

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE

August 2019

Dear Colleagues,

ACC Accredited Employers Programme Audit Results

The University has recently been audited by ACC, under the Accredited Employer Partnership Program. It was recommended by our Auditor that we should retain our Tertiary Accreditation (the highest award achievable), and this has now been finalised by ACC.

For more information on the ACC programme and process, please see the link below.

[ACC Partnership Programme](#)

Release of new University Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) Policy

The University has revised the current Health and Safety (H&S) policy to include wellbeing.

The H&S policy is now the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) policy, and replaces all previous versions. The HSW policy includes Governance and Leadership statements, breaks down responsibilities by role, and describes how we manage HSW at the University.

All staff should make themselves familiar with section 6 "All Staff" responsibilities, and those other responsibilities that apply to their particular role.

All students need to make themselves familiar with their responsibilities as per section 7 "students".

In summary, the following changes have been made to the Policy document:

- Amendment to the Policy title, which now reads 'Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy'

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



- Minor amendments to incorporate a greater emphasis on staff and student 'wellbeing'. The term 'wellbeing' is now incorporated throughout the document
- A slightly revised foreword from the University Chancellor
- A re-signed Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Statement
- A revised set of policy statements to accommodate:
 - An empowerment approach to the statements and a reduction of 'deficit / managerial' messages where possible
 - Re-ordering and better grouping of statements, where possible
 - New statements to reflect commitments to wellbeing, mental health, and rehabilitation
- Updated Statement of Responsibility for the Director of Property Services in section 9.0
- Updated Statement of Responsibility to incorporate the role of 'Licensed Operator' as held by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at section 12.0
- Updated Statement of Responsibility to amend the role of the Hazard and Containment Manager 12.1
- Updated Statement of Responsibility to incorporate the role of Hazard and Containment Advisor / Laser Safety Officer 12.2
- Minor amendments to the drawings found in Appendices A-C

[UoA HSW Policy](#)

Slips, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls are one of the most common cause of injuries to our staff and students.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



Injuries can happen in a number of ways with peak times during winter months. Ways in which injuries occur include:

- Slipping on a wet floor (which is wet because something is spilt on it, or because of weather conditions such as slippery leaves, build-up of moss, or cleaning processes)
- Pedestrians looking at their phone rather than where they are walking
- Unmarked changes in floor levels
- Poor housekeeping and obstructed views – leading to people tripping over loose carpets, mats, trailing cables, boxes or bags
- Damaged flooring including stairs
- Not using stair hand rails
- Cramped conditions and poor work flow (e.g. desks too close together)
- Inappropriate storage creating tripping hazards
- Standing on unstable furniture
- Poor lighting

Since January 2018, there have been 198 reported slips, trips and falls resulting in 192 days lost time injuries. These include fractures, strains and bruising, all of which caused pain and discomfort to our staff and students.

What can we do to help reduce these injuries?

Although our property services team and gardeners already do a fantastic job trying to keep on top of increased leaves and moss build-up causing slippery conditions, here are some things you can do to help:

- Report moss and slippery surfaces so they can be treated
- Report areas where there are leaves causing risk to pedestrians
- Signpost any slippery areas

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



- Ensure walkways are designated with good conditions under foot, clearly marked or signposted and adequately lit
- Use mechanical lifting aids rather than carrying heavy or unwieldy loads that block the view ahead
- Use cordless tools where possible. If you need to use cables for temporary lighting or power tools, run the cables at a high level or use a proper cable cover
- Consider using a ramp for any changes in level and use contrasting colours to delineate. Where this is not possible, use signs to warn workers to look out for a level change
- Keep work and storage areas tidy

Case Study – Reporting near miss accidents

Situation: Wet weather conditions and a worn wooden stair tread created a slippery surface. A staff member walking down the stairs slipped on the wet worn wooden tread resulting in a fractured foot. The staff member was treated and transported for further medical assistance.

Learnings: The incident was a result of worn slippery wet surface where a week prior a near miss had occurred which, unfortunately, had not been reported.

Following the reported injury a maintenance request was raised, the stair tread was repaired and the area was treated for moss which had caused the slippery surface.

Often accidents occur due to a number of unforeseen factors coming together. In this case, injury could and should have been prevented; this highlights – as a minimum – the value of near-miss and hazard reporting.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW)

Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) is run annually by Mental Health Foundation New Zealand.

MHAW will be held on 23–29 September 2019 and the theme is:

Explore your way to wellbeing – Whāia te ara hauora, Whitiōra

Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) is an opportunity to explore the experiences, actions, relationships and surroundings that uplift your mental wellbeing and help you to enjoy your mahi/work. Here at the University we support and encourage you to explore your way to wellbeing within your teams.

Everyone has mental health and wellbeing – it is something for you to treasure and look after. When your mental wellbeing is strong and your workplace is supportive, you will feel more engaged in your mahi, be more productive and have higher morale and job satisfaction. Of course, sometimes there are things that impact our mental health and wellbeing that we cannot control and this can make life difficult. Exploring the ways you can feel good is a useful tool to help you manage the ups and downs of life – at mahi and beyond.

More than 50% of New Zealanders will experience a mental health problem in our lifetime.

Over the coming months, some of our faculties are running activities to promote ways in which you could explore wellbeing.

Take the opportunity to have a conversation on what does wellbeing look like and what does it mean to you, your colleagues and teams.

While attending a recent workshop there were a number of comments taken back to our team on how we could take notice and become more aware our colleagues' mental health and wellbeing.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE

One of our team who attended notes:

'It is impossible to feel happy 365 days in a year, sometimes you feel ordinary and sometime you feel extraordinary, but there are times when you feel unordinary and low. When you feel low talk to a friend.

Take notice of your loved ones, friends and colleagues, and when there is a change strike up a conversation, "I've noticed you're a bit quiet these days, is everything okay?" and just listen to what they say.'

The links below offer tips on how you could support a person through the low times.

Another challenge taken from the workshop is to remind two people every day why they are valuable in your life.

'Yes it was awkward, yes some asked if I was okay and "stop being weird", but once said it is important to me to tell you why you matter and are valuable in my life the conversation flipped to them sharing why I matter and how I'm valuable to their life.

Truly, it is uplifting.'

Here is list of resources which can be shared as conversation starters, how to create a well place, quizzes and activities for you teams.

<https://mhaw.nz/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/five-ways-to-wellbeing-downloads/>

<https://www.likeminds.org.nz/>

<https://www.good4work.nz/>

<https://wellplace.nz/>

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/events/national-events/mental-health-awareness-week/>

(Source: Mental Health Foundation)

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE

Cold and Flu Season

With the cold and flu season well and truly upon us it can sometimes be difficult to determine whether you have a cold or flu. This guide may assist you determine which ailment applies to you, how to prevent and treatment.

| Is it a cold or flu? | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Cold | Symptoms | Flu |
| Yes | Stuffy or runny nose | Sometimes |
| Yes | Sneezing | Sometimes |
| Yes with yellow or green gunk | Cough | Yes dry cough can develop into chest infection |
| Yes | Sore throat | Sometimes |
| Yes mild head and/or body aches | Body aches | Severe aches all over |
| No | Nausea | Sometimes |
| Rare for adults | Fever | Yes |
| No | Chills and sweats | Yes |
| Slowly over a few days | When do symptoms come on | Rapid within hours |
| <p>Stop the spread of cold</p> <p>To lower your risk of catching a cold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid close contact with people who have a cold Keep your hands away from your nose and mouth Wash your hands often, especially after coming in contact with someone who has a cold Eat a healthy diet Get plenty of rest Do not smoke <p>You can help prevent the spread of colds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turn away from others and use tissues when you cough or sneeze Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose | | <p>Stop the spread of flu</p> <p>Immunisation is your best defence against influenza:</p> <p>It may take between 1–4 days to feel symptoms after you catch influenza. The worst symptoms usually last about 5 days, but coughing can last up to 2–3 weeks.</p> <p>If you are unwell, stay at home until you are better.</p> <p>Follow basic hygiene practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds and dry them for 20 seconds – or use an alcohol-based hand rub Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth Do not share drinks Avoid crowded places |

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE

- Wash your hands often and especially before touching food, dishes, glasses and cutlery
- Use paper towels in bathrooms
- Do not let your nose or mouth touch public telephones or drinking fountains
- Do not share food or eating utensils with others
- Avoid close contact with others for the first 2–4 days

Self-care when you have a cold:

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids such as water
- Use a humidifier to increase air moisture, especially in your bedroom

There are no medicines that cure a cold:

Antibiotics only work against bacterial infections, not the viral infections that cause a cold.

However, you can treat your symptoms with medicines such as painkillers, nose drops or sprays, cough syrups and drops, throat lozenges and decongestants. (Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take any of these if you are already taking other medicine.)

When to see your doctor:

Most colds last only a week or two and you probably would not need to see a doctor. However, you should see your doctor if you get any of these symptoms with your cold:

- An earache that gets more painful
- Wheezing, shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Swollen, tender glands in your neck
- Chest pain
- Skin rash
- A sore throat that gets more painful, or has white or yellow spots
- A cough that gets worse or becomes painful

Also see your doctor if you have:

- A temperature of 38.6°C or higher that lasts more than 2 days
- Shaking chills

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze – then put the tissue in a lined bin
- It is important to drink small amounts of fluids often

If you have an existing medical condition:

- Make sure you do not run out of regular medications
- Make sure you take medications for any condition to keep them under good control.

Antibiotics only work against bacterial infections, not the viral infections that cause influenza.

You can also:

- Reduce fever by using a damp cloth on your forehead, washing the arms and body with a cool cloth, bathing in slightly warm water
- Take appropriate medicines to relieve discomfort and fever if necessary.
- It is especially important to reduce fever if you are pregnant.
- Gargle a glass of warm water and/or suck sugarless hard sweets or lozenges to help with sore throats
- Shower or bathe regularly and keep bedding and nightwear clean and dry
- Use skin balm or moisturiser to stop your lips from cracking.

Danger signs:

Seek urgent medical advice if you have:

- A high fever that does not come down, especially if you are pregnant
- Chills or severe shaking
- Difficulty breathing or chest pain
- Purple or bluish discolouration of your lips, skin, fingers or toes
- Seizures or convulsions
- Signs of other serious conditions, such as meningococcal disease (which may include severe headache, sleepiness, vomiting, stiff neck, dislike of bright lights, and sometimes a rash)

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE

- A headache that lasts several days

If your lips, skin or nails look blue, or you are feeling confused, it is important to see your doctor as soon as possible.

Look out for signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, and not passing urine regularly. If a person you are caring for is less responsive than normal, unusually quiet, or confused, you should call a doctor urgently. It is also important to let your doctor know if you were starting to feel better, then get worse.

(Source: Ministry of Health)

Ministry of Health FluTracking

About FluTracking, the project which harnesses the power of the internet for tracking influenza. By taking part, you will not only be contributing to scientific research, you will be helping to track influenza in your local community and nation-wide. Over the 13 years the survey has been running in Australia (and now in New Zealand) we have grown to over 40,000 participants per week who have collectively completed over 5 million surveys! More details could be found [here](#).

Hygiene and reuse of wearable equipment

A reminder to consider the issues of hygiene with equipment that multiple people wear such as headgear, glasses and VR headsets/goggles.

We saw a recent incident whereby a student using a VR headset received a minor eye infection, so remember to follow best practice such as regularly cleaning equipment, using cleaning wipes after sessions, wearing disposable facemasks and/or assigning equipment to specific users where possible.

If you are setting up wearable equipment, have a chat to the HSW team, or some of the technical groups around the university that already use them, for advice. We are also gathering some best practice notes from current users and they will be up on the intranet or Knowledge Base soon.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



This and previous issues of the HSW E-update are available [here](#).

As usual, if you have any query on anything related to health, safety or wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact us on hsw@auckland.ac.nz.

Similarly, if you have any suggestions as to topics you would like us to cover in future e-updates, please get in touch.



Angus Clark

Associate Director – HSW