

**IEUA**

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND  
SAFETY POLICY**

**24 March 2003**

## **1. Introduction**

Occupational Health and Safety is a crucial issue for all workplaces. The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) considers it unacceptable for any employee to be exposed to any factor in the workplace that is a risk to their health and safety. Safe workplaces are the legal and moral obligation of employers. The IEUA believes that any workplace death is unacceptable and will continue to advocate on behalf of members, the necessity for commitment and action from all employers.

The IEUA Occupational Health and Safety Policy outlines the critical areas and responsibilities that all stakeholders must commit to in order to ensure that our members can do their jobs safely and without risk. The IEUA believes every workplace must be free of work-related injury, death and disease.

### **1.1 Objectives**

- (i) To ensure effective consultative structures are established in every workplace which provide for the involvement of members and employees in decisions impacting on their health, safety and welfare.
- (ii) To protect members and employees against risks to their health, safety and welfare at work.
- (iii) To eliminate at source, risks to the health, safety or welfare of members and employees whilst at work.
- (iv) To support, encourage and train IEU officials and organisers to participate in OHS focused campaigns.
- (v) To negotiate with employers to develop occupational health and safety agreements.
- (vi) To actively promote the legislative rights of OHS Representatives and OHS Committees to receive training that is paid for by their employer.
- (vii) To advocate improvements in OHS legislation to reflect changes in work organisation and hazards.

### **1.2 General Principles**

The IEU recognises the general principles informing its approach to health and safety are:

- (i) Employees have a right to expect they will not be injured or made ill from work.

- (ii) Employees must work in a manner which does not willfully or recklessly endanger their own health and safety or the health and safety of any other person.
- (iii) Employers must provide and maintain safe and healthy workplaces and safe systems of work.
- (iv) The demonstrated commitment and co-operation of employers and employees to involvement in consultation, identification of hazards, assessment and control of risk is necessary for the effective prevention of work related death, injury, illness or disease.
- (v) Employers must ensure risks to the health, safety and welfare of persons at work are eliminated at their source. If this cannot be achieved employers must ensure the risk is reduced by applying the hierarchy of controls, so far as is practicable
- (vi) Employers and employees must be sufficiently skilled and trained in OHS so they are able to exercise their rights, responsibilities and obligations effectively
- (vii) Suppliers, designers and manufacturers must provide safe products and equipment, together with clear, accurate information about their safe use in the workplace.
- (viii) The IEUA has an active responsibility to participate as much as possible in all decision making processes with relevant bodies affecting occupational health and safety. The aim is achieving and maintaining working environments which are safe and without risks to health.

## **2. Risk Management Approach**

- 2.1 The IEU endorses a risk management approach to workplace health and safety which requires hazards to be identified, assesses the risks of those hazards to health and safety and implements appropriate measures to control such risks.
- 2.2 The hierarchy of controls must be applied to all identified hazards, with elimination, substitution or engineering controls being preferred to administrative measures or personal protective equipment.
- 2.3 A schedule of regular workplace inspections and safety management audits are integral to an efficient risk management approach to health and safety.

## **3 Duties of Employers**

- 3.1 The IEU believes that the primary responsibilities of employers are to comply with their legal duty of care to provide and maintain so far as is practicable a safe working environment.

- 3.2 The IEU endorses the legal requirement of employers to implement effective structures and procedures to consult with their employees on all health and safety issues.
- 3.3 The IEU requires all employers to ensure health and safety representatives and members of health and safety committees are trained and given adequate paid time release, resources and access to information to enable them to effectively carry out their duties.
- 3.4 Employers shall employ or engage persons other than the employees' elected health and safety representative, who, being suitably qualified or trained in relation to occupational health and safety are able to provide advice to the employer in relation to the health and safety of the employees of the employer.
- 3.5 Employers must nominate a person (not being the elected health and safety representatives) to represent the employer in matters dealing with health and safety issues in the workplace, the functions of the health and safety representative or health and safety committee or other agreed procedures as set out in clause 5.4 of this policy.

#### **4. Health and Safety Representatives**

- 4.1 The IEU endorses the right of employees to elect a health and safety representative and requires employers to actively encourage and facilitate the election of health and safety representatives.
- 4.2 The period of tenure for the elected representative shall be determined by employees and shall comply with relevant state legislation.
- 4.3 Health and Safety Representatives should be IEU members and will exercise the powers and functions accorded to them at law without victimisation, discrimination or coercion from their employer.
- 4.4 Elected health and safety representatives should keep their IEU branch informed of relevant issues and advancements in their workplace and should regularly consult with IEU branch organisers.

#### **5. Health and Safety Committees**

- 5.1 The IEU endorses the right of employees and health and safety representatives to require their employer to establish a workplace health and safety committee.
- 5.2 The IEU believes that Health and Safety Committees provide an appropriate mechanism for consultation between employer and employees for discussing and resolving a variety of workplace problems.

- 5.3 Employee representatives to health and safety committees should be IEU members and will exercise the powers and functions accorded to them at law without victimisation, discrimination or coercion from their employer.
- 5.4 IEU members of health and safety committees should keep their branch informed of relevant issues and advancements in their workplace and should regularly consult with branch organisers.

## **6. Other Agreed Arrangements**

- 6.1 The IEU endorses other agreed arrangements, as allowable in the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001, which enables employers and employees to develop a consultative approach to OHS that is specifically tailored to their individual workplace.

## **7. Training and Education**

- 7.1 The IEU upholds the right of elected health and safety representatives and members of health and safety committees to attend such training courses as necessary to enable them to efficiently carry out the duties attached to such positions.
- 7.2 The employer shall allow the attendance at such courses with pay and shall provide all reasonable costs of course fees, course materials, accommodation, travel and meals.
- 7.3 The IEU recommends that formal agreements with employer bodies are negotiated at the Branch level to mandate a minimum number of health and safety reps and health and safety committee members to undertake approved training annually.
- 7.4 The IEU will promote through employer organisations the development of training and education packages for Principals, Bursars and Business Managers and School Boards.
- 7.5 The IEU endorses the inclusion of health and safety training in the induction programmes of all new staff and will negotiate with employers the most appropriate way of delivery.
- 7.6 The IEU recognises the key role and participation of delegates, health and safety reps, activists and rank and file members in advancing health and safety improvements in the workplace. Therefore each branch of the IEUA will:
  - (a) encourage, support and train members to be active as health and safety representatives and/or health and safety committee members.

- (b) provide rank members with OHS training, information and materials, through a variety of means, including, seminars, conferences and other forums
- (c) provide delegates, organisers and management committee members with OHS training, information and materials, through a variety of means, including, seminars, conferences and other forums

## **8. Awards and Enterprise Agreements**

- 8.1 The IEU undertakes to advance improvements to health and safety at work through the inclusion of OHS provisions in awards and enterprise agreements.
- 8.2 The IEU undertakes to ensure that the provisions of awards and enterprise agreements do not directly or indirectly negatively impact on the health and safety of members.

## **9. National OHS Strategy**

- 9.1 The IEUA endorses the ACTU National OHS Strategy 2002 – 2012 and will endeavour to ensure the national vision, targets and priorities are promoted and implemented in workplaces.

## **10. Involvement in Health and Safety**

- 10.1 The IEU will continue to identify, liaise and fully participate in those tripartite, union, employer and industry based bodies it considers important to the promotion of improved health and safety for its members.
- 10.2 The IEU will ensure as far as is possible that in all workplaces where there are members of the union, there are elected health and safety representatives, health and safety committees or other agreed arrangements as set out at clause 6 of this policy.
- 10.3 Where appropriate, the IEU will continue to support, conduct or participate in specific OHS campaigns, including the ACTU National OHS campaign.
- 10.4 The IEU undertakes to continue to participate in International OHS Events such as the International Day of Mourning on April 28 each year.
- 10.5 Through its involvement in Education International, the IEU will monitor international developments in health and safety and where appropriate oppose the poor health and safety practices of international education employers.

10.6 The IEU is committed to continuing to promote and raise the profile of occupational health and safety issues through branch journals and other publications.

## **11 Priority OHS Issues**

11.1 The IEU identifies the following OHS issues as being of concern for our members:

- Occupational stress
- Work related violence and bullying
- Manual handling
- Hazardous substances
- Working Environment
- Working hours
- Work processes/work organisation

11.2 The IEU should co-ordinate the development of strategies to address the above priority issues.