

# VOICE PROCEDURE (21) V2

## PURPOSE

To provide guidance in the prevention of voice related injuries.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

**Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) must ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that:**

- a hazard management approach related to voice fatigue/strain is identified, assessed, and controls are adopted and reviewed
- information, instruction and training is provided to workers as required
- consultation, coordination and cooperation occurs with other duty holders, workers and worker representatives
- the working environment is designed, constructed and maintained to minimise voice strain.

### Officers must:

Exercise due diligence to ensure that the PCBU meets their responsibilities as above.

### Workers must:

- take reasonable care for their own safety and avoid adversely affecting the health and safety of others through any act or omission
- identify and report any concerns relating to voice strain/fatigue
- comply with all reasonable instructions and procedures.

## DEFINITIONS

Definitions of terms can be found on the Catholic Safety website via this link [here](#).

## ACTIONS

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION	
	<p>Hazards can be identified through strategies such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting a workplace assessment to identify issues.</li> <li>• Formal or informal surveys.</li> <li>• Discussions with staff during performance appraisals/staff meetings.</li> <li>• Hazard and incident reports.</li> <li>• Reporting results of the assessment to all staff to discuss the most appropriate methods of control.</li> <li>• Absenteeism records.</li> </ul>
RISK ASSESSMENT	
	<p>Assess the hazard in consultation with workers through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual inspection of the working space.</li> <li>• Assessing the level of noise.</li> </ul>

## CONTROLS

Consider the following:

- Advise to rest the voice whenever possible.
- Maintaining a high fluid intake to lubricate vocal cords (water recommended).
- Changing communication methods e.g. non-verbal signals, group work rather than individual instruction, speakers, whistles, bells and handclaps.
- Reviewing building design and use of room.
- Modifying behaviour management techniques.
- Engaging speech pathologists as required.
- Ensuring staff meetings regularly include voice care on the agenda.
- Provision of voice care training.
- Using newsletters/flyers to raise awareness of voice care.
- Providing appropriate equipment, for example a megaphone or PA system.

See Appendix 1.

## INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

- The workers will be briefed on the requirements of this procedure during induction.
- Provide information, instruction and training as required on the correct use of equipment.

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Retain any documents relevant to voice management as per Document Control Procedure 24.

## MONITOR AND REVIEW

This procedure will be monitored for compliance and effectiveness by Catholic Safety Health & Welfare SA as per Audit Procedure 7.

## RELATED DOCUMENTS

### External Documents

Work Health and Safety Act (SA) 2012

Work Health and Safety Regulations (SA) 2012

Duke Voice Care Centre ([dukevoicecare.org](http://dukevoicecare.org))

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

[www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/taking-care-your-voice](http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/taking-care-your-voice)

### Internal Documents

Work Health & Safety and Injury Management Policy

Catholic Church Endowment Society Procedures No 1-31

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Strategies for Minimising Voice Strain

## FORMS

Nil

## VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approved Date	Reason for Development of Review	Review Date
4	Sector Forums	February 2014	Legislation – New WHS Act	2017
<b>April 2015 – Document consolidated across CCES sectors</b>				
V1	Executive Manager CSHW	24/04/2015	Procedure consolidation	2017
V2	Executive Manager CSH&WSA	26/06/2017	Procedure Review	2020



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Kathy Grieve

## APPENDIX No: 1

### Practical Strategies for Minimising Voice Strain

#### **What is voice?**

The sound of your voice is produced by vibration of the vocal cords, which are two bands of smooth muscle tissue that are positioned opposite each other in the larynx. The larynx is located between the base of the tongue and the top of the trachea, which is the passageway to the lungs.

#### **How do you know when your voice is not healthy:**

If you answer “yes” to the following questions, you may have a voice problem:

- Has your voice become hoarse or raspy?
- Have you lost your ability to hit some high notes when singing?
- Does your voice suddenly sound deeper?
- Does your throat often feel raw, achy, or strained?
- Has it become an effort to talk?
- Do you find yourself repeatedly clearing your throat?

If you think you have a voice problem report immediately to your PCBU/Officer. You may need to consult a doctor to determine the underlying cause. The doctor may also refer you to a speech pathologist to assist you in ways to use your voice.

#### **What causes voice problems:**

Causes of voice problems can include:

- Upper respiratory infections
- Inflammation caused by gastroesophageal reflux (sometimes called acid reflux, heartburn or GERD)
- Vocal misuse and overuse
- Growths on the vocal folds such as vocal nodules or laryngeal papillomatosis (<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/recurrent-respiratory-papillomatosis>)
- Cancer of the larynx
- Neurological diseases (such as spasmodic dysphonia) (<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/spasmodic-dysphonia>)
- Psychological trauma

**Tips to prevent voice problems:**

Stay hydrated:

- Drink plenty of water. Six to eight glasses a day is recommended.
- Limit your intake of drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine, which cause the body to lose water and make the vocal cords and larynx dry. Alcohol also irritates the mucous membranes that line the throat.
- Avoid or limit medications that dry out your vocal folds, including some common cold and allergy medications.

Maintain a healthy lifestyle and diet:

- Don't smoke and avoid second hand smoke. Smoke irritates the vocal folds. Also cancer of the vocal folds is seen most often in individuals who smoke.
- Avoid eating spicy foods. Spicy foods can cause stomach acid to move into the throat or esophagus, causing heartburn.
- Include plenty of whole grains, fruits, vegetables in your diet. These foods contain vitamin A, E and C. They also keep the mucus membranes that line the throat healthy.
- Wash your hands often to prevent getting a cold or the flu.
- Get enough rest. Physical fatigue has a negative effect on voice.
- Exercise regularly. Exercise increases stamina and muscle tone. This helps provide good posture and breathing, which are necessary for proper speaking.
- If you have persistent heartburn talk to your doctor about diet changes or medications that can help reduce flare-ups.
- Avoid mouthwash or gargles that contain alcohol or irritating chemicals. If you still wish to use a mouthwash that contains alcohol, limit your use to oral rinsing. If gargling is necessary, use a salt water solution.
- Avoid using mouthwash to treat persistent bad breath. Halitosis (bad breath) may be the result of a problem that mouthwash cannot cure such as low grade infections in the nose, sinuses, tonsils, gums or lungs as well as from gastric acid reflux from the stomach.

Use your voice wisely:

- Try not to overuse your voice. Avoid speaking or singing when your voice is hoarse or tired.
- Rest your voice when you are sick. Illness puts extra stress on your voice.
- Avoid using extremes of your vocal range, such as screaming or whispering. Talking too loudly and too softly can both stress your voice.
- Practice good breathing techniques when singing or talking. Support your voice with deep breaths from the chest, and don't rely on your throat alone. Singers and speakers are often taught exercises that improve this kind of breath control. Talking from the throat, without supporting the breath, puts great strain on the voice.
- Avoid cradling the phone when talking. Cradling the phone between the head and the shoulder for extended periods of time can cause muscle tension in the neck.
- Consider using a microphone when appropriate. In relatively static environments such as exhibit areas, classrooms, or exercise rooms, a lightweight microphone and amplifier-speaker system can be of great help.
- Avoid talking in noisy places. Trying to talk above noise causes strain on the voice.
- Consider voice therapy. A speech pathologist who is experienced in treating voice problems can teach you how to use your voice in a healthy way.

Reference: NIH National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders (NIDCD)

[www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/taking-care-your-voice](http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/taking-care-your-voice)