



# **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

## **ETC Foundation**

ETC	Management
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**For Approval:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J.H.J. Dusseljee', written over a light blue horizontal line.

J.H.J. Dusseljee  
Director ETC Foundation

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ELIGIBILITY</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Guiding principles	4
1.2 Eligibility	4
<b>2 POLICY DIRECTIVES</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Legal framework	5
2.2 Prevention, education and awareness	5
2.3 Managing health and safety	6

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
GGD	Gemeentelijke Gezondheidsdienst - municipal health service
H&S	Health and Safety
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
ILO	International Labour Organization
RI&E	Risk Inventory and Evaluation

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# 1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ELIGIBILITY

## 1.1 Guiding principles

- ETC aims to be a responsible employer and considers the health and safety of its employees to be of vital importance to the organisation.
- ETC is committed, as a corporate social responsible employer, to ensure the health and safety of its employees within the office and during duty travel.
- ETC will provide its employees with relevant information so that they can make well-considered decisions and take precautions that safeguard their personal health and safety.
- ETC promotes an open atmosphere at the workplace in which its employees will feel free to discuss issues around (their) health and safety with colleagues and ETC's partner organisations.
- ETC will ensure the confidentiality of any information related to an employee's health condition in personnel files or anywhere else.
- ETC will not allow discrimination against or stigmatisation of its employees related to their health condition, or on any other grounds.
- The Health and Safety policy is binding on the entire organisation.

## 1.2 Eligibility

ETC's Health and Safety policy is applicable to all employees of ETC. There is an exception for people that have certain contractual relationships with ETC, who are not automatically eligible for the rights and obligations of the Health and Safety policy. The applicability to all parties is described below.

### *Employees*

The Health and Safety policy applies to all employees with a formal employment contract with the employer (ETC Foundation). Employees are expected to support the Health and Safety policy and comply with and act upon the policy directives. As such, employees will provide timely information to the employer on relevant health and safety issues.

### *Interns and volunteers*

Interns and volunteers, even where formally contracted by ETC, are **not** eligible for the medical entitlements laid down in the Health and Safety policy. While ETC arranges and pays for liability and accident insurance, such people are expected to arrange their own medical insurance. In the event of duty travel, ETC will arrange additional travel insurance and cover the costs of vaccinations and malaria prophylactics (or other preventive measures).

### *Partner organisations*

The Health and Safety policy will **not** apply to organisations that are supported (financially or otherwise) by ETC, the so-called partner organisations. ETC regularly organises meetings or workshops for which employees of partner organisations are expected to travel, either nationally or internationally. ETC expects partner organisations to insure their own employees and cannot be held responsible for the health and safety of these employees.

### **Foreign visitors on invitation**

The Health and Safety policy will not apply to foreign visitors. These visitors are covered during their stay in the Netherlands under the terms and conditions of a travel and medical insurance that ETC arranges and pays for and that is organised through AON Consulting (ICS). It is important to note that this travel insurance excludes coverage for pre-existing health conditions for which ETC will not also accept liability.

### **Contracted expertise (e.g. consultants, trainers)**

ETC mostly contracts the expertise of external persons on a short-term basis. Such experts are given a contract which stipulates their duties and benefits. The contracts include a specific clause on health and safety. ETC sees it as its duty to inform the experts of the possible risks, insofar as these are known, in carrying out their duties, but such experts will bear full responsibility for their own health and safety while on duty travel for ETC. ETC expects experts to arrange their own package of insurance.

## **2 POLICY DIRECTIVES**

### **2.1 Legal framework**

The Health and Safety policy complies with the Dutch Working Conditions Act (Arbowet). In line with this law, a Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E) was undertaken in 2007/2008. The RI&E is primarily an inventory of the health and safety risks identified in the ETC office in the Netherlands and this exercise will be repeated should working conditions require so. The results are formulated in an action plan that addresses health and safety issues that require follow-up. This action plan will be evaluated and updated on a yearly basis in cooperation with the Company Council.

The Health and Safety policy supplements ETC's employment conditions and human resource policy.

Policy directives directly related to HIV/AIDS are based on the "ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work<sup>1</sup>".

### **2.2 Prevention, education and awareness**

ETC will inform all employees on how a safe working environment, safe equipment and safe methods of work can be achieved in the office and on duty travel.

ETC will provide this information to its employees both in written form and in verbal form during the introduction of new employees and during thematic meetings within ETC's premises. ETC will ensure that this information is regularly updated and made available on the intranet.

ETC will promote open discussions on issues surrounding health and safety, both within and outside the offices. As such, health and safety issues and themes will frequently appear on the agenda of work meetings in the ETC units. General issues related to working conditions (such as evaluation and update of the RI&E action plan) will be placed on the agenda of the Staff Meeting once a year.

In the Netherlands, there is no law that makes vaccinations obligatory. ETC strongly advises and offers its employees the possibility to take preventive measures before travelling abroad, such as updating vaccinations and taking precautions against malaria and other diseases if relevant. In addition, ETC stresses the importance

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<sup>1</sup> A code developed by the International Labour Organization (2001) which is considered a leading document in the development of HIV/AIDS workplace policies.

to all its employees of vaccinating against Hepatitis B. It is the responsibility of the employee to follow up on this advice. This is to the health benefit of the employee, and also to that of others (e.g. family and colleagues).

Information is provided on the intranet on the modes of transmission and the prevention of tropical diseases and HIV/AIDS.

During any consultation on preventive measures, pregnant and chronically ill employees (e.g. those with diabetes, HIV positive) are strongly advised to inform the GGD (Municipal Health Service) or physician about their condition. They require tailor-made advice on which vaccinations and prophylactics are allowed so that preventive measures will not cause them, or their unborn child, any harm. ETC will reimburse the costs of vaccinations and malaria prophylactics in line with country-specific recommendations by the GGD. Regardless of the country-specific recommendations, ETC will reimburse the cost of a Hepatitis B vaccination.

Employees who travel abroad on duty, or live there semi-permanently, are strongly advised to have a medical examination once every two years. Information about medical examinations can be found on the intranet. ETC employees are obliged, wherever possible, to take the necessary precautions with regard to their own safety while travelling, such as by wearing seat belts, using reliable transport, limiting travel after dark and adhering to curfews.

ETC employees that travel to politically unstable areas or countries are expected to intensify the above safety precautions and obtain the latest local information (i.e. on [www.minbuza.nl](http://www.minbuza.nl)) on safety before and during travel and have a plan at hand in case emergency evacuation is required. Where the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly advises against travel to a specific country, approval from the Director of ETC is required for a mission to go ahead. When employees themselves and/or their manager have reasonable doubts concerning safety, they should ask the Director for advice and approval. The Director of ETC should be notified whenever an employee is travelling to a medium- or high-risk country.

## 2.3 Managing health and safety

In compliance with the Dutch Law on Healthcare Provision<sup>2</sup>, ETC employees are expected to arrange their own medical insurance (i.e. the obligatory basic health insurance). In the event of ill health, employees are expected to properly arrange the required treatment and pay the cost through their medical insurance.

Employees on duty travel in the Netherlands or abroad are insured by ETC in the event of requiring medical treatment, or following accidents or robbery. ETC will arrange and pay for this insurance for its employees. Employees, when abroad on duty travel, are obliged to contact the insurance company in the event of requiring urgent medical assistance and/or treatment.

In the event that an ETC employee is a victim of robbery, assault or flight problems such as delays, strikes or missing luggage, the employee is responsible for providing evidence or proof to ETC. Police reports or airline statements are required in order to be able to submit a claim to the insurance company. If the insurance company declines a claim, ETC will decide whether to cover the damages incurred by the employee according to the specific circumstances (such as the practicality of obtaining a police report). ETC will coordinate claims with the insurance company.

ETC recognises that its employees travel to countries where the healthcare provisions range from acceptable to poor. ETC therefore strongly advises its employees, in the event of medical advice being needed, to seek advice from ETC's partner organisations, clients or other reliable local contacts on acceptable healthcare institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> Zorgwet

Employees that do not have previous travel experience of conflict and post-conflict areas will not be allowed to travel independently during their first duty travel to at-risk countries. ETC will arrange for such employees to be accompanied by an experienced ETC employee, combining their duty travels to the same country. Alternatively, the employee may be accompanied by an experienced employee of one of ETC's partner organisations.

Pregnant and/or HIV-positive employees are particularly vulnerable to health and safety risks as a result of a weaker immune system. This can place some restrictions on their duty travels. For pregnant women, air travel involves more risks, especially in the first three months. Most airlines, depending on pregnancy complications, do not allow women to fly beyond 36 weeks into the pregnancy. Employees, regardless of their HIV status, that are unsure of their fitness for duty travel are encouraged to seek advice from their medical doctor.

Any employee that, due to ill-health, is no longer capable of performing all their duties will be offered, where possible, alternative employment by ETC in line with the advice of ETC's occupational health physician<sup>3</sup>, and in compliance with the Dutch 'Poortwachter' law. This law will also apply when an employee, due to ill health, is no longer able to continue their employment with ETC. The illness procedure is described on the intranet.

Discrimination against or stigmatisation of employees on the basis of their ill health will not be tolerated within ETC and is considered a disciplinary offence. Employees are encouraged to confide in ETC's counsellor for unwelcome intimacies, ETC's HR officer or the occupational health physician in such situations, and to file an official complaint as stipulated in the organisation's employment conditions. Contact information can be found on the intranet, under information and procedures/personnel.

Where employees are experiencing work-related problems, the first line of communication should be with their line manager. Secondly, the HR officer can be asked to assist with mediation. When the problem cannot be solved to everybody's satisfaction, ETC has an external trust person who can become involved. All communications between the employee and other parties will be held to rules of strict confidence.

Employees that encounter traumatising situations during duty travel are advised to seek professional supportive counselling in consultation with ETC.

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<sup>3</sup> Occupational Health Service situated in Amersfoort.