**Drafting a Workplace TB Policy**

NOTE: This document covers the key aspects of a workplace TB policy as identified by the World Health Organization and the International Labour Organization. It outlines the components of the policy and then an example of a draft policy on the following page.

**Components**

**Preamble/Recognition**: The preamble states why TB is considered an important issue to the employer. Broadly speaking this includes:

* TB as a workplace issue
* The role of the workplace as a location for the spread of disease
* The importance to the company of upholding the health and wellbeing of its employees
* The role TB programs can play in addressing other issues (e.g respiratory pathogens).

**Commitment to non-discrimination:** Stigma is a major challenge in TB care and prevention. Often, people simply do not wish for their peers, colleagues, or managers to know that they have TB. An opening statement on non-discrimination can help to address some of these concerns.

**Privacy:** Related to the element above, most policies restate the confidentiality of employee health data.

**Commitment to a healthy work environment:** This section outlines the specific steps that the employer will take to ensure that TB isn’t transmitted in the workplace.

**Care and support**: This outlines the steps that the employer will take to assist an individual who is diagnosed with TB.

**Social dialogue:** Policies are only useful if they remain up to date. This section outlines the process through which the workplace TB policy will be continually updated.

We encourage companies to develop their own policies on the basis of these sections and in-keeping with existing occupational health policies. However, a template policy can be found on the following page.

**Template Workplace TB Policy**

**Section 1: TB in the workplace**

Tuberculosis (TB) is the world’s leading cause of death from an infectious bacteria. It is spread through airborne transmission. Any congregant setting, such as a workplace, is a potential location for the spread of TB.

[COMPANY X] is deeply committed to the health and wellbeing of our employees and our communities. A single case of TB in the workforce can have multiple, profound social and economic consequences for our employees, their families, and for our operations. As such, this policy outlines the steps that we will take as a company to ensure that if someone is ill with TB they get the care that they need as soon as possible.

We also recognise that the benefits of a TB program can go beyond preventing TB infections and caring for people affected by TB. As a respiratory pathogen, measures such as those below to tackle TB can also help build resilience against the spread of other infectious pathogens. Our commitment to TB, therefore, is intended to have a positive impact not only on our operations, but also on the general standard of health and wellbeing in the communities in which we operate.

**Section 2: Non-discrimination**

2a. No one should experience discrimination of any form on the basis of their TB status. This includes full, ongoing access to relevant health insurance, occupational safety, social protection, and any workplace health care schemes.

2b. Employees with TB will be entitled to work for as long as they are medically fit and appropriate work is available.

2c. Where an individual is, or has been, affected by TB and is no longer able to carry out their regular duties, all efforts will be made to ensure that an alternative role or set of responsibilities is found within the organisation.

2d. Individuals affected by TB are encouraged to report any instances of perceived discrimination from a manager or colleague to the relevant HR authorities.

**Section 3: Confidentiality**

3a. The TB status of any individual is expressly confidential and will not be shared with any other individual in the company beyond the relevant health and safety authorities. Employees may choose whether their line managers are notified of their health status.

3b. No individual will be asked to disclose information on their TB status as a part of our recruitment processes.

3c. [COMPANY X] is legally bound to share information regarding TB status of employees with the local health authorities to support access to care. We will do this in discussion with any individual who has been affected by TB.

**Section 4: Health work environment**

4a. We will take all possible measures to limit the risk of potential TB transmission in the workplace. Specific measures may vary depending on the nature and structure of the buildings concerned, but will include:

* Provision of information and education relating to TB transmission and identification of symptoms.
* The provision of protective clothing where relevant.
* Maintaining high standards of hygiene and cleanliness in the workplace.

4b. Possible additional measures include:

* Enhanced ventilation and air filtration systems.
* Efforts to ensure that the density of the workforce population in a given site remains low enough to ensure that most employees have more than two metres of space between them.
* Wastewater surveillance to detect the presence of potential pathogens.
* Other measures as appropriate.

**Section 5: Care and support**

5a. Any individual with TB-associated symptoms is encouraged to take sick leave immediately and seek access to care.

5b. Where possible, the company will facilitate access to care, for example through a referral programme with TB diagnosis providers if other forms of care are not available.

5c. Individuals who are seeking care may draw on a stipend to support the cost of travel to and from a medical clinic.

5d. Individuals who have been diagnosed with TB may take full sick leave up until the point that they are signed off as fit to work by a medical practitioner.

5e. Individuals who have been sick with TB may take advantage of a ‘phased return-to-work’, meaning a slow increase of the number of days per week that they are expected to work so as to avoid relapse.

5f. Individuals who have a family member that is sick with TB may apply for carers leave if they are able to provide relevant medical paperwork confirming the diagnosis.

**Section 6: Ongoing updating of this policy**

6a. We recognise that the core of TB care and prevention in the workplace is ensuring that all individuals feel comfortable to seek care and diagnosis as soon as they start to feel unwell and that this, in turn, is based on the culture of our workplaces.

6b. We will take all necessary steps to ensure a health-positive culture in our workplaces.

6c. Among those steps is the continued updating of this and other workplace health policies. We will do this in collaboration between the Medical Affairs, Human Resources, representatives from management, and representatives from the workforce, as well as engagement with local health authorities where necessary.

6d. This policy will be updated at least every two years.