

Chapter 4: Operational Policies

Introduction

BCTS is a provincial government agency and its employees must be aware of and abide by applicable over-arching government safety policies, procedures and rules. Policies are in place to improve the health, safety and wellness of British Columbia government employees under the auspices of the BC Public Service Agency (BCPSA). Additional policies, procedures and rules may be approved by MOFR for use by all Ministry employees including BCTS employees.

Specific BCPSA or MOFR policies or procedures may be referred to in other chapters under topics addressed therein.

New policies introduced by the BCPSA or MOFR will be reviewed by the senior management of BCTS for staff communication, training and inclusion in this program.

The British Columbia provincial government operates under a collective agreement framework with its employees. The collective agreements govern the working relationship between the employer and the workforce. These agreements have been examined for requirements related to worker health and safety and these requirements have been integrated into the BCTS OHS program.

Policy Revision

Government policies are maintained by the BCPSA or MOFR. Comments or requests for additions or revisions may be made through the BCTS executive.

The provincial safety co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring changes to these policies and for alerting managers and supervisors to any changes so that they can be effectively communicated to staff. The provincial co-ordinator will also ensure website links are current and functional, so that staff can easily access the full version of current policies.

Communication of BCPSA Policies

As part of the OHS program, managers and supervisors must review employee compliance with these policies and at appropriate times re-enforce the need for compliance during staff and safety meetings or in individual cases during on the job training or performance discussions. The policies need to be discussed with new staff members during orientations.

BCPSA Policy Manual Chapter 12 Workplace Health And Safety

The Public Service Agency provides overarching policy guidance to line agencies and employees which is integrated into their policy manual. The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy Directive 12.6 outlines the public service OHS

program requirements and describes the general roles and responsibilities for all provincial government employees.

Injury Management Program/ Return to Work and Stay at Work BCPSA Policy 12.5

BCTS's first priority is to prevent injuries and illnesses through the provision of a healthy and safe workplace

BCTS recognizes the importance of managing health-related absences. Workers should return to work after a health-related absence as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so. The BCPSA has developed a cooperative and consistent program that uses modified work, rehabilitation, job placement and follow up to ensure that ill, injured, and disabled workers can remain at work or quickly return to productive and meaningful work.

In accordance with the BCPSA policy, BCTS and the BCPSA will make every reasonable effort to provide suitable alternate employment for an employee who is unable to perform his or her normal duties as a consequence of an injury or health concern. Each work site will attempt to accommodate employees who cannot perform the basic duties of their position. Return to work can involve roles across the public service spectrum and is not limited necessarily to the employees normal role or activities. It is important that medical professionals involved are aware of this potential in reflecting on back to work options.

If a worker sustains minor injuries while on the work site, the priority will be for BCTS to make arrangements for the individual to the stay at work during the recovery process.

The BCPSA employs Disability Case Management Specialists who have been assigned to provide consultative services to workplaces around the province. These specialists are available to assist line Managers with the development, implementation and maintenance of their stay at work and return to work Program and applicable program elements for their workplace.

More information can be accessed by contacting your Human Resources Consultant at BCPSA or by visiting the following links:

http://www.bcpublicservice.ca/policies/policy_manual/chapter12.htm#health

<http://www.bcpublicservice.ca/dismgmt>

<http://www.bcpublicservice.ca/policies/directives/9-12/12-05abs.htm>

Harassment Prevention

BCTS promotes an environment free from harassment and discrimination that violate the fundamental rights, dignity and integrity of the individual. Employees attend a mandatory harassment prevention workshop as soon as possible following their first day of employment.

Employees have the right to employment without discrimination or harassment due to race, color, ancestry, place of origin, religion, family status, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, political belief, and conviction for a criminal or summary offence unrelated to their employment.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome comment or conduct of a sexual nature that may detrimentally affect the work environment or lead to adverse job-related consequences for the victim of the harassment.

The full version of the standards of conduct for public service employees is located at: <http://www.bcpublicservice.ca/policies/directives/5-8/05-4soc.htm>

Violence in the Workplace

Work related threats and/or acts of violence against employees or their families is unacceptable and will not be tolerated

Employees must report any act or threat of violence and the employer will conduct an investigation into all such reports. Where a ministry employee has reasonable cause to believe that there is a risk of violence, the employee will remove her/himself from that environment.

BCTS will:

- Acknowledge the authority of employees to make and act on decisions regarding risk of violence;
- ensure employees are aware of and follow safety practices to prevent and respond to violent incidents;
- when necessary establish written practices to identify and address risks for each local worksite using input from all worksite employees; and
- offer critical incident debriefing and/or other support, including authorization for leave from work to consult with a physician of their choice for treatment or referral, to employees directly affected by workplace violence.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/manuals/policy/mngmtrsv/ms6-7.htm>

Critical Incident Stress management

The MOFR will provide a Critical Incident Stress Management Program (CISMP) which includes:

- education and prevention
- organized intervention for those suffering critical incident stress
- a resource and referral network

Specially selected and trained volunteer employees, working in conjunction with designated mental health officers will provide immediate support and assistance to Forest Service personnel exposed to a critical incident.

More information for staff can be found at: <http://gww.for.gov.bc.ca/dsq/cismp/>

Impairment

Employees conducting work in an impaired manner can substantially pose a threat to their own health and safety as well as that of their fellow workers; it will not be tolerated in the workplace.

Examples of impairment can be:

- Excessive fatigue
- Excessive mental stress or instability
- Improper use of medicinal drugs
- Impairment due to substance use (illicit drugs and alcohol)
- Physical injury, disabilities or illness not fully accommodated or addressed in the work plan that may effect safety of an employee.

BCTS believes that each employee has a responsibility and is accountable to themselves and to their fellow workers to help eliminate impairment in the workplace.

Impairment is a serious problem which must be dealt with by both the employer and employee in accordance with BC PSA guidance and in respect of the collective agreements. No employee will be subject to discipline for voluntarily seeking assistance in overcoming a problem with substance abuse prior to an initial impairment contravention occurring.

Smoking

Rules have been established within the BCPSA to allow enforcement of the restriction of smoking activities. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in the imposition of disciplinary actions.

As a result of this initiative, smoking is prohibited in the following locations:

- Government offices
- Government vehicles
- Storage and refuelling facilities
- Hazardous substance spill locations

Designated smoking areas may be provided in safe, outdoor locations at a reasonable distance from entry ways to ensure smoke does not enter the area through entrances, windows, ventilation systems or any other means. In addition, all workplaces will ensure that non-smoking signage is located at the main entries to the workplace. Further information and expectations are also presented in WSBC regulations:

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/publications/OHSRegulation/Part4.asp>

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Rules have been developed within the BCTS safety program to enforce the use of PPE. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in the imposition of disciplinary action.

- Management must ensure that appropriate PPE is provided to all employees.
- Supervisors must ensure that personal protective equipment is worn in the workplace and that employees are instructed in the care and maintenance of PPE.
- Employees must use PPE as required when conducting job activities.

A more complete description of BCTS procedures for use of PPE is located in Chapter 10.

BC Forest Service Aviation Safety Directive

The MOFR Deputy Minister letter of April 4, 2006 confirms the following:

- The MOFR Protection Program has the mandate to provide standards, procedures, guidelines and training for aviation safety across the MOFR.
- The Director, Protection Program is the authority and will continue to provide standards, procedures, guidelines, and training in aviation safety.
- Section 1.4 of the Aviation Manual describes the roles and responsibilities of MOFR staff who are flying as part of their job.

More information for staff can be found in the Aviation Safety manual at:
<http://icw.for.gov.bc.ca/protect/WMRC/MAG/AviatSafety/cover.htm>

Ergonomics

BCTS ensures that every new and relocated employee has the right to have an ergonomic assessment within a reasonable time period.

BCTS works toward the prevention of musculoskeletal injuries by identifying factors in the workplace that may expose workers to a risk of musculoskeletal injury, assessing the risk of those factors identified and ensuring the risk to workers is mitigated.

Each worksite will have access to competent professionals to assess situations and deliver training. BCTS will pursue the BCPSA to maintain a qualified list of contractors to provide this service on an as needed basis.

More information for staff can be found at:
<http://gww.for.gov.bc.ca/hrb/ww/safety/index.htm?erg#bottom>

Indoor Air Quality

BCTS works with building managers and officials to provide acceptable indoor air quality for workers by ensuring that the building ventilation system be properly designed, constructed, operated and maintained.

BCTS works under service agreements with the MOFR for building maintenance services.

Where the indoor air quality may be adversely affected by the possible malfunction of the ventilation system, the employer will investigate and require MOFR or other building maintainer take measures to re-establish acceptable indoor air quality as required.

Immediate action will be taken to vacate a building or premises when the health or safety of workers is at immediate risk from poor air quality.

Working Alone

An employee is considered to be working alone when working in a situation where no one is nearby who can see or clearly hear them to determine his/her well-being and, if needed, to secure assistance.

Working in isolation means a worker or group of workers is assigned to an activity or situation where either the location or circumstances could prevent the timely arrival of help in the event of disabling injury or other misfortune.

BCTS staff should avoid working alone whenever possible and must not be working alone and in isolation. Employees working alone or in isolation follow the business area standards for manchecks designed for those purposes.

Employees who work alone are responsible to take extra precautions to ensure their own safety when working in this situation. If using radio communication poses problems for man checks, a satellite phone or cell phone should be used as an alternative.

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

BCTS works toward reducing the need for employees to handle hazardous materials or controlled substances. BCTS WHMIS program is discharged in

collaboration with the Ministry on whole and guided by the Public Service Agency. Each BCTS office will work cooperatively with their companion ministry or other agency offices to ensure coordinators are identified and trained to ensure the implementation of the WHMIS program. These coordinators may or may not be BCTS staff however all staff with in the applicable office will be aware of who they are in order to be able to explore questions and concerns about the WHMIS.

Employees who are required to handle these materials and/or substances will be trained in the safe work practices and will complete WHMIS training prior to engaging WHMIS products.

Supervisors take the necessary steps to educate employees with regard to necessary labelling and identification of products prior to attending the workshop and ensure that employees in need of WHMIS training attend the first available workshop.

More information on WHMIS can be found at:

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/WHMIS/Home.asp>

<http://gww.for.gov.bc.ca/bcts/ba/safety/>

<http://gww.for.gov.bc.ca/hrb/ww/safety/hazards/whmis.htm>

Transportation of Dangerous Goods

BCTS works toward reducing the need for employees to handle hazardous materials or controlled substances.

Employees who are required to handle these materials and/or substances will be trained in the safe work practices and trained in safe handling of these products prior to conducting those activities. The transportation of pressurised containers must be done in accordance with the regulations governing the transportation of dangerous goods.

Pressurised containers must never be transported in the passenger compartment of aircraft, motor vehicles, or marine vessels.

When transporting any type of pressurised container to and from the job site, employees must make every effort to protect the pressurised container from accidental discharge or puncture if it has been separated from its original shipping package. The purpose of this procedure is to prevent the accidental discharge of contents from products such as, and including bear spray and tree marking paint.

When employees carry pressurised containers, they must inform pilots of this prior to boarding any aircraft. The decision on whether or not to transport the pressurised container on the aircraft will be made by the pilot.

Pressurized containers will only be stored in designated areas in and around the buildings under the control of BCTS. Pressurised containers must not be stored inside desks or office space, or any other area where there is likely to be a congregation of employees unless they are inside a protective canister that is approved for this purpose.

More information may be found at:

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/acts-regulations/GENERAL/t/tdg/act/tdg.htm>

Ministry of Forests Policy Firearms – Forestry Use

Only trained, certified/ licenced, and authorized staff are permitted to handle firearms. Firearms will be used in a safe manner and only when required in the course of Ministry duties, or for the protection of employees. Handguns are prohibited for use in the Ministry.

Branch Directors, Regional managers, and District managers/timber sales managers are accountable for monitoring the issuance and use of firearms within the branch, regional, district and timber sales offices.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/manuals/policy/mngmtrsv/ms6-3.htm>

Discipline and Enforcement

BCTS does not permit its employees to behave contrary to written rules, procedures, and legislative or regulatory requirements. The organization will also not allow unsafe actions or behaviour in the workplace; these deficiencies can cause severe injuries or fatalities.

The Disciplinary and Enforcement Policy provides for progressive action designed to correct unacceptable behaviour related to Health and Safety. Disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the BCGEU and PEA Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Options in the disciplinary action process are presented in order of severity are:

1. Informal verbal correction and counselling (not documented)
2. Formal verbal warning (documented)
3. Letter of reprimand (documented)
4. Suspension (documented)
5. Termination (documented)

Depending on the circumstance one or more of these steps may be omitted or combined.

More information for staff can be found on the BC Public Service's Performance Management and Progressive Discipline can be accessed at:

<http://gww.bcpublicservice.gov.bc.ca/epdp/resources/discipline.htm>

Rewards and Recognition

A reward and recognition policy is designed to encourage employees to make a performance difference either individually or through teams. The policy recognizes achievements or accomplishments that contribute to the overall objectives of this Program.

Each business area has the discretion to allocate resources from their budget for either a "planned recognition" or "immediate recognition", or on-the-spot recognition to individuals or teams. Planned recognition programs are pre-arranged scheduled ways of acknowledging contributions and accomplishments of an individual or team.

A BCTS program to specifically acknowledge safety awareness promotion and program achievements is dealt with in chapter 26.

More information can be accessed through the BCPSA at:

<http://www.hrtoolkit.gov.bc.ca/recognition/>

Local Procedures

Specific local rules may be put in place with a number of these policies. As an example:

- Designated smoking areas may be established
- Specific PPE may be required

Mandatory local procedures are required for working alone or in isolation and for communication and mancheck frequencies in these cases. (See also Safe Work procedures Chapter 10)

Local Procedures

Local Business Area District policies are possible.

Forms and Checklists

None.