

## Health and Safety Policy and Procedure

### Policy

The Australian Plants Society (APS NSW) is committed to providing a safe environment for members, volunteers and visitors when they participate in APS NSW activities.

While the Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation does not apply to APS NSW as a fully volunteer organisation, the Board is committed to adopting a best practice approach to duty of care and complying with WHS laws by:

- taking reasonable care of our own health and safety
- taking reasonable care of the health and safety of others
- developing and ensuring volunteers, members and visitors follow any reasonable instructions or procedures as relates to WHS.

This Health and Safety (H&S) Policy and Procedure outlines how we create an environment which keeps our volunteers, members, visitors and others safe.

This policy and procedures apply to activities managed by the state office, district groups (DG) and individual members. It covers the main activities that we undertake, including bushwalks, meetings, garden visits, bush care, plant sales, propagation and social activities.

It also recognises that many DGs undertake their activities on premises owned by other organisations, such as councils. In these cases, the policies and procedures of those organisations need to be followed.

This policy and all associated documents and forms are found in the Safety section of the APS NSW website (<https://www.austplants.com.au/Health-and-safety/>).

This policy and procedures covers 4 areas:

1. Take responsibility and consult
2. Manage risks and report
3. Induct/Train
4. Provide a safe environment

Below is a table outlining responsibilities at all levels. All members in APS NSW should understand their obligations under this policy.

The groups shown below are:

- Board members of APS NSW
- State office volunteers
- District group leaders (committee members and other key leadership roles)
- Activity leaders – who lead activities
- Team members who volunteer
- Members who attend activities
- Visitors

Table 1: Our responsibilities

Area	Responsibility	Board & state office	DG leaders	Activity leaders	Team members	Members and visitors
Take responsibility and consult	Know responsibilities	√	√	√	√	√
	Lead by example i.e. role model safe behaviours	√	√	√	√	√
	Have an action plan	√	√			
	Discuss safety, share information and seek views	√	√	√	√	√
Manage risks and report	Know the risks of activities I do	√	√	√	√	√
	Do a risk plan/assessment before each activity and communicate	√	√	√		
	Maintain a risk register	√	√	√		
	Communicate reporting procedure	√	√			
	Take care of anyone who is hurt	√	√	√	√	√
	Report the injury or incident	√	√	√	√	√
	Investigate all incidents and injuries and take action (keep a register)	√	√	√		
Induct/train	Induct/Train people to be safe	√	√	√		
	Attend training and induction	√	√	√	√	√
	Record training	√	√			
Provide a safe environment	Know emergency procedures	√	√	√	√	√
	Communicate emergency procedures	√	√	√		
	Have first aid kit and trained first aiders	√	√	√		
	Ensure insurance up to date	√				
	Provide safe equipment and gear and fix things that are unsafe	√	√			

## Procedures

Procedures outline the actions which need to occur to keep people safe. Not following the procedures can impact our liability and insurance.

### Take responsibility and consult

All members should take responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing. Leaders in the Society should lead by example by following all safety procedures.

Members and volunteers need to be consulted on safety matters that affect them.

Each area of the Society should have an action plan to implement these safety measures.

All information about safety will be held on the APS NSW website. You do not need to log in to access these pages. <https://www.austplants.com.au/Health-and-safety>

In addition, we will:

- Discuss any safety incidents and investigate at board meetings
- Provide and update materials and information for use by groups and members
- Work with District Groups to keep information relevant
- Consult with members and volunteers about safety and what affects them

### Manage risks and report

Risk management is a systematic process to identify hazards, assess the risks and identify how these risks can be managed.

Risk plans need to be done for all activities in APS NSW and District Groups. Draft risk plans for many activities of APS NSW including District groups are available on the website:

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Health-and-safety>

New risks are added as identified. Common hazards in our activities include:

- Meetings and office activity
  - Lifting heavy objects
  - Slips, trips and falls
  - Health issues from kitchen and food preparation
  - Burns
  - Traffic hazards
  - Covid-19 safety
  - RSI and stress
- Activities outdoors, bush walks, garden maintenance and bush regeneration
  - Slips, trips and falls
  - Exposure to heat and sun and exhaustion
  - Injuries from falling branches
  - Animal bites or stings
  - General health issues or personal limits
  - Extremes of weather
  - Covid-19 safety
  - Getting lost
  - Bush fires
  - Seasonal or specific hazards of the site or walk
  - Injury to the leader

- Nurseries, propagation
  - Exposure to heat and sun
  - Injuries from using tools and machinery
  - Injuries from sharp vegetation eg thorns, metal objects, glass
  - Slips trips and falls
  - Lifting heavy objects
  - Dust inhalation
  - Animal bites or stings
  - Unaccustomed physical work or working beyond capabilities
  - Traffic hazards
  - Injuries from falling branches
  - General health issues or personal limits
  - Health issues from kitchen and food preparation
  - Burns
  - Covid-19 and hygiene

To assess the level of risk, a likelihood and impact matrix is used.

*Likelihood and severity matrix*

Impact means how severely someone could be hurt, or how ill could it make them.

Likelihood is how likely it is to happen.

		Impact →				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Significant	Severe
Likelihood ↑	Very Likely	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High	High
	Likely	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High
	Possible	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	Med Hi
	Unlikely	Low	Low Med	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi
	Very Unlikely	Low	Low	Low Med	Medium	Medium

Here is an example:

	Negligible e.g. scratch	Minor e.g. first aid required	Moderate e.g. medical attention and several days recovering	Significant e.g. serious injury	Severe e.g. kill or permanent injury
Very Likely e.g. slip	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High	High
Likely e.g. reaction to bite	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	High
Possible e.g. snake bite	Low	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi	Med Hi
Unlikely e.g. tree falls on someone	Low	Low Med	Low Med	Medium	Med Hi
Very Unlikely e.g. swept away by flood	Low	Low	Low Med	Medium	Medium

Based on the level of risk, risk plans are developed. These aim to eliminate, remove or manage the risks as outlined below. These are called control measures. More information can be found on the SafeWork NSW website: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/easywhs-beta/managing-risks/learn-more>

APS NSW holds insurance for public liability and director and offices insurance. To be able to access the right level of cover, these safety procedures need to be followed.

The certificates of currency and product information documents are found in the Members only section of the APS NSW website.

### Activity leader tasks

Before activities	During activities	After activities
Activity leader needs to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify risks (use sample risk plans)</li> <li>Use the matrix to assess potential for harm</li> <li>Develop risk plans to address major risks (i.e. those marked 1, 2 and 3)</li> <li>Have a current first aid kit</li> <li>Depending on numbers and risk, be trained as a first aider or line up a member who has or know the nearest medical facility. Have ambulance and police numbers accessible</li> </ol>	Activity leader needs to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief participants on risks</li> <li>Ensure they sign the attendance book or sign-on sheet (printed name, signature and emergency contact)</li> <li>If an accident or incident occurs (including a near miss):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take care of the person immediately</li> <li>Record the incident or injury (nature of the incident, where it happened, who was involved, and details of any witnesses)</li> <li>Verbally report the incident to the President of the District Group AND the President of APS NSW.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	Activity leader needs to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete written report and send to President of District Group and APS NSW (office@austplants.com.au)</li> <li>Review the incident to see what could have been done differently</li> <li>Give all forms and risk plans to the nominated person in the District Group to retain for 12 years (the statute of</li> </ol>

		limitations for personal injury)
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### *Reporting procedures*

If a hazard is identified or an incident or an injury occurs, these must be reported as soon as possible.

This means:

- All injuries – i.e. illness or injury requiring medical action
- All incidents – i.e. events that cause a minor injury requiring first aid
- All near-misses – i.e. events that do not cause injury but might do so
- All hazards – i.e. anything which has the potential to cause ill health or injury.

If someone is injured or has an incident causing minor injury:

- Ensure the person receives immediate medical or first aid care. If the injury is serious, call an ambulance.
- Advise the activity leader, who will inform the District Group President and APS NSW President as soon as possible
- Complete the Injury Form

APS NSW holds a record of all incidents and injuries that occur, and updates the risk register as appropriate when new risks come to light.

### **Procedures for Induction and training**

Members and volunteers need to have the right skills to do their jobs. There are various ways to training people including:

- Members – Overall safety awareness and procedures via video and presentation at District Group level and at periodic times e.g. annually
- Volunteers – must attend briefing as available on the website in person or Zoom, along with any role specific training e.g. nursery activities.

Training is recorded in the Training Register, managed by APS NSW with the support of the district group.

### **Procedures to provide a safe environment**

#### *Emergency procedures*

Emergency procedures are required at all locations where APS NSW operates. Having such a plan is a legal requirement.

When the district group operates on grounds or in facilities managed by another organisation, they will likely have emergency procedures, which should be followed.

If these procedures do not exist, APS NSW and district group activities need to have an emergency procedure.

An emergency procedure includes the following:

- What kind of emergencies might occur
- What you will do if there is an emergency
- Emergency contacts

- Evacuation and emergency procedures
- After an emergency
- Testing the plan
- Training
- Reviewing, recording and updating the plan

At the start of any meeting or activity, tell people what to do in an emergency.

A template for developing an emergency plan is found on the APS NSW website in the safety section.  
<https://www.austplants.com.au/Health-and-safety>

### *First aid procedures*

First aid must be available at all activities. This is a legal requirement for workplaces and is appropriate for APS NSW to adopt given our activities (bushwalks, bushcare, garden visits and maintenance, and the age of our membership).

First aid is the immediate treatment or care given to someone suffering from an injury or illness until advanced care can be accessed or the individual recovers. The aim of first aid is to:

- preserve life
- prevent illness or injury from becoming worse
- relieve pain, if possible
- promote recovery
- protect the unconscious.

First aid can reduce the severity of an injury or illness and in extreme cases, could mean the difference between life and death.

### **First aid kits**

A first aid kit should be kept in an accessible location, be fit for purpose, and maintained. This kit may be provided by the owner of the facility. If not, the District Group should supply it.

Members should know where the first aid kit is held and be able to access it.

The first aid kit should provide basic equipment for administering first aid. i.e. to treat cuts, scratches, punctures, grazes, splinters, muscular sprains and strains, minor burns, snake bites, bleeding wounds, broken bones, eye injuries and shock. Extra equipment may be needed in remote workplaces, e.g. allergic reactions.

District Groups are responsible for managing their own first aid kits as is the state office. If assistance from the state office is required to fund these, please inform one of the members of the APS NSW board.

### **First aiders**

In determining whether the group should have a first aider, or more than one, the risks of the group's activities should be considered. As a guide, Safework NSW provides ratios of first aiders to workers. See below.

Based on this, a group with 50 members would ideally have at least 1 trained first aider. Groups which operate large nurseries should have several trained first aiders.

Workplace risk level	Type of workplace	Ratio of first aiders to workers
Low risk	Retail shops, offices, libraries or art galleries	1:50
High risk	Factories, motor vehicle workshops or forestry operations	1:25
Remote high risk	All night convenient store and service station workers, long distance freight transport drivers	1:10

(Table adapted from the NSW Government: Code of Practice; First Aid in the Workplace, January 2020).

To be a first aider, the person should hold a nationally recognised qualification issued by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

First aiders should attend training on a regular basis to refresh their first aid knowledge and skills. Refresher training in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) should be carried out annually and first aid qualifications should be renewed every three years.

If an automated defibrillator (AED) is available, the District Group should determine whether a trained first-aid-er is available to operate it.

Where it is not practical to have a first aider on site or on an activity, district groups should have the contact details recorder for local medical services or emergency services.

If a district group needs assistance or lacks resources in either buying or upgrading a first aid kit, or training first aiders, the state office will assist.

### *Safe work procedures for chemicals*

#### **Chemicals – Glyphosate**

Products containing glyphosate or organophosphates have been assessed as being potentially carcinogenic. Glyphosate and organophosphates are also found in some other common pesticides and herbicides. For this reason, glyphosate should be avoided during APS activities.

#### **Chemicals – Yates Clonex**

According to the safety sheet prepared by Chemical Data Services Pty Ltd, these products (both red and purple) are not classified as hazardous. However, contact with skin or eyes can cause irritation. If this product is used, the Safety Data Sheet for the product should be reviewed, and protective equipment worn.

The sheets for the purple and red products, dated 24 January 2020, are found in the Safety section of the website.



Before use of any other rooting hormone products, the safety sheets for these products should be reviewed for safety (some are considered carcinogenic) and discussed with the President of the district group and of APS NSW.

In the event of poisoning, call the Poisons Information Centre – 131 126.

### **Potting mixes**

There are many different potting mixes on sale. While in general, most are not considered hazardous, some are. There are risks including irritation of the nose, throat and lungs leading to conditions ranging from hay fever or asthma to pneumonia.

Before any specific potting mixes are used, the Safety Data Sheets should be reviewed. These can be found by searching for the product and 'Safety Data Sheet'.

The Safety Data Sheet for Hortico's various potting mixes and Debco's Potting Media Range are found on the APS safety website for reference.

When using potting mix of any sort,

- Contact with eyes and skin should be avoided
- Avoid inhalation.
- Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment such as safety shoes, gloves, safety glasses and dust masks.

### *Facilities, handwashing and work station procedures*

All paths, facilities and equipment needs to be maintained in good condition to minimise the risk of injury to volunteers. Identifying and mitigating risks should be done in consultation with the facility owner, if applicable, or if not, the District Group should manage the environment.

Volunteers, including those with particular needs or disabilities, must have access. Steps need to be taken, as far as reasonably practicable to facilitate this access.

Outdoor volunteers should have access to shelter for eating meals and taking breaks, and to protect them adverse weather conditions.

Hand washing facilities must be provided to maintain a good standard of personal hygiene.

As we are a virtual organisation, working from home is standard. People who spend a lot of time in this environment need to check that their work stations are designed to prevent or minimise any injury. If assistance is required on identifying work station issues, these should be raised with the relevant District Group committee or the State Office for remedial attention.