



# Health & Safety



## Health & Safety **and You**

**Health & Safety law** applies equally to employers, employees and the self-employed and all A24Group Agency Workers (as self-employed Agency Workers) have a general duty to ensure that their work activities do not endanger themselves or others. Equally, the client/establishment or owner of a private house has a general duty to ensure that the work environment itself is free from dangers to health or safety.

## INTRODUCTION

In compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act 85, 1993), A24Group are effectively discharging its statutory duties by preparing a written Occupational Health and Safety policy.

This outlines the company's health and safety arrangements and organisational structure, which is available at the company premises, along with a copy of the company's staff handbooks that must be read by all Agency Workers and any other interested person who may be affected by their work activities.

In order for A24Group to discharge its statutory duties, employees are required by law, to co-operate with the management in all matters concerning the health, safety and welfare of themselves and any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions whilst at work.

A24Group encourages all employees to inform their immediate superior of any areas of the health and safety policy that they feel are inadequate to ensure that the policy is maintained as a true working document.

## HEALTH & SAFETY STATEMENT

The Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993, states that employers should establish and maintain, as much as reasonably responsible, a work environment that is safe and does not pose a risk to the health of employees. All employees, including members of management, can benefit from an Occupational Health and Safety act summary.

It is the policy of A24Group to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all of the employees working for the company or other persons who may be affected by our undertakings.

A24Group acknowledges that the key to successful health & safety management requires an effective policy, organisation and arrangements, which reflect the commitment of senior management. To sustain that commitment we will continually measure, monitor and revise where necessary an annual plan to ensure that health and safety standards are adequate.

The management of A24Group looks upon the promotion of health and safety measures as a mutual objective for themselves and their employees at all levels. It is therefore, the policy of the management to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent personal injury and damage to property. Also, the company aims to protect everyone, including all visitors and members of the public, insofar as they come into contact with the company or its activities, from any foreseeable hazard of danger.

All employees have duties under The Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1993 and they are informed of their personal responsibilities to take due care for the health and safety of themselves and to ensure that they do not endanger other persons by their acts or omissions. They are also informed that they must co-operate with the company in order that it can comply with the legal requirements placed upon it and in the implementation of this policy.

Agency Workers are our most valuable asset, so it is only sensible to make sure that everything possible is done to help provide the best support. If health care workers are troubled by their own ill-health, working environment, or other stressful circumstances, then they will not be able to give their full attention to this demanding task. In addition, apart from being good employment practice, no hospital or clinic can function effectively if there is a high incidence of ill health among health care workers.

The company regards all health and safety legislation as the minimum standard and expects management to achieve their managerial targets without compromising health and safety.

## HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDANCE

**The A24Group seeks to ensure the following in relation to Health & Safety:**

- That you have the necessary qualifications, experience, skills and capability to carry out the assignments that you will be undertaking.
- That we provide your information of any health hazards which may arise out of the work, or the conditions in which it is carried on.
- That you are given sufficient information, instruction and training to ensure your own Health & Safety.
- That consideration is given to Health & Safety factors when equipment is procured or new services obtained, or when changing procedures to work patterns and that all necessary safety precautions are taken and that necessary safety instructions have been understood.

**You are responsible for your own personal Health & Safety and you have a duty of care to your fellow workers. Your responsibilities include:**

- The duty to comply with all safety instructions and directions laid down;
- The duty to use the means and facilities provided for health and safety in a proper manner;
- The duty to refrain from the wilful misuse of, or interference with, anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare and any action that may be construed as dangerous;
- The duty to report any potential hazards or dangerous occurrences that may cause harm to others.

## SAFETY INSTRUCTION

- Always familiarise yourself with the local Health & Safety policies and procedures for the environment in which you are working and pay particular attention to fire and emergency procedures.
- Never attempt a task without first ensuring that you understand the instructions and can carry them out safely.
- Always maintain a clean and safe work area.

- If you see, or believe you see, an unsafe act or condition, report it to your consultant and/or your direct line manager as soon as possible, taking immediate steps to correct it or ask your manager to rectify it. You may be assumed to have agreed to an unsafe condition if you do not comment on it and if you continue working.
- Certain jobs require you to wear protective clothing or to use equipment. If you are unsure, ask for advice before you start working. You must ensure that all cleaning materials or other potentially hazardous substances are correctly stored, labelled and are used in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions in order to reduce the risk of injury or danger to health. All waste or by-products must be properly disposed of.
- Only use, adjust, alter or repair equipment if you are authorised to do so.
- If you, or the equipment you operate, are involved in an accident – regardless of how minor – report it immediately to your direct line manager and the agency. If necessary, get First Aid attention immediately. You should also report near misses to your branch.
- Ensure that all equipment (e.g. hoists) has been maintained properly and that documentary evidence is supplied.
- Obey all health & safety rules, signs and instructions. If you are unsure as to what they mean, ask.
- In line with our agency handbook, it is recommended that all staff obtain immunisation against common infectious diseases.

## IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING HAZARDS

Although within establishments, a Risk Assessment will have been carried out by a designated competent person, all Agency Workers need to look out for hazards at the establishment where they have accepted an assignment and report back to their agency, via the complaint's procedure and report on anything they feel may present a risk to an individuals' health & safety. Hazards can include broken doors and windows, carpets or rugs that present a tripping hazard, dangerous chemicals, and faulty electrical equipment such as exposed wires.

### HOW TO REPORT BACK

Call your Bookings Team and describe the hazard that you have identified. You may be asked to complete a Risk Assessment Form, which will be provided for the purpose.

## ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING

Agency Workers are responsible for ensuring that all incidents or accidents that relate to the provision, control and maintenance of Health & Safety in the workplace are reported to the client and your agency (and/or to the Local Management team in the case of serious accidents and/ or dangerous occurrences).

It is also important that the internal reporting procedure of the establishment is carried out e.g. recording the accident in the accident report book.

All accident information that is entered into the accident book will be kept for a minimum of three years. Near misses are defined as incidents that almost become accidents, but only missing by a very small margin of error. All near misses should be reported and recorded because a series of near misses could very easily become a hit or an accident.

Relevant risk assessments and safe systems of work may require revision following a near miss incident.

If you are working in a Client's home, a written record (in the care plan and service records) must be kept of any accident or occurrence that happens in the workplace, however minor. **In addition to internal reporting through the accident report/services records, the establishment/client must ensure that the following are reported to the appropriate enforcing authority, e.g. the local Environmental Health Officer:**

- Fatal accidents;
- Major injury accidents/conditions;
- Dangerous occurrences;
- Accidents causing more than three days incapacity for work;
- Certain work-related diseases;
- Certain gas incidents;
- If you suffer a needle stick injury you must attend treatment immediately and report the incident. If possible take note of the patient's details in order to help identify potential risks.



## AS SOON AS A NEEDLE STICK (SHARP) INJURY OCCURS YOU SHOULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

- Encourage bleeding by squeezing the site of the puncture wound, do not suck;
- Wash the wound with soap and water, do not scrub;
- Cover wound with waterproof dressing;
- Report incident to the manager and agency;
- Report to the OH Department during normal working hours;
- If the injury occurs out of office hours report to emergency department if required and inform the agency the next day;
- Document the circumstances that led to exposure.

**Always report a needle stick injury even if it occurs with a “clear” needle, via an incident report or accident book according to protocol. The agency will submit this report in accordance to the Compensation for Occupational Injuries & Diseases Act also passed in 1993, Act No. 130 of 1993, replaced the Workmen’s Compensation Act. This Act provides for compensation to workers who have sustained an injury on duty, or who have contracted an occupational disease.**

## REPORTING OF INJURIES AND DANGEROUS OCCURRENCES

Reporting an incident is an important part of an effective occupational health and safety program. It helps identify work related health and safety hazards, risks and dangers. The purpose is to identify the causes of incidents.

Appropriate controls can then be put in place to prevent further occurrences of such events. In other words, an incident investigation is normally performed to find out what happened, why it happened, and to prevent it from happening again. The same innovative approach is demonstrated through the stipulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. According to the Act, the employer or user of equipment should formally investigate all section 24 incidents as well as any other incident where more medical treatment than the normal first aid is required.

### The company defines an accident as:

- An unplanned or unforeseen event, which causes injury to persons, damage to property or a combination of both. I.e. a fall resulting in a fracture; incorrect operation of equipment leading to breakdown or damage.

### The company defines a near miss as:

- An unplanned or unforeseen event that does not cause injury or damage, but could have done so. I.e. loose or defective flooring covering; short-circuits on electrical equipment.

The first priority when an accident occurs is to obtain first aid treatment for all injuries, if the incident is serious enough to warrant medical intervention the manager/supervisor will dial/call emergency services and request an ambulance/paramedic.

When the casualty has received suitable medical/first aid treatment details of the accident should be recorded in the accident book for future reference.

### Accidents that occur on duty must be reported to:

- Agency Workers – All injuries on duty as well as accidents and near misses to be reported to [complaints@a24group.com](mailto:complaints@a24group.com).
- Internally employed staff - Register of all injuries, accidents and near misses to be kept at our Head Office (Bellville, Cape Town {SA}). All injuries on duty as well as accidents and near misses to be reported to Facilities Management or the Health Committee.

In order to determine what corrective action is necessary to prevent a repetition it is essential to isolate all contributing factors. This can only be done by an investigation. The outcome of all investigations will be communicated to all members of staff who need to act as a result of an accident.

Accident investigations are carried out to establish the facts relating to the accident/incident not individual’s opinions. Under no circumstances will such investigations be used as a mechanism to apportion blame. Investigations are primarily a management tool to identify suitable measures to prevent a recurrence.

**The Health & Safety Management System for the A24Group is kept in the office and is available for inspection by any interested party upon any reasonable request. The policy is also available as a download from our group website [www.a24group.com/downloads](http://www.a24group.com/downloads).**

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