

SQS 9

The service unit takes all reasonable steps to ensure that it provides a safe physical environment for its staff and service users.

- 9.1 Fire, and other necessary safety equipment, is available and effectively maintained.
- 9.2 Staff and service users are made aware of procedures for responding to an emergency and fire drills are conducted on a regular basis, at least annually.
- 9.3 The service unit regularly reviews its immediate and broader environment to identify safety issues and ensures that appropriate strategies for managing them are developed and implemented.
- 9.4 A record is kept of any accidents or injuries involving staff and/or service users at the service unit and the manner of responding to such incidents.
- 9.5 If the service unit is involved in transporting service users, all relevant road and traffic safety precautions are taken.
- 9.6 The service unit ensures that any service equipment is properly maintained and, where appropriate, is used under proper supervision.

A. INTRODUCTION TO SQS 9 - SAFE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Every organisation has a responsibility to ensure that it provides a safe and secure environment for its service users, staff and visitors.

The intent of the SQS 9 is to ensure that your service unit identifies plans for and fulfils its responsibilities in relation to safety by:

- having appropriate policies and procedures and ensuring that they are reviewed and updated regularly
- ensuring that all potential hazards have been identified and eliminated or managed as appropriate
- ensuring that staff are confident in their knowledge of what to do in an emergency situation
- maintaining appropriate records

B. ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MEETING SQS 9

In order to meet SQS 9, your service unit will need to:

- provide, regularly maintain fire and other safety equipment and keep maintenance records
- have written procedures for responding to an emergency and ensure that staff are aware of procedures
- provide training to staff and service users in how they should respond in an emergency situation
- conduct fire drills on at least an annual basis and keep appropriate records
- conduct regular safety audits on immediate and broader environment, recording the results, the actions taken to rectify problems and outcomes achieved
- maintain a record of all accidents or injuries involving staff and/or service users and the manner of responding to them
- take all relevant road and traffic safety precautions in transporting service users including appropriate supervision of them during transit, irrespective of whether the vehicles used being owned by the unit or not
- use qualified drivers and maintain roadworthy vehicles with document proof if the unit have drivers and vehicles

- have written procedures for service equipment used for direct service delivery regarding their regular maintenance and, where appropriate, their use under proper supervision
- ensure that all the above procedures are adhered to.

C. RESOURCES TO ASSIST YOUR SERVICE UNIT TO MEET SQS 9

This manual contains the following documentation:

- a model policy on maintaining a safe environment
- guidelines to assist you develop procedures for four specific aspects of safety
 - fire
 - typhoon/rainstorm
 - hygiene/cleanliness
 - critical incident

The documentation may be used by your service unit:

- as a reference document when reviewing your service unit's existing policies and procedures
- as a basis for developing your own documentation
- as a model which may be adopted by your service unit if you do not currently have safety policies and procedures or you wish to replace your current documents

The sample policy document provides a general example only and should be customised to suit the requirements of your service unit.

MODEL SAFETY POLICY

This example provides an outline of a Safety Policy and specific suggestions on the content. You may wish to use the wording or to alter it accordingly to reflect the key requirements of your service unit and the special characteristics of your organisation.

SAFETY POLICY of [insert name of service unit]

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and the associated procedures is to:

- (i) ensure a safe environment for service users, staff and visitors to [insert name of service unit].
- (ii) ensure safe working practices are understood and followed by staff.
- (iii) provide guidance to staff and service users on appropriate action to be taken in the event of an emergency situation arising.

2. Philosophy

[Insert name of service unit] is committed to ensuring a safe environment for all people (service users, staff, visitors) who visit or use the facilities or participate in the activities of the service unit.

Safety is a shared responsibility and all staff of the service unit have a duty to contribute to the safety of the environment by acting in a safe manner, adhering to policies and procedures and following instructions in the case of an emergency situation.

3. Policy

In order to maintain the optimal environmental and safety conditions, the [insert name of service unit] is committed to:

- regular environmental and safety audits and implementation of problem resolution plans
- regular practice of procedures such as fire and evacuation drills
- equipment maintenance and training in the use of equipment
- regular review and updating of policies and procedures
- staff training in policies and procedures relevant to safety matters
- written documentation and hazard identification through regular review of the written documents

4. Procedures

The [insert name of service unit] has developed and regularly reviews the following safety procedures [list of your procedures].

[signature, Agency Head]

[date]

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF SAFETY PROCEDURES

These guidelines are divided into three main areas - Process, General Issues and Specific Areas. The guidelines raise a number of questions for you to consider in developing or reviewing specific safety procedures for your service unit.

1. Process

- You may wish to nominate a staff member to be in charge of completing the procedure development or review process
- If your service unit needs to write a number of procedures you may decide to establish a schedule in order of importance
- In some areas you may wish to consider seeking advice from experts e.g. government departments such as Fire Services, professionals with expertise in the particular policy area such as infection control
- Ideally, your service unit should ensure that every policy is clearly labelled, has the name of your service unit and carries the date of its production and a review period e.g. April 1999, for review in two years

2. General Issues

- Ensure that all key staff are involved in the process of preparing safety procedures
- Ensure that your service unit has a clear and well known process for identifying safety issues and for reviewing solutions taken to rectify problems
- Staff orientation and induction and staff training programs should incorporate specific training and information on safety - ranging from awareness of the service unit's policies to basic health and safety information through to specific techniques of lifting service users and emergency evacuation procedures
- Procedures should be displayed in key locations throughout your facility and be included in staff orientation and training sessions.

3. Specific Areas

FIRE

Key points to consider include:

- there is adequate and well maintained fire equipment such as extinguishers, hoses, fire blankets, and smoke detectors
- all fire service installations and equipment should be maintained in efficient working order at all times
- all electrical installations and equipment should be regularly checked and maintained in good order
- fire drills should be conducted at regular intervals, say of not less than once annually
- all exit doors should be readily and conveniently openable from inside without the use of a key
- no object is left to obstruct the exit routes
- a map marking all exits and positions of fire fighting equipment should be displayed in an eye-catching area
- an evacuation plan for emergency removal and a contingency plan for aftercare arrangement after emergency should be available
- regular fire inspection of the premises and a record of actions taken to rectify any identified problems
- exits are clearly marked in Chinese and English
- written evacuation procedure exists and there is also a floor plan for evacuation of the staff and service users
- staff are instructed in the proper use of fire-fighting equipment
- staff are instructed in the procedures of what to do in an event of a fire
- service users' evacuation procedures include consideration of their special need e.g. those in wheelchairs, visually impaired, bed-ridden or elderly service users

An *Evacuation Procedure* may include some of the following:

- nominates the staff member with overall responsibility
- specifies methods of leaving the building
- specifies assembly points
- specifies how to contact the emergency services
- specifies other people to be advised after the evacuation (eg. Board, families of service users)

A "*What to do in case of fire*" procedure may include some of the following:

- actions to take on first discovering a fire
- nominates the staff member with overall responsibility
- specifies methods of leaving the building
- specifies assembly points
- specifies how to contact the emergency services

TYPHOON/RAINSTORM

Key points to consider include:

- obtain and follow guidelines from government concerning conditions under which attendance and travel restrictions apply at various warning levels
- develop procedures for safe return home of service users and staff
- develop procedures for sheltering at the facility if service users and staff are unable to return home
- develop procedures concerning notification of family

HYGIENE/CLEANLINESS

Key points to consider include:

- written procedures concerning the prevention of communicable diseases e.g. hepatitis, HIV
- infection control guidelines
- procedures for hazardous waste disposal
- vaccination policy
- facilities regularly reviewed for cleanliness, rubbish disposal and repairs
- facilities provide adequate ventilation

CRITICAL INCIDENT

Key points to consider include:

Incident Prevention:

- awareness of strategies and techniques to avoid assault to self and others
- prevention of critical incidents arising eg. security procedures for intruders, storage of dangerous goods such as drugs
- equipment maintenance procedures and record keeping
- training for staff and service users on proper use of equipment
- maintenance of a first aid box and staff knowledge of its use

Critical Incident Management:

- written procedures covering accessing emergency medical care, means of transfer of individual to hospital, notification of family
- written procedures for debriefing from a critical incident
- provision of support and counselling services

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