## Support for employees affected by domestic and family violence

#### Policy statement

EveryMan Australia is strongly committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment for all employees. It is recognised that employees sometimes face difficult situations in their work and personal life, such as domestic and family violence (DFV), that may affect their attendance, performance at work or safety.

DFV occurs when one person in a relationship (a partner, ex-partner or family member) uses violence and abuse to maintain power and control over the other person. This can include behaviour that is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically or economically abusive, threatening, coercive, or aimed at controlling or dominating the other person through fear. DFV can affect people of all cultures, religions, ages, genders, sexual orientations, educational backgrounds and income levels.

EveryMan Australia leaders, managers, supervisors and all employees are committed to making EveryMan Australia a great place to work. EveryMan Australia can make a significant difference to employees affected by DFV by providing appropriate safety and support measures.

DFV is unacceptable in any setting, including the workplace. Any EveryMan Australia employee who perpetrates violence and abuse from the workplace, including by telephone, fax, mail, email, internet or social media may be subject to disciplinary action.

All employees have a responsibility to model the public service values, which includes behaving in a way that promotes a work environment free from any form of violence and supporting those who are affected by DFV.

Fostering a workplace culture where employees affected by DFV are supported in the workplace, contributes to a healthy and safe working environment for all.

#### 2. Application

This policy applies to employees of EveryMan Australia, including contractors, agency temporary staff, work experience and industry placements, trainees and volunteers.

#### 3. Effective date

12 April 2016

#### 4. Policy

##### 4.1 Confidentiality and disclosure

EveryMan Australia employees have the right to choose whether, when and to whom they disclose information about being affected by DFV. This policy does not override any legal obligations to disclose information.

Information disclosed by an employee in relation to DFV will be kept confidential, except to the extent that disclosure is required or permitted by law.

##### 4.2 Awareness raising

EveryMan Australia will make available and promote the online awareness raising program, [Recognise, Respond, Refer: Domestic Violence and the Workplace](https://sas.elluminate.com/site/external/jwsdetect/nativeplayback.jnlp?sid=vclass&psid=2014-05-21.1641.D.FCD6C0C66BB0C6E122BFC4D63A393F.vcr), (see ‘Workplace and DV link’ in Resources table on Staff Page) jointly developed by the Queensland Government and Australia’s CEO Challenge. All employees are strongly encouraged to complete the program.

EveryMan Australia will ensure that information on support options are made available to employees.

##### 4.3 Support options available to employees

There are a number of support options available to assist employees affected by DFV. In relation to clauses 4.3.3 to 4.3.6, these arrangements should be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that they are appropriate.

4.3.1 Documentation

When considering the support options outlined below:

1. When an employee is requesting access to DFV leave and other support options, supervisors, managers or directors are required to request that evidence of the occurrence of domestic or family violence be provided if and when it is available.
2. EveryMan Australia acknowledges that employees may not be in a position to provide evidence of the occurrence of DFV, and an employee’s access to leave and other support options should not be denied in the absence of supporting documentation.
3. Evidence may include:
* a document issued by the Police;
* a written referral, issued by a registered medical practitioner or registered nurse, to a counsellor trained in providing support in domestic violence situations
* a document issued by a Court, or a counsellor trained in providing support to people experiencing the effects of domestic violence
* written confirmation from an Employee Assistance Program provider or from a domestic violence support service that the employee is experiencing domestic violence issues

b) Any related communications must be conducted in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner. Any documentation sighted must be returned to the employee unless the employee requests otherwise.

4.3.2 Leave entitlement

1. Leave for domestic violence purposes is available to employees who are experiencing domestic or family violence to allow them to be absent from the workplace to attend counselling appointments, legal proceedings and other activities related to, and as a consequence of, domestic violence.
2. Leave for domestic violence purposes is available to all employees, with the exception of casual employees, who are entitled to access leave without pay for DFV purposes.
3. An EveryMan Australia employee experiencing domestic or family violence will have access up to a maximum of 15 days per calendar year paid leave. Leave for DFV purposes is non-accumulative.
4. The reasons may include, but are not limited to, attending medical, legal, police or counselling appointments; attending court; organising alternative accommodation, child care or school attendance arrangements for the purposes of attending to matters arising from DFV or supporting the person affected by DFV.
5. Leave should be granted where the Executive Director is satisfied that the employee requires leave because the employee is affected by DFV. However, leave should not be denied in the absence of supporting documents.
6. The employee does not have to use other leave entitlements before accessing this leave. This leave can be taken as consecutive days, single days or as part days.
7. The employee may also access further paid or unpaid leave, including special leave, sick leave, carers leave, recreation leave, long service leave or other accrued time to attend to matters arising from DFV—this will be in accordance with the directives relating to each type of leave.
8. Employees wishing to access leave for domestic or family violence purposes should discuss making an application with their supervisor or management as soon as reasonably practical.
9. As a general rule, a leave application should be submitted by an employee for approval service before the commencement of the leave. However, retrospective applications may be approved provided that appropriate evidence is provided as soon as reasonably practicable upon the employee’s return to the workplace.

4.3.3 Work performance and attendance

a) Work performance or attendance may be influenced by factors not connected with work. Employees will be supported and encouraged to raise concerns about their personal circumstances, including whether DFV is a contributing factor to work performance and attendance.

b) It may also be necessary to include additional support and provide reasonable workplace and role adjustments for a period of time. Regular reviews, a return to work plan and a performance improvement process may still be required.

4.3.4 Flexible working arrangements

EveryMan Australia will provide employees affected by DFV with access to flexible working arrangements. Employees are encouraged to discuss their needs with their managers in the first instance.

4.3.5 Counselling support services

a) EveryMan Australia will offer the Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) or similar, to all employees and their immediate family members. The EAP offers free and confidential support services through face-to-face, telephone and online counselling.

b) The EAP also provides specific advice to managers to support employees affected by DFV.

4.3.6 Other workplace support and role adjustments

EveryMan Australia may also consider:

1. workplace safety needs and arrangements to protect the employee and colleagues following a risk assessment, including increased security measures
2. supporting employees to have the workplace included in a Domestic Violence Order, where appropriate
3. providing other support and reasonable adjustments in the workplace, such as:
* job redesign or changes to duties
* changes to working hours or patterns of work
* alternative suitable employment in other teams, offices and locations
* changes to email address and telephone numbers
* secure parking.

##### 4.4 Safety in the workplace

Of paramount consideration is the safety and wellbeing of all EveryMan Australia employees in the workplace. Fostering a workplace culture where employees affected by DFV are supported contributes to a healthy and safe working environment for all.

In situations where an employee affected by DFV is concerned for their safety or that of their colleagues, it is recommended that the employee work in consultation with their manager and/or supervisor and/or human resources officer to develop a Workplace safety plan agreement.

A DFV risk assessment checklist should be completed by the supervisor/manager and/or human resources officer in consultation with the employee affected by DFV, prior to completing a Workplace safety plan agreement, and include any necessary support and reasonable adjustment.

The Workplace safety plan agreement should outline specific workplace safety needs and arrangements considered necessary to support the employee and provide for their safety, such as:

* changes in relation to any work patterns, practices or work location
* precautionary plans to be undertaken pre or post-work (e.g. travel arrangements, secure carpark etc.)
* workplace changes and/or security measures to protect the employee and their colleagues
* updating emergency contacts and/or next of kin details.

Arrangements should be reviewed on a pre-determined schedule and in response to any changes in circumstances or occurrence of any events related to the staff member’s safety, to ensure currency, ongoing relevance and efficacy.

#### 5. Responsibilities

##### 5.1 Leaders/managers/supervisors will:

* model EveryMan Australia values, including behaviour in a way that promotes a work environment free from any form of violence
* actively participate in DFV related learning and development activities to effectively communicate and manage any domestic violence arising in the workplace
* encourage employees to actively participate in DFV related learning and development activities
* sensitively communicate with employees affected by DFV
* take prompt and appropriate action to address any reports of employees affected by DFV
* ensure appropriate levels of support are provided to employees affected by DFV
* ensure appropriate management of work performance and monitoring of attendance issues.

##### 5.2 Employees will:

* model the public service values, including behaving in a way that promotes a work environment free from any form of violence
* actively participate in DFV related learning and development activities
* sensitively communicate with colleagues affected by DFV
* ensure colleagues are aware of available support services and encourage colleagues to seek assistance.