

BSBWHS201

Contribute to health and safety of self and others

Release 1

Learner guide

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Aspire Version 1.1

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BSBWHS201 Contribute to health and safety of self and others Release 1

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBWHS201 Contribute to health and safety of self and others*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples and case studies	Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks, learning checkpoints and the final assessment. Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help
Summary	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.
Final assessment	The final assessment provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate all of the learning that you have undertaken for this unit of competency. Your trainer/assessor may ask you to undertake the final assessment tasks.



Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and interprets information in relation to WHS and emergency incidents
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses structures and language appropriate to audience and context in reports giving factual information
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses structures and language appropriate to audience and context in reports, descriptions, opinions and explanations Extracts meaning from reports, descriptions, opinions and explanations
Navigate the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes responsibility for following WHS legal requirements Follows protocols and procedures related to own role Seeks assistance from others when WHS issues are beyond scope of immediate responsibilities
Get the work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans, organises and implements routine tasks in order to optimise health and safety Selects and implements actions from predetermined procedures

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Work safely	1A Follow safety procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Check systems and equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Follow procedures for responding to emergency incidents	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Implement work safety requirements	2A Report WHS queries and concerns	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Identify, report and record hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Identify and implement WHS procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Identify and report emergency incidents and injuries	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2E Identify WHS duty holders	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Participate in WHS consultative processes	3A Contribute to meetings, inspections and other WHS consultative activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Raise WHS issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Take action to eliminate hazards and reduce risks	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

Topic 1

Work safely

All working environments involve some degree of risk. They are subject to regulations that outline how to identify, assess and control specific workplace hazards. You may not currently be working directly with machinery or hazardous chemicals; however, any job role may involve work associated with hazardous activities or environments. Work health and safety (WHS) is concerned with the health and safety of all people in the workplace. The main objective of WHS is to prevent injury or harm in the workplace.

In Australia every year, there are approximately 250 work-related deaths and over 300,000 cases of work-related injuries or disease. These result in disastrous consequences for the person involved, their families and colleagues, and in a loss of production for industry and payouts in compensation. You can make an important contribution to the health and safety of your workplace.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Follow safety procedures
- 1B Check systems and equipment
- 1C Follow procedures for responding to emergency incidents

1A

Follow safety procedures

Safety procedures and instructions are important guides to help you work safely. In this section you will learn about:

- your role in work health and safety (WHS)
- workplace risks and hazards
- what you can do about workplace risks and hazards
- the information you need to maintain WHS.

What is your role in WHS?

Persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) in Australia are required by law to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their workers, customers, visitors and the wider community. A PCBU includes an employer, a corporation and association, each partner in a partnership and/or a sole trader organisation.

You may not currently be working directly with machinery or hazardous chemicals. However, it is quite possible that your job involves work associated with hazardous activities or environments.

Your organisation's WHS policies and procedures are based on legislation and regulations. By following these policies and procedures, you ensure you meet your legal responsibilities as shown below.

Broadly, you have a responsibility to:

- comply with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU
- report any hazards to appropriate personnel such as your supervisor
- report any job-related injury or illness to your supervisor or HSR
- understand and exercise your rights under WHS legislation
- wear personal protective equipment and clothing (PPE) if appropriate.

Workplace risks and hazards

Workplace risk is defined as the chance of something occurring that will result in injury or damage. Workplace hazards are those things in your workplace that have the potential to cause harm to life, health, property or environment. You need to actively participate in the methods your organisation has developed to identify hazards and deal with them.

Office hazards are not always as obvious as those in production areas. Hazards that you may be exposed to include anything that is a source of:

- potential harm in terms of human injury or ill health
- damage to property
- damage to the environment
- a combination of these.

Risks and hazards in different settings

Some hazards are common to most settings, such as being around colleagues or clients with infectious diseases, performing manual handling tasks that may be hazardous and people in the work environment failing to wash their hands appropriately. Below are examples of hazards you may encounter in different settings.

Office setting	Medical setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ergonomic (equipment design) issues • Extreme temperatures, and excessive noise or vibration • Inefficient fire and emergency procedures • Overwork or interpersonal issues • Poor lighting and ventilation • Faulty electrical or computer equipment • Unstable or overstacked shelving • Breakage/spillage of hazardous substances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood and other bodily fluids • Breakage/spillage • Workplace aggression and security issues • Medical emergency; falls, bleeding, seizures, panic attack or psychosis • Contaminated waste • Sharps (such as needles and scalpel blades) • Used dressings, bandages and equipment • Unsterilised or poorly sterilised equipment and work surfaces

What to do about workplace risks and hazards

You can eliminate, minimise and/or manage workplace risks by being alert to potential hazards and reporting them to your supervisor and/or your organisation's designated health and safety officer and/or health and safety representative (HSR).

If you are in a medical setting, you can talk with doctors, nurses and/or the practice manager about safety issues.

Your organisation's policies and procedures and work instructions will guide you in how to work safely. These policies and procedures are based on legislation (laws) and regulations that your organisation must follow. If an organisation does not follow these, it may be fined, taken to court or face more serious action depending on the seriousness of the breach.



Plan, organise and implement routine tasks to optimise health and safety

Every worker can assist in optimising WHS through the way in which they organise their daily work activities. A daily work plan allows you to improve your level of organisation for implementing routine tasks, and also improves your level of organisation for incorporating health and safety requirements into all of these routine tasks. There are six main steps that need to be followed when planning, organising and implementing routine tasks as shown below.

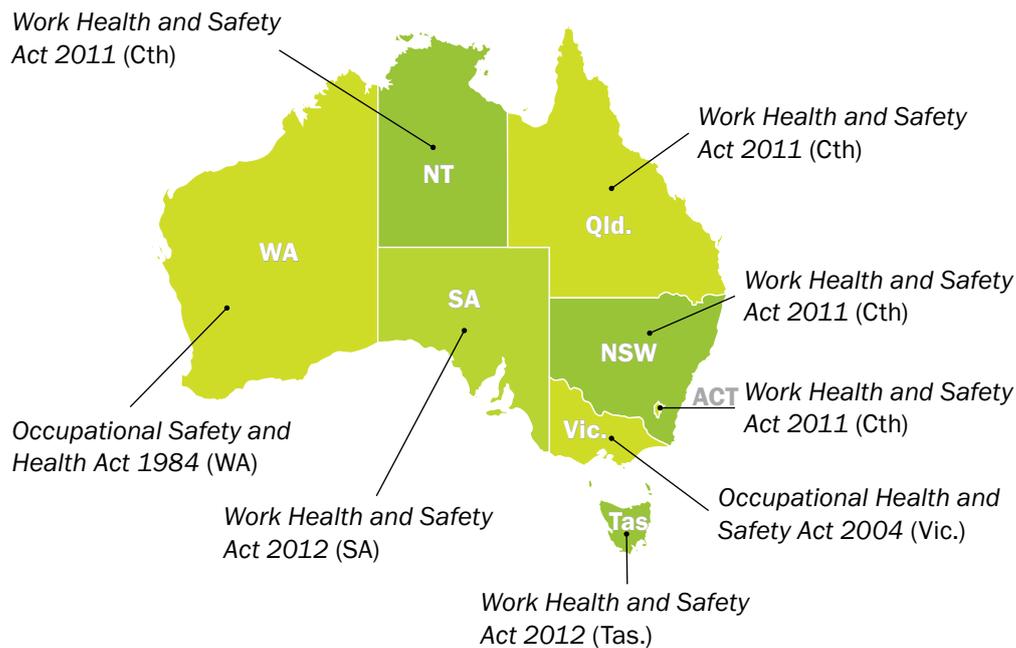
Steps to plan, organise and implement routine tasks

- 1** Identify the tasks to be completed.
- 2** Assess the time and resources needed to complete the tasks in line with organisational parameters such as work procedures and quality manuals.
- 3** Use information from a variety of sources and your own experience to identify safety hazards in each task.
- 4** Communicate issues relating to safety clearly and effectively with other team members to assess the risks and to determine appropriate controls.
- 5** Document procedures for performing tasks safely.
- 6** Continually review hazard identification, risk assessment and work procedures as tasks change or as new hazards are identified.

WHS legislation

Commonwealth WHS legislation was updated in January 2012 with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) coming into effect. This replaces the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (Cth). At this time, all states and territories have implemented harmonised WHS laws based on this new Act except Western Australia and Victoria, which continue to enforce state-based safety laws at present.

The WHS legislation in each state and territory is shown below.



Legal requirements for safe workplaces

All WHS legislation requires employers to provide a safe workplace, adequate training and supervision and to control workplace hazards and risks. You must work in line with legislative requirements, regulations, Australian and industry standards, and be aware of relevant codes of practice that provide guidance about best practice.

Health and safety legislation describes the legal requirements for ensuring workplaces are safe and healthy, such as:

- managing risks to health and safety
- promoting and maintaining the health, safety and welfare of people at work
- protecting people at work from injury and illness, including psychological injury
- protecting the health and safety of the public in workplaces
- consulting workers and encouraging participation in maintaining WHS
- providing rehabilitation and maximum recovery for injured workers.

WHS authorities and legislation

Refer to the table below for information about the WHS authority and legislation in each state or territory. Safe Work Australia is the national body for WHS. Visit its website at: www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au.

ACT	WorkSafe ACT www.worksafety.act.gov.au
NSW	WorkCover New South Wales www.workcover.nsw.gov.au
NT	NT WorkSafe www.worksafe.nt.gov.au
Queensland	WorkCover Queensland www.workcoverqld.com.au
SA	SafeWork SA www.safework.sa.gov.au
Tasmania	WorkCover Tasmania www.workcover.tas.gov.au
Victoria	WorkSafe Victoria www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
WA	WorkSafe www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

Regulations

Regulations support WHS legislation by setting out specific requirements, duties and procedures that apply to specific areas of work. Some regulations apply to all workplaces while others apply to specific industries. You need to be aware of the regulations that apply specifically to your workplace and your job role.

Regulations cover obligations to:

- identify hazards
- perform risk assessment for some hazards
- specify controls and/or processes.



Codes of practice

Codes of practice are developed through a consultation process that involves industry representatives, employers, workers, professional associations and relevant government agencies. To have legal effect in a jurisdiction, a code of practice must be approved in that jurisdiction. Examples of approved codes of practice in the states and territories can be found on the websites of the relevant WHS regulators. Codes of practice only address particular issues. They do not cover all hazards and risks that may arise.

A code of practice provides:

- compliance information
- practical advice to organisations, employers and workers in specific industries to help them meet their obligations
- practical guidance for people who have WHS duties
- explanations of how to apply the standards required under the Act
- explanations of effective ways to identify and manage risks.

Workplace policies and procedures

Workplace policies and procedures are developed for all aspects of an organisation's activities including how to work safely. They ensure you and the organisation meet WHS obligations.

Policies describe the approach the organisation adopts toward a particular aspect of its operation: what the organisation intends to do about something. For example, the goal of a workplace diversity policy is to get the best possible outcomes for the organisation and its workers by promoting and supporting workplace diversity.

A procedure is a set of instructions that a worker must follow to complete a task effectively and safely, in a way that maximises efficiency and effectiveness. Your supervisor may expect you to develop the skills and knowledge to access your workplace procedures when you are unsure how to perform a task. It is essential that you can access information in a procedures manual relevant to your role.

WHS policy

All workplaces in Australia are required to have in place a safe system of work, which may include a WHS policy that describes the organisation's responsibility for the health and safety of its workers. The policy should include the organisation's goals and objectives regarding WHS and a general set of guidelines related to health and safety in the workplace.

The WHS policy will help you fulfil your duty of care as a worker for the organisation.

WHS procedures

WHS procedures are instructions developed to ensure everyone works safely and effectively as outlined below.

Information contained in WHS procedures includes:

- selecting, using and storing personal protective equipment (PPE)
- personal presentation and workstations
- standard safety precautions and housekeeping
- safe handling of chemicals, poisons and dangerous materials, including safety data sheets (SDSs)
- emergency and fire drills
- implementing hazard identification and control systems
- manual handling
- staff development and training programs
- waste management
- emergency contact numbers, including local doctors and hospitals
- WHS personnel
- location of first-aid equipment.

Personal presentation

Your organisation may have a policy that covers personal presentation. Workers in retail, health and hospitality, for example, may have to ensure they maintain a clean, neat and tidy appearance and dress in a manner that is not likely to risk contamination or offend customers or patients. You may be required to wear a uniform. It is important that your clothing is clean, ironed and kept in good condition. You may find your workplace procedures require that workers with long hair tie it back neatly and keep make-up and jewellery to a minimum.

Personal protective equipment

You may be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to perform some aspects of your work. PPE is a control measure that is designed to protect the wearer from risks of injury or illness.

PPE is more effective when used in conjunction with other control measures to manage exposure to risk, but there are some instances in the workplace where it may be the only control in place. Your organisation's WHS policies and procedures and your supervisor will give you advice about the use of PPE.

It is essential, and part of your duty of care, that you use PPE correctly to protect your own health and safety. Your workplace is responsible for supplying any PPE you require. You should let your supervisor know if the PPE that you use needs repair or replacement when it is damaged or has passed its expiry date.

Common PPE items

The PPE used in your workplace will have been selected to suit the specific work performed. PPE should be used in conjunction with other controls when the equipment or process has a risk that cannot be eliminated or reduced.

Here are examples of common PPE items.

Common PPE items

- Overalls help protect from grime and hazardous substances.
- Safety boots protect the feet and may be steel-capped. They are compulsory on some work sites.
- Safety gloves help protect hands against cuts, heat or cold.
- Safety helmets help protect the head against injury by falling objects.
- Masks help protect from dust and other airborne particles, especially when using tools.
- Respirators help protect against breathing in toxic gases. This includes work carried out in confined spaces.
- Earmuffs are for use in noisy environments. They can help protect against industrial deafness

Standard precautions

Your workplace may need you to use standard precautions, such as work practices related to infection control. These include sound hygiene practices; for example, washing and drying hands before and after patient contact in a medical environment.

Workers in a medical environment use standard precautions when handling sharps and other contaminated or infectious waste. Workers in industries that involve preparing food also use standard precautions. It is important that you carefully follow any standard precautions that are prescribed for your workplace.

Example: procedure for a routine hand-wash

Hand-washing is one of the most important measures in preventing the spread of infection. All employees of medical centres are required to use standard precautions and frequent hand-washing to remove visible dirt and potentially harmful microorganisms. There are many other industries where hand-washing is a critical process as well, such as food production and handling, livestock management and chemical use.

The objective of this policy is to minimise the risk of cross-contamination through physical contact with patients and colleagues, and touching inanimate objects, such as door handles and telephones.

Here is the procedure for a routine hand-wash:

Correctly washing your hands should take at least 15 seconds. Wet hands thoroughly. Lather hands with soap and briskly rub together under running water, making sure all surfaces of the hands and wrists are washed. Ensure you wash under rings too. Rinse under a moderate stream of water. Dry thoroughly, using disposable towel if possible.

There may be times when you cannot wash your hands this way. You may need to use sanitising gels to ensure your hands are free from bacteria.



Safety data sheets

Your organisation may use a range of chemicals, hazardous substances and workrelated equipment. These may be specialised items that are used in production, a process or a medical environment. Office environments also have chemicals, such as toners for a printer or photocopier that pose a risk to workers' health and safety if not used correctly.

Manufacturers of chemicals and hazardous substances are required by law to provide safety data sheets (SDSs) to their customers to explain the correct storage, care and handling of the manufacturer's products. These were previously known as material safety data sheets (MSDSs). Organisations are required to have an SDS for any hazardous substances in the workplace. The SDS must be no more than five years old. If your workplace does not have a current SDS for a product, you must alert your supervisor. Access the SDS for any product you are likely to encounter in your role and make sure you follow its instructions to assist with health and safety in the workplace.

WHS in your workplace

Your organisation should provide you with WHS information based on the applicable legislation during your induction training, as well as in policy and procedure manuals.

Induction training is the training you receive when you start at a new organisation. It is usually designed to introduce you to the organisation and give you the information you need to start working in your job. It is important that your induction training includes the information you need to maintain health and safety. This also applies when you have been transferred or promoted from a different position or section of the organisation. This is important to help you understand any WHS issues that are specific to your new role.

WHS topics covered in your induction may include:

- employer and worker duty of care
- fire and emergency procedures
- first-aid facilities
- the health and safety committee (HSC)
- health and safety representatives (HSRs)
- WHS training programs available in the workplace
- the organisation's health and safety policy
- hazard identification and risk management
- personal protective equipment (PPE).

Duty of care

One of the most important principles you need to understand in relation to WHS is duty of care. Duty of care describes the legal obligation of individuals and organisations to proactively identify possible causes of injury and illness that may exist in their work environment or as a result of their actions. It is a legal requirement under duty of care to do everything reasonably practicable to remove or minimise the possible cause of harm. It also extends to keeping property and the environment safe.

‘Reasonably practicable’ means what is reasonable in the specific situation to control hazards and risks in terms of likelihood, degree of harm, what the person knows or ought reasonably to know, available and suitable methods of control, cost and other alternatives.

Employer duty of care

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), all persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) have a primary duty of care.

Your employer has a duty of care to provide customers, visitors and workers with a safe and healthy work environment.

Your employer’s primary duty of care in regard to you and your colleagues requires them to:

- provide and maintain a safe working environment, safe plant and structures, and safe systems of work
- ensure safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances
- provide adequate facilities for welfare at work of workers and access to facilities
- provide information, training, instruction and supervision
- monitor the health of workers and conditions in the workplace.

Your organisation must also implement a system to make sure all workers understand their own responsibilities for maintaining health and safety.

Worker duty of care

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), workers include:

- employees
- independent contractors
- home-based workers (also known as outworkers)
- apprentices, trainees and work experience students
- volunteers who work in an employment-like setting.

Clarify your duty of care with your supervisor. Under the WHS Act, a worker’s duty of care includes:

- taking reasonable care of their own safety
- cooperating with any reasonable policy or procedure they have been notified of that relates to WHS
- complying with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU
- taking reasonable care to ensure their conduct does not adversely affect the safety of others.

Example: duty of care in the workplace

Bronwyn is employed as an administration officer in a reception area. Her role is to engage with clients and refer their needs to staff members who can provide the information requested as and when it is required. When she first starts work, her supervisor Ron, explains during induction training that Bronwyn has a duty of care to:

- her colleagues, including other administration staff and those not employed in the administration section of the business
- clients
- non-client visitors to the reception (such as service staff and professional guests).

Practice task 1

1. The following is a list of WHS terms and words. Definitions of these are contained throughout this topic. As you find the definitions, write them in your own words in the spaces provided. You may want to compile this as an electronic file on your computer so you can easily search and update the stored information, and add other words. The first one has been done for you.

Work health and safety glossary	
Biohazard	A biohazard is any organism, or material of biological origin, that causes harm to humans, plants, animals or the environment.
Consultation	
Duty of care	
Hazard	
Hazard control	
Hazard or risk register	
Housekeeping	
HSR	

continued ...

... continued

Work health and safety glossary (cont'd)	
Manual handling	
Noise pollution	
PPE	
PCBU	
Risk	
Risk assessment	
Risk control	
SDS	
Social and psychological hazards	
Waste management	
WHS	
WHS codes of practice	
WHS legislation	
WHS policies	

continued ...

... continued

WHS procedures	
WHS regulations	
WHS standards	
Workplace bullying	

2. Identify the PPE that would be most suitable for minimising exposure to the hazard described.

Hazard	PPE
a) Hilton is required to handle cash at reception in the Accident and Emergency Room at the hospital.	
b) Vanessa needs to deliver WHS posters to the production manager in the factory.	
c) Rhys is required to work on the dock near the waste compressor at the waste management service.	

continued ...

... continued

Hazard	PPE
d) Sermsah is a laboratory technician handling chemicals.	
e) Camilla needs to deliver handwritten phone messages to workers on a construction site.	

1B

Check systems and equipment

Your job may require you to use a range of technology and equipment. When working with this equipment, it is important that you carry out pre-start systems and equipment checks according to workplace procedures. Each piece of technology and equipment poses a risk to health and safety if it is not in correct working order or is not used correctly.

When you use the same equipment every day, it is easy to become complacent and not use the right precautions to make sure the equipment has been regularly maintained and is operating properly. This section provides you with the opportunity to learn about equipment and systems safety checks, documenting equipment and systems safety checks and equipment start-up and operation procedures.

If using a new piece of equipment, always follow the operating procedures or manufacturer's instructions.

Equipment and systems safety checks

An important part of your daily work routine is to check the various systems and equipment you will use during the day to make sure they are in correct working order. Your workplace policies and procedures should include the steps to follow. You may need to perform this procedure at the beginning of your working day or at specified intervals during the day.

When we work with technology and equipment every day, it's easy to forget about safety. But technology and equipment poses a risk to health and safety if it is not in good working order, or if it is not used properly.

Position yourself in front of your computer. Make sure you can reach your keyboard comfortably.

Position the monitor out of direct sunlight. Adjust it to the correct height.

Dust your work area whenever necessary. Dust can cause problems with monitors and computers.

Secure all cables. These can be a serious trip hazard for you and others.

Reduce glare and heat at your workstation by using available window coverings.

Keep temperatures at no higher than 26°C. Maintain humidity levels at around 40 to 60 per cent when practicable to do so.



Maintenance records

If you are working with specialised equipment, you may have to record the results of regular equipment safety checks; for example, keeping records of when medical instruments are sterilised if you work in a medical office. Your organisation's policies and procedures describe what you should do to maintain accurate records of equipment and systems safety checks.

Maintenance records for workplace equipment usually document information such as the:

- model and serial number of the equipment
- date of servicing
- reason for the service request
- maintenance performed and a description of the parts that were used.

Equipment start-up and operation procedures

You may work in an environment where you have to use plant. Plant refers to machinery, equipment, containers, appliances and tools. Your workplace policies and procedures should include detailed information on how to clean, start and operate this plant. Your supervisor should provide you with the right training so you can safely operate the plant and correctly wear required PPE.

Workplace safety procedures and instructions for checking systems and equipment may include the following:

- Using checklists to ensure systems and equipment are in good working order and do not create a safety hazard
- Performing checks at set time intervals such as beginning/end of each shift, or each time equipment is used
- Keeping the most recent checks physically close to the item of equipment and available for operators to access
- Records of the skill level of the operator; for example, whether an appropriate licence is held or specific training has been undertaken
- A record of faults reported
- A procedure for removing equipment from use until repairs are completed
- Routine maintenance requirements checklist; for example, cleaning may be required after a safety check is performed

Practice task 2

Read the following scenario, then answer the question that follows.

Scenario

You are employed as an administration officer in a sales and marketing department. Your supervisor is responsible for coordinating the annual sales conference. The conference is being held next week. Your supervisor needs you to accompany her to a meeting with the events manager at the conference venue tomorrow. She will meet you there. She asks that you set yourself up in the meeting room at the venue with a laptop ready to record the minutes of the meeting.

What will you do at the venue to make sure your equipment is set up correctly and ready for you to perform your work safely? Provide reasons for your decisions.

1C

Follow procedures for responding to emergency incidents

Workplaces vary in the way they provide documented information about responding to emergency incidents. Talk to your supervisor about the policies and procedures and other information available in your organisation. This section provides you with information on emergency manuals and general information to help you respond to emergency incidents that may occur in a workplace.

Emergency manual

Most organisations have an emergency manual. The purpose of an emergency manual is to describe an organisation's emergency procedures and fire-safety precautions, and guide those who are required to take action to protect lives and property in an emergency.

Your supervisor should provide you with training so you know the correct procedures and can carry them out. This is particularly important if you are employed in a job or industry that carries a high risk of emergency. Regular safety drills need to be conducted to ensure workers maintain their skills in responding to emergencies.



Incidents

The term 'incident' may be used to describe any event that results in human injury or damage to property, or has the potential to cause injury or damage. Your organisation's WHS policies and procedures will have been developed with the goal of identifying the most likely cause of incidents, so that precautions can be taken to control the work environment. The hazard identification and control plan is a part of this approach. It identifies the types of hazards and the controls that need to be put in place.

Below are some examples of emergency incidents and the consequences that may result.

Emergency incidents	Incident consequences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidents, near misses and sudden illness • Crime, alcohol and other drug intoxication • External threats such as bomb threats • Fire, flood and severe storms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pain or suffering to the individuals involved • Anxiety for their families, colleagues and witnesses to the incident • Lost production, work time and financial costs to the organisation

Prevent incidents

Incident prevention ensures that all equipment and fixtures, including furniture, are regularly checked and maintained. Incidents can be caused by the failure of equipment components; for example, faulty equipment can cause unexpected or forceful movements that result in strains and injuries, and electrical faults can cause electric shock or burns.

Your supervisor may be responsible for making sure equipment is regularly maintained by qualified people. You need to let your supervisor know if you become aware of equipment faults or breakdowns or where maintenance has not been performed according to the schedule. Many organisations use a 'breakdown and maintenance' checklist or register to record breakdowns and ensure repairs are carried out promptly.



Common causes of injuries in the workplace

Here are three common workplace hazards and how you should manage them.

Slips, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls are a common cause of injuries in the workplace. The condition of floor surfaces in the workplace can contribute to the risk of trips and falls.

What you should do:

Notify your supervisor or health and safety representative of any issues regarding flooring in your work environment.

Spills

Substances that have spilled on the floor, including chemicals, vomit, blood and other fluids, are a significant hazard in any workplace.

What you should do:

Attend to these promptly according to your workplace policies and procedures. Make sure you use appropriate PPE when handling spills.

Lighting

Lighting in your workplace should be adequate for all tasks to be carried out safely. This is particularly important in areas where equipment is used or stored and in areas that clients and the public have access to.

What you should do:

Tell your supervisor if you become aware that an area is poorly lit. Your organisation may have a form that is used to request maintenance and repair of plant or equipment.

Respond to an incident

If an incident occurs, take immediate action if it is safe to do so to prevent further injury from occurring and administer first aid if you are qualified to do so. Seek assistance from colleagues, including your supervisor, security staff or health and safety representative; clients; emergency services (by dialling 000); or members of the public. Note that you may need to preserve the scene if it is a notifiable incident.

Here are six common incident response procedures.

Evacuation

One of the most challenging emergency responses you may be involved in is the evacuation of the premises. Your organisation should have an evacuation plan. The aim of the evacuation is to remove people from the dangerous situation to a safer location. People are likely to be injured if those in the emergency area are panicking, so try to model appropriate behaviour such as:

- not running or shouting instructions at people
- trying to speak calmly, clearly and quietly, and at close range to people.

WHS procedures explain what to do in an emergency and are usually displayed in public areas. Make sure you know the evacuation plan for your work area.

A well-written evacuation plan should cover:

- fire procedures, including the responsibilities of fire wardens and floor wardens
- clearing everyone from the building
- everyone assembling at evacuation meeting points
- checking of the names of all evacuated individuals.

Bomb threat

You may receive a bomb threat by telephone, in written format or as a suspicious object. The threat may contain specific information about the type of device and its location, or it may be non-specific. Your organisation will usually have a bomb-threat checklist that is kept in close proximity to each telephone.

Your workplace bomb-threat checklist may require that you note details including:

- the exact wording of the threat
- the gender and other details of the caller, such as estimated age
- details of speech, accent, delivery and background noises
- the location of the device
- the time of detonation.

Regard all threats as genuine and behave accordingly. Your workplace procedures will explain how to proceed with the bomb threat, but usually you would immediately advise your supervisor.

Safety alarms

- └ You must be familiar with any safety or security alarms installed in your workplace. Never ignore an alarm.
- └ Most alarm systems provide an audible (sound) and visible warning that something is wrong. An audible alarm could be a siren, hooter or bell. The visible component may be a flashing light.
- └ Individual systems are designed to meet the organisation's requirements, and may detect:
 - equipment malfunction
 - fire or smoke
 - gas leaks
 - intruders
 - trapped people (for example, in lifts or cool rooms)
 - theft
 - unauthorised entry or exit.

Service failure

- └ Sometimes the supply of communications, electricity, or water to the organisation is interrupted. Your supervisor or workplace procedures manual may have advice on what to do.
- └ Specific staff may be responsible for advising team members and workers in other departments on the cause of the problem and when the service will be restored. Where service is interrupted for an extended time, these staff need to contact the service provider and give progress reports to relevant personnel.
- └ In some cases, it may be necessary to close areas of the workplace, particularly where lighting is poor and there is a risk to the public. Your supervisor will advise you if it is necessary to do this.

Toxic or noxious fumes

You may be employed in an organisation where there is risk of a chemical spill, or other hazardous materials. If this is the case, you should have received information during your induction training about the correct procedures to follow.

In cases where the spill is giving off toxic or noxious fumes, follow your organisation's procedures, which may include the following:

- Call emergency services on 000 and ask for the fire service.
- Notify the fire warden (if one has been appointed) for your department or organisation.
- Provide as much information as possible about the hazardous material to the emergency services contact.
- Open windows and doors, if possible, to ventilate the area.
- Ask all people on the premises to evacuate if instructed to do so by your supervisor or emergency services contact.
- Assist with the evacuation to the assembly area if required.
- Remain at the assembly area until advised by emergency services.

Spills

You may work in an organisation where you are required to help clean up spills. These spills could be chemicals, cleaning agents or body fluids.

Workers in the health industry may be exposed to spills of body fluids such as blood, saliva, urine and faeces.

Take special precautions when dealing with spills of body fluids. Your organisation may have infection control procedures you need to follow to manage spills, clean the area and dispose of biological waste or contaminated materials.

Fire safety

All workplaces should have a fire plan that ensures all workers and visitors can get out of the building safely. Workers should be warned not to attempt to deal with a fire unless they have been trained to do so.

Here are the steps to follow if you are told to evacuate the building or a fire alarm sounds.

Fire evacuation steps

- 1** Remain calm.
- 2** Follow the fire warden's instructions.
- 3** Stop what you are doing. Leave the building immediately via the closest escape route. Do not use the lift.
- 4** Close windows and doors as you go if safe to do so and time allows.
- 5** Before opening any door, feel the door and door handle. If the door is hot, take another route.
- 6** If you encounter smoke during your evacuation, drop to the floor and crawl.
- 7** Assemble and remain at the evacuation assembly point. Do not return to the building until you are told by the fire brigade, fire warden or your supervisor that it is safe.
- 8** Advise your supervisor or emergency personnel of any injuries you or others have sustained, as soon as possible.

Practice task 3

It is helpful to have a telephone contact list you can easily refer to in an emergency. Using a table, record the information that is relevant to your situation. If you are not currently employed, you may wish to develop a contact list for a community or sporting group, or the organisation where you are undertaking training.

Emergency	Who to contact	Contact number

Summary

1. Acts and regulations govern work health and safety (WHS).
2. Employers and workers have a responsibility to keep workplaces safe.
3. WHS awareness is the key to keeping workplaces safe.
4. Workplaces have WHS policies and procedures relating to their specific tasks.
5. It is important that your induction training includes the information you need to maintain WHS.
6. An important part of your daily work routine is to check the various systems and equipment you will use during the day and make sure they are in correct working order.
7. Workplace procedures must be followed when responding to emergency incidents.

Learning checkpoint 1 Work safely

This learning checkpoint is designed to confirm your skills and knowledge in working safely.

Part A

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

Scenario

You are employed as an administration assistant. Your supervisor, Shannon Brown, has sent you an email asking you to help prepare for a seminar that is being organised for customers.

email message		sent: 2 April 2015
To:	Administration assistant	
From:	Shannon Brown	
Subject:	Seminar preparations	
<p>As you know, we have organised a seminar for 10 of our most important customers. The seminar will be in the boardroom next Wednesday from 9 am. The seminar will be managed by the sales and marketing department.</p> <p>I need your assistance to prepare the boardroom on the morning of the seminar. Please organise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The boardroom needs to be tidied during the lunchbreak. You need to organise cleaning products and equipment to perform this task. • Customers will be given a tour of the production area. They will pass through the warehouse on their way to production. Both areas are noisy and have mobile plant. • The sales manager has asked that a notebook computer and projector be available on the boardroom table. A projector screen is also required. • There is not an adequate number of power points in the room. Powerboards are required. • Three notebook computers are being set up on a side table so visitors can log on and check their email during the breaks. Please start these up in the morning. • Desmond Lee, one of the visitors, requires wheelchair access. Please check that there is adequate access in the public areas and the boardroom for him. 		

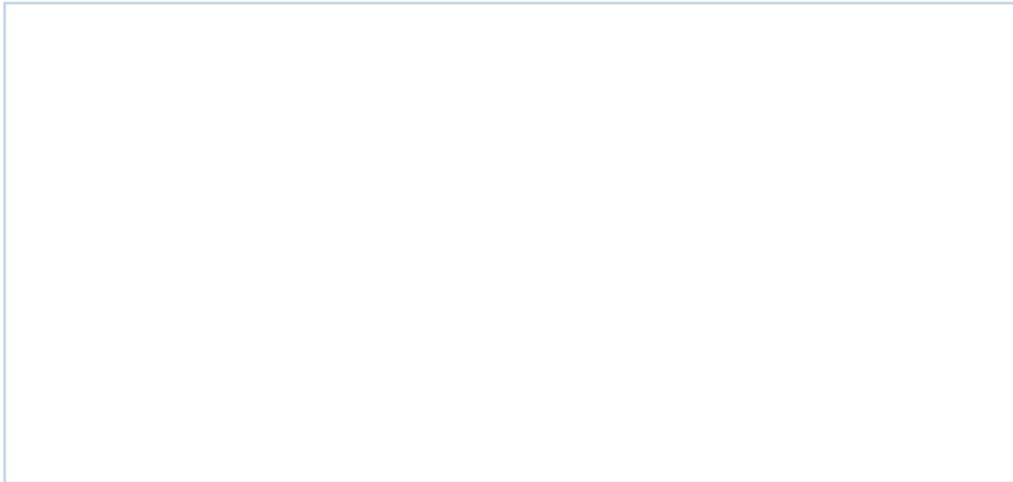
Explain the preparations you will make by answering the following questions.

1. List at least four organisational procedures you need to follow when making the preparations. What will you do during your preparations to show you are following these policies and procedures?

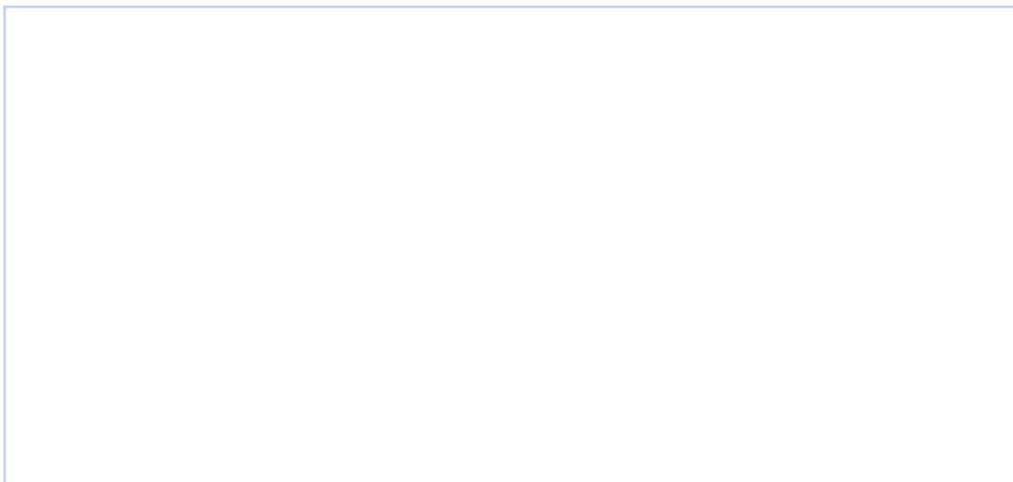
2. What PPE will you and the visitors require?

3. How will you ensure the safe use of chemicals when making the preparations?

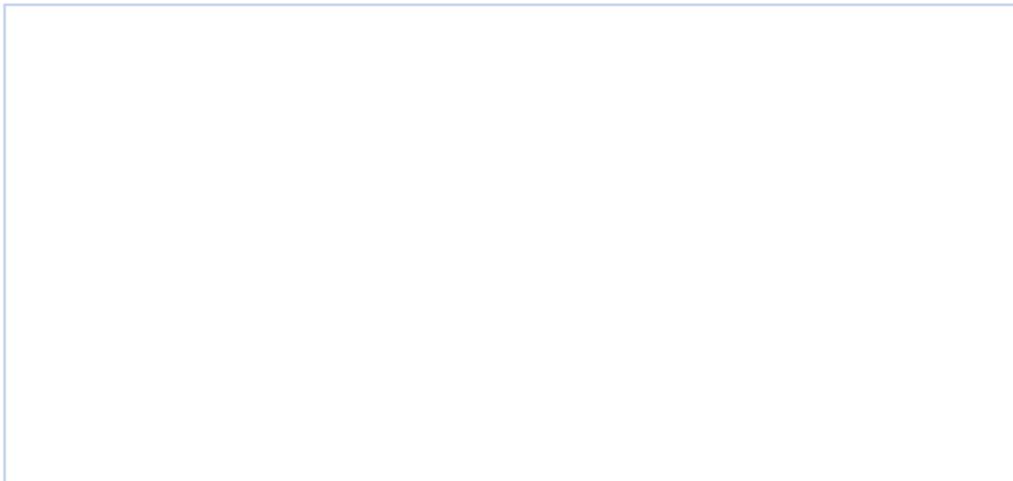
4. Prepare a pre-start safety checklist for the equipment.



5. If you were to do a pre-start safety check based on the information contained in the scenario, list at least three hazards you may find and the harm they could cause.



6. List the people you have a duty of care to. What is your duty of care to these people?



7. Who could you report any hazards to, or seek WHS advice and clarification from?

Part B

Read the emergency evacuation procedures and the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Central City Council

Emergency evacuation procedures in case of fire

Assist people in immediate danger.

Warn others by shouting 'Fire, fire, fire'. Raise the alarm, if it's not already sounding, and telephone 000.

Decide if you can put the fire out. If you have not been trained to do so, do not attempt to put it out.

Do not attempt to use the fire extinguisher if you have not been instructed how to use it.

If you can put out the fire, then do so. If not, proceed to evacuate the building.

If you hear the fire alarm ringing, you must prepare to evacuate the building:

- Switch off all computers, printers and electrical appliances.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Gather your personal belongings in preparation to immediately evacuate the building.
- Help other people in the room.
- Evacuate the building and proceed to your building assembly area.
- Walk quickly, but don't run.

If you have to move through a closed door that you cannot see through:

- feel the door to see if it is hot
- look for smoke coming under the door
- open the door slowly and look around it to see if there is a fire behind it
- if there is no fire on the other side, go through and close the door behind you
- move to the assembly areas as quickly as possible.

Report to your floor warden that you are there and if you know of anyone trapped in the building.

Remain in the assembly area until you are informed that you may leave or move by either the building warden or a member of the emergency services.

Case study

Hermann has been employed for six weeks as an information officer at Central City Council. His workstation is on the fourth floor of the building. He is very happy with the amount of work he has done today. Raj, a work experience student from the local high school, has been helping him with his filing. Juliet, Hermann's supervisor, has told Raj and Hermann that she is happy for them to listen to Raj's iPod while she is away on her lunch break.

Raj is standing on a carton so he can reach the top shelves of the shelving system. He notices smoke coming from one of the windows in the storeroom. He is pretty sure the storeroom is locked – Juliet usually takes the key with her when she goes to lunch.

What actions should Hermann and Raj take to deal with this emergency situation? Include any procedures they need to follow.

Topic 2

Implement work safety requirements

In this topic, you will develop the skills and knowledge needed to participate in hazard identification processes in your workplace. This topic will also explore the types of hazards that may exist in your workplace. Many workplaces have formal processes, such as workplace inspections, incident reporting and health and safety committees (HSCs). The information in this topic will prepare you to participate in these processes in your workplace.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Report WHS queries and concerns
- 2B Identify, report and record hazards
- 2C Identify and implement WHS procedures
- 2D Identify and report emergency incidents and injuries
- 2E Identify WHS duty holders

2A

Report WHS queries and concerns

Participating in WHS in your workplace involves asking questions and reporting queries and concerns about safety. There are people who can help you work safely in your organisation. These include your supervisor and specialised WHS personnel.



Your supervisor

The instructions or training you receive, so you can do your job and any new tasks or additional duties, should include information about how to work safely. This is particularly important when you are working with plant and machinery, technical equipment or hazardous materials.

If you are unsure about any aspect of this information, ask questions. Your supervisor has a duty of care toward you and will appreciate you taking an active interest in participating in workplace health and safety.

It may not be practical for you to refer to your supervisor every time you have a question or concern about WHS. Depending on the issue, a range of other sources of information may be available to you, including:

- health and safety representatives (HSRs) or health and safety officers
- more-experienced colleagues
- the organisation's policy or procedures manuals
- training manuals.

Deal with issues

Your daily work routine brings you into contact with other workers, suppliers and customers, as well as the various systems and equipment used in the organisation. Poor work practices, unsafe behaviours or not following relevant policies and procedures may jeopardise the health and safety of others in the workplace and the organisation's reputation.

Tell your supervisor how an issue came to your attention and give any evidence you have to support your concern. Do not hesitate to contact your supervisor or relevant personnel if you believe an emergency or incident may be about to occur as a result of the issue you have identified.

Your supervisor will follow workplace procedures to make sure your concerns are investigated and action is taken, where necessary, to eliminate or minimise any risks that exist.

You may become aware of issues relating to:

- incorrect use of PPE
- damaged or missing safety signs
- poorly maintained equipment
- poorly kept records
- missing stock and supplies
- standard precautions not being followed
- sterilisation and vaccine storage procedures not being followed correctly
- missing safety data sheets (SDSs).

Specialised WHS personnel

There may be other people in your workplace who have special responsibilities for implementing WHS policies, such as health and safety officers.

Health and safety representatives (HSRs) have powers and functions under the WHS Act.

Some organisations have a health and safety committee (HSC), which is a group of people formed to oversee WHS in the workplace.



Health and safety representatives

Health and safety representatives (HSRs) are a key link between workers and the person conducting the business or undertaking (PCBUs). An HSR is a person from your workplace who has been elected by a work group to represent them on WHS issues. There can be as many HSRs and deputy HSRs as needed after consultation, negotiation and agreement between workers and the PCBU.

HSRs have a range of functions and powers in relation to their work group members and the areas they work in, as explained below.

HSR functions	HSR powers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent their work group in matters related to WHS • Provide information to workers about health and safety • Bring issues to the attention of the PCBU in an attempt to resolve them • Monitor risk control measures • Investigate WHS complaints from the work group • Inquire into potential risks to the health and safety of workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can conduct an inspection • Can accompany an inspector during an inspection • Can be present at an interview about WHS with a worker • Can request that an HSC be established • Can direct a person to cease unsafe work in certain circumstances

Health and safety officers

Your organisation may employ a health and safety officer to manage WHS matters. Health and safety officers differ from health and safety representatives because they are not elected employees and they are usually specialists in health and safety. They are employed by the organisation to perform a specific WHS role.

A health and safety officer may have extensive experience in workplace safety and expert knowledge of legislation, regulations, codes of practice, equipment and work systems. Supervisors and management staff in the organisation work closely with the health and safety officer to perform risk identification and then develop plans to eliminate or minimise risk.

Health and safety officers can assist with:

- analysing and investigating incidents
- assisting in the preparation of standard operating procedures
- conducting safety audits
- coordinating fire and other emergency responses
- coordinating health and safety training
- inspecting plant, equipment, processes and working methods
- providing advice and information on safety matters to supervisors, senior management and workers
- providing specialist advice to the HSC.

Practice task 4

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

Case study

Natiq is an administration officer in the human resources department of an organisation. His role involves scheduling appointments, interviews and meetings for his supervisor; ordering stationery; collating information packs for job candidates; and recording the contact details of candidates who contact the organisation by telephone.

During his first week, Natiq attended induction training, which included an introduction to the WHS policies and procedures of the department. The training officer told the participants to raise any concerns they have about WHS with their immediate supervisor initially. In many cases, the supervisor will be able to take action to resolve the WHS issue, but it may be necessary to contact the specialist WHS personnel for advice or assistance.

The organisation also has an HSC. Staff from all the departments housed in the same building meet once a month to discuss WHS issues, conduct investigations and make recommendations to improve WHS. HSC members regularly inspect work areas to identify potential hazards.

Employees are encouraged to raise WHS matters at team meetings or to attend HSC meetings. It is expected that all workers will read the meeting minutes distributed by email each month. Any requests for maintenance are to be recorded on a maintenance request form.

Natiq is enjoying his role in the human resources department but is concerned about some of his working conditions.

The following table lists Natiq's WHS concerns. What actions should Natiq take to bring his concerns to the attention of the most appropriate person?

WHS issue	Action to be taken by Natiq
1. Personnel files are overstacked in the compactus.	

continued ...

... continued

WHS issue	Action to be taken by Natiq
2. The ergonomic chair cannot be adjusted as the mechanism appears to be broken.	
3. Natiq frequently works through his lunch break to make sure the department's telephone is answered.	
4. Natiq has to carry large quantities of paper to the photocopier each morning because there is no equipment available to transport it.	
5. The light is not working in the storeroom.	

2B

Identify, report and record hazards

In your work role, you may identify hazards in your work environment. Once hazards are identified, they need to be reported to the designated person and recorded according to workplace procedures. In this section, you will develop the skills and knowledge you need to participate in hazard identification in your organisation.



Hazards

A hazard is a source, or potential source, of human injury, ill health or disease. Anything that may cause injury or ill health to anyone in your workplace is a hazard.

A risk is the likelihood of a hazard resulting in an injury or disease, together with the seriousness of the injury or disease. For example, electricity is a hazard. There is a risk that someone may receive a shock if it is incorrectly wired or if wiring is exposed. Manual handling is also a potential hazard, because there is a risk that a person may strain their back if it is not done according to correct manual-handling procedures and guidelines.

Your organisation's WHS policy should include a systematic approach aimed at eliminating or minimising workplace hazards. Each workplace has its own unique combination of hazards.

Hazards may arise from:

- worker behaviour
- equipment and substances used in the workplace, and the specific work environment
- inappropriate or ineffective management systems and procedures
- poor work practices
- poorly trained workers
- poorly maintained equipment.

Types of hazards

The hazards identified in your workplace will depend on the kind of activities, people and technology involved in your organisation. New technology and work practices can be introduced and create new hazards. If you identify new hazards, report them to the appropriate personnel in your organisation. Remember, you have an important role to play in helping your organisation work safely.

Below are five types of hazards that all workplaces potentially have.



Biological hazards:

Bacteria, viruses, mould, mildew, spillages of blood or body fluids and waste, needlestick injury, contaminated sharps, dressings and waste, fumes and insects



Chemical hazards:

Chemical substances such as acids or poisons and those that could lead to fire or explosion; cleaning agents; materials; fumes; and scheduled drugs and poisons



Mechanical/electrical hazards:

Electricity and equipment, plant and machinery



Physical hazards:

Floors, stairs, work platforms, steps, ladders, fire, falling objects, slippery surfaces, hazardous manual handling, excessively loud and prolonged noise, vibration, radiation, poor lighting, poor ventilation, hold-ups and threatening customers or patients



Psychological hazards:

Workplace stressors arising from a variety of sources such as workplace bullying, conflict and poor time management

Example: hazards in the workplace

Feature of workplace	Example hazard
Surfaces	Wet floor
Electrical	Frayed electrical cords, incorrectly wired equipment, poorly maintained equipment
Knives and box cutters	Poorly trained staff
Heavy items	Poor manual-handling techniques
Obstacles	Fraying or lifted carpet, items stored in the wrong place
Chemicals	Incorrectly labelled or stored, lack of safety data sheet (SDS) or appropriate PPE
Lighting	Poor lighting
Operating machinery	Inadequate machine guards
Airborne contaminants	Asbestos
Training	Insufficient induction or on-the-job training
Clothing	Restricted movement, slippery soles on shoes, loose-fitting gloves
Work practices	Shift work may lead to fatigue-related hazards
Imaging equipment in a medical centre	Risk of exposure to chemicals and radiation
Manual handling	Medical staff lifting patients

Methods of identifying hazards

Workplace procedures include instructions for identifying hazards. Several of these procedures will be formal and may include forming teams to perform inspections, analysing incident reports and writing reports.

The most valuable information you can provide about hazards in your work environment is usually based on observation, consultation with other team members and colleagues, safety checklists completed as part of your daily work routine, customer feedback and implementing your daily work practices.

Formal procedures are combined to form a hazard identification plan. The hazard identification plan for your organisation may include the processes detailed below.

Processes in hazard identification plan

- Analysing injury and illness records, including workers compensation information
- Analysing work processes
- Collecting information on trends and developments in WHS
- Consulting with HSRs and HSC members
- Contacting supervisors in similar workplaces to learn from their expertise and experiences
- Gathering feedback from workers, known as consultation
- Investigating workplace incidents and near-miss reports
- Performing inspections or safety audits
- Reviewing the potential impact of new work practices or equipment introduced into the workplace

Workplace inspections

Workplace inspections are conducted on a regular basis with the assistance of the HSR or health and safety officer. The purpose is to identify and control the hazards before they cause harm. This is a way of being proactive about hazards, rather than reacting after the hazard has caused harm.

Evidence needs to be gathered to show that workers are following relevant health and safety legislation, regulations and the organisation's policies and procedures. Site and workplace inspections also provide an opportunity for workers to raise any WHS concerns.

If you are involved in formal WHS processes, you may carry out inspections in some or all of these ways:

- Inspect the existing and known hazards.
- Inspect the work processes; that is, how the tasks are performed. These can be routine inspections at specific times of the month or year.



- Make unannounced inspections to check whether WHS requirements are being observed.
- Inspect any new processes or equipment to assess hazards.
- Inspect work practices or equipment after complaints or concerns are raised by workers.
- Make follow-up inspections after processes have been changed due to recommendations.

How to do a workplace inspection

You may be required to conduct a formal WHS inspection or participate in a health and safety inspection team.

Before you begin the identification process, you should be aware of the factors that actually control the workplace, including human skills, work spaces, work schedules, equipment and work processes.

To do the site or workplace inspection (individually or as part of the inspection team), tour the work environment, observe workers going about their daily routines and encourage them to discuss WHS issues. This is called consultation and is an important part of the health and safety process.

Depending on your organisation, you may pay particular attention to:

- manual-handling hazards; for example, lifting and/or moving people or objects
- housekeeping; for example, condition of floors, work benches, ladders and walkways
- plant and machinery; for example, machines and moving parts, waste disposal and noise levels
- working at height; for example, construction and demolition
- chemical hazards; for example, fumes, gases, storage, labelling, handling, SDSs, PPE, scheduled poisons and cleaning agents
- electrical safety; for example, damaged electrical wires or appliances and how workers handle electrical equipment
- fire safety; for example, fire-fighting equipment, access and exits, alarm systems and emergency response instructions for workers
- first-aid provisions; for example, first-aid kit and staff with training in first aid
- work practices; for example, the use of ergonomic furniture, work breaks and exercises.

Example: completing a job safety check

Step 1	List all the jobs or tasks that take place in your work team. Do not leave out any task, no matter how small. All tasks may pose a hazard.
Step 2	<p>Conduct the safety check. You can do this in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the workplace policies and procedures for the task. • Watch how workers perform the task. • Check the equipment used. <p>Ask the workers questions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What tasks are uncomfortable? • What tasks are risky? • What tasks worry you in terms of safety? <p>Identify any problems.</p>
Step 3	Decide which problems need to be dealt with first; that is, the ones that pose immediate danger.
Step 4	Summarise the way problems might be solved, or seek help with solving the problems.
Step 5	Report the problems to management and get a decision about what will be done about it.
Step 6	Decide whether more training for staff is needed and report this to management.

Practice task 5

Undertake a hazard identification inspection of a work area with an associate, workplace colleague or another student.

You need to organise an appropriate time to undertake the inspection. Plan it carefully, ensuring you have all the necessary equipment, including any requisite PPE, and that you have communicated with and secured the approval of the workplace manager.

Record your findings.

2C

Identify and implement WHS procedures

Workplace hazards are the things in your workplace that have the potential to harm you, your work colleagues, customers and visitors to the workplace. Workplace risk is defined as the chance of something occurring that will result in injury or damage. Risks associated with workplace hazards need to be controlled.



Risk assessment

The first step in implementing risk management is hazard identification. The information you give your supervisor, HSR or health and safety officer is an important component in your organisation's risk management strategy.

Once a hazard has been identified, the next step is to assess the risk it poses. Your supervisor may collaborate with health and safety specialists to agree to eliminate or control the risk based on the likely degree of seriousness of the injury or damage, and the opportunity for control.

Risk assessment involves:

- identifying hazards
- working out the chance of injury or damage occurring as a result of the hazard
- working out the likely degree of seriousness of the injury or damage
- finding the most appropriate method for managing that risk.

Example: risk assessment checklist

Organisations often develop checklists that suit their specific needs.

Risk assessment checklist					
Hazard	Who is at risk	How often	High risk	Medium risk	Low risk
Stacking boxes of paper on high shelves	Administration assistant	Once a week	✓		
Frayed carpet in reception area	Customers and receptionist	Every day		✓	
Changing toner on photocopier (gloves have been provided)	Office assistant	Irregularly			✓

Participate in risk assessment activities

When a risk assessment is conducted, the assessment should be recorded and made available to workers affected by the hazard that has been assessed. It is important that workers are aware of the control measures that are to be implemented.

If you participate in risk assessment activities, your assistance may be required to undertake the activities below.

Risk assessment activities

- Evaluate the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring and the likely severity of any injury or illness.
- Review available information about the hazard, such as incident reports, SDSs, workplace monitoring and inspection reports and supplier information.
- Identify factors that contribute to the risk, such as the workplace layout; worker skills, knowledge and experience; and existing work practices.
- Identify actions necessary to eliminate or control the risk.
- Complete any relevant records.

Hazard control

The role you play in your workplace in eliminating or controlling hazards depends on your organisation's policies and procedures. Your involvement may include:

- reporting hazards you have identified
- assisting your supervisor to investigate appropriate risk control methods
- implementing procedures to eliminate or control hazards
- monitoring the implementation of new or enhanced procedures
- maintaining records related to hazard control.

Once a hazard has been identified, action must be taken to either eliminate or control the hazard before it results in injury or illness. Hazard control is the process of determining and implementing the best way to control hazards. The best way to control a hazard is to eliminate it. Elimination is the first choice in a system called the hierarchy of control.



Hierarchy of control

Risks are managed using the hierarchy of control. As the name suggests, the controls are measures that should be applied in sequence. This means that if the first option is not available, choose the next; for example, if you can't eliminate a piece of equipment because it is vital to the operation of the business, choose the next best option (substitution). You may find that in many cases, a combination of controls may be the best method.

This is the hierarchy of control, starting from the best option and working down to the least preferred options.

Elimination

Eliminate the hazard from the workplace entirely; for example, remove hazardous substances from the workplace or remove professional samples of drugs from consultation rooms.

Substitution, isolation and/or engineering controls

Substitution: substitute or modify the hazard by replacing it with something less dangerous; for example, if a cleaning agent is hazardous because it produces harsh fumes, replace it with one that does not produce harsh fumes.

Isolation: isolate the hazard by physically removing it from the workplace or by securing the area involved; for example, storing sharps in a lockable cabinet in a hospital ward.

Engineering controls: use engineering methods to control the hazard at its source; for example, provide additional ventilation in a production area or securely store hazardous materials.

Administrative controls and PPE

Administrative controls: these are management processes that are introduced to ensure workers' health and safety; for example, rosters that are designed to ensure workers have reasonable breaks between shifts to minimise the likelihood of hazards being realised. Administrative controls include provisions to:

- ensure workers follow correct and safe procedures
- train workers to use equipment or undertake tasks correctly
- regularly maintain equipment
- regularly monitor equipment.

PPE: introduce PPE such as goggles, gloves and masks to reduce exposure to a hazard. Protective equipment is the last control option and is most effective when used with higher controls.

Control the risk through elimination and substitution

You may be able to recommend that a risk be completely removed from the workplace by replacing or redesigning equipment or processes. A chair that can no longer be adjusted to suit a worker's height should be discarded and a new one purchased. Damaged electrical cords must be replaced by ones that have been certified. Any broken equipment should be replaced.

You may be able to undertake some of these controls yourself; for example:

- Move things that people may trip over.
- Move files that are stored on high shelves to a shelf at waist height so they can be worked on.
- Help workers eliminate back strain by suggesting management provide training in better posture and the benefits of regular work breaks.

Discuss these actions with your supervisor to ensure they are appropriate for the work area and fit in with the organisation's policy and procedures.



Take action

In any situation where you feel an immediate risk to health and safety is present, take action to protect your colleagues and other people in the work environment. You may need to clean up a spill, turn off the electricity supply or shut down machinery so the immediate hazard is controlled.

Following a risk assessment, there is a range of actions your organisation may decide to implement to control risk in a specific department or across the whole organisation.

Actions to control risk may include:

- analysing existing work practices to find ways to make them safer
- arranging fire or emergency response training and drills
- coordinating WHS training
- counselling workers about unsafe work practices
- investigating incidents
- maintaining or modifying plant and equipment
- preparing or revising standard operating procedures or procedures manuals
- purchasing new equipment.

Commonly used hazard signs and safety symbols

Safety signs and symbols are used to provide information on hazards, the location of safety equipment, and guidance in emergencies. The symbols are there to make sure people can understand signs regardless of their level of literacy.

Many signs and symbols are used to warn people that a hazard exists so they can be careful; for example, you have probably seen the warning signs a cleaner puts up when mopping a floor. The sign warns you to be careful as the floor may be wet and slippery.

Here are some common safety signs found in the workplace.



Do not smoke in this area

A red circle with a line through it means that you should not do something.



There is first-aid equipment here

A green square means safety equipment is stored here.



This is poisonous

A yellow triangle means a health risk.



This area or item is dangerous

Danger signs have DANGER written on them, in white letters on a red oval shape.



Be careful when walking here

A rectangle indicates information. A rectangle with an exclamation mark always has a written warning on it.



This contains flammable liquids

A red diamond with flame symbol indicates danger due to flammable materials.



Eye protection must be worn

A circle indicates that an order is in force. White image on blue background means it is mandatory.

Practice task 6

Identify which level of the hierarchy of control each of the following actions corresponds with.

1. You replace a faulty toaster with a toaster that works, to avoid electrocution or fire.

2. You ensure that the room where chemical substances are kept always has ventilation.

3. You put on protective gloves prior to handling toxic substances.

4. You move a box of files from the upper shelf to the middle shelf to avoid over-stretching when you reach for them.

5. You reposition the computer and keyboard to ensure they are at a comfortable level.

6. You bend at the knees before picking up a cardboard box of paper.

7. Your employer has scheduled a 15-minute break mid-morning and an hour break for lunch.

2D Identify and report emergency incidents and injuries

If an emergency incident or injury occurs in your workplace, you should take certain steps to ensure these are reported appropriately. Reporting incidents according to workplace procedures can be an important way of identifying hazards, assessing risks and controlling the risk of future incidents or emergencies. An important aspect of accident and incident prevention in the workplace is reporting all incidents and near misses.



Immediate response

Your immediate response in any emergency situation is to act quickly to protect your safety and the safety of the people around you. You need to know what the organisation expects of you in regard to protecting or safeguarding the property of the organisation.

An important part of your response to any emergency is to report the emergency to the appropriate person or department. Your workplace policies and procedures will advise you on the correct person to contact in specific emergency situations.

The appropriate person or department to report an emergency to could be:

- the communications officer
- emergency services (such as police, ambulance or fire service)
- the fire warden
- first-aid officers
- the health and safety officer
- floor wardens

- internal security staff
- the health and safety representative
- the owner/manager
- the supervisor.

Incident reports

All workers must report any hazards, near-miss incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace. This usually involves completing an incident report form and submitting it to your supervisor as soon as possible.

The purpose of these reports is to ensure compliance with policies, procedures and regulations related to reporting, investigating and addressing incidents. It is a legal requirement under WHS legislation and for insurance purposes to report all injuries in the workplace.

Incident reports give the organisation information about what injuries are occurring in the workplace and their causes. These may be investigated so steps can be taken to eliminate or minimise the risk of the incident recurring. Analysing the information contained in an incident report also helps identify which physical locations or work practices present the most risk.

The formal process of reporting incidents may be included in your organisation's WHS policy statement, induction handbook, safety manual or hazard identification and control procedure.



Example: an incident report

Workplace incident report

Report no: _____

Surname: _____

First name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____ Mobile number: _____

Date of injury: _____ Time: _____

Details of injury: _____

Describe the circumstances of the incident: _____

Description of incident by witness: _____

Signature of witness: _____

(please also print name) _____

Date: _____

When was the injury reported?

Date: _____

Time: _____

Who was the injury reported to?

Name: _____

Position: _____

continued ...

... continued

Workplace incident report (cont'd)
Details of action by management: _____ _____ _____
Date ceased work: _____ Time ceased work: _____
Total time lost: (days, hours, minutes) _____
Details of preventative measures taken: _____ (to be completed by health and safety representative) _____ _____ _____
Signed: _____ Date: _____

Incidents

An incident is any event that results in human injury or damage to property or the environment, or has the potential to cause injury or damage.

A WHS incident may involve:

- dangerous occurrences that could have injured someone
- disabling injuries
- exposure to hazardous substances or circumstances
- minor injuries
- occupational illnesses
- serious equipment, plant or property damage
- uncontrolled fire and explosions
- any other serious incident that could put workers, visitors, contractors or customers at risk.

Categories of incidents

Incidents range from near-miss incidents to serious incidents. You may be involved in the incident or may witness an incident occurring. Incident reports should be completed as soon as possible while the events are still fresh in your mind. These reports assist the organisation to be proactive in preventing similar incidents occurring in the future.

Specialist staff, such as a human resources manager, may use the information on the form to organise medical assistance and a return to work for any injured party.

Information included on the form is private. You should not discuss the information you have completed or read on forms filled out by others. If you are given a copy of the incident report, store it securely.

Here are the five categories of incidents you may need to report on.

Categories of incidents
1. Near miss – an incident in which a person just avoids being injured
2. Damage to plant or equipment – a serious occurrence, but one in which no-one is hurt
3. Minor injury – may highlight a more serious safety problem
4. Major injury – a serious incident
5. Work-related travel injury – an incident that occurs while a worker is travelling to or from work

Incident report processes

If an incident occurs, your immediate priority is to take action to prevent other people being hurt. This may involve:

- barricading the area
- contacting security, the fire warden or the health and safety officer
- telephoning emergency services
- administering first aid or medical treatment, if you have the appropriate skills and knowledge.



Once you have responded to the immediate situation, report the incident. Your first step may be to make a verbal report to your supervisor, HSR or health and safety officer. If you have been injured, ask your supervisor or human resources staff for information on how to proceed with a workers compensation claim.

Follow up your verbal report with an incident report form as soon as possible. You may need to attach medical or other certificates to your report. It may also be necessary to obtain statements from witnesses to the incident.

Report a notifiable incident

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), there are specific incidents that must be notified to the state or territory regulator. A notifiable incident is:

- a death of a person
- a serious injury or illness of a person; for example, a serious eye injury requiring immediate treatment or medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance
- a dangerous incident; for example, an uncontrolled fire exposing a worker to serious risk.

It is the responsibility of the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) to inform the regulator immediately that a notifiable incident has occurred in the workplace. This can be done by telephone and in writing on the form approved by the regulator.



Practice task 7

Investigate the procedures followed in your workplace (or a community or sporting organisation) to document near misses, serious incidents and emergencies.

Ask an appropriate person why they feel it is important to document all activities, actions and outcomes immediately after an incident.

Record your findings.

2E

Identify WHS duty holders

Duty holders are identified under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth). More than one person may have the same duty, and a person may have more than one duty. Duty holders need to consult, cooperate and coordinate activities so it is more likely that risks will be controlled and WHS measures undertaken efficiently.

To participate in the WHS consultative process, you need to be able to identify the WHS duty holders in your own work area, which may include those below.

PCBU

Persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) include:

- employers
- corporations and associations
- each partner in a partnership
- sole trader organisations.

The primary duty of care of the PCBU is to:

- provide and maintain a safe working environment, safe plant and structures and safe systems of work
- ensure safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances
- provide adequate facilities for welfare at work of workers and access to facilities
- provide information, training, instruction and supervision
- monitor the health of workers and conditions in the workplace.

Officers

An officer is a senior manager in a business who has the decision-making power to determine the direction that a business takes on health and safety issues. They may be a:

- director
- company secretary
- chief executive officer
- chief financial controller.

Officers should take reasonable steps to exercise due diligence; that is, they should:

- understand their WHS duties and those of the business
- understand hazards and risks
- allocate appropriate resources to eliminate or minimise risk
- check the business is doing what it says it is doing about WHS.

Workers

Workers include:

- employees
- independent contractors
- home-based workers (outworkers)
- apprentices
- work experience students
- trainees
- volunteers who work in an employment-like setting.

A worker's duty of care includes:

- taking reasonable care of their own safety
- cooperating with any reasonable policy or procedure they have been notified of that relates to WHS
- complying with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU
- taking reasonable care to make sure their conduct does not adversely affect the safety of others.

Other people

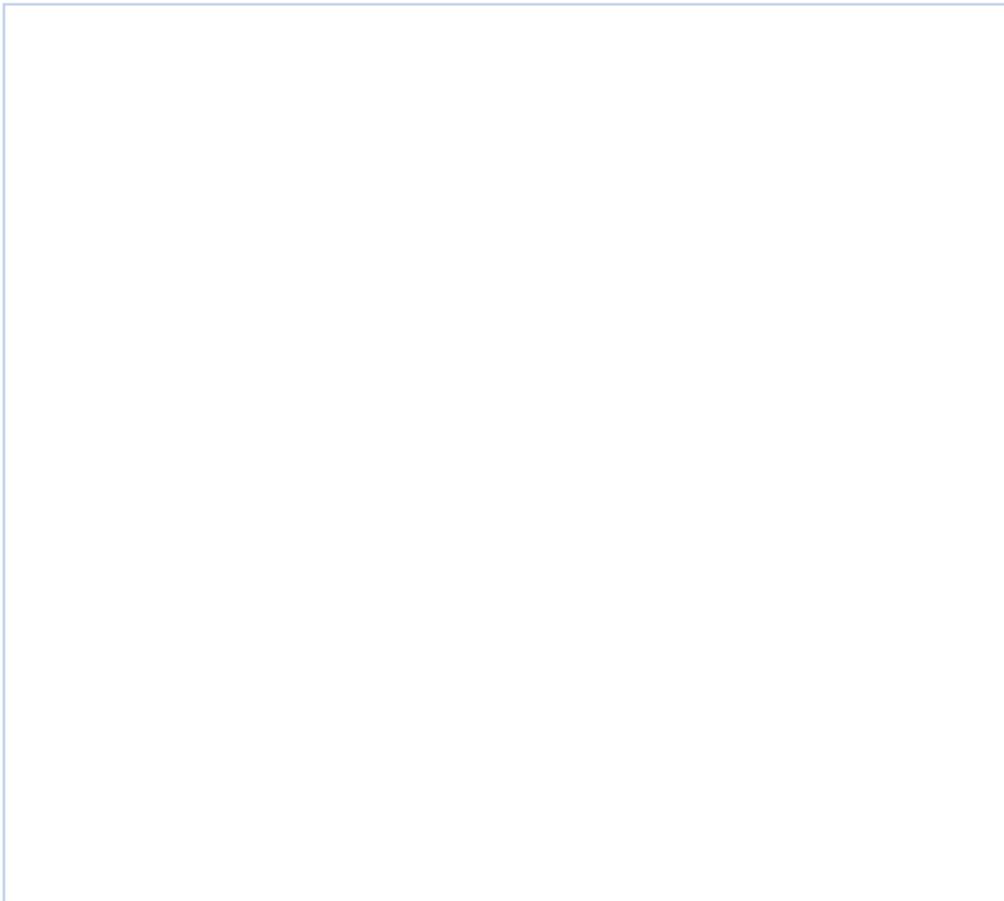
Other people at a workplace include:

- visitors
- customers
- a WHS inspector on a visit.

Like workers, these other people must take reasonable care for their own health and safety, not adversely affect the health and safety of others and comply with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU.

Practice task 8

Identify four people in your workplace who have WHS responsibilities. Explain each person's WHS role and responsibilities.



Summary

1. Poor work practices, unsafe behaviours and not following relevant policies and procedures may jeopardise the health and safety of those in the workplace and the organisation's reputation.
2. If you are uncertain about any WHS issues in your work environment, or if you observe any hazards, talk with your supervisor, health and safety representative and/or health and safety officer.
3. You may have the opportunity to participate in a site or workplace inspection. These are usually conducted on a regular basis with the assistance of the health and safety representative or health and safety officer.
4. Once a hazard has been identified, action must be taken to either eliminate or control it before it results in injury or illness. This process is called hazard identification and risk control.
5. All workers must report any hazards, emergency incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace. This usually involves completing an incident report form and submitting it to your supervisor as soon as possible.
6. The WHS duty holders in your organisation need to consult, cooperate and coordinate activities to be able to control risks effectively.

Learning checkpoint 2

Implement work safety requirements

This learning checkpoint is designed to confirm your skills and knowledge in implementing work safety requirements.

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow. Use your initiative to select an effective way to present the information in each question; for example, you may use a short statement, a paragraph, table, chart or bullet list.

Case study

Kyla is employed as a receptionist. Her supervisor, Sheridan, is scheduled to arrive at work 30 minutes later than Kyla. Kyla is usually the first person to arrive at the office every morning, and is responsible for unlocking the doors. The keyhole of one door is too close to the doorjamb, and she always hurts her hand when opening it.

She is also responsible for switching on all equipment, and finds it difficult to reach the wall socket behind the bookcase where the photocopier is plugged in. The photocopier is in use all day. As it is right next to her workstation, the noise of the machine and all those using it disturbs her concentration.

Every time Kyla wants something from the top drawer of her filing cabinet, she has to slide it open a fraction, then quickly turn the key to lock the other drawers so they don't all slide out and tip the cabinet over.

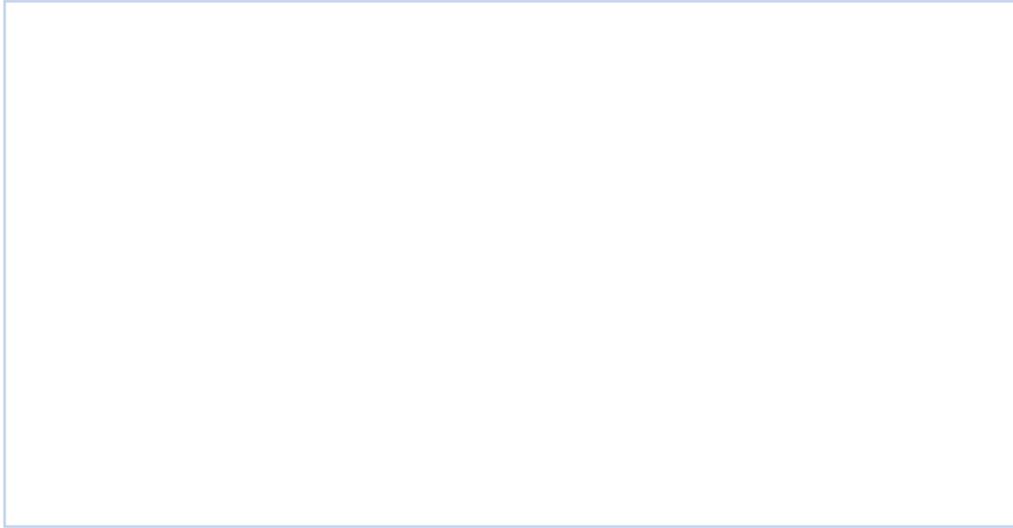
1. Explain the difference between hazards and risks. List the hazards and risks in Kyla's work environment.

2. Who should Kyla report her concerns to and why?

3. What can Kyla do to report and raise awareness of these hazards?

4. What recommendations would you make to improve the situation?

5. What process should Kyla follow if an incident occurs where the cabinet drawer slides open, hits her work colleague on the knee and cuts her leg? Her colleague requires medical attention.



6. What is Kyla's duty of care? Who would be the WHS duty holders in Kyla's workplace?



Topic 3

Participate in WHS consultative processes

Workers are in a unique position in an organisation to provide advice to management and health and safety specialists about the health and safety issues in their workplace. You and your fellow workers have firsthand knowledge about the equipment, work practices and physical environment, and may also receive feedback from customers about safety issues related to the products and services provided by your organisation.

You need to take the opportunity to bring your knowledge about WHS issues to the attention of the appropriate people in your organisation. You will learn about the consultation processes that may be in place and consider the most effective method for presenting your ideas to your supervisor and work colleagues. It is important to remember that in some cases it will be appropriate or necessary for you to take immediate action.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Contribute to meetings, inspections and other WHS consultative activities
- 3B Raise WHS issues
- 3C Take action to eliminate hazards and reduce risks

3A

Contribute to meetings, inspections and other WHS consultative activities

PCBUs are required by law to consult with workers about any WHS matters that affect them. Consultation involves sharing information and making sure workers' views are considered when decisions about WHS are made. Participating in consultation processes in your organisation enables you to contribute to decisions that affect health and safety.



Consultation

Your organisation may undertake consultation with you and your work colleagues regarding WHS issues.

WHS issues may include:

- changes to policies, work practices and procedures
- changes to premises, plant or substances used at work
- conducting workplace risk assessments
- incorporating new health and safety requirements imposed by legislation, regulations and codes of practice
- making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the health and safety of workers
- making decisions about the organisation's consultative procedures
- reviews of policies, procedures and work practices
- risk control.

Methods of consultation

Consultation is critical when managing WHS. The methods used to consult with you may depend on the size of your organisation.

Some ways your organisation may consult with you and your work colleagues about WHS include:

- electing HSRs and providing them with reasonable access to you and your work colleagues during working hours
- involving you in workplace inspections and risk assessments and asking for your comments and feedback during workplace inspections
- ensuring that WHS is included on meeting agendas at regular team meetings
- forming an HSC and providing HSC members with reasonable access to workers during working hours
- asking you for your comments and feedback during informal conversations.

Worker experience

Because workers have direct experience in work activities they are likely to be the first to know when there is a WHS issue. This experience and knowledge is detailed below.

Worker experience	Workers first to know
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising stores Operating plant or machinery Handling materials Using computers and technology Dealing with clients Other tasks, depending on the work performed in their organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machinery is not regularly maintained Lighting or ventilation is inadequate Materials are substandard Workplace procedures are not being adhered to Not feeling they have the skills or knowledge required to work safely

Health and safety representatives

Health and safety representatives (HSRs) are elected by work groups to promote their interests in relation to WHS. Your HSR is available for you to discuss any concerns you may have about WHS. Part of your HSR's role is to consult with you on WHS; that is, directly asking you for your input on health and safety in the workplace.



Contribute to health and safety consultation

Team meetings are used to consult with team members about health and safety issues. Time should be provided to discuss WHS at each team meeting.

Your supervisor may:

- report on recent workplace incidents
- report on production time lost to workplace injuries
- report on new practices to improve WHS
- ask team members to raise WHS issues, particularly any hazards identified
- provide you with a copy of the minutes of recent HSC meetings.

Key communication skills

Your input on health and safety is valuable. Your supervisor may use the health and safety information gathered from the team to investigate further. Any issues that cannot be resolved or that may impact other areas of the organisation will be referred to relevant staff, such as senior management, the HSC or the health and safety officer.

If you wish to raise a health and safety issue, explain the issue clearly, refer to any evidence that you have and, if possible, make a suggestion about how to solve any problems raised.

Here are some key general communication skills that you can use when participating in a discussion about health and safety at a workplace meeting.

Key general communication skills

- Listen attentively.
- Notice verbal and nonverbal clues.
- Be open to feedback.
- Allow others to speak by not interrupting.
- Focus on the issues being discussed.
- Avoid becoming emotional and confrontational.

Health and safety committees

WHS legislation includes information about the requirements to establish health and safety committees (HSCs). The purpose of an HSC is to assist consultation between PCBUs and workers and to serve as an advisory role in the organisation.

Below is an overview of the legislative requirements for establishing an HSC, its membership and the role it plays.

Establishing an HSC

- Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), it is not mandatory to have an HSC, but one must be established by the PCBU if:
- a request is made by an HSR on behalf of a work group
 - a request is made by five or more workers who carry out work for the business
 - the WHS regulations require it
 - the business chooses to establish the committee.

HSC membership

According to WHS laws, at least half of the members must be workers who are not nominated by the PCBU.

Role of the HSC

- HSCs play an important role in organisations by:
- facilitating cooperation on health and safety
 - discussing identified WHS problems
 - consulting with workers and making recommendations aimed at improving WHS
 - assisting in developing health and safety standards, rules and procedures
 - monitoring and reporting on WHS performance, including compliance with legislation and workplace policies and procedures.

Practice task 9

Describe how you would contribute to consultation activities in your workplace when dealing with a range of WHS issues, listed in the following table.

Refer to the information in this learner guide and your workplace policies and procedures to work out the best consultation method.

Your answers should describe when you would raise the issue (for example, at the next team meeting), identify the party with whom you would raise the issue (for example, a supervisor) and identify the method you would use to raise the issue.

Issue	When I would raise this issue	Who I would raise this issue with	How I would raise this issue
There is frayed wiring on the toaster in the staff lunch room.			

continued ...

... continued

Issue	When I would raise this issue	Who I would raise this issue with	How I would raise this issue
The top shelves in the stationery cupboard have been overstacked.			
The external light in the staff car park is not working.			
Product cartons are blocking the entrance to the fire exit in the storeroom.			

continued ...

... continued

Issue	When I would raise this issue	Who I would raise this issue with	How I would raise this issue
Warehouse staff are not wearing hairnets when walking through production areas.			
The emergency exit sign is obstructed by packages waiting to be picked up by a courier.			
You have been asked to work through your designated meal break.			

continued ...

... continued

Issue	When I would raise this issue	Who I would raise this issue with	How I would raise this issue
<p>A customer at reception is threatening the receptionist because she has been waiting for a long time.</p>			
<p>You would like to purchase a small stepladder to assist you in storing items in the stationery cupboards.</p>			
<p>Your safety goggles have a broken strap and you need to have them replaced.</p>			

3B

Raise WHS issues

At times, you will need to raise WHS issues without waiting to be consulted. Employers and all workers have a duty of care towards other people in their workplace. Organisations develop policies, procedures and systems to make sure they comply with relevant WHS legislation, regulations and codes of practice.

Supervisors, department managers and specialist WHS personnel work together to manage WHS matters. Your first step in reporting a WHS issue is to decide who the best person to give advice is. Your induction training and workplace procedures will most likely include advice on the best communication channel for reporting WHS issues. In many cases, your supervisor will be your first contact point on WHS issues.



WHS reporting processes

Below is further information about the WHS reporting process.

How to report WHS issues

Your workplace procedures contain information on the method you should use to report the matter to your supervisor and/or other WHS staff. Usually, you would advise your supervisor and potentially other WHS personnel by speaking with them. Remember to do the following:

- Explain the issue clearly.
- Refer to any evidence that you might have.
- If possible, make a suggestion about how to solve any problems raised.

Then, follow up with a formal notification. This notification could be an email or a form that has been developed to suit the needs of your organisation. Your organisation may have an electronic or printed list of hazards and the action that should be taken to address them. This list is called a hazard or risk register. Check with your supervisor or WHS personnel as to whether you are required to enter information about hazards in the hazard or risk register.

What will happen after you report a WHS issue?

Your supervisor and/or other appropriate WHS staff should have the skills and knowledge to decide what immediate action needs to be taken to either eliminate or minimise any risks you have identified. They may be able to take action immediately to resolve the issue; for example, they may reorganise shifts or relocate items at your workstation.

In some cases, your supervisor and/or other appropriate WHS staff will need to bring the matter to the attention of other supervisors, department managers or WHS specialists. They may also need to bring the WHS matter to the attention of the relevant personnel at the next HSC or senior management meeting. They may need to collect more information on the matter and conduct an investigation. It is essential that steps are taken to prevent any harm to people while the matter is being investigated.

Feedback about WHS issues you raise

You should seek feedback about issues you have raised. If a suitable amount of time has elapsed and you have not received feedback, or the WHS risk has not been resolved, you should approach your supervisor or raise your concerns at the next team meeting.

Practice task 10

Read the case study, then complete the task that follows.

Case study

Victoria is doing work experience at a large finance institution. Her role is to file transaction records in paper files. The room she is working in is quite dark and, after a few hours, Victoria begins to feel sleepy. She checks to see if she can open a window or let air in, but it appears the window is locked and, because of the situation of the room, it is not receiving the air-conditioning from the rest of the building.

continued ...

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Prepare a brief WHS report that Victoria should make, including who the report should be made to and how it should be made.



3C

Take actions to eliminate hazards and reduce risks

Taking action to eliminate or reduce risks is an important part of the WHS processes in a workplace. There are a range of actions that can be taken in response to hazards and risks.

Once a hazard has been identified, action must be taken to either eliminate or control the hazard before it results in injury or illness. This is called risk control.

Here is a summary of the hierarchy of control.

Hierarchy of control

- Eliminate the hazard from the workplace entirely.
- Substitute or modify the hazard by replacing it with something less dangerous.
- Isolate the hazard by physically removing it from the workplace or securing the area involved.
- Use engineering methods to control the hazard at its source.
- Use administrative controls.
- Introduce personal protective equipment (PPE) such as goggles, gloves and masks to reduce exposure to a hazard.

Review of WHS processes

You may be involved in actions to manage a hazard. In some cases, you may take these actions yourself without asking your supervisor. Where your actions require a change to workplace procedures or impact your colleagues or other departments, you must tell your supervisor.



Housekeeping

Your organisation may have a housekeeping policy about general cleaning and presentation of the workplace, including the reception and waiting areas. It may reflect the nature of the work performed in the organisation. For example, an organisation involved in production may keep the area tidy by safely storing ladders and machinery. The housekeeping policy for a retail organisation may describe how to store merchandise and keep aisles clear of equipment and merchandise.

You must be familiar with this policy and understand your housekeeping responsibilities. Your work team may have developed a cleaning schedule that requires you to regularly do 'spot maintenance' or cleaning throughout the day. Make sure you use the recommended cleaning agents and PPE. Remember, taking these precautions is part of your duty of care.



Example: housekeeping policy

This organisation's WHS policy commits the organisation to ensuring its workplaces are healthy and safe for staff, customers and visitors. A well-kept workplace minimises the probability of accidental injury to people and damage to property.

Below are details of the housekeeping policy.

Guidelines for housekeeping

The organisation aims to meet the following objectives:

- All dangerous goods, including combustible materials and flammable liquids, are stored in accordance with statutory requirements.
- All work areas are kept clean and orderly.
- Containers, boxes, equipment and materials are stored in a manner that prevents objects from falling.
- Floors are kept clear of objects and substances that could cause slips, trips or falls.
- No smoking rules are enforced throughout the workplace.
- Stairways, emergency exits and corridors are kept clear to ensure free passage of persons, if required in an emergency.

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Roles and responsibilities

Your role and responsibilities in relation to housekeeping may involve helping with the general cleaning of your work environment. This could include public areas such as a waiting area or reception. Contract cleaners may be employed to provide general cleaning in all areas of the organisation after hours. Your supervisor is responsible for making sure you receive the best training for using and maintaining cleaning equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions and workplace policies and procedures.

Be proactive and advise your supervisor of any irregularities or non-conformance of cleaning standards.

All staff are responsible for keeping their own work areas neat and tidy. Further details on the responsibilities of staff for WHS can be found in the WHS policy manual for staff.

Maintenance issues such as torn carpet, damaged stair treads, and light bulbs that need replacing should be reported to the service desk.

Medical centre office cleaning equipment

The following items must be available for general cleaning and housekeeping in the medical office. Medical office workers are responsible for ensuring supplies are available in sufficient quantities and are regularly replenished. The following cleaning equipment must be stored in the central store area:

- Heavy-duty utility gloves
- Plastic apron to protect clothing
- Protective eyewear, either a mask or visor
- Non-corrosive, non-abrasive, free rinsing and mildly alkaline detergents in their original containers or clean, well-labelled bottles
- A range of cleaning brushes in various sizes
- Towels for drying cleaned items

Public areas

You may be responsible for maintaining the waiting or reception area throughout the working day. Your workplace policies and procedures may describe the standards you are required to maintain. These could include the following:

- Keep public areas tidy and clean to maintain a safe environment.
- Maintain privacy for customers or patients, particularly when they are providing personal or private information or are distressed.
- Background music or television must be appropriate for general audiences.
- Clean toys, books or play equipment provided for children weekly.
- Take particular care to clean all surfaces.
- Attend to spills urgently.

Stock requiring special handling

Your role may involve storing items that require special handling and storage. For example, workers in the health industry may need to maintain storage of dangerous or hazardous items, fragile items and refrigerated items including vaccines and antibiotics. Ask your supervisor to show you the various dangerous goods classifications that appear on any relevant cartons so you can observe the correct procedures and any legislative requirements for their handling and storage.

You may need to store some stock in special facilities, such as flammable goods in sealed metal containers or cupboards. Access to these goods may be restricted. Check your procedures manual and clarify any questions with your supervisor.



Store chemicals

Chemicals must be secured in an appropriate area to prevent unauthorised access. Refer to the information on the SDS for advice on correct storage of chemicals, including any specific handling and storage requirements.

Store flammable materials with particular care. Organise the storeroom so flammable materials are not stored near a source of heat or flame. Ask your supervisor how to dispose of containers that have had flammable materials in them.

Take note of the location of any first-aid instructions that are posted in the storeroom. Do not allow customers access to the chemical storage area.

Chemicals that are stored and used in the workplace present a range of hazards. They may be poisonous, flammable, explosive, an oxidising agent, a sensitising agent or corrosive or a combination of these properties.

Common chemicals in office environments include:

- industrial cleaners used by cleaning staff
- printer or copy-machine cartridges
- glass and surface cleaner
- antibacterial soaps
- furniture polish.

Waste management

Waste in organisations, particularly in the health industry or manufacturing, can be a risk to people and the environment. These organisations have specific workplace procedures to advise staff on how to correctly handle, store and dispose of waste. This waste is a form of biohazard.

A biohazard is any organism, or material of biological origin, that causes harm to humans, plants, animals or the environment. Organisations that use biohazards must follow strict labelling guidelines to warn workers of potential hazards.

Make sure you are familiar with the any biohazard labels used in your workplace, and follow appropriate procedures when handling or storing these materials.



Manual handling

Manual handling is any work-related physical task or activity, effort or movement such as lifting heavy boxes and holding, lowering, pushing or restraining an object or a load.

Manual handling is a common task in many industries, and is a major cause of injury at work. Manual tasks involve handling loads by lifting, stretching, bending and twisting, or using heavy equipment.

In the office environment, filing cabinets, storage systems, shelving and computer workstations may present manual-handling hazards with a degree of risk. Work-related injuries from manual handling most commonly affect the back, neck, shoulders, arms and wrists.

Here is some additional information about manual handling injuries, training and lifting.



Injuries

Injuries caused by manual handling may include:

- hernia
- neck and back injury
- occupational overuse syndrome
- slips, falls and crush incidents
- strained heart muscles
- strains and sprains.

Training

It is essential for you to receive training in the methods you can use to reduce the risk of injury. In your training you will learn how to:

- lighten loads by breaking them into smaller quantities
- reduce bending, twisting and reaching movements
- use a manual-handling aid
- follow instructions on safe manual-handling methods
- prevent muscle strain and fatigue by warming up before working and taking regular rest breaks
- report any manual-handling situations that may cause injuries, to your supervisor or specialist WHS personnel.

Lifting

Here are some tips for lifting using the correct manual-handling procedures.

- Always lift safely.
- Bend at the knees and crouch down closely to the object.
- Keep your back straight while crouching.
- Grip the object firmly with both hands.
- Allow your leg muscles, not your back or arms, to take the strain.
- Stand up slowly keeping your back straight.
- Avoid any twisting or jerking movements.
- Bend at the knees again in order to put the object down.

Noise

Noise in the workplace can be a problem if it distracts or annoys people, interferes with communication or causes stress.

Too much noise can result in a lack of concentration, errors and a loss of communication between workers. Exposure to noise can permanently damage hearing.

In an office, unacceptable levels of noise may come from:

- machines, such as photocopiers, fax machines and printers
- other equipment, such as telephones and paging systems
- background building noise, such as lifts, doors, air conditioning and traffic.

If you feel that the noise in your work area poses a hazard to health and safety, notify your supervisor or WHS specialist according to your workplace policies and procedures.



Slips, trips and falls

Uneven and slippery floors, items left in walkways or electrical cords on the floor are all possible causes of slips, trips and falls in workplaces. Injuries from tripping and falling may cause damage to arms, legs, back, neck and head, and even permanent disability.



Social and psychological hazards

Social and psychological hazards include those that affect your emotional, psychological or social wellbeing. Everyone wants to feel that the work they are doing is worthwhile, enjoyable, rewarding and contributing to the success of the organisation. Workers need to feel they have a positive relationship with their work colleagues and the organisation. If workers have negative feelings about these issues, they can face social and psychological hazards.

The most common of these hazards is stress. Stress is difficult to define. While it is a normal part of everyday life, it becomes a problem when it is excessive and affects the way you work and your general wellbeing.

If you feel stress is becoming a hazard to your health and safety, arrange to speak to your supervisor about your concerns. It is important to address any stress issues immediately to avoid psychological illness or injury.

There are many causes of stress including:

- lack of variety in work tasks
- lack of independence
- not enough feedback from supervisors or managers
- poor ability to interact with other people
- harassment and bullying
- not enough personal satisfaction in the work
- not enough training opportunities
- being overworked
- not having enough to do.

Workplace bullying

Bullying is behaviour that threatens, humiliates, victimises or undermines another person. In recent years there have been many successful prosecutions of organisations that have failed to prevent bullying.

Your organisation should have policies and procedures for dealing with bullying. Record any incidents of bullying in a diary, noting the date, time and location of the incident and any comments or behaviour by the other party or parties. You should also record any response you had to the behaviour and retain any emails or other electronic communications that are evidence of bullying.

Your organisation's procedures may require you to ask the person bullying you to stop the behaviour. If the behaviour does not stop, refer the matter to your supervisor or WHS specialist. If you feel threatened, you should immediately refer the matter to appropriate personnel.

Bullying can have a variety of physical and psychological effects on people.

Commonly reported effects of workplace bullying are:

- stress, anxiety and tension
- feelings of social isolation at work
- loss of confidence and self-esteem
- loss or deterioration of personal relationships
- headaches, backaches and stomach cramps
- depression
- deterioration of work performance.

Example: penalties for workplace bullying

In NSW, a company was fined \$24,000 and its directors \$1000 each for allowing employees to carry out an 'initiation' of a young apprentice. The magistrate described this 'initiation' as a polite term for bullying.

(Source: WorkCover New South Wales, www.workcover.nsw.gov.au)

In Victoria, a worker was convicted and fined a total of \$9500 for bullying a new trainee worker. At the hearing, the magistrate noted that 'the financial and social cost of workplace bullying is enormous, and we know that the answer is to prevent it from happening in the first place'.

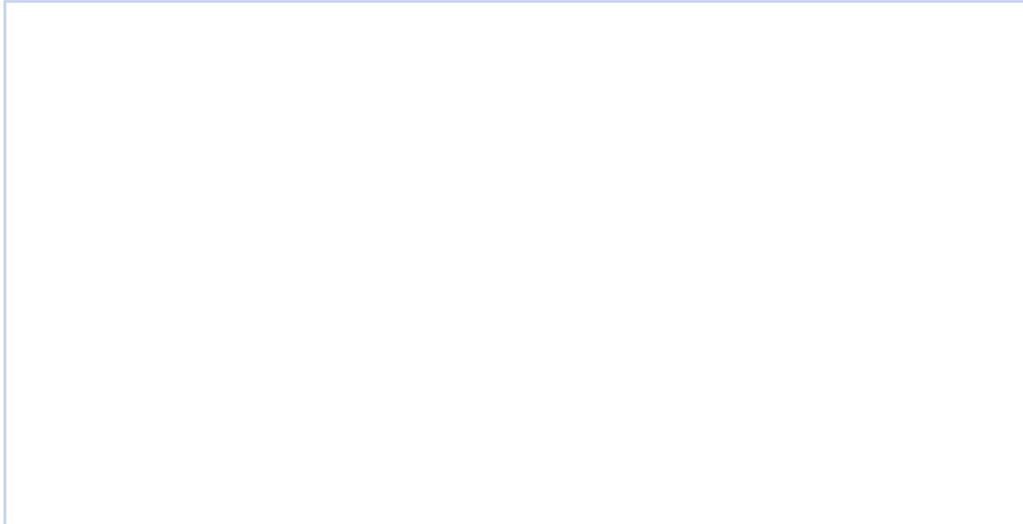
(Source: WorkSafe Victoria, www.workcover.vic.gov.au)

A company director was fined \$8000 for harassing and bullying one of his workers. The harassment included racist comments. The magistrate noted that any form of racial vilification or discrimination is against the law.

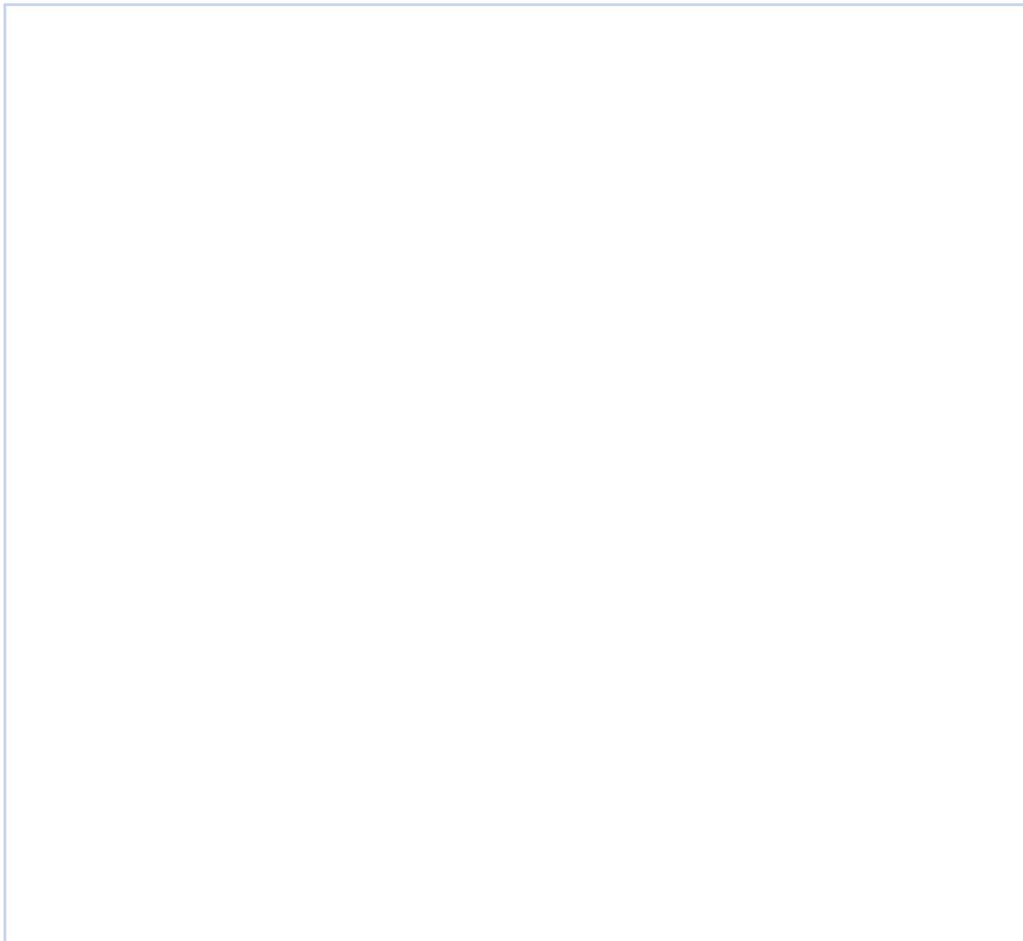
(Source: WorkSafe Victoria, www.workcover.vic.gov.au)

Practice task 11

1. Prepare a checklist you could use in your work area to make sure you maintain the area properly. If you are currently employed, you may wish to refer to your organisation's housekeeping policy to help develop your checklist. You could also use the housekeeping policy in the previous example.



2. Using the internet, research bullying in the workforce to learn more about its impact and relevant legislation. What were your key findings?



Summary

1. PCBUs are required by the relevant legislation and regulations to consult with workers about any WHS matter that affects them.
2. Consultation is very effective in managing WHS because workers have firsthand information and experience of the various factors that may give rise to hazards in the workplace.
3. Your supervisor is usually your first contact point on WHS issues.
4. Your supervisor, or other WHS personnel, should report to you about the outcome of any issues you have raised.
5. You can take the following actions to control risks in your organisation:
 - Keep work areas clean and well presented.
 - Follow correct procedures with stock requiring special handling.
 - Store chemicals appropriately.
 - Manage and dispose of waste appropriately.
 - Use correct manual-handling procedures.
 - Manage noise pollution appropriately.
 - Prevent slips, trips and falls.
 - Prevent and manage social and psychological hazards.
6. Your organisation may have a housekeeping policy that covers general cleaning and presentation of the workplace, including reception and waiting areas.

Learning checkpoint 3

Participate in WHS consultative processes

This learning checkpoint is designed to confirm your skills and knowledge for participating in WHS consultative processes.

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow. Use your initiative to select an effective way to present the information in each question; for example, you may use a short statement, a paragraph, table, chart or bullet list.

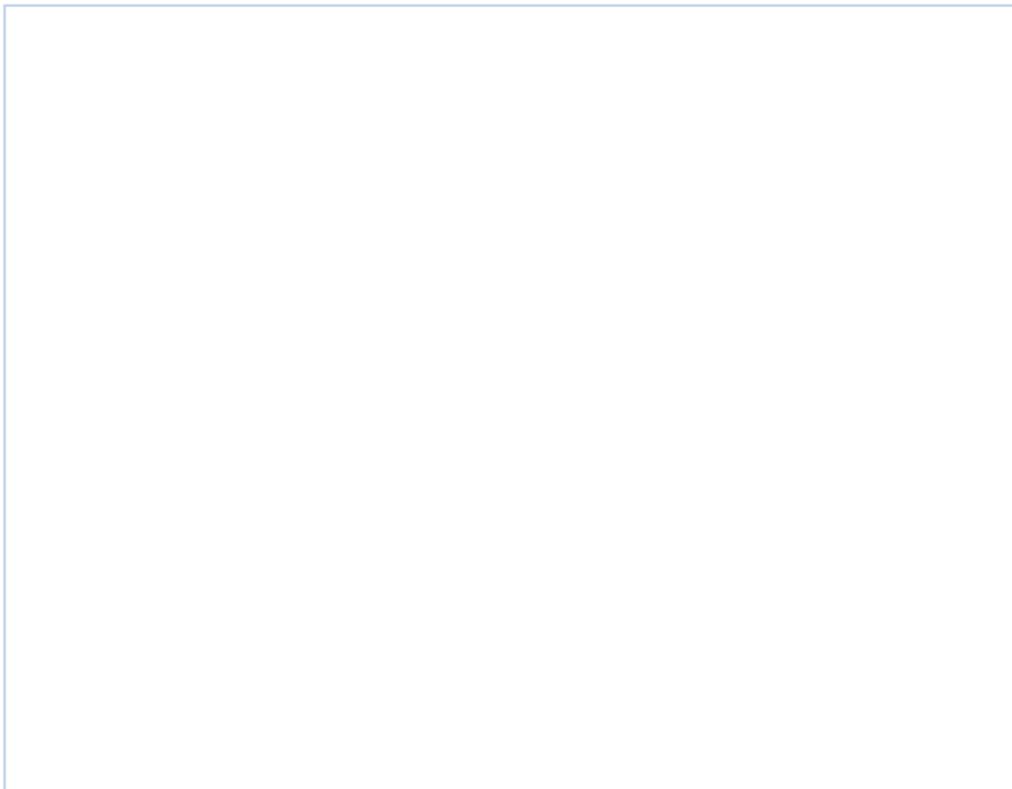
Scenario

You started working as an administration officer three months ago. You like the people you work with, your workplace is located close to your home, and you are learning many new and interesting tasks. You are concerned, however, about the volume of work you are required to complete. You have to process a large number of sales orders and invoices each day. Your supervisor receives a report at the end of each day that identifies how many orders and invoices were processed by each worker.

You have been working through your lunch every day and staying back an extra hour each afternoon to complete the necessary quota. You overheard your supervisor severely reprimanding a colleague who was not meeting their target, and you don't want to get into trouble.

You are finding that your attention wanders as you are driving home each day. Yesterday you drove through a red light. You suspect you are overtired, and think you need to do something about your situation.

1. What hazard/s are you facing and who can you talk to about your concerns?



2. What WHS consultative processes might there be in the workplace that you can participate in to address this and other WHS issues?

3. What would you do before raising your issue/s?

4. What would you say when raising your issue/s?

5. Discuss with a colleague or another learner the actions that could be taken to eliminate the hazard and reduce risks. Record your decision.

6. What risks are associated with the hazard?

7. What action could you take to contribute to WHS in your workplace to make sure others are not subject to similar hazards and risks?

