

Work Procedure / Instruction
Procedure number: QMS008 V1
Consultation and Communication

1. Objectives:

Consultation and Communication is a mandatory requirement under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* (The Act), therefore this procedure pertains to Bunbury Harvey Regional Council's (BHRC's) obligations under the Act.

Consultation will take place on all occupational safety and health matters including:

- undertaking risk management activities
- proposing changes that may affect workers
- making decisions about any occupational safety and health procedures
- the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of workers

Where BHRC has concurrent duties under the Act with another stakeholder, it will consult, cooperate and coordinate with the other stakeholder and its workers, so far as is reasonably practicable.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Safety Management System guidelines and Occupational Safety and Health Policy.

2. Guidelines:

Meaningful consultation can lead to fewer workplace injuries and give everyone the opportunity to:

- discuss and share their health and safety concerns
- identify safety hazards and risks
- find and implement practical solutions
- contribute to the decision making process
- communicate outcomes in a timely manner

3. Procedure:

3.1 Consultation

BHRC will consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers who carry out work for BHRC who are (or are likely to be) directly affected by an Occupational Safety and Health matter. If the workers are represented by a health and safety representative, the consultation will involve that representative.

Consultation at BHRC involves sharing of information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views, and taking those views into account before making decisions on safety and health matters.

BHRC will consult, co-operate and co-ordinate activities with all other stakeholders who have an occupational safety and health duty in relation to the same matter, so far as is reasonably practicable.

3.2 Health and Safety Committee (HSC)

Health and safety committees bring together workers and management to assist in the development and review of health and safety policies and procedures for the workplace.

A HSC has been established and contain 5 members, membership will be as follows:

- One (1) shall be the BHRC Chief Executive Officer
- One (1) shall be the OSH Advisor
- One (1) shall be the employee representative from Administration
- One (1) shall be the employee representative from Banksia Road Organics Processing Facility
- One (1) shall be the employee representative from Stanley Road Waste Management Facility

The functions of the health and safety committee are:

- to facilitate co-operation between BHRC and workers in instigating, developing and carrying out measures designed to ensure the safety and health of workers
- to assist in developing standards, rules, policies and procedures relative to safety and health
- and such other functions prescribed by the regulations or agreed between BHRC and the committee

The role of the HSC is to facilitate cooperation between BHRC and workers on health and safety matters as well as to develop health and safety standards, rules and procedures.

The effective operation of a health and safety committee is dependent upon everyone fulfilling their role.

3.3 Health and safety representatives (HSRs)

HSRs have been elected to represent various work groups and investigate health and safety issues.

There are three (3) Health and Safety representatives for BHRC.

- 1x employee representative from Administration
- 1x employee representative from Banksia Road Organics Processing Facility
- 1x employee representative from Stanley Road Waste Management Facility

3.4 Other Agreed Arrangements

Other agreed arrangements for consultation may be set up by BHRC provided the arrangement is agreed to by the workers and is likely to result in better consultation and improved decision making.

Once established, consultation must be in accordance with the procedures agreed to between BHRC and the workers.

Regardless of the arrangement, the obligation on BHRC to consult with all workers remains.

Other agreed arrangements for consultation on health and safety matters used by BHRC may be through:

- regular scheduled meetings
- team meetings (where occupational safety and health is always an agenda item)
- one-off meetings
- tool box talks
- face to face discussions
- briefing sessions

All consultation arrangements will be consistent with BHRC's legal obligations under the Act.

3.5 Consultation Processes

The nature of consultation about particular matters regarding BHRC will ensure:

- that relevant information about the matter is shared with workers
- that workers be given a reasonable opportunity:
 - to express their views and to raise work health or safety issues in relation to the matter
 - to contribute to the decision-making process relating to the matter,
 - that the views of workers are taken into account by BHRC
 - that the workers consulted are advised of the outcome of the consultation in a timely manner
- If the workers are represented by a health and safety representative, the consultation must involve that representative

BHRC will ensure that consultation occurs in relation to the following health and safety matters:

- when identifying hazards and assessing risks to safety and health arising from the work carried out or to be carried out by BHRC
- when making decisions about ways to eliminate or minimise those risks,
- when making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of workers,
- when proposing changes that may affect the safety and/or health of workers,
- when making decisions about the procedures for:
 - resolving occupational safety and health issues at the workplace
 - monitoring the health of workers
 - monitoring the conditions at any workplace under the management or control of BHRC
 - providing information and training for workers
 - when carrying out any other activity prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this section

BHRC will:

- set up consultation processes and ensure they are discussed and reinforced regularly
- documents these processes
- regularly monitor and review the consultation procedures to ensure they are the most effective form of consultation

BHRC will consult with employees on a regular basis, involving them in decision making and informing them of decisions that may affect their health and safety.

3.6 Consultative mechanisms include:

- Annual audit of staff meeting minutes and agenda to review OSH items discussed and resolved
- Review of Occupation Safety and Health committee meeting minutes for resolution compliance
- regular inspection of premises and a record of findings, with a roster to ensure all employees are involved in workplace inspection and hazard identification
- monthly Housekeeping audits
- Where a new work practice is introduced, employees are consulted and potential and existing hazards reviewed - this information is disseminated to staff as required
- OSH as a standard agenda item at staff meetings

Further Information:

- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 and Regulations*
- *Local Government Act 1995 and Regulations*
- *Occupational Safety and Health Policy*
- *Occupational Safety and Health Committee*

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