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**Subject:** Managers' Brief – the City's refreshed approach to workplace safety

**Attachments:** Managers' Brief - Safety at the City - 2019.pdf

Greetings Colleagues,

The City is committed to providing a safe, positive workplace. This is a fundamental part of our work culture. When we care for staff, it is reflected in how they care for themselves, each other, others they encounter as part of their job, and services they provide.

I know for many of us the tragic death of an Engineering team member at a worksite in September is top of mind. While our teams work through this incredibly difficult event, we remember that prioritizing the health and safety of staff is and always will be the priority.

In our ongoing effort to continue our commitment to health and safety, we have refreshed the City's Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Safety Management System (SMS), and developed an overarching Safety Approach.

The new Safety Approach, endorsed by City Leadership Team, works collectively with the policy and SMS to highlight how we prioritize safety in the organization. It will also frame how we aim to achieve a safety culture that ensures:

- Every person goes home safe and healthy every day
- Staff are empowered to speak up when they see an unsafe act or condition
- All leaders and supervisors are accountable to address and respond to safety concerns raised by their staff

A City-wide campaign will be rolled out to encourage staff to review these documents and continue to help strengthen the City's safety culture. This will start with the November Safety Talk and presentations to senior leaders in all business units.

The Managers' Brief attached is a tool to help support you in promoting a safe workplace with your teams. **Please read the attached and share important information with your staff as the campaign begins and on a regular basis.**

Thank you for your support.

Best,  
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



*The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.*

# Managers' Brief

## Safety at the City

November 2019

### Background

*“\*Today, between two to three City employees will be injured at work”*



The City cares about its staff and is committed to providing a safe, positive workplace. To better reflect our commitment to safety, the City:

- Refreshed its Occupational Safety Policy and Safety Management System (SMS); and
- Developed a Safety Approach in which our City Manager in partnership with the City Leadership Team commits to prioritizing the safety, health and well-being of City employees, their families and partners.

**The Safety Policy:** The City and those who work here are committed to protecting the health and safety of all staff. The policy outlines the principles which guide the City in creating and maintaining a psychologically and physically safe and healthy workplace and identifies responsibilities necessary to meet the City's commitment.

**The Safety Management System (SMS):** Encompasses all work actions, processes, programs, procedures and defined responsibilities that support employees' psychological and physical health and safety. The SMS document brings together and outlines the City's programs, procedures, policies and responsibilities that support staff safety and health.

**The Safety Approach:** Is our leadership's documented commitment to psychological and physical health and safety and is signed by all members of the City Leadership Team. The Safety Approach highlights how we prioritize safety in the organization. It also frames how we aim to achieve a safety culture that ensures:

- Every person goes home safe and healthy every day;
- Staff are empowered to speak up when they see an unsafe act or condition; and

- All leaders and supervisors are accountable to address and respond to safety concerns raised by their staff.

Collectively these documents emphasize the City's position on health and safety - more importantly, they reinforce the notion that everyone must be a safety leader by making safety an everyday commitment.

These documents are available on the [HR section of Citywire](#).

A City-wide campaign will be rolled out to ensure:

- Every employee knows our leadership's safety commitment;
- No employee walks past an unsafe act; and
- Every employee knows these documents.

This Managers' Brief will help you understand and share important information with your staff as the campaign begins.

## What you need to... know

- The City has refreshed the Occupational Health and Safety Policy, SMS and created a Safety Approach.
- Over the coming months, a City-wide safety campaign will be rolled out across the organization.
- The goal of the campaign is to strengthen the City's safety commitment culture by encouraging a commitment-based safety mindset.
- A commitment-based safety culture is visible when staff anticipate hazards before they start new tasks or jobs, follow safety standards, policies and procedures because they believe in them, and not just because they are told to do something.
- When staff commit to safety, they have personal and professional motivation to act safely, to watch out for others, and are better equipped to evaluate safety risks in new situations.
- As part of this campaign, you will see messaging on Citywire, City Insider, along with posters, crew talks, special projects related to safety and more - with links to supporting resources including the SMS and Safety Approach that all staff are encouraged to read.

- The City has partnered with WorkSafeBC on initiatives to reduce injuries and achieve a safety commitment culture:
  - A few operations divisions in Engineering Services will be part of a safety culture review. WorkSafeBC will gather information through worksite visits, workshops with management teams and a staff survey on organizational health and safety culture in 2020. There is a commitment that recommendations identified will be actioned as we work towards keeping the City a safe place to work; and
  - Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services will focus on evidence informed solutions that will further improve psychological and physical safety.
- “Respect Works Here” posters will be distributed to be displayed where we engage with the public to ensure it is known we are committed to a safe and respectful workplace. The City is committed to providing a work environment in which all individuals are treated with mutual respect and dignity; abusive conduct or comments are not acceptable.
- “Safety of Staff” (S.O.S.) handbooks have been created for staff to enable them to easily report hazards and risks to their supervisors. These will be rolling out throughout 2020 after engagement with senior leadership in each business unit.

## ...Do

- Lead by example. Act as a role model for your team by acting safely. Proactively communicate and demonstrate the importance of health and safety.
- Take action to create and promote a safe workplace; encourage and empower employees to speak freely and openly; and offer suggestions for continuous improvement. This can be achieved by:
  - Building relationships and trust with staff
  - Being an active and visible safety leader
  - Interacting positively with staff to coach them and encourage good safety behaviours
  - Regularly discuss hazards and risks in the workplace and how to eliminate the hazards or minimize the risk of injuries.
- Review the new documents with your teams to ensure they are known.

- Display “Respect Works Here” posters in work areas where we engage with the public.
- Work with your Occupational Safety Specialist or Safety Superintendent to roll out Safety of Staff Handbooks.
- Talk about health and safety with your teams using the speaking notes below as a guide.
- Encourage staff to speak to you, your HR consultant or their safety committee representative if they have safety suggestions or concerns. No one should hesitate to address health and safety concerns; this should be an open, consequence-free action to improve the workplace.

## ...Say

Below are some messages to support you in speaking to your staff about this campaign.

### Background

- The City cares about its staff and is committed to providing a safe, positive workplace. To better reflect our commitment to safety, the City has refreshed its Occupational Health and Safety Policy, Safety Approach and Safety Management System (SMS) and designed Respect Works Here posters and Safety of Staff handbooks.
- The SMS works with the City’s Occupational Health & Safety Policy and overall Safety Approach to frame how we aim to achieve a safety-oriented work culture.
- Whether you work in an office, out in the field or at a customer-facing service desk, these documents apply to all City staff and it is important that you put them into practice.
- We encourage all staff to review these documents to understand how the City supports a safe work environment and how you can too.
- You can find these documents on the Human Resources section of Citywire, or please ask me for a printed copy if you prefer.



## Why it matters

- We are all responsible for not only ensuring we are up-to-date on safety standards, but also making it an everyday commitment.
- Committing to safety every day is simple. If you are unsure of how to complete a task, ask your supervisor; don't take shortcuts; participate in ongoing training to ensure your safety practices are up-to-date; and always be sure to address any safety concerns with your manager, business unit safety specialist/safety superintendent or safety committee representative.
- Being committed to safety means you are driven to act and respond safely because you know it's the right thing to do.
- Here are some ways everyone can be a safety leader:
  - See something, say something. Look out for yourself, your colleagues and the public.
  - Use a safety mindset in all the work that you do to quickly identify and mitigate potential hazards and risks;
  - Identify and report hazards, near misses, and unsafe conditions to your supervisor (including work conducted by contractors, subcontractors, and staff in different departments);
  - Only complete tasks that you are trained for – remember that you are always able to refuse work that you feel is unsafe;
  - Refuse unsafe work, and work you are not properly trained for;
  - Be curious about safety and don't be afraid to ask questions; and
  - Understand and follow safety-related work procedures, guidelines, standards and rules.
  - Wear your personal protective equipment (PPE).
  - Stop, think and act:
    - **Stop** long enough to think about what you're about to do.
    - **Think** about how you're going to do it. Is it the safest way? If not, how can you do it better?
    - **Act** in the safest way possible.
- Safety concerns can also arise when you are bullied, intimidated or threatened by other people.
- Staff who work in public-facing environments are more susceptible to unsafe situations resulting from encounters with an angry member of the public.
- And just as we remind staff that this is a respectful workplace, the same values, attitudes and behaviours are asked of the public.

- Bullying and harassment are not tolerated. Please know that you can speak to me if you experience this.

### **Share your concerns, ideas or suggestions**

- In order to help you perform at your best, you need to feel safe and confident in organizational safety practices.
- And although the City is already committed to creating a safe workplace, there is always room for continuous improvement.
- Speak up if you have safety concerns. It can sometimes be uncomfortable to address an unsafe act when others do not acknowledge it. But it is important to let someone know.
- You can reach out to me, our business unit safety specialist/safety superintendent, or your safety committee representative if you have any safety concerns, or even new ideas to share.
- Over the coming months, you'll start to notice safety messages and posters around the workplace.
- We encourage you to think carefully about safety and make safety an everyday commitment.
- If you want to learn more, please visit the HR pages on Citywire.

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Q. How should I report a workplace hazard?**

Please come talk to me, and I can investigate it further and determine any corrective actions that we need to take. Also use the Safety of Staff handbooks that include a reporting form.

### **Q. Won't I get in trouble if I stop work to complete a hazard check?**

No. Safety is always the priority, and we encourage all staff to stop work when they are unsure whether something is an unsafe act or not. Meeting your deadline is never more important than people's safety.

### **Q. What about third-party contractors? Are they exempt from our safety standards?**

No. All workers – contractors and City workers – are responsible for meeting regulated requirements and City safety standards. WorkSafeBC can write compliance orders against the City, even if it is a third-party contractor completing



the work. It's important that supervisors oversee work completed by contractors, and ensure they comply with safety requirements.

**Q. What role do Safety Committees play?**

There are about 30 Safety Committees at the City. These committees provide a forum for worker and management representatives to make recommendations related to health and safety issues in their workplace. Many smaller workplaces have a Safety Representative who plays a similar role as a committee.

**Q. How do we measure safety at the City?**

There are a number of metrics we track quarterly, such as: number of incident investigations, amount of time lost to injury/illness, number of workplace inspections, and number of safety orientations.

**Q. I have health concerns about my work environment. What should I do?**

- A. Please speak to me or our business unit safety specialist/safety superintendent. Depending on the situation, we may bring in other staff or experts to help get to the root of the issue, investigate it further, and possibly develop an action plan to correct the issue.

**Q. Isn't Human Resources (HR)/Operations Support and Safety Branch (OSSB) in Engineering responsible for safety?**

- A. Although organizational health and safety is overseen by HR/OSSB, it is everybody's responsibility to create safe operations, program and administrative functions to stay safe, act safe and look out for one another. By doing so, we reduce the risk of injuries for our staff and the public.

**Q. What sort of training is available to me?**

- A. Plenty! From ergonomics to confined spaces to violence prevention – there is training that fits all types of work at the City. Please speak to me if you want to register for a CityLearn course, or are interested in some external training that you think would help you develop your skills.