

# Work Environment & Facilities Procedure (3)





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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the requirements for managing the work environment and facilities owned and / or managed by a Catholic Church Endowment Society Inc. (CCES) entity.

It provides practical guidance on how to provide and maintain a physical work environment that is without risks to health and safety. This procedure covers:

- the physical work environment, such as workspace, lighting and ventilation; and
- facilities for workers, including toilets, drinking water, washing and dining areas, change rooms, personal storage and shelter.

## 2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all workers under the Catholic Church Endowment Society Inc.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

Definitions can be found on the [Catholic Safety & Injury Management Website](#).

### 3.1. Information

Refer to National Construction Code Volume one (1) Health and Amenities for student toilet ratios.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific responsibilities for carrying out certain actions required by the CCES, have been allocated to particular position holders within the organisation. Such responsibilities are consistent with the obligations that the legislation places on officers, managers, supervisors, workers and others in the workplace.

Responsibility, authority and accountability processes have been defined in [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Procedure \(12\)](#), and summarised in:

- [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Workers \(025G\)](#);
- [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Managers & Supervisors \(023G\)](#);
- [Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Officers \(024G\)](#); and
- [Work Health & Safety and Injury Management Policy](#).

You are required to familiarise yourself with this procedure in order to understand the obligations that you may have in relation to its implementation and to carry out your assigned actions and responsibilities.

This Procedure is to be read in conjunction with your Organisational Policies and / or Procedures.



## 5. PROCEDURE

The type of facilities needed at the workplace depend on the industry the business or undertaking is operating in, the nature of the work carried out, the size and location of the workplace and the number and composition of workers at the workplace.

The requirements in the National Construction Code of Australia determines the minimum building requirements for what facilities are required for new buildings.

New facilities shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the National Construction Codes of Australia, safety legislation and relevant Codes of Practice.

All facilities shall be evaluated against the requirements of safety legislation and Codes of Practice using [Work Environment & Facilities Checklist \(057F\)](#) or equivalent initially and when there are any significant changes.

### 5.1. Work Environment

All worksites must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that:

- the layout of the workplace allows, and is maintained to allow, persons to enter and exit the workplace and move within it safely, both under normal working conditions and in an emergency;
- work areas have space for work to be carried out safely;
- floors and other surfaces are designed, installed and maintained to allow work to be carried out safely;
- lighting enables each worker to carry out work safely, persons to move around safely and safe evacuation in an emergency;
- ventilation enables workers to carry out their work without risk to their health and safety;
- workers exposed to extremes of heat or cold are able to carry out work without risk to their health and safety; and
- work in relation to or near essential services (such as gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telecommunications) does not affect the health and safety of persons at the workplace.

#### 5.1.1. Entry and Exit

All worksites shall ensure:

- the means of entry and exit to and from the workplace must be safe. This must include ensuring that workers with special needs or disabilities can safely enter and leave the workplace;
- entries and exits should be slip-resistant under wet and dry conditions;
- aisles and walkways should be at least 600 mm wide and kept free of furniture or other obstructions at all times. Where it is necessary to clearly define entry and exit routes, the boundaries of the route should be marked by a permanent line of white, yellow or other contrasting colour at least 50 mm wide or by glowing markers. Entry and exit routes, stairs and walkways should be adequately lit;



- open sides of staircases should be guarded with an upper rail at 900 mm or higher and a lower rail. A handrail should be provided on at least one side of every staircase. Extra handrails may be needed down the centre of wide staircases. Further information is available in AS / NZS 1657 Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders—design, construction and installation;
- separate entries and exits for mobile equipment (e.g. forklifts, trucks) and pedestrians shall be provided to minimise the risk of persons being hit by moving vehicles. If people and vehicles have to share a traffic route, use kerbs, barriers or clear marking to designate a safe walkway.
- the location of exits shall be clearly marked and signs posted to show the direction to exit doors to aid emergency evacuation. Refer to [Emergency Management Procedure \(10\)](#).

### 5.1.2. Work Areas

The layout of work areas shall be designed to provide sufficient clear space between furniture, fixtures and fittings so that workers can move about freely without strain or injury and also evacuate quickly in case of an emergency. Space for aisles, passages and access to other areas is needed in addition to the space around workstations. In determining how much space is needed, the following are considered:

- the physical actions needed to perform the task;
- the need to move around while working;
- whether the task is to be performed from a sitting or standing position;
- access to workstations; and
- the equipment to be handled and the personal protective equipment that may be worn to perform the work.

Environmental factors including heat or noise may require an increase to the space, as will work activities that involve manual tasks or the use of tools (e.g. knives, hand & portable power tools etc.) where the risk of injury is increased due to close working conditions.

### 5.1.3. Workstations

Workstations should be designed so workers can carry out their work in a comfortable, upright position with shoulders relaxed and upper arms close to the body. Different workers require different working heights. Worksites must provide workstations suitable for the person and the task (e.g. by providing adjustable workstations).

Many tasks are best done in a seated position, for example screen-based work. For tasks undertaken in a seated position, workers should be provided with seating that:

- provides good body support, especially for the lower back;



- provides foot support, preferably with both feet flat on the floor, otherwise a footrest should be provided; and
- allows space for leg clearance and freedom of movement.

Chairs should be fully adjustable to accommodate different-sized workers with seat height, back rest height and back rest tilt adjustments and should not tip or slip—a five-point base is the most stable. Castors should be used on carpet and glides or braked castors on hard surfaces. Refer to [Hazardous Manual Tasks Procedure \(16\)](#).

#### 5.1.4. Floors and other surfaces

Floor surfaces should be suitable for the work area.

The choice of floor surfaces or coverings will depend on the type of work carried out at the workplace, as well as the materials used during the work process, the likelihood of spills and other contaminants, including dust, and the need for cleaning.

Floors should be inspected regularly in line with workplace inspections and maintained to eliminate slip and trip hazards. Common examples of hazards include trailing cables, uneven edges or broken surfaces, gratings or covers, loose mats or carpet tiles.

Floor surfaces require sufficient grip to prevent slipping, especially in areas that may become wet or contaminated.

Cleaning methods should take account of the potential for slips, which may be increased by the use of some cleaning agents.

Workers who undertake static standing work should be protected from discomfort and the jarring effects of direct contact with concrete, masonry or steel floors, for example, by providing carpet, cushion-backed vinyl, shock-absorbent underlay, anti-fatigue matting, grates or duckboards.

Floors and other surfaces, such as mezzanines or platforms that people may walk on, must be strong enough to support loads placed on them. Refer to [Fall Prevention Procedure \(23\)](#).

#### 5.1.5. Storage and racking

Racking shall comply with the requirements of AS / NZS 4084 Steel storage racking.

Damaged racking shall be removed from service and be tagged in accordance with the requirements of [Plant Management Procedure \(15\)](#). “Out of Service” signage shall be prominently fitted to the lower level of damaged racking to clearly identify the damaged rack and shall display the “Danger Tag”.

Racking shall have in one or more conspicuous locations, a permanent corrosion resistant plaque not less than 125 mm long and 250 mm high with minimum 25 mm lettering and shall be mechanically secured to the racking structure at 2 m above floor





level. Operating instructions on the plaque shall include but not limited to the following:

- the correct application and use of the equipment;
- the working load limits to be adhered to;
- prohibitions on unauthorised alterations;
- the requirement to report any damage incurred due to impact so that its effect can be assessed

Racking shall be subject to regular inspections, and at least every (12) twelve months to;

- ensure the correct application and use of equipment;
- ensure that working loads are adhered to;
- ensure that the racking installation has not been altered. A copy of the load application and configuration diagrams shall be retained for this purpose;
- examine the extent of damage due to impact in the racking installation;
- examine the “out-of-plumb” of the racking;
- examine for any dislocation and deformation of sections and connections for uprights and beams;
- examine connectors for deformation or signs of cracking of the welds; and
- examine base plates and floor anchors.

Goods shall be stored in such a way to prevent loads falling or shifting. Consideration shall be given to goods falling through the back of racking. Goods stored in racking shall be on pallets or a safe alternative. Where there is a risk of items falling, goods shall be secured to the pallet either through shrink wrapping, strapping or a safe alternative.

Goods shall not be stored on racks where the goods exceed the safe working load for the shelf beam or where the total load would exceed the safe working total unit load for each bay.

#### 5.1.6. Lighting

Lighting must be provided, whether it is from a natural or artificial source, to allow safe movement around the workplace and to allow workers to perform their job without having to adopt awkward postures or strain their eyes to see.

When considering the type and level of lighting needed in the workplace, the following factors should be taken into account:

- the nature of the work activity;
- the nature of hazards and risks in the workplace;
- the work environment;
- the level of natural light including transitions or changes throughout the day;



- current level of artificial lighting;
- glare;
- contrast; and
- reflections.

Different lighting levels may be needed for different times of the day. Too much lighting can result in glare. Measures to prevent low or excessive levels of lighting, glare or reflection include:

- providing extra lighting, such as a lamp on a movable arm;
- changing the position of existing lights;
- changing the location of the workstation;
- increasing or decreasing the number of lights;
- changing the type of lighting used for example from white light to blue light;
- changing the diffusers or reflectors on existing lights; and
- using screens, visors, shields, hoods, curtains, blinds or external louvres to reduce reflections, shadows and glare.

Adequate lighting after dark may be required for outdoor paths around the workplace and car parks. Outdoor lighting should allow workers to move about easily without risk of falling.

As per the class of building, emergency lighting must be provided for the safe evacuation of people in the event of an emergency.

#### 5.1.7. Housekeeping

An untidy workplace can cause injuries, in particular injuries resulting from slips and trips, therefore good housekeeping practices are essential for all workplaces. For example:

- spills on floors should be cleaned up immediately;
- walkways should be kept clear of obstructions;
- work materials should be neatly stored; and
- waste should be regularly removed.

Areas close to workspaces should be allocated to allow for the storage of tools and materials that are used frequently, for example providing racks for hand tools above workbenches.

Containers for waste should be conveniently located and regularly emptied.

Workers are to leave their immediate work area in a clean and tidy condition at the end of the working day.





### 5.1.8. Ventilation

Workplaces must be ventilated to allow work to be carried out without risk to health and safety. Fresh, clean air should be drawn from outside the workplace, uncontaminated by discharge from flumes or other outlets, and be circulated through the workplace.

It is the responsibility of the PCBU with control of the premises to ensure that air-conditioning and other ventilation systems are regularly serviced and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Workplaces inside buildings may have natural ventilation, mechanical ventilation (fans or extraction units) or air-conditioning.

Where workers could be exposed to air-borne contaminants (e.g. welding fumes, dust), specific control measures to remove or reduce the potential for exposure, so far as is reasonably practicable must be implemented.

### 5.1.9. Heat and Cold

Workers carrying out work in extreme heat or cold must be able to carry out work without a risk to their health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Thermal comfort is affected by many factors, including air temperature, air movement, floor temperature, humidity, clothing, the amount of physical exertion, average temperature of the surroundings and sun penetration.

Both personal and environmental factors should be considered when assessing the risk to workers' health from working in a very hot or cold environment. Personal factors can include the use of some prescription medication, age, health condition, the level of physical activity, pregnancy and breastfeeding, the amount and type of clothing worn, and duration of exposure. Environmental factors include air temperature, the level of humidity, air movement and radiant heat.

The means of maintaining a comfortable temperature will depend on the working environment and the weather, and could include any of the following:

- air-conditioning;
- fans;
- electric heating;
- open windows;
- building insulation;
- layout of workstations; and
- direct sunlight control.

In summer, where temperatures are extreme, worksites shall ensure:

- adequate drinking water is available;



- extra rest breaks are provided in a cool area, if possible in an air-conditioned environment;
- reallocating or rotating workers duties and / or arrange more workers to do the job to reduce individual exposure;
- work is rescheduled when extreme weather is predicted, to a time, either earlier or later in the day or complete work indoors if possible.

Worksites may have a Hot Weather Policy that stipulates if forecast temperatures reaches a certain level, then no outside work is to be undertaken. Worksites to ensure if a policy exists, it is communicated to workers.

## 5.2. Facilities

Worksites must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision of adequate facilities for workers, including toilets, drinking water, washing and eating facilities. These facilities must be in good working order, clean, safe and accessible.

When considering how to provide and maintain facilities that are adequate and accessible, consider:

- the nature of the work being carried out at the workplace;
- the nature of the hazards at the workplace;
- the size, location and nature of the workplace, and
- the number and composition of the workers at the workplace.

### 5.2.1. Access to facilities

Workers, including those who have particular needs or disabilities, are to be provided with access to the facilities. Facilities may not need to be provided if they are already available within reasonable distance from the work area, are suitable for workers to use and the workers are provided with breaks to use the facilities.

### 5.2.2. Drinking water

Clean drinking water must be provided free of charge for workers at all times. The supply of the drinking water should be:

- positioned where it can be easily accessed by workers and;
- separate from toilet or washing facilities to avoid contamination of the drinking water.

The temperature of the drinking water should be at or below twenty - four (24° C) degrees Celsius. This may be achieved by:

- refrigerating the water or providing non-contaminated ice; or
- shading water pipes and storage containers from the sun.

Water should be supplied in a hygienic manner, so that workers do not drink directly from a shared container. This may involve:



- a drinking fountain, where the water is delivered in an upward jet; or
- a supply of disposable or washable drinking containers.

### 5.2.3. Toilets

Access to clean toilets must be provided for all workers while they are at work.

For workplaces within buildings, the National Construction Code of Australia sets out the ratio of toilets to the number of workers, and the specifications for toilets. Generally, separate toilets should be provided in workplaces where there are both male and female workers. However, one (1) unisex toilet may be provided in workplaces with both male and female workers where:

- the total number of people who normally work at the workplace is ten (10) or fewer; and
- there are two (2) or fewer workers of one (1) gender.

A unisex toilet should include one (1) closet pan, one (1) washbasin and means for disposing of sanitary items.

For all other workplaces, separate toilets should be provided in the following ratios.

Workers	Closet Pan(s)	Urinals	Hand washing basins
<b>Females</b>	1 per 15 females	N/A	1 per 30 females
<b>Males</b>	1 per 20 males	1 per 25 males	1 per 30 males

Toilets should be:

- fitted with a hinged seat and lid;
- provided with lighting and ventilation;
- clearly signposted;
- fitted with a hinged door capable of locking from the inside on each cubicle;
- designed to allow emergency access;
- positioned to ensure privacy for users; and
- separated from other rooms by an airlock, a sound-proof wall and a separate entrance that is clearly marked.

Toilets should be supplied with:

- toilet paper for each toilet;
- hand washing facilities;
- rubbish bins; and
- for workers, hygienic means to dispose of sanitary items.

### 5.2.4. Hand washing

Hand washing facilities must be provided to enable workers to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene. Workers may need to wash their hands at different



times, for example after visiting the toilet, before and after eating meals, after handling chemicals or handling greasy machinery.

Hand washing facilities should:

- be accessible at all times to work areas, eating areas and the toilets;
- be separate from troughs or sinks used in connection with the work process;
- contain both hot and cold water taps or temperature mixers;
- be protected from the weather;
- be supplied with non-irritating soap preferably from a soap dispenser; and
- contain hygienic hand drying facilities, for example automatic air dryers or paper towels.

Where a worksite engages in activities such as food preparation or health care, there are also duties under health & food safety legislation in relation to hand washing facilities.

In situations where there are no hand washing facilities (e.g. grounds & maintenance sheds), workers should be provided with access to alternative hand hygiene facilities such as a water container with soap and paper towels, hand wipes or alcohol-based hand wash.

#### 5.2.5. Dining facilities

Workers must be provided with access to hygienic facilities for eating, preparing and storing food.

A separate eating area should be provided if:

- ten (10) or more workers usually eat at the workplace at the same time; or
- there is a risk of substances or processes contaminating food.

#### 5.2.6. Facilities for large static workplaces

A dedicated eating area should be provided that is protected from the weather and is separated from work processes, toilet facilities and hazards, including noise, heat and atmospheric contaminants. It should be supplied with:

- tables and seats to accommodate each worker likely to use the eating area at one time;
- a sink with hot and cold water, washing utensils and detergent;
- an appliance for boiling water;
- crockery and cutlery;
- food warming appliances, such as a microwave oven;
- clean storage, including a refrigerator for storing perishable food; and
- vermin-proof rubbish bins, which should be emptied at least daily.



Eating areas should have one (1) m<sup>2</sup> of clear space for each person likely to use the area at any one time. The clear space is calculated free of furniture, fittings or obstructions such as pillars. This means that the size of an eating area for ten (10) workers should be ten (10) m<sup>2</sup> plus extra space for furniture, appliances and fittings such as sinks.

For some small workplaces, an area within the workplace for making tea / coffee, preparing and storing food might be all that is needed. The facility should be protected from the weather, be free of tools, work materials and be separated from toilet facilities and hazards including noise, heat and atmospheric contaminants. It should be supplied with:

- seating;
- a sink with hot and cold water, washing utensils and detergent;
- an appliance for boiling water;
- clean storage, including a refrigerator for storing perishable food; and
- vermin-proof rubbish bins, which should be emptied at least daily.

#### 5.2.7. Personal storage

Accessible and secure storage should be provided at the workplace for personal items belonging to workers, for example handbags, jewellery, medication or hygiene supplies.

This storage should be separate from that provided for personal protective clothing and equipment in cases where contamination is possible. Refer to [Personal Protective Equipment Procedure \(29\)](#).

Where work involves the use of tools provided by a worker, provision should be made for secure and weatherproof storage of those tools during non-working hours.

#### 5.2.8. Change rooms

If workers have to change in and out of clothing due to the nature of their work, access to private changing areas with secure storage for personal belongings should be provided. There should be separate male and female changing rooms and the temperature of the changing room maintained so that it is comfortable for workers when changing.

#### 5.2.9. Shower facilities

For certain jobs involving dirty, hot or hazardous work, showers may need to be provided. Usually separate facilities should be provided for males and females. However, in small workplaces where privacy can be assured, it may be acceptable to provide one unisex shower.



#### 5.2.10. Accommodation

Where workers are required to sleep at their 'workplace' (e.g. boarding house supervisors, carers), accommodation should be separated from hazards at the workplace likely to adversely affect the health and safety of a worker using the accommodation. The accommodation facilities should also:

- be lockable, with safe entry and exit;
- meet all relevant structural and stability requirements;
- meet electrical and fire safety standards;
- have a supply of drinking water;
- have toilets, washing and laundry facilities;
- be regularly cleaned and have rubbish collected;
- have crockery, utensils and eating facilities;
- have lighting, heating, cooling and ventilation;
- have storage cupboards and other furniture;
- be provided with a refrigerator or cool room; and
- have all fittings, appliances and equipment in good condition.

#### 5.3. Records

Documents used to manage Work Environment & Facilities as prescribed by this procedure will be produced in a format that allows tracking for verification and review and be in accordance with requirements detailed in [Document Control Procedure \(22\)](#).

#### 5.4. Review

This procedure will be subject to a planned review by the document owner in accordance with the requirements outline in [Document Control Procedure \(22\)](#).

Other methods for reviewing and evaluating the performance of this procedure will include:

- audit activity;
- investigations;
- performance reports.

## 6. RELATED SYSTEM DOCUMENTS

### 6.1. Policies & Procedures

Audit Procedure (7)

Consultation & Communication Procedure (5)

Document Control Procedure (22)

Emergency Management Procedure (10)

Fall Prevention Procedure (23)

Hazard Management Procedure (14)





Hazardous Manual Tasks (16)

Personal Protective Equipment Procedure (29)

Plant Management Procedure (15)

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Procedure (12)

## 6.2. Forms & Tools

Work Environment & Facilities Checklist (057F)

Work Environment & Facilities (3) Process Flow Chart (021T)

## 7. REFERENCES

Legislation and other requirements related to this procedure are defined in [Group Legal Register \(010T\)](#) which can be accessed via the Catholic Safety & Injury Management website.

### 7.1. Internal Resources

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Managers & Supervisors (023G)

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Officers (024G)

Responsibility, Authority & Accountability Matrix – Workers (025G)

### 7.2. External Resources

National Construction Code

## 8. AUDITABLE OUTPUTS

The following examples will be used to verify implementation of this procedure:

- Workplace Inspections
- Inspection & Testing Checklists
- Air conditioning and ventilation inspection reports
- Emergency plans
- Safety signage
- Facilities (e.g. toilets, drinking water, hand washing, food preparation etc.)



## 9. VERSION CONTROL & CHANGE HISTORY

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