

10. **Employee Safety**

(a) Commitment to safety

The Society shall comply with all regulations provided by WorkSafe B.C. The Society expects that a safe and clean working environment is essential in order to carry out work assignments in a satisfactory manner. The Society will monitor the work environment regularly to ensure that health and safety standards as outlined in the Policy and Procedures Manual are upheld. The Society will alert employees promptly of any known safety risks.

The Health and Safety committee will hold regular meetings to review and make recommendations on unsafe, hazardous or dangerous conditions with the aim of preventing and reducing risk of occupational injury or illness, and also to provide protection from factors adverse to employee safety and welfare. As well, the safety committee will make recommendations for staff training and equipment needs as they relate to ensuring the safety of employees and the people we support.

Health and safety committee meeting minutes, and contact information for the health and safety representatives, will be posted on the Spectrum website.

(b) Workplace environment

Employees have an obligation to report unsafe work conditions to the Society. Employees have the right to refuse to perform unsafe work.

Employees who, in the course of their duties, may be exposed to challenging or aggressive situations shall receive training and support in recognizing and handling such situations. Please refer to Policy #41: Violent or Threatening Situations for more information.

The supervisor will ensure that workplace hazards are identified, that preventive measures are in place to minimize risks, and that employees are trained on safety practices specific to the worksite.

i. Working alone

The Society will make every reasonable effort to ensure the safety of employees who are required to work alone or in isolation. Examples of protective measures include, but are not limited to:

- Schedules that track where employees are working each day;
- Check-in with a co-worker at shift change;
- Effective means of communication to ensure access to assistance if needed;
- Site security – locks on doors, secure entry access, appropriate lighting

Employees who are required to work alone or in isolation will be instructed on safety practices specific to their worksite, to ensure their safety at all times.

ii. Bullying and harassment

The Society promotes a work environment for all employees that is free from bullying and harassment, as described in the Code of Conduct.

(c) Workplace injury

Personnel who are injured at work must report the injury immediately to their supervisor or directly to HR. HR will advise on steps to follow in reporting the injury to WorkSafe. Please refer to Personnel Policy #9: Health and Welfare Benefits for information on WorkSafe coverage.

- (i) Personnel who are injured in the course of their work are advised to consult with their doctor for an assessment of their injuries and recommended treatment and follow-up. The Society can also arrange for critical incident/trauma counselling if appropriate, or personnel can utilize the Employee Assistance Plan as outlined in Personnel Policy #9: Health and Welfare Benefits.

(d) Communicable diseases

The Society adheres to provincial and federal guidelines regarding the prevention and reporting of communicable diseases. Spectrum personnel will be expected to follow any guidelines set by government or health authorities in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease. Please refer to Policy #30: Prevention of Communicable Diseases for more information.

To minimize the risk of communicable disease transmission it is important to observe Universal Precautions. It is the employee's responsibility to know and follow these guidelines. See Policy #31: Universal Precautions for more information.

(e) Take care of yourself

Employees who take care of themselves and their own needs will be better prepared to care for others on the job. For example:

- Don't accept more work than you can handle
- Recognize signs of stress and take necessary steps to alleviate stress in your life
- Let your supervisor know if you need assistance with something. Don't place yourself or others at risk by taking on more than you are prepared for.
- Enjoy your work! If you don't, then be honest with yourself and your supervisor about it. You may need a break, a change of hours or even a different job.
- Don't come to work if you are sick.
- Eligible employees can access the Employee Assistance Plan. See Personnel Policy #9: Health and Welfare Benefits for more information.

(f) Lifting tips

Staff should be trained on individual protocols before attempting routine lifts and transfers with people requiring physical support.

Each program team should regularly review lifting practices at team meetings.

The following are intended as guidelines only, and should not take the place of individual protocols:

- Whenever you are lifting someone, be sure he/she knows what you are doing. Explain how you plan to do it so they can anticipate your moves.
- Size up the situation – don't attempt to lift someone alone if you have any doubts about your ability to do so.
- Check your footing. Your feet should be apart to give you a broad base of support.
- Get close to whoever (or whatever) you are lifting. Move in and hold close.
- Keep your back straight and bend with your knees and hips.
- Straighten your legs to lift.