



**African Population and
Health Research Center**

Transforming lives in Africa through research.

POLICY ON SAFETY AND HEALTH

Date of Review: October 2021
Date of Approval: November 2021
Next Review Date: November 2024
Next Review Date: November 2027

APHRC Policy on Safety and Health

1. INTRODUCTION

APHRC recognizes the importance of a healthy and safe work environment for the well-being and productivity of its staff, board members, consultants, volunteers, visiting scholars, interns, contractors and suppliers on APHRC premises. The safety and health of employees and all APHRC representatives is a primary consideration in APHRC's operations. Similarly, safety and health should be every employee's responsibility at all levels. This policy is to ensure health and safety at work and address accidents, injury and safety incidents if they occur. All employees are required to abide by the terms of this policy statement as a condition of employment.

APHRC has an obligation to ensure that other persons, such as tenants occupying office premises within the APHRC Campus, West Africa Regional Office or its other premises, consultants, volunteers, contractors and suppliers are informed of and commit to APHRC's Policy on Safety and Health in their work or association with APHRC and while in the premises of any APHRC Facility.

This policy does not apply to tenants' offices and their employees carrying out their activities within their offices. However, it applies to the activities they carry out which may affect others within APHRC Campus premises. This policy is binding on all staff, board members, consultants, volunteers, interns, visiting scholars, contractors and suppliers on APHRC premises. All shall respect similar rules of places they visit while conducting APHRC business.

2. DEFINITIONS

Disability - The World Health Organization (WHO) defines disability as a result of the interaction between a person's health condition and a variety of environmental and personal factors. The WHO also describes disability as having three dimensions:

- **Impairment** - a loss or abnormality in a person's body structure or function, or mental functioning. Examples include loss of a limb, vision, or memory.
- **Activity limitation** - Difficulty with activities such as seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving.
- **Participation restrictions** - Difficulty with normal daily activities, such as working, socializing, and getting health care.

Health - The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Safety - Workplace safety is the process of protecting employees from work-related injuries and illnesses. It involves providing a safe work environment, safe equipment, and policies and procedures to ensure employee health and safety

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The **Executive Director** has ultimate responsibility for the following:

- The health and safety of all people involved in and affected by the Center's activities;
- The implementation and review of the Policy;
- The delegation of health and safety management responsibilities;
- The provision of a safe working environment; and
- The allocation of appropriate resources to ensure effective implementation of the policy.

Employer's responsibilities:

The Center's goal is to ensure safety and health at work. To meet this goal, the Center shall endeavor to:

- Provide physical safeguards to the maximum extent possible;
- Have regular safety and health inspections;
- Train employees in good safety and health practices, and provide new staff with the Policy on Safety and Health during their induction at APHRC;
- Not require employees to work while their ability or alertness is impaired by fatigue, illness, or other causes that might expose the individual or others to ill health; and
- Investigate promptly and thoroughly, every accident to find out what caused it and to correct the problem so that it does not recur.

The Center shall have prominently displayed literature on fire drills, fire escape routes and other emergency office evacuation procedures in its offices. All employees will be encouraged to familiarize themselves with these procedures and to observe them in the event of an emergency.

APHRC being the landlord for the APHRC Campus facilities will ensure the following:

- Tenants taking office premises shall undertake to observe health and safety precautions while carrying out their day to day activities;
- Tenants will ensure all renovation works being carried out in their offices by contractors shall be carried out in accordance with the contents of this policy and other local or national laws. The contractors will have to sign construction site health and safety regulations;
- Tenants will be responsible for any injuries which may take place within their offices; and
- Duplicate copies of all door keys are to be kept by the Head of Facilities and Administration. Such keys shall not be duplicated further (except with the authorization of the Head of Facilities and Administration or the Executive Director or his or her designate) or made available for use by other individuals who are not in the current employment of the Center.

APHRC will ensure that:

- First-aid kits are available on site;
- All worksites are clean and orderly and necessary measures and warnings are put in place such as scaffolding and warning signs;

- Work surfaces are kept dry and appropriate steps taken to ensure the surfaces are slip resistant;
- Toilets and hygiene facilities are provided and maintained in a clean and sanitary way;
- All work areas are adequately illuminated and ventilated;
- Fire exits are in good operating condition and are unobstructed;
- Portable fire extinguishers are provided in adequate numbers and types, and mounted in readily accessible locations;
- Fire extinguishers are recharged regularly with the recharge date noted on the inspection tag;
- Employees are instructed on the use of fire extinguishers and fire protection procedures at least once a year;
- All staff are instructed on proper emergency evacuation procedures;
- Fire Marshalls and First Aiders are appointed and trained regularly so that they support staff and the building occupants in case of fire or other emergencies;
- All stocks of highly inflammable substances are kept either in a fire-resisting store or in a safe place outside any occupied building
- A clear and bold notice indicating that smoking is prohibited is displayed in its premises;
- Vacuuming with appropriate equipment is used whenever possible rather than blowing or sweeping dust;
- Aisles and passageways are kept clear;
- Spilled materials are immediately cleaned up;
- Electric extension cords have a grounding conductor;
- All temporary circuits are protected by suitable disconnecting switches or plug connectors at the junction with permanent wiring;
- Exposed wiring and cords with frayed or deteriorated insulation are repaired or replaced;
- All cords, cables and raceway connections are intact and secure;
- All disconnecting switches and circuit breakers are labeled to indicate their use or equipment served;
- All electrical raceways and enclosures are securely fastened in place;
- All unused openings in electrical enclosures and fittings are closed with appropriate covers, plugs, or plates;
- All electrical enclosures such as switches, and junction boxes, are provided with tight-fitting covers or plates;
- All vehicles are fitted with functioning safety belts and are properly ventilated;
- Construction and facility renovation works are carried out in compliance with this policy and all safety gears in place. No work will be allowed to be carried out by any service provider or contractors hired by APHRC or its tenants without wearing the appropriate gear; and
- Fire and emergency evacuation drills are regularly performed.

This policy document will be given to all new employees during orientation. A copy will be posted on the Center's server/intranet. An addendum to this policy on health and safety will be shared with all tenants, contractors, service providers and an undertaking to comply obtained.

APHRC is committed to regular consultation with staff to ensure that the safety and health policy is operating effectively and that health and safety issues are regularly reviewed.

APHRC's Employee's responsibilities:

General

1. Employees are responsible for compliance with all rules and regulations and for continuously practicing safety precautions while performing their duties. They should conduct their activities in a manner, which prevents personal injury or injury to others, and/or damage to property.
2. Employees shall use reasonable care and judgment in performing their jobs. Every case of employee illness or injury occurring on APHRC's premises or while on APHRC duty is to be reported to the Head of Human Resources immediately so that proper treatment as well as insurance and benefits procedures can be promptly initiated.
3. Employees shall neither permit unauthorized persons to enter the office at any time, nor disclose office routines, procedures or restricted information that would jeopardize the safety of co-workers or company resources. All visitors, including family members of the staff, should be accompanied at all times by the relevant staff member.
4. Employees shall support the security of the office by ensuring that all windows, desk drawers, and cupboards are locked when not occupying the office. Sensitive documents are to be stored in lockable files/drawers.
5. Employees are to promptly report to the Head of Human Resources and or Head of Facilities and Administration on any unsafe or inappropriate conditions that may pose danger to APHRC employees and visitors so that these are repaired /corrected in a timely fashion. Reports can be sent to the following email: facilitiesmanagement@aphrc.org
6. Employees with a specific concern about a possible health or safety problem should discuss this concern with an immediate supervisor or the Head of Human Resources or the Head of Facilities and Administration.
7. Employees are expected to exercise due diligence and to protect the Center's assets/resources, office interior and exterior, including the floors, walls, woodwork, common and other areas. This includes using the assets/resources properly and protecting them from potential hazards. Careless, negligent, or unsafe use of equipment, supplies or any other resource may result in disciplinary action, including termination of employment.
8. Employees riding motor bikes on streets and roadways, and who are exposed to the hazards of traffic are required to wear bright colored (traffic orange/green) warning vests and protective headgear (helmets).
9. Employees shall not handle or tamper with any electrical equipment, machinery, or air or water lines in a manner not within the scope of their duties.
10. Drivers are expected to tell their supervisors if they are on medication that may make them drowsy so that they are temporarily assigned other duties.
11. Certain operations require employees to wear protective gear or clothing. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow proper safety precautions and wear such gear as required. The Center shall furnish dust coats, gumboots, and other protective equipment etc. to all employees and visitors who need them for the safe performance of their duties.

12. Employees are to come to work fit for duty and to work safely.
13. Supervisors are accountable for workplace health and safety in areas under their control.
14. Employees should use seat belts at all times while driving or riding in APHRC vehicles. Drivers of APHRC vehicles are required to remind the passengers to wear safety belts before driving off the vehicle.
15. Drivers may not carry non-authorized passengers with the official vehicles of the Center.
16. Employees should raise an alarm in case of fire and evacuate the premises. Attempts to extinguish the fire should only be made if it is safe to do so.

Employees are expected to observe national safety regulations such as driving speed limits, parking regulations, and different county health and safety regulations.

The Head of Facilities and Administration responsibilities:

- i) Record all work-related injuries or illness, except minor injuries requiring only first aid; and
- ii) Ensure first aid kits are replenished with materials as needed.

4. SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The use, manufacture, distribution, dispensing or possession of illegal and/or controlled substances on APHRC premises, vehicles or at sponsored functions is strictly prohibited. If it is determined that an employee is abusing drugs and other controlled substances, the Head of Human Resources will advise the said staff member to seek medical help. In the event that such an employee does not heed this advice, the employee shall be liable to summary dismissal. Continued employment will be contingent upon verification that a treatment plan is being followed, including periodic substance abuse testing. Refusal to follow the treatment plan or submit to drug testing will result in termination of employment. Employees convicted of a drug related charge will be terminated from employment.

No alcohol is to be consumed at the APHRC offices at any time unless it is served as part of an official function.

APHRC is a tobacco free environment. Tobacco use is not permitted within the Campus, field offices or while riding in a company vehicle. Smoking or chewing tobacco or similar substances is prohibited in the Campus, field offices or while riding in a company vehicle.

5. PREVENTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

To help maintain a safe environment as well as to evaluate and manage health and safety problems that arise, the Center has a Health and Safety Committee that works with the Facilities and Administration and Human Resources units. The committee is charged with the responsibility to:

- Ensure regular review of workplace health and safety practices;
- Provide opportunities for appropriate training and creating awareness of workplace health and safety;
- Support management in ensuring health and safety policies and procedures are implemented, including effective communication of relevant information;

-
- Identify, assess and control health/safety hazards at the workplace;
- Report health and safety breaches, and initiate preventive and corrective action;
-
- Carry out spot checks on compliance with the safety and health policy; and
- Recommend disciplinary action to be taken against culprits who continuously and deliberately violate this policy and or fail to comply with its requirements.

Annual inspection, by the Health and Safety Committee or its designate, will cover safety and health issues in the following areas:

- Building and Grounds Conditions - Floors, walls, ceilings, exits, stairs, walkways, ramps, platforms, driveways, and aisles;
- Housekeeping Program - Waste disposal, tools, objects, materials, leakage and spillage, cleaning methods, schedules, work areas, remote areas, storage areas;
- Electricity - Equipment, switches, breakers, fuses, switch-boxes, junctions, special fixtures, circuits, insulation, extensions, tools, motors, grounding, national electric code compliance;
- Lighting;
- Heating and Ventilation - Type, effectiveness, temperature, humidity, controls, natural and artificial ventilation and exhausting;
- Noise pollution;
- Fire Prevention - Extinguishers, alarms, sprinklers, smoking rules, exits, personnel assigned, separation of flammable materials and dangerous operations, explosion-proof fixtures in hazardous locations, waste disposal and training of personnel;
- Maintenance - Provide regular and preventive maintenance on all equipment used at the workplace, recording all work performed on the machinery and by training personnel on the proper care and servicing of the equipment;
- Transportation - Motor vehicle safety, seat belts, vehicle maintenance, safe driver programs;
- First Aid Supplies - Medical care facilities locations, posted emergency phone numbers, accessible first aid kits;
- Evacuation Plan - Establish and practice procedures for an emergency evacuation, e.g., fire, chemical/biological incidents, bomb threat; including escape procedures and routes, critical plant operations, employee accounting following an evacuation, rescue and medical duties and ways to report emergencies; and
- Safety gears to be worn while carrying out a particular role.

Employee health prior to appointment

All new employees are required to take a pre-employment medical examination at their own expense. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform his/her manager or supervisor of any health condition or illness or disability, which may affect the safe performance of his/her job.

To cater for minor injuries or illnesses, first-aid kits are located on every floor; and emergency telephone numbers for fire station, ambulance, security and medical insurance providers are posted on the intranet; and fire extinguishers are located near the fire escape doors, the lifts and the restrooms.

Contractors will be required to submit insurance policy for the works being carried out that are over USD 1,000 or its equivalent in other currencies. This includes repair, maintenance works and construction.

6. ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

At times, a personal problem may be severe enough that it carries over into the work environment and affects health and job performance. It is in the best interest of both the employee and the employer that the individual receives help in dealing with such a problem. APHRC may assist the affected employee to seek professional help should such personal problems persist.

The employee may contact his/her supervisor, the Head of Human Resources or any other established channel in private to get assistance with the assurance that strict confidentiality will be respected at all times.

7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

There will be continuous monitoring of the policy. It will be reviewed by the Board every three years or earlier when deemed necessary.

AFRICAN POPULATION AND HEALTH RESEARCH CENTER (APHRC)

Policy on Safety and Health

I, _____ (*Employee or service provider's name*) have received a copy of the Policy on Safety and Health dated November 2024. I have read and understood it and agree to adhere, at all times, to the stipulated terms. I acknowledge that this policy is part of my contract of employment. I also understand that I shall be subjected to the stipulated consequences, if I fail to adhere to the terms.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
(*Employee or service provider's signature*)