WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set out how Bilingual Care:

- provides a safe workplace and minimises risks to the health and wellbeing of staff, consumers, and their representatives, as well as all other stakeholders and
- promotes health and safety practices that are consistent with legislative requirements.

It applies to all stakeholders of the organisation, including consumers, representatives, advocates, staff, volunteers, associated providers/contractors, other service providers, government agencies and members of the community. It meets relevant legislation, regulations, and Standards.

Work Health and Safety (WHS) programs should align with *AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems - Requirements with Guidance for Use*.

Applicable Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

- *Standard 2. The Organisation*
- *Standard 3. The Care and Services*
- *Standard 4. The Environment*

Definitions

Coercive Conduct - Coercion means persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.[1] A person must not take any action intended to intimidate, force or cause a person to exercise, or not exercise, a health and safety power, function or role. This includes organising, or threatening to organise or take such action.[2]

Discriminatory Conduct - Engaging in discriminatory conduct against a person because of the person's WHS roles or activities. Examples of discriminatory conduct could include:

- terminating a worker
- terminating a contract for services with a worker
- changing a worker's position to their detriment, e.g. by decreasing their salary or by demotion
- treating a worker differently from others
- not hiring someone
- offering a prospective worker less favourable terms and conditions

[1] WorkSafe Queensland, Queensland Government (2023) *Discriminatory, coercive and misleading conduct*, accessed 10 September 2024, https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/discriminatory-coercive-and-misleading-conduct

[2] Safe Work Australia (2020) Interpretive Guideline - *Model Work Health and Safety Act - discriminatory, coercive or misleading conduct*, accessed 10 September 2024, https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/interpretive-guideline-model-work-health-and-safety-act-discriminatory-coercive-or-misleading-conduct

- terminating a commercial arrangement, e.g. a contract to supply materials to a workplace, or a sub-contracting arrangement.

Organising, or threatening to organise or take, any of the above action is also discriminatory conduct. In addition, a person must not request, instruct, induce, encourage, authorise or assist someone else to engage in discriminatory conduct.[3]

Duty of Care - A common law concept that refers to the responsibilities of organisations to provide people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonable, foreseeable risks of injury. In the context of this policy, duty of care refers to the responsibility of Bilingual Care to provide staff with an adequate level of care and protection against reasonable, foreseeable harm and injury. Similarly, Bilingual Care staff are expected to provide consumers and anyone else using the service with the same level of care and protection to prevent reasonable, foreseeable harm and injury.

Electrical equipment - any apparatus, appliance, cable, conductor, fitting, insulator, material, meter, or wire that:

- is used for controlling, generating, supplying, transforming, or transmitting electricity at a voltage greater than extra-low voltage
- is operated by electricity at a voltage greater than extra-low voltage
- is part of an electrical installation located in an area in which the atmosphere presents a risk to WHS from fire or explosion or
- is, or is part of, an active impressed current cathodic protection system.

Hazard – the chance of something happening that may have a negative (or positive) effect on the intended outcome. In relation to WHS, this is generally a source or situation that could cause harm or damage to a person, property, or the environment.

Misleading conduct - knowingly or recklessly make a false or misleading representation to another person about the other person's:

- rights or obligations under the Act (for example, the right to cease work) or
- ability to initiate, or participate in, a process or proceedings under the Act (for example the right to request the election of a HSR or the right of a majority of workers of a work group to remove a HSR elected by them) or
- ability to make a complaint or inquiry to a person or body empowered under the Act to seek compliance with the Act (for example, stating that the circumstances do not allow an inspector to be called in to resolve an issue).[4]

Open Disclosure - open discussions and communication with each consumer/their representative when something goes wrong within the service that has caused harm or may potentially cause harm to a consumer. This harm may be physical, psychological, or social, resulting in loss of quality of life, impairment, suffering, injury, disability, or death. Further information can be found in the *Aged Care Open Disclosure Framework and Guidance*.

Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) – a broad term used in WHS legislation to describe all forms of modern working arrangements, commonly referred to as businesses. This includes an individual who is conducting a business (e.g., Sole Trader/Self-employed).

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[3] Safe Work Australia (2020) Interpretive Guideline - *Model Work Health and Safety Act - discriminatory, coercive or misleading conduct*, accessed 27 October 2025, https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/interpretive-guideline-model-work-health-and-safety-act-discriminatory-coercive-or-misleading-conduct

[4] Safe Work Australia (2020) Interpretive Guideline - *Model Work Health and Safety Act - discriminatory, coercive or misleading conduct*, accessed 27 October 2025, https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/interpretive-guideline-model-work-health-and-safety-act-discriminatory-coercive-or-misleading-conduct

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – clothing or equipment worn by workers to protect them from possible harm or injury. PPE can include items such as eye and face protection (e.g., glasses, goggles, or face shields), gloves, masks, clothing (e.g., coveralls, aprons), and safety footwear.

Psychosocial Hazards – Psychosocial hazards at work are aspects of work and situations that may cause a stress response which in turn can lead to psychological or physical harm. They can arise from or in relation to:

- the design or management of work
- the working environment or
- workplace interactions or behaviours.

Reasonably Practicable – what could be reasonably able to be done at a particular time to ensure WHS, with regard for:

- the likelihood of the hazard or risk occurring
- the degree of potential harm
- how much information is known, or ought to have been known, about the hazard or risk
- the ways of eliminating or minimizing the risk
- the availability/suitability of eliminating or minimising the risk and
- the cost of eliminating or minimising the risk (is the cost grossly disproportionate to the potential risk).

Safe Work Procedure (SWP) – a documented procedure for performing specific workplace tasks. SWPs reduce risks to health and safety by ensuring staff know how to work safely when carrying out specific tasks by providing step-by-step instructions on how to perform a task/job, and the necessary safety precautions. SWPs may also be called Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Safety Data Sheet (SDS) – a document prepared by the manufacturers of chemicals that provides information about a hazardous chemical to ensure users can work safely with the substance. Information in SDSs includes the substance's physical properties (e.g., melting/boiling point, toxicity, reactivity), health effects, first aid response requirements and safe handling procedures (e.g., personal protective equipment, safe storage/disposal, and spills management).

If not provided in physical form with a chemical, SDSs should be located on the manufacturer's website. SDSs are valid for 5 years but should be checked at least annually in the event the manufacturer has made updates.

Worker - includes employees, contractors, subcontractors, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, volunteers, and any other individuals if they perform work for the business.

Workplace – any place where work is carried out on behalf of Bilingual Care. This can include a consumer's private residence, or public areas in the local community.

Policy

Bilingual Care is committed to delivering services that do not cause harm, injury, or illness to anyone at any time. Bilingual Care takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of its staff, consumers, as well as their families, carers, the community, and any other stakeholders. It also endeavours to provide a safe and healthy work and service delivery environment, in compliance with its legal and moral obligations.

Bilingual Care staff are not expected to carry out work that is unsafe. Consumers and others are not expected to tolerate unsafe work practices or environments. Bilingual Care considers that communication and consultation with its staff, consumers, and any other stakeholders, is important in identifying, understanding, and resolving any potential hazards.

All Bilingual Care stakeholders, including staff, consumers, their families, and carers have a responsibility to ensure Bilingual Care's services and work environments remain safe.

Bilingual Care's Leadership Team is responsible for:

- implementing an effective WHS program for Bilingual Care, considering the size and nature of the services it provides
- showing leadership and commitment to having a positive safety culture
- providing enough resources to enable health and safety to be effectively managed
- consulting and involving staff and other stakeholders about health, safety and well-being matters that may affect them
- developing and documenting WHS policies and procedures, including Safe Work Procedures and Emergency Procedures
- providing health and safety training and information for all staff to safely perform their role
- reporting and investigating accidents and incidents
- managing risks by eliminating or reducing them as far as is reasonably practicable
- providing appropriate safety equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) and
- regularly monitoring and reviewing Bilingual Care's health and safety performance to identify improvements.

Bilingual Care staff are responsible for:

- taking responsibility for their own health and safety, and not compromising the safety of others
- following all reasonable instructions, safe work procedures and rules
- reporting any health and safety hazards or concerns
- reporting all injuries, incidents or near misses as soon as possible
- participating in health and safety training as required by Bilingual Care and
- promoting a positive health and safety culture to help continuously improve.

If a staff member does experience an injury or illness, Bilingual Care is committed to the safe and durable return of the injured worker and will:

- participate in the development of a return-to-work/suitable duties plan and ensure that injury management commences as soon as possible after the staff member is injured
- support the injured staff member and ensure that early return-to-work is a normal expectation
- provide meaningful suitable duties that are based on medical advice as soon as possible
- ensure that injured staff (and anyone representing them) are aware of their rights and responsibilities – including the right to choose their own doctor, and the responsibility to provide accurate information about the injury and its cause

- consult with staff to ensure that the return-to-work program operates as smoothly as possible and
- maintain the confidentiality of injured staff members and their records.

Bilingual Care's consumers, their families, and carers (with the support of staff where needed), are responsible for ensuring that their actions, or failure to act, does not intentionally put themselves, staff, or others at risk (without compromising the consumer's rights).

Where a consumer experiences an injury or illness in connection with the supports provided by Bilingual Care, Bilingual Care has in place a *Consumer Incident Management Policy and Procedure* and will protect and uphold consumer rights in accordance with this policy. A framework of open disclosure will also be followed during these instances to acknowledge the impact to the consumer – see Bilingual Care's *Open Disclosure Policy and Procedure.*

Bilingual Care has a goal to provide a safe and healthy work environment that is free from workplace injury and illness. This can only be achieved through the honest participation, co-operation, and commitment of everyone working together.

Procedures

General

All WHS issues must be reported to the Managing Director, who will address or respond to the issue, or nominate a suitable staff member to do so. Staff can report safety concerns directly to their Managing Director, via email or by completing an *Incident Report Form*. Consumers can raise potential safety concerns with their support worker (who can then escalate if necessary), via email, or by submitting a *Feedback and Complaints Form*.

The Managing Director must track the progress and outcomes of all WHS issues raised in Bilingual Care's *Risk Register*. Where relevant, issues should also be included in the *Continuous Improvement Plan*.

The Managing Director reports WHS matters to the Leadership Team quarterly. All high-risk concerns (for instance, where there is immediate risk of death or serious injury) must be escalated to the Leadership Team immediately so that control measures can be implemented.

Bilingual Care identifies and manages workplace hazards and risks to health and safety in line with its *Risk Management Policy and Procedure*. For incident reporting and investigation procedures, see Bilingual Care's *Workplace Incident Management* and *Consumer Incident Management* policies and procedures. Emergency procedures are set out in Bilingual Care's *Emergency and Disaster Management Policy and Procedure*.

Leadership Team Responsibilities

The Leadership Team must:

- display this policy in a prominent location at Bilingual Care premises
- keep up to date and comply with changes in WHS legislation and practices and ensure these are communicated to staff, consumers and others where relevant
- have designated staff who are responsible for WHS functions and activities
- ensure staff are provided with adequate training in Safe Work Procedures and are informed of known hazards to their health and wellbeing that are associated with the work they perform

- support access and provide information to inspectors, authorised representatives or staff who are acting within their powers under WHS legislation and
- allocate appropriate resources to control any identified risk.

Managing Director Responsibilities

The HR Director is responsible for overseeing Bilingual Care's WHS functions and activities. They must ensure that:

- there are safe systems of work in place
- all equipment provided for use by workers is safe and meets relevant safety standards
- substances and equipment are used, handled, and stored safely
- there are adequate welfare facilities available for workers, such as first aid kits, first aid rooms and staff-only areas
- Bilingual Care holds all appropriate licenses, registrations and permits, where required under WHS legislation
- every reasonable effort is made to resolve WHS issues with workers or their representatives within a reasonable timeframe and
- safety audits and risk assessments of Bilingual Care's workplaces are undertaken regularly to prevent injuries and incidents.

Staff Responsibilities

WHS responsibilities and accountabilities will be included in all *Position Descriptions*. Staff are expected to always uphold these when performing duties for or when representing Bilingual Care.

Upon commencement, all staff must undergo an Induction that includes general and task-specific WHS training. Staff are expected to participate in ongoing formal and on-the-job training provided by Bilingual Care as required.

Staff must provide appropriate health and safety information, instruction, training, and supervision to all consumers, families, carers, and other people in the workplace and ensure those people are not exposed to health and safety risks arising from Bilingual Care's activities.

Staff are also expected to take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others who could be affected by their actions. They must cooperate with all reasonable WHS rules and practices implemented by Bilingual Care and contribute to reviews of this policy and procedure.

Responsibilities of Consumers and Others

Consumers and other people in Bilingual Care's workplaces are expected (with the support of staff where required) to:

- be familiar with this policy and procedure
- cooperate with all reasonable WHS rules and practices implemented by Bilingual Care, including providing all relevant personal information and allowing relevant risk assessments to be undertaken and
- ensure their actions or failure to act do not put themselves, staff, or others at risk.

Consultation

Bilingual Care encourages open and honest communication about potential health and safety risks, including psychosocial hazards. Bilingual Care must consult, as far as is reasonably practicable, with workers who are likely to be directly affected by a health and safety matter. Consultation is required when identifying hazards, assessing risks, and deciding on the best method to control them.

WHS consultation should be conducted when:

- proposing changes that may affect the health and safety of workers
- introducing new equipment into the workplace
- identifying hazards and risks that may result from work being carried out and
- making decisions on the best way to minimise or eliminate risks and hazards that have been identified.

Consultation also involves input from consumers and their supporters, which can be provided directly to staff as part of care assessment, planning and review processes, or through feedback and complaints. Consumers may also provide feedback or raise their concerns about WHS matters through the Consumer Advisory Body.

Where Bilingual Care undertakes work with other stakeholders, such as associated providers or other service providers, they will be included in the consultation process where relevant.

The Managing Director must also consult with relevant workers to develop Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) to help staff undertake their duties safely.

WHS Committees

A WHS Committee will be formed in consultation with staff, based on a request from staff. The purpose of a WHS Committee is to proactively review health and safety matters together, both staff and management, to ensure that Bilingual Care provides a safe and healthy work environment. The WHS Committee is to be comprised of at least 50% staff and management representatives, or as otherwise agreed between staff and management. Any subcontractors, contractors, labour hire agency workers or volunteers that work with Bilingual Care may also be invited to participate in the WHS Committee.

Health and Safety Representatives

A designated work group (a group of employees who share similar work health and safety interests and conditions) may request to have a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) represent them on health and safety matters. Bilingual Care will facilitate this request in negotiation with the work group.

Should more than one worker nominate for the position, an election can be held. The election process can be agreed between the workers and management (e.g., ballot papers and ballot box), and the election method will be open, honest, and fair.

An elected HSR will be provided with appropriate training so that they can perform their role effectively, paid by Bilingual Care. Being elected as a HSR does not replace the workers' primary role. Bilingual Care will provide the HSR reasonable time to tend to health and safety matters, as needed. An HSR is elected for a term of three years.

Bilingual Care will keep a current list of elected HSRs and display a copy at the workplace. This will include the name of the HSR, contact details and date elected.

Bilingual Care must also notify their State Regulators of their elected HSRs on the approved form, as soon as possible.

SafeWork NSW
The details of current HSRs must be updated via SafeWork NSW online services using the HSR notification portal.[5]

Union officials assisting HSRs no longer need to hold a Right of Entry Permit to enter Bilingual Care's workplaces. However, certain rules and requirements still apply to those officials, including under state and territory law.

Consultation with HSRs

Bilingual Care will work proactively with HSRs and consult with them about health and safety matters that affect them and their designated work group. This includes notifying HSRs of inspector visits and sharing enforcement and incident notices.

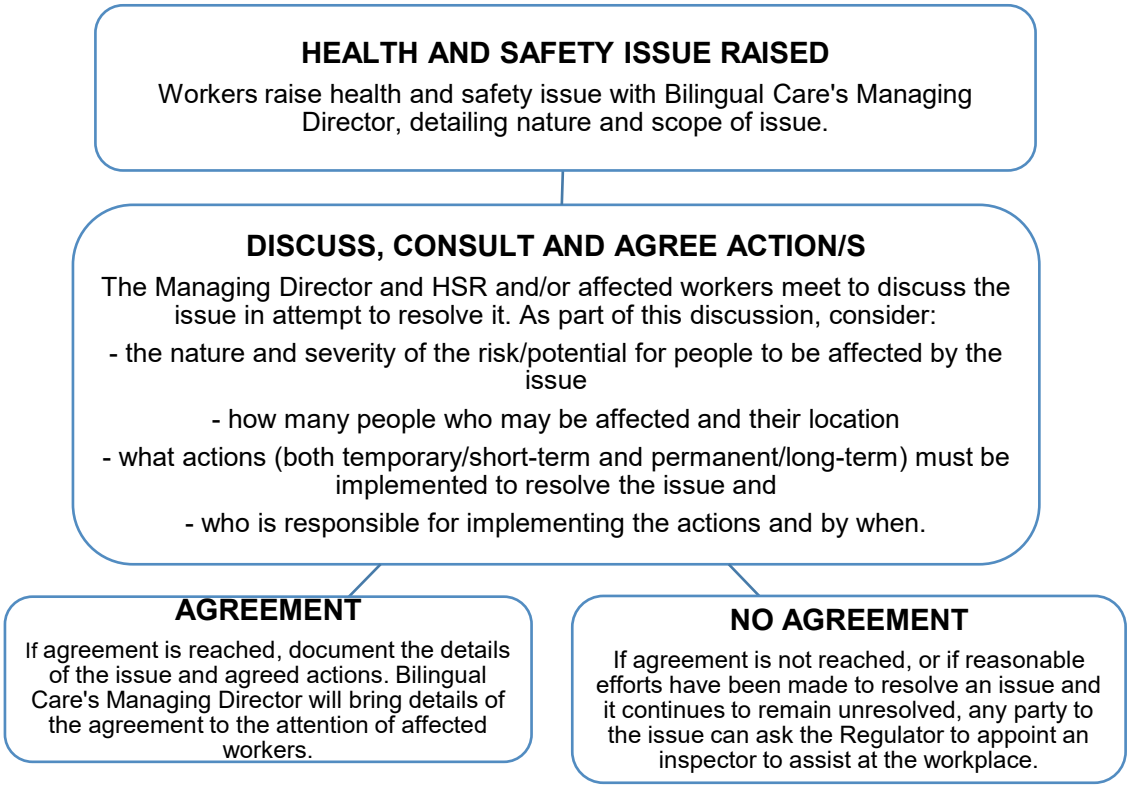
Bilingual Care will not tolerate discriminatory, coercive or misleading conduct in relation to WHS matters. Workers will be allowed to perform their WHS roles and activities, and to raise health and safety issues or concerns about their work, without fear of discrimination or coercion.

Issue Resolution

Bilingual Care will take all reasonable steps to consult and collaborate with workers to resolve potential or reported health and safety risks that may affect them. Bilingual Care also acknowledges that sometimes health and safety matters that are raised cannot be immediately resolved or actions agreed to mitigate the risk.

Where a health and safety matter has been reported to Bilingual Care and it remains unresolved, the following Issue Resolution process can be followed.

[5] https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/safety-starts-here/consultation@work/health-and-safety-representatives



Reporting

WHS hazards or risks should be identified, managed, and reported in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Risk Management Policy and Procedure*.

Incidents or injuries relating to WHS issues should be reported in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Incident Management* policies and procedures.

Risk Assessments

The following approach should be taken when conducting a risk assessment in relation to a possible workplace health and safety hazard:

- conduct the risk assessment objectively - gather all available, relevant information, data, and research about the hazard
- include staff and/or consumers who work with, or may be directly impacted by the hazard, in the risk assessment process – risk assessments should be a team effort
- consider all possible control options, based on the Hierarchy of Control, as outlined in Bilingual Care's *Risk Management Policy and Procedure*
- document the risk assessment, including who was involved in the risk assessment, the nature of the hazard/s, the current controls, and any proposed treatments in the *Risk Assessment Form*
- assign any proposed/future treatments to a responsible Supervisor and agree on a date that the action can be reasonably completed
- regularly review the progress of treatment actions to ensure they are completed, or if they cannot be completed to determine an alternate strategy to reduce the risk and
- provide the Risk Assessment to the Managing Director so that it can be entered and tracked in Bilingual Care's *Risk Register*.

Preventing Psychosocial Hazards

Bilingual Care acknowledges that psychosocial hazards may exist in the workplace and actively manages these risks as part of its risk management processes. Psychosocial hazards are important to be aware of and manage because they can cause stress. Stress is the body's reaction when a worker perceives the demands of their work exceed their ability or resources to cope. When stress becomes frequent, prolonged, or severe it can cause psychological and physical harm.

Psychosocial hazards may include the following:[6]



It is also important to consider that some hazards cause stress when a worker is exposed to the risk of that hazard occurring as well as when they are directly exposed to the hazard itself. For example, workers exposed to workplace violence are likely to experience stress if they perceive that the risk has not been controlled, even if the violence does not occur again. In this situation, despite the hazard rarely occurring, the stress itself may be prolonged.[7]

Bilingual Care encourages staff to take a proactive role in identifying and reporting situations that can cause stress, as per Bilingual Care's *Risk Management Policy and Procedure* and *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*.

Working in Consumers' Homes

Where supports are to be provided in a consumer's home, the Consumer *Risk Assessment* and *Home Risk Assessment* must be completed as part of the consumer's initial intake assessment, and before commencing services (see also Bilingual Care's *Initial Assessment and Care Planning Policy and Procedure)*.

Risk assessments should be conducted in person where possible and as the preferred method. If it is not possible to attend in person, a risk assessment can be conducted over the phone (asking for key information about accessibility and the environment) but should be verified in person at the next available opportunity.

A consumer's home can change between visits. Changes may include:

- positioning of furniture

[6] Safe Work Australia 2023, *Model Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work*, Safe Work Australia, accessed 21 December 2023, https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-managing-psychosocial-hazards-work. Note: each State and Territory has its own adaptation of the Model Code of Practice for Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work.

[7] Safe Work Australia 2023, *Model Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work*, Safe Work Australia, accessed 21 December 2023, https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-managing-psychosocial-hazards-work. Note: each State and Territory has its own adaptation of the Model Code of Practice for Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work.

- inoperable electrical equipment
- people or animals are now present
- altered storage patterns
- spills or leaks
- new equipment or furniture and
- obstructed access.

Staff must determine at each visit the safety of the consumer's home as a workplace before commencing their duties. This includes undertaking a visual scan of the home immediately on arrival, and of any equipment to be used before it is used.

Consumers and/or their supporters are responsible for:

- maintaining a safe work environment for staff (for example, repair broken steps, mow long grass, restrain animals, provide adequate lighting)
- looking after their own in-home safety (for example, maintaining electrical equipment and installing smoke alarms and safety switches to switchboards)
- cooperating with staff to ensure they can work in a safe way (for example, moving furniture to allow adequate workspace)
- keeping their equipment safe, well maintained and in good order and
- informing staff of any known hazards.

For additional guidance in conducting risk assessments and some practical advice for managing risks for staff working in consumers' homes, the *SafeWork Australia Model Code of Practice: Healthcare and social assistance industry*[8] can be used.

Remote or Isolated Work

Remote or isolated work is when a staff member may be isolated from help from other people because of where or when they are working, or the nature of the work they are doing. For example, they may be working in locations or at times where it would be difficult for them to be rescued, get medical assistance, or be reached by emergency services.

Workers also face additional risks if nobody else is around to help with difficult tasks, alert them to hazards, give a second opinion about how to safely do a task, or notice if they are fatigued.

Further, a worker may be isolated even if other people are close by, for example, a community nurse carrying out clinical visits at night.

Bilingual Care must manage the risks associated with remote or isolated work. This is particularly important should a staff member require medical assistance, rescue, or emergency services. Exposure to violence and poor access to emergency assistance are the main hazards that increase the risk of remote or isolated work.

[8] Safe Work Australia 2025, *Model Code of Practice: Healthcare and social assistance industry*, Safe Work Australia, Canberra, accessed 27 October 2025, https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-healthcare-and-social-assistance-industry

Working in the Community

Staff who are providing support to consumers while in the community must consider the safety of consumers, themselves, and members of the public. Because the environment can change rapidly depending on the location, staff are required to regularly scan for any potential health and safety risks, such as trip hazards, spills, weather conditions or crowded places that may overwhelm or trigger concerns for the consumer. Where possible, staff should navigate away from potential dangers to avoid injury or incidents.

In the event an incident occurs while in the community, staff should report the incident as soon as practicable as per Bilingual Care's *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure and*/or *Consumer Incident Management Policy and Procedure*, depending on the nature of the incident.

Manual Handling

Manual Handling is related to the physical aspects of work, and injuries can occur from:

- using repetitive or ongoing force
- using or having sudden force
- repetitive movements
- prolonged holding in one position, or awkward postures and/or
- exposure to vibration.

Manual Handling injuries can also be a result of moving objects or handling people, either over an extended period (gradual wear and tear), or due to a sudden incident. Bilingual Care will identify potential manual handling risks in consultation with staff and consumers and implement management plans to reduce the risk of injuries.

Consumer Risk Assessments will also help to identify potential manual handling risks and strategies to prevent them specific to each consumer. The Managing Director will ensure that staff working with each consumer are informed of any potential manual handling issues.

Bilingual Care will provide Manual Handling training to all staff, at Induction and refresher training at least two yearly. This will include strategies for all care workers who are required to help with consumer mobility.

Staff working with consumers who have manual handling requirements must refer to their training as well as the consumer's *Care Plan* for guidance. The Managing Director will ensure that staff are informed of any potential manual handling issues and should be contacted if staff have any concerns.

Equipment Hazards

Equipment used by consumers can cause injury to both consumers and staff if it is not used correctly or kept in good condition. When consumers have equipment that needs to be used by Bilingual Care's staff, *Consumer Risk Assessments* will be completed to identify potential risks, specific to each consumer. The Managing Director will ensure that staff working with each consumer are informed of any potential risks and the strategies to prevent injuries.

Types of equipment that can be considered as part of *Consumer Risk Assessments* include:

- mobility aids (e.g. walkers, hoists)
- medical devices (e.g. oxygen tanks, monitors)
- assistive technologies (e.g. shower chairs, bed rails)
- electrical equipment (e.g. heaters, chargers)

The risk assessment process will consider whether the equipment is:

- fit for purpose and appropriate for the consumer's needs
- properly installed and maintained
- safe to operate in the home environment, considering risks such as entrapment, tipping, electrical faults, and misuse.

Training

The Managing Director will ensure that staff are provided training to competently use equipment when supporting consumers, specific to the individual consumer's equipment. Consumers will also be supported by staff to ensure they are correctly using any equipment. Training will include:

- safe use and handling of equipment
- recognising signs of malfunction or wear
- reporting hazards or incidents

Maintenance and Inspections

Bilingual Care will include in the consumer's *Care Plan* inspection or servicing requirements for equipment if required. If equipment is unsafe to use, it must be tagged out and reported – see ***Unsafe Electrical Equipment at the Workplace*** section for tagging out procedures.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are among the most common causes of injury, often resulting in serious harm such as fractures, musculoskeletal injuries, cuts and bruises. These incidents frequently occur on the same level, including uneven surfaces, stairs and ramps, both indoors and outdoors.

Slips - occur when there is insufficient traction between a person's footwear and the walking surface, often due to contaminants like water, oil, or powder. For example, if a staff member slips on grease on the kitchen floor.

Trips - can happen when a person's foot or leg strikes an unseen object, causing a loss of balance. For example, a staff member trips on a loose mat in a doorway.

Falls - can occur when someone loses balance or missteps, even without falling to a lower surface. For example, a staff member missteps on stairs and strains their back while regaining balance or could also fall down the stairs causing a major injury.

When undertaking initial care planning with consumers, staff will be required to complete an *In-Home Environment Risk Assessment* to help identify potential slip/trip/fall hazards in the consumer's home environment where staff will be working. Identified hazards will be discussed with the consumer to try and eliminate or minimise the risk (with their consent), for example, clearing clutter and obstacles from walkways. Other potential sources of slip/trip/fall risks can include:

- uneven or damaged flooring
- wet or oily surfaces (e.g. bathrooms, spills)
- clutter and obstacles (e.g. rugs, cords, pets, excess furniture)
- inappropriate footwear
- carrying loads that obstruct view
- poor lighting

The Managing Director will ensure that staff working with each consumer are informed of any potential slips, trips and falls hazards.

Vehicle Safety

Vehicles are commonly used by Bilingual Care staff to travel between consumer's homes, facilities, and service locations and to transport consumers in the community. These vehicles are considered workplaces and therefore must be managed under the same work health and safety obligations as any other work environment. See Bilingual Care's *Vehicle Safety Policy and Procedure* for guidance on managing risks with vehicles.

Fatigue Management

Fatigue is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion that reduces someone's ability to work safely and effectively. Fatigue impacts alertness, which may lead to mistakes and an increase in incidents and injuries, particularly when:

- operating equipment
- completing critical tasks that require a lot of concentration and
- doing night or shift work when a person would be normally sleeping.

Fatigue can be work related, non-work related or a combination of both. As such, both Bilingual Care and its staff are responsible for identifying and managing fatigue in the workplace.

The Leadership Team will work to prevent and manage fatigue-related risks in the workplace by:

- consulting with staff to identify and manage fatigue-related risks
- providing staff with fatigue-related information and training and
- monitoring, reviewing and, where applicable, modifying rostering processes and working arrangements.

In addition, all staff should:

- understand their sleep, rest and recovery needs and get adequate rest and sleep away from work
- seek medical advice and help if they have or are concerned about a health condition that affects their sleep or causes fatigue
- assess their own fitness for work before starting
- monitor their level of alertness and concentration while at work and
- monitor for signs of fatigue in the people they work with.

Workplace Violence

Bilingual Care proactively works to prevent and reduce violence in the workplace, including when working in a consumer's home or in the community. The Leadership Team will conduct risk assessments in relation to situations that may expose workers to the risk of violence, including:

- providing services to consumers who have challenging behaviours
- performing work alone and/or in isolated environments and
- working in an environment where other people may pose a risk to workers' personal security (e.g. consumers' family and friends).

In conjunction with Bilingual Care's *Consumer Risk Assessment* and *Home Risk Assessment*, where a consumer has been identified as having challenging behaviour, specific strategies, and mitigations to reduce the risk of violence will be clearly outlined in their *Care Plan*. Bilingual Care will ensure that staff are provided with de-escalation and avoidance strategies. See also Bilingual Care's *Minimising the Use of Restrictive Practices Policy and Procedure*.

All injuries or incidents relating to violence must be reported – including abuse and threats, in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*.

Work Related Stress

Work related stress can be commonly experienced when working with vulnerable people or people with high or complex needs. Work related stress refers to the physical, mental, and emotional reactions of workers when they perceive that their work demands are greater than their abilities and/or their resources (such as time/ help / support). Stress responses can occur when the worker perceives they are not coping in situations where it is important to them that they do.

The Leadership Team will conduct risk assessments to identify potential sources of occupational stress. These might include (but are not limited to):

- rates of absenteeism
- staff engagement/morale
- peak/seasonal demands
- incident reports and data trends
- exit interviews of past staff and
- consumer feedback.

Risk assessments must also consider risk factors. These might include (but are not limited to):

- excessive workload
- consumers or others in the workplace
- lack of clarity about role requirements
- exposure to emotionally distressing situations or incidents
- emotional attachment to a terminally ill consumer and
- poor support from managers.

Bilingual Care will implement control measures to prevent work related stress in consultation with its workers.

Biological Hazards

Exposure to biological hazards can cause serious illness to workers, with potential for infections and other health complications. To reduce exposure and risk from contact with biological hazards, Bilingual Care has in place specific infection prevention and control strategies, set out in its *Infection Control Policy and Procedure*.

Safe Work Procedures

Bilingual Care will develop Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) in consultation with workers and based on risk assessment. SWPs will be reviewed regularly to ensure the documented processes are current, accurate and meet legislative requirements. Staff will be provided training in Bilingual Care's SWPs at induction and when they are changed/updated.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provides protection to workers from possible harm or illness hazards they may be in contact with. The use of PPE does not change the nature of the risk and is considered a 'last line of defence'.

Bilingual Care will provide the necessary PPE required for staff to safely perform their job tasks, as well as for all consumers who require it, based on risk assessment and in consultation with staff and consumers.

When necessary, staff must use appropriate PPE that is suitable for the nature and degree of the identified hazard. For tasks involving hazardous chemicals, the PPE recommended in the *Safety Data Sheet (SDS)* must be used.

Staff must be trained in the proper selection, fitting, storage, and maintenance of PPE. Training will be provided by Bilingual Care at induction, and refresher training will be provided at least annually.

Electrical Safety

General

Electrical work is not to be undertaken on Bilingual Care premises except by an appropriately licensed Electrical Installation worker engaged by the Managing Director. The changing of light globes and lamps have been known to result in electric shock and falls from heights. This work must be completed by a licenced electrician or an appropriately trained staff member or contractor.

Testing, Tagging and Repairing Electrical Equipment

The inspection, testing and tagging of electrical equipment used at Bilingual Care must be conducted for all equipment that is in use. Equipment not in use and/or beyond its testing date should be removed from service, and an isolation tag applied noting that tagging is required and must be completed prior to use.

Testing and tagging of equipment must be done either by a qualified electrician or by someone who has successfully completed an approved course at a Vocational Education and Training provider. There are also several electrical contractors who specialise in the checking and tagging of electrical equipment. Electrical appliances must be inspected and tested:

- at intervals not exceeding those set out by *AS3760:2010* (a tolerance of two weeks is acceptable) and
- before being returned to service or after any repair or servicing that could have affected the electrical safety of the appliance.

Manufacturers' instructions may specify intervals appropriate to specific types of equipment.

New Equipment

Brand new electrical equipment that is 'out of the box' and unused (i.e., new equipment that is not second-hand) does not have to be tested before first use but should still be visually inspected to ensure that no damage occurred during transport, delivery, installation, or commissioning.

The date when the new electrical item was placed into service should be recorded, including:

- that the equipment is ‘new to service'
- the date of entry into service and
- the date when the first electrical safety test is due.

Any equipment purchased second-hand must be tested and tagged before first use.

Appliances Brought in from Home

Electrical appliances brought in from home by staff, or by contractors, consumers, or volunteers, for use on Bilingual Care premises are subject to the same testing and tagging procedures as for appliances owned or leased by Bilingual Care. Appliances should be tested and tagged prior to their use on Bilingual Care property.

While there is no requirement to test and tag personal computers/laptops, staff, consumers, and volunteers are encouraged to have their laptops tested and tagged using an approved person or company.

In both situations above the testing and tagging is the responsibility and at the expense of the owner.

Hire Equipment

While it is the responsibility of the person hiring equipment to ensure that the equipment is inspected and tested at the commencement of each hire, the person or company who hires out the equipment to Bilingual Care must ensure that the equipment - for the period of the hire - meets all relevant inspection and testing requirements.

Use of Electrical Portable Outlet Devices on Bilingual Care Premises

The use of double adaptors is not permitted within Bilingual Care and should be removed and replaced with Electrical Portable Outlet Devices (EPODs), also known as power boards, fitted with overload protection devices.

Power boards are to be used only if they have overload protection. Home-made EPODs are illegal throughout Australia and must not be used at Bilingual Care.

Ensure that any power boards are installed securely and in a location that is not susceptible to damage or exposure to water and have adequate ventilation. Where possible, power boards should be placed on their side to prevent dust build up in unused points. Each power board must be plugged into a general-purpose outlet (GPO). GPOs share power circuits. Be aware too many EPODs plugged into GPOs on the same circuit may overload the circuit and cause a power failure.

Staff must regularly check that all plugs are firmly fixed into the power board and look for any signs of damage/fraying. Any power boards that are broken or not working must be removed from use and replaced.

Examples of EPODs / Power boards in Use





Extension leads are only suitable for temporary applications. For longer term applications a new GPO should be installed or an EPOD with overload protection used. Ensure the extension lead is placed appropriately and shielded with an appropriate cover to reduce tripping hazards. Be wary of heavy equipment rolling over or impacting the lead as it may damage the insulation and wires causing shorting.

Unsafe Electrical Equipment at the Workplace

The Managing Director will ensure that any unsafe electrical equipment is disconnected (or isolated) from its electricity supply and, once disconnected, is not reconnected until it is repaired or tested and found to be safe or is replaced or permanently removed from use.

To ensure that unsafe electrical equipment is not used inadvertently before it can be tested, repaired, or replaced, it should immediately be tagged to indicate that it has been taken out of service for safety reasons pending testing and possible repair and to warn against further use.

An *Incident Report* should be lodged when the hazard is discovered and include all details of the incident to enable accurate investigation.

Electrical Equipment and Appliances in Consumers' Homes

While electrical equipment in a private residence does not have to be tested and tagged, Bilingual Care staff must still visually inspect any electrical equipment or appliance prior to use to ensure that it is not damaged, cords are not frayed, and the item is in good working order.

Any electrical item that is broken or damaged must not be used, and the consumer or their supporters/family informed so it can be repaired or replaced. If appropriate, it is recommended that the item is removed from use.

Electrical Hazard and Incident Reporting

All hazards and injuries relating to electrical safety must be reported immediately in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Incident Management* policies and procedures.

Most electrical shocks constitute a notifiable incident and must be dealt with in accordance with Bilingual Care's *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*.

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Policies and procedures relating to emergency planning, safety and security, vehicle safety, physical accessibility, chemical use and storage, infection control, medication management and food storage and preparation*
- *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Consumer Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Open Disclosure Policy and Procedure*
- *Risk Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Emergency and Disaster Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Initial Assessment and Care Planning Policy and Procedure*
- *Infection Control Policy and Procedure*
- *Vehicle Safety Policy and Procedure*
- *Risk Register*
- *Risk Assessment Form*
- *Risk Assessments*
- *Consumer Risk Assessment*
- *In-Home Environment Risk Assessment*
- *Incident Report*
- *Feedback and Complaints Form*
- *Continuous Improvement Plan*
- *Leadership Team Meeting Minutes*
- *Safe Work Procedures*
- *Safety Data Sheets (SDS)*
- *WHS Committee Meeting Agendas*
- *WHS Committee Meeting Minutes*

Monitoring and Review

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Leadership Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, consumer, and other stakeholder feedback, where relevant.

Bilingual Care's *Continuous Improvement Plan* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of Bilingual Care's service planning and delivery processes.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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