

HEALTH & SAFETY BASICS

What is this document about?

Developing an approach to health and safety.

Ensuring that your club provides a safe and enjoyable environment for its members is straightforward. You just need a clear and commonsense approach.

What is health and safety?

Health and safety is about the hazards that exist in your usual club environment. Are there hazard signs? Are there enough toilets and hand-washing facilities? Do you have a first aid kit and people trained in its use? What will you do in the event of an accident or Civil Defense emergency? Do you have contact numbers for your members' next-of-kin to ensure they can be contacted in the case of an illness or serious injury?

However big or small, the club should have plans in place to deal with health and safety issues. How extensive these plans are will vary, depending on the size and structure of your club. But even if the club is small, it's still important that these issues are considered.

The club's legal requirements change according to whether or not you employ paid staff. But, in short, club management and members should consider the following guidelines to ensure everyone remains healthy and safe while participating in club activities.

Developing a policy

Essentially, the club must comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. The Act aims to prevent harm to all people at work and to others who are in, or in the vicinity of, workplaces. This means that employers and others (you and the club) must maintain safe working environments and implement sound health and safety practices.

If the club does not employ anyone, but depends on a group of volunteers, it is still important that reasonable steps are taken to ensure the health and safety of members, participants and volunteers. A local body or OSH inspector may review your premises, event or venue and make recommendations for dealing with hazards. But they can't enforce those recommendations unless you have paid employees.

An important way of ensuring your club is up to scratch with the Act is to develop a health and safety policy. This is your club's statement on how it will ensure the health and safety of anyone involved in its activities. Appoint a health and safety coordinator to develop a policy for the club and ensure this is upheld. This includes hazard management, accident reporting, safety checklists, emergency procedures and accident reporting.

What to include in a health and safety policy

- The purpose of the policy, for example, club members and officers need to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of everyone on the premises.
- Procedures required to meet the policy - include a checklist or register for the coordinator to regularly use to check for hazards around the buildings/fields etc.
- Ensure staff and volunteers know they must notify the coordinator of any hazards so action can be taken to minimise the risk of an injury occurring.
- Outline ways to deal with hazards that can't be managed immediately, for example, any hazards not dealt with straightaway must be noted and discussed at the next committee meeting.
- Outline emergency evacuation procedures – what people should do in the event of an emergency such as a fire or earthquake (emergency procedures should be displayed prominently).
- Outline an incident management procedure, for example, what to do in the event of an accident.

Sport New Zealand provides a comprehensive guide to health and safety legislation as it affects sport and recreation organisations in Supporting sport: health and safety. The sample health and safety policy manual covers many issues around health and safety in the workplace in addition to those occurring in a club situation.

Appointing a coordinator

Your club should ensure that someone on the committee is given the role of health and safety coordinator. This does not have to be a separate position, but can be if preferred. It's the health and safety coordinator's role to ensure the club's health and safety policies are followed. This includes hazard management, accident reporting, safety checklists and emergency procedures. We have provided a sample job description for a health and safety coordinator.



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Hazard management

One of the most effective ways to reduce accidents at the club is to identify potential hazards and implement a strategy on how to control them. A hazard is any activity, situation or substance that can cause harm. You can't manage hazards at your club if you don't know what they are. Maintain a hazard register.

Regularly spend time going through a hazard identification checklist. This will enable you to deal with issues as they arise, make a plan for dealing with each hazard, and hopefully prevent future injuries.

Emergency procedures

Notify everyone at the clubrooms or venue of emergency procedures in the event of fire, earthquake or other major incident. If the club does not own or rent its premises, then these procedures should be readily available from the venue you are using. If the club meets in a private home, then it's a good idea to inform everyone of exits as well as toilets and other general information.

Contact your local Civil Defence centre and/or local council to establish the correct guidelines for action in the event of a civil defence emergency. There should be enough emergency food/water/blankets etc. to keep members safe should a major disaster occur while the club is meeting. More information on planning for civil defence emergencies can be found in the front of your phonebook and Yellow Pages as well as on the Civil Defence website.

Accident recording, reporting and investigation

If the club employs staff, you are legally obliged to record and investigate all accidents that happen while at work. You are also obliged to notify all accidents that involve serious harm to an employee to your nearest Work Safe office. Even if you don't employ paid staff, it's still a good idea to record all accidents on a register to prevent future accidents of the same kind. We have provided a Corrective And Preventative Action (CAPA) form for you to use. The version with the Accident reporting section also includes a track inspection section for use prior to any activity on your track. There is also a sample Accident Investigation form which you may choose to use.

Sport NZ has also produced a comprehensive guide to health and safety legislation as it affects sport and recreation organisations in health and safety in Strong organisations. This document outlines your legal responsibilities as an employer.

Training courses

There are lots of first aid and safety courses available. Red Cross New Zealand or St John New Zealand both offer a variety of health and safety training courses around the country. There are also commercial training courses available to help you find out more about health and safety in the workplace. Check your Yellow Pages or search on Google to find suitable courses near you.