



Guide

Elections – Safety & Wellbeing

Guide for Parliamentarians and Staff

1. About This Guide

Election campaigns can be both exciting and challenging and present a unique set of circumstances that differ from routine parliamentary work. During these times parliamentarians, their staff and volunteers may face distinct or heightened Work Health and Safety (WHS) risks.

This guide offers practical advice to minimise WHS risks and provides tips on maintaining general health and wellbeing during the campaign period.

NOTE: Volunteers work in a capacity for the parliamentarian rather than the Commonwealth and are not covered by the Commonwealth's workers' compensation scheme (Comcare) or insurance fund (Comcover) in the event of an injury or workplace incident. Parliamentarians engaging a volunteer are encouraged to take out their own personal insurance cover and to consider any security and confidentiality factors relating to their engagement.

How to use the Guide

- Review the information contained in the following sections of the guide:
 - **Section 2 – Election Activities and Work Health and Safety Risks** provides information on common activities undertaken during election campaigning and the potential hazards associated with them.
 - **Section 3 – Looking After Your Health and Wellbeing** contains tips for looking after your wellbeing during the busy and often demanding election campaign.
- Use the guidance contained at Attachment A, B and C to review the preparation for activities which may be undertaken during campaigning and consider recommended risk controls.

Checklist	Purpose
Election Preparation Tool Attachment A	This tool will help individuals identify some of the more common WHS risks and provide guidance on what can be done to manage them. This tool can be used to help ensure people understand the potential risks and are prepared for campaigning.
Simple Event Checklist Attachment B	A simple checklist to assist with preparation for attendance at events, including consideration of the risks associated with the consumption of alcohol. This checklist can be used to prepare for election events to ensure appropriate risk controls are in place.
Event Security Screening Tool Attachment C	A tool to assist with identifying potential security risks associated with events. The checklist can be used to screen for any potential risks, and where risks have been identified to consider what risk controls are in place.

For further guidance, including implementing suggested risk controls, contact the PWSS Work Health and Safety team on 1800 747 977 (Option 3) or email whs@pwss.gov.au.

2. Common Election Activities and WHS Risks

This section includes common activities which may be undertaken during election campaigns that could expose parliamentarians, employees and volunteers to potential hazards. Some activities may be unique to election campaigns while others may be more common during business-as-usual times.

Canvassing

Canvassing is a fundamental component of the democratic process, serving as an effective method to campaign and engage with constituents. The Department of Finance's [Directing a MOP\(S\) Act employee](#) document provides guidance on the types of tasks that may be undertaken.

While canvassing is generally a positive and rewarding experience, it does present the potential for exposure to:

- violence and aggression (verbal and physical)
- UV radiation and adverse weather events
- slips and trips
- manual handling risks
- traffic
- interaction with wildlife and domestic animals.

Events

During election campaigns, there will be opportunities to attend or host events in a range of settings that have the potential to expose attendees to a range of hazards including:

- security risks
- violence and aggression (verbal and physical)
- UV and adverse weather events
- impairment from alcohol consumption.

Interacting with Constituents

Engaging with constituents is a key activity during an election campaign. This engagement can take place within electorate offices (in-person, via the phone, letters, or emails), at election forums, through promotional activities, door knocking, or at various other locations or events. While most of these interactions may be pleasant, there is an increased risk of exposure to violence and aggression (verbal and physical).

Mail Handling

During an election period, parliamentarians and their campaign headquarters may experience an increase in mail. Although mail-related hazards are rare, employees handling packages should be mindful of:

- offensive and/or toxic materials
- explosive devices.

Media

During elections, media attention and social media activity often increase, leading to heightened scrutiny and media contact. This can negatively impact employees' psychological wellbeing. Hazards can include:

- aggression
- psychologically distressing situations.

Polling Booths

The election campaign can reach its peak on polling day. This can expose individuals to various hazards when present at polling booths, such as:

- UV and adverse weather events
- violence and aggression (verbal and physical)
- slips and trips
- increased fatigue
- traffic.

Protests

Parliamentarians, their offices, employees and volunteers can be the target of protests, and this type of attention may increase during election campaigns. This kind of attention may also be present when attending campaign forums or other public events. Protests may be planned i.e. where there is a warning of the protest activity, or unplanned and spontaneous. This type of activity has the potential to expose people to:

- violence and aggression (verbal and physical).
- psychologically distressing situations.

Travel

The frequency and nature of travel can often increase during election campaigns. Travel can include the use of road, rail and air transportation. Excessive travel can expose individuals to a range of hazards, including:

- motor vehicle and traffic incidents
- manual handling
- Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)
- slips and trips
- UV and adverse weather events weather
- fatigue.

Workload

During election campaigns, there will often be an increase in workload and potentially longer working hours. In combination, these can have potentially negative effects on an individual's health and wellbeing if not managed appropriately. Some of these impacts include:

- fatigue
- psychological distress
- increased risk of incidents associated with rushing, fatigue, manual handling.

3. Looking After Your Health and Wellbeing

Election campaigns are busy. To effectively manage the demands on physical and mental health during this time it is important to have protective strategies in place. The following wellbeing principles provide an effective foundation for good mental and physical health.

SEEDS - Principles for Health and Wellbeing¹

SEEDS is a concept from John Arden, PhD² that encompasses different aspects of mental and physical health that he calls the "Five Essential Factors for Cultivating and Maintaining Mind-Body Health." His five essential components are Social, Exercise, Education, Diet and Sleep (SEEDS).

Social Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Being around positive, supportive people has a powerful regulating effect on our nervous system. ✓ It is also important to recognise the need to balance time spent with others and time spent alone.
Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Movement is medicine. Regular exercise has a positive effect on both our physical and psychological wellbeing. ✓ Exercise with others can also introduce fun which can be a powerful reset for our nervous system. ✓ It is important to match our exercise regime to our level of fitness and not to overdo it.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Knowing what's happening with our minds and bodies and identifying healthy coping strategies for stressful situations is an important pillar for mental and physical health. ✓ Identify resources for support and know how to access them (including PWSS and your EAP).
Diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ What we consume can have a significant effect on our mood, physical wellbeing and mental health. ✓ Be mindful of planning for busy times to ensure you maintain good nutrition. ✓ Stay hydrated and be mindful of limiting your intake of alcohol, caffeine and sugar.
Sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set a good routine with regular sleep and wake times. ✓ Try to maintain the temperature of your bedroom between 18 -21 degrees. ✓ Dim the lights towards the end of the evening. ✓ Do some slow movement stretches. ✓ If unable to sleep after 30 minutes, move out of bed and undertake a quiet activity for a short time before returning to bed.

1 Arden, J. B. (2022). *Rewire Your Brain 2.0 – Five Healthy Factors to a better life*. Jossey-Bass; 2nd edition (16 March 2023).

2 Arden, J. B. (2014). *The brain bible: how to stay vital, productive, and happy for a lifetime*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Campaign WHS Preparation Tool

This tool will help individuals identify some of the more common WHS risks and provide guidance on what can be done to manage them. In the event of an incident occurring, being able to demonstrate these risks have been addressed is best practice under WHS legislation. The PWSS can work with parliamentarians, Health and Safety Representatives and WHS Site Officers to implement measures and maintain appropriate records. For assistance, please contact the PWSS WHS team on 1800 747 977 (option 3) or whs@pwss.gov.au.

WHS Risk	Suggested Risk Mitigations
Alcohol and Other Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals are aware of their obligations under the Behaviour Codes and Standards. Responsible service of alcohol is maintained at events and non-alcoholic options are available. Consider how you might sensitively manage employees who may become impaired. The Simple Event Checklist (Attachment B) can be used to plan for attendance at events where alcohol may be served.
Animal/bird Attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of your surroundings including the risk of animal attacks i.e. dogs, livestock, birds, reptiles, insects. Do not enter properties with animal signage.
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategies to prevent DVT when undertaking extended travel include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> walk around at least every 2 hours <input type="checkbox"/> do leg exercises such as calf stretches or heel lifts <input type="checkbox"/> drink plenty of water <input type="checkbox"/> avoid alcohol or caffeine (these can add to dehydration) <input type="checkbox"/> wear compression stockings if other DVT risk factors exist.
Fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals are aware of the <u>Fatigue Management Policy</u>. Travel is planned to reduce fatigue risks including impacts on normal sleep patterns. Employees do not to travel if unwell. Employees have sufficient time and resources to complete their work without the need to work excessive hours.
Mail Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals know how to handle suspicious mail (isolate area and contact police) in line with their EO Emergency Response Procedure where the following are observed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> excessive postage <input type="checkbox"/> unusual, heavy or lopsided package <input type="checkbox"/> stains, discoloration or odour <input type="checkbox"/> poorly written or misspelled address <input type="checkbox"/> excessive packaging (tape, string etc) <input type="checkbox"/> wires or ticking sound.
Manual Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals are provided with instruction on <u>manual handling principles</u> and <u>workstation set-up</u>. Individuals have access to equipment and/or assistance to handle loads (including when travelling).

WHS Risk	Suggested Risk Mitigations
Motor Vehicle / Traffic Accidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals minimise the risk of motor vehicle or traffic accidents by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring fitness to drive <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing driving where practicable <input type="checkbox"/> Taking breaks of 15 minutes every 2 hours <input type="checkbox"/> Use of hands-free mobile when driving <input type="checkbox"/> Being traffic aware <input type="checkbox"/> Using footpaths and pedestrian crossings.
Psychological Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision and support arrangements are in place (including for volunteers). Employees are aware of counselling and support available through PWSS and the Employee Assistance Program, including to debrief after being exposed to a distressing event or interaction.
Security & Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> maintain security while opening and closing the office <input type="checkbox"/> Have arrangements to work securely when alone or working remotely <input type="checkbox"/> Know how to manage security threats posed by visitors <input type="checkbox"/> Have been trained in de-escalation procedures. Emergency procedures including raising the alarm and how to isolate employees from threats are in place. Where there are current security threats (e.g. protests) liaise with the AFP. First aid equipment is available including issuing personal first aid kits for remote travel. Individuals have their mobile phone with them, and it is fully charged prior to travel and at the start of each day. Do not hand out personal contact details to constituents. Be aware of potential surveillance during your duties, e.g. door knocking / canvassing.
Slips and Trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slips/trips are prevented through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wearing comfortable non-slip footwear <input type="checkbox"/> Not rushing, especially up or down stairs <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining a clear line of sight when carrying loads.
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel is planned to minimise the impact on the normal sleep patterns of employees and to allow for adequate rest breaks. Employees are fit and well to travel.
Violence and aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees are aware of the <u>Work-Related Violence and Aggression Policy</u> and their responsibilities under the policy. Employees know how to manage and respond to violence in different settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When meeting constituents in the office, the following controls are in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> meeting spaces allow for employees to escape readily and items which could be used as weapons are removed.

WHS Risk	Suggested Risk Mitigations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a process for disengaging with constituents is discussed, agreed upon and in place. ○ When interacting with constituents in the community, the following controls are in place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> where possible employees are in pairs <input type="checkbox"/> employees do not meet constituents in isolated areas <input type="checkbox"/> employees to politely decline invitations to enter constituent homes <input type="checkbox"/> employees have an agreed arrangement for disengaging with constituents if needed. ○ The EO has implemented a process for managing protests outside offices in line with Finance's Protest Management Guide. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> assessing the risk to employees <input type="checkbox"/> keeping doors locked and only allowing cleared visitors to enter the premises <input type="checkbox"/> diverting phones to message bank <input type="checkbox"/> reiterating the importance of employees not entering the reception area in the event of constituent threats or aggression <input type="checkbox"/> reiterating how can employees to access and use the duress alarm/call police <input type="checkbox"/> debriefing after the incident (PWSS can assist). <p>Refer also to the AFP's Stay Secure site which provides practical safety and security information covering travel, vehicle, cyber and home security, protests and terrorism.</p> ○ Responding to the media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> have a central point for official media contacts <input type="checkbox"/> employees do not share information about their work on social media. ○ The EO has implemented a process for managing and responding to phone calls which considers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> call screening / message bank <input type="checkbox"/> de-escalation tips / disconnection <input type="checkbox"/> response to serious threats – including involving the AFP. ● Employees are trained in de-escalation techniques.
Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Monitor the BOM website for weather warnings <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid driving or outdoor events during stormy weather <input type="checkbox"/> Follow Cancer Council advice regarding UV protection.
Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workloads/work schedules allow for adequate breaks. ● Individuals have sufficient time / resources to manage their work to minimise working excessive hours. ● Contingencies are in place to cover absentees and workloads during peak demand periods. ● Employees should be aware of the counselling and support offered through PWSS.

WHS Risk	Suggested Risk Mitigations
Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals take care of themselves following guidance such as the “SEEDS” principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Social Connectedness <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Education (of self around wellbeing strategies) <input type="checkbox"/> Diet <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep

Simple Event Checklist

This checklist may be used to assist with the preparation of hosting or attending events and with managing potential risks including those associated with alcohol. In the event of an incident occurring, being able to demonstrate these risks have been addressed is best practice under WHS legislation.

Pre-event
<p>➤ Consider whether the catering provider has been asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide and display zero alcohol and low alcohol beverage options (eg beer, wine, cider, spirits etc) as well as juices, soft drinks and water. • cater for the dietary needs of all those attending the function (eg vegetarian, gluten free, halal). • not serve alcohol prior to the advertised event and to conclude service at least 15 minutes prior to the advertised event end time. • use employees with relevant skills including the responsible service of alcohol certification.
<p>➤ Consider whether invitees have been asked to provide information on their dietary requirements.</p>
<p>➤ Identify employees who may be vulnerable at work events and develop strategies to help them remain safe at the event. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay connected - remain in the main function area so that you are not isolated from colleagues. • look out for each other - check in with team members particularly if they have been talking with the same person for some time – agree on a signal or code word to indicate if everything is alright or if they need assistance to leave the conversation. • have an exit strategy - if someone makes you feel uncomfortable or scared, excuse yourself to get a drink, speak to a colleague or go to the bathroom. If this does not work, use agreed signals to alert colleagues and let them know that you need assistance. • Do not feel pressured to drink alcohol. Enjoy the zero-alcohol or low-alcohol alternatives available as well as juices, soft drinks and water. • drink slowly and stay hydrated - alternate alcoholic drinks with non-alcoholic alternatives such as juices, soft drinks or water. • keep track of how many drinks you have had so that you can remain in control. • always watch your drink – this minimises the risk of someone filling up your glass without your agreement.
<p>➤ Consider whether clear expectations have been set regarding responsible consumption of alcohol and acceptable behaviour in relation to alcohol at work events.</p>
<p>➤ Check whether a protocol has been established with event staff/Parliamentary Security Service to safely and appropriately manage inappropriate behaviour.</p>
<p>➤ Check whether employees have been reminded of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their health and safety responsibilities. • appropriate workplace behaviour expectations including the Behaviour Codes and Standards. • feeling comfortable to opt out of alcohol consumption.
During event
<p>➤ Consider appointing someone to keep an eye out for signs of impairment of employees and to address any concerns discreetly and sensitively, including assisting to arrange safe transport home if necessary.</p>

Event Security Screening Tool

This screening tool has been developed with reference to the AFP's Activity Risk Assessment and other security and safety advice relating to campaigning activities as detailed on the AFP's [Stay Secure Election Campaigning website](#).

Instructions: Review the security risk categories below to identify if there are potential risks that are applicable to the proposed event being attended. Review the potential risk mitigation strategies for each risk category and consider whether sufficient risk controls are in place. Consider contacting the AFP (in your state or territory) for further advice. Finally consider whether attendance at the event is acceptable given the identified potential risks.

In the event of an incident occurring, being able to demonstrate these risks have been addressed is best practice under WHS legislation.

Risk Category	Specific Risk Issues	Risk Present? Y / N	Considerations for Mitigating Risks
1. Current threats to EO	<p>Have there been any threats received by the EO in the last month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person By telephone By mail? <p>If yes, are these threats likely to be present at the planned event?</p>		<p><i>Consider:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether any known threats against the EO could increase the security risk for EO employees attending events. Whether there are sufficient security protocols in place to manage the known/potential risks. Examples of controls include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> security personnel event risk management plan process for screening attendees crowd controls (barriers, access controls, guards) emergency response plan staff working in pairs training in de-escalation techniques Whether there is a need to involve the AFP in responding to these threats.
2. Protest activity	<p>In recent months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any targeted protests at the EO? Have there been any protests against the 		<p><i>Consider:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether there is a risk to EO staff from any known protest at the proposed event site. Whether there are sufficient security protocols in place to manage the known/potential risks. Examples of controls include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> security personnel

Risk Category	Specific Risk Issues	Risk Present? Y / N	Considerations for Mitigating Risks
	<p>government in the electorate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are these protest groups likely to be present at the planned event? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> event risk management plan process for screening attendees crowd controls (barriers, access controls, guards) emergency response plan staff working in pairs training in de-escalation techniques Whether further advice from the AFP should be sought.
3. Terror threats	<p>Review the current national terrorism threat assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certain Expected Probable Possible Not expected <p>Is the event site a potential target for terrorism (e.g. places of worship, government buildings, symbolic events, crowded public places)?</p>		<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether there are sufficient security risk controls in place, especially where the terrorism threat assessment is <i>Expected</i> or <i>Certain</i> Whether there are sufficient security protocols in place to manage the known/potential risks. Examples of controls include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> security personnel event risk management plan process for screening attendees crowd controls (barriers, access controls, guards) emergency response plan staff working in pairs training in de-escalation techniques Whether further advice from the AFP should be sought.
4. Political Environment	<p>Are there any current discussions in the media which may prompt a protest against the Parliamentarian or government while at the event?</p>		<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether there are any current issues receiving coverage in the media which may indicate an increased security risk for attendance at events Whether there are sufficient security protocols in place to manage the known/potential risks. Examples of controls include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> security personnel event risk management plan

Risk Category	Specific Risk Issues	Risk Present? Y / N	Considerations for Mitigating Risks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ process for screening attendees ○ crowd controls (barriers, access controls, guards) ○ emergency response plan ○ staff working in pairs ○ training in de-escalation techniques ● Whether further advice from the AFP is warranted
5. Site/venue security	Does the event venue/site have security protocols in place, including managing access, crowd control and emergency response?		<p>Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whether there are adequate site / event security risk controls in place ● Whether risk controls been verified with the venue / site controller? Examples of controls include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ security personnel ○ event risk management plan ○ process for screening attendees ○ crowd controls (barriers, access controls, guards) ○ emergency response plan ○ staff working in pairs ○ training in de-escalation techniques
6. Personal security	Is there the potential for a threat to the personal security of EO staff at the event?		<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Whether staff are sufficiently prepared to respond to any potential personal threats associated with the planned event. Examples of controls include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ security personnel e.g. AFP, state/territory police including consultation with event security staff as appropriate ○ event risk management plan ○ process for screening attendees ○ crowd controls (barriers, access controls, guards) ○ emergency response plan ○ staff working in pairs

Risk Category	Specific Risk Issues	Risk Present? Y / N	Considerations for Mitigating Risks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ training in de-escalation techniques
7. Travel security	Are there any potential security risks travelling to and from events (e.g. active or planned protests)?		<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the route to the event is safe and secure and whether EO staff may be exposed to security risks (e.g. protests) enroute • Whether alternative travel arrangements to or from the venue need to be considered • Whether further advice from the AFP should be sought
8. Environmental impacts	Are there any warnings regarding adverse weather events for the event site – especially for outdoor events?		<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a forecast weather event poses a significant risk and if the event can be held indoors or postponed • Whether staff are adequately prepared (e.g.: access to shade, sunscreen, water, wet weather gear)

Information to be provided to AFP for planned electorate events

The Security Protection Diplomatic Liaison (SPDL) arm of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) can provide advice and information regarding security arrangements for events attended by Parliamentarians and EO staff. The information they require regarding the proposed event includes:

- location, venue, date and times of event
- expected size of event, people attending, VIPS, guest lists, is the event open or ticketed
- what the event is about, purpose of event, how is the event being advertised
- current EO concerns - persons of interest or groups
- point of contact for the event/electoral office.

Note: assessing risk can be done in conjunction with SPDL contact the SPDL office in your state or territory. See [Security Protection Diplomatic Liaison AFP](#)

 **24/7 Support** 1800 747 977

 **Text the PWSS** 0487 112 755

www.pwss.gov.au