

HLTWHS003

Maintain work health and safety

Release 3



Learner guide

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Aspire Version 1.2



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Version control and modification history

Version	Release date	Modification
Release 3, version 1.1	April 2017	First release.
Release 3, version 1.2	January 2019	Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program. Updated health and safety regulators table on page 6.

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *HLTWHS003 Maintain work health and safety*, Release 3. 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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 and learning checkpoints. ▶ Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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.

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
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities ▶ Managing your work and seeing how well you are going and making goals for yourself at work ▶ Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents ▶ Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology ▶ Interpreting key information in relevant documents ▶ Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents ▶ Communicating through written letters, email and online ▶ Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clarifying instructions ▶ Providing information ▶ Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution ▶ Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance ▶ Interpreting measurements
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning your workload and commitments ▶ Implementing tasks ▶ Completing work on time ▶ Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding and applying decision-making processes ▶ Reviewing the impact of your decisions
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifying problems ▶ Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes and reviewing the outcome
Innovation and creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas ▶ Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something ▶ Making suggestions to improve work

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Technology and digital literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely ▶ Accessing, organising and presenting information ▶ Using equipment correctly and safely

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 outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Contribute to workplace procedures for identifying hazards and controlling risks	1A Identify and record existing and potential hazards	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Contribute to the development of strategies for implementing risk controls	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Implement risk controls and identify and report issues, including residual risk	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Implement policies and procedures into work team processes	2A Regularly provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the work team	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Provide information about identified hazards and the outcomes of risk assessment and risk controls	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Monitor housekeeping practices to ensure that WHS policies and procedures are followed	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Maintain WHS incident records in the work area according to requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Support consultation, cooperation and communication	3A Encourage work team participation in consultative activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Report health and safety issues in line with workplace procedures and legislative requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Encourage and assist work team members to contribute to WHS	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Identify and record existing and potential hazards**

- 1B Contribute to the development of strategies for implementing risk controls**

- 1C Implement risk controls and identify and report issues, including residual risk**

Contribute to workplace procedures for identifying hazards and controlling risks

Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to work safely and keep themselves and the people they provide support for safe. Part of this responsibility includes talking about safety, identifying if something isn't safe and reporting any problems to the right person.

Support workers play an important role in keeping the workplace safe because they spend time with people they support in their rooms and homes. They also use the workplace equipment regularly and will notice if things are not working properly or are unsafe.

There are laws that cover how to keep the workplace safe. These are work health and safety (WHS) laws. You and your organisation must comply with these laws.

1A Identify and record existing and potential hazards

As manager, you need to support people to work safely. There may be risks to the workers' personal safety. Risks in aged care, disability and home and community care include manual handling, infection control, working at night or managing behaviours of concern. You have a legal and ethical obligation to support workers in a way that reduces risk. Your workplace will have policies and procedures to follow. You also need to work within standards and legislation, as well as following codes of practice.



Identifying and recording hazards and supporting workers to identify and record possible and existing risks is an essential part of your role when maintaining a safe workplace.

Understand WHS responsibilities

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) outlines the responsibilities of the employer and the rights and responsibilities of the employee in keeping workplaces safe.

Here is a summary of employees, employers and others' responsibilities.

Employee responsibilities

These responsibilities are for all employees. The main things you must remember after training are to:

- ▶ work safely – you must follow all training, processes and procedures
- ▶ not put anyone else in danger and do everything you can to ensure a person's safety, in line with your duty of care requirements
- ▶ report any hazards or incidents including near misses
- ▶ follow the instructions you are given
- ▶ use equipment, including protective equipment, properly – in the way you have been trained and following the manufacturer's instructions
- ▶ cooperate with your supervisor and employer
- ▶ understand your rights and responsibilities are equally important.

It is just as important for you to follow the training you are given as it is for you to receive that training from your employer. It is also important for you to share information about any hazards or potential hazards. You must follow your workplace policies and procedures and report any hazards or incidents to the right person. This will usually be the HSR and your supervisor.

Workers have a duty of care (a legal responsibility) to keep themselves, people they support and others safe, therefore, they need a basic understanding of the risks associated with various hazards. As conditions in a workplace may change, information about WHS policies and procedures should be provided regularly to work teams.

Employee rights

All employees have the right to:

- ▶ have an elected HSR (this means employees choose someone to talk to managers about safety for them and to keep the workplace safe)
- ▶ be protected from hazards at work
- ▶ receive information, training and supervision to help them work safely
- ▶ be provided with the right protective clothing and equipment
- ▶ talk to managers about WHS problems (you can talk directly to the managers or ask the HSR to talk to them for you)
- ▶ stop work if you feel it is unsafe.

Employer's responsibilities

It is the employer's responsibility to provide a safe workplace. Employers are responsible for:

- ▶ having safe processes and procedures in place to make sure work can be done safely
- ▶ providing training and supervision to make sure employees know how to work
- ▶ safely use equipment, aids and chemicals properly
- ▶ consulting and cooperating with employees about safety (the new WHS Act states that an employer must now include all workers in the consultative process, including indirect workers such as contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers, trainees and students on work experience)
- ▶ the provision of required protective clothing or equipment, such as goggles and disposable gloves.

The employer must also:

- ▶ help with the election of a workplace health and safety representative (HSR) or health and safety committee (HSC)
- ▶ support the people chosen to be HSRs
- ▶ provide information to the HSR about hazards that have happened or might happen
- ▶ in the workplace
- ▶ allow the HSR paid time to carry out WHS tasks they are responsible for
- ▶ let the HSR know about any accident or dangerous incident that occurs
- ▶ allow the HSR to attend a course of training in work health and safety within three months of requesting it and pay all course fees and any other reasonable associated costs
- ▶ pay the HSR for time to attend the course of training.

Senior members of staff have a responsibility to maintain duty of care, and do all in their ability to protect the welfare of those supported by the organisation. Senior staff need to have a thorough and current understanding of WHS processes, legislation and codes of practice.

Health and safety representative

Health and safety representatives (HSRs) are a key link between employees and employers. They tell employers about employees' safety and health concerns. They also help employers to make sure workplace safety processes and procedures work. To be an HSR the person must:

- ▶ be employed at the workplace
- ▶ be elected by members of that work group
- ▶ once elected, undertake training in work health and safety, approved by the regulator (or have previously undertaken the training)

Health and safety representatives:

- ▶ inspect workplace areas
- ▶ immediately investigate accidents or risk of serious injury or harm
- ▶ must keep up with information provided by the employer on hazards in the workplace, and liaise with government and other bodies
- ▶ report hazards in the workplace
- ▶ refer safety and health matters they think appropriate to the safety and health committee (if the workplace has one)
- ▶ liaise with employees about safety and health
- ▶ must be informed by the employer about dangerous situations or accidents, or when an inspector visits the workplace
- ▶ must be notified of any changes in the workplace that may affect employees' safety and health
- ▶ can attend any safety and health discussion between an employer and an employee if the employee asks them to be there
- ▶ can expect space and time to help them carry out their duties; for example, they will need storage space to keep records and information, and time off work on normal pay to attend to the safety and health functions
- ▶ can expect to be trained according to the regulations – they can get paid leave to attend accredited introductory training on WHS.

WHS committees

Some workplaces might have a health and safety committee (HSC). A committee is a group of people who meet to talk, share information and make decisions about a certain topic. A health and safety committee will be responsible for thinking about WHS issues and how they can be solved. The committee might include:

- ▶ support workers
- ▶ maintenance staff
- ▶ other health professionals
- ▶ supervisors or managers.

It is a good idea for a committee to have people from all different parts of the organisation. This way, all the different parts of the business can share ideas. For example, if you did not include maintenance staff, you might miss out on important ideas about how to keep equipment operating safely. Everyone on the WHS committee is responsible for thinking of ways to make the workplace as safe as possible. They will then share their ideas with the managers or your employer.

WHS legislation

On 1 January 2012, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) came into effect, replacing the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (Cth). This model legislation was developed by the Commonwealth government to harmonise work health and safety laws across Australia.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth) describes the legal requirements for:

- ▶ ensuring risks to health and safety are identified, assessed, eliminated or controlled
- ▶ promoting and maintaining the health, safety and welfare of people at work
- ▶ protecting the people at work from injury and illness
- ▶ protecting the health and safety of the public in workplaces
- ▶ involving employers and workers in the process of maintaining workplace health and safety
- ▶ providing rehabilitation and maximum recovery for injured workers.

Codes of practice

Codes of practice (also known as compliance codes) are industry guidelines that provide guidance to employers and workers about how to achieve the standard required by an Act and regulations. A code of practice is not law but should be followed unless there is an alternative course of action that achieves the same or better standards. Codes of practice are developed through consultation with industry groups, professional bodies, trade associations, industry representatives, employers and workers.

Codes of practice may:

- ▶ be incorporated into regulations
- ▶ not necessarily relate to a standard
- ▶ be called upon as evidence in court or other enforcement action.

Industry standards

Standards set out the safety and specification details and provide guidance for those working in certain areas; for example, in community services, and are produced by national or international bodies, such as Standards Australia, WHS regulators or industry bodies. Standards detail what preventative action needs to be taken to avert injury, disease and death for all people within a workplace.



Some standards are of an advisory nature only, designed to suggest best practice or to guide users of other standards. Standards are only legally binding when included in legislation, and thus become mandatory, and may be called upon as evidence in court or other enforcement action.

Standards relate to many areas of community services from building design specification to emergency evacuation procedures and signage, to environmental hygiene standards that specify the requirements for basins and soap for hand-washing.

State/territory WHS authorities

Each state and territory still has its own statutory body responsible for regulating and enforcing WHS laws, as shown here.

Australian Capital Territory	The regulator for the Australian Capital Territory is WorkSafe ACT. http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-act
New South Wales	The regulator for New South Wales is SafeWork NSW. http://aspirelr.link/safework-nsw
Northern Territory	The regulator for the Northern Territory is NT WorkSafe. http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-nt
Queensland	The regulator for Queensland is Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-qld
South Australia	The regulator for South Australia is SafeWork SA. http://aspirelr.link/safework-sa
Tasmania	The regulator for Tasmania is WorkSafe Tasmania. http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-tas
Victoria	The regulator for Victoria is WorkSafe Victoria. http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-vic
Western Australia	The regulator for Western Australia is WorkSafe WA. http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-wa

Regulatory requirements

Legislation is the law, and regulations provide the rules for how to apply the law. Each state and territory in Australia has regulations to support WHS legislation. Regulations establish specific requirements, duties and procedures for particular areas of work.

Some regulations are very specific and apply to an individual industry. These are then used to create individual workplace policies and procedures.

Regulations, policies and procedures may relate to:

- ▶ personal protective clothing and equipment
- ▶ standard precautions
- ▶ handling hazardous/dangerous materials and goods
- ▶ emergency procedures and general safety precautions
- ▶ standard housekeeping.

Hazards common to the work environment

Hazards will vary according to the type of environment you work in or manage. The severity and possible effect of each hazard needs to be assessed on each occasion.

In general, workplace hazards can be grouped in the following ways.

Examples of common hazards

- ▶ Manual tasks – overexertion or repetitive movement, which can cause muscular strain; the requirements are stipulated in the Hazardous Manual Tasks code of practice
- ▶ Gravity – falling objects, falls, slips and trips can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, concussion, permanent injuries or death
- ▶ Electricity – a potential ignition source; exposure to live electrical wires can cause shock, burns or death from electrocution
- ▶ Machinery and equipment – being hit or caught by moving parts can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, permanent injuries or death
- ▶ Hazardous chemicals – chemicals (acids, heavy metals) and dusts (asbestos and silica) can cause respiratory illnesses, cancers or dermatitis
- ▶ Extreme temperatures – heat can cause burns, heat stroke or fatigue; cold can cause hypothermia or frostbite
- ▶ Noise – exposure to loud noise can cause permanent hearing damage
- ▶ Radiation – ultraviolet, welding-arc flashes, microwaves and lasers can cause burns, cancer or blindness

Hazard identification procedures

Your workplace will have specific procedures for managing risks in the workplace. Follow procedures to ensure that you practise according to industry standards, codes of practice and legislation.

In general, the following describes hazard identification procedures.

Hazard identification procedures

Step 1: Hazard identification

What is the hazard? Identify all the hazards involved with a work setting or task.

A workplace hazard is something with the potential to harm the health and safety of people at work.

Step 2: Risk assessment

Assess the risk by working out how badly the hazards could affect people – this means thinking about all the things that can happen and the range of effects.

Decide whether the hazard is a high, medium or low risk.

Step 3: Managing and controlling the risk

Decide how to manage and control the risk.

Risk control methods and reporting

If a risk assessment results in an unfavourable risk level, steps can be taken to ensure activities continue, which include the application of one or several risk control measures.

The remainder of a risk assessment generally consists of explanatory notes relating to the hazard and the findings of the assessment, and the recommended action. Like any actions related to WHS, it is important that all staff are made aware of the hazard, the level of risk and all actions taken in response to the risk.



Report risk

If a hazard or emergency situation is reported early, sometimes the impact can be reduced. For example, if you smell smoke and report it immediately, your quick action might mean a fire is found and put out while it is still small, and not much damage has been done.

Reports may be made face-to-face, over the phone, using memos, or through a report form.

The following describes some of the ways hazards may need to be reported.

Writing a report

- ▶ Write about the hazard in the communication book or on a hazard identification form. Your written report will need to be factual and easy to understand.

Speaking to the appropriate person

- ▶ Speak to your HSR, nominee or committee chairperson or your supervisor or manager to ask their advice about what you should do.

Putting alert tags on faulty equipment

- ▶ Attach alert tags to let everyone know there is a problem with the equipment and it is not to be used.

Notifying all staff

- ▶ Tell the staff replacing your shift about any identified hazards.

Telephoning your supervisor

- ▶ Support workers may need to report the hazard or risk as soon as possible if it is serious; for example, if the front steps of an older person's house have collapsed.

Report WHS problems

Your organisation's WHS policies and procedures are written to match WHS legislation. One of your responsibilities is to follow these policies and procedures. Part of the policies and procedures cover reporting hazards and other WHS issues. You will need to know what needs to be reported and how to report it.

Some WHS problems are bigger or more urgent than others. There are different ways to report big, small and urgent WHS problems. You must report to your supervisor or health and safety representative anything in the workplace that you think could be hazardous.

The following outlines common hazards and incidents workers might report to the health and safety representative.

Examples of hazards to report

Trip hazards

Are there any torn carpets that someone may catch their foot on and cause them to fall?

Disposable gloves

Are disposable gloves being worn when a care worker is handling soiled linen or clothing?

Electric faults

Faulty plugs on electrical items

Equipment problems

The hoist is broken or is not working correctly

Issues to consider when reporting

When you are working in community care and you observe any of the dangers listed above or you feel worried about security or safety, you should report your concern to your supervisor.

You should also be aware of the following issues and know how to report them.

Changing conditions

The health and physical condition of people you support often worsens over time. For example, you may have been assisting a person with personal care for almost a year. Their condition has changed so gradually that you may not realise. You notice one day they are having difficulty walking because of the pain, or you need to give more assistance than before.

Let your supervisor know, as the person is now at risk of falling and may need a frame or a wheelchair, or you may need more time to do the task to avoid rushing them or getting yourself stressed.

Equipment needs

It is important to have the correct equipment to follow your workplace policies. Sometimes as the condition in older people changes, the equipment needs to change. For example, when you started working at a hostel two years ago, only two people needed hoist transfers. Now, with more people being supported, workers are doing more hoist transfers. There are now eight people who need hoist transfers and only one hoist. This makes it difficult for workers to complete their work on time, as most of you need to use the hoist. Your supervisor needs to be told of the situation so there can be a recommendation for another hoist.

Communication

When your workplace changes policies or buys new equipment, the managers will consult with all staff that are affected. It is their responsibility to provide you with information and training about the new policies or equipment. It is your responsibility to attend the training or read the information so you know what to do.

Feedback

Feedback sheets and follow-up reports are commonly used in community care. If you notice a workplace hazard or issue that is not urgent, you report it to your supervisor using a feedback form. When the issue has been fixed, your supervisor should send you a feedback form to let you know what has been done about the problem. If the hazard or issue is urgent, you should contact your supervisor immediately to let them know about the problem.

Effectiveness

There may be times when risk control procedures do not work properly. For example, you may have reported a loose step at a person's home. You completed the feedback form and received a follow-up report to say the problem had been fixed. A few months later the same problem recurs (happens again). This could be because the step was nailed when it should have been screwed in place. You will need to complete another feedback sheet so the step can be properly repaired.

Training needs

You need to have up-to-date information to do your job properly. Most workplaces have regular training sessions for staff. For example, they will provide annual first aid, infection control and manual-handling training updates.

It is your responsibility to make sure you are up-to-date with training. For example, you may need to have some training on how to use the hoist, so you would ask your supervisor to arrange it for you.

Example

Identify existing and potential hazards and record them according to workplace procedures

Kelly works in a nursing home. She hears yelling coming from Mrs Smith's room. As she enters the room, she sees two visitors screaming at each other and throwing their arms around. The room smells strongly of alcohol. Mrs Smith is crying and is being comforted by a third visitor, her daughter. It seems alcohol may be causing the aggressive behaviour. The two abusive visitors are threatening Mrs Smith's safety, her daughter's safety and Kelly's safety. Kelly must immediately let her supervisor know what is happening.



Practice task 1

1. What are the three steps to follow when identifying hazards?

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2. Identify your state/territory WHS legislation and authority, and discuss how they relate to regulations, codes of practice and industry standards.

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3. Identify two common hazards in the workplace, and explain how you would go about identifying and reporting risks.

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Click to complete Practice task 1

1B Contribute to the development of strategies for implementing risk controls

Risk control measures refer to the devices and methods employed to eliminate the hazard or, where this is not practicable, minimise the risk associated with the hazard. When determining the appropriate form of risk control to be used, the primary form of reference should be the hierarchy of control.

Basically, the six risk controls in the hierarchy relate to the action that should be taken to control a risk, in the preferred order; that is, if the first one does not work, or is not applicable, move on to the next risk control.



Hierarchy of control

The risk control that is appropriate for any given circumstance depends upon many factors, which must be considered when deciding the measure to implement. For most organisations, these are also linked with financial considerations.

When determining the most appropriate control measure, it is advisable to also consider the possible consequences and the potential exposure to the risk; for example, will it be often or very infrequent? Where a risk is serious or beyond the scope of your responsibility, you must report the issue immediately through the appropriate channels to management.

Generally it is within the scope of your role to address minor issues directly, such as those problems identified in the previous table, which can be resolved quickly and without assistance from outside the work group.

The hierarchy of control is a commonly accepted model that lists, in descending order, the risk control measures an assessor should apply to an identified hazard. These control measures occur within three levels. Elimination of hazards is preferred.

More information on the hierarchy of control is found here.

Level 1 controls

Eliminate hazards.

Level 2 controls

Substitute the hazard with something safer.

Isolate the hazard from people.

Use engineering controls.

Level 3 controls

Use administrative controls.

Use personal protective equipment (PPE).

Examples of control measures

To identify what measures should be applied, use the hierarchy of control. The hierarchy stipulates that the first and best level of control is to eliminate the hazard; the next is to substitute and so on until the final (and least effective) control option, which is to use PPE.

The following provides examples of control measures within each of the three levels of control.

Examples of hierarchy of control



Eliminate risk

This aims to eliminate the risk at its source and should always be the first choice. The source of the risk is the hazard, so this usually means removing hazardous materials or abandoning hazardous work practices. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Clean up a spill straightaway to avoid anyone slipping and hurting themselves.
- ▶ Stop using toxic substances that are not essential to the work.
- ▶ Repair or replace equipment.



Substitute

If elimination is not practicable, the next best control is to substitute the hazard with something of a lesser risk. This is also likely to be a less expensive measure to implement. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Use less-hazardous chemical materials.
- ▶ Reduce the size of objects that need to be lifted.
- ▶ Break a task down into smaller chunks so there is not as much risk; for example, share a task with another person to share the load.



Isolate

This involves physically separating the source of harm from people by distance or using barriers. For instance, install guard rails around exposed edges and holes in floors; use remote control systems to operate machinery; store chemicals in a fume cabinet.



Engineering controls

The next best solution is to implement engineering controls that involve changing equipment or tools. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Provide a trolley to move heavy loads.
- ▶ Install ventilation to remove chemical fumes.
- ▶ Change the layout of work levels to minimise bending and twisting during manual handling.



Administrative controls

This relates to work procedures and work organisation. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Develop policies and procedures to minimise the risks to all people in the workplace.
- ▶ Reduce the time the person is exposed to the hazard; for example, job rotation.
- ▶ Ensure equipment is maintained regularly.
- ▶ Limit access to hazardous areas.
- ▶ Perform risk assessments.
- ▶ Provide safety awareness signage.
- ▶ Provide training in infection control, manual handling, chemical training and fire and emergency procedures, and using equipment safely.



Wear PPE

Wearing and using PPE is the least effective control method.

Organisations must:

- ▶ provide appropriate PPE
- ▶ ensure the PPE fits well and is comfortable under working conditions
- ▶ ensure people use it when necessary
- ▶ train users in why the PPE is necessary, wearing the right PPE for the task and how it must be worn.

Combine measures to suit

Realistically, there will be very few occasions where only a single risk control measure is applied. A combination of measures provides the best result. Note that even in relatively safe and familiar environments, such as a kitchen, hazards exist in the form of electrical equipment, sharps (knives, can openers), heat (toasters, kettles) and slips or spills.

Consider the following table that describes some examples of the use of multiple measures to increase safety.

Working outdoors

- ▶ Administrative – times of work, requirement for breaks in shade, clothing requirement, monitoring fellow workers requirement
- ▶ PPE – sun hats, safety shirts, sunscreen, sunglasses

Liquid chemical hazard

- ▶ Substitution – use a less hazardous chemical
- ▶ Administrative – designated usage areas (ventilated), requirement to use ventilation equipment, authorised (trained) user list, dedicated first-aid station with eye bath, direction not to mix certain cleaning agents
- ▶ PPE – ventilators, goggles, disposable gloves, safety aprons when handling

Infection or contamination hazard

- ▶ Elimination – contract cleaners or caterers performing cleaning and food preparation duties
- ▶ Administrative – training on hygiene for staff, directions on hand-washing through posters or signs, supplying available cleaning agents
- ▶ PPE – disposable gloves according to duties

Implement controls

Often the introduction of a risk control measure can require an adjustment within a workplace, particularly where the measures are newly applied to an existing risk for which no controls had previously been extended. Where no injuries, illness or emergency had arisen prior to the implementation, it is easy for staff to be sceptical about the requirement for the control measures.

This is where your leadership is required to reassure the work group of the value of the extra controls in making the environment and task safer (or less hazardous) than before. Implement controls in line with organisational policies and procedures, as outlined here.

Workplace culture

- ▶ When developing an implementation strategy, which should include an ongoing commitment to support, one of the main hurdles you can face is the prevailing workplace culture. Never underestimate or discount the effect of workplace culture on the implementation of control measures.

Prioritise safety

- ▶ Other factors can also be present and impact workplace culture, such as the cultural background or religion of the staff members, children and their family members. Where there are large representations of a specific nationality or religious belief within the organisation, these must be considered in whatever actions are taken in the workplace. However, the priority is and must always be workplace safety.

Introduce new controls

When new control measures are applied, education must accompany the introduction. Members of the work group are more likely to participate and accept the new controls if there is a common understanding of why they are needed and how they are to be used.

Education in this instance may only be a short briefing, or where there are broader controls, there may be a requirement for organisation-wide training.

Once all staff members understand the need for controls and the way they are to be implemented, the final step is to provide adequate support for staff members to adhere to the new controls. Support can be in the form of being available to answer any questions staff members may have; by providing positive feedback when staff are seen to be doing the right thing; and providing constructive feedback if improvements are required. The key is communication – where all people understand exactly what is required and how to implement controls. Ensure you keep within organisational policies and procedures when introducing new controls.

Education should include:

- ▶ what the control measure is
- ▶ why it has been implemented
- ▶ how it is to be applied; that is, how to use equipment and how to apply new instructions
- ▶ any other important information.

Workplace policies and procedures

In any situation, you must always refer to your workplace policies and procedures for guidance, and ask your supervisor if you are unsure.

Strategies and procedures to reduce risks may be addressed in:

- ▶ hazard management policies and procedures
- ▶ care plans and assessment documents
- ▶ procedures for manual handling, such as always using assistance from another person, and operating designated hoists
- ▶ procedures for using mobility equipment
- ▶ procedures for personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ▶ human resource plans to address induction, duress, harassment and grievance
- ▶ emergency procedures including fire and incidents
- ▶ team meetings
- ▶ post-incident debriefing sessions.

Example**Contribute to the development of strategies for implementing risk controls**

Kim is co-ordinator of seven volunteers at Best Outcomes Youth Support. Following an organisation-wide WHS audit, Kim's work unit finds three areas of concern for which new WHS risk control measures are to be implemented. The identified hazards are: slippery tiles in the kitchen area; a problem with the electrical safety switches (installed to prevent electrocutions) malfunctioning and continually tripping; and finally that some workers and volunteers are failing to wear disposable gloves when handling the young people's food.



The agreed controls for these hazards are as follows:

- ▶ Purchase new rubber mats to line the wet areas of the kitchen area, along with a new cleaning requirement to lift and thoroughly disinfect the rubber mats monthly to avoid health issues.
- ▶ Have a qualified electrician check and repair or replace all the electrical safety switches in the building.
- ▶ Provide education and training for all staff and volunteers regarding the need for hand hygiene and disposable gloves when handling foods.

As the supervisor, Kim assembles the volunteers and provides this information to them, highlighting the safety aspects of the decisions and the potential risks that have been avoided. He also reiterates the vital requirement for hygiene in the facility. Finally, Kim encourages the volunteers to come to him with any questions or queries regarding the controls and to let him know if they think the control measures are having the desired effect.

Practice task 2

1. A person you support uses a wheelchair. They need to shower and need assistance leaving their wheelchair to enter the shower. Explain how you would implement a risk control in accordance with manual handling requirements.

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2. You have been alerted that staff are not correctly washing their hands after removing disposable gloves. Explain how you could implement a risk control in line with your workplace policies and procedures.

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3. A trip hazard has recently been removed from the entrance of a room in your workplace, but feedback from staff suggests that people with walking aids still stumble when entering the building. What control measure could be implemented?

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[Click to complete Practice task 2](#)

1C Implement risk controls and identify and report issues, including residual risk

Occasionally, a suggested risk control measure may not perform as expected in reducing or eliminating the risk. All workers must be aware of risks associated with each task they perform – especially in some cases where workers are so engrossed in the task that they may fail to recognise the risks.

Supervisors must be observant and monitor their team as they go about their duties. When they do so, supervisors should be able to recognise situations and actions that may present a risk to staff members. This can be particularly obvious when a new risk control measure is implemented, as there may be resultant risks generated or deficiencies in the risk controls implemented. Observing a team member perform a task and employ all designated risk control measures should allow you to establish if there remain any areas where risk still exists, or that may be improved upon.



Residual risk

Where a risk still exists following the implementation of controls or corrective action, this is residual risk, and it must be reported to management for documentation, according to procedures. Residual risk often occurs in the short term, when the initial steps to remove a hazard have been taken; for example, if an electrical appliance such as a fan is malfunctioning, it may be removed from use and placed in a storeroom, with a sign attached to it saying 'Faulty, do not use'. The residual risk is that someone may not see the sign, then use the fan and be harmed. If all workers are aware of hazards, the controls in place and then the residual risk, the risk of harm is reduced to an almost negligible level.

Reporting residual risk may include updating the workplace hazard register and verbally reporting at a meeting to ensure all staff members know and understand any risks. The next step is usually to implement higher-level control measures, such as the purchase of new and safer equipment, replacement of faulty devices, task elimination or administrative controls.

Risk control issues

There are a number of factors that may cause an existing risk control measure to be deficient, as shown here.

External influences

Not all contingencies can be predicted for the work group, and some risk control measures that may have worked under usual circumstances can be less efficient when external influences are applied. An example may be specific administrative controls that may be applied to a piece of equipment being negated when it breaks down and loan equipment of a different specification is brought in.

Control introduces risk

There may be times where the introduction of a risk control measure may in itself present further risks. For example, adding the requirement to wear mitts when handling hot plates or pots in an organisation's kitchen can lead to an increased chance of dropping them due to the loss of dexterity.

Incorrect training

When control measures or their application are not adequately explained, their use can be neglected or applied inappropriately. For example, medical practitioners (doctors and nurses) spend time learning to properly wash their hands to ensure cleanliness and hygiene, but how many workers in your industry are shown these same techniques? Another example can be found in the application of PPE, such as disposable gloves, where a worker may be seen using the same pair of disposable gloves going from handling food to dispensing medicine.

Inappropriate PPE

Occasionally the type of PPE purchased or implemented (sometimes due to cost-saving measures) is inadequate. For example, there are several different types of disposable gloves available for purchase. The ones purchased may be the cheap latex glove option; however, it is found that three workers develop rashes on their hands due to an allergic reaction to the disposable gloves; while another worker complains that the disposable gloves are too thin and tear easily.

Inappropriate measures

There are times when the measures themselves just are not appropriate, or where better options are available. During an outing to the beach, for example, it may be specified that hats should be taken while neglecting to mention sunscreen or sunglasses, or where sunscreen is recommended where long sleeves would be more appropriate.

Incorrect assessment

As part of a risk assessment, you need to take into account all possible factors that may contribute to the risk conditions. This is not always possible, particularly where the risk environment is unfamiliar, or where the hazardous task conducted (or equipment is operated) is outside the context in which the assessment was done. For example, a risk assessment may have determined that allowing workers to use a particular cleaning chemical may pose no risk if the assessment is completed in a large well-ventilated area; however, this task is often performed in a small enclosed area where there is a high chance of harmful fumes being inhaled.

Address and report issue

After an issue has been identified, it needs to be addressed and/or reported as soon as possible and according to workplace procedures to further reduce any risk involved. In some of the previous examples, it may be well within the supervisor's capabilities to address and correct the situation; for example, in the case of purchasing more expensive rubber disposable gloves.

However, there may be other occasions when a deficiency has been identified that may be beyond your role or responsibility, and needs to be referred to management.

Again, this information must be accurate and passed on to management as soon as possible to ensure whatever risk exists then undergoes further assessment, so more appropriate risk control measures can be put in place. This cycle should continue until the risk is reduced as much as possible.

When reporting issue, you must report:

- ▶ a description of the risk (the original one and any relating to the deficiency)
- ▶ the existing control measure that was put in place
- ▶ the reason it is, or is seen as, being inadequate
- ▶ a remedy (such as further control measures), where possible.

Example

Identify and report issues with risk controls, including residual risk

As part of the risk control measures, the workers at Long Beach Aged Care wear disposable gloves when handling food, and heavier rubber gloves to provide protection against toxic chemicals when cleaning.

Daisy, a supervisor at the centre, notices that although all the support workers use the disposable gloves when preparing food, often (particularly when cleaning) workers don't wash their hands after wearing the rubber gloves for an extended period. This is highlighted when two people develop minor skin irritations that are traced back to a support worker who had been in contact with them with sweaty (unwashed) hands.



After considering options, Daisy prepares a memo to the health and safety representative and manager of Long Beach Aged Care, reporting:

- ▶ the performance of the existing control
- ▶ the new risk that is resulting (residual risk of germs spreading through sweat)
- ▶ where the problem appears (from not washing hands after removing gloves).

She recommends that signs be placed above cleaning product storage areas and sinks to remind people to wash their hands after removing gloves, and also that staff be educated about the risks of contamination from not washing their hands often enough.

Practice task 3

1. Explain residual risk, using a workplace example.

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2. Identify three issues that may occur when implementing risk controls.

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3. What should you do if you identify an issue with the risk control?

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Click to complete Practice task 3

Summary

1. Identifying and recording hazards and supporting workers to identify and record possible and existing risks is an essential part of your role when maintaining a safe workplace.
2. It is important to follow WHS legislation, industry regulations and standards, codes of practice and policies and procedures when identifying and recording or reporting hazards.
3. Risk controls are used to remove, eliminate or control risk. Use the hierarchy of control, which has three levels.
4. Residual risk may occur after controls are implemented. Learn how to identify possible issues associated with controls.

Learning checkpoint 1

Contribute to workplace procedures for identifying hazards and controlling risks

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in contributing to workplace procedures for identifying hazards and controlling risks.

Part A

1. Identify two hazards common to the workplace environment, and explain how they can cause harm.

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2. Explain the principles of hazard and risk control in relation to the following:
 - a. Hazard identification procedures
 - b. Risk assessment
 - c. Risk controls
 - d. Hierarchy of control
 - e. Residual risk

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4. Explain what hierarchy of control refers to and how it used.

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Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Victoria works in an aged care home as a supervisor. When Victoria begins her employment, she reviews the hazard register and notices a high incident of falls. She is not sure if this is simply to do with the age of people supported by the organisation. She suspects hazards could be better controlled.

1. Explain how Victoria could contribute to the development of strategies for implementing risk controls in line with workplace procedures and policies.

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2. When Victoria conducts a risk assessment of the hallway where the majority of falls occur, she notices that there is a significant slope in the floor, which may contribute to falls. There is also a hall carpet which could cause trips, especially if not flat. Explain how Victoria could implement risk controls in line with the hierarchy of risk control and workplace and legislative requirements.

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3. Identify the residual risk that may occur in this scenario.

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4. How would Victoria report the incident? Provide an example of Victoria's report by using the following headings:

- ▶ Date
- ▶ Situation
- ▶ Action
- ▶ Outcome

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Regularly provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the work team**
- 2B Provide information about identified hazards and the outcomes of risk assessment and risk controls**
- 2C Monitor housekeeping practices to ensure that WHS policies and procedures are followed**
- 2D Maintain WHS incident records in the work area according to requirements**

Implement policies and procedures into work team processes

The supervisor is the first person workers should approach when they have any WHS concerns. All supervisors must therefore have sufficient WHS and workplace knowledge to address these first-line approaches.

To provide useful and specific advice, you must have an understanding of the applicable laws, regulations, codes of practice and so on, as well as an understanding of their individual responsibilities when receiving queries and offering advice. You are not expected to have all the answers to WHS queries by the work group; however, there is an expectation that you know who to refer queries to when they are unable to answer them.

2A Regularly provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the work team

Organisations have requirements under the Commonwealth, state and territory acts that they must adhere to. These include having a WHS policy, maintaining registers of identified hazards and incidents in the workplace, and putting in place procedures for emergencies, evacuations, incident and accident reporting and investigation and auditing.

You must be able to identify all relevant policies and procedures applicable to your work group and extract relevant elements. The information in these policies and procedures is important to everyone associated with the organisation, whether employed as full-time, part-time, casual or contract staff, a volunteer or a person who visits the organisation.

Information may include:

- ▶ hazard, incident and injury reporting
- ▶ hazard identification, risk assessment and control
- ▶ human resources policies and procedures such as harassment and grievance procedures, induction programs, team meetings and alcohol and drug policies
- ▶ consultation and participation
- ▶ incident investigation
- ▶ quality system documentation.

Remain current

Be aware that legislation, standards, codes of practice and guidelines are regularly updated, so it is vital that there are protocols in place that ensure the information relied on and provided to others is current. This may include regularly checking the websites of WHS authorities or the organisation responsible for WHS in your state or territory.

Safe Work Australia is the peak national authority on WHS policy development. Find out more information about Safe Work Australia at <http://aspirelr.link/safe-work-australia>. You can also join or subscribe to a WHS group or association such as Occupational Health and Safety Representatives at Work via their website at <http://aspirelr.link/ohs-rep>.



WHS policies

A policy is a line of action adopted from other considerations, such as government legislation, to guide and determine present and future decisions. Policies provide an overall plan with general goals. Therefore, a WHS policy is simply a method of stating how the organisation, workers, contractors and visitors are expected to behave when they are on the organisation's property or performing activities on behalf of, or for, the organisation. The law requires an organisation to provide a safe system of work. To comply, the organisation requires a method of communicating, duplicating and implementing safe working practice. A WHS policy forms the basis of this practice. The WHS policy itself will include an aim that outlines what the policy intends to achieve, and will identify what needs to be done by the organisation (in terms of compliance and best practice) and how it will achieve the aim.

The depth or extent of a WHS policy depends on the size of the organisation and the industry or sector.

Policies may relate to:

- ▶ manual handling
- ▶ noise
- ▶ personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ▶ fatigue management
- ▶ hazardous substances
- ▶ hostile intruders
- ▶ hot work
- ▶ hygiene
- ▶ infection control
- ▶ infectious waste.

WHS procedures

Procedures prescribe the actions that need to be executed as a sequence of activities, tasks, steps and processes that, when undertaken, produce the described result or outcome. For example, a hand-washing policy may state that all workers must wash hands following all bathroom visits and before any food preparation.

Procedures are usually associated with activities that involve a hazard, such as an evacuation procedure for a building, in case of a fire or other emergency. The procedures should identify the event or events that trigger the requirement for the procedure, for example, fire, earthquake or chemical spill, and detail the processes for dealing with the event/s. It should also describe the responsible persons and what safety aids, equipment or PPE are required.

Example procedures are listed here.

Infection control and hygiene

- ▶ This procedure would include the control of the spread of germs and infectious diseases through monitoring of personal and group hygiene (for example, hand-washing) and through a first-aid process that may include isolating or sending people home if they are ill or show symptoms of illness. It would also cover epidemics, pandemics or influenza outbreaks.

Emergency evacuation

- ▶ This procedure would include the general evacuation plan for a number of possible events (fire, earthquake, terrorist attack, gas leak, electrical fault or bomb threat). Typically it would also include responsible persons (chief and/or area wardens), exits and exit procedures, assembly areas and roll-call procedures.

Electrical safety

- ▶ This procedure would include safe use of electrical equipment, including safety devices for exposed power outlets, electrical equipment maintenance or safety inspection scheduling and safe storage of electrical devices.

Vehicle operation (car or minibus)

- ▶ This procedure would include vehicle safe operating instructions; alcohol and prescription drug use restrictions; use of co-drivers if required; and basic vehicle servicing and maintenance.

Hazardous manual tasks

Manual tasks relate to handling heavy objects or handling people or animals. Manual tasks may result in muscle exertion or strain and can cause back injury or other musculoskeletal disorders, such as hernias. Injury may result from repetitive strain, or overexertion.

Some people you support will not be able to move on their own accord, and may require assistance – such as moving between bed and wheelchair. Ensure you follow the two-person rule and use a lifting hoist. You will need specific training to use the hoist.

When lifting boxes or equipment, ensure you always follow the two-person rule, and follow correct manual handling techniques.



Infection control

Infection control is any process or activity that is designed to reduce the likelihood of infections being transmitted. Infection control activities include hand-washing, using respiratory etiquette, wearing personal protective equipment and cleaning and sanitising objects and areas.

Infection control policies and procedures, like all policies and procedures related to workplace health and safety, are designed to reduce the incidence of illnesses and injuries. Organisations' infection control policies and procedures will vary depending on the sectors and settings in which they provide services. Different federal, state and territory legislation and government policies apply for various agencies and services, workplaces and job roles. Despite these differences, all infection control policies and procedures share certain common features, such as the requirement to adhere to Australian and New Zealand Standards for infection control. You can find the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Health Care at the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) website: <http://aspirelr.link/nhmrc>.

Infection control policies and procedures are designed to:

- ▶ identify hazards
- ▶ identify risks
- ▶ identify the people involved
- ▶ develop and implement risk reduction strategies
- ▶ minimise the impact of any potential or actual spread of infection.

Workplace emergency procedures

An emergency is a sudden, unexpected event or situation that requires immediate action to prevent or limit casualties. Although emergency situations are of an unforeseen nature, organisations can still plan responses should they occur. During an emergency, staff will look to their supervisor for guidance and leadership. The supervisor plays a critical role in implementing the immediate required action by coordinating the actions of their work group, by complying with evacuation orders or other appropriate workplace procedures.

Types of emergencies are outlined here.

Different emergencies	
Falls	Serious injury events such as a broken arm or leg due to a fall
Evacuation	Events that require evacuation, including fires and explosions, hazardous substance and chemical spills, and bomb alerts
Security	Security emergencies, such as armed robberies, intruders and disturbed persons
Internal	Internal emergencies, such as loss of power or water supply and structural collapse
External	External emergencies and natural disasters, such as a flood, storm or traffic accident impacting the organisation

Respond to emergency procedures

The response to emergencies may vary according to the type of situation, the organisation and location of the emergency. It is vital that procedures are followed, as they prescribe the best actions for different circumstances. Procedures will take into account the emergency response standards and guidelines that include numbers and locations of exits, placement of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors, emergency signage and lighting, and assembly point locations.

Standards and guidelines for the correct implementation of emergency response procedures ensure that a workplace has the correct process, procedures and equipment in place to address all emergency situations.

More information about responding to emergency procedures is given here.

Equipment

Procedures relating to the use of emergency equipment will not only cover general emergency action, but also the correct use of emergency equipment and/or PPE. There are procedures for the use of lifesaving appliances (such as respirators and automatic defibrillators) that must be followed and procedures related to using fire extinguishers.

Drills

Often the best way to reinforce actions that need to be performed in an emergency situation is to perform drills. A drill in this sense is the repetition of a series of actions until they become embedded in people's memories. In an emergency situation, the actions embedded in the subconscious become second nature when it is not possible to think a problem and solution through due to urgency or panic.

Access

For emergency procedures to be effective and useful, they must be accessible to all staff and visitors to a centre. To ensure everyone is aware of the procedures, workplaces can run emergency evacuation drills. However, new staff and visitors still require access to the procedures outside these times, so they must be accessible; for example, located in the policy and procedures manual where all stakeholders can readily access them.

Acknowledgement

The best way to ensure the work group understands and can access these procedures is to instigate a 'read and sign' sheet or some other type of acknowledgment that provides supervisors with evidence that the members of the work group have read and understand the workplace emergency procedures.

Provide information to the work team

There are several ways to provide the information on the applicable policies and procedures to a work group. Unlike the compliance documentation (legislation, standards and codes of practice), workers must have access to the policies and procedures of the organisation to assist them in performing their duties.

Providing information contained in these documents face to face (through presentations, lectures or meetings), where more than one policy or several procedures exist, can be impractical. Instead, organisations maintain a current version of the policies and procedures in a hard-copy manual or electronically on the workplace intranet to ensure they are easily accessible or on display to all workers and visitors. Each worker will receive a copy during their induction and be taken through it to ensure they understand all that it contains.

Here are some other methods for providing information.

Provide information as a document

- ▶ There are often situations and contexts where a physical procedure document is essential, simply because computer or network access is not available. Having both options of electronic and physical documents accessible to all workers, contractors and visitors allows an organisation to meet its legal requirements.

Provide information verbally

- ▶ Providing information verbally about policies and procedures is more appropriate when there is an amendment or addition to them. This can be done by running a meeting and having all workers attend, and then updating the policy and procedures manual and ensuring all people have access to it.

Provide advice

The requirement for a supervisor to have a good understanding of WHS processes, from both a legislative (regulatory) and workplace perspective becomes apparent when providing advice to the work group. You must only provide advice within your level of knowledge and area of responsibility; and you must never provide WHS advice without specific training or knowledge. Therefore, you must understand your own limitations in providing WHS advice and know what resources (human and physical) you have at your disposal when you are either not qualified to advise, or believe the inquiry or issue needs to be dealt with on a higher level; for example, this may mean referring an issue to an HSR or the manager of the organisation.



Regularly provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the work team

Rhada and Ahmed work at High Street Aged Care in Perth's northern suburbs, and their supervisor is Rory. Here is how Rory checks for understanding and practises the evacuation procedures.

Check understanding

On Thursday, High Street Aged Care is to practise their fire drill, for which they recently attended an information session from a senior officer from the metropolitan fire brigade. The workers are instructed by Rory, their supervisor, that the drill will be different from the last drill they performed. They are also told to make a mental picture of how to get to the nearest exit.

Rory had checked the previous week to ensure that all the staff, including his work group, had read and understood the evacuation procedures by having them email him with confirmation, plus any questions, queries or feedback they had. The workers had to pay particular attention to assisting people with mobility issues to evacuate safely and as quickly as possible. This was addressed in the information about the fire drill.

Evacuation procedures

When the fire alarm sounds at an unspecified time, Rhada and Ahmed are instructed to bend as low as possible when evacuating, as the air is the freshest at this level. They are also instructed that they have a time limit of less than five minutes to gather people and evacuate everyone from the building.

From their knowledge of the layout of the building and understanding of the evacuation procedures, Rhada and Ahmed know the best routes to the exits. They work together to evacuate people with mobility aids. They need to quickly survey the route to ensure there are no obstacles. Service users and workers are successful in reaching the exits and designated safe meeting point, and it makes the workers aware how quickly time can pass, especially when assisting people with mobility aids.

Practice task 4

1. Give one example of a WHS policy and one example of a WHS procedure.

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2. Explain one verbal and one written method for providing information about emergency procedures.

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3. List at least two key procedural steps contained within an emergency procedure document.

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[Click to complete Practice task 4](#)

2B Provide information about identified hazards and the outcomes of risk assessment and risk controls

You may have to provide to your work group information about hazards and risks, the outcomes of risk assessments, and the required risk controls. This information should be provided in an accessible and understandable format; for example, in a hard copy and stored near policies and procedures, or on the intranet where workers can use their technical skills to access it.



Hazards and risks

Often it is difficult for someone not familiar with WHS to accurately understand or describe the difference between a hazard and a risk, and as such the words sometimes become confused. They in fact have very different meanings – although they both relate to maintaining a safe work environment. It is important to differentiate the two accurately so that all members of a work group understand how hazards and risks impact their work environment.

Ensure all workers understand these definitions so they can be alert to the hazards in their environment and understand the level of risk they present. They must also be provided information about any current hazards in the workplace, what is being done to rectify them and the actions workers must take to avoid the hazard. This may be communicated verbally or in written communication such as a memo.

Hazard

A hazard is a source or situation with the potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill-health, damage to property, the environment or a combination of these; for example, a loose carpet square in a room represents a trip or slip hazard for people being supported and workers; poor maintenance of alarm systems represents a communication hazard.

Risk

A risk is the chance or probability that a hazard will cause harm, injury or ill-health and is measured in terms of likelihood and consequence.

Identify hazards and risks

To be able to reduce the risk to all people in the workplace, hazard identification procedures need to be in place. These procedures are generally included as part of a broader risk management process that is implemented through the workplace health and safety committee (HSC) or health and safety representatives (HSRs).

If there are no defined procedures, or if the procedures are vague, you must motivate the work group and promote a culture of safety to ensure every member of the team is both vigilant and aware of what constitutes a hazard.

Workers should have a good idea of what constitutes a hazard in their individual work space. However, there are other hazards that are often overlooked or simply accepted without a second thought.

Consider the presence of some of the hazards and associated risks in the following.

Messy staffroom

- ▶ Health risks related to bacteria, insects (including cockroaches and ants) and also slipping or tripping on clutter

Faulty neon light tubes or poor office lighting

- ▶ Health risks related to eye soreness/strain, headaches and fatigue

Worn or loose carpet squares

- ▶ Health risks related to a trip hazard, which can cause minor or major injuries

General clutter

- ▶ Health and safety risks related to the possibility of fire; for example, in an evacuation scenario, a cluttered environment may cause delays that could be costly in terms of everyone reaching a safe place

Faulty air conditioner

- ▶ Health and safety risks related to the possibility of effects on health, bacteria from faulty filters (for example, legionella bacteria); or a fire hazard if electrical in nature

Personal hygiene

- ▶ Health risks such as cross-contamination and germs spreading when hands are not washed or appropriate PPE (disposable gloves) are not worn in food preparation, injury treatment or cleaning

The role of a supervisor

Your role is to observe and ensure work group compliance with any hazard identification and reporting processes while promoting WHS by example. To do this you must have a good working knowledge of any risks within the work environment, and be able to educate the work group about how to identify and eliminate hazards and residual risk.

Using training sessions, group or individual meetings and documents, explain how a hazard is identified. Workers must conduct an initial assessment on the seriousness of the hazard and whether it poses an immediate threat to the health and wellbeing of people present. If there is no immediate threat, a more in-depth risk assessment should occur. If the hazard is determined to be an immediate threat, instant action should be taken.

Consider:

- ▶ the effectiveness of existing controls
- ▶ the likelihood of each consequence, considering exposure and hazard level.

Principles of hazards and risk assessment

You need to understand the difference between a hazard, which is something with the potential to cause harm, and a risk, which is the likelihood of harm occurring and an estimate of severity.

In your role, you will encounter various hazards and associated risk factors. It may be part of your job to identify these factors, which is the first step in preventing or minimising risk. Different service providers have different risks and considerations. For example, an aged care facility is likely to have a set of risks that are distinctively different from a warehouse environment. The type of service the organisation provides significantly affects the types of risks and hazards that may be present.



The four steps of risk assessment include:

- ▶ Gathering information about each identified hazard
- ▶ Considering the level of exposure to the risk; that is, the number of people exposed and the duration of the exposure
- ▶ Using the information to assess the likelihood of harm (very likely, likely, unlikely, highly unlikely)
- ▶ Assessing the consequence or impact of the hazard (death, significant injuries, minor injuries, negligible injuries)

Risk assessment

Risk assessment involves the probability or likelihood of the risk occurring and the severity of the harm incurred. A risk assessment helps guide you in your decision-making process in terms of the tasks undertaken. Therefore, a risk assessment is a tool used to determine the risk profile (viability) of a certain task or function. Here is a description of the risk assessment matrix.

Purpose

A risk assessment matrix assists in determining the level of risk an activity or area of the organisation may pose. You use a risk assessment matrix to evaluate a potential hazard by assessing the likelihood and impact of a risk. The matrix allows people to:

- ▶ consider what can potentially go wrong
- ▶ determine what the negative impact would be – the consequences determine the likelihood
- ▶ determine the risk level.

Using the matrix

Determine the likelihood of the particular hazard occurring – select unlikely, likely or very likely from the choices on the y axis. Then, determine the possible impact of the hazard, as per the x axis – is the possible impact minor, moderate or major? A minor impact refers to no or minor injury caused to staff and no time lost as a result of the hazard; moderate refers to injury or illness occurring and time lost; and major refers to major injury or incident with a significant amount of time lost and even permanent incapacity or death.

Risk levels

Once the likelihood and impact have been determined, locate where they intersect on the matrix to establish the level of risk. The result will be:

- ▶ Acceptable risk – low
- ▶ Acceptable risk – medium
- ▶ Unacceptable risk – high or extreme

Any risk found to be high or extreme must be acted on immediately. Risks deemed medium should be acted on as soon as possible, and those deemed low may require little action.

Risk assessment matrix

Consider the probability and impact of a risk you may face in your work and use the following matrix to estimate whether it is an acceptable or unacceptable risk.

LIKELIHOOD	VERY LIKELY	Acceptable risk Medium	Unacceptable risk High	Unacceptable risk Extreme
	LIKELY	Acceptable risk Low	Acceptable risk Medium	Unacceptable risk High
	UNLIKELY	Acceptable risk Low	Acceptable risk Low	Acceptable risk Medium
		MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR
	IMPACT			

Risk assessment nomogram

A risk assessment nomogram is a tool that can be used to assess risk. It provides a visual guide to the risk associated with an activity.



Develop a nomogram

The following provides instructions for developing a nomogram.

1. Encourage participation

- ▶ While it is the responsibility of you or another senior member of staff to conduct risk assessments and take the necessary follow-up action, participation by the work group should be encouraged. By engaging the team, you can effectively cover more ground in the assessment, and also use the team members' experience and knowledge to help undertake a full and complete assessment.

2. Probability and exposure

- ▶ To assess risk using a nomogram, you need to work from left to right, to determine the likelihood of the risk occurring (in this case represented by the 'Probability' line); the frequency of undertaking the task (represented by the 'Exposure (Frequency)' line); and the impact (represented by the 'Possible consequence' line).

3. Likelihood

- ▶ So, in relation to the hazard, determine the 'Probability' (likelihood of the event occurring) based on the exposure to the risk. These range from 'Practically impossible' (for example, a worker is killed in the car park by having an aeroplane fall on them) to 'Almost certain' (for example, a worker will almost certainly be injured if they are expected to carry a 30 kg box of equipment upstairs with no assistance). Mark this point on the line.

4. Frequency

- ▶ The frequency of which the event is likely to occur is then selected using the options on the next vertical line (from 'All the time' to 'Once a year') – again, based on exposure to the hazard. Mark this point on the line. You then need to draw a line from the 'Probability' point, through the determined frequency ('Exposure') and continue the line to finish at the 'Tie line', in the centre of the nomogram.

5. Consequences of hazard and action

- ▶ Determine the possible consequences of the hazard and mark this point on the vertical line second from the right; in this case, the possible consequence is determined to be 'Important'. Draw a line from where the first line ended at the Tie line, through the point on the 'Possible consequence' line and end the line at the 'Risk' line on the left. Where this second line ends, this establishes the risk. What action do you think would be appropriate in this case?

Limitations of risk assessments

It is important to understand that risk assessments are not perfect. Limitations aside, one thing is certain: some risk assessment is always better than none, both legally and ethically.

Here are the limitations.

Subjectiveness of assessor

- ▶ The principle weakness of a risk assessment is that it is purely subjective – it is the assessor's perception of what the risk is. Often the same assessor, given different prevailing circumstances, may make a different judgment as to the risk of a particular hazard.

Quality and quantity of information

- ▶ An accurate risk assessment also relies on the assessor having all possible information on a particular hazard, and assessing all possible factors affecting the outcome, which is often impractical or unachievable – even impossible.

Provide information about risk assessment

Use effective communication when providing information to your work group about risk assessment procedures. You should provide a specific training session dedicated to explain risk assessment processes, including identifying hazards, analysing risk using a nomogram and a risk assessment matrix, and how to implement controls and report risks. As well as verbal communication, support training by providing written procedures, and examples of already-completed documentation, and nomograms.

Relevant documents, such as hazard identification and emergency procedures, should be readily available. Each staff member may have documentation accessible in their intranet file or as printed copies.

Ensure your work group are familiar with risk assessment processes, and offer opportunities for individual training and supervision, to ensure correct WHS procedures are followed.

Provide information about risk control

Your work group need to know how to respond if a hazard is identified. In Topic 1, you learned about possible risk controls according to the hierarchy of risk control. Risk control measures refer to the devices and methods employed to eliminate the hazard or, where this is not practicable, minimise the risk associated with the hazard. When determining the appropriate form of risk control to be used, the primary form of reference should be the hierarchy of control. The six risk controls in the hierarchy relate to the action that should be taken to control a risk, in the preferred order; that is, if the first one does not work, or is not applicable, move on to the next risk control.



Provide information about PPE

As a last line of defence for all workers where a hazard exists, organisations are required to provide personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE refers to any clothing and/or equipment that are worn by a person to provide protection from hazards by providing a physical barrier between the person and the hazard.

It is relatively easy to determine whether PPE is available for designated tasks in a workplace, by attending each work area and physically identifying the safety equipment that is present and comparing this against the range of duties required to be performed in that area, according to the workplace procedures. For example, in child care, the required PPE would be disposable gloves for nappy changes. Ensuring PPE is available also means that all workers must know where and how to access it, when to use it and how to use it correctly. Use meetings and demonstrations to ensure that all staff understand the correct use of PPE.

The following outlines examples of PPE.

Personal protective equipment

- ▶ Head protection, such as broad-brimmed sun hats and bicycle helmets
- ▶ Face and eye protection, such as safety goggles, sunscreen or sunglasses
- ▶ Respiratory protection, such as compressed air systems, surgical masks, gas masks, ventilators or respirators (these are not usually required in a community services environment)
- ▶ Hearing protection, such as ear muffs and ear plugs (again, these are not usually required in a community services environment)
- ▶ Hand protection, such as disposable gloves and mitts
- ▶ Clothing and footwear, such as enclosed anti-slip footwear, long trousers, aprons and hairnets.

Example

Provide information about identified hazards and the outcomes of risk assessment and risk controls

In the kitchen of a large aged care facility, a WHS review is conducted to determine the availability and functionality of the kitchen's PPE. The kitchen supervisor, Jill, who is also in charge of all the volunteers who help prepare the meals, inspects all the safety equipment, including several different types of safety gloves and oven mitts, aprons and even safety goggles. Each person's footwear is also inspected as staff and lunch volunteers come in, to ensure they are wearing adequate foot protection that is enclosed, non-slip and isn't worn or ill-fitting.

Jill understands exactly what is required in the kitchen, so she realises that the food preparation areas don't all have access to mitts (for hot food) or disposable gloves for food handling, so she reports this to the manager.



Practice task 5

1. Give two examples of information that you should provide about hazards to your workgroup.

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2. Give two examples of important information you should provide about the outcomes of risk assessment and risk controls.

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3. Give two examples of important information you should provide about use of PPE.

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[Click to complete Practice task 5](#)

2C Monitor housekeeping practices to ensure that WHS policies and procedures are followed

Housekeeping is the practice of maintaining order and adhering to standards of presentation and performance in the workplace to ensure a safe and healthy environment is maintained at all times. This relates to how WHS is managed and implemented within the workplace.

Here is a summary of important housekeeping practices.

Housekeeping practices



General workplace cleanliness and tidiness

Keeping the workplace free from debris, spills and mess decreases the chance of fire hazards, blocked exit ways and the chance of pest infestation, cross-contamination and the associated health risks.



Unobstructed walkways and emergency exits

Along with general tidiness, having adequate storage protocols prevents items or objects being stacked or placed in walkways or near exits, which could hinder an evacuation process.



Underfoot conditions

Ensuring floors are free from spills or slip and trip hazards (such as uneven surfaces or loose tiles or carpet); this also extends to the provision of anti-slip or anti-skid floor coverings, and that surfaces indoors and out are safe and in good repair.



Work space around equipment and machinery

Clutter is the cause of many workplace accidents, especially around machinery or equipment. This is especially the case where clutter prevents adequate access to equipment or encroaches too closely onto moving machinery parts. Several hazards are present in this case, including fire, electrical and mechanical hazards



Functioning services

When adequate and fully functional, all these elements provide a safe workplace. Stuffy workspaces, without adequate lighting or ventilation, present a number of health and wellbeing risks to those working there, including asthma and allergy-related illnesses.



Storage

This includes access to and availability of PPE; if PPE is not available, or is not stored correctly, its effectiveness can be deteriorated or performance degraded. Storage areas can also become hazards themselves if they are neglected or items are not stored adequately and become manual-handling issues, such as a heavy box that requires two people to lift and carry it, being stored on a top shelf.



Signage

Signs are everywhere in workplaces today, whether they mark emergency exits, first-aid points or fire extinguishers, or simply provide guidance for the safe use of the photocopier. As a minimum, there is a legal requirement for a workplace to adequately sign emergency exits, evacuation procedures and emergency contact numbers.

Monitor housekeeping practices

It may be your responsibility to monitor the housekeeping practices on a daily basis, as a matter of routine, to help ensure the safety of the work group. This can be done during a morning walk around, which does not necessarily require any specialist knowledge. In a workplace with generally good housekeeping standards it is easy to identify when things are out of place, but the more chaotic a work environment, the more difficult this can be. Monitoring may involve seeing a person undertaking a task incorrectly, or neglecting to do a task. In such a case you may just need to explain and/or demonstrate the correct housekeeping procedure to the person. In your explanation you should also explain why a procedure is undertaken in a specific way; that is, to ensure their health and safety and that this has been determined as the safest and most efficient way. It is your role to help people understand the importance of following the WHS policies and procedures.

Monitor and address issues with housekeeping practices

When someone identifies a WHS issue, whether it is inside or outside their work area, they need to report it to an appropriate person in that work area, such as the area supervisor, group leader or the HSR. This also applies when the workplace is off-site, such as during an excursion – an appropriate person must be informed. Once the issue or deficiency has been reported and steps taken to address it, there should be a process of follow-up to ensure the issue has been totally resolved and standards are being maintained. Provide staff with information and/or training on the organisation's WHS policies and procedures, including demonstration of safe housekeeping practices.

Methods used for monitoring

Workplace procedures are designed to ensure safe working practices are followed and exposure to risk is minimised. Following procedures is not about complying with management directives, but about maintaining safe working practices that ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in the organisation. Those in leadership positions need to understand the existing processes and procedures, and have a good working knowledge of their application. This allows a supervisor or work group leader to confirm that all members of the team are compliant with the procedures and, by monitoring the work standard of those within their team, recognise any deviations. All this must be done while maintaining a high standard themselves, to lead by example.

Here are explanations of different methods you could use to monitor safe practices in the workplace.

Observation

- ▶ Observe and encourage others to regularly observe the conditions of the workplace. Check for clear walkways, and fire exits. Ensure PPE is stored correctly. Monitor floors for trip hazards.

Hazard reports

- ▶ Hazard reports must be completed if hazards are identified. They should specify where and what the hazard is, and its possible effect.

Maintenance reports and requests

- ▶ Machinery and equipment needs to be regularly monitored for useability. Maintenance reports should be regularly reviewed to ensure equipment is serviced when necessary.

Daily hazard identification checklist

- ▶ The checklist can be completed daily. Check off each area when safety has been reviewed. For example, check that the first-aid kit is safely stored at the end of each day.

Incident reports

- ▶ Incident reports are used if an incident occurs. They should detail the nature of the incident and the actions taken.

WHS audit

- ▶ The supervisor, in consultation with the HSR, will carry out safety audits to check that records about safety are kept properly. They might check that forms are kept in the right place and that policies and procedures about safety are kept where everyone can find them.

Safety audits

In consultation with the HSR, audit a specific workplace procedure at regular intervals. Observe one, two or more support workers performing a specific task. All workplaces must check that policies and procedures are being followed. By observing workers completing a procedure, you will know whether it is being done correctly or whether further training is required.

The information gathered during the audit will help you learn whether the procedures are being followed properly.

Hand-washing

- ▶ Check the correct procedure is followed and that hands are washed before and after handling food, after using the toilet and before and after physical contact with individual people.

Infection control

- ▶ Check to make sure that waste products are disposed of correctly and personal protective clothing is worn when necessary.

Electrical safety

- ▶ Check that plugs and cords are in good working order and not frayed or damaged and a licensed electrician might test all electrical equipment every six months.

Equipment safety

- ▶ Check that all equipment, such as a hoist, is used according to safe handling procedures.

Disposal of incontinence pads

- ▶ Check these are being disposed of according to strict soiled waste procedures.

Example

Monitor housekeeping practices to ensure that WHS policies and procedures are followed

Here is an example of a safe housekeeping guidelines form that can be used to monitor WHS work practices.

Housekeeping Form		
Area inspected:		
Date of inspection:		
Inspected by:		
Area	Action	Corrective action
Office Areas and Amenities	Offices are free of clutter and piles of paper. Shelf storage is orderly and floor coverings intact. There are no exposed computer leads, double adaptors in use or frayed electrical cords, or frayed cords to electrical appliances. Employee lunch areas are clean. Tables and food preparation benches are free of rubbish. Microwaves and fridges are wiped clean regularly.	
Stairs/ Passageways	Passageways are free of obstructions. All stairs are free of rubbish, oil and grease. Slip resistant treads and toe-boards are intact and handrails in place are intact and secure.	
Fire and Emergency	Fire doors are closed and not propped open. Fire extinguishers are not free-standing and are secured in holders to the wall and have signs stating use for type of fire to be fought.	
Tools and Equipment	Tools and equipment are correctly stored in their proper place when not in use. Area is keep clean of rubbing.	
Outdoor Areas	The surrounding grounds and parking areas are free of rubbish and unnecessary materials.	

‘Safe housekeeping guidelines’ excerpt reproduced courtesy of University of Western Sydney Occupational Health & Safety Information Services.

Practice task 6

1. Provide two examples of housekeeping practices you need to monitor in your workplace.

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2. Explain two different ways of monitoring safe workplace practices.

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3. What is the purpose of a safety audit?

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Click to complete Practice task 6

2D Maintain WHS incident records in the work area according to requirements

An incident report should be completed after any incident has occurred that has or may impact a person's safety. This includes a near-miss situation, where a person was nearly injured or exposed to a danger, so this danger can be removed. Incident reports include a detailed description of what happened and where (including the hazard that was identified), who was involved, any injuries sustained and any treatment given. Again, an incident report should be completed as soon as possible after an incident or near miss, to ensure the hazard is removed as soon as possible.

Legislative requirements for record-keeping and reporting

Legislative requirements for record keeping and reporting include those specified under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), state and territory privacy legislation in terms of what and how information should be reported, recorded and passed on to others.

You are also legally obligated to maintain documentation for 8–10 years in case of subpoena.

Other WHS legislative reporting requirements relate to:

- ▶ registered plant (equipment)
- ▶ hazardous substances and dangerous goods
- ▶ environmental monitoring
- ▶ health surveillance
- ▶ serious incident and injury reporting

Legislative requirements for reporting serious incidents

You must to report serious incidents to government agencies such as WorkCover, WorkSafe or Comcare via the appropriate means; that is, completing a hard-copy form, or emailing or faxing a notification.

Failing to report a 'notifiable incident' is also an offence and penalties apply.

The following information comes from an Incident Notification: Information Sheet produced by Safe Work Australia.

The WHS law requires:

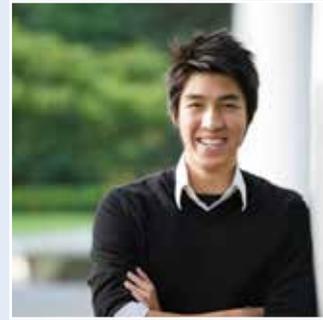
- ▶ a 'notifiable incident' to be reported to the regulator immediately after becoming aware it has happened
- ▶ if the regulator asks—written notification within 48 hours of the request
- ▶ the incident site to be preserved until an inspector arrives or directs otherwise (subject to some exceptions).

Example

Maintain WHS incident records in the work area according to requirements

Zhou is the supervisor of a youth support organisation in suburban Sydney. His team of eight are all good workers and conscientious in their approach to WHS.

At work, Zhou is aware of the hazards that are present, such as those associated with hygiene, slip and trip hazards and evacuation procedures. He also notes the external hazard presented by overhanging branches of old shade trees in the outdoor area, which can't be removed under council by-laws.



Zhou regularly inspects the known hazards within the workplace to ensure all control measures are in place, but doesn't think to assess the effectiveness of hazard reporting until a near miss occurs late one afternoon, relating to a hazard that is present and had been reported, but never actioned.

A small mat had been placed across a carpet edge where the edging was lifted, creating a trip hazard. The mat was only supposed to be a 'quick fix' measure until it could be repaired; however, over time it was forgotten by whoever initially put the mat down. When the mat itself slipped as one of the support workers was bringing out lunch, the support worker almost fell, but managed to steady herself (she dropped the lunch) and attention was again drawn to the mat.

In evaluating the reporting process, Zhou finds that there had in fact been a hazard identification report lodged in the past month about the carpet hazard. However, the reporting process had failed partly because of a misunderstanding regarding the correct process to use to report the hazard; partly because the mat had become a fixture and that people no longer noticed it; and partly due to education, as others who had noticed the potential hazard just assumed it had been reported by someone else and failed to follow it up.

Zhou reports his findings and a review of processes is initiated by management.

Practice task 7

1. Give two examples of legislative requirements relate to completing incident reports.

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2. Give two examples of workplace procedures for maintaining incident reports.

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3. What type of incidents would you be likely to record in an incident report?

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Click to complete Practice task 7

Summary

1. Organisations have a requirement to have a WHS policy, maintain registers of identified hazards and incidents in the workplace, and put in place procedures for emergencies, evacuations, incident and accident reporting and investigation and auditing.
2. Use a variety of methods for regularly providing information about WHS policies and procedures to your work group, including meetings and briefing sessions.
3. Clearly outline procedures such as the emergency procedures.
4. Support your workgroup to use appropriate hazard identification methods and risk assessment processes, such as nomograms and a risk assessment matrix.
5. WHS housekeeping refers to the everyday practices intended to keep a workplace safe, like storing PPE correctly.
6. Use appropriate methods for maintaining incident records in the workplace, such as ensuring information remains private.

Learning checkpoint 2

Implement policies and procedures into work team processes

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in implementing policies and procedures into work team processes.

Part A

1. Identify three WHS policies and procedures relevant to the workplace.

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2. Briefly define hazardous manual tasks and infection control, and outline how these are linked to codes of practice, industry standards and organisational policies and procedures.

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3. Give two examples of guidelines you would use to ensure workers follow emergency response procedures effectively.

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4. How would you monitor housekeeping practices to ensure that WHS policies and procedures are followed? Give one example of a housekeeping practice.

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Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Ali Kahn supervises a disability respite service. He is inducting a new group of support workers and volunteers into the service. One of the hazards Ali wants to provide specific information about is manual handling tasks. An individual receiving service supports uses a wheelchair and regularly needs support moving from the wheelchair to their bed, the car or a lounge chair.

1. Outline two methods that Ali could use to regularly provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the work team?

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2. Give two examples of information relating to identified hazards and the outcomes of risk assessment and risk controls that Ali may need to share with the work group.

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3. When workers shower people, or the organisation supports or assist with toileting, they need to use disposable gloves. Give two examples of information Ali should provide about the use of PPE if he were orally explaining procedures in a team meeting.

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4. Explain how Ali should ensure incident reports and records are maintained in the work area according to workplace procedures and legislative requirements.

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5. When using a hoist to lift a person one day, one of the workers, Samuel Hayes, uses the hoist incorrectly. As a result, the person is bruised on the hip and complains of pain. Ali needs to file an incident report in conjunction with Samuel. Draft an example of an incident report using the following headings:

- ▶ Date
- ▶ Name
- ▶ Job title
- ▶ Scenario
- ▶ Action

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Encourage work team participation in consultative activities**
- 3B Report health and safety issues in line with workplace procedures and legislative requirements**
- 3C Encourage and assist work team members to contribute to WHS**

Support consultation, cooperation and communication

Consultation is a critical element for success in any WHS process. It is a legal requirement for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) and workers to engage in open communication about WHS matters. Consultation is also about talking with the work group and encouraging them to raise their concerns and identify any WHS queries or questions they may have. Consultation usually occurs through either one-to-one or group meetings.

All forms of consultation have both benefits and drawbacks. For one-to-one consultation, the benefit lies in the confidentiality aspect and that the individual may feel they can speak more freely about issues they may have; however, this comes at the expense of having group knowledge available that may be able to resolve any issues immediately. The ideal forum or consultation option in the workplace is therefore a personal preference and may involve a combination of the two options.

3A Encourage work team participation in consultative activities

Employers are required by the relevant legislation and regulations to consult with you and your work colleagues about any WHS matters that affect you. Consultation is the process of gathering information, sharing ideas and giving feedback. Participating in consultation processes in your organisation enables you to contribute to decisions that affect health and safety. Workers can make a valuable contribution to workplace safety because they are familiar with the work environment and its hazards. They will have suggestions for addressing hazards and can provide feedback about the effectiveness of risk controls.

Consultation and participation

The WHS issues that you may consult your colleagues about, and the methods of consultation, are outlined here.

Issues

Potential WHS issues include the following:

- ▶ 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

Methods of consultation include the following:

- ▶ Appointing HSRs and providing them with reasonable access to staff during working hours
- ▶ Involving workers in workplace inspections and/or asking for feedback during workplace inspections
- ▶ Involving workers in risk assessments and/or asking for your feedback during risk assessments
- ▶ Encouraging WHS discussion at regular team meetings
- ▶ Forming a health and safety committee (HSC), and providing HSC members with reasonable access to workers during working hours
- ▶ Asking for feedback during informal conversations

Seek contribution

Team meetings are a particularly useful way to consult with team members about safety issues. You may find that time is provided for discussion of workplace health and safety at each team meeting. You should provide opportunities for staff to raise WHS issues, by clearly explaining the issues, referring to any evidence staff may have, and if possible, making a suggestion about how to solve any problems raised. You may use this WHS information to investigate further. Any issues that cannot be resolved or that may impact on other areas of the organisation will be referred to relevant staff (such the HSC or the HSR).

During meetings, you may:

- ▶ report on recent workplace incidents
- ▶ report on production time lost to workplace injuries
- ▶ report on new practices to improve workplace health and safety
- ▶ ask team members to raise WHS issues
- ▶ ask team members to describe any hazards that have been identified
- ▶ provide a copy of the minutes of recent HSC meetings
- ▶ report on recent workplace incidents
- ▶ report on production time lost to workplace injuries
- ▶ report on new practices to improve workplace health and safety.

Encourage staff to maintain and update knowledge about WHS practices

People can only contribute to a healthy and safe work environment if they have the skills and knowledge to do so. All employees should have the WHS policies and procedures of their workplace carefully explained to them and receive adequate training for their job. Individually, staff should take steps to maintain and update their knowledge of WHS issues in the workplace to ensure they keep themselves and others safe. The requirements for maintaining and updating knowledge of WHS issues are described here.

Employer requirements

Legislation places a significant responsibility on employers to ensure workers are adequately trained for the tasks they are required to undertake. Training in WHS issues ensures that all workers are aware of their responsibilities and is crucial for enabling employees to work safely in a particular workplace. For HSRs, WHS legislation requires that they attend relevant training programs to enable them to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

Currency of knowledge of WHS issues and practices may also extend to ensuring that workers and supervisors are aware of any changes to systems, procedures or equipment that may affect the way a task is carried out. Ongoing training should be provided as circumstances change.

Worker requirements

Ensure staff are aware of and follow your organisation's procedures as they relate to their work role. This includes identifying and reporting hazards, incidents, injuries and near misses; using correct protective clothing and equipment; following emergency response procedures and participating in issue resolution and consultation as required. In some circumstances, ensuring currency of skills and knowledge may be a mandatory part of a person's job requirements. For example, in community and health services, all support workers may be required to maintain currency of first-aid credentials.

Employees can maintain and update their knowledge of WHS issues by attending any required training, reading and applying information in WHS documentation or workplace bulletins, and discussing WHS issues with their supervisor or with HSRs.

Example

Encourage work team participation in consultative activities

Kath is the supervisor of a disability respite service. She is familiar with the applicable WHS laws and regulations for the community services industry and enjoys attending information sessions to keep up to date. She also keeps up to date with the organisation's policies and procedures manual so she can inform her work group if there are any changes.

Kath often fields questions from her team regarding WHS issues, particularly regarding food handling and hygiene when people are unwell. She appreciates the concern of her work group members, especially when serious concerns are raised.

Today, one of the new team members, Marcia, comes to Kath when she notices that there are no disposable gloves left in the office. Kath checks with the team members and finds that other areas are also lacking tissues, hand sanitiser and some signage that should be present relating to the correct hand-washing procedure. Kath thanks Marcia and the other workers for bringing this to her attention and explains that she will pass this information on to the HSR. They will source supplies for the short term and devise a way to track the level of supplies, so that workers' safety isn't compromised by them running out of PPE, sanitiser and tissues. Kath says she will get back to them at the next team meeting, so everyone hears the solution.



Practice task 8

1. Why is it important to encourage participation in WHS activities?

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2. Outline two methods could you use to encourage participation.

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3. What are the workers expected to know when participating in WHS?

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Click to complete Practice task 8

3B Report health and safety issues in line with workplace procedures and legislative requirements

The record-keeping requirements specified in state, territory and Commonwealth legislation are designed to facilitate investigation, should an incident occur. Documentation of hazards, risks, training and incidents provides a history from which an organisation can learn and incorporate continuous improvements. Having thorough and accurately documented WHS records also stands the organisation in good stead, should any incident occur and lead to legal action taken against a person or the organisation.



WHS records

Various records are required in relation to WHS under Commonwealth, state and territory Acts, regulations, standards and codes of practice depending upon the industry or sector. There may also be further requirements, which must be met by organisations, from industry associations or groups as part of terms of membership.

It is important to note that there may be specific lodgment time limits for some forms and notifications. That is, the report, such as a WHS incident report, must be lodged with the appropriate government agency within a certain time period. An example is reporting a fatality, where in the Commonwealth jurisdiction, Comcare (the Australian Government WHS agency) must be notified within 24 hours. Failing to do so may result in prosecution in some circumstances.

WHS legislative reporting requirements relate to:

- ▶ serious incident and injury reporting
- ▶ registered plant (equipment)
- ▶ hazardous substances and dangerous goods
- ▶ environmental monitoring
- ▶ health surveillance.

Hazard, incident and noncompliance reporting processes

Hazards, incidents and instances of noncompliance can be identified and reported using the following processes.

Hazard reports

When a worker identifies a hazard (for example, torn carpet on the floor), they can report this via a hazard report form. All workers should know where to access and how to complete such forms – it may be your responsibility to assist them. Where there are immediate safety issues, staff members should understand the need to report verbally and alert those affected, and then to follow up with a written hazard report. All reports should be completed as soon as possible so people are not exposed to the hazard for any longer than necessary.

Maintenance requests and reports

If an identified hazard is the result of faulty machinery, generally a maintenance request or report is required. For example, a faulty refrigerator in the kitchen may not present an immediate problem, but could lead to food going bad if not attended to. The report should highlight the fact that a fridge is not cooling properly, which may lead to food poisoning. If your organisation does not provide maintenance requests or reports, those reporting should be encouraged to complete a hazard report to ensure the problem is recorded and reported adequately.

Reports on completion of inspections

Hazards may also be identified as a result of a daily inspection, a safety audit, an internal (annual) audit, an investigation or a special inspection of a new area or piece of equipment. Often inspections require the use of a specific checklist to ensure all areas are adequately assessed. These checklists can highlight previously unidentified hazards, which must then be reported upon completion of the inspection, in the form of a written report and in conjunction with the inspection checklist.

Incident reports

An incident report should be completed after any incident has occurred that has or may impact a person's safety. This includes a near-miss situation, where a person was nearly injured or exposed to a danger, so this danger can be removed. Incident reports include a detailed description of what happened and where, the hazard that was identified, who was involved, any injuries sustained and any treatment given. An incident report should be completed as soon as possible after an incident or near miss, to ensure the hazard is removed.

Reports of noncompliance with work procedures

If a worker does not comply with work procedures, they may be putting themselves and others at risk of injury or illness and may therefore introduce a new hazard to an otherwise controlled risk. Noncompliance may also occur because procedures are inadequate, which should then prompt a review. Any occurrences of noncompliance should be reported verbally or in writing to your manager, and contain a description of exactly what you saw and any actions you took.

Legislative and workplace requirements

It is your responsibility to understand how to complete organisational WHS records accurately and to assist others in doing so, according to organisation requirements. Ensure all staff understand how to complete WHS documentation correctly and in accordance with the organisation's policies and procedures.

Legislative and workplace requirements

- ▶ The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) in relation to what information is shared, and how it is shared as well as how information is stored
- ▶ WHS legislation in regards to correct reporting of serious incident and injury reporting
- ▶ Use of appropriate forms when making a report, according to WHS legislation.
- ▶ Accuracy and completion of reports.
- ▶ Complete documents according to organisational policies and procedures

Accuracy and timeliness

Workers are expected to understand how to complete the necessary WHS records. You should ensure staff are adequately trained to complete documentation. You may also be responsible for reviewing records to ensure they are accurate and thorough.

Reviewing reports may involve checking that:

- ▶ the correct form or record has been completed
- ▶ any forms are completed fully and signed
- ▶ the information is accurate in terms of content, spelling and grammar (especially the spelling of people's names, and that the dates and times are correct)
- ▶ any attachments have been completed correctly and are attached
- ▶ records are completed within specified time lines (usually as soon as possible after an incident) and forwarded to the relevant person or agency.

Report processes and evaluation

The following processes are important to remember when completing and maintaining WHS reports.

Report on progress action plans

An action plan describes how, and in what time frame, the identified WHS issues will be addressed. Action plans for WHS can be seen as the 'how and when' of implementing control measures.

Action plans are generally very straightforward, and in most cases just constitute a few columns at the end of a hazard identification form.

The plans should be followed, with progress updates given to management and all relevant staff at regular intervals. For example, is the plan being followed and implemented according to the time lines? Have there been any difficulties implementing the plan? Does the plan need to be revised?

At times, the implementation of WHS action plans can be stalled by the appearance or identification of new or unexpected hazards that must also be dealt with.

Evaluate process

Simply identifying a hazard and reporting it is not sufficient unless these processes are regularly reviewed, and reported hazards are identified and logged in the hazard register for risk control actions. Evaluating the hazard reporting process can be achieved by following up a report made by their work group, and then by checking whether recently reported hazards have been registered and acted upon appropriately.

Example

Report health and safety issues in line with workplace procedures and legislative requirements

As the group leader in a government-run aged care residence, Mika is often involved in induction training for new staff and providing WHS information to her team. Part of her responsibilities also involves checking WHS incident reports have been completed properly prior to their submission to the HSR.

Rolf, one of Mika's team, has verbally reported a problem with the noise level in the recreation room since the building air conditioner has been repaired, but has not followed it up with a written incident report. When another worker goes home with a migraine, Mika chases up Rolf to complete the appropriate WHS incident report, which he has forgotten about. Several members of the team have continued to complain among themselves about the noise.

Rolf completes the form, which is available on the organisation's intranet, and emails it to Mika. After a quick scan, Mika notes in the supervisor's comments section that the initial report was made verbally two weeks prior.

Within two days, management organises to have the air conditioner service crew return and install new sound insulation, which reduces the noise level, making it more habitable and useable for the staff and people being supported.



Practice task 9

1. Give two examples of legislative requirements and workplace procedures you should comply with when making WHS reports.

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2. What are two examples of WHS reports or records?

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3. Describe two ways to ensure accuracy and timeliness when developing WHS reports.

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[Click to complete Practice task 9](#)

3C Encourage and assist work team members to contribute to WHS

All workers and volunteers within an organisation require an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their designated health and safety representative (HSR) and the health and safety committee (HSC). By understanding the roles and responsibilities of these entities, all personnel within an organisation can then access the information and resources they provide to assist in maintaining a safe workplace.



Ensure others are able to implement safe work practices

As work health and safety is everyone's responsibility, each worker has a responsibility to ensure their fellow workers have access to the WHS resources and equipment they require to safely undertake their assigned duties and implement safe work practices. This includes full access to personal protective equipment (PPE); ensuring others have an understanding of safe and appropriate workplace practices, policies and procedures; and that all staff members have received adequate training both to undertake their jobs and understand their health and safety responsibilities in the workplace.

Implement processes to ensure workers follow WHS policies and procedures

WHS processes in the workplace function best when everyone works together to look after one another. Ensuring your colleagues wear disposable gloves when attending a person with an open wound, or that they wash their hands after blowing their noses, helps to maintain a work environment that is free of incidents and illness. Consider the following.

Avoid shortcuts

Some people may take a shortcut to complete their tasks faster; for example, a worker may decide it is quicker to assist a person with toileting activities without wearing disposable gloves. This, however, puts the worker at risk of coming into contact with or contracting such illnesses as gastro, which can then be passed on to many others.

Follow procedures

It cannot be stressed enough that practices, policies and procedures related to WHS must be followed at all times, and not doing so is a breach of responsibilities. There are processes that can be put in place to ensure everyone knows the correct practices and procedures that are in line with organisational policy.

The two-person rule

When a potentially dangerous or hazardous task needs to be performed, most safe work practices or procedures include guidance that at least two people must be present – one undertaking the task, and an observer, guide or assistant to ensure safety is maintained. The two-person rule should be applied when necessary; therefore the resources (such as extra staff) must be available to allow for this. For example, if there is a heavy piece of equipment in the outdoor area that needs to be moved, the safe work practice would be to have two staff members carefully lift and move the equipment. All workers should be aware of the situations where the two-person rule is applied; for example, when lifting heavy or awkward objects or when closing up the premises after dark.



Safety monitors

One way of ensuring compliance with safe work practices, policy and procedures is for all workers to act as monitors for their colleagues and ensure they haven't simply forgotten to apply the correct practices. This involves being aware of what is going on around you by observing your co-workers – particularly the new and junior members of staff. You can then provide positive feedback when you see them implementing safe work practices, or remind them of the correct practice or procedure for doing so. For example, if you see a new worker putting full rubbish bags at the back door that is also a fire escape and must not be obstructed, you can explain to the person the reason for this, and suggest that they be put in the storeroom until the end of the day when they are put in the skips out the back.

Safety equipment registers and checklists

Where the work or task is by nature solitary and can't be observed, such as showering a person, a solution may exist in having a safe work register or checklist of tasks for the worker to sign off or initial upon completion. This could also be a wall chart or poster above a hot-water tap, reminding workers to ensure the water temperature is not too hot.

A safety equipment register, with an associated condition report to be completed at the time of sign-out, can be used to identify when a worker is using specialist or valuable safety equipment (such as hot-water thermometers or sterilising equipment) and monitor the equipment's condition.

Education and workplace culture

Maintaining a safe and healthy workplace involves trusting those you work with to adhere to the required practices. There is a chain of responsibility under WHS legislation for PCBUs and managers to ensure the safe working practices are adhered to by their workers.

The following explains the importance of education and culture.

Education

If all members of an organisation are properly trained in the performance of their duties and informed about WHS policies and procedures, they should be able to complete their tasks safely. Education can simply be an information session or work group meeting where a WHS matter is discussed. How these sessions are structured is dependent on the workplace context and reliant upon having an accepting workplace culture.

Culture

Workplace culture, or more specifically, a positive workplace safety culture, encourages participation from all members of an organisation by including them in all facets of the WHS process. By giving workers a sense of responsibility for the WHS processes, achieved by including everyone in all facets of WHS applicable to their area of interest (work area), a positive safety culture is fostered.

Documented performance

Regular reviews of the overall staff performance (monthly, bimonthly or quarterly) in regard to WHS can provide an indication of success, or any areas where adherence to WHS practices has been neglected in the preceding period. These should then be discussed at team meetings to ensure all workers know what is and is not being achieved in terms of safety practices.

Identify staff training needs

All members of an organisation need to be familiar with the laws, regulations, standards and codes of practice that apply to them, and they must comply with WHS policies, procedures and practices. Communicating this information regarding individual compliance does not have to take the form of a formal course of instruction; it can be held as one or a series of information sessions. Consider the following.

Training days

- ▶ Organisations often institute annual training days at the start of each calendar or financial year. Existing and new workers are trained, the year ahead is previewed and organisation policies, procedures and practices are explained.

Opportunities

- ▶ Annual training days present opportunities to reinforce and remind workers about their WHS responsibilities; to train them in new or better safe work practices; or to identify any training needs that can be addressed immediately or in the future.

General needs

- ▶ Other general training needs may include ensuring all workers understand the evacuation procedure. Workers are shown the correct procedures for safely and efficiently evacuating the building or premises, and undertake a mock evacuation.

Identify individual training needs

Here are the steps for determining individual training needs.

Identifying the task to be performed

- ▶ Identify what tasks are being performed by group members, as well as what hazards there are or may be exposed in their daily duties. For example, if a new assistant has started in an aged care residence, consider their responsibilities, which may include providing support to people, providing food, and assisting with personal hygiene tasks.

Considering the hazards related to a task

- ▶ Consider any hazards in relation to each task; for example, considering hazards for undertaking personal hygiene tasks would necessitate wearing disposable gloves, and considering hazards for assisting a person to move from their chair to their bed would necessitate using the correct procedure.

Considering ways to address hazards

- ▶ Ask the worker if they can confidently address each hazard; that is, perform the duty according to the correct procedure. You can also have the worker demonstrate or explain a practice to you. Often, asking someone a question about how they may react or what they may do in certain circumstances can provide an insight into where a training need exists.

Address training needs

If a training need does exist, it may be addressed immediately or need to be reported to management (or similar) so training can be arranged at another time. For example, if a new assistant does not demonstrate the correct procedure for assisting a person to move from their chair to the bed, this could be addressed immediately by demonstrating the correct procedure and then having the assistant demonstrate the procedure again. You can then follow up a few days later to ensure they are still following the correct procedure. However, if a training need relates to a more serious issue, such as a worker not having a current first-aid certificate, this would require the worker to be trained by an appropriate provider, such as St John Ambulance.



Identify training solutions

When a training need is identified, you need to determine whether appropriate training exists to meet the need. This may not be easy, as the range of training and training providers is as varied in quality as it is in quantity. Some examples of a perceived training need and a potential training solution are provided here.

Sharps

Training need: Working with needles to assist a person with type 1 diabetes

Training solution: Safe handling of medical sharps

Optional training: First-aid training

Chemicals

Training need: Working where toxic chemicals are stored for use in cleaning

Training solution: Dangerous goods handling

Optional training: Poisons and first-aid training

Record and communicate outcomes of consultation

It is important to maintain a record of what has occurred as part of the participative processes. Apart from the legislative requirement to maintain records, we live in a society where litigation is rife, so it makes sense for anyone providing any advice to maintain a written record of all outcomes – particularly for WHS, where injury, illness or death may result from actions or inaction.

Commonwealth, state and territory legislation and regulations require not only that records are maintained of incidents or accidents (WHS incident registers), but also that a record of WHS reports or issues raised by members of the organisation are kept, generally in the form of a WHS hazard or risk register. The following information must be recorded relation to the outcomes of WHS consultation.

WHS consultation record keeping requirements

- ▶ The name of the person making the inquiry or raising the issue
- ▶ The name of the person who received the inquiry or was informed of the issue
- ▶ A description of any advice offered
- ▶ The name and position of any party to whom the issue was referred
- ▶ The date, time and place of the report
- ▶ Any additional pertinent information; for example, actions taken, particularly if they were contrary to the advice provided

Communicate to the workgroup

There may be times when a WHS issue raised may be considered critical, in that it needs to be reported or acted upon immediately, as it poses an immediate threat to people's health and safety; for example, fire or emergency, fallen power lines in the grounds or car park, or an electrical equipment malfunction.

Where issues are not so critical, but hazards still exist, everyone still needs to be kept informed. Alerting everyone to a potential or existing hazard after consultation allows people to avoid it where possible, or to be aware of it in the meantime.

When communicating outcomes, the important thing is that all workers are made aware and that the message is communicated in a concise and efficient manner. Encourage workers to communicate with each other when hazards are identified.



Methods of communication

If workers have a thorough grasp of WHS procedures, they are more likely to be able to effectively contribute. Here are the ways to communicate information relating to WHS practices.

Ways to communicate WHS information

- ▶ Face-to-face meetings allow the supervisor to communicate more detailed information, as well as answer questions anyone may have.
- ▶ Information sheets can contain details relating to a hazard and the outcome of discussions about it, and be attached to doors, walls or machinery where the hazard exists.
- ▶ Notices can be posted on the noticeboard for all to see.
- ▶ 'Read-me' files or float-files can be handed to all staff and, once read, require the reader to sign their initials before they pass them on.
- ▶ Group emails can be used; these can also include a reader confirmation, so the supervisor can be sure all members have opened the email.
- ▶ Public-address (PA) systems, if available, allow for rapid and wide dissemination of information and are useful to alert all staff of an immediate or urgent hazard.

Reward participation

Encourage participation in WHS practices by celebrating when participation occurs. This may involve notifying the workgroup when a staff member effectively identifies and responds to a hazard. It may involve acknowledging participation in formal staff appraisals. If staff feel valued, they are more likely to participate in keeping the workplace safe.

Example

Encourage and assist work team members to contribute to WHS by remaining current and providing information

Johann, the coordinator at a Newcastle disability support centre, regularly receives updates about WHS in his work email since he registered with Occupational Health and Safety Representatives at Work, a free website that provides a wealth of information about WHS across all industries.

Here is how Johann remains current with WHS laws and regulations for his industry and provides information to his team.

Remaining current

As part of his daily routine, Johann scans the newsletters for information related to the running of the centre that may affect his co-workers. Today Johann notices an update regarding a type of electrical outlet safety plug. During a risk assessment at a Melbourne centre, the safety plug was found to fall out easily when used a few times, which allows access to the electrical outlet. After checking with the centre, Johann discovers that they use this type of safety plug extensively in recreational rooms.

Providing information

During the morning meeting, Johann alerts all workers to the new hazard and asks everyone to check the safety plugs in their area to ensure they are not easily removed, and to report to him if they are. Johann is happy when informed that all the checked outlets in the support areas are secure. He informs the workers that they must undergo a daily check of each outlet in their area until all the safety plugs can be replaced. Johann makes a note of this and reports the findings to the centre director.

Practice task 10

1. List two ways to support staff members to contribute to WHS practices in the workplace.

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2. List two ways you could encourage staff to participate in a team meeting.

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3. Explain how training can assist group members to participate in WHS processes.

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Click to complete Practice task 10

Summary

1. Consultation with a work group on WHS issues can take the form of one-to-one or group meetings.
2. A supervisor should be available and knowledgeable enough to offer advice on most routine WHS issues faced by their work group.
3. If you are unsure how to deal with a WHS issue, or the issue is beyond your professional knowledge, you should refer to an appropriate person for guidance.
4. WHS issues should be dealt with promptly to ensure everyone's safety, and according to your organisation's policy and procedures.
5. WHS issues can be referred to internal or external personnel.
6. Maintain a list of appropriate contacts to refer to or call upon.
7. Records of the outcome of the WHS consultation process should be kept and promptly communicated to the work group, to ensure everyone is aware of how a situation has been resolved or referred.

Learning checkpoint 3

Support consultation, cooperation and communication

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in supporting consultation, cooperation and communication.

Part A

1. What are consultative procedures and why are they important to participation in WHS processes?

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2. Identify two consultative methods you could use.

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3. Identify two different types of WHS reports or records you may use in the workplace.

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4. Does it matter when WHS reports are submitted? Explain.

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Part B

Read the case study, then answer question that follows.

Case study

Ruby manages an aged care community support service. She is reviewing WHS processes and procedures and notices that incident reports are often completed but not filed and the hazard identification checklist has not been completed in over a month.

Outline two processes that Ruby could use to encourage and assist work team members to contribute to WHS.

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