

## Policy Statement

### Children in the Workplace

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The following Policy statement was adopted at the Executive Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017 and adopted as Branch Policy from 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017

#### 1. **INTRODUCTION**

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This policy provides a guide to help clubs, patrol captains and patrolling members to understand and manage patrolling members who choose to take their children (non-patrolling members) onto a patrol or lifesaving activity.

It is a requirement of the Workplace Health and Safety Act to maintain a safe working environment for all workers

#### 2. **AIM**

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This policy aims to

- Establish the framework and guidelines within SLSQ Point Danger Branch for children in the workplace
- Ensure necessary management of children in the workplace is occurring within our affiliated club
- Support the Management Committee and Patrol Captains in making decisions relevant to their club, the patrol and specific circumstances.
- Maintain the provisions of the Workplace Health & Safety Act (QLD)

This policy has been developed because it is recognised that a number of members bring their children to patrol or other lifesaving activities. It is necessary that the clubs and members have the necessary information to make an informed decision to ensure the safety of all parties.

Note : it should be noted that Children are already in our workplace in the form of Patrolling Members who hold SRC or Bronze i.e. skilled workers – these are noted as “Young Workers” under the Act. This policy is directly relating to members who bring children on patrol as non-patrolling members including but not limited to babies and toddlers.

#### 3. **SCOPE**

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This policy applies to all clubs and members of Point Danger Branch who are involved in active life saving duties.

#### 4. **CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE – DEFINITION & RESPONSIBILITY**

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- In Queensland, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (the Act) provides for the protection of all people at workplaces, including children and young workers.

- This legislation covers children who are working as well as children who are in a workplace for any other reason.
- The Act places the responsibility for workplace health and safety upon persons conducting a business or undertaking. This responsibility applies to the person conducting a business or undertaking whether the business or undertaking is conducted alone or with others, and regardless of whether or not the business or undertaking is conducted for profit.

## 5. **DUTIES**

- **Person** : A person conducting a business or undertaking has the primary duty under the Act to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that workers and other persons are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from the business or undertaking.
- **Officers** : Officers, such as company directors, have a duty to exercise due diligence to ensure that the business or undertaking complies with the Act and Regulation. This includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that the business or undertaking has and uses appropriate resources and processes to provide and maintain a safe work environment.
- **Workers** : As discussed above, workers have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that they do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. Workers must comply with any reasonable instruction and cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to health and safety at the workplace.

## 6. **CONSULTING WITH WORKERS**

- Consultation involves sharing of information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and taking those views into account before making decisions on health and safety matters.
- The WH&S Act requires that you consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers who carry out work for you who are (or are likely to be) directly affected by a work health and safety matter.
- You must consult your workers when proposing any changes to work that may affect their health and safety.

## 7. **WHAT IS A WORKPLACE?**

- The Act defines a workplace as a place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work.
- This definition includes places commonly recognised as workplaces, such as shops, factories, construction sites, hospitals, farms and rural properties.
- To save any confusion – surf lifesaving clubhouses and patrol arenas are considered workplaces under the Act.

## 8. **SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN**

- In situations where children are at workplaces, the main characteristics to consider are their normal adventurous behaviour and disregard for their own safety. Children are more likely to play on equipment, to climb, hide in “cubby holes”, play in excavations, go where they are not supposed to go, and experiment with the chemicals they may find.

- Persons conducting a business or undertaking should ask themselves how and when children can gain access to the workplace or parts of the workplace, what they are likely to find and what they would do. They should consider access afterhours as well as during normal work hours.

## **9. CONTROLLING WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS FOR CHILDREN**

- When selecting the best way to control exposure to the risk of death, injury and illness for children at workplaces, persons conducting a business or undertaking must work through the risk management process described in the *How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice*.
- Supervision is necessary, but there can be too much emphasis on this as a way of controlling exposure to risks for children. In some situations, the hazards can be eliminated, and this is always the best option. Physical barriers, such as locked cupboards and storage areas, and guards minimise exposure to the risk for children entering dangerous areas at times when there is no supervision or when the implemented controls fail. These control measures are particularly effective in situations where children are living in the workplace.
- If it is reasonable to expect that children will be at a workplace at any time for any reason, there should be clear ground rules about entry and supervision. Everyone at the workplace should know what the rules are and there should be a system to ensure the rules are followed. Unexpected or unplanned entry to workplaces should also be considered.

## **10. CHECKLIST**

- Clubs are encouraged to utilise a Risk Assessment Table or checklist (see attached an example) to determine the safety of the area for all persons involved in any activity whereby a child is brought into the workplace
- This will include
  - Identification of Hazard – identify the possible hazards that may cause harm to children – identify direct or indirect things or situations that may cause harm.
  - Assessing the Risk of injury or harm to children – assess the risk of injury or harm to a child or worker that could arise from each hazard identified and decide which needs to be addressed.
  - Controlling the Risk – eliminate or reduce risks to children and employees by implementing control measures
- Key Questions to ask in safety and health planning
  - Is the workplace suitable for children? There may be some workplaces that are not suitable for children in any situation
  - Is there adequate supervision of children?
  - Can patrol members be given limited duties on patrol to ensure supervision of their child i.e. revert to Award Member for the patrol

## **11. POSSIBLE RISKS IN THE SURF LIFE SAVING ENVIRONMENT**

Possible risks that relate to the surf lifesaving environment can include but are not limited to

- Child Supervision during rescues/incidents

- Child Supervision during set up/pack down

All of these items need to be addressed in your club's risk management document as it relates to this issue.

**CHECKLIST FOR CHILDREN IN THE WORKPLACE**

Identification of hazards to children	Assess the risk of Identified Hazards	Control the Risks
Check for possible entry to areas with chemicals or fuel		
Check for possible entry to areas with tools/sharp objects		
Consider situations where there may be distractions to workers – increasing the risk to children, parents or other workers		
Consider the level of supervision		
Consider situations that arise where lapses in parental or guardian supervision mean that there is a danger to the child		
Check the storage, location and height of items the child may get access to		
Check items that a child may be able to climb or play on		
Check for items that might get knocked over		
Consider situations where children may not be seen by operators of machinery or vehicles		
Check whether children may be able to switch on vehicles or machines		

Check for other hazards involving equipment that is specific to your workplace		
Consult members about any issues that have arisen with children in the workplace		
Check for weather hazards ensuring there is adequate cover from sun, rain, wind and any other inclement weather		
Child Management/Supervision during active deployment (rescues)		