



## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) is committed to the health, safety and wellness of its employees and to providing a healthy and safe work environment that minimizes the risk of workplace injuries, accidents and illnesses.

The GNWT works to ensure that effective practices are in place to protect the health, safety, and well-being of its employees, guests, and any person granted access to a GNWT workplace.

### 2. PRINCIPLES

The GNWT adheres to the following principles when implementing this Policy:

- (1) All employees are entitled to work in a healthy and safe environment and have the right to be informed of any hazards in the workplace.
- (2) The health and safety of government workplaces is a responsibility shared by GNWT management and employees.
- (3) Any behaviour, act, or situation that presents a hazard to employees, contractors, guests of the government and/or members of the public is unacceptable in the workplace. In the event of an unsafe work condition, employees have the right to refuse work.

### 3. SCOPE

This Policy and the applicable guidelines apply to all Territorial public service employees, except employees of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation. It also applies to contractors, volunteers, clients and members of the public in GNWT workplaces.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this Policy:

**Deputy Head** - the deputy minister of a department, superintendent of a divisional education council, chief executive officer or president of a board, authority, agency or any such person as may be appointed as deputy head.

**Occupant Department** - any department, board or agency that occupies a workplace.

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**Occupational Health and Safety** – matters related to the health and safety of employees, contractors, guests of the government and members of the public in the workplace.

**Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – a joint workplace committee established under the *Safety Act* and the Collective Agreement between the GNWT and the Union of Northern Workers.

**Primary Occupant Department** – the department, board or agency with the most number of employees occupying the workplace.

**Workplace** – a location where an employee is, or is likely to be, engaged in work while employed by the GNWT.

### 5. AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

#### (1) General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Financial Management Board. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:

##### (a) Ministers

Ministers are accountable for the implementation of this Policy in their departments, boards and agencies.

##### (b) Deputy Heads

Deputy Heads are accountable for the administration of this Policy in workplaces where their department, board or agency is the primary occupant department, and within their own department.

#### (2) Specific

##### (a) Minister of Finance

The Minister of Finance may make recommendations to the Financial Management Board for amendments to this Policy.

##### (b) Deputy Minister of Finance

The Deputy Minister of Finance may:

- (i) Establish further guidelines on the application of this Policy.

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- (ii) Provide support, direction and assistance on the mandate of this Policy and associated procedural and/or guideline issues.
- (iii) Provide advice to deputy heads to ensure that their department, board or agency occupational health and safety measures are consistent with this Policy and in compliance with associated guidelines, legislation, regulations and other government policies.
- (iv) Monitor the effectiveness of occupational health and safety programs.
- (v) Coordinate effective communication on occupational health and safety management throughout the GNWT.

(c) Deputy Heads

- (i) Ensure that the activities of the department, board or agency are compliant with this Policy.
- (ii) Ensure the development, implementation and operation of occupational health and safety programs in workplaces where the department, board or agency is the primary occupant department and/or the occupant department.
- (iii) Provide senior management support for workplace occupational health and safety committees where the department, board or agency is the primary occupant department and/or the occupant department.
- (iv) Monitor the effectiveness of occupational health and safety programs in workplaces where the department, board or agency is the primary occupant department and/or the occupant department and provide feedback to the Deputy Minister of Finance.
- (v) Ensure this Policy and accompanying guidelines are adequately communicated within the department, board, or agency.
- (vi) Establish department, board or agency occupational health and safety committees to address occupational health and safety issues specifically related to their organization's work, if the department, board or agency determines that this is required.

(d) Occupational Health and Safety Committees

Occupational health and safety committees shall be established for all departments, boards and agencies and for all workplaces in the GNWT,

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consistent with established guidelines that outline the specific authorities and accountabilities of committees, managers and employees.

(e) Department of Finance

- (i) Provide assistance, guidelines and advice to departments, boards and agencies on the GNWT Occupational Health and Safety Program.
- (ii) Identify and coordinate occupational health and safety training for GNWT employees.
- (iii) Lead or assist in investigations of serious workplace incidents upon request by a deputy head.

(f) Managers

- (i) Promote safe workplace practices, and communicate this Policy and associated guidelines to all employees under their supervision.
- (ii) Identify the workplace health and safety training needs of subordinates and ensure these are tracked and monitored through the annual performance appraisal system.
- (iii) Carry out the responsibilities associated with their assignment to health and safety committees and investigation or emergency teams, if required.
- (iv) Ensure that employees who hire/oversee contractors provide relevant information to them related to workplace hazards and occupational health and safety.

(g) Employees

- (i) Promote safe workplace practices, and be aware of and comply with this Policy and associated guidelines.
- (ii) Carry out the responsibilities associated with their assignment to health and safety committees and investigation or emergency teams, if required.

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### 6. PROVISIONS

(1) Occupational Health and Safety Program

The GNWT Occupational Health and Safety Program provides processes, guidelines and tools for the management of occupational health and safety throughout the GNWT.

There are several elements to the Occupational Health and Safety Program including orientation; inspections; committees and their structures, processes, roles and responsibilities; and preventative and emergency programs and procedures.

(2) Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed by the Department of Finance every three years.

### 7. PREROGATIVE OF THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Financial Management Board to make decisions or take action with respect to occupational health and safety.



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Chair  
Financial Management Board