

## WHATS YOUR POLICY ON SAFETY

It's what you really feel about this topic of safety that should be written into your policy, if it feels good/right then you will probably do it, and others will believe in it too. As with any plan of action this is your starting point, it sets the tone for other things that will follow, it conveys the message of leadership and that there are standards to be met.

There are many examples of policy documents that can be used (see some over the page) but the truth is it's about your shed and your members, so write it the way you want it to be. No two Mens Sheds are really the same, just like the people who are in the Shed, so draw together the key messages you want to say about keeping people safe and happy in your Shed and write them in easy to understand terms, on one page only, you don't need to write a book.

**“You have a Duty of Care to ensure the safety of all persons who may enter the Shed”**

The Health and Safety in Employment Act aims to promote the health and safety of everyone at work and of other people in and around places of work, including volunteers. To achieve this, it requires people who are responsible for work and those who do the work to take steps to ensure their own health and safety and that of others.

Mens Sheds are not exempt from the Act, there is clearly a Duty of Care responsibility that applies to voluntary community bodies such as Mens Sheds. Couple that with the fact that the things we work with in a Mens Shed are really no different to the equipment, tools and machines that are used in industry, so the outcome of misuse is probably the same – pain.

Member participation is an important tool of developing and implementing health and safety practices. We must provide reasonable opportunities for members to participate in ongoing processes for the improvement of health and safety, and members are expected to actively participate in health and safety matters.

Assign responsibilities ensuring key members/supervisors clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, and ensure they have been given the appropriate training to enable them to perform what is asked of them. Health & safety training and knowledge can come in different forms, some very good articles can be found in the “Safeguard” publication, there are seminars run by major safety equipment supply companies and ACC, as well as some private local people that can assist, and of course the WorkSafe NZ website – Occupational Safety section where you can request help, read and/or print available publications, and keep up to date with safety bulletins .



Your policy statement needs to be displayed for all to see, whether they are members, contractors or visitors to the Shed, this visual message is so important in setting the atmosphere of how things are done around here – led by safety.

It is also important that your actions back up that commitment, and right from the top, **Remember “If any member walks through and thinks he doesn’t need eye protection, after the members have decided it’s the safe way, the system will fail”**

The phrase ‘all practicable steps’ is important and qualifies many of the duties under the Act.

It applies to the general duties that must be carried out by all those in a workplace. And describes the standard of reasonable endeavour that each person must meet when carrying out those duties.

Taking ‘all practicable steps’ in relation to those things you know or ought reasonably to know about, means those steps that it is reasonably practicable to take.

A step is practicable if it is possible or capable of being done. Reasonably means that you don’t have to do everything humanly possible; you only have to do what a reasonable and prudent person would do in the same situation.

Whether a step is reasonable takes into account;

- The nature and severity of any injury or harm that may occur,
- The degree of risk or probability of injury or harm occurring,
- How much is known about the hazard and the ways of eliminating, isolating or minimising the hazard,
- The availability and cost of safeguards.

At the end of the day, the Committee has the ultimate responsibility to manage Health and Safety just like they must manage all other aspects of the Mens Shed, to ensure that the things required to be done are being done means that someone must check.

It’s not about creating something that is a burden on participants, rather its about creating and maintaining an atmosphere that is supportive of making the time people spend in the Shed, fulfilling, rewarding (not in the monetary sense) and provides pleasure. That safe and happy feeling will generate positive support and promotion from within and across the wider community.

Blokes who work shoulder to shoulder, care for each other, so let’s set the tone for the new bloke who joins us – we’ve got his back too, he’s one of us.

**“Shedding has to be great time in life – lets keep it that way”**

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