HLTWHS004

Manage work health and safety

Aspire

Learning Resources

HLTWHS004
Manage work health and safety

Release 2

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1

Aspire Learning Resources
Supporting Vocational Education and Training for 30 years
1991 to 2023

Contents

Aspire acknowledges the homelands of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and pays our respect to Country

Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *HLTWHS004 Manage work health and safety*, Release 2.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program.

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.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
Callouts	Callouts reiterate key learning points to help students revise for their assessments.
Weblinks	Weblinks provide learners with additional content to contextualise their learning and develop their understanding.
Videos	Videos provide a visual reference of key concepts to aid comprehension and guide learner exploration. Each video is accessed by a QR code in the Learner Guide (or a button in the eBook version) for ease of access.
Glossary/margin definitions	Key terms are defined where they first appear to help consolidate understanding. A glossary of terms is provided at the end of the Learner Guide to assist learner revision of key concepts.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.
Case studies	Case studies are interspersed throughout the learning content to provide a workplace setting that contextualises key concepts.

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.

These skills are listed below:

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	• 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	• Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents • Communicating through written letters, email and online • Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	• 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	• Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance • Interpreting measurements
Learning	• Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities • Managing your work and seeing how well you are going • Making goals for yourself at work • Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Problem-solving	• Identifying problems • Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes • Reviewing the outcome
Initiative and enterprise	• 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
Teamwork	• Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport
Planning and organising	• Planning your workload and commitments • Implementing tasks • Completing work on time • Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Self-management	• Understanding and applying decision-making processes • Reviewing your behaviour and the impact of your decisions
Technology	• Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely • Accessing, organising and presenting information • Using equipment correctly and safely

Note: Not every unit of competency will contain all foundation skills.

What do you already know?

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

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Establish work health and safety practices	1A Interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and policies and procedures	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1B Develop procedures for hazard identification and risk control	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1C Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1D Identify requirements for expert WHS advice	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 2 Facilitate consultation, cooperation and communication	2A Develop activities to provide WHS advice	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2B Monitor processes for ensuring that workers can contribute WHS feedback	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2C Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2D Develop and implement processes for responsibility and accountability	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2E Implement and monitor WHS training programs	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 3 Monitor compliance with risk control processes	3A Develop and communicate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3B Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3C Evaluate compliance of WHS record-keeping policies and procedures	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 4 Evaluate and maintain WHS	4A Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	4B Develop a WHS Action Plan considering priorities, training needs and potential barriers	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	4C Monitor achievement against the plan and update plan as required	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic 1: Establish work health and safety practices

1A Interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and policies and procedures

1B Develop procedures for hazard identification and risk control

1C Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures

1D Identify requirements for expert WHS advice

1A

Interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and policies and procedures

Work health and safety (WHS) is concerned with the health and safety of all people in the workplace.

The main objective of WHS is to prevent injury or harm in the workplace. Many workplaces have formal processes, such as workplace inspections, incident reporting and health and safety committees (HSCs).

Work health and safety (WHS) legislation is one of the most important pieces of legislation dealing with the work environment in Australia. It addresses the fundamental right all workers have to a safe and healthy work environment.

One of the most significant changes has been the national workplace health and safety reforms that resulted in the development of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) and model regulations and codes of practice. These reforms are designed to improve national workplace health and safety by simplifying the system and making laws more consistent across Australia.

Each state and territory has a regulatory body responsible for enabling and enforcing compliance with the WHS regulation. You should visit your regulator's website frequently to locate the most up-to-date version of the Act, regulation, codes of practice and industry guidelines.

WHS legislation

The WHS legislation is made up of the model WHS Act, regulations, codes of practice and a national compliance and enforcement policy.

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. For the Act to be legally binding, it must be passed by the Parliament in each state and territory. At this time, not all Australian states and territories have implemented harmonised WHS laws based on this Act.

The purpose of harmonising the work health and safety laws is to:

- protect the health and safety of workers

- improve safety outcomes in the workplaces

- reduce compliance costs for business

- improve efficiency for regulatory agencies.

You can access the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) at: aspirelr.link/whs-act

Legislation is the law, and regulations provide the rules for how to apply the law. WHS legislation is designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of all people in the workplace.

You need to be aware of and know how to access current WHS legislation and other WHS documentation relevant to the community services environment. This documentation includes regulations, codes of practice and your organisation's health and safety policies and procedures.

Keeping up to date with this information is essential for compliance with the law. State or territory regulators provide valuable resources that can help you to comply with WHS laws. Regulator websites usually contain fact sheets, checklists, safety alerts and other resources that you can download. Most regulators also produce a regular safety newsletter that you can subscribe to.

Role of regulators

It is the responsibility of the commonwealth, states and territories to regulate and enforce WHS in their jurisdiction. Under the model WHS Act, regulators ensure and enforce compliance with the work health and safety laws through a range of roles and functions, including, but not limited to:

- conducting workplace investigations, issuing notices for noncompliance, conducting necessary legal proceedings and prosecutions

- supporting and promoting work health and safety education and training

- providing work health and safety advice to duty holders and the community

- collecting, analysing and reporting data on the operation and effectiveness of the model WHS Act

- supporting the relevant Minister by providing recommendations and advising on the operation and effectiveness of the model WHS Act.

You can find more information about modelling WHS laws at: aspirelr.link/swa-model-whs-laws

Video: WHS introduction
Watch the following video for a basic overview of work health and safety legislation in Australia: aspirelr.link/yt-whs-legislation-overview

The name of the work health and safety legislation and the regulator responsible for its implementation in each state and territory is shown below and is correct at the time of publication.

Australian Capital Territory	• *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (ACT) • The regulator for the Australian Capital Territory is WorkSafe ACT. • aspirelr.link/worksafe-act
New South Wales	• *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (NSW) • WorkCover NSW was replaced by three new agencies in 2015. The work previously done by WorkCover is now handled by either SafeWork, icare or SIRA. • aspirelr.link/nsw-workcover
Northern Territory	• *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (NT) • The regulator for the Northern Territory is NT WorkSafe. • aspirelr.link/worksafe-nt
Queensland	• *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld) • The regulator for Queensland is Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. • aspirelr.link/worksafe-qld
South Australia	• *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) • The regulator for South Australia is SafeWork SA. • aspirelr.link/worksafe-sa
Tasmania	• *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (Tas.) • The regulator for Tasmania is WorkSafe Tasmania. • aspirelr.link/worksafe-tas
Victoria	• *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.) • The regulator for Victoria is WorkSafe Victoria. • aspirelr.link/worksafe-vic
Western Australia	• *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WA) • The regulator for Western Australia is WorkSafe WA. • aspirelr.link/worksafe-wa

Regulatory requirements

The model WHS regulations specify the minimum mandatory WHS requirements to help you comply with your duties under the WHS Act. You need to understand what these requirements mean to you and your work so that you do not accidentally breach your duty of care.

If a relevant requirement exists in the Act or regulations, you must follow that requirement.

All workers have requirements under the regulatory framework, but these requirements may vary depending on the worker's role and responsibilities.

The person with the highest level of WHS responsibility and requirements is a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU). A PCBU includes an employer, corporation, association, partnership, sole trader and any volunteer organisation that employs a person to carry out work.

There are specific **regulatory requirements** related to:

- high-risk work

- major hazard facilities

- hazardous chemicals

- general diving work

- electrical equipment and installation

- confined spaces

- plant

- lead, asbestos and airborne contaminants.

> **Regulatory requirements**
> The rules and laws that a government entity imposes on an organisation.

Industry standards

Industry standards set out the safety and specification details and guide 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 advisory only, designed to suggest best practices or to guide users of other standards. Standards are only legally binding when included in the 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 specifications to emergency evacuation procedures and signage, to environmental hygiene standards that specify the requirements for basins and soap for hand-washing.

> **Industry standards**
> The minimal accepted requirements followed by the members of that industry.

You can find more information about health and community services standards at: aspirelr.link/health-community-service-standards

The main regulatory requirement for community services is to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, risk management processes are followed so that the workplace is without risks to the health and safety of any person.

The regulatory framework outlines mandatory requirements around how a safe community services environment is to be achieved through:

- participation and representation, including the process for electing the health and safety representative

- risk management processes

- incident notification

- regulation exemptions

- duties in high-risk areas and hazardous manual tasks.

Benchmark standards for ways to meet your regulatory requirements can also be found in the relevant codes of practice and your workplace policy and procedures.

Codes of practice

Codes of practice
A document providing practical guidance on how to comply with duties in the workplace.

Codes of practice (sometimes referred to as compliance codes) provide practical guidance on how to meet the standards contained in WHS Acts and regulations. Codes of practice are generally considered the benchmark standard and are developed through consultation with representatives from industry, workers and employers, special interest groups, and government agencies. They provide guidance on a range of matters, including duty of care, hazard identification, risk assessment processes and risk control.

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.

In your role, you must be familiar with the codes of practice that apply to community services. You can keep up to date with your state or territory's codes of practice by regularly visiting the Safe Work Australia website and your state or territory's WHS authority. Although they are not enforceable by law, codes of practice should be followed unless there is an alternative course of action that achieves the same or better standards.

You can find a list of codes of practice for NSW at: aspirelr.link/sw-nsw-codes-of-practice

Employers and workers fail to meet their obligations if they do not adopt a method as safe as, or safer than, the code. If an organisation applies the information provided in the relevant code of practice, it will be deemed to have complied with the obligations prescribed by the WHS Act.

Here are examples of model codes of practice developed by Safe Work Australia:

Example model codes of practice
• Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination
• First Aid in the Workplace
• Hazardous Manual Tasks

Code of conduct

A **code of conduct** is a set of principles, standards, values or rules of behaviour that guide the decisions, procedures and systems of work for a workplace. The code of conduct should promote the welfare of people by protecting their rights and ensuring ethical practices are followed.

Code of conduct
A set of rules that informs employees how to act in a workplace.

The code of conduct may vary between community services workplaces; however, most community services have a code of conduct that promotes ethical behaviour, accountability, transparent sharing of information, bestowing dignity and respect and practising confidentiality.

It is important to be familiar and compliant with your workplace code of conduct.

Workplace codes of conduct might include:

- a statement of purpose
- related legislation
- disciplinary action for breaches of the code
- a summary of the workplace values
- roles and responsibilities of accountable persons named in the code
- worker rights and treatment under the code
- general applications of the code
- application of the code to specific work circumstances.

You can find an example of a Code of Ethical Conduct at: aspirelr.link/facs-cec

Employer and employee requirements

As a manager, you need to support people to work safely in community services.

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 care for 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.

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.

Your workplace should have a process for raising issues, such as identified hazards, incidents, and injuries to management. All workers must report these issues either directly to management or through a health and safety representative (HSR) where appropriate. The reporting line usually follows the governance line of the workplace, and an issue will be raised through the line management – for example, through the worker, HSR, the manager and the PCBU.

Here are some general duties that you can do to keep the workplace safe:

General duties
• Understand and comply with relevant work health and safety laws. • Take reasonable care to protect your own health and safety and that of the people around you. • Use the safety equipment provided by your employer. • Follow workplace policies, procedures and any safety instructions. • Participate in risk management processes and report workplace hazards and incidents. • Communicate and consult with people regarding risk management.

Workplace duty holders

Everyone who works in the community services environment has a duty of care to ensure that health and safety is a priority in the workplace. Under the WHS Act, a duty holder is any person that has a work health and safety duty, including PCBUs, importers, manufacturers, designers, installers of plant or products, suppliers, officers and workers. Some duties are the responsibility of more than one person and therefore that duty is shared. Duties cannot be transferred.

There are four main classifications of duty holders:

- PCBUs

- officers

- workers

- others (such as visitors and customers).

A worker may gain increased duties if they are elected by members of their work group to be their health and safety representative (HSR) and facilitate the flow of information regarding health and safety between the PCBU and the workers.

If you are a community services worker and you identify a workplace issue, then you must report that issue directly to your manager. Alternatively, you may choose to raise the issue with management through your HSR.

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, the 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.

PCBU rights and responsibilities

PCBU stands for: a person conducting a business or undertaking. This is essentially all employers.

Everyone in the community services environment, including visitors, workers, officers and PCBUs, has duties under WHS legislation. The PCBUs and their officers have a higher level of responsibility that covers all aspects of the workplace. The PCBU has the primary responsibility of providing a safe and healthy workplace. You must seek help if you are unsure about an issue, rather than ignoring it or taking inappropriate action.

An officer is a person who makes decisions or participates in making decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part of, business or undertaking. Officers have a responsibility under the WHS Act to ensure the PCBU complies with the Act, through providing, monitoring, evaluating and sustaining appropriate systems of work to manage WHS matters.

While the PCBU and officers have a higher level of responsibility, each worker must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others while complying with instructions from the PCBU.

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 work 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 the team 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 workers need to have a thorough and current understanding of WHS processes, legislation and codes of practice.

The WHS Act states that a PCBU must, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health and safety of workers engaged, or caused to be engaged, by the PCBU; workers whose activities are influenced or directed by the PCBU; and other persons who could be put at risk from work carried out by or for the PCBU.

You can read more about the PCBU duties at: aspirelr.link/pcbu-duties

The PCBU has overarching obligations regarding consultation, issue resolution, incident notification and compliance with regulations.

Video: PCBU duties
Watch the following video that outlines the duties of a PCBU:
aspirelr.link/yt-pcbu-duties
Pay attention to the obligations PCBUs have in the workplace.

HSR rights and responsibilities

Health and safety representatives (HSR) are workers who have been elected to represent a designated work group.

The HSR has key responsibilities to advocate for the WHS rights of the workers, communicate with the workers and PCBU and monitor the PCBU's compliance with the WHS legislation. The HSR may also request that the PCBU establishes a health and safety committee (HSC).

The role of a HSC is to facilitate participation in, and coordination of, developing, implementing and monitoring WHS measures to improve the health and safety of the workers.

> More detailed information on HSR roles and responsibilities can be found at: aspirelr.link/comcare-hsrs

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 the 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 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.

Duty of care

Duty of care describes the legal obligation that individuals and organisations have to anticipate and act on possible causes of injury and illness that may exist in their work environment, or as a result of their actions.

A person or organisation must do everything they can to remove or minimise the possible cause of harm.

While aspects of WHS legislation may vary between states and territories, there are common legislative requirements and obligations under the duty-of-care principle. Everyone in the community services environment has the responsibility of duty of care for themselves, the people they care for, visitors and each other.

Duty of care
A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other persons.

Due diligence

Due diligence in its simplest form means taking care. This means that when you are working in the community, you take every reasonable precaution in any given circumstance to protect the health, safety and welfare of yourself and the people you work with.

Due diligence requires that all workers understand and carry out their legal duties, assess the risk and hazards in the workplace on an ongoing basis, and take all reasonable precautions with respect to those risks.

Circumstances in the community are always changing. Therefore, to ensure you practise due diligence, you need to constantly evaluate the circumstances surrounding you and ensure that you are taking reasonable precautions to minimise all possible risks.

Here are some reasonable components that you must consider following due diligence:

Knowledge	To exercise due diligence, you will need to have up-to-date knowledge regarding WHS matters.
Understanding	To exercise due diligence, you will require an understanding of the workplace and the hazards and risks associated with it.
Resources	To exercise due diligence, you will need to have access to appropriate WHS resources to manage and eliminate risk.
Processes	To exercise due diligence your workplace will require appropriate processes to comply with any duty obligations, such as processes to receive and respond to information about incidents, hazards and risks.

Example

Interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and workplace policies and procedures

Shawn has recently moved interstate and started a new job. On his first day at the new workplace, Shawn identifies a hazard and tells his colleague Johan about it. Johan tells Shawn that he needs to report it, but Shawn isn't sure whether this is part of his duty of care.

Shawn searches the internet and finds the WHS Act and regulations relevant to his new state. He then locates the section of the Act and the regulations relevant to duty holders who are workers. The information confirms that Shawn has a duty of care to report this hazard to his manager.

Shawn knows that every workplace has a different system for managing work health and safety so he refers to the WHS policy, procedures and code of conduct for his new workplace. As he reads through the documents, he discovers that there is an elected health and safety representative (HSR) who can help him raise this issue with management.

Shawn consults with the HSR, Robert, about the issue and Robert explains that he will raise it with the PCBU, Ilona. Ilona will be responsible for following it up with Shawn, the HSR and other workers until the issue is resolved.

Practice Task 1

Question 1

List three sources that you can review to learn more about your role in work health and safety management.

Question 2

Which of the following are the responsibilities of a PCBU? Select all that apply.

❑ Providing a safe work environment

❑ Providing hygiene supplies

❑ Providing safe work systems

❑ Monitoring the workplace

❑ Providing safe plant and structure

Question 3

Suggest four general duty requirements that you can perform to keep your workplace safe.

Question 4

Provide a brief explanation of what duty of care is.

1B Develop procedures for hazard identification and risk control

Developing procedures for hazard identification, assessment and control are an important and mandatory requirement under WHS legislation.

All workplaces are different. Hazards present in one community services environment may not be present in another.

A **hazard** is anything that might cause injury or ill health to anyone in your workplace, or damage to property or the environment.

A risk is the likelihood of a hazard resulting in an injury or illness, and the predicted severity of that potential injury or illness.

When developing hazard and risk management procedures, it is important that you consult with all the necessary people and clearly document the process and any outcomes of the process.

Principles of hazard and risk management

Everyone in the community services environment, including visitors, workers, officers and PCBUs have a responsibility to be part of the hazard and **risk** management process in a workplace. This means that we are all looking out for things that have the potential to cause harm, analysing the situation and making decisions about what to do to stop something bad from happening.

Hazard identification and risk management are performed by all duty holders and are essential to keeping the workplace safe. At each stage of the process, a high level of risk analysis, consultation and documentation are required. There are four main steps to the risk management process.

Identify hazards → Assess risks → Control risks → Review control measures

Workplace policies and procedures

A WHS policy is a written statement of how your workplace is committed to achieving a safe and healthy workplace.

These policies should be developed in consultation with workers and clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of management and workers to achieve compliance with WHS legislation.

The type and number of policies, procedures and processes will vary depending on the nature of the work and the hazards in the specific community services environment in which you are working.

You should develop a procedure with consideration given to these questions:

- WHAT the purpose of the procedure is

- HOW to undertake the task safely

- WHO has responsibility

- WHEN activities should be undertaken and when the procedure must be reviewed.

The community services procedures are documents that give specific instructions on how the requirements of the WHS policies are to be met. Below are some examples of procedures that may be used in the community services environment.

Workplace policies and procedures
• Hazard management • Manual handling of people and objects • Hazardous waste • Infection control • Incident reporting and investigation

Hazard identification

Hazard identification is a process where you try to find all the factors that have the potential to cause harm to people.

Once existing or potential hazards are identified, they need to be reported to the designated person and recorded according to workplace procedures.

Aspects of work that contribute to hazards include:

- the physical work environment

- the work tasks and how they are performed

- the equipment, materials and substances used.

The community services environment that you work in will have procedures for identifying hazards. You may be part of a team involved in the hazard identification process, including performing inspections, analysing **incident reports** and writing reports.

The relevant regulator website will often contain useful forms and tools for identifying hazards in your workplace.

Your workplace hazard identification plan may include:

- analysing injury and illness records

- analysing work processes

- collecting information on trends and developments in workplace health and safety

- consulting with employees, supervisors, HSRs, and health and safety committee members

- investigating workplace incidents and near-miss reports

- performing inspections or safety audits

- reviewing new work practices or equipment introduced into the workplace.

Develop procedures for hazard identification

Identifying hazards requires a consistent team approach that uses all of the available information and identification methods. Having a procedure for identifying hazards enables people to carry out the hazard identification process to the same high standard every time.

Your hazard identification procedures should clearly outline the methods for identifying hazards, individual roles and responsibilities, communication, consultation, documentation and reporting requirements.

The community services environment has the potential for multiple different hazards, such as those related to handling chemicals and exposure to infectious disease.

One identification method may not suit all hazards and you may require individual procedures for identifying each type of hazard, as shown here:

Infection control	Conduct a workplace audit to check compliance with hand hygiene.
Manual handling	Conduct a workplace manual handling task inspection.
Slips and trips	Investigate workplace incidents and near-miss reports.
Stress	Collect information on stress-related trends.

Principles of risk assessment

Once a hazard has been identified, you need to conduct an assessment of the risk that the hazard may result in injury, harm or damage.

Risk
assessment
Determining
the likelihood a
hazard will cause
harm, injury or
ill-health and
determining
its possible
consequences.

Risk assessments should be recorded in a risk assessment form. Your HSR, supervisor or WHS specialist is responsible for determining how best to control or eliminate the risk based on the information contained in the risk assessment form. When a risk assessment is conducted, the assessment should be recorded and made available to workers affected by the hazard that has been assessed. It is important that workers are made aware of the control measures that are to be implemented. The best way to control a hazard is to eliminate it.

These are the steps involved in the risk assessment process:

Risk assessment process
Evaluate the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring and the likely severity of that injury or illness.
Review health and safety information relevant to the hazard, such as incident reports, safety data sheets, results of workplace monitoring and inspections, and supplier information.
Identify factors that contribute to the risk, such as the physical layout of the workplace, the knowledge, skills and experience of workers, and existing work practices.
Identify actions necessary to eliminate or control the risk.
Complete any relevant records.

Hierarchy of control

The hierarchy of risk control is a system with three levels of control measures that aim to eliminate hazards and manage risk. The elimination of a hazard is the first choice in this system of controls.

Unfortunately, in the real world some hazards cannot be eliminated by reasonable practices. In cases where a risk cannot be eliminated, the controls from the next level down — substitution, isolation and engineering — are implemented to manage the risk to an acceptable level. The lowest and least effective level of the hierarchy of control implements administrative measures and personal protective equipment (PPE) to manage the risk associated with hazards.

Wherever reasonably practicable, the highest possible level of the hierarchy of control should be used for risk management.

Video: Hierarchy of control
The following video explains the functions of the hierarchy of control:
aspirelr.link/yt-hierarchy-of-control
Ensure you review the effectiveness of each control method to help you correctly identify risks and implement measures to reduce them.

The following information explains the hierarchy of controls in managing risks in the workplace:

Level 1 control	**Elimination** Eliminating the risk at its source should always be the first choice. The source of the risk is the hazard, so this usually means removing hazardous material or abandoning hazardous work practices. For example: • clean up a spill straight away to avoid anyone else slipping and falling over and hurting themselves • stop using toxic substances that are not essential to the work • repair or replace equipment.
Level 2 controls	**Substitution** If elimination is not practicable, substitute the hazard with something of lesser risk. This is also likely to be a less expensive measure to implement. For example: • use less hazardous chemical materials • reduce the size of objects that need to be lifted • break a task down into smaller chunks so that there is not as much risk; for example, share a task with another person. **Isolation** This involves physically separating the source of harm from people by distance or by using barriers. For example: • 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 possible solution is to implement engineering controls that involve changing equipment or tools. For example: • provide a trolley to move heavy loads • use a hoist rather than trying to lift a consumer from the floor • install ventilation to remove chemical fumes • change the layout of work levels to minimise bending and twisting during manual handling.

Level 3 controls	Administrative controls
	This relates to work procedures and work for organisations.
	For example:
	• develop policies and procedures to minimise the risks to all people in the workplace
	• reduce the time the person is exposed to the hazard (e.g. 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, fire and emergency procedures and how to use equipment safely.
	Personal protective equipment (PPE)
	Wearing and using personal protective clothing or equipment is the least effective hierarchy of control measures. The use of personal protective clothing and equipment can be a hazard if it restricts movement, sight or hearing, and is the last option for risk control.
	Organisations must:
	• provide appropriate protective clothing and equipment
	• ensure the clothing fits well and is comfortable under work conditions
	• ensure people use PPE properly and when necessary
	• train workers in why the clothing is necessary
	• teach workers how to wear the right protective equipment for the task; for example, wearing waterproof foot protection when showering consumers will help you avoid having wet footwear, so you will avoid or minimise the risk of fungal infection and the risk of slipping and injuring yourself.

Risk analysis

Risk analysis is a process of identifying and defining all possible outcomes that could occur due to risk, and the people who could be affected.

Risk analysis broadly looks at three different aspects of the risk:

1. What are the possible outcomes?

2. How likely is it that those outcomes will occur?

3. If those outcomes occur, what are the possible consequences?

Risk analysis
The process of identifying and analysing potential issues that could negatively impact people or projects.

Risk analysis takes place to some extent at all stages of the hazard and risk management process. The community services environment often has multiple hazards that need to be addressed, so risk analysis can be a useful tool to prioritise the order in which hazards are managed. Tools such as a risk assessment matrix can be used to simplify the risk analysis process.

Risk assessment matrix

A risk assessment matrix is a table (matrix) used for allocating risk ratings for risks that you identify, based on two intersecting factors: the likelihood (or probability) of a risk-based event occurring, and the consequence (or impact) if it did.

The higher the rating of likelihood and/or severity of injury or illness, the higher the need to control the risk associated with that hazard.

A risk assessment matrix will often be used to assess a hazard before and after the implementation of controls to ensure that the risk has been reduced to an acceptable level.

		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood	**Almost certain**	High	High	Very High	Very High	Very High
	Likely	Moderate	Moderate	High	Very High	Very High
	Possible	Low	Moderate	High	High	Very High
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Low	Moderate

Develop procedures for assessment and control of risks

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.

Assessing and controlling risk requires a consistent team approach involving all people affected by the risk. Often people working in the area where the risk is present will have valuable insight and knowledge that will contribute to a more thorough assessment and implementation of optimal control measures.

Procedures may relate to:

Emergency evacuation	This procedure would include the general evacuation plan for several possible events (e.g. fire, earthquake, terrorist attack, gas leak, electrical fault, or bomb threat). Typically, it would also include the responsible persons (e.g. 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.

You can view an example of an emergency procedure at the Aged & Community Services Australia — Aged Care Emergency Planning website: aspirelr.link/acsa-acep

Having a procedure for assessing and controlling risk enables people to carry out the risk management process to the same high standard every time.

Your risk workplace assessment and control procedure should clearly outline:

- the methods for assessing risk

- risk classifications and priorities

- implementation of the hierarchy of control

- individual roles and responsibilities

- required communication, consultation, documentation and reporting

- recommendations concerning how and when to review the outcomes of the risk management process.

Manual handling

A manual task is any task that requires a person to push, pull, lift, lower, hold, carry or otherwise restrain any animal, person or object. Hazardous manual tasks are manual tasks that are at risk of causing harm to a person. Not all manual tasks are hazardous.

Hazardous manual tasks can be identified by one or more of the following characteristics:

- repetitive force or movement

- high force or heavy load

- sustained or awkward postures

- vibration.

If one or more of these factors is present in a task, then you could be at risk of an injury. The more factors any one task contains, the higher the chance that the task will cause harm.

To manage the risk associated with hazardous manual tasks, follow correct risk management processes and implement the recommendations outlined in the Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice. According to this model code of practice, if a manual task contains a high force or heavy load then the risk must be assessed and controlled.

Infection control

Infection control
Measures undertaken to prevent and minimise the level of identification in a healthcare environment.

Infection control is any process or activity that is designed to reduce the likelihood of infections being transmitted. 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 the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019). 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 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.

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: aspirelr.link/nhmrc-infection-control-guidelines

Emergencies

An emergency is a sudden unexpected event or situation that requires immediate action to prevent or limit casualties. Although emergencies are unforeseen, 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 team by complying with evacuation orders or other appropriate workplace procedures.

Types of emergencies are outlined here:

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

WHS benchmarks

Benchmarking allows you to assess the differences between your service and other world-class organisations.

Benchmarking includes an examination of the methods, processes, procedures, and service performance of your workplace against those that consistently rate as world-class in the community services sector.

Work health and safety benchmarking is a planned process by which an organisation compares its health and safety processes and performance with others to learn how to:

- reduce accidents and ill health.
- improve compliance with health and safety law
- cut compliance costs.

Benchmarking is not just about comparing data or copying your competitors. Benchmarking is more about continuously learning from others, learning more about your organisation's strengths and weaknesses in the process, and then acting on the lessons learned. This is what leads to real improvement.

Benchmarking is systematic and provides opportunities to foster or build on a continuous improvement program which is key to any best practice approach. Because WHS is integral to all key business processes, benchmarking WHS can contribute to improvements in all management systems. It is a powerful strategy for developing the attitude that WHS is everyone's responsibility in the service.

You can read more about benchmarking at: aspirelr.link/benchmarking-tool

Example
Develop procedures for hazard identification, assessment and risk control

Davide is the health and safety representative for his work group. Earlier this week a worker named Alinta told Davide about a spill that she had noticed in the work corridor.

Alinta knew that if she ignored the spill that someone might slip over, so she reported it to Mandy the cleaner who then mopped up the spill.

Davide was really pleased with Alinta and Mandy's commitment to work health and safety but unfortunately discovered that there was no documentation regarding the hazard identification method, risk assessment or control implementation that had taken place.

Davide asked Alinta why she hadn't completed any of the paperwork and she replied that she thought that it was Ron's, her team leader's, responsibility. Together they reviewed the hazard identification procedure and discovered that the information on roles and responsibilities was not very clear.

Davide promised to follow up on the issue with management so that the procedure clearly outlines each person's role and responsibilities in the process.

Practice Task 2

Question 1

Which of the following are characteristics of hazardous manual tasks? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Repetitive force
- ❑ Repetitive movement
- ❑ High force
- ❑ Stable postures
- ❑ Sustained postures

Question 2

Which of the following are common workplace hazards? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Manual tasks
- ❑ Mental health
- ❑ Electricity
- ❑ Equipment and machinery
- ❑ Hazardous chemicals

Question 3

Briefly describe the purpose of infection control.

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

Case study

Anna is a health professional who works at an aged care home. Anna has been asked by her supervisor, Lukas, to do a risk assessment of her work environment to identify any potential causes of harm, and then follow up on them according to WHS legislation requirements.

Question 4

Describe four sources and methods that Anna could use to identify hazards.

Question 5

Explain the purpose of WHS benchmarking in the workplace.

Question 6

Number each step from 1 to 10 in the order Anna should follow to analyse the risks
she has identified as potential workplace hazards.

	Analyse the risk
	Use the hierarchy of control to eliminate the risk
	Use a risk assessment matrix
	Follow the risk assessment and control procedures
	Consult with others regarding the risk control process
	Document and report the risk assessment process
	Report the hazard
	Perform a risk assessment
	Document and report the risk control process
	Consult with others regarding the risk assessment

1C Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures

Monitoring controls and hazard-specific procedures enables early identification of new hazards and ensures that controls are maintained or adjusted in a timely manner to effectively manage workplace risk.

The community services environment is always changing. Legislation, work systems, processes, technology, equipment, machinery and tools are constantly changing and being updated. Therefore, regular review of the hazard identification, risk assessment and control procedures is necessary to comply with WHS legislation and regulatory requirements.

Maintaining records is an essential aspect of monitoring risk control and hazard-specific procedures. Without any documentation, it is very difficult to accurately measure how well a procedure is meeting the needs of the people it is designed to support.

Having a written account of the risk management process demonstrates how hazards were identified and the decision-making processes involved. A written account also provides information about which controls were chosen and the intended result. This information can also be used to identify any deviations from the procedure.

By using written accounts alongside incident and injury data, an assessment can be made on whether or not the WHS procedures are effective, and the controls are effectively managing risk.

Documented risk management processes can also be used as tools to minimise risk. By documenting common workplace hazards such as hazardous chemicals, alongside the controls that are needed to manage the risk, the document can then be turned into an action plan that everyone can refer to and follow to minimise the risk associated with those hazards.

Common workplace hazards include:

- manual tasks

- gravity

- electricity

- equipment and machinery

- hazardous chemicals

- extreme temperatures

- noise

- radiation

- biological hazards

- psychosocial hazards.

Monitor procedures for compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements

All WHS-related procedures should accurately reflect current WHS legislation as well as the recommendations outlined in the associated code of practice and industry guidelines. It is important that all procedures are regularly updated to reflect any change of practice and ensure consistency with the legislation and regulatory requirements.

All WHS procedures should be able to be consistently applied across all areas of the workplace. For example, your infection control procedure should contain a risk-management framework that enables the basic principles of infection prevention and control such as hand hygiene, to be applied to a wide range of community services settings. However, some areas of infection control may require specific processes for specific work areas.

Strategies for minimising hazards

You don't have to wait until a hazard is present in the workplace to start putting hazard minimisation strategies in place.

Five strategies that you can put into place to minimise workplace hazards and ensure your control measures remain effective are outlined here:

Risk minimisation strategies	
Procedures	Ensure procedures have clear roles, responsibilities and resources to enable workers to be accountable for their own health and safety and that of others.
Review	Regularly review and update work processes and procedures in consultation with workers and representatives.
Update	Make sure hazard information sheets are current and the technology and equipment you are using comply with best-practice standards.
Maintenance	Regularly inspect, test and maintain equipment.
Training	Provide up-to-date training and ensure staff have appropriate competencies to complete their work.

Example
Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures

It has been three months since Kenneth implemented a new procedure and controls to reduce manual handling injuries in his workplace. Kenneth's manager Holly has asked him to monitor the controls and assess the effectiveness of the procedure.

Kenneth requests a report comparing the manual handling incidents and injuries for the past three months with that of the three months before the changes came in. The data shows that manual handling incidents and injuries have halved since the new procedure and controls were implemented.

Kenneth also consults with the people who are using the procedure and receives very positive feedback.

Kenneth documents the review process and reports back to Holly that the procedure and controls are working well. However, as his workplace is constantly changing, Kenneth puts a recommendation in his report that the procedure and controls continue to be routinely reviewed, or when a change of practice requires it.

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Provide four examples of why it is important to monitor controls and hazard-specific procedures.

Question 2

Match each of the following risk minimisation processes to its appropriate strategy.

Procedures	Hazard information sheets need to be current, and the technology and equipment you are using must comply with best practice standards.
Review	Ensure that there are clear roles, responsibilities and resources outlined so that workers understand their own accountabilities and that of others.
Update	Provide regular training to ensure staff have the appropriate skills to complete their work.
Maintenance	Work processes should be regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with workers and representatives.
Training	Equipment should be regularly inspected, tested and maintained.

1D Identify requirements for expert WHS advice

By law, the PCBU must consult with officers, workers and others regarding general work health and safety advice. Usually, this general advice can be provided by the PCBU, an HSR or HSC.

If circumstances arise that require expert WHS advice, then the PCBU has a responsibility, where reasonably practicable, to either employ or engage a suitably qualified person to act as a resource to the HSC, HSR and workers as required.

An HSR is entitled to request the involvement of an expert to assist in carrying out their HSR role and responsibilities at any time they deem necessary.

The appointed regulatory body can also act as a useful workplace support service depending on the nature of the WHS expertise required. It is recommended that you regularly visit the website of your state or territory regulator to keep up to date on the available WHS tools and resources. Many sites have subscription functions that you can sign up to, so you are alerted to any changes and the latest WHS news.

> You can subscribe to WorkSafe Queensland's quarterly updates here: aspirelr.link/workcover-queensland-update

Roles and requirements for WHS specialist advice

By law, your community services organisation must employ or engage a suitably qualified person to give advice on issues that affect workers' health and safety as required. If your workplace does not employ anyone with the right skills or knowledge to provide this advice, the PCBU should consider engaging an external consultant to give advice about establishing, maintaining and improving safe systems of work; identifying, eliminating and controlling workplace hazards; and taking workplace environment samples and measurements, e.g. noise levels or air quality.

Keep in mind that consultants usually specialise aspects of safety management. One consultant may be able to provide guidance about how to better manage ergonomics, while another may be better equipped to provide advice about risk assessments. Be sure to select the consultant best suited to your service's needs.

Sources of expert advice may include:

- medical specialists

- occupational hygienists and infection control specialists

- ergonomists

- engineers

- WHS inspectors and auditors

- injury management coordinators.

Human resources policies and procedures

HR policies and procedures – for example, codes of conduct, bullying, harassment and discrimination, alcohol and drug use, smoking, and grievance reporting – cross over into the area of WHS.

Breaches of these policies and or procedures have the potential to result in workplace injury and workers compensation claims.

When implementing workplace health and safety in the workplace, you need to consider the following aspects of HR which have a vital role in the success of any WHS plan.

1. Job design

Aspects of job design, such as workload, rostering, shift work, clarity of reporting relationships and direction, supervision and more, have a critical role in the prevention of workplace injury. For example, physical injuries can be minimised through consideration of ergonomics, repetitiveness and physical exertion of tasks in resourcing planning.

2. Organisational culture

Developing a safety-first culture requires moving beyond the pathological and reactive practices of the past to a proactive and generative culture of safety. For example, a manager can initiate change by driving the culture of a service away from one that reacts — to one that is proactive.

3. Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection can assist in the prevention of workplace injury and illness in several ways. For example, it is essential that all successful candidates identify with and can demonstrate a commitment to safe work practices.

4. Performance management

Linking WHS to performance management processes – for example, appraisals, reward and recognition, performance standards, and performance recovery.

5. Induction

Providing WHS induction training prior to commencement or immediately upon commencement – for example, providing information regarding policies and procedures relevant to the role, and a practical induction into specific safety equipment, practices or risks that may exist in their new role.

6. Training and development

Ensuring that employees are provided with instruction and training relevant to their role – for example, training on specific policies, procedures, tasks or equipment, and ensuring that employees who are required to possess the relevant licenses or qualifications.

7. Absenteeism management

Considering high absenteeism that may indicate low job satisfaction, physically or mentally taxing job demands, or conflict between employees or managers – for example, managing absenteeism by keeping detailed records.

8. Health and wellbeing

Implementing employee health and wellbeing programs can potentially have the (perhaps unintentional) benefit of reducing workplace injuries and illnesses – for example, increasing awareness of physical and mental health, and implementing associated exercise programs can improve posture, improve work tolerance and strength, and assist in relieving workplace stress.

9. Working conditions and amenities

Providing and maintaining a minimal level of facilities for the welfare of workers – for example, access to first aid and amenities.

Example
Identify requirements for expert WHS advice

Jose, Maddy and Scott are members of a newly elected health and safety committee (HSC). The HSC agree that the current safety management system needs to be updated.

Jose points out that it would be really useful if their workplace had a WHS consultant who could help them determine what changes need to be made to comply with the WHS legislation.

Maddy asks the Service Manager, Carol, whether it would be possible to employ a permanent WHS consultant to assist the HSC. Carol explains that due to the small size of the business and their financial budget, a permanent WHS consultant is not a reasonably practicable option. Carol advises that she will engage an external WHS consultant to help the committee to audit the safety management system and to develop, implement and review the safe systems of work.

Charles contacts the state regulatory body for a list of recommended consultants and arranges a time-limited contract for a consultant with the skills best suited to the job.

Practice Task 4

Read the case study, then answer the questions.

Case study

Malcolm is the HSR at an aged care facility work group. Yesterday Malcolm received a hazard identification report regarding an electrical fault with a piece of equipment that requires a risk assessment. Malcolm requires expert advice to help him complete the risk management process and his workplace does not employ anyone suitably qualified to help with this job.

Question 1

Provide an explanation of Malcolm's rights as HSR regarding expert advice.

Question 2

What type of expert assistance might the consultant provide to help Malcolm manage this hazard? Tick all that apply.

❑ Provide specialist skills and knowledge regarding the faulty equipment

❑ Conduct an assessment to determine what caused the electrical fault

❑ Conduct a risk assessment to determine the risk of this hazard resulting in harm to someone

❑ Provide advice on control options to eliminate identified risks and minimise future hazards

❑ Provide advice on staff rosters and annual leave

Question 3

Why is it important that HR policies and procedures – for example, codes of conduct, bullying, harassment, and discrimination – are considered under WHS?

Summary

- Work health and safety (WHS) is concerned with the health and safety of all people in the workplace.

- The WHS legislation is made up of the model WHS Act, regulations, codes of practice and a national compliance and enforcement policy.

- Each state and territory has a regulator to enforce legislation in their area.

- Regularly accessing WHS information is essential to keeping policies, procedures and work practices in compliance with the legislation requirements.

- Duty of care describes the legal obligation that individuals and organisations have to anticipate and act on possible causes of injury and illness that may exist in their work environment or as a result of their actions.

- Everyone in the community services environment, including visitors, workers, officers and PCBUs, have duties under WHS legislation.

- The PCBUs and their officers have a higher level of responsibility that covers all aspects of the workplace. All workers have a duty to raise issues related to hazards, incidents and injuries.

- Your WHS policy is a written statement of how your workplace is committed to achieving a safe and healthy workplace.

- Hazard identification, risk assessment and risk management are performed by all duty holders and are essential to keeping the workplace safe.

- The PCBU has a responsibility, where reasonably practicable, to either employ or engage a suitably qualified person to provide expert WHS advice to the HSC, HSR and workers as required.
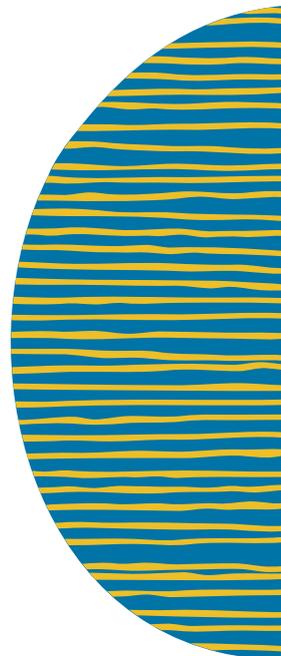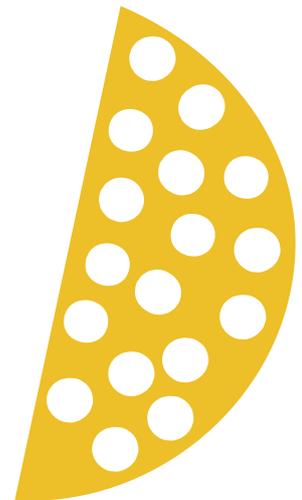
Learning Checkpoint 1

Establish work health and safety practices

Part A

1. Under the WHS Act, what is meant by the term 'duty of care'?

2. Under the WHS Act, what is meant by the term 'due diligence'?

3. Which of the following are duty holders under the WHS Act? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ PCBUs
- ❑ Employee's family
- ❑ Officers
- ❑ Workers
- ❑ Customers

4. List three general duties of duty holders.

5. Under the WHS Act, who can be a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)?

6. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. PCBU have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace for workers engaged or caused to be engaged by the PCBU.	Yes / No
b. PCBU have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace for workers whose activities are influenced or directed by the PCBU.	Yes / No
c. PCBU have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace for other persons who could be put at risk from work carried out by or for the PCBU.	Yes / No
d. PCBU have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace for workers who are employed full-time only.	Yes / No

7. Provide three examples of the responsibilities of state and territory WHS authorities.

8. Which of the following are forms of infection control? Select all that apply.

- ❑ Hand-washing

- ❑ Supplying tissues to staff

- ❑ Wearing personal protective equipment

- ❑ Reusing clean medical masks

- ❑ Cleaning and sanitising areas

Part B

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

Case study

Miyuki is a Community Access Coordinator, and her role is based in Tasmania at the Hobart Community Health Centre (HCHC). The HCHC has a range of community services, including nursing, podiatry, social work and physiotherapy. There are also office workers and housekeeping services that work as part of the team based in this building.

Gwen is the health and safety representative (HSR) for the centre and Tim is the HSR for the combined allied health services.

Rhonda is the Area Service Manager for all services based out of the HCHC and she answers directly to the company's chief executive officer (CEO), Jacob.

1. What model WHS legislation and other supporting guidelines should the HCHC access to comply with the law? Tick all that apply.

    ❑ *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth)

    ❑ Work Health and Safety Regulations 2021

    ❑ Codes of practice

    ❑ Staff handbook

    ❑ Industry guidelines

2. List two examples of model codes of practice that may be applied to Miyuki's workplace.

3. Provide three sources that Miyuki can use to access WHS information.

4. What WHS policies might the HCHC have to develop to ensure compliance with WHS legislation? Tick all that apply.

    ❑ Information management

    ❑ Manual handling of people and objects

    ❑ Hazardous waste

    ❑ Infection control

    ❑ Incident reporting and investigation

5. Describe three methods that Gwen could use to identify hazards in the workplace.

6. What information should Miyuki find in the HCHC's hazard identification procedure? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Methods for identifying hazards

- ❑ Individual roles and responsibilities in the hazard identification process

- ❑ Communication and consultation methods that should be used

- ❑ Information that should be documented

- ❑ Time and address of the incident

7. List the correct reporting line that Miyuki should follow to raise issues related to hazards, incidents and injuries.

8. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order that Tim and Gwen should follow when conducting a risk assessment.

	Review health and safety information relevant to the hazard, such as incident reports, safety data sheets, results of workplace monitoring and inspections, and supplier information.
	Identify factors that contribute to the risk, such as the physical layout of the workplace; the knowledge, skills and experience of workers; and existing work practices.
	Evaluate the likely severity of any potential injury or illness.
	Identify actions necessary to eliminate or control the risk.
	Evaluate the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring.

9. In the correct order, what are the three levels of the hierarchy of control that Tim and Gwen could implement to manage risks in their workplace?

10. Give four examples of information Gwen and Tim should find in the risk assessment and control procedure.

11. Which of the following are things that Rhonda should consider when monitoring risk controls and hazard-specific procedures? Tick all that apply.

❑ Whether the procedure complies with the WHS legislation

❑ Whether the procedure meets the benchmark standards set out in the codes of practice and industry guidelines

❑ Who will not be using the procedures

❑ Whether the work environment or work task has changed since the procedure was implemented

❑ Whether there is any useful information or resources on the regulator's website

12. Describe four situations when Jacob would need to engage the services of a professional to give expert WHS advice.

13. List two HR requirements that may be applied to Miyuki's workplace.

Topic 2: Facilitate consultation, cooperation and communication

2A Develop activities to provide WHS advice

2B Monitor processes for ensuring that workers can contribute WHS feedback

2C Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers

2D Develop and implement processes for responsibility and accountability

2E Implement and monitor WHS training programs
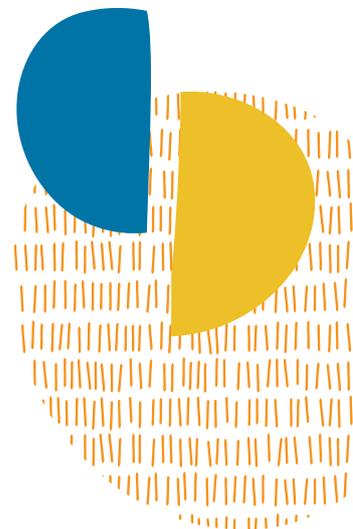
2A Develop activities to provide WHS advice

WHS legislation requires consultation, cooperation and communication in every work health and safety process.

Work health and safety processes include the provision of activities to distribute information, feedback channels, documentation processes and WHS training processes. Consultation can be a formative process or as simple as regularly talking with workers. Consultation can also be undertaken through health and safety representatives (HSRs) and a health and safety committee (HSC). However, the legislation does not require these communication mechanisms unless a request for an HSR is made by a worker or a request is made by the HSR for five or more workers for an HSC.

It is recommended that your workplace follows the guidelines set out in the Work Health and Safety Consultation, Co-operation and Co-ordination Code of Practice to ensure compliance with the law.

One of the aims of the WHS Act is to foster a work environment where cooperative and consultative relationships can exist between PCBUs and workers regarding work health and safety matters. Such relationships enable the flow of essential information across all areas of a workplace.

The development and provision of procedures, processes and activities to deliver and receive WHS information is required under WHS legislation. When developing activities to provide WHS advice, the activity must allow both the sharing of information and an avenue for participation and providing feedback.

Setting up the correct consultation framework in your work ensures that information distribution is systematic and is not person-dependent. This method acknowledges the limitations of people in reliably remembering and communicating vital information. By having systems in place, such as meeting minutes and reporting lines, high quality, timely and consistent information is distributed every time.

By law, the PCBU must consult workers before making decisions about:

- identifying hazards, assessing risks and implementing controls

- changes to working practices and systems

- designing, implementing, reviewing and updating policies.

> You can read the WHS Consultation, Co-operation and Co-ordination Code of Practice in full on the Safe Work Australia website here: aspirelr.link/whs-ccc-code-of-practice

Consultative activities

Consultation is the term used to describe the process of providing information, seeking a viewpoint, considering ideas and solutions, and providing feedback.

Consultative activities are an essential requirement to ensure compliance with WHS legislation and the Work Health and Safety Consultation, Co-operation and Co-ordination Code of Practice.

By providing WHS consultative activities, the PCBU can communicate information regarding identifying hazards, assessing risk and use of controls, and effectively managing workplace health and safety issues. Support workers and their managers have valuable first-hand information and experience of the various things that may give rise to hazards in the workplace. It is therefore important to provide WHS activities that allow workers to be consulted regarding these WHS issues.

Consultation about WHS issues may take place through:

- WHS personnel, such as an HSR or health and safety officers
- the health and safety committee
- feedback during workplace inspections and risk assessments
- regular team meetings and individual face-to-face meetings
- WHS training sessions
- notices and information sheets posted in frequented sites around the workplace
- individual and group emails
- public addresses and the media.

Example
Develop activities to provide WHS advice

Kiara is the PCBU of a residential aged care home. Kiara has noticed that there has been very poor compliance with the instructions she emailed out in a memo last week.

Kiara discussed the issue with her Manager, Sinead, who pointed out that a memo does not provide people with an opportunity to respond or provide feedback, and recommended that further communication was required.

Kiara decided to add the item to the agenda of the regular staff meeting. At the meeting, it became apparent that staff had not complied with the instructions on the memo because the instructions could not be followed without completely restructuring the service's roster.

Kiara and the HSR advised the staff that they would follow up on this issue at the next HSC meeting. Unfortunately, Kiara accidentally forgot about the issue by the time the next HSC meeting was held. Luckily the aged care home Kiara works at has a process in place whereby all unresolved issues from the regular staff meeting are automatically added to the HSC meeting agenda, to ensure they will be followed up – even if someone forgets or cannot attend the meeting.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

List two situations when a PCBU must consult with their workers.

Question 2

Which of the following are consultation activities that can be used to distribute WHS information in the workplace? Select all that apply.

- ❑ Meetings of the health and safety committee

- ❑ Automated text messages

- ❑ Feedback during workplace inspections and risk assessments

- ❑ Regular team meetings and individual face-to-face meetings

- ❑ WHS training sessions

Question 3

Provide three examples of why consultative activities for WHS issues are necessary in the community services environment.

2B Monitor processes for ensuring that workers can contribute WHS feedback

Workers have a duty of care to participate in work health and safety issues by contributing to consultative processes.

Consultative process
Asking for and recognising all employees' views when making decisions.

Consultative processes exist within community services to enable workers to provide valuable feedback. Processes for consultation should be monitored to ensure that the method for collecting feedback meets the WHS Act and regulation requirements and is the most appropriate and effective way to gather this information. When reviewing feedback processes, you must consider the needs of the support workers and ensure that the feedback process includes a safe and supportive forum where opinions can be shared without fear and criticism.

Your human resource policies and procedures should support the flow of WHS information in the workplace through the provision of a safe environment to express concerns, enforce the code of conduct, and provide processes for dispute and issue resolution.

Effective communication is highly unique to the individual needs of a workgroup. If a support worker is unable to access information or does not feel comfortable providing feedback, then they may not participate in the consultation process and valuable feedback could be lost.

Monitoring processes

A way to monitor feedback processes is to analyse what percentage of people being consulted are providing feedback. In some circumstances, it is useful to simply ask the people involved in the process if the methods for providing feedback are appropriate.

However, it can be more effective to engage with those not providing feedback by providing an alternate communication forum. For example, if you notice that only certain people provide feedback during a meeting, it may be beneficial to circulate the meeting minutes for feedback via email, and provide an opportunity for those who are uncomfortable talking in a group setting to individually express their opinions.

When monitoring consultation processes, you need to identify whether the communication method ensures information is accessed in a reasonable time frame. For example, placing a memo on a staff room noticeboard will only ensure that it is seen by staff who use the staff room frequently. Ensuring the process includes two or more communication methods will increase the information distribution and feedback.

Considerations for monitoring consultation processes are outlined below:

People	Method	Time
Has the process included all people who should be involved in the consultation?	Is the method for delivering information and receiving feedback appropriate and effective?	Is the information and feedback being received within an acceptable time frame?

Ensure participation

Support workers are more likely to participate in WHS decisions and processes when they understand their legislative roles and responsibilities, and when their ideas are actively sought and thoughtfully addressed.

One way of increasing participation in WHS matters is to write consultation requirements into workplace contracts and discuss these requirements during the orientation process. This then outlines the expectation for workers to participate in the workplace, and creates the contractual requirement to enforce participation.

Workplace culture will also impact the participation of workers in WHS processes. To foster a workplace culture of participation, workers should be encouraged to ask WHS questions, raise concerns, report issues, make recommendations, and contribute to issue resolution processes.

Ways to provide workers with participation opportunities
• Ensure consultation takes place during a suitable time within normal work hours. • Ensure consultation occurs regularly during workplace meetings. • Allow for different methods to provide feedback.

Example
Monitor processes for ensuring that workers can contribute feedback on WHS issues

Jaydon works for a disability service provider and sits within the team responsible for developing and updating WHS procedures. The infection control procedure is due to be updated and requires several changes to comply with the latest industry advice.

Jaydon develops a draft of the new procedure and sends it out to all the workers that will be affected by the changes, requesting their feedback.

After two weeks, Jaydon has only received two emails providing the feedback he requested, so he discusses the issue with the service manager, Linh.

Linh explains to Jaydon that one email is probably not considered a 'reasonable opportunity' to particiapte in the process and suggests John run a few small information sessions to discuss the changes with staff members. Linh also recommends that John allows for an anonymous feedback form to be completed at the end of each session.

John discovers that this process is much more effective, and the results support changing the consultation process to include an information sheet, a face-to-face group-based discussion forum and a follow-up advisory email.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

Give three examples of why community service providers need to monitor feedback processes.

Question 2

Which of the following methods should workplaces use to ensure that workers participate in WHS consultative processes? Tick all that apply.

❑ Provide monetary incentives.

❑ Ensure workers understand their WHS roles and responsibilities.

❑ Ensure consultation occurs regularly during workplace meetings.

❑ Allow for different methods to provide feedback.

❑ Promote a culture of participation by encouraging workers to ask WHS questions and raise concerns.

2C Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers

Consultation records are a useful source of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the consultation requirements within the WHS legislation.

By law, consultation with duty holders does not have to be documented unless it is specifically required under the WHS regulations regarding high-risk hazards.

Consultation documentation can also be used as a communication tool to update workers on consultation outcomes.

Examples of consultation records may include:

- training records

- meeting minutes, agendas and action lists

- emails, memos and information sheets

- records relating to the HSR election process and the establishment and constitution of the HSC.

When documenting consultation processes, the records should contain clear, concise and transparent information, and report any outcomes of the consultation process.

Once documented, the consultation outcomes should then be circulated to everyone who was involved in the consultation process to update them on the progress of the process as shown below:

Consultation outcome reports should document
• The people involved in the process
• The relevant WHS issue
• The decision-making process
• What decisions were made
• Who is accountable for follow-up actions and time frames
• Any completed actions

Workplace communication

Workplace communication is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal information from one person to another. Effective communication increases the efficiency and productivity of a workplace and is also an important aspect of minimising and resolving disputes.

Some factors that influence workplace communication are outlined below:

Method	Information should be simple and clear and may be delivered by written information, visual demonstrations and audible instructions.
Content	The amount of information provided should be relevant, engaging and able to be understood by the audience.
Frequency	Depending on the nature of the content, the information may need to be delivered only once or many times over to achieve the desired result.
Skills	Getting a message across depends on the skills of the people giving and receiving the information. Literacy levels and learning styles need to be considered when planning communication in the workplace.

Example
Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers

Manu is responsible for coordinating the trial of a new brand of hoist in a residential aged care home and has been asked by his manager Evie to document the consultation process and outcomes.

Manu arranges for an equipment demonstration and information session and invites all of the support workers who may be affected by the change.

Manu keeps a record of everyone who attended the training. At the end of the equipment demonstration, Manu emails feedback forms and asks that the forms be returned within a fortnight.

At the end of the fortnight, Manu also emails a survey to everyone involved, asking for specific information around the storage, access, ease of use and whether the equipment meets the need of the workers.

Manu records the relevant issues regarding the new hoist, who was involved, what decisions were made, a summary of the feedback and the outcome of the trial. A copy of this document is then used to notify the workers that the equipment passed inspection and that Evie will be responsible for ordering the new hoists within a month.

Practice Task 7

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

Case study

Fabio is the manager of a community health centre. The centre recently had a tender process to replace all chairs in the clinic and reception areas. As part of the decision-making process, chairs from different suppliers were trialled by each department for a fortnight and then feedback from staff regarding each chair was collected and compared.

Question 1

Which of the following are records Fabio could keep during this process as evidence of consultation with workers? Tick all that apply.

❑ Training records for information sessions

❑ Meeting minutes, agendas and action lists

❑ Emails, memos and information sheets regarding the trial

❑ Employee files

❑ Worker feedback forms

Question 2

Describe three factors that will influence how Fabio communicates with his staff regarding this process.

Question 3

What information should Fabio record and then circulate to his service at the end of the process?

2D Develop and implement processes for responsibility and accountability

The WHS Act and regulations require that eliminating hazards and controlling risk are considered as early as possible when planning or designing products, structures, machinery, equipment or processes.

This **safe design** process ensures that processes are developed and implemented to document the responsibilities, duties and accountabilities of the workers involved.

When developing policies and procedures and a WHS action plan, you should adopt a safe design approach that begins at the concept development phase of a structure when you're making decisions about:

- the design and its intended purpose

- materials and equipment to be used

- possible methods of maintenance, operation and disposal

- what legislation, codes of practice and standards need to be considered and complied with.

> You can find more information on principles of safe design at: aspirelr.link/safe-design-basics

Safe design is a process during which hazard identification and risk assessment methods are used from the beginning of a concept or plan, to enhance the safety of the result.

When developing and implementing safe design processes, the following key elements of safe design should be considered:

Principles of safe design processes
Assigning responsibilities, duties and accountability to people who make decisions affecting the design process
Considering hazards and risks throughout the life cycle of the product or process
Applying hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control processes to the design

Safe design
Integrating hazard identification and risk assessment methods early in the design process to eliminate or minimise risks of injury.

Principles of safe design processes
Ensuring that the people who are in charge of the design have the required skills and competencies
Using effective communication and documentation throughout the design process

Example

Develop and implement processes to ensure documentation of responsibilities, duties and accountabilities

Celine is a senior support worker at a shared accommodation for people with disability. She has been nominated to be part of a small team of people to develop a procedure for equipment storage in the home. Unfortunately, at the last team meeting, two team members had completed work on the same thing without talking to the rest of the group. Not only had time been wasted by duplicating work, but the work produced did not take into account important safety considerations.

The team decided that the best way to overcome this issue was to draw up a project plan that documented the roles and responsibilities of each member and to arrange a weekly progress meeting.

Celine divided up the roles based on the expertise in the group and designed a meeting agenda and action list, naming the person responsible for completing key actions and the time frame they must do it in.

The team members also agreed that relevant hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control considerations should be discussed at every meeting.

By developing and implementing these processes, Celine's team effectively used principles of safe design when designing and writing their equipment storage procedure.

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Explain what safe design is and when should it be used by a service provider.

Question 2

List four principles of safe design processes that should be considered when developing and implementing workplace processes.

2E Implement and monitor WHS training programs

In your workplace, the PCBU has a duty of care to provide information, training and instruction to the workers so that they can safely carry out their work without risk to their health.

All work health and safety training should cover the type of work, associated hazards and risks and the safety measures, such as the use of PPE and emergency procedures, to manage workplace risk.

Training must be provided before a person starts a new role or task. Training must also be provided as routinely as skill maintenance requires and as a change of practice, legislation and guidelines require.

To ensure safe work practices are understood and followed, PCBUs have a duty of care to induct, train, supervise and provide instruction to workers so they can do their jobs safely.

This applies to all workers, including employees, casuals, labour-hire, contractors and volunteers. To contribute to compliance with WHS legislation in the service provider you work in, you may be required to provide workers, contractors, visitors or suppliers with information about common hazards in the workplace and how they should be managed.

Induction training

As part of your role, you may be involved in conducting a WHS induction session for new workers or explaining emergency procedures to visitors. These training sessions may include the following types of information:

- health and safety procedures and policies required for specific tasks, such as manuals and safety data sheets

- evacuation and other emergency procedures

- hazards that workers may be exposed to while working

- using, maintaining, storing and disposing of PPE

- hazard reporting and accident/incident/injury reporting procedures

- the organisation's alcohol and drug policy

- the organisation's relevant human resource policies, such as the code of conduct, communication and dispute resolution policy.

Task-specific training

Task-specific training should be carried out for each duty that will be performed by a worker and will often include a practical face-to-face component as well as written support materials, such as equipment or procedure manuals. Task-specific training ensures that the workers have the required skill competency and will use the correct technique to safely carry out each work task right from the beginning of their employment.

Task-specific training may include how to:

- operate a piece of equipment using the prescribed safe working procedure
- adopt the correct manual handling technique
- use PPE
- identify and control hazards using the prescribed procedure
- raise health and safety concerns.

Personal protective equipment training

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is clothing and equipment designed to protect workers from exposure to sources of harm. If your workplace supplies PPE, then by law you must use it. In the community services, PPE is often an important control for managing infectious disease.

All service providers will have an infection control policy and procedures to protect against biological hazards and the spread of communicable diseases. Good infection control assumes that everyone is potentially infectious and requires the use of PPE such as gloves, gowns and face masks, along with other important controls, such as hand hygiene and covering cuts and abrasions with waterproof dressings.

PPE used by service providers
• Hygienic disposable gloves
• Hygienic disposable overalls
• Hygienic disposable shoe covers
• Hygienic disposable face mask
• Hygienic protective eyewear

Video: PPE in aged care

The following video describes how and when to wear PPE in aged care:
aspirelr.link/yt-ppe-aged-care

Emergency procedure training

By law, your workplace must have a current emergency response plan that covers major incidents in the workplace. The plan must include all emergency procedures, the process for testing emergency procedures, and specific information, training and instructions for the workers involved in the emergency planning and response. Emergencies may include:

- fire or explosion

- violence and bomb threats

- chemical threats

- medical scenarios requiring treatment

- natural disaster.

You need to be familiar with the information contained in the emergency manual and any emergency procedures.

Your workplace may conduct regular drills to ensure employees maintain their understanding in responding to emergencies.

Community services emergency procedures

Emergency procedures should give clear and simple instructions about how to respond to emergencies, including how to safely evacuate people from that workplace.

When designing emergency procedures for community services, careful consideration and consultation should be made regarding:

- the size, layout and location of the place that work is being carried out

- the nature of the work being performed

- an assessment of all potential workplace hazards and the consequences of those hazards

- the number of workers and people they support in the workplace

- skill competency, training and equipment requirements

- allocation of roles and responsibilities.

WHS support services

There are many types of support available to help you and your team stay safe and healthy in the workplace. You may not always know whether one of your workers is experiencing mental health issues or illness. Even if you do, they may not want to speak openly about what they are going through but you can still help them get the support they need.

Consider the following for managers or workers in your workplace:

- free online mental health training for managers

- mental health and wellbeing programs

- programs to create positive workplace culture to build morale and encourage people to seek help early

- training and resources to help everyone build skills to stay well at work

- mental health support services with trained counsellors or psychologists

- peer support programs.

There are several hazards that can have a negative impact on your team. For example, office and desk-based activities feature across all areas of community services. Sedentary work, such as sitting at a desk, can be detrimental to both workers' wellbeing and general health. These negatives can impact their focus on working safely.

Each workplace is different though. You need to know what the hazards are in your service so that you can assess the risk they pose.

You can find more information about mental health support services and tools for the workplace at: aspirelr.link/mental-health-work-support

Example
Implement and monitor training programs to ensure WHS training requirements are addressed

Marco oversees fire safety and emergency management at the residential aged care home he works at. Marco's team has recently attended an information session on the fire evacuation procedure, including who is in charge, what communication is required, the building exit plan and the evacuation meeting point.

Marco knows that it is a WHS training requirement that all workplaces must conduct regular emergency response training drills, so he arranges a practice drill for his team and the residents.

Marco describes the simulation scenario to his team and then activates the fire alarm. The nominated fire wardens put on their hats, make a mock notification to the fire service department, alert the other sections of the building, and successfully perform the evacuation plan.

Marco records the training drill scenario, the names of the people who attended and the outcome of the training drill as evidence of compliance with the WHS training requirements.

Practice Task 9

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

Case study

Andre is the PCBU of a large aged care home. Under the WHS legislation, Andre must provide information, training and instruction to the workers at the home so that they can safely carry out their work without risk to their health and safety.

Question 1

Describe three situations that require Andre to provide training for the staff.

Question 2

Which of the following are required WHS policies for Andre's workplace? Select all that apply.

❑ Health and safety policies and procedures

❑ Emergency and evacuation procedures

❑ Staffroom cleaning schedule

❑ Using, maintaining and storing PPE

❑ Hazard reporting and accident/incident/injury reporting procedures

Question 3

Describe four factors that Andre should take into consideration when developing community services emergency procedures and training.

Summary

- The WHS legislation requires consultation, cooperation and communication in every work health and safety process, including the provision of activities.

- When developing activities to provide WHS advice, it is essential that the activity allows for the sharing of information and provides an avenue for participation and feedback.

- Processes for consultation should be monitored to meet the WHS Act and regulation requirements.

- Workers are more likely to participate in WHS decisions and processes when they understand their legislative roles and responsibilities, and when their ideas are actively sought and thoughtfully addressed.

- Consultation records must demonstrate compliance with the WHS legislation and can be used as a communication tool to update workers on consultation outcomes.

- The WHS Act and regulations require that eliminating hazards and controlling risk are considered as early as possible when planning or designing products, structures, machinery, equipment or processes.

- A key aspect of this safe design process is ensuring that processes are developed and implemented to document the responsibilities, duties and accountabilities of the workers involved.

- A PCBU has a duty of care to provide information, training and instruction to the workers so that they can safely carry out their work without risk to their health.

- All work health and safety training should cover the type of work, associated hazards and risks, and safety measures, such as the use of PPE and emergency procedures, to manage workplace risk.

- By law, the service provider where you work must have a current emergency response plan that covers major incidents in the workplace.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Facilitate consultation, cooperation and communication

Part A

1. Explain how the following factors influence the communication of consultative activities in the workplace.

    - Method

    - Content

    - Frequency

2. List five types of training that might be included in a service provider's induction program.

3. Which of the following PPE may be required for community services? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Disposable gloves

- ❑ Disposable overalls

- ❑ Disposable shoe covers

- ❑ Hard hats

- ❑ Protective eyewear

4. Which of the following WHS emergencies should be covered in the emergency procedures for the service? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Fire or explosion

- ❑ Violence and bomb threats

- ❑ Glass breakage

- ❑ Medical scenarios requiring treatment

- ❑ Natural disaster

5. Describe four examples of support services that can be applied to a community service setting.

Part B

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

> ## Case study
>
> Davide is a support worker for Home Help, an organisation that provides home support for eligible people who need assistance with showering, cleaning and shopping.
>
> Isolde, a fellow support worker at Home Help, had a significant manual handling incident last week and tore a muscle in her shoulder while assisting someone with showering.
>
> Areti is the local manager at Home Help and has been asked by the National Director, Genevieve, to investigate Isolde's incident and ensure that Davide and the other workers are not at risk of a similar injury.
>
> As part of the investigation, Genevieve has asked Areti to conduct a safety audit of the Home Help systems, including the consultation framework, training, and related documentation processes.

1. List four consultation activities that Areti might review to check for evidence of compliance with legislative consultation requirements.

2. Which of the following should the Home Help support workers have been consulted about regarding manual handing? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Identifying manual handling hazards

- ❑ Assessing manual handling risks

- ❑ Equipment manuals

- ❑ Implementing controls to eliminate manual handling risks

- ❑ Changes to working practices and systems

3. Explain three reasons why Genevieve thinks it is important for Areti to review Home Help's consultation and feedback processes.

4. Describe three Home Help consultation records Areti might review during her investigation.

5. What information might Areti find when she reviews the documented consultation outcomes? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Manual handling issues

- ❑ Which workers read the equipment manuals

- ❑ The decision-making process

- ❑ Who was accountable for follow-up actions and assigning time frames

- ❑ The actions that have been implemented to control manual handling risks.

6. List four types of evidence of safe design principles that Areti might find when reviewing the hazardous manual task policy.

7. Describe two types of evidence that Genevieve will need to find regarding manual handling training to demonstrate that Home Help complies with the WHS legislation training requirements.

**8.** Provide four types of evidence that Areti might find to prove that Davide, Isolde and the other workers have been allowed to participate in WHS processes.

Topic 3: Monitor compliance with risk control processes

3A Develop and communicate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures

3B Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes

3C Evaluate compliance of WHS record-keeping policies and procedures
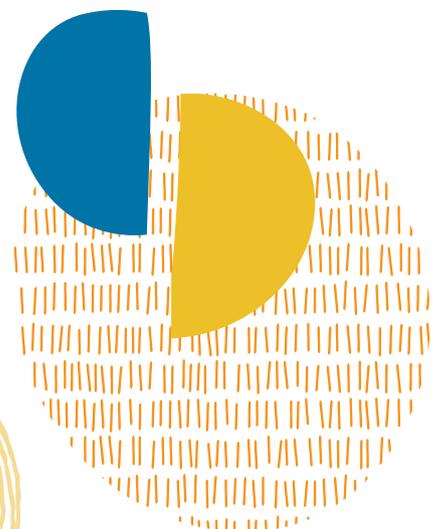
3A Develop and communicate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures

Record keeping is an important and mandatory requirement under WHS legislation.

Records provide valuable information on hazards, incidents and injuries that require investigation and further risk assessment and controls.

Your service provider will have record-keeping policies and procedures to comply with WHS legislation. By law, some WHS matters have mandatory **record-keeping** requirements and include specific instructions about the nature of the information that is recorded, how the information is stored and how long the records must be kept for.

It is important to develop WHS record-keeping policies and procedures to provide important information to workers regarding the documentation and reporting requirements of their role.

The record-keeping policies and procedures in your workplace may include a stand-alone document and instructional material that applies to a specific WHS issue and is therefore addressed within the policy or procedure outlining management of that WHS issue. For example, your workplace may have a policy regarding general record-keeping principles, archiving and storage of documents, and specific record-keeping instructions within the hazard identification procedure. This may be the use of a specific form that applies only to hazard identification.

When developing record-keeping policies and procedures, it is important to consider the record-keeping principles shown below:

General record-keeping principles
• Accountability – Ensure policies and procedures clearly delegate record-keeping responsibilities.
• Integrity – Use technology and processes that will ensure authentic and accurate information.
• Protection – Ensure that records adhere to privacy and confidentiality laws.
• Compliance – Ensure record-keeping processes meet legislative and regulatory requirements.
• Availability – Maintain records so that the information can be easily and accurately retrieved.
• Retention – Maintain records for the specified time frame.
• Transparency – The information in the records should be clear, concise and comprehensible.

Workplace incidents

A workplace incident is any set of circumstances that have taken place and resulted in an injury or illness, or could have resulted in an injury or illness. Incidents are categorised into groups based on the severity of the possible outcome.

All incidents must be recorded on an incident report form and reported to management as soon as possible. This includes scenarios where harm could have occurred but did not, as such information can be used to eliminate future risk from the identified hazards.

Here are the five categories of workplace incidents that should be recorded and reported to management:

Near miss	An incident or accident in which a person only just avoids being injured
Damage to equipment	A serious occurrence where equipment is damaged, but no-one is hurt
Minor injury	A less serious incident where someone was harmed, but may still indicate a more serious safety problem
Major injury	A serious incident that results in a worker's death, permanent disability or hospitalisation
Work-related travel injury	An injury that occurs while a worker is travelling to or from work

Incident reports

Employees must report any hazards, incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace. This involves completing an incident report form and submitting it to their supervisor as soon as possible.

The purpose of incident reports is to ensure that the organisation complies with policies, procedures and regulations relating to reporting, investigating and correcting incidents.

Incident reports provide the organisation with information about what kinds of injuries are occurring in the workplace and how they are caused. These may be investigated and then steps are taken to eliminate or minimise the risk of the incident recurring.

Analysing the information contained in an incident report also assists in finding those physical locations or work practices that present the most risk. These may then be addressed as a matter of priority.

Notifiable incidents

Notifiable incidents under the national work health and safety (WHS) laws are specific incidents that must be reported to their WHS regulator.

Notifiable incidents include:

- the death of a person

- a serious injury or illness, such as immediate treatment for a serious head injury

- a dangerous incident, such as the collapse of a structure.

The PCBU has a duty to inform the regulator immediately after they become aware of a notifiable incident occurring in, or as a result of, the business they are conducting. The PCBU must notify the regulator by the fastest means possible, whether it is via phone or in writing (such as email or an online form).

The regulator will need to know the following:

- an overview of the incident

- date and time it occurred

- where it occurred

- a detailed description of the incident

- details of the injured person

- how and where they are being treated

- the business's details

- actions taken

- details of the notifier.

If the regulator is notified by phone, they may also request a written account of the notifiable incident.

For further information on types of notifiable incidents, Safe Work Australia have put together an information sheet here: aspirelr.link/swa-incident-notification-sheet

Video: Notifiable incidents
Watch the following video to gain a deeper understanding of incident notification: aspirelr.link/yt-incident-notification

Example

Develop and communicate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures

Dinesh is the manager of a day centre that runs a range of activities for people with disabilities. He recently engaged Georgia, an external WHS consultant, to audit the record-keeping policies and procedures in his workplace.

Georgia reported that the service's record-keeping policies and procedures contained high-quality information regarding protection of privacy and compliance with legislation. However, Georgia also identified that key information on accountable persons and the integrity of the information was lacking.

Dinesh circulated Georgia's report to the health and safety committee (HSC) and requested that, firstly, the HSC develop an overarching record-keeping policy that documented how the service would ensure accountability, integrity, protection, compliance, availability, retention, disposition and transparency in all record-keeping processes.

Dinesh requested that, secondly, the committee update all WHS policies and procedures, such as the notifiable incident procedure, to include documented roles and accountability. Lastly, Dinesh requested that the HSC review record-keeping technology and processes, such as incident reporting forms, to ensure they are current and record accurate information.

The HSC worked in consultation with workers to update all the record-keeping policies and procedures as requested. By the end of their efforts Dinesh was satisfied that the updated policies and procedures were a valuable source of WHS information to all the workers at the day centre.

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Which of the following WHS issues in the workplace have mandatory record-keeping requirements? Tick all that apply.

❑ Workplace hazards

❑ Workplace incidents and injuries

❑ Employee records

❑ Notifiable incidents

❑ High-risk activities

Question 2

Briefly describe the legal requirements of a PCBU regarding notifiable incidents.

Question 3

List two things that are considered a notifiable incident under WHS legislation.

3B Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes

Under the model WHS Act, a PCBU has a responsibility to investigate incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace with the aim of preventing it from happening again.

The purpose of investigating incidents and injuries (and near misses) is to identify all the factors involved in the incident and to determine what strategies will address the issues and prevent a recurrence.

Hazard, incident and injury data becomes the evidence required to determine whether or not the WHS systems in a workplace are effectively minimising risk and reducing workplace incidents and injuries.

As community services are constantly changing, it is important to monitor hazard, incident and reporting processes in your workplace to maintain compliance with the legislative requirements.

Monitoring reporting processes

Noncompliance is the failure to follow the duties specified in the WHS Act or regulations, or the failure to achieve the same or a better standard of workplace health and safety than is described by relevant codes of practice.

You have an important role to play in identifying noncompliance in your workplace. The monitoring strategies used in your workplace will present you with opportunities to participate in this compliance process.

When monitoring incident and injury reporting processes, the factors shown below should be taken into account:

Incident and injury report monitoring factors
• The number of incidents being reported
• The nature and frequency of the incidents being reported
• The work groups who are, and are not, reporting incidents
• Identified deviations from policy and procedures
• The time frame in which the incidents are reported
• The quality of the information being reported
• The environment, plant and equipment involved
• The collection, analysis, use and storage of report data

Your role in monitoring compliance

Compliance
Ability to follow an order or a set of rules.

Your workplace should have a formal system in place that enables WHS **compliance** to be monitored regularly. This may include conducting biannual safety audits, observing specific safety measures through walk-through inspections, conducting WHS meetings to clarify procedures, checking the quality and currency of WHS information, and checking incident reports.

Work health and safety in the workplace should be everyone's priority. It is everyone's responsibility to participate in monitoring activities to ensure the workplace is safe.

Here are some ways that you can monitor your workplace's compliance with WHS legislation:

Monitoring workplace WHS compliance
• Check the service's safety system by doing walk-through inspections and a safety audit.
• Research and collect data to show evidence of compliance; for example, check audits, accident forms or feedback forms.
• Identify hazards, assess risks and make recommendations for controlling the hazards and risks.
• Report breaches of WHS procedures.
• Make sure actions arising from the health and safety committee meetings are carried out and reviewed to check they are effective.
• Confirm that accidents, incidents and near misses are being reported and dealt with appropriately.
• Stay up-to-date with WHS trends and developments by reading legislation, standards, and the latest advice from your WHS regulator.
• Check that records of consultation and risk management activities are being correctly maintained.

Use reporting processes in prevention strategies

The information contained in hazard, injury and incident reports should be used to identify potential causes of harm in the workplace and devise appropriate prevention strategies.

Each incident and injury report should be dealt with individually and as part of the bigger picture by analysing incident and injury trends in the workplace.

When devising injury and incident prevention strategies, you need to identify all of the factors involved and then analyse them in the context of:

• the relationship between the factors

• the work task

• the work environment.

Incident and injury report data should be considered when implementing the incident prevention strategies shown here:

Awareness	Workers should be advised of existing and potential hazards in the workplace and what risk management controls have been put in place.
Culture	A workplace culture of risk management and accountability should be promoted.
Competency	Ensure workers have the knowledge and skills to participate in WHS processes.
Systems	The systems of the workplace should ensure that the procedures and processes of the workplace are, as far as reasonably possible, without risk to the workers.

Example
Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes according to legislation

Stefan is the Work Health and Safety Consultant at a large aged care provider that runs a number of residential homes. As part of his role as the WHS consultant, Stefan investigates workplace hazard, incident and injury report data and applies it to the incident prevention strategies in his workplace.

Last month Stefan noticed a significant increase in incident and injury reports related to trips and falls at one particular aged care home.

Stefan individually investigated each incident, identifying the environment, and the task-specific and person-related factors that contributed to each incident. He analysed the trends in the data and discovered a clear contributing trend was blown light globes in the common stairwell and general areas.

Stefan consulted with the housekeeping department regarding the light globes and found out that the supply department had recently changed the brand of globes used and that the new globes appeared to be faulty.

The supply department contacted the supplier, who confirmed that a faulty batch was on recall and arranged to replace the faulty globes with a non-faulty product.

Stefan also arranged for each department manager at the home to notify their workers at the next staff meeting of the risk of trips and falls in poorly lit stairwells and walkways.

Stefan continues to monitor the incident report data to ensure that the chosen controls are effectively minimising trips and falls in the workplace.

Practice Task 11

Question 1

Briefly explain what responsibilities the PCBU has in investigating incidents in the workplace.

Question 2

Which of the following are ways that you can monitor workplace compliance with WHS legislation? Tick all that apply.

❑ Check the service's safety system by doing walk-through inspections and a safety audit

❑ Research and collect data to show evidence of compliance; for example, check audits, accident forms or feedback forms

❑ Ask staff to be careful and watch out for accidents

❑ Identify hazards and assess risks and make recommendations for controlling the hazards and risks

❑ Report breaches of WHS procedures

Question 3

Match each incident prevention strategy to its appropriate implementation.

Awareness	Ensure workers have the knowledge and skills to participate in WHS processes.
Culture	Workers should be advised of existing and potential hazards in the workplace and what risk management controls have been put in place.
Competency	The systems of the workplace should ensure that the procedures and processes of the workplace are, as far as reasonably possible, without risk to the workers.
Systems	A workplace culture of risk management and accountability should be promoted.

3C

Evaluate compliance of WHS record-keeping policies and procedures

Evaluation is a systematic approach to assessing the quality of a service and how well it achieves its proposed outcomes.

Evaluating the safety management systems of a workplace ensures that the systems are achieving compliance with the WHS legislations by creating a safe workplace.

When evaluating a system, there must be quality at each level of the system, including the policies, procedures, work instructions or practice. This includes the workplace records that provide evidence of the delivered outcomes of the system.

As the data from these records is essential for evaluating WHS systems, it is recommended that quality system documentation and evaluation is used to ensure that the recorded data accurately represents the existing WHS systems.

The quality of the evidence provided by the records will depend on the quality of the record-keeping policy and procedures. If record-keeping practices are inconsistent and inaccurate then the data taken from them will not accurately reflect the quality of the system, and be of little to no value in measuring the outcomes of the system.

Evaluate incident report data

Analysing data collected from incident, accident and near-miss reports can indicate whether WHS legislation is being complied with.

A reduction in the number of serious occurrences may demonstrate that procedures and management systems are effective. Other trends indicated in reports, such as the possibility that people are disregarding the need to wear PPE, can lead WHS specialists to identify where stricter procedures may need to be developed.

When analysing incident report data, it is important to consider the quality of the data that is being analysed. By evaluating the quality of the incident report data, you can ensure that the data accurately reflects the hazards and risk inherent to the work tasks and environment.

Quality system documentation

When evaluating the quality of incident report data, it is important to assess the information in terms of quality system documentation. Quality system documentation is a documentation hierarchy of the policies, procedures, practices and records of a workplace. This method requires assessing the quality of each level of the documentation hierarchy, from the record-keeping policy level through to the procedures, then practices and the records themselves. Poor quality at any level of this documentation system will impact the quality of the incident report data.

Each level of the documentation hierarchy should contain clear, concise and comprehensible information. Key aspects that contribute to quality at every level of the documentation hierarchy are identified below:

Policy	Should clearly outline how the organisation will comply with specific WHS legislation requirements.
Procedures	Should describe the methods that will be used to implement the policy, including assigning roles and responsibilities, where the task should be done and what documentation is required.
Practices	Should provide very detailed instruction to achieve consistency in how work tasks are to be carried out.
Records	Should be an accurate account of the workplace activities that have been completed to fulfil the requirements of the policy, procedures and practices. Records can be used to track deviation from policies, procedures and practices, and indicate where corrective action is required.

Example

Evaluate compliance of WHS record-keeping policies and procedures in line with legislation

Graeme is the manager of Calla Community Centre (CCC) and plays an active role in reviewing the workplace incident and injury report data. When analysing the workplace data from the past five years, Graeme notices that the number and nature of incidents is very inconsistent.

Graeme is concerned that, even though a new high-quality safety management system was implemented two years ago, there is no reportable trend to show a reduction in workplace incidents and injuries.

Graeme requests that Janelle, a quality management system expert, evaluates the WHS record-keeping data of CCC to determine whether it accurately reflects the safety management system the centre has put in place.

Janelle explains to Graeme that she cannot evaluate the report data in isolation as the policies, procedures, work practices and recording methods all contribute to the quality of the report data.

Janelle evaluates each component individually and identifies that the record-keeping work practices lack detailed instructions that would ensure consistency, which has created inconsistencies in the frequency and content of the data recorded.

Graeme updates the practice documents to include more detailed instructions. He notices that for the next 18 months the data is much more consistent. With this accurate data, Graeme identifies workplace trends and applies this information to incident prevention strategies at the Calla Community Centre.

Practice Task 12

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

Case study

Amelia is the director of an aged care provider that provides domestic support to older people who require assistance with making beds, cleaning and vacuuming in their home.

Six months ago, the service purchased and implemented a new incident management system that allows incident and injury reports to be submitted online. Once a report is submitted, a notification email is sent to Amelia so that she can investigate the incident and respond appropriately.

Amelia expected there to be an increase of incident reports with the introduction of the new system, but she has noticed a significant decline instead.

Amelia has requested that Joanne, the health and safety representative, evaluates the incident reporting system and finds out why the old and new incident data is so different.

Question 1

Which of the following are reasons Amelia needs accurate, high-quality incident and injury reporting data? Tick all that apply.

❑ Analysing data collected from incident, accident and near-miss reports can indicate whether WHS legislation is being complied with.

❑ A reduction in the number of serious occurrences may demonstrate that procedures and management systems are effective.

❑ Injury reporting data can help Amelia roster staff appropriately and account for any time off requests booked.

❑ Incident trends can lead WHS specialists to identify where stricter procedures may need to be developed.

❑ Information from incident and injury reports can be used to improve incident prevention strategies in the workplace.

Question 2

List three reasons why Joanne needs to evaluate the WHS record-keeping policies, procedures, practices and methods of her workplace.

Summary

- Your organisation will have record-keeping policies and procedures to comply with WHS legislation.

- You must be aware of the regulatory record-keeping requirements regarding workplace hazards, incidents and injuries; notifiable incidents; and high-risk activities such as working with asbestos, hazardous chemicals, lead, plant and confined spaces.

- Employees must record and report any hazards, incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace.

- A workplace incident is any set of circumstances that have taken place and resulted in an injury or illness or could have resulted in an injury or illness.

- Incidents are categorised into groups based on the severity of the possible outcome.

- A notifiable incident includes the death of a person, a serious injury or illness, or a dangerous incident.

- The PCBU has a duty to inform the regulator immediately after they become aware of a notifiable incident occurring.

- Under the model WHS Act, a PCBU has a responsibility to investigate incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace with the aim of preventing them from happening again.

- Managers must evaluate the record-keeping policies and procedures of a workplace to ensure that the WHS systems can be monitored based on accurate report data.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Monitor compliance with risk control processes

Part A

1. Which of the following are factors that should be considered when monitoring incident and injury report data? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ The number of incidents being reported

- ❑ The nature and frequency of the incidents being reported

- ❑ The work groups who are, and are not, reporting incidents

- ❑ Correct application of policy and procedures

- ❑ The quality of the information being reported

2. List four ways that incident and injury data can be used to influence incident prevention strategies.

3. Match each category of workplace incidents to its correct description.

Near miss	A serious incident that results in a worker's death, permanent disability or hospitalisation
Damage to equipment	A less serious incident where someone was harmed, but may still indicate a more serious safety problem
Minor injury	An incident or accident in which a person only just avoids being injured
Major injury	An injury that occurs while a worker is travelling to or from work
Work-related travel injury	A serious occurrence where equipment is damaged, but no-one is hurt

4. Briefly explain what quality system documentation is and how it can be applied to evaluating the WHS record-keeping system of a workplace.

Part B

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

> ### Case study
>
> Poh has been employed as the WHS consultant at Care-Car, a community-based company that meets transport needs in the community. It provides transport to and from medical appointments.
>
> Bryce is the manager of Care-Car and is responsible for a team of drivers and reception staff.
>
> Last week a very serious incident occurred when Simon, one of the drivers at Care-Car, turned a blind corner in the car park and hit a pedestrian.
>
> The pedestrian was taken by ambulance to the hospital where she required several operations and will likely need an extensive period of rehabilitation.
>
> The concerning factor Bryce identified in the incident report was that the incident location was referred to as 'the blind corner in the car park.' When the incident was discussed at the next staff meeting, many workers volunteered stories of near-misses they have had in that same location.

1. By WHS law, what immediate and follow-up actions should Simon have taken as soon as this incident occurred?

2. By WHS law, list four immediate and follow-up actions that Bryce should have taken as soon as he became aware of this incident.

3. Describe two kinds of information the workers at Care-Car should be able to find in their WHS record-keeping policies and procedures.

4. Describe five ways that Poh can monitor Care-Car's hazard, incident and injury reporting processes to meet legislative requirements.

5. Give two reasons why correct implementation of the WHS monitoring system could have prevented the 'blind corner' hazard.

Topic 4: Evaluate and maintain WHS

4A Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group

4B Develop a WHS Action Plan considering priorities, training needs and potential barriers

4C Monitor achievement against the plan and update plan as required
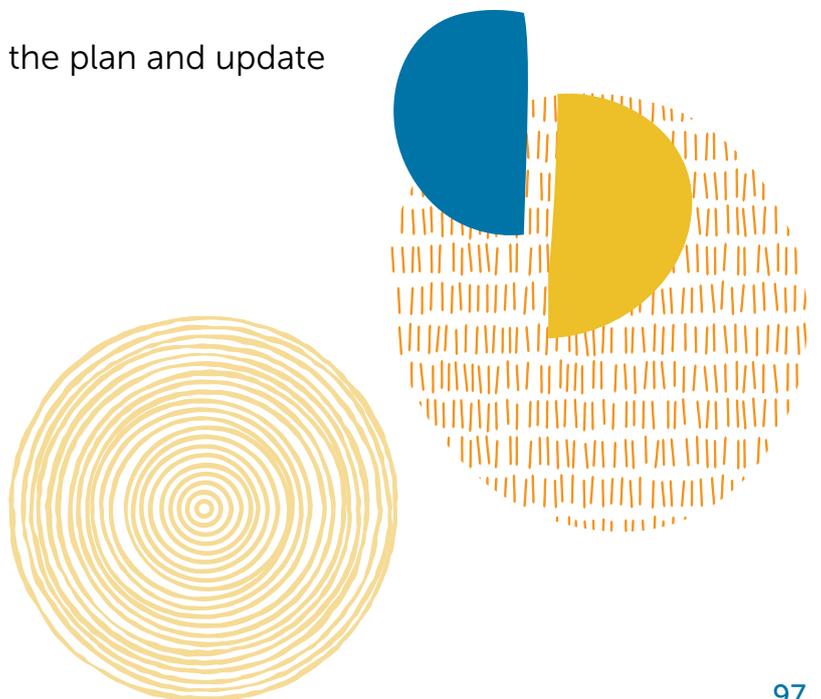
4A Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group

The process for determining WHS priorities should be done in consultation with the work group affected by the WHS matters.

Your workplace should have a systematic and continuous improvement approach towards WHS matters. Each workplace should establish WHS priorities in consultation with the workers, and develop and implement a WHS Action Plan that addresses the WHS priorities and training needs of that workplace.

In your workplace, there will likely be many WHS matters that warrant the investment of time and resources. All workplaces must face the challenge of deciding the order in which all the identified WHS matters are to be dealt with.

Involving workers in this consultation process is essential for meeting WHS legislative consultation requirements, establishing a workplace culture that promotes health and safety, and ensuring that workers' valuable first-hand experience and opinions are factored into the decision-making process.

Consider the following factors when determining WHS priorities:

WHS legislative requirements	The model WHS Act and regulations set out the framework and requirements that a workplace must adhere to in order to establish a safe workplace. The very first consideration in WHS prioritisation should always be compliance with the legislation, as this provides the foundation for all other WHS systems.
Risk assessment and control	Risk management is the fundamental principle that governs all WHS decisions. Every WHS requirement aims to create a workplace where, as far as reasonably practicable, the risk is eliminated or managed. When establishing WHS priorities, it is essential that priority is given based on the magnitude of the associated risk. A risk assessment matrix can be used to establish a risk rating and prioritise accordingly.
Reasonably practicable controls	The WHS legislation specifies that risk must be managed wherever reasonably practicable. This means that the time and resources spent on WHS priorities must be achievable within the available budget and be considered to be a reasonable practice. For this reason, WHS priorities will often be influenced by assigning priority to the WHS control that is cost-efficient, acceptably manages risk, and meets the operational needs of the workplace.

Consulting with the work group on WHS priorities

The WHS priorities in each workplace may differ with respect to the main identified hazards; however, as a general rule, many of the WHS priorities will remain the same.

As the WHS priorities of a workplace aim to address the legislative requirements of that workplace, most of the priorities will directly reflect key requirements of the WHS legislation. It is important to note that each workplace must address each of these priorities in its own individual way, tailored to the needs of the workers and the work tasks.

Common WHS priorities include developing, implementing and monitoring:

- WHS policies, procedures and practices
- a consultation framework to meet WHS consultation and participation requirements
- a workplace induction and training program
- hazard, incident and injury record-keeping and reporting policies, procedures and practices
- hazard identification, assessment and control policies, procedures and practices
- risk management plan for identified industry-specific high-risk hazards, e.g. manual handling
- contractor management
- emergency response plan, policies, procedures, practices, training and drills.

Involving workers in the process of establishing WHS priorities complies with the legislative requirement of a PCBU to consult with workers before making decisions regarding identifying hazards; assessing risks; implementing controls, changes to work practices and systems; and designing, implementing, reviewing and updating policies.

Workers have first-hand knowledge and experience of the operational nature of their work tasks. This experience and knowledge means workers have valuable insight into common workplace hazards, the likely frequency of an incident occurring, and potential control measures to effectively manage risk, while not interfering with the completion of the work task.

It is often best to establish WHS priorities with the workers in the context of a WHS Action Plan. The consultation process for this plan will uncover valuable information about contributing environmental, people-related and task-specific factors that will aid future planning.

Here are some more benefits of consulting with workers:

Benefits of consulting workers in the process of establishing WHS priorities
• Comply with WHS legislative consultation requirements.
• Raise awareness of WHS issues in the workplace.
• Raise awareness of the incident and injury management processes.
• Promote a culture of proactive health and safety behaviours.
• Identify key workplace hazards based on task-specific knowledge and experience.
• Identify solutions that will increase the efficiency of the work processes.

Example
Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group

Anthony is the manager of a community support team that provides support services directly to a person's home in the community. Last week Anthony received an incident report advising that Sandra, a support worker, had been attacked by a dog during one of her home visits.

When investigating the incident, Anthony discovers that there was a range of contributing factors, including a lack of safety procedures at the client's home and a lack of identified training and medical response needs.

Anthony decides that the best way to handle the issue is to request that Sandra and the other workers help him to identify the WHS needs in home support services and prioritise those needs.

Together, Anthony and the support workers map out and prioritise all of the WHS issues that arise in home support services.

By involving the workers, Anthony has gained valuable insight into operational hazards and risks that he was not previously aware of. The discussion process also raised awareness among the support workers about workplace risk, and provided the workers with an opportunity to participate in the risk management process.

Practice Task 13

Question 1

List two factors that influence WHS priorities in the community services environment.

Question 2

Which of the following are common WHS priorities in a workplace? Tick all that apply.

❑ Consultation framework to meet WHS consultation and participation requirements

❑ Workplace induction and training program

❑ Hazard, incident and injury record-keeping and reporting policies, procedures and practices

❑ Job descriptions and employee files

❑ Emergency response plan, policies, procedures, practices, training and drills

Question 3

Describe five benefits of consulting with workers to establish WHS priorities.

4B Develop a WHS Action Plan considering priorities, training needs and potential barriers

A WHS Action Plan is a document that outlines how WHS requirements are integrated into the applicable policies, procedures and practices of a workplace to address the identified WHS priorities.

Like any quality improvement process, implementing the WHS improvements in the WHS Action Plan will require addressing barriers to improvement in the workplace.

Your WHS Action Plan should be a live document that can be updated as the plan is monitored, and corrective actions are required.

The plan should enable a systematic approach to WHS, allow clear documentation of important WHS processes and be a means to track the progress of important WHS initiatives. The size and scope of the plan will depend on the size of the workplace and the level of risk associated with the nature of the work tasks being performed.

The WHS Action Plan will typically include the relevant legislation, codes of practice and industry standards; the scope of the plan; roles; responsibilities; consultation methods; identified hazards and risk management strategies; incident reporting; training requirements; and methods for monitoring, reviewing and adapting the plan to the needs of the workplace.

Address WHS priorities and training needs

The primary function of any WHS Action Plan is to address the main identified safety issues in the workplace, including WHS training requirements.

The priority safety issues should be individually listed, followed by a list of any applicable legislation, codes of practice, guidelines or resources, the intended actions of the workplace to address the issues, the responsible person, the intended time frame for completion, and the intended review date.

Examples of key safety issues for workplaces:

- ❑ WHS policies
- ❑ Consultation in the workplace
- ❑ Hazard, incident and injury reporting
- ❑ Risk management of major workplace hazards
- ❑ WHS training needs

The WHS Action Plan should include the overall training plan for the workplace and the individual training requirements for each identified hazard noted in the plan.

The training plan should address the frequency, structure, content, skill competency and persons responsible for the training programs.

As workplace induction is an important legislative requirement, it is often listed separately from general training in the WHS Action Plan and has its own intended course of action.

You can find an example template of a WHS Action Plan at: aspirelr.link/whs-safety-management-plan

Example
Develop a WHS Action Plan considering priorities and training needs

Martine is the WHS Consultant for the Community Allied Health Service team. The Health and Safety Committee (HSC) recently established and prioritised the main workplace WHS issues, in consultation with the allied health workers. The HSC realised that, to address all of the identified WHS priorities, they will need a WHS Action Plan. They requested that Martine act as the Project Manager for coordinating the development and implementation of the plan.

Martine searches on the regulator's website and finds a draft community services WHS Action Plan that the allied health team can tailor to their needs. Martine updates the WHS Action Plan to include all of the identified hazards and WHS priorities, and assigns responsibility to the HSC members and team leaders to be in charge of different sections of the plan.

The main sections of the plan include: WHS Policies, Consultation in the Workplace, Hazard, Incident and Injury Reporting, Risk Management of Major Workplace Hazards, Emergency Response Management, and WHS Training Needs.

For each section of the plan, the accountable person develops a set of follow-up actions, including specific outputs and set time frames.

Martine arranges for the team to meet once a month to track the progress of the WHS Action Plan and to ensure that the identified priority safety strategies are being acted on.

Develop procedures for emergency situations

PCBUs must ensure that an emergency plan is prepared for the workplace, including for workers who may work at multiple workplaces.

An emergency plan is a written set of instructions that outlines what workers and others at the workplace should do in an emergency. An emergency plan must provide for the following:

- emergency procedures, including an effective response to an emergency

- evacuation procedures

- notifying emergency service organisations at the earliest opportunity

- medical treatment and assistance, and effective communication between the person authorised to coordinate the emergency response and all people at the workplace

- testing of the emergency procedures, including the frequency of testing, and information, training and instruction to relevant workers in relation to implementing the emergency procedures.

You can find more information about WHS emergency plans from Safe Work Australia at: aspirelr.link/swa-emergency-plans-fact-sheet

Video: Emergency situations
Watch the following video to learn about managing and responding to emergency situations in the workplace: aspirelr.link/yt-emergency-procedures

Identify potential barriers to improvement

To develop a successful strategy for workplace improvement, you must first identify and understand the potential barriers to change.

Change in any workplace is an inconvenient and disruptive process — even when implementing an improved way of operating. When dealing with barriers to change, you need to understand that you may be dealing with personal beliefs and behaviours that may not always be rational or understood by those who hold them.

Change should take place in an achievable and worthwhile sequence of practical steps. The more factors that are involved, the more likely the intended change will be unsustainable.

Potential barriers

Barriers to change can be categorised into five groups based on the factor causing the resistance to the change process.

The contributing factors to barriers to improvement are outlined below:

Comprehension	**Awareness and knowledge**
	Awareness and understanding are essential first steps in any change process. Being unaware of what needs to change and not understanding why it should change is a common barrier to improvement.
Motivation	**A drive to change behaviours**
	An individual will not be motivated to change unless their current circumstances are more uncomfortable than the proposed change, or unless they fear the current circumstances more than the proposed change. Alternatively, a person will be motivated to change if the incentive is large enough to cause them to desire the change that will result in them attaining that incentive.
Beliefs	**An individual's beliefs and attitudes**
	An individual's beliefs will influence the way they behave. If they believe that the proposed change is not worth the effort or financial cost required to achieve the change, then they will resist the change process.
Skills	**The ability to implement change**
	If an individual does not have the skills or coping strategies required to implement a proposed improvement, then they will resist the proposed change.
Logistics	**Practical, financial, and political challenges**
	Lack of time, money, resources, equipment, infrastructure, scope and priority can also be barriers to improvement.

Strategies to identify and counteract barriers

Once you have identified barriers to change (preferably early on), you can then devise strategies to successfully overcome those barriers in a consultative and supportive way.

Here are some methods you can use to overcome barriers to improvement in your workplace:

Talk to key people	Talking to key people who will be affected by a change is a quick and inexpensive way to gain an understanding of particular benefits and potential problems that may arise as a direct result of the change.
Observe current practice	Observing the issue you wish to improve provides insight into the current workplace behaviours and factors involved; this can be done informally or as a workplace audit.
Interview people involved	Conducting face-to-face interviews or using a questionnaire is a good way to capture information on the beliefs, behaviours and knowledge of a work group.
Mind mapping	Presenting an issue and allowing the people affected to map potential solutions to the problem is a powerful way to identify current beliefs, behaviours and knowledge. This method often discloses the best motivation to use when building a case for change.
Focus groups	Conducting a facilitated group conversation using open questions can provide a solid evaluation of the range of beliefs, behaviours and knowledge within a work group.

Example
Identify potential barriers to improvement

Lana is the supervisor of the community equipment scheme, a warehouse responsible for the distribution, collection and maintenance of loan medical equipment, such as raised chairs and shower stools.

Ralph, a worker at the warehouse, approached Lana last week with a great idea for improving workflow and decreasing manual handling risk. Ralph suggested that they relocate all the heavier items to the large storage area located closer to the equipment pick-up entrance.

Lana talks to some of the key people that would be affected by the change and realises that there are some barriers to the improvement that will need to be addressed and overcome.

In her discussions with the workers, Lana identifies that the two main barriers to change are the lack of awareness of the need to change and concern for the way implementing the change will interrupt the service.

Lana arranges a focus group discussion at the next staff meeting and, through a range of directed questions, allows the team to discuss the current manual-handling risk and inconvenience of collecting the large equipment from the back of the warehouse. The team members quickly engage with the need to address the risk to themselves and other workers.

Everyone agrees that the equipment needs to be relocated and they are happy to assist once Lana suggests closing the service for the morning and rostering extra staff to help rearrange the warehouse.

By identifying and addressing the barriers to change, Lana successfully implemented and sustained an improvement in her workplace.

Practice Task 14

Question 1

Describe what a WHS Action Plan outlines.

Question 2

Which of the following information can typically be found in a WHS Action Plan? Tick all that apply.

❑ Applicable legislation, codes of practice and industry standards

❑ Key roles and responsibility

❑ Job descriptions

❑ Consultation methods

❑ Identified hazards and risk management strategies and incident reporting

Question 3

How should the WHS Action Plan address training needs in the workplace?

Question 4

Explain who is responsible for preparing an emergency plan in the workplace.

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

Case study

Kaveh works as the practice manager of Sunshine General Medical Practice. Kaveh has noticed that in the past six months, the reception workers at the practice have reported a significant increase in calls relating to clarifying appointment times and rescheduling missed appointments.

Kaveh discusses the issue with Zoey and Alfred, the owners of the practice, who suggest that the practice switches to a new client management system that can generate client appointment letters and send automated appointment reminder text messages to mobile phones.

Zoey and Alfred put Kaveh in charge of consulting with the reception staff and implementing the new system.

Question 5

Give four barriers to change that Kaveh may need to identify and overcome.

Question 6

Which of the following are strategies that Kaveh can use to identify and overcome barriers to the new client management system? Tick all that apply.

- ❑ Talking to key people
- ❑ Observing current practice
- ❑ Canvassing passers-by
- ❑ Mind mapping
- ❑ Holding focus groups

4C Monitor achievement against the plan and update plan as required

The aim of the WHS Action Plan is to ensure that the WHS outputs, such as the control measures, risk management processes, and emergency preparedness, are delivered within the planned time frame.

A key element of successful project management is monitoring achievement against planned progress. Senior management and the HSC, or the HSRs, team leaders and key workers should form a work group to be responsible and accountable for the progress of the WHS Action Plan. The work group should meet at regular intervals to track the progress of the plan.

In order to be monitored, the WHS Action Plan must first have clear objectives and measurable performance indicators.

Factors required to monitor the progress of the WHS Action Plan are listed below:

- Established objectives

- Delegated actions and assigned accountability

- Specified time frames

- Established performance measures

- Processes for collecting and analysing performance measure data

Monitor achievements against WHS Action Plan

Your WHS Action Plan should have established performance indicators to measure the objectives of the plan.

Performance indicator
A set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge long-term performance.

A **performance indicator** is a measurable value that can be used to determine how effective an organisation is at achieving its target outputs or objectives. These measures should be gathered at planned intervals through audits, routine checks, workplace inspections and testing.

A performance matrix, which outlines the objective and the performance measure, may be useful to help track the actual to planned performance completion of action items.

Injury reduction	• Compare the total cost of workers compensation claims for the current quarter with the same period from the past two years
Hazardous substances	• Percentage of hazardous substances with an up-to-date SDS
Manual handling	• Number of training sessions delivered • Percentage of the total number of workers trained
WHS policy awareness	• Number of policies developed and approved • Number of workers signed off on reading policy
Electrical safety	• Number of pieces of equipment tagged and tested within the time frame
Fire safety	• Number of drills completed successfully • Number of workers involved in a training drill
Risk management	• Number of hazard assessments completed • Number of controls implemented

Update WHS Action Plans

The development of the WHS plan should be an iterative process. An iterative process is a continuous improvement process of repetitive cycles of analysis and updates.

At each new review cycle, analysis of performance measure data will indicate whether or not the plan is successfully achieving the workplace objectives and indicate if there is the need for corrective action.

As the workplace is constantly changing, the WHS Action Plan must be able to be updated as a change in legislation, practice or need requires. The WHS Action Plan should be reviewed and updated at scheduled intervals after analysis of performance measure data, following an investigation into a workplace incident or a change in legislation requires.

The review process should identify the breakdown of WHS processes and barriers to achieving planned progress. The review should generate recommendations for system improvements and then those corrective actions should be implemented into the WHS Action Plan.

Example

Monitor achievement against the plan and update the plan as required

Dante works as the HSR for Anslee Aged and Community Care and attends the monthly health and safety committee (HSC) meeting.

Three months ago, Dante was assigned the responsibility of following up on the Hazardous Substances section of the WHS Action Plan. Dante was also required to update all the safety data sheets (SDSs) for every chemical used at the service.

Dante is behind schedule for updating the SDS and has only updated half of the sheets, compared to the planned progress of having completed the job by now.

At the next HSC meeting, Dante reports on his SDS progress and raises the concern that the committee is not monitoring the progress of the WHS Action Plan.

The HSC addresses Dante's concerns by setting performance indicators for each section of the plan and scheduling reviews at planned intervals through audits, routine checks, workplace inspections and testing.

Not only do the performance measures allow the HSC to monitor the achievement against planned progress, but the performance measure data analysis also allows the HSC to identify necessary corrective actions and update the WHS Action Plan as required.

Practice Task 15

Question 1

List four factors that are required to monitor the progress of a WHS Action Plan.

Question 2

Match each risk being monitored to its performance measure.

Injury reduction	Percentage of the total number of workers trained
Hazardous substances	Number of drills completed successfully
Manual handling	Percentage of hazardous substances with an up-to-date SDS
Fire safety	Number of hazard assessments completed
Risk management	Compare the total cost of workers compensation claims for the current quarter with the same period from the past two years
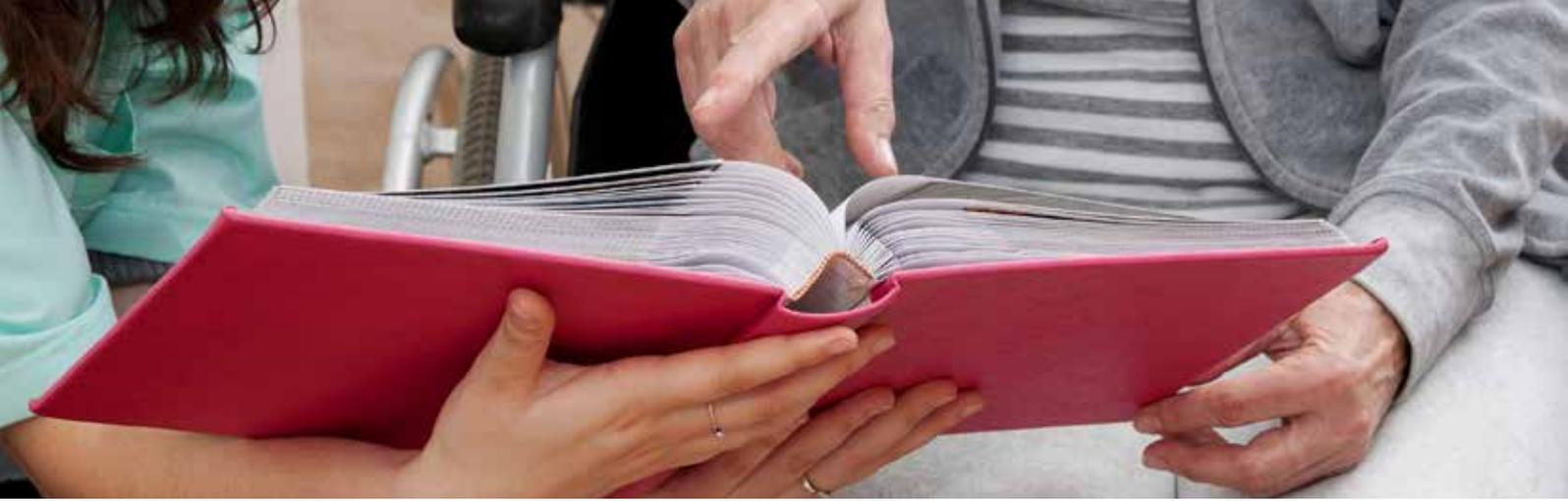
Summary

- All workplaces must face the challenge of establishing and prioritising WHS matters.

- The process for determining WHS priorities should be done in consultation with the work group affected by the WHS matters.

- Involving workers in the process of establishing WHS priorities is essential for meeting WHS legislative consultation requirements, and establishing a workplace culture that promotes health and safety.

- A WHS Action Plan is a document that outlines how WHS requirements are integrated into the relevant policies, procedures and practices of a workplace to address the identified WHS priorities.

- The WHS Action Plan will typically include the applicable legislation; codes of practice and industry standards; the scope of the plan; roles; responsibilities; consultation methods; identified hazards and risk management strategies; incident reporting; training requirements; and methods for monitoring, reviewing and adapting the plan to the needs of the workplace.

- The WHS Action Plan should list each WHS priority individually, followed by any applicable legislation, codes of practice, guidelines or resources, and the intended actions of the workplace to address the issues, the responsible person, the intended time frame for completion and the intended review date.

- To develop a successful strategy for workplace improvement, you must first identify, understand and overcome the potential barriers to change.

- Common barriers to improvement include poor awareness and knowledge; lack of motivation to change; beliefs and attitudes; lack of skills; and practical, financial and political challenges.

- As the workplace is constantly changing, it is important that the WHS Action Plan is monitored and able to be updated as a change in legislation, practice or need requires.

Learning Checkpoint 4

Evaluate and maintain WHS

Part A

1. Provide four types of information regarding workplace training that should be included in a WHS Action Plan.

2. Describe how motivation can impact workplace change.

3. Describe three things that must be outlined in an emergency plan.

4. List two potential WHS Action Plan objectives and an appropriate performance measure for each.

Part B

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

Case study

Emma is the chief executive officer of Real-time Meal-time, a community service provider that delivers frozen meals to people living in the community. The company recently experienced a huge growth with the acquisition of two smaller industry competitors.

Real-time Meal-time now faces the challenge of streamlining the WHS systems from its three branches and ensuring all workers are familiar with the WHS policies, procedures and practices at Real-time Meal-time.

Emma and her officers agree that there are going to be many competing WHS issues and training needs that will have to be addressed in the coming months.

1. Which of the following are ways that Emma and her officers could use to prioritise WHS issues? Tick all that apply.

   ❑ Consulting with workers

   ❑ Keeping a record of meals delivered

   ❑ Identifying and addressing the legislative requirements of that workplace

   ❑ Identifying and addressing major risks in the workplace

   ❑ Considering Real-time Meal-time's available resources and how they can be used most effectively to achieve a safe workplace

2. Describe two reasons why it is important for Emma to consult with workers when identifying and prioritising WHS issues.

3. Explain four of the benefits that may be gained by involving Real-time Meal-time workers in the process of identifying WHS priorities.

4. List the steps Emma and her officers should take to develop and monitor a WHS action plan for Real-time Meal-time.

5. List three methods Emma might use to identify barriers to improvement.

6. Explain why Emma would use mind mapping as an activity to facilitate improvements at the service.

7. Provide three occasions when Real-time Meal-time's WHS Action Plan should be monitored and updated.

8. Describe how Emma will know that the objectives of the WHS Action Plan are being achieved.

Glossary

Code of conduct

A set of rules that informs employees how to act in a workplace.

Codes of practice

A document providing practical guidance on how to comply with duties in a workplace.

Compliance

Ability to follow an order or a set of rules.

Consultative process

Asking for and recognising all employees' views when making decisions.

Duty of care

A moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of other persons.

Hazard

A source or a situation with the potential for causing harm, damaging humans, property and/or the environment.

Industry standards

The minimal accepted requirements followed by the members of that industry.

Infection control

Measures undertaken to prevent and minimise the level of identification in a healthcare environment.

Performance indicator

A set of quantifiable measurements used to gauge long-term performance.

Record keeping

The act of documenting the history of a person's or organisational activities.

Regulatory requirements

The rules and laws that a government entity imposes on an organisation.

Risk

The probability and consequences of injury, illness or damage resulting from exposure to a hazard.

Risk analysis

The process of identifying and analysing potential issues that could negatively impact people or projects.

Risk assessment

Determining the likelihood a hazard will cause harm, injury or ill-health and determining its possible consequences.

Safe design

Integrating hazard identification and risk assessment methods early in the design process to eliminate or minimise risks of injury.