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**2024-2025 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT & GOALS**

**HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**

The health and safety of our employees is important. Our policy is to strive for the highest possible level of safety and to comply with all applicable laws. We are committed to the prevention of occupational illness and injury. We believe that prevention is key to reducing the human and economic costs associated with workplace injuries, accidents and illness. We do this with the help and cooperation of our employees and consumers. Everyone must be conscientious about work safety including proper work methods, reporting potential hazards and decreasing known hazards.

Cheshire will make every reasonable and practical effort to provide and maintain a safe and healthy occupational environment. It must be remembered that most work areas are consumers’ private homes and as such warrant respect for individual needs, styles, cultures, likes and dislikes.

Cheshire employees, consumers, leaders and board members are responsible for complying with all legislative and organizational policies, procedures and practices related to health and safety. Moreover, they are responsible for actively promoting, identifying and reporting the need for change or updating current information and practices.

While prevention is our goal, Cheshire is also committed to the active rehabilitation of workers who are injured. We do this by providing early and safe return to work duties where necessary and by working cooperatively with the injured worker and their health care providers to develop return to work strategies that facilitate their recovery.

Cheshire continues to work towards the elimination of workplace injuries. Working with our Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees and building on the foundation of a comprehensive Health & Safety program, our goals this year will focus on the following areas:

* **Injury Reduction**: Cheshire is dedicated to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for our employees, consumers, and stakeholders. We promote a safe workplace through incident reporting and prevention initiatives, with a strong focus on raising awareness of slip, trip, and fall hazards. Our goal is to enhance safety, mitigate risks, prevent injuries, and support ongoing prevention efforts, ensuring the well-being of all.

* **Workplace Harassment and Violence**: Cheshire strongly encourages the reporting of all incidents of workplace harassment, violence, and any conditions that may impact psychological health and safety. The organization is dedicated to fostering a safe, supportive environment for all employees, prioritizing both physical and mental well-being. Cheshire will ensure that policies and procedures related to harassment, violence, and psychological safety are continuously updated, and that all employees receive comprehensive training to effectively address and prevent such issues.
* **Hazard Identification and Awareness: (Occ H&S illness prevention):** Cheshire is committed to fostering a safe and healthy working environment by prioritizing hazard identification and awareness as part of its Occupational Health & Safety initiatives. Regular workplace inspections are conducted to proactively identify potential hazards, including physical, chemical, biological, and ergonomic risks, with an effective hazard reporting system encouraging employees to report any issues. Additionally, Cheshire ensures all employees are well-informed about common workplace illnesses and injuries through awareness programs, informational materials, and workshops.

Cheshire emphasizes the importance of personal protective equipment (PPE), ensuring employees are properly trained in its use and that safety equipment is regularly maintained. As part of our commitment to employee safety, we are introducing a new respiratory protection program to further safeguard against workplace hazards. In addition to this, regular health monitoring programs are in place to identify potential risks early, and employees have access to health resources such as ergonomic assessments and counseling services. Emergency response procedures are well-defined, with periodic drills to ensure staff readiness. Collaboration with external experts and continuous audits of safety practices help improve and update the company’s hazard identification processes, ensuring a culture of ongoing safety and well-being for all employees.

* **Personal Safety Awareness and Training**: Cheshire is dedicated to enhancing staff safety by routinely offering ongoing back care training and promoting awareness of safe driving techniques, as well as preventing slips, trips and falls. Cheshire recognizes the increased need to prioritize personal safety, especially when working alone. We are committed to regularly reviewing our existing protocols and measures, while also collaborating with other agencies to ensure we provide the most effective safety plans for our employees.

***Thank you for being our partner in Health & Safety.***



Angela McMillan, Executive Director