

## **WORLD BANK GROUP HEALTH AND SAFETY CHARTER**

### **Introduction and purpose**

The health and safety of World Bank Group (WBG) staff is paramount. It is the foundation for everything we do, our happiness and wellbeing, our engagement and productivity, and our capacity to contribute to the WBG mission.

This document summarizes the WBG approach to protecting and enhancing the health and safety of staff, and is intended to guide the initial steps in developing and implementing a Health and Safety management system. It addresses:

- The President's statement on health and safety;
- The context of the WBG approach to health and safety;
- The core principles of managing health and safety in the WBG;
- Responsibility and accountability.

As implementation of the WBG Health and Safety management system progresses, Directives, Procedures, and Guidelines will be issued under the WBG Policy and Procedure Framework.

### **President's Statement<sup>1</sup>:**

People are the World Bank Group's most valuable resource, and to support our staff, our working environment should be as healthy and safe as possible. I would like all staff to know that I am fully committed to maintaining such an environment, and to promoting the highest degree of physical, mental, and social wellbeing of all employees.

During my travels and interactions with staff, I have been pleased to see how much effort is already devoted to staff health and safety, involving the contributions of many people across the WBG. I was also encouraged by the extremely positive recognition recorded by staff in our recent Employee Engagement Survey regarding actions taken to ensure their safety at work. But we need to do more to ensure that these efforts are coordinated, managed, and directed towards the most prevalent risks. We need to establish clear roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities through the managerial structure, while also recognizing the responsibility that individuals have for their own health and safety.

To this end I am establishing a representative Occupational Health and Safety Committee reporting to the Senior Management Team, tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring a Health and Safety policy that will apply to our staff wherever they may be. The committee will help guide a global Occupational Health and Safety Management system to identify, assess, manage, and monitor risks derived from medical, psychosocial, and physical work environment factors. Our commitment to Occupational Health and Safety will enhance the efficiency and sustainability of the World Bank Group's workforce, and optimize our capacity to accomplish our goals.

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Yong Kim. WBG Kiosk announcement, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

## Context

The WBG aspires to promote and maintain the highest degree of physical, mental, and social wellbeing for all its employees, and to ensure a healthy and safe environment in all its workplaces. It has long advocated for its partners and clients to do the same<sup>2</sup>.

Ensuring employee Health and Safety is:

The right thing to do:

In today's world, creating a healthy workplace that does no harm to the mental or physical health, safety or well-being of workers is a moral imperative. Many employers, including the WBG, aspire to go beyond legislated minimum standards, embracing the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility;

The smart thing to do:

The business argument behind creation of healthy workplaces is compelling. There is a wealth of data demonstrating that in the long term, the most successful and competitive companies are those that have the best health and safety records, and the most physically and mentally healthy and satisfied employees;

The legal thing to do:

Most countries have legislation requiring, at a minimum, that employers protect workers from hazards in the workplace that could cause injury or illness. Many have much more extensive and sophisticated regulations. Although the WBG generally operates under a specific host country agreement which provides immunity to National Legal systems, the Bank's working principle is to at least comply with local laws and standards, and to set the example for improvement where needed.

In formulating its approach to Occupational Health and Safety, the WBG is guided by the World Health Organization's Healthy Workplace framework<sup>3 4</sup>, the International Labour Office Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems<sup>5</sup>, and the United Nations Common System Occupational Safety and Health Framework<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> IFC / World Bank Group. Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines: Occupational Health and Safety, April 30, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization. Worker's Health: Global plan of action (WHA60.26 dated 23 May, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> WHO Healthy Workplaces: a model for action for employers, workers, policy makers, and practitioners, 2010

<sup>5</sup> International Labour Office. ILO-OSH 2001.

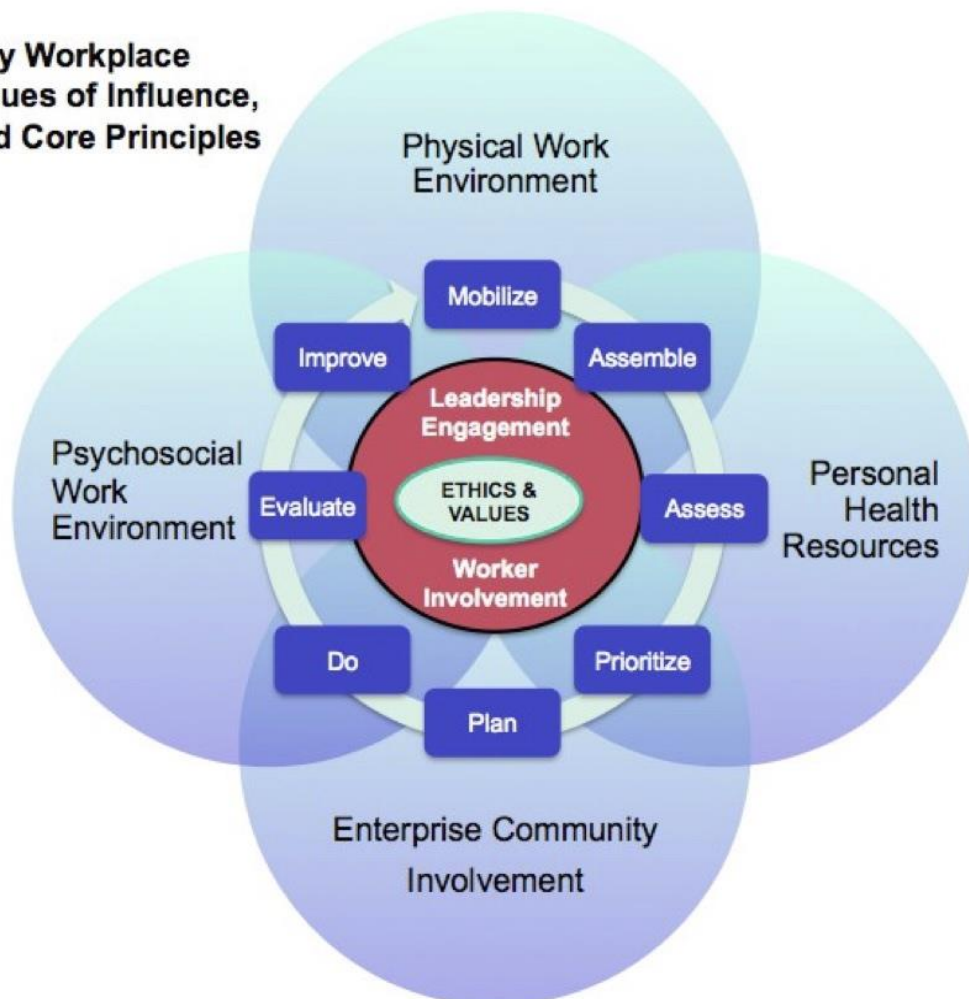
<sup>6</sup> United Nations Common System Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Framework. CEB/2015/HLCM/7/Rev.2 31 March 2015.

A healthy workplace is one in which employees and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of staff and the sustainability of the workplace<sup>3</sup>, by considering:

- health and safety concerns in the physical work environment;
- health, safety and well-being concerns in the psychosocial work environment including organization of work, workplace culture, and maintaining a healthy balance between work demands and personal life;
- personal health resources in the workplace; and
- the influence of the local community and nearby environments on employee health<sup>7</sup>, and ways of participating in the community to improve the health of employees, their families and other members of the community.

These four avenues of influence overlap with one another, and form the backdrop to a continual improvement process, which engages management and employees, and strives to optimize health and safety in the workplace.

**WHO Healthy Workplace  
Model: Avenues of Influence,  
Process, and Core Principles**



<sup>7</sup> For example, unhealthy water supplies or uncontrolled atmospheric pollution can constitute significant challenges to health.



## **Core Principles of Health and Safety Management**

Within the context of the above model, the core principles adopted by the WBG for optimizing health and safety in the workplace are:

**Leadership and example:** Empowered and guided by the President's statement of commitment to health and safety, all levels of management are expected to set the example regarding health and safety, ensuring that all employees are informed and involved. A Health and Safety Committee, reporting to the Senior Management Team, will develop policy, assign responsibilities, and monitor implementation and improvement;

**Risk management:** In all its activities, workplaces and operations, the WBG encourages an approach that includes identification of hazards (and who may be affected by them), analysis of risk, implementation of reasonably practical risk mitigation measures to achieve acceptable levels of residual risk, and ongoing monitoring and adjustment to ensure that risk mitigation strategies are effective;

**Accident/incident response:** Although every preventive effort will be made, the WBG recognizes that accidents and incidents might still occur. Effective emergency response to accidents and incidents is therefore an important part of risk management.

**Training and education:** The WBG will ensure training for supervisors and managers in the principles and practice of Risk Management, and will ensure that all employees are aware of their own role in protecting the health and safety of themselves and others;

**Transparency and communication:** All employees should be aware of any significant known risks in their working environment, how the WBG health and safety management system is addressing these risks, and of their own role in achieving optimal health and safety conditions. Through permanent representation on the WBG Health and Safety Committee, the WBG Staff Association is included in the management and monitoring structures for health and safety;

**Documentation:** Health and safety program activities will be documented, and records kept of workplace accidents, and related injuries, illnesses or property losses;

**Periodic review:** Regular review will determine what is working, and what changes are needed.

## **Responsibility and Accountability**

Health and safety is a responsibility that starts at the level of the President, and flows down through the line management chain to all supervisors. Employees themselves are also responsible for their own health and safety, and for implementing the organisation's health and safety directives, procedures, and guidelines. Dedicated health, safety, medical or other services are tools that enable management to fulfil its responsibility and duty of care regarding staff health and safety.

Specifically:

The President: Sets the tone for a work and management environment in which all employees are involved in continual improvement of health and safety performance, and that adequate resources are allocated to this purpose;

The Occupational Health and Safety Committee guides, monitors, reviews and improves the WBG Health and Safety program, reporting directly to the President and the Senior Management Team (see below);

Managers and supervisors are responsible for the occupational health and safety of their staff, and will implement all elements of the WBG Health and Safety Directive, Procedures and Guidelines;

All WBG employees and contractors on WBG premises are responsible for the health and safety consequences of their own actions on others, and to be aware of and to implement the provisions of WBG health and safety Directives, Procedures, and Guidelines. Any health and safety concerns should be reported immediately to WBG management.

## **Occupational Health and Safety Committee**

Mandated by the President, and reporting to the Senior Management Team, strategic guidance and program oversight is provided by an Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OHSC), which has at least the following members:

- Chair (Vice President, Human Resources)
- Secretary (Director, Health Services Department)
- Representatives of:
  - Staff Association
  - General Services
  - Human Resources
  - Security
  - Health Services
  - Legal
  - WBG Functional Regions
  - WBG Global Practices

The functions of the OHSC are to:

- provide leadership and advice to the WBG on matters relating to OHS;
- develop a corporate strategy for implementing an OHS management system that defines priorities, assigns specific responsibility and accountability, allocates resources, and provides program implementation advice;
- develop and review WBG OHS standards, giving due consideration to relevant host country's national standards;
- promote occupational health and safety awareness by support for training and awareness programs on accident and disease prevention, and related educational activities for staff;
- monitor and evaluate the implementation of OHS management system, and make recommendations for improvement.

## **Conclusion**

The WBG recognizes that health and safety is the foundation upon which all other activities are built. Being optimally healthy enables individuals to enjoy their lives, to engage fully with the demands of their jobs, to be productive and creative, and to achieve results. The WBG health and safety management system includes the mandate, framework, and procedural guidance to ensure that our health and safety aspirations and goals are met.

Next steps include the development and implementation of a set of occupational health and safety directives, procedures and guidelines that will ensure that:

- hazards that pose a risk to health or threaten safety are recognized, recorded, and managed;
- preventive and mitigation strategies for these hazards are implemented;
- training on health and safety is provided to all staff;
- incidents/accidents are reported, reviewed, and prevented; and
- a continuous process for recording, monitoring, review, and improvement is in place for the World Bank Group's occupational health and safety management system.