



## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

### Volunteer Program – Gardening / Handy Work

#### Statement

The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Incorporated (PQSA) are committed to ensuring the Health and Safety of our workers and clients while managing client needs and providing worker responsibilities and services in a prompt and timely manner.

Approved by:  Chief Executive Officer	Date: October 2015
Registered by:  Manager, Human Resources	Date: October 2015

## **SCOPE**

This Policy provides practical guidelines for the worker involved in gardening and handy work on how to prevent injury, assessing health and safety risks; and, what to do if something should occur.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Preventing injury when gardening and undertaking handy work on client premises –**

#### ***A step by step process***

Risk management of injury prevention involves an approach that is planned, systematic and covers hazards and associated risks to worker and client safety.

**Identifying hazards and assessing risks** are processes that help identify:

1. What could harm workers and clients
2. How likely it is that harm may occur (eg: not very likely, very likely) and
3. How serious the harm could be (eg: minor injury, serious injury, death)

**Controlling risks** – is a process that concentrates on working out which risk control measures are the most effective to use according to the circumstances. Identifying hazards involves indentifying all of the things and situations that could potentially contribute to injuries while undertaking gardening and handy work tasks in a client premises.

#### **Hazards identified as per Risk Assessment #7-002**

- ◆ Weather
- ◆ Insects
- ◆ Thorns
- ◆ Chemicals ie. Weedkiller, potting mix
- ◆ Electrical power tools
- ◆ Snakes
- ◆ Ladders

#### **Control Measures to reduce injury**

Workers must ensure the following control measures are implemented when gardening or doing handy work:

- ◆ Wear gloves
- ◆ Wear enclosed shoes / prefer work boots
- ◆ Wear face mask
- ◆ Wear goggles for eye protection
- ◆ Have easy access to a Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all recorded Chemicals
- ◆ When using Electrical Power Tools use RCD's
- ◆ When working outside wear a wide brimmed hat
- ◆ Apply sunscreen
- ◆ Wear trousers
- ◆ Drink plenty of water

#### **Handy Hints**

##### **Weather**

When it is hot it's best to garden in the early morning or late afternoon to avoid the hottest part of the day.

Remember it is PQSA Policy that no outdoor activities are to be undertaken when the temperature is 35 degrees or over (Refer to the Hot Weather Policy and Procedures).

**Insects / Thorns**

Many gardening injuries involve fingers or hands. Always wear gardening gloves and use appropriate tools instead of fingers. Buried objects, thorns from bushes, insects on the plants can all injure your hands. It is also ideal to wear long trousers and enclosed shoes/boots to prevent insect bites on legs and feet, sunburn and cuts from trees and bushes. If appropriate use insect spray such as Aerogard to reduce insect bites.

**Chemicals**

Workers must ensure they check with their Supervisor that chemicals being used are registered on the Associations Hazards Substance Register and an MSDS is issued.

When using chemicals such as weed killer wear eye wear protection and always use rubber (thick) gloves to avoid burning skin and eyes. Before using read manufacturer’s instructions and carry MSDS in case of spills or ingestion. Store unused chemicals in a safe place and follow the manufacturer’s instructions.

**Potting Mix**

Read manufacturer’s instructions printed on the bag before using the mix then open the bag slowly. Be careful not to inhale airborne particles and wear a facemask, eye protection and gloves. Poke the garden hose into the opening to wet the mix to reduce the risk of airborne particles, wash hands thoroughly and wash gloves. Store unused potting mix in a safe place.

**Electrical Power Tools**

To avoid serious injury before turning on at the power point / source check that the tools are **not on** and use portable RCD’s. When using electrical equipment, wear safety goggles and earmuffs or earplugs. Be aware of the electrical cord to avoid cutting through it. Do not use electrical tools in wet conditions.

**Snakes**

**How to avoid the risk**

- ◆ Avoid walking through long grass
- ◆ If you do intend to do the above wear long pants and boots
- ◆ Be careful when gardening or clearing wood piles-they are great places for snakes to sleep
- ◆ Stay on paths
- ◆ Watch where you step
- ◆ Leave snakes alone-they may see you as a threat. Many bites occur when people try to kill snakes

**Ladders**

Do not use a ladder if on your own, another person must be present in case of emergency. Refer to SOP Ladder Safety.

**RELATED DOCUMENTATION**

- ◆ SOP - Ladder Safety
- ◆ Hot Weather Policy and Procedure

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

