

**TITLE: STRESS POLICY**

Authorised by:  
**Russell Prince**  
Chief Executive

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Employees are the most valuable asset of SETA and their care and well-being is a priority and it is our intention to offer support to each individual in order to prevent work-related stress becoming a problem.

The work and business of SETA cannot be carried out successfully without competent personnel who are motivated, flexible and highly skilled.

It is acknowledged that both short and long term stress may lead to ill-health that could be prevented by management controls.

Through this Policy SETA will attempt to identify cases of personnel showing signs of stress and implement control measures to minimise or remove the causes.

The management is aware of the support they can offer personnel. This may range from the provision of the correct tools and materials or simply being approachable for personnel.

Stress can be the result of many topics from work or outside of work or both and are referred to as **stressors**. Examples are:

- The culture of the organisation
- Personal relationships
- Demands of the Job
- Control
- The Job Role
- Support, training & factors unique to the individual
- Change

Personnel need to know that management will listen to their problems and strictly observe confidentiality.

**Step 1**

- Establish good communications between managers and personnel
- Take time to discuss with personnel regarding their problems and locate the root of the matter
- Decide if the stressors are work-related or from another source
- Obtain professional help if appropriate

**Step 2**

If the stressors are work-related then consider how alterations can be made on behalf of the staff member.

For example, too much work to do in too little time.

Prioritise the work, cut out unnecessary tasks or obtain temporary help.

**Step 3**

If Steps 1 and 2 are not appropriate, then follow the Risk Assessment format.

- Identify the hazards, i.e. work loads, housekeeping, noise, temperature, space
- Who will suffer harm?
- How likely is this?
- Evaluate the risk to the staff.
- Implement controls and/or preventative measures.
- Monitor and record the outcomes.

The findings from a Risk Assessment must be implemented and account taken of the changes made to measure improvements to a reduction in work-place stress.

The last page shows Work-Related Stressors and “What Management Can Do?” Every member of staff should complete this and take the opportunity to improve the working environment that we share by bringing problems forward for attention.

**Problems that can lead to Stress**

- Lack of communication and consultation
- A culture of blame when things go wrong; denial of potential problems
- An expectation that people will regularly work excessively long hours or take work home with them

**What Management can do**

- Provide opportunities for staff to contribute ideas, especially in planning and organising their own jobs
- Introduce clear business objectives, good communication, and close employee involvement, particularly during periods of change
- Be honest with yourself, set a good example, and listen to and respect others
- Be approachable – create an atmosphere where people feel it is OK to talk to you about any problems they are having
- Avoid encouraging people to work excessively long hours

**Problems that can lead to Stress**

- Too much to do, too little time
- Too little/too much training for the job
- Boring or repetitive work, or too little to do
- The working environment

**What Management can do**

- Prioritise tasks, cut out unnecessary work, try to give warning of urgent or important jobs
- Make sure individuals are matched to jobs, provide training for those who need more, increase the scope of the jobs for those who are over-trained
- Change the way jobs are done by moving people between jobs, giving individuals more responsibility, increasing the scope of the job, increasing the variety of tasks, giving a group of workers greater responsibility for effective performance of the group
- Make sure other workplace hazards, such as noise, harmful substances and the threat of violence are properly controlled

**Problems that can lead to Stress**

- Lack of control over work activities

**What Management can do**

- Give more control to staff by enabling them to plan their own work, make decisions about how that work should be completed and how problems should be tackled

**Problems that can lead to Stress**

- Poor relationships with others
- Bullying, racial or sexual harassment

**What Management can do**

- Provide training in interpersonal skills
- Set up effective systems to prevent bullying and harassment (i.e. a policy, agreed grievance procedure and proper investigation of complaints)

**Problems that can lead to Stress**

- Uncertainty about what is happening
- Fears about job security

**What Management can do**

- Ensure good communication with staff
- Provide effective support for staff throughout the process

**Problems that can lead to Stress**

- Staff feeling that the job requires them to behave in conflicting ways at the same time
- Confusion about how everyone fits in

**What Management can do**

- Talk to people regularly to make sure that everyone is clear about what their job requires them to do
- Make sure that everyone has clearly defined objectives and responsibilities linked to business objectives, and training on how everyone fits in.

**Problems that can lead to Stress**

- Lack of support from managers and co-workers
- Not being able to balance the demands of work and life outside work

**What Management can do**

- Support and encourage staff, even when things go wrong
- Encourage a healthy work-life balance
- See if there is scope for flexible work schedules (e.g. flexible working hours, working from home)
- Take into account that everyone is different, and try to allocate work so that everyone is working in the way that helps them work best