

22. Health and Safety Policy

Ensuring the health and safety of individuals in our services will be considered a fundamental responsibility of all Spectrum employees, volunteers and sub-contractors, in all of their endeavours.

Spectrum Society Health and Safety Goals:

- (a) Develop and implement innovative safety, risk and wellness programs.
- (b) Invite input from employees and individuals served and respond with effective strategies.
- (c) Create user-friendly processes by streamlining procedures, reducing steps in decision making and minimizing paperwork.
- (d) Gather and maintain meaningful data about health and safety to inform decision-making and strategic planning.
- (e) Ensure a safe work environment for employees and volunteers, and safe program and home environments for individuals served.

Policy:

- (a) Standards for health and safety will be clearly defined and monitored on a regular basis.
- (b) Spectrum personnel will encourage and support individuals to lead a healthy lifestyle, and will provide individuals with information and instruction on health and safety, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Access to emergency care when needed
 - (ii) Safety issues relating to the home or program site
 - (iii) Regular review of Spectrum's emergency and evacuation procedures, as appropriate
 - (iv) Specific healthcare and personal care procedures, as appropriate
 - (v) Information about community resources and how to access them
 - (vi) Contingency plans in the event of a disruption to the individual's service
- (c) Individuals have the right to make choices regarding their behaviour and actions. While we have a duty to provide appropriate support and information, staff will not impose their values or unfairly restrict individuals' choices.
- (d) Individuals may have allergies that require environmental limitations. Examples include allergies to fragrances, animals, or foods. The office is a fragrance-free zone. Any environmental limitations set to protect a person's health will be clearly explained during new staff orientations.

- (e) The Society shall comply with all regulations set forth by WorkSafe B.C. to ensure a safe working environment for its employees. Please refer to Spectrum's Personnel Policies and Procedures for more information on employee safety.
- (f) Spectrum's Health and Safety Committee will meet regularly to review policies and procedures relating to health and safety. The purpose of the Health and Safety Committee is to promote, develop and practice, through all available resources, a safe working and living environment.
- (g) Employees will receive initial and annual competency-based training to identify and respond to health and safety hazards. Initial training will be conducted during the orientation to the program and documented on the orientation checklist. Subsequent training may take place through mock drills, post-tests, and other activities.
- (h) Program orientations will address strategies for supporting individuals in community settings, if applicable. The expectation is that staff will be comfortable and confident in their ability to provide support in community settings, and that both staff and individuals will be as safe as possible. Pre-planning can help to ensure successful community-based experiences. Some guidelines to consider are:
 - (i) Emergency preparedness
 - inform others of your destination and your intended time of return
 - carry a list of emergency contacts
 - know how to implement any protocols for dealing with challenging behavior
 - (ii) Practical considerations
 - take along house keys, spending money, spare clothes, other essentials
 - prepare any medications that may be needed
 - involve the individual in planning the outing and explain expectations in advance
 - call ahead to confirm pre-arranged appointments (medical offices will tell you if they're running behind, saving you the inconvenience of a lengthy wait)
- (i) Health and safety self-inspections will be carried out at each Society-operated home on a semi-annual basis. The supervisor will be responsible for ensuring completion of these inspections and following up on any concerns.
- (i) External health and safety inspections will be carried out at each of Spectrum's community housing locations, on an annual basis. The supervisor will be responsible for arranging these inspections and following up on any concerns. The external health and safety inspection may be conducted by the local fire department, licensing office, or other official body and must produce a written report on the inspector's findings.
- (j) Asbestos Management
Spectrum will abide by WorkSafe guidelines regarding asbestos management in homes where our staff are working, including:

- maintaining an inventory of properties and potential asbestos hazards;
- informing homeowners of our responsibility to ensure a safe workplace for our staff and obtaining verification of inspections where applicable;
- providing guidance to staff on reporting potential asbestos hazards;
- reviewing the exposure control plan annually in consultation with the Health and Safety committee, and updating as needed.

Exposure Control Plan

Purpose

The purpose of the exposure control plan is to ensure the health and safety of staff, individuals and others who may be present in the homes.

Risk identification, assessment and control

Asbestos is a fibrous material that is very tough and resistant to chemicals and heat. Up until 1990, it was regularly used in a large number of building products, including ceiling texture, drywall mud, flooring, and attic insulation. If these materials are disturbed (such as when they are drilled, sawed, sanded, or broken up during renovations or due to holes being kicked or punched in a wall), people in the home can breathe in asbestos fibres. This can cause damage to the lungs, making breathing very difficult and potentially resulting in cancer or even death.

The Society will maintain an up-to-date inventory of properties that will be used to track whether there is verified or potential asbestos present at each location.

Any repairs to Spectrum homes where there is a potential for asbestos exposure will be assessed and completed by an approved contractor.

Education and training

Employees working in homes where asbestos is or may be present will review the reporting and exposure protocols as part of their orientation.

Monitoring and reporting

The supervisor is responsible for monitoring workplace safety on a day to day basis, including following up on any concerns regarding actual or potential asbestos exposure.

Any concerns about potential asbestos exposure in a home must be reported immediately to the supervisor, who will arrange for a qualified inspector to assess the situation or, in the case of private homes, request the homeowner to arrange for an inspection.