



FAALAPOTOPOTOGA O SU'ESU'EGA FAASAIENISI A SAMOA

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ORGANISATION OF SAMOA

**Occupational Health and Safety Manual
Version One (1), October 2018**



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Occupational Health and Safety Manual

"Positive thinking achieves positive results"



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Foreword

As Chairman of the SROS' Board of Directors, I am very pleased to endorse the first version of *SROS' Occupational Health & Safety Manual*.

SROS' Occupational Health & Safety Manual designed to engage the staff in recognizing, evaluating and controlling hazards associated in SROS' buildings mainly in all laboratories.

The manual was developed with the aim to provide a central user-friendly guide for safety and other related matters for all SROS' staff and everyone should adhere to the safety guidelines stated in the manual.

Moreover, given the dynamics of the organisation, this manual is likely to review, update from time to time to suit SROS' OSH needs subject to the SROS' Board of Director's approval in every two years

Therefore, this manual is a series of policy statements, aims, and objectives of SROS to manage the risk and safety for its staff.

Sulamanaia Montini Ott
CHAIRMAN, SROS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Occupational Health and Safety Manual

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Document History

Issue date	Document status / amendments	Name of person responsible	Sign-off
May 2018	Final Draft for discussion	Sia Ah Sam	
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Warnings and Cautions

Throughout this manual, the following items are used:

WARNING: A Warning is used to indicate risk to life, up to and including death.

CAUTION: A Caution is used to indicate risk to property and / or injury to people.

Note: A Note provides additional information.

Even if a warning, caution, or note is not given, staff are at all times encouraged to take care when working on site. **Protection of life is the first consideration in an emergency.** Property protection is secondary.

WARNING: Tools present a range of hazards in the workplace, including serious injury and/or death. Tools must be inspected and maintained regularly to limit the danger to users.

WARNING: Precautions must be taken to minimize exposure to ANY spilled chemical as this can lead to injury or even death. Employees must be careful not to step in the spilled material and track it around. Always contact Emergency Response Team (ERT) personnel if an exposure to a chemical occurs.

WARNING: Chemicals can cause burns or poisoning. Make sure that you are wearing appropriate safety gear when handling chemicals. A first aid kit and chemical spill kits must be available at all times.

WARNING: Industrial gases can be highly flammable, toxic, and /or asphyxiating, which can lead to poisoning and even death. Make sure that you use all gases in accordance with the guidelines specific to the gas.

WARNING: Cylinders are under high pressure. Never use without a regulator to reduce pressure. Connect only to apparatus designed for the contained gas. Never heat cylinders. Keep oils and greases away. Avoid leakage. Avoid undue shocks. Never drop the cylinder. Store appropriately.

WARNING: Electrical faults can cause injury or even death due to shock and burns, fire, and explosions that could ignite flammable materials.

WARNING: In the case of a fire, only attempt to put out the fire **if there is no risk to your life or the life of fellow employees.**

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Occupational Health and Safety measures that are currently in force at the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa (SROS).

This Guideline is designed to help SROS and its employees plan for possibilities and enhance their ability to prevent workplace injuries and disasters. The best solution to avoid and prevent such risks and danger from happening is to develop a well-thought-out emergency plan to guide the Organisation when immediate action is necessary.

Benefits derived from better occupational health and safety (OHS) management performances include:

- Increased safety awareness among staff
- A systematic approach to identifying and controlling OHS risks
- Efficient disaster management and effective employee participation

1.1 Obligations

SROS recognises its moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy work environment for employees, clients, and visitors. This commitment extends to ensuring that the organisation's operations do not place the community at risk of injury (both physical and mental), illness, or property damage.

1.2 Objectives

SROS will:

- Ensure that all employees are provided with a working environment that is safe and without risk to their health.
- Implement and maintain safe systems of work.
- Consult with all employees on OSH matters.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure risks are controlled in the SROS workplace.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to protect employees.
- Ensure compliance with the *OSH Health Act 2002*, the *Occupational, Safety & Health Regulations, 2014*, and *SROS Human Resources Manual, 2018*.
- Provide employees with the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision.

1.3 General responsibilities of managers and staff

Managers, with the assistance from the Senior Administration Officer, are accountable for implementing this policy in their area of responsibility. They must report any breach of the policy or a situation that they believe puts their staff at risk, or any changes that they believe necessary to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Managers must:

- Gather information to determine:
 - Employee safety risks and preventive measures
 - Employee tasks within the workplace
 - Qualifications and experience required by employees to perform their work adequately and with safety at the workplace
- Evaluate, monitor, and review the OSH systems at SROS to ensure that they provide and maintain the employees' work environment in a manner that is safe and does not risk employees' health

- Determine the adequacy of risk control measures and, if required, negotiate change.
- Consult with employees in the development, promotion and implementation of health and safety policies and procedures
- Ensure that on-hired employees receive training in the safe performance of their assigned tasks
- Ensure the provision of resources to meet the health and safety commitment.
- Divisional Managers must inform employees of any material that may not be used or of any procedure that may not be carried out by a person working alone. They must ensure that the person is familiar with the procedure being used, that the procedure is reviewed, and that hazards are known.

Employees must:

- Report all identified hazards, "near misses", and injuries to their manager and/or to the Senior Administration Officer.
- Participate in skills development and training to actively improve competencies.
- Follow all health and safety policies and procedures.
- Follow safe work procedures set down by SROS.
- Work with care and consideration for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others.

2. Employee Safety Responsibilities

In addition to the report and training requirements set out in section 1.3, employees are obliged to meet the following requirements:

- Use any and all protective equipment issued to them and also maintain this equipment well.
- Under no circumstances consume alcohol or use illegal drugs during working hours as this can lead to impaired judgement and preventable accidents.
- Avoid working alone when a laboratory procedure is being performed. Safety requirements demand that someone must always be within calling distance.

2.1 Reporting accidents and injuries

It is important that any accident or incident, including "near misses", is reported immediately, even if they do not result in injury or damage.

In the event of an injury, the employee must obtain first aid treatment to ensure that the injury does not worsen. In some cases, the Accident Compensation Cooperation (ACC), may need to be notified.

All accidents and incidents must be investigated, documented, and filed. Any employee who is involved with the accident or incident must cooperate with this investigation.

2.2 Hazard reporting

If the employee identifies a hazard, they must report it to their Manager. If it is within their authority to do so, they must implement a control to eliminate the risks caused by the hazard. It is the responsibility of SROS individuals and management to take the necessary actions to control the risks in their work environment.

2.3 Rehabilitation

If an employee suffers an injury while at work that will stop them from working and they wish to submit a claim for compensation, they must forward the appropriate claim form to the Senior Administration Officer along with any authorised medical certificates.

The Senior Administration Officer will forward the claim to ACC, who will approve or reject the claim.

It is SROS policy to take all reasonable steps to help with employee rehabilitation if they suffer an injury at work. The primary focus of rehabilitation is to enable them to return to a normal life as soon as possible after their injury. It is their responsibility to co-operate in a rehabilitation program if this is part of the recovery process, and employees may also be required to assist in a rehabilitation program for a fellow employee who is recovering from an injury.

2.4 Annual medical check-ups

SROS requires all employees to attend an annual medical check-up. This could assist in the early detection of ailments and potentially prevent complications that could be detrimental to health or cause death.

3. Emergency Procedures

KEEP CALM, THINK, AND ACT QUICKLY.

SROS have emergency plans in place to ensure that potentially life-threatening events are handled with maximum efficiency in order to protect people's lives. It is important that all employees are aware of their responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

Protection of life is the first consideration in an emergency. Property protection is secondary.

Employees must:

- Learn the emergency telephone number, **911**
- Find out where they have to go if premises are evacuated.
- Find out who their Emergency Response Team (ERT) member is.
- Find out who they have to notify if an emergency occurs.
- If they are trained in the use of fire-fighting equipment, they must know the location of the equipment.

3.1 First Aid

Injured employees must report all injuries to their first aider immediately – **EMPLOYEES MUST NOT TREAT THEMSELVES**. This is important to ensure that necessary treatment can be administered before employees leave the site.

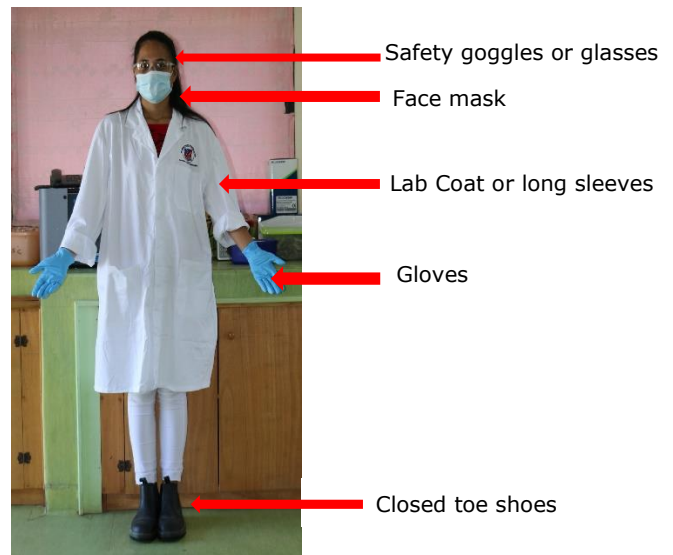
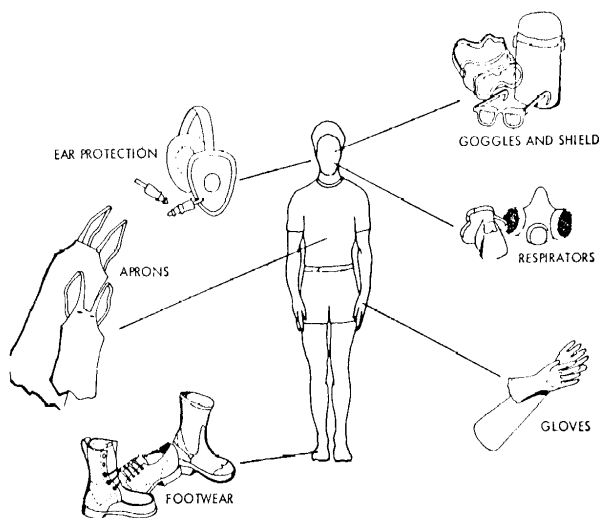
All divisions have their own first aid kit – employees must make sure that they know where the nearest first aid box is located for use in an emergency. They must not interfere with first aid boxes or supplies unless an emergency has occurred.

3.2 Personal Protective Equipment

All personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided by SROS. Wearing PPE reduces the risk of injury and it is the employee's responsibility to wear this equipment when and where required. The employee's Manager or Senior personnel will explain the protective equipment to them and PPE signage will be displayed in areas it must be worn. Employees are required to observe and follow these rules.

The following PPE is provided:

To protect ...	Employees must do the following
Hearing	Wear hearing protection in all designated areas to protect them from noise-induced hearing loss, whenever the noise level exceeds the noise exposure standards or where SROS has implemented hearing protection as control. Employees will be told if hearing protection is required.
Eyes	Wear eye protection to prevent serious eye injuries. Employees will be told where eye protection is required and the type of protection to be worn.
Feet	Wear suitable shoes or boots in designated areas to protect their feet from falling objects.
Hands	Wear gloves, if appropriate.
Body	Wear a lab coat, a long-sleeved shirt and long pants if necessary. Alternatively, an apron may be worn.
Breathing	Use a respirator if this is appropriate.



For added protection, loose clothing, neck ties, bulky rings and dangling jewellery may not be worn when working with or near moving machinery. Long hair must be tied back or enclosed in a hair net.

4. Tools

WARNING: Tools present a range of hazards in the workplace, including serious injury and/or death. Tools must be inspected and maintained regularly to limit the danger to users.

4.1 Machinery and power tools

Machinery, such as the avocado plant, generators, and power tools such as bush cutters, can lead to injury. Only qualified personnel are to operate this machinery and equipment.

4.2 Hand tools

Hand tools present a range of hazards in the work place. Injuries that can be sustained as a result of hand tool use include:

- Cuts and abrasions
- Eye injuries
- Punctures and bruises
- Broken bones

To minimise the risk of injury with hand tools:

- Choose the right tool for the job (avoid using homemade tools).
- Wear appropriate PPE.
- Inspect tools for any hazards prior to use.
- Report any problems or hazards with the tool to the Manager in charge.
- Follow all safe operating procedures that are provided.
- Use lighter tools that can be held comfortably for longer periods.
- Remove any jewellery and avoid loose fitting clothes if they present a risk.
- Store tools properly so that they do not present a hazard

Inspection and maintenance of all hand tools must be done quarterly and an inventory count must be done monthly. All tools must be well kept in a safe tool box to avoid hazards.

4.3 Laboratory equipment

Laboratory equipment must be inspected and maintained by a qualified person. The frequency of the inspection depends on the hazard posed by the equipment, the manufacturer's instructions, or as required by regulations.

Inspection and maintenance of laboratory equipment must be done annually unless there's a breakdown that needs to be fixed to avoid work delays. Records of the maintenance must be kept on file by the Senior Technician/Maintenance Officer.

5. Vehicle Safety

The following guidelines apply to both personal vehicles and any vehicles provided by SROS.

- Drive carefully at all times including to and from work.
- Obey all road rules and regulations, including workplace speed limits.
- Do not speed.
- Park your vehicles and in a designated parking spot. Make sure that the parked vehicle does not present a hazard to other vehicles or people.
- Be aware of pedestrians.

When on foot, be aware of vehicles being driven in the work area. Keep to designated walkways.

5.1 Refuelling petrol vehicles

- By law, the vehicle engine must be switched off before and during refuelling.
- Take care when operating the fuel cap of petrol vehicles. Static discharge from some types of clothing can ignite petrol vapours from your vehicle tank.
- Dropping a mobile phone or switching it on can cause sparks that may ignite petrol vapours.
- Using a mobile phone while refuelling can cause a lapse in concentration.
- By law, drivers and passengers are required to extinguish their cigarettes, cigars, or pipes prior to entering a service station.

6. Chemicals

WARNING: Chemicals can cause burns or poisoning. Make sure that you are wearing appropriate safety gear when handling chemicals. A first aid kit and chemical spill kits must be available at all times.

WARNING: Precautions must be taken to minimize exposure to ANY spilled chemical as this can lead to injury or even death. Employees must be careful not to step in the spilled material and track it around. Always contact Emergency Response Team (ERT) personnel if an exposure to a chemical occurs.

Many chemicals are used in the workplace. These can range from relatively harmless chemicals through to highly toxic ones.

Chemicals can affect the health by entering the body through breathing (as dust or spray) through skin absorption or through ingestion, for example: employees not washing their hands after handling a chemical and then eating or drinking).

6.1 Hazardous chemical spillage

In the event of a chemical spill, employees should follow the S.W.I.M.S procedure:

STOP and think. STOP working. STOP the spill. Assess the situation:

- How big is the spill?
- Are there any injuries associated with the spill?
- Has it made contact with skin or personal clothing?
- Can it be safely cleaned?

WARN others:

- Alert other employees.
- ERT personnel will contact 994/996 if there is a medical emergency or danger to life, health, or to the environment.

ISOLATE the area

- Restrict access to those involved in the spill clean up
- Determine the extent of the spill
- Keep doors closed

MONITOR them carefully and completely:

- Check for any chemical contamination or signs/symptoms of exposure (for example, wet clothing, wet skin, or respiratory irritation)
- If anyone is injured or contaminated, begin decontamination measures. If an employee is trained in First Aid they can start treatment. For medical emergencies call 994/996.

STAY in or near the area until help arrives.

- Minimize movement. Avoid spreading contamination to other areas
- Have a person who is knowledgeable about the incident be available to talk to or assist ERT personnel.

6.2 General clean-up procedures after a spill

Laboratory workers who have had the proper training and possess the appropriate equipment can safely and effectively handle the majority of chemical spills that occur in the laboratory.

Spills involving multiple chemicals may pose a range of different hazards. Always contact ERT personnel if multiple chemicals are involved in a spill.

SROS can handle spills involving one litre or less of liquid and one pound or less of a solid.

The following procedures are specific guidelines for using the recommended spill clean up materials.

1. Put on the PPE from the spill kit. This includes splash goggles and nitrile/silver shield combination gloves.
2. Ask a fellow scientist for assistance – they must also put on the PPE from the spill kit.
3. Make sure that all forms of local exhaust, such as fume hoods are operating. It is generally not advisable to open windows.
4. If broken glass is involved, **do not pick it up with gloved hands:** Use the scoop or tongs to place it in the bag, then place the bag in a strong cardboard box or plastic container.
5. All tools used in the clean-up need to be decontaminated (plastic scoops, tongs and so on). Remove all gross contamination with a wet paper towel and then dispose of the contaminated paper towels as waste.
6. Rinse the tools off with large amount of water.
7. Dispose of the gloves as waste.
8. Dry the tools off and place it back into the spill kit along with the splash goggles.

For procedures specific to flammable liquid and other liquid spills, refer to the following sections.

6.3 Clean-up procedures for liquid spills, other than flammable liquids

1. Spread the chemical spill powder over the spill starting from the edges and working inward. This will help to confine the spill to completely cover the liquid. There should be no free liquid.
2. Use a plastic scoop to check that the liquid is completely absorbed by the powder.
3. Pick up the powder with the scoop and place it in the polythene bag.
4. Wipe the area down with a wet paper towel.
5. Dispose of the paper towel with the waste generated from the spill clean up.
6. Seal the bag with tape and attach a completed orange hazardous waste sticker to the bag.

6.4 Clean-up procedures for flammable liquid spills

1. Control all sources of sparks that can ignite vapours.
2. Lay the chemical spill pads over the spill. These pads are designed to suppress the vapours emitted by a volatile liquid. Allow pads to completely soak up liquid.
3. Pick up pads with tongs or other device to minimize direct contact with a gloved hand. Place the used pads in the polyethylene bag.
4. Wipe the area down with a wet paper towel.
5. Dispose of the paper towel with the waste generated from the spill clean up.
6. Seal the bag with tape and attach a completed orange hazardous waste sticker to the bag.

6.5 Clean-up procedures for solid spills

1. Use the plastic scoop to place the spilled material into the polyethylene bag. Take care and do not create dust or cause the contaminated powder to become airborne.
2. After the bulk of the material is cleaned up, wet a spill pad and wipe the area down.
3. Place the used pads in the polyethylene bag.
4. Wipe the area down with a wet paper towel
5. Dispose of the paper towel with the waste generated from the spill clean up.
6. Seal the bag with tape and attach a completed orange hazardous waste sticker to the bag.

7. Explosions

- Immediately evacuate to the assembly area. ERT personnel will guide/assist everyone away from danger.
- Remain calm and listen for further instructions from ERT personnel.

8. Industrial gases

WARNING: Industrial gases can be highly flammable, toxic, and /or asphyxiating, which can lead to poisoning and even death. Make sure that you use all gases in accordance with the guidelines specific to the gas.

WARNING: Cylinders are under high pressure. Never use without a regulator to reduce pressure. Connect only to apparatus designed for the contained gas. Never heat cylinders. Keep oils and greases away. Avoid leakage. Avoid undue shocks. Never drop the cylinder. Store appropriately.

Note: Cylinders are installed and moved, if required, by the company providing the gas.

Cylinders of compressed gas are often used by SROS. Employees required to use cylinders must know the safe handling procedures. Some general guidelines are:

- Check that the correct gas is being used.
- Check that hoses and couplings are suitable and in good order.
- Work with gases in well-ventilated areas.
- Secure cylinders in racks or with chains.
- Always wear the correct protective clothing for the job.
- Treat oxygen with care – **do not use oxygen as a substitute for compressed air.**
- Store empty cylinders separate from full cylinders.

9. Electrical Safety

WARNING: Electrical faults can cause injury or even death due to shock and burns, fire, and explosions that could ignite flammable materials.

Employees must never attempt to make any electrical repairs. Only qualified electricians (who will be contacted by Management) can work on electrical equipment and installations. If employees find an electrical fault, they must contact any of the Managers or Senior Technician Officer.

10. Fire

WARNING: In the case of a fire, only attempt to put out the fire **if there is no risk to your life or the life of fellow employees.**

Employees who discover a fire must do the following:

- Use the fire extinguisher located nearest to them to put out the fire. If this is too risky, vacate the premises immediately, and make sure that employees in the area and the ERT are warned.
- Stay low to the floor, because smoke, poisonous gases and heat will rise to the ceiling.
- Cover nose and mouth with a wet cloth and protect any exposed skin.
- If instructed to evacuate the building by Emergency Response Team personnel, close all fire doors and leave the building by the designated evacuation route or as directed.
- Emergency Response Team personnel will contact Fire Department 911 immediately.
- ALL fire extinguishers will be checked at every two years of its condition and usage.

10.1 Using a fire extinguisher



11. Evacuation Procedure and Assembly Areas

Note: For assembly areas after evacuation, including assembly routes, refer to the Disaster Recovery Plan and Business Continuity Plan.

When evacuating employees must always

- Move out and away from the building to the assembly areas (see *Appendix 1*) and keep a minimum of 300 feet away from the building (see map for safe assembly area)
- **DO NOT** leave assembly areas unless authorised to do so
- **DO NOT** return to the building until the ALL CLEAR announcement is given by any Team Leader or by the Emergency Response Team.

The Assembly areas are outdoor locations that have been identified as safe places when building occupants must assemble after evacuating the hazardous building. SROS has identified the following two areas;

- The main assembly area is the open field east of the CEO's Office & Building

- An alternative evacuation area is the open field behind the Microbiology Laboratory.11.1 Exterior locations designated as safe locations

The following exterior locations have been designated as safe locations where building occupants assemble after evacuating the building:

- Open field on the left of the main office and in front of the new building (A1)
- An alternate evacuation area is the open field behind the microbiology laboratory (A2)

11.2 Testing and updating the plan

A general recommendation for testing and reevaluate the entire plan is **at least every six months**. At the same time, this manual can be modified and updated if required (refer to Document History, Pg 3)

12. Safety in the Office Environment

12.1 Workplace amenities

Workplace amenities include toilets, shelter sheds, seating, dining rooms, change rooms, drinking water, personal storage spaces, and washing facilities. These amenities are provided for the welfare or personal hygiene needs of employees. They prevent spread of germs and disease, prevent ill health from exposure to contamination and meet the basic human needs of employees.

SROS provides adequate facilities and users must keep it clean and secure and maintained in good working order.

12.2 Housekeeping

Trips, slips and falls can result from poor housekeeping. It is every employee's responsibility to ensure that their work areas are kept clean and tidy.

All materials, equipment and tools not in use must be safely stored. All rubbish and waste must be placed in the bins provided at assign areas. All aisles and access to fire extinguishers must be kept clear.

Remember that cleaning up after a job is part of doing that job right.

Some general guidelines for office safety to consider are the following:

- Keep walkways and aisles clear
- Do not open more than one filing cabinet drawer at a time
- Do not use double adapters or overload a power point
- Do not use a chair to reach higher places – use a step ladder
- Watch for worn carpet or slippery surfaces, especially on steps and stairs
- Think about your sitting posture– adjust the chair if necessary
- Do not forget to stretch and move about from time to time
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear

12.3 Illness or injury

- If illness or injury occurs, apply whatever first aid you are capable of and move the patient as little as possible.
- Contact ERT personnel for assistance and instructions.

12.4 Personal hygiene

Personal cleanliness is very important in helping to prevent illness and the spread of infection. Employees must wash their hands after using any chemicals.

13. Behaviour

The following behaviour is unacceptable at SROS and in the interests of employees it will not be tolerated:

- Horseplay and practical jokes.
- Bullying.
- Fighting and instigating a fight.
- Assaulting, threatening, or interfering with other employees.
- Abusing, damaging, or destroying of property.
- Interfering with, or removing without permission, the property of the organisation, the client, or any person.
- Interfering with, bypassing or rendering inoperative, any controls designed to provide protection or safety for yourself or another person.
- Failing to adhere to safe operating procedures.
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on SROS property, or bringing or consuming drugs or alcohol onto the SROS site.
- Driving a SROS vehicle while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Smoking in a non-smoking area.

As set out in *SROS HRM Section 10 - Staff Code of Conduct*, counselling and disciplinary actions will be taken as necessary. This may include termination of employment, if appropriate.

13.1 Occupational violence

Occupational violence is a physical attack or threat to an employee or group of employees that creates a risk to health and safety. It includes aggression and challenging behaviours and can be categorised as client-initiated and external or intrusive occupational violence.

13.2 Client-initiated occupational violence

The typical risks to employees occur when they are working with people who are:

- In need of care but are distressed, afraid, ill or feel trapped.
- Feeling anger, resentment, feelings of failure or unreasonable expectations of what an organisation or worker can provide them.
- Carrying (or have access to) drugs.
- Handling cash or valuables.

13.3 External or intrusive occupational violence

The typical risks to employees occur when they are working with people who are:

- Working alone or in an isolated area.
- Working with only few workers on site.
- Working at night.
- Communicating face to face with customers.
- Working where money, drugs, or valuables are kept.

If employees are involved in or witness an incident of occupational violence at SROS, they must immediately report it to their Manager.



13.2 Harassment

For more information on harassment, refer to *SROS Human Resource Management Policy Manual*.

14. Discrimination

SROS is committed to the principles of equal opportunity and is committed to avoiding discrimination in all areas of employment. If employees feel that you have been discriminated against, they should notify their Divisional Manager who will ensure that the situation is investigated confidentially and that any necessary action is taken. See also the *SROS Human Resource Management Policy Manual, Version 5, 2018*.