Example Only

Occupational Violence and Aggression (OVA) Policy

Date: **Published By:** **Version:**

1. Purpose

This policy sets out [Organisation Name]'s commitment to providing a safe and respectful environment for all workers, patrons, contractors, and visitors within our aquatic facilities.

Our goal is to prevent and respond effectively to any form of Occupational Violence and Aggression (OVA), including verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, or physical assault.

The organisation recognises that OVA is a work health and safety (WHS) hazard and that all workers have a right to perform their duties free from aggression, harassment, or harm.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all workers of [Organisation Name], including employees, contractors, volunteers, students, and agency staff, across all aquatic facilities and associated programs.

It also applies to interactions with patrons, clients, members of the public, and external service providers, both on-site and off-site (e.g. community outreach, swimming programs, events).

3. Definitions

Occupational Violence and Aggression (OVA): Any incident where a person is abused, threatened, or assaulted in circumstances arising out of, or in the course of, their work. This includes verbal abuse, intimidation, threatening gestures, harassment, stalking, and physical assault.

Worker: Any person who carries out work for [Organisation Name], including employees, contractors, volunteers, and labour hire staff.

Incident: Any act of violence, aggression, or behaviour that causes physical or psychological harm, or creates a risk to health and safety.

4. Policy Statement

[Organisation Name] will:

- Provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment, free from violence and aggression.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to OVA from patrons, visitors, or colleagues.
- Ensure that all incidents are reported, recorded, and investigated in a fair, no-blame manner.
- Support workers who experience or witness OVA through debriefing, counselling, and access to appropriate resources.
- Continually improve systems and controls through regular consultation, risk assessment, and review.

5. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Prevent incidents of OVA through proactive design, training, and supervision.
- Ensure consistent response procedures for managing aggressive behaviour.
- Promote awareness among staff and patrons that OVA is unacceptable.
- Foster a workplace culture based on respect, safety, and accountability.
- Ensure compliance with relevant WHS legislation, standards, and codes of practice.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Management will:

- Endorse and resource OVA prevention and response measures.
- Monitor policy implementation and review incident trends.
- Ensure systems for worker consultation and feedback are in place.

Supervisors and Duty Managers will:

- Model calm and professional behaviour.
- Ensure all incidents are reported and managed according to procedure.
- Provide debriefing, support, and escalation where required.

Workers will:

- Comply with this policy and related procedures.
- Report all incidents or near misses promptly.
- Participate in training, consultation, and debriefing.

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) will:

- Participate in risk assessments, policy reviews, and consultation processes.
- Represent workers' health and safety concerns relating to OVA.

7. Risk Management

[Organisation Name] will implement a structured risk management process for OVA in accordance with the SafeWork NSW Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work (2022) and ISO 45003:2021, including:

- Identifying hazards and potential triggers of aggression.
- Assessing risk levels and prioritising high-risk areas (e.g. reception, pool deck, car park).
- Implementing controls such as environmental design, staff training, duress systems, and behavioural signage.
- Reviewing incidents and updating controls regularly.

8. Incident Reporting and Response

All workers must report incidents of OVA immediately or as soon as practicable. Reports should be made via the organisation's incident reporting system or to the Duty Manager.

Incidents will be reviewed to:

- Ensure the safety of all involved.
- Identify root causes and contributing factors.
- Determine corrective or preventive actions.
- Serious incidents may be referred to police, insurance providers, or regulatory authorities as required by law.

9. Worker Support and Recovery

Workers exposed to OVA will have access to:

- Immediate welfare checks and debriefing.
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or equivalent psychological support.
- Modified duties or time away from public-facing work, if needed.
- Support and follow-up will be coordinated by the Duty Manager or WHS Advisor to ensure recovery and reintegration into the workplace.

10. Communication and Training

All workers will receive:

- Induction training on the OVA Policy and procedures.
- Role-specific training in communication, de-escalation, and incident response.
- Regular refreshers and toolbox talks to maintain awareness.
- Updates when procedures or systems change.

Signage promoting respectful behaviour (e.g. "There is No Excuse for Abuse") will be prominently displayed throughout all facilities.

11. Consultation and Review

This policy has been developed in consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs). It will be reviewed annually, or following a significant incident, legislative change, or organisational review. Feedback from workers will be actively sought to ensure the policy remains relevant, effective, and consistent with best practice.

12. Related Documents and References

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW, ACT, TAS)
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017
- SafeWork NSW Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work (2022)
- ISO 45003:2021 Psychological Health and Safety at Work
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- [Organisation Name] Incident Reporting Procedure
- [Organisation Name] Employee Assistance Program Policy

13. Policy Authorisation

Approved by: [CEO / General Manager]
Date: [Insert Date]
Next Review: [Insert Date]
Version: [Insert Version Number]