease.
- 4.4. If an employee elects not to undertake a medical examination as required above, the employee will be directed not to return to work. Appropriate medical and legal advice will then be sought regarding the particular case.
- 4.5. Employees should refer to health guidelines for the recommended timeframes for communicable diseases, including timeframes for self-isolation.
- 4.6. If any employee displays symptoms similar to those associated with a given disease within the timeframes considered to be at risk by the WHO, the Australian Government Department of Health, or the Northern Territory Government, they will be directed not to attend work until they obtain a further medical examination and a clearance to return to work.



- 4.7. For any absence required from work, leave is to be in accordance with the Council’s Enterprise Agreement and accessed in the following order:
  - a) Personal leave
  - b) Annual leave
  - c) Leave Without Pay
  - d) Long service leave (minimum 4 weeks)
- 4.8. The following links are available to all employees to assist in managing exposure as outlined in this procedure:
  - a) NT Health <https://health.nt.gov.au/>
  - b) NT Government <https://nt.gov.au/>
  - c) World Health Organisation <https://www.who.int/>
  - d) Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.au/>
  - e) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade– Smartraveller <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>

**5. Records Management and Privacy**

- 5.1. The information concerning the personal health and well-being status of an individual must remain confidential and should be in compliance with the Council’s records management and privacy policies at all times. Health or personal information:
  - a) Must be used only for the reason for which it was obtained.
  - b) Must not be given to anyone else without the permission of the owner.
  - c) Should be retained safely for the required period.
- 5.2. In case it is suspected that an employee has exposed other employees or members of the public to any infectious diseases then the Council identifies those employees or members of the public who may have been exposed. The information given should only state the nature of the exposure and not mention the employee by name in order to protect their identity.

**Definition**

In the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
<b>Workplace Communicable Disease</b>	A communicable disease that can be contracted through work, from many different sources.
<b>Communicable/ Communicable Disease</b>	The spread of a disease from one person to another, or from an animal to a person.
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation



<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer of West Daly Regional Council, appointed in accordance with the Local Government Act.
<b>Council</b>	West Daly Regional Council
<b>Employees</b>	Any employee, contractor, volunteer, agents etc., of West Daly Regional Council.

## References

*Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*

*Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011.*

*Information Act 2002 (NT)*

*Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)*

Department of Health Emergency Response Plan for Communicable Disease Incidents of National Significance

Northern Territory Government Health Guidelines

WDRC Enterprise Agreement

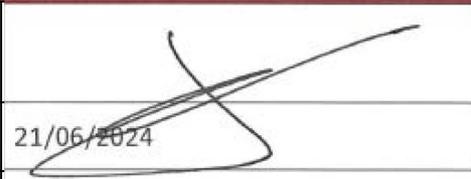
GOV13 Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

S01 WH&S Manual

## Review History

Version Number	Approval Date	Policy Number	Policy name	Minutes ref./resolution no.
1.0	30/01/2019	HR29	Communicable Diseases	013/2019
2.0	21/06/2024	WHS06	Communicable Diseases	OCM-2024/67 ID: 24954

## Endorsement

<b>Signature of Endorsement:</b>		
<b>Date:</b>	21/06/2024	
<b>Name and Position:</b>	John Thomas, Chief Executive Officer	