

### What and Why

A Safety Policy is an overarching document that clearly and simply states the commitment to safety by the most senior body/person in the organisation. It is the cornerstone of the Safety Management System.

Commitment to the policy is usually demonstrated by the signing of the policy either the Chairman of the Board, the President or the entire Executive Committee, depending on the structure of the operator's business.

A safety policy should align with other organisational policies, and should include references to:

- Developing or maintaining a positive safety culture
- The continuous improvement of safety and the SMS, by the operator.

Strong safety leadership is a key component in developing a positive safety culture, and this starts with a clear and concise policy that reflects how safety is regarded in the organisation.

### How

Safety policy can be developed in a number of ways, depending on the size and complexity of the organisation.

There are a number of indicative steps traditional to policy making:

1. Identify the need – in this case the need is a legal requirement;
2. Delegate responsibility to a person or group to take responsibility for its development;
3. Gather information – what legal requirements need to be met, are there existing templates that can be used, who can provide guidance?
4. Draft the policy – make sure that the wording and complexity are appropriate for those who have to implement and understand the policy;
5. Consult – with key stakeholders, e.g. members, volunteers, board members, subscribers, etc;
6. Finalise /Endorse – who will approve the policy? What is the process to do this?
7. Consider procedures – what procedures and/or forms will be required to support the policy?
8. Implement – how will it be communicated? Is training/awareness required?
9. Monitor and Review – as part of normal SMS review or when changes occur in the operations as necessary.

A policy will generally have the following headings:

- **Statement of Commitment** – what the promise from the leaders?
- **Purpose** – what is the reason for the policy?
- **Scope** – What is covered by the policy and what isn't;
- **Accountabilities and Responsibilities** – What are the expectations from various workgroups? the Board, the management team, rail safety workers, volunteers, contractors and visitors?
- **Endorsement** – sign off by the most senior leader or leadership group. Depending on the level of complexity, all workers may sign a copy of the policy.

Once implemented, signed copies of the safety policy should be made available in various work locations including operational areas. This will enable everyone who attends those locations to see what the operator's policy is and what the expectations of them are.

## Who

The development of the safety policy should be collaborative and include input /endorsement from the Executive Committee/ Board.

The policy should clearly describe the operator's expectations of various work groups that perform work on the operator's behalf.

Everyone who performs work for the operator is expected to comply with the policy.

## When

Policies are normally reviewed by senior leaders at least once a year or following an incident.

Consultation should occur with key stakeholders when policies are reviewed.

## List of relevant documents (internal)

All SMS Elements

[General Safety Duties under the RSNL](#)

## Links (external)

[ONRSR Website](#)

[ONRSR Website – Legislation](#)

[ONRSR Website – Safety Management Systems](#)

[SAI Global](#)

## Appendices

A. [Example Safety Policy Template](#)