

# **BSBWHS501**

# **Ensure a safe workplace**

Release 1

**Learner guide**

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Aspire Version 1.1

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# Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBWHS501 Ensure a safe workplace*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

## How to work through this learner guide

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

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



## Foundation skills

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

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

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organises, evaluates and critiques ideas and information from WHS legislation, policies, procedures and programs</li> </ul>
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produces WHS policies, procedures and programs using appropriate vocabulary, grammatical structure and conventions to produce</li> <li>Records WHS decisions according to organisational requirements</li> </ul>
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presents and seeks information from others using structure and language suitable for the audience</li> <li>Provides information on resolution of WHS issues varying level of technical vocabulary to suit audience</li> </ul>
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selects from, and applies, an expanding range of mathematical and problem solving strategies in identifying financial and human resources required</li> </ul>
Navigate the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitors adherence to legal and regulatory rights and responsibilities for self and others in relation to WHS</li> <li>Takes responsibility for developing, implementing and reviewing policies, procedures and processes in accordance with organisational and legislative requirements</li> </ul>
Interact with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plays a lead role in situations requiring effective collaboration demonstrating the ability to guide discussions and negotiate agreeable outcomes</li> <li>Provides feedback to others in forms they can understand and use</li> </ul>
Get the work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops plans or processes to manage relatively complex, WHS management tasks with an awareness of how they contribute to operational and strategic goals</li> <li>Uses systematic, analytical processes, setting goals, gathering relevant information, and identifying and evaluating options against agreed criteria</li> <li>Considers whether, and how, others should be involved, using consultative or collaborative processes as an integral part of the decision-making process</li> <li>Uses digital systems and tools to enter, store and retrieve relevant information</li> </ul>

## 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 and maintain a WHS management system in a work area	1A Locate and communicate WHS policies	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Identify duty holders and define WHS responsibilities in the work area	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Identify and approve resources required by the WHS management system	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Establish and maintain participation arrangements in a work area	2A Set up and maintain participation arrangements according to legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Resolve issues raised through participation arrangements and consultation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Provide information about participation and consultation outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Establish and maintain procedures for hazard and risk control in a work area	3A Develop procedures for hazard identification and risk control	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Ensure new hazards are not created from proposed changes in the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Select and implement risk control measures	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3D Identify inadequacies and provide resources to implement new risk control measures	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3E Identify and act on requirements for expert WHS advice	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Key outcome</b>	<b>Rate your confidence in each section</b>
Topic 4 Evaluate and maintain a work area WHS management system	4A Develop and provide a WHS induction and training program for all workers	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4B Maintain WHS records to identify patterns of occupational injury and disease	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4C Measure and evaluate the WHS management system	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4D Develop and implement improvements to the WHS management system	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4E Ensure compliance with WHS legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

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# Topic 1

## Establish and maintain a WHS management system in a work area

Commonwealth, state and territory Work Health and Safety (WHS) Acts provide a framework to protect the health and safety of all Australian workers. Health and safety regulations and codes of practice provide practical guidance on how to meet the standards set out in WHS Acts.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Locate and communicate WHS policies
- 1B Identify duty holders and define WHS responsibilities in the work area
- 1C Identify and approve resources required by the WHS management system

## 1A

## Locate and communicate WHS policies

Workplaces should have detailed WHS policies and procedures, which all workers must be familiar with and able to access. These policies and procedures should be based on the latest WHS legislation, regulations and codes of practice, and updated regularly in line with any changes to these.

## WHS legislation

WHS legislation was enacted nationally in January 2012 with the implementation of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth). This Act replaced the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (Cth) and individual state/territory health and safety Acts. Currently (as at June 2015), all states and territories have adopted the new Act, except Western Australia and Victoria.

Here is information on the WHS legislation in each state and territory.

<b>Commonwealth</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Cth)
<b>ACT</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>
<b>NSW</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>
<b>NT</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>
<b>QLD</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i>
<b>SA</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012</i>
<b>TAS</b>	<i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012</i>
<b>Vic</b>	<i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i> (Vic.)
<b>WA</b>	<i>Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984</i> (WA)

## National framework

The main objective of the new legislation is to provide a nationally consistent WHS framework and compliance and enforcement policies.

WHS legislation is designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of all people in the workplace. You should be aware of, and know how to access, current WHS legislation and other WHS documentation relevant to your specific workplace, occupation and industry. 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. Your role as a manager or supervisor means that you have a legal duty to be aware of the legislation, regulations, codes of practice and other WHS requirements that apply in your workplace and to ensure compliance. This may include providing advice to others about WHS obligations.



## WHS regulators

WHS legislation requires employers to provide a safe workplace and adequate training and supervision in relation to workplace health and safety. They also require them to control workplace hazards and risks.

You can read more about the national body for WHS, Safe Work Australia, at: [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au).

Here is an example of the state and territory WHS regulators.

<b>Commonwealth</b>	<b>Comcare</b>	<a href="http://www.comcare.gov.au">www.comcare.gov.au</a>
<b>ACT</b>	<b>WorkSafe ACT</b>	<a href="http://www.worksafe.act.gov.au">www.worksafe.act.gov.au</a>
<b>NSW</b>	<b>WorkCover NSW</b>	<a href="http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au">www.workcover.nsw.gov.au</a>
<b>NT</b>	<b>NT WorkSafe</b>	<a href="http://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au">www.worksafe.nt.gov.au</a>
<b>QLD</b>	<b>WorkCover Queensland</b>	<a href="http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au">www.worksafe.qld.gov.au</a>
<b>SA</b>	<b>SafeWork SA</b>	<a href="http://www.safework.sa.gov.au">www.safework.sa.gov.au</a>
<b>TAS</b>	<b>WorkSafe Tasmania</b>	<a href="http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au">www.worksafe.tas.gov.au</a>
<b>Vic</b>	<b>WorkSafe Victoria</b>	<a href="http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au">www.worksafe.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>WA</b>	<b>WorkSafe WA</b>	<a href="http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe">www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe</a>

## Maintain a safe workplace

Regulations support WHS legislation by stating requirements, duties and procedures that apply to specific areas of work. Some regulations apply to all workplaces, while others apply to specific industries or tasks. Regulations specify how some duties under the WHS Act must be met and also the procedural or administrative processes that must be in place.

Regulations that are in place to maintain a safe work environment cover the following areas.

### Regulations to maintain a safe workplace

- Identifying hazards
- Performing risk assessments for workplace hazards
- Specifying controls and/or processes to minimise hazards
- Representing and participating with workers on health and safety issues
- Maintaining safe plant and structures
- Monitoring hazardous work involving noise, hazardous tasks, confined spaces, risk of falls, demolition work or electrical safety
- Monitoring requirements for licencing and accreditation
- Monitoring safety in construction work or mining
- Monitoring safety when working with asbestos or hazardous materials and chemicals

## Legal requirements

The WHS Act in your state or territory describes the legal requirements for a safe and healthy workplace.

Here is some information on the legal requirements covered under WHS legislation.

### WHS legal requirements

- Managing risks to workers' health and safety, including risk assessment and control processes
- Protecting people at work from injury and illness, including psychological injury
- Protecting the health and safety of the public in workplaces
- Consulting workers and encouraging participation in maintaining work health and safety, including establishing health and safety committees
- Providing rehabilitation and maximum recovery for injured workers
- Providing training in safe operating procedures
- Having procedures for identifying workplace hazards
- Having emergency and evacuation procedures
- Having requirements for maintenance and confidentiality of records of occupational injury and disease

## Regulations and codes of practice

Acts (or legislation) are statutory laws; so passed by parliament. They can only be changed or amended by parliament. Regulations and codes of practice are commonly known as subsidiary legislation. These have to be published in the *Government Gazette* to become legal. Regulations and codes of practice provide guidelines for how an Act can be implemented. Information on legislation, regulations and codes of practice is available from a number of online sites.

You can source online information from the following sources:

- [www.comcare.gov.au/the\\_scheme/the\\_whs\\_act/get\\_to\\_know\\_the\\_whs\\_act](http://www.comcare.gov.au/the_scheme/the_whs_act/get_to_know_the_whs_act)
- [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/model-whs-regulations](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/model-whs-regulations)
- [www.business.gov.au/business-topics/employing-people/workplace-health-and-safety/Pages/whs-acts-regulations-and-codes-of-practice.aspx](http://www.business.gov.au/business-topics/employing-people/workplace-health-and-safety/Pages/whs-acts-regulations-and-codes-of-practice.aspx)



## Specific industries

For a full list of regulations for your work area, refer to the national, state and territory bodies responsible for health and safety.

Here are some examples of regulations that have been developed for specific industries and areas of work.



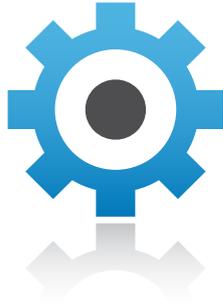
### Construction

- Worker safety induction training
- Worker training related to site-specific risks and safety requirements (site induction)
- Preparation of health and safety plans on projects costing \$250,000 or more
- Preparation of safe work method statements for high-risk construction work



### Health and community services

- Needle stick injuries
- Control of infectious diseases
- Office hazards
- Sprains and strains



### **Manufacturing**

- Forklift safety
- Electrical equipment
- Ladder rules and regulations



### **Hospitality**

- Manual handling
- Exposure to hazardous substances
- Trips, slips and falls
- Fatigue

## **Codes of practice**

Codes of practice address specific issues related to health and safety risks in the workplace. Here is some general information about codes of practice.

### **Codes of practice**



#### **Developed through consultation**

- Codes of practice are developed through consultation between industry representatives, persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs), workers, special interest groups, government agencies and professional associations.
- They provide practical guidance on how organisations can meet the standards contained in WHS Acts and regulations.
- Each must be approved separately in a state or territory jurisdiction in order to have legal effect.



#### **Not enforceable by law**

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

**Areas covered**

Some of the areas included in codes of practice are:

- compliance information
- practical guidance for people who have WHS duties
- explanations of effective ways to identify and manage risks
- control of hazardous substances in the workplace
- workplace amenities
- workplace consultation
- falls in construction.

**Further information**

Information on the codes of practice that apply to your industry and workplace is available on the websites of your relevant industry association and WHS regulator in each state and territory.

## Australian and industry standards

There are two types of standards that apply to the workplace, as described below.

**Australian standards**

Australian Standards are developed to ensure safe, reliable and consistent performance of products, services and systems. They cover a range of areas and are constantly reviewed to make sure they are accurate and current. Organisations may be required to meet certain standards related to the industry they work in.

An example of an Australian Standard related to WHS is AS/NZS 4804:2001 *Occupational health and safety management systems – General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques*. This Standard provides guidelines for organisations and others in health and safety management systems and information on how to ensure these systems are implemented and managed effectively.

### Industry standards

Industry standards provide advice to industry members about how to meet their obligations under legislation, and guidelines for controlling hazards and risks within a particular industry. Industry standards are developed in consultation with industry groups, PCBUs and other stakeholders. They apply to common WHS hazards and risks within a specific industry.

An example of industry standards related to WHS are the National Standards for Mental Health Services, which deal with the risks associated with occupational violence and aggression within the industry and provide guidelines on how providers and workers in this industry can deal with risks.

## Safe Work Australia

Safe Work Australia has developed guidance material to provide advice to duty holders on how to apply legislation and meet their obligations. They also provide information on WHS laws to assist in compliance with the Act. In specific areas, guidance material is provided to cover certain groups such as volunteer workers. Guidance material may consist of fact sheets, information sheets and guidelines that can be used to support the WHS management system, policy and procedures.



For example, the Guide to the Model Work Health and Safety Regulations provides an overview of WHS regulations and cross-references the information to other relevant regulations. This guide is designed to help identify duties and rights that apply within the regulations.

You can read the Guide to the Model Work Health and Safety Regulations at: [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/621/Guide\\_Model\\_WHS\\_Regulations.pdf](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/621/Guide_Model_WHS_Regulations.pdf).

## Duty of care

Duty of care describes the common law obligation of individuals and organisations in the workplace. All PCBUs and workers must anticipate and act upon possible causes of injury and illness that may exist in their work environment or as a result of their action or inaction.

Every individual in a workplace has a duty of care to ensure health and safety is maintained and that their own behaviour does not place others at risk of harm, injury or illness. PCBUs have a duty of care to supply and maintain a healthy and safe workplace, which includes ensuring workers, visitors and others are safe from physical and psychological harm.

## Manage hazards

Workplace hazards exist in all workplaces and organisations. The WHS Act requires PCBU's to implement risk management practices, including systems to identify hazards, then assess and eliminate or control the risks arising from these hazards.

Here is information about identifying and avoiding a workplace hazard.

### What is a hazard?

A hazard is an object or situation that has the potential to cause harm, resulting in injury, illness or damage to property. A risk is the likelihood that a hazard may cause harm. Everyone has responsibility for reporting hazards they identify at work, and this is critical for maintaining a healthy and safe workplace.

### Identify hazards and assess the risk

It may be your responsibility to implement and monitor procedures to identify hazards and assess risks. All organisations should have procedures to systematically do this. It is important that you always follow organisational procedures for hazard identification and risk control and ensure they are known and complied with within your work group or team.

### Noncompliance

Noncompliance may result in harm or permanent injury to workers or visitors to the workplace. For example:

- Carpet or lino that has come unstuck may cause someone to trip
- Chemical spills on a factory floor may cause a fall
- A poorly maintained air-conditioner may result in a polluted environment that causes an asthma attack

### Avoiding hazards and risks

Hazards and risks can be avoided with:

- a comprehensive maintenance program
- an effective overall WHS management system
- regular safety audits
- the purchase and use of equipment and machinery that meets recognised safety standards
- a system to evaluate and review risk management practices
- an effective process that enables all workers to report hazards as they are identified in the workplace.



## Committees and representatives

Health and safety committees (HSCs) and health and safety representatives (HSRs) work with the organisation to adapt, adopt and communicate WHS legislation to the workplace.

The following provides further information on these roles and responsibilities.

### HSCs and HSRs



#### Health and safety committees

Health and safety committees (HSCs) bring together management and workers to focus on WHS issues. Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), an HSC must be set up within two months of being requested to do so by an HSR or five or more workers in the workplace.

This legislation also requires an HSC to meet every three months and at any reasonable time if requested by at least half of the committee members. PCBUs must allow each committee member to attend a scheduled meeting.



#### Duties of an HSC

The HSC is required to:

- facilitate cooperation between the PCBU and workers on health and safety
- discuss identified WHS problems
- consult with workers and make recommendations to improve health and safety in the workplace
- help develop health and safety standards, rules and procedures
- monitor and report on WHS performance (including compliance with legislation and workplace policies and procedures).



#### Health and safety representatives

The role of health and safety representatives (HSRs) is to consult with workers to identify WHS issues that need to be resolved. HSRs provide information to managers, supervisors and workers. They usually represent workers in relation to WHS issues and may have power in some cases.

All organisations must ensure that WHS issues are dealt with promptly and according to the law. Legislation does not require all organisations to have an HSR however, an HSR must be appointed if requested.



### WHS knowledge required

HSRs should have a wide range of WHS knowledge, including:

- the organisation's current requirements and obligations in accordance with legislation, regulation and codes of practice
- how to conduct WHS induction
- the types of incidents that are notifiable
- requirements for consultation in the workplace
- how to advise on safe work practices
- the process for WHS audits and accident investigation

## Consultation

Consultation is an important part of maintaining health and safety in the workplace. PCBUs consult with workers to provide them with relevant safety information and give them a reasonable opportunity to express their views. They also contribute to the decision-making process by:

- identifying hazards and assessing risks
- making decisions about how to eliminate risks
- evaluating the adequacy of facilities
- proposing changes that may affect health and safety
- communicating health and safety issues and procedures.

## Training

Legislation requires all those involved in a workplace to be given WHS information and training in a form that is appropriate to their level of understanding.

Here is some further information on training requirements.

### Inductions

Inductions explain:

- WHS procedures (participants should also be provided with a copy of the WHS policies and procedures manual)
- risks and hazards associated with the work to be undertaken
- the location of emergency exits
- the organisation's alarm warnings and emergency evacuation procedures
- first-aid procedures
- safety signage and how to read/interpret it
- work-life balance
- how to seek WHS help when needed.

### Appropriate training

Training may be required in:

- setting up a workstation following ergonomic practices
- operating equipment safely
- identifying hazards
- assessing and controlling risk
- understanding safety signage
- using personal protective equipment (PPE) where provided
- following the organisation's emergency response plans including emergency evacuations and post-emergency debriefings.

### WHS management systems

WHS management systems provide a means to identify hazards and eliminate or reduce the risks associated with those hazards. To identify hazards, your organisation may use workplace inspections, regular equipment checks, incident and injury reports or audits. Many organisations use a risk assessment matrix to analyse and evaluate risk. Controlling risks should be undertaken according to the hierarchy of risk.

## Adopt new WHS legislation

All workers must be aware of any new legislation and how it applies to roles and activities within the organisation. In some organisations, it is the HSR's role to consult with the PCBU and workers to highlight requirements and obligations under the new legislation. In other organisations, this is a critical role of the managers and supervisors.

Here are some points to consider when adopting new legislation.

Adopting new WHS legislation
Include WHS updates in regular team meetings.
Update policies and standard operating procedures to reflect the new legislation.
Distribute communications to all workers advising of the new legislation.
Provide training and refresher training in areas of WHS impacted by the new legislation.
Update workplace signage and other information to reflect the new legislation.

## Communicate WHS information

Organisations are obliged to inform and update workers on all WHS matters. This includes conducting induction sessions, providing information to HSCs, informing workers on new procedures or legislation, updating the organisation's WHS policies and procedures manual and ensuring all workers are familiar with the procedures.

Good communication skills are essential to make sure that all WHS information is clear and easily understood. Consider the following points.

### Audience

Think about the audience, including:

- what they should know
- their language, literacy and numeracy skills
- the technology limitations that may influence the way you disseminate the information.

### Diversity

Consider the diversity within the group and make sure you cater for the different needs of individuals. Workers should have an opportunity to clarify any information that is being communicated. Make sure you follow up with them afterwards to ensure the communication has been successful.

### Specific issues

Be aware of specific issues within your organisation. Here are two examples:

- An office environment may place emphasis on working ergonomically, ensuring aspects such as noise and air quality are monitored and making walkways free from hazards and risks.
- A factory may focus on ensuring that all workers wear PPE.

## Methods of communicating WHS information

Here are some examples of how to effectively communicate WHS information.

### Communicating WHS information



#### Induction

- Delegate a supervisor to provide a WHS induction for all new workers.
- Include WHS information in organisational induction documents.
- Create an induction checklist to ensure all aspects of WHS have been covered for new workers.



#### Training

- Arrange training or demonstration sessions for new equipment or hazardous workplace tasks, such as manual handling.
- Provide regular refresher training to ensure worker skills and knowledge are current and appropriate under WHS requirements and obligations.



#### Meetings and presentations

- Provide regular reminders of WHS issues at team meetings.
- Arrange meetings to discuss and reinforce specific aspects, such as identifying hazards or completing an incident form.
- Run a full worker meeting with an electronic presentation and a guest speaker expert to explain a new WHS issue.



#### Written and visual information

- Request HSRs to prepare booklets that address specific issues.
- Include WHS information in company newsletters or bulletins.
- Arrange for relevant WHS information to be prepared visually (for example, posters of emergency procedures or how to contact an ambulance).
- Regularly send internal emails, memos and intranet notices to remind workers of WHS.

## WHS policies

Workplace policies aim to show, in clear and simple terms, what the organisation plans to achieve. WHS policies outline how management will achieve workplace safety, along with the specific responsibilities of the PCBU, the organisation’s officers, management and its workers.

Here is an outline of what organisations need to include in their policies.

<b>Statement</b>
A statement committing the organisation to providing a safe and healthy working environment
<b>Objectives</b>
Objectives of the policy, including how WHS will be integrated into all organisational activities
<b>Strategies</b>
<p>Strategies the organisation will use to achieve its WHS objectives, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emergency evacuation procedures</li> <li>• WHS audits</li> <li>• reporting accidents</li> <li>• reporting incidents and dangerous incidents (near misses)</li> </ul>
<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>
Roles and responsibilities of key positions such as health and safety officers, managers and supervisors with specific accountability for implementing health and safety practices and procedures
<b>Function of HSC</b>
The function of the HSC and a commitment to consultation and cooperation between management and workers
<b>Review processes</b>
Review processes for assessing the policy’s effectiveness, stating a commitment to regularly monitoring and reviewing the policy to ensure health and safety in the workplace

## Policy areas

Workers must be consulted when developing, reviewing and evaluating policies to ensure they are relevant and practical.

Areas covered by a typical WHS policy:

- Hazard identification and management
- Induction, training and supervision
- Incident reporting and investigation
- Consultation and participation
- Emergency planning and response
- Alcohol, drugs and smoking
- Bullying and harassment
- Manual handling
- Environmental management
- Mobile phone use
- Safety procedures relating to visitors and contractors

## Record-keeping requirements

PCBUs must maintain and monitor records of the health and safety of workers and others involved in the workplace. Procedures should be in place for collecting, filing, storing, retrieving and disposing of WHS records. All WHS records must be readily available for workers who are dealing with hazardous materials or substances in the workplace.

WHS records should include the following:

- Risk control plan
- First-aid register for minor injuries
- Register of all incidents and accidents
- Workplace incident report forms
- Hazard report forms
- Hazard checklists and audit results
- Workers compensation report forms
- Records of WHS consultation and committee meetings
- Accident or incident investigation reports
- Safety data sheets (SDSs)

## Notifiable incidents

A PCBU must notify the regulator as soon as they become aware of any work-related death, serious injury or illness or serious incident. Notice of an incident must be given by the fastest possible means, by telephone or in writing (including electronic means, where available). If notice is given by telephone, the regulator may request follow-up written notice of the incident. This must be provided within 48 hours of the request. A record of each notifiable incident must be kept by the PCBU for at least five years.

Here are examples of notifiable incidents.

Notifiable incidents
Death or serious injury
Immediate hospital treatment as an in-patient
Immediate treatment for serious injuries such as amputation, scalping, spinal injury, loss of a bodily function or serious laceration, burn, head injury or eye injury
Medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance

## Privacy and confidentiality

PCBUs hold a range of information relating to workers, including fitness for duty and other HR and medical information that should be held separately to compensation claim files. PCBUs should be mindful of their obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and understand the purpose for which information is obtained.

Depending on the organisation, worker records may be stored and maintained in a human resource management system or files within the administration or payroll area. It is critical that records pertaining to workers are stored securely and only available to appropriate personnel in the workplace for an appropriate purpose. Any policy and procedures regarding worker records should include considerations for privacy.

### Example: WHS policy and procedures

With the changes in WHS legislation, EZY Construction must develop a policy to ensure they are legally compliant. Their general policy statement broadly covers their responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all workers, whether directly employed or visiting the organisation. The policy outlines resources that will be made available to ensure compliance with the Act and regulations.

The policy includes information about the health and safety committee (HSC) and the committee membership, which includes a PCBU representative, construction union representative and worker representative. It outlines how the HSC will make decisions and how often the committee will meet. It also states who has the authority to action responses to the committee's recommendations.

The WHS procedures outline how the policy will be implemented, including:

- training and education
- work (procedure) design, workplace design and standard work methods
- changes to work methods, procedures and practice
- safety rules, including penalties
- emergency procedures and drills
- provision of health and safety equipment, services and facilities
- workplace inspections and evaluations
- reporting and recording incidents, accidents, injuries and illnesses.



## Practice task 1

1. How safety conscious is your organisation? Complete this checklist to find out.

<b>Safety commitment checklist</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Health and safety responsibilities are identified and known.		
Senior managers take an active role in health and safety.		
Supervisors' involvement in health and safety is encouraged.		
HSRs are actively and broadly involved.		
There is a functioning HSC.		
Procedures and plans are in place for hazard identification and risk assessment.		
There is a high priority on controlling hazards at the source.		
There is a comprehensive approach to recording WHS information and maintaining records to enable investigation and analysis.		
There is a comprehensive approach to workplace inspection and incident investigation.		

2. Choose a safety commitment from the checklist in question 1 and adapt it for your work area.

3. How would you adopt this safety commitment into your work area?

4. How would you communicate the requirements of this safety commitment to your team? What methods would you use?

## 1B

## Identify duty holders and define WHS responsibilities in the work area

WHS legislation places a duty of care on the PCBU and all workers in a workplace and in your work area. Duty holders are required to:

- eliminate risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable
- minimise any risks that are not reasonably practicable to eliminate, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The PCBU and every worker in any organisation must do everything they can to remove or minimise the possible cause of harm. Everyone has the responsibility for other workers, customers, contractors and visitors. This is referred to as a general duty of care, which includes preventing psychological harm as well as physical harm, injury or illness.

## WHS roles and responsibilities

Under the legislation, organisations must identify people's responsibilities for WHS in the workplace.

Here are those roles and responsibilities.



### PCBU

The term 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) refers to the principal duty holder and has a broader duty of care than the traditional employer role.

### Officer

An officer is a person who makes decisions that affect the organisation's activities. An officer may be a director, executive, general manager or manager within a PCBU. Note that this is different to a health and safety officer, which is a person with a WHS qualification or expertise.

### Worker

A worker is any person who carries out work for a PCBU. This includes direct workers at all levels: contractors, subcontractors, self-employed people, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, work experience students, workers placed by labour hire companies, and volunteers.

**Volunteers**

Volunteers are not directly employed by the PCBU, but work with an organisation on an unpaid basis.

**Others**

The definition of others includes visitors to a workplace and customers of a PCBU who are in the workplace.

## Duties of a PCBU

The following outlines the key duties of a PCBU. These are set out in Safe Work Australia's *Guide to the Model Work Health and Safety Act*.

**1****Provide and maintain:**

- a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, including safe access in and out of the workplace.
- plant, structure and systems of work that are safe and do not pose health risks.

**2****Provide:**

- training in the safe use, handling, storage and transport of plant, structure and substances.
- adequate facilities for workers' welfare.
- information, instruction, training or supervision to workers to enable them to work without risks to their health and safety and that of others.

**3****Monitor:**

- workers' health and workplace conditions to prevent injury or illness arising out of the conduct of the business or undertaking.

**4****Maintain:**

- accommodation owned or under their management and control to ensure the health and safety of workers occupying the premises.

**5****Consult:**

- with other duty holders, workers and their representatives.

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**Ensure:**

- that any fixtures, fittings and plant do not put at risk the health and safety of any person.
- all workplace activity relating to plant or structure, including its decommissioning or dismantling, is, so far as is reasonably practicable, without risks to health and safety.

## Duties of officers

The key duties of officers are set out in Safe Work Australia's *Guide to the Model Work Health and Safety Act*. Here is what the *Guide* states officers must do.

**Keep up to date**

Acquire knowledge on WHS matters and keep this up to date.

**Understand industry**

Understand the nature and operations of the work and associated hazards and risks.

**Minimise risk**

Ensure the PCBU has, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks.

**Use feedback**

Ensure the PCBU has appropriate processes to receive and consider information about work-related incidents, hazards and risks, and to respond in a timely manner.

**Follow processes**

Ensure the PCBU has, and implements, processes for complying with their duties and obligations (for example, reports notifiable incidents, consults with workers).

**Coordinate resources**

Verify the provision and use of the relevant resources and processes.

## Duty of workers

Safe Work Australia's *Guide to the Model Work Health and Safety Act* outlines the duty of workers under the WHS Act, which are listed below.

### A worker's responsibilities

- To take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions while at work
- To comply so far as they are reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU to allow the PCBU to comply with WHS laws
- To cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the PCBU relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been communicated to workers

## Duty of volunteers and others

The main duty volunteers have is to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their omissions, if undertaking work for the PCBU.

Duties of others in the workplace include taking reasonable care of their own health and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions. They are to comply with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU.

You can read more about the duties in the workplace at: [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/717/Guide-to-the-WHS-Act.pdf](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/717/Guide-to-the-WHS-Act.pdf).

## Noncompliance

Failure to comply with WHS regulations, policy and procedures may result in prosecution by authorities under the WHS Act. Failure by contractors to comply or observe a direction is considered a breach of their contract and sufficient grounds for termination of that contract, and will further result in immediate ejection from the premises or site.

Prosecutions under the Act can result in fines being paid by companies as well as individuals. Prison is also a possible outcome of noncompliance where deliberate noncompliance results in death or serious injury.

## Example: WHS roles and responsibilities

In order to meet their obligations under the WHS Act, a large consulting business decides that their WHS policy should note the key role and responsibilities for their staff.

Managers are identified as having responsibility for ensuring WHS policy and procedures are implemented and are also accountable for supporting supervisors in their role of implementing the policy. Managers also hold a vital role in reporting incidents to the board and emergency services.

Supervisors are responsible for the practical measures to ensure a safe work environment. This includes ensuring the behaviours of others don't pose risks to health and wellbeing. Supervisors also have a role to act promptly to reduce any hazards.

Workers have a responsibility to adhere to the policy and procedures to ensure their own health and wellbeing is maintained, including reporting near misses, incidents, risks and hazards using the organisation's reporting mechanisms.

Contractors and subcontractors engaged to perform work on the organisation's premises or locations are required, as part of their contract, to comply with the WHS policies, procedures and programs, and to observe WHS directions from managers, supervisors and any other designated health and safety officers of the organisation.



## Practice task 2

Locate a document in your organisation that outlines the roles and responsibilities of the workers in your work area in relation to WHS. Answer the following questions.

1. Who are the people in your work area who have a responsibility to work to the WHS policy and procedures?

2. In general, what is every person's specific WHS responsibilities, regardless of role?

3. What WHS duties does a manager have?

4. What are the repercussions for noncompliance?

## 1C

## Identify and approve resources required by the WHS management system

To ensure compliance with WHS legislation and regulations, a planned, systematic and well-documented WHS management system should be implemented. The system must be appropriate for the PCBU and its activities and must enable relevant workplace information and data to be examined to identify hazards and assess and control risks. You may need to analyse and use this data and information in your role as a health and safety officer to ensure that hazard management is effective in your work area and work group.



## Effective WHS management systems

For WHS management systems to work effectively, enough funds and resources must be allocated to all parts of the system. WHS should be a main part of an organisation's strategic planning. This should be reflected in all management decisions and allocation of resources, responsibilities and accountabilities.

## WHS strategic planning process

The WHS strategic planning process involves developing WHS policies, procedures and standards, identifying the organisation's WHS needs and priorities and preparing a WHS plan.

Here are some points to consider when developing a WHS strategic plan.

Details of a WHS plan
Strategies to achieve the WHS objectives and performance measures
WHS priority areas
Human resources required
Physical resources required
Time lines for priorities
WHS budget, which forms part of the organisation-wide budget

## Identify WHS resources

As a health and safety officer, you need to consult with your team and other stakeholders to identify their WHS priorities and discuss these in the WHS planning process.

Recommendations for individual safety or WHS expenditure may also come from a variety of other sources, including individual workers, the health and safety committee, health and safety representatives, unions or external contractors.

WHS resources include both people and funding, as explained here.

### Human resources

People are the most important resource for any WHS activity. Managers must consider the human resource requirement and training required for:

- the health and safety committee (with regard to WHS legislation and regulations)
- specialist health and safety representatives
- emergency wardens
- first-aid officers
- compliance officers or auditors
- managers, supervisors and workers.

### Financial resources

Few WHS systems can be introduced or maintained without enough financial support. For example, finances are needed for the employment and salary of a health and safety officer, to fund training courses, to purchase physical WHS resources (such as safety helmets or first-aid kits) or for upgrading equipment.

Sufficient finances must be identified and budgeted to allow for these ongoing costs, as well as an allowance for unforeseen WHS events during the budget period. The idea of a buffer within the budget allows action to be taken when unexpected risks emerge. This concept is an accepted practice in the broader risk management field.

## Approve WHS expenditure

Depending on the organisation, most resourcing decisions require the approval of a manager. Sometimes decisions also require the approval of the health and safety committee, health and safety officer and others involved in the situation.

Approval processes generally require the manager to present a detailed cost breakdown of exactly what the program entails and the expected outcomes upon implementation. Some approval processes require a detailed analysis of the program and even alternative propositions to allow the panel to select the most cost-efficient and appropriate outcome.

Questions to ask when approving an initiative:

- Will this initiative assist the organisation in meeting statutory requirements?
- Will this initiative assist the organisation in meeting its strategic WHS objectives?
- Are all the costs associated with planning, implementing and evaluating accounted for?
- What benefits will the organisation gain from this initiative?

### Example: establish a WHS management system

Barrow Hill Iron Ore Pty Ltd operates an open-cut mine in the Pilbara region in Western Australia. Senior management at Barrow Hill Iron Ore has recently been reviewing the organisation's WHS performance and has undertaken a strategic planning exercise. They are committed to and are supporting cultural change in the organisation, including:

- revising and developing WHS policies and procedures to incorporate environmental sustainability
- retraining supervisors and department managers in risk management procedures
- ensuring adequate resources (financial and human) are provided to support all WHS strategic objectives
- involving the entire workforce in planning, implementation and monitoring WHS initiatives.

Senior management has established WHS standards, objectives and priorities, allocated management responsibilities and accountabilities, and appointed a health and safety advisor for each site. Each site has developed a WHS plan based on their management priorities. The priority standards for implementation at each of the processing plants are hazard management; consultation mechanisms; incident reporting and investigation; training; fitness for work; and emergency management.



### Practice task 3

1. Nominate one WHS priority for your work area.

*continued ...*

... continued

2. Identify one activity that will help you address this issue. Include the following:

- A brief description of the activity
- Who the activity would involve
- The cost of the activity
- The expected outcomes of the activity
- The time line for this activity



## Summary

1. PCBUs need to understand and comply with their WHS obligations and learn how to communicate WHS information effectively to all workers.
2. Duty-of-care provisions outline the responsibilities of PCBUs and all workers and visitors to a workplace.
3. All organisations should establish a system of managing WHS-related matters that is enacted through their policies and procedures.
4. WHS roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined for workers at all levels of an organisation.
5. WHS needs to be included as an integral part of an organisation's strategic planning, and should be reflected in all management decisions and allocation of resources, responsibilities and accountabilities. This includes the need to develop a budget for WHS as part of the planning cycle.
6. PCBUs need to consult with workers and other relevant stakeholders to determine WHS priorities and incorporate these in the planning processes.

## Learning checkpoint 1 Establish and maintain a WHS management system in a work area

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in establishing and maintaining a WHS management system in a work area.

### Part A

1. Why does a manager need to understand WHS legislative requirements? Give three reasons.

2. Provide two examples of where you would need to apply your knowledge of WHS legislative requirements within your work area.

3. Using the table provided, identify three WHS policies in your work area and decide the most appropriate way to communicate these policies to the relevant stakeholders.

<b>Name of policy</b>	<b>Who the policy applies to</b>	<b>How this policy should be communicated</b>

4. Using the table provided, explain the purpose and responsibilities of each of the roles listed.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>WHS responsibilities</b>
<b>Health and safety officer</b>		
<b>Health and safety representative</b>		
<b>Health and safety committee</b>		

<b>Role</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>WHS responsibilities</b>
<b>WHS specialist adviser</b>		
<b>Team leader</b>		
<b>Worker</b>		

5. What is a PCBU? Name five records they must maintain and monitor to meet their WHS legislative obligations.

6. Outline the process you would follow to identify and approve financial and human resources for WHS activities within your work area.

## Part B

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

### Case study

Sleep Tight is a family-run business formed in South Australia that specialises in the manufacture and distribution of mattresses. It has manufacturing plants in three states across Australia, with the largest in South Australia.

Sleep Tight employs a total workforce of over 800 people, with 400 employed in the South Australian manufacturing plant. About two-thirds of the workforce are women, primarily employed in the non-trade areas of the plant including packaging and quality control. The workforce comes from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Senior management is reviewing the organisation's WHS performance. It wants to carry out a strategic planning exercise and is committed to achieving cultural change in the organisation.

1. What are three WHS issues that may apply to this organisation and why?

2. Why is it important to integrate WHS into an organisation's strategic planning? How does this impact the allocation of resources and funding?

3. Identify three responsibilities that health and safety representatives may have in this organisation.

4. Describe three strategies that could be used to make sure appropriate WHS information is communicated to all workers effectively, regardless of linguistic or cultural background.

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## Topic 2

# Establish and maintain participation arrangements in a work area

A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must consult workers, health and safety officers, consultants and key stakeholders to comply with legislative and regulatory requirements. Consultation is required to ensure workers are able to perform their roles in a safe manner. Implementing and monitoring health and safety policies and programs is more effective if you engage with workers and use their workplace knowledge and experience. Consulting with workers encourages them to actively contribute to workplace safety. By listening to their responses and valuing their input, you can create a two-way communication process that enables health and safety issues to be raised and discussed with a view to addressing any identified problems or concerns.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Set up and maintain participation arrangements according to legislation
- 2B Resolve issues raised through participation arrangements and consultation
- 2C Provide information about participation and consultation outcomes

# 2A

## Set up and maintain participation arrangements according to legislation

Work health and safety laws require PCBUs to consult with workers regarding health, safety and welfare issues at work. This obligation is not limited to direct workers of the PCBU and includes contractors, sub-contractors and their workers; volunteers; and any other people who are working for the PCBU. Workers also have a right to be involved in health and safety matters and may elect to be represented by a health and safety representative (HSR) for their work group.

### Participation arrangements

Developing and implementing health and safety policies and procedures requires the support of workers. You are more likely to gain support if workers feel they have input into decisions and management acts on their ideas and opinions.

Workers are very important in identifying health and safety issues as they are performing tasks every day and become aware of potential hazards. Also, issues in the workplace such as bullying may not be apparent in a safety audit if it is conducted by people outside the work group. Effective consultation can bring potential hazards and possible solutions to the attention of management.

Consultation can also improve overall relations between PCBUs and workers as it helps establish an environment of trust and openness, which can lead to improved work outcomes. A healthier work environment and improved productivity can be achieved more easily when PCBUs and workers collaborate on health and safety issues.

You can read more about consultation in Part 5 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) at: [www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00471/Html/Text](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00471/Html/Text).



### Health and safety committees

A health and safety committee (HSC) may be appointed to identify and resolve health and safety issues and develop procedures for safe work systems. Regulations regarding HSCs vary between states and territories and depend on the number of people an organisation employs and whether workers have asked for a committee to be set up. Committee members should include a mix of PCBU and worker representatives.

An effective health and safety committee:

- provides a forum for cooperation and consultation between the PCBU and workers on health and safety matters
- maintains health and safety management documentation in the workplace
- investigates training needs and ensures adequate training is provided to all workers
- keeps up to date with health and safety information and current health and safety best practice
- recommends establishing, maintaining and monitoring WHS programs, measures and procedures
- helps to find solutions to health and safety problems

- helps to investigate workplace incidents and evaluates the overall health and safety program
- helps to promote health and safety in the workplace.

## Due diligence

Due diligence, in the context of health and safety, means to provide a certain standard of care to avoid harm. In relation to WHS, section 27 of the Act requires officers to take reasonable steps to demonstrate due diligence.

You can read more about due diligence at: [www.comcare.gov.au](http://www.comcare.gov.au). Search for 'Exercising due diligence'.

Here is more information on due diligence.

### Exercising due diligence

Work health and safety laws now impose a specific duty on 'officers' of corporations and unincorporated bodies, such as clubs and associations, to exercise due diligence to ensure that the corporation, club or association meets its WHS obligations.

### Due diligence cannot be outsourced or delegated

Employing a health and safety officer or safety advisor can help PCBUs meet their health and safety obligations. However, the duties to exercise due diligence will always remain with the PCBU and cannot be outsourced, or delegated to, a health and safety officer.

### Due diligence may include employing a health and safety officer

Organisations that have serious health and safety risks should employ a health and safety officer or external consultant who has knowledge of the relevant legislation, regulations, and codes of practice, equipment and work systems. Health and safety officers provide advice on safety matters and have a legal responsibility to make sure that all health and safety obligations are met.

## Responsibilities of health and safety officers

Health and safety officers are responsible for ensuring that the organisation complies with their legal responsibilities under the WHS Act.

Here are some of the responsibilities of a health and safety officer.

#### Health and safety officer responsibilities

- Working closely with management to perform risk identification, analyse incident reports and develop plans to eliminate or minimise risk
- Assisting in the preparation of standard operating procedures, health and safety programs and initiatives
- Conducting inspections and safety audits
- Coordinating fire and other emergency responses
- Coordinating health and safety training
- Inspecting plant, equipment, processes and working methods
- Investigating incidents
- Providing information to workers
- Providing specialist advice to the HSC

## PCBUs

As well as meeting their legal obligations regarding WHS, PCBUs play a big role in influencing workers to value health and safety. They do this by changing unsafe work behaviours and setting expected safety standards in the workplace.

Here are several points to consider in relation to the obligations of PCBUs.

#### Competing priorities

PCBUs often face competing priorities that may influence the amount of time, resources and energy they allocate to health and safety. By committing to health and safety at work, PCBUs provide a clear and consistent message to their workers that reinforces how important workplace safety is.

#### Advice and direction

Safe Work Australia has developed model codes of practice that provide practical advice and guidelines to assist PCBUs in meeting their health and safety obligations.

The Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination Code of Practice provides direction for PCBUs on how to consult with workers and suggests the processes that may be used to achieve effective consultation. It also outlines how duty holders may work together to achieve effective health and safety outcomes.

**Legal jurisdiction**

Codes of practice must be approved and implemented in each state or territory to have legal jurisdiction. Refer to your state or territory’s health and safety regulator to find out whether the Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination Code of Practice has legal jurisdiction in your area.

## Benefits of participation arrangements

A healthier work environment and improved morale and productivity can be achieved when the PCBU and workers collaborate on health and safety issues. Workers have a legal right to consult with the PCBU on matters affecting their health and wellbeing. A strong health and safety culture is one where workers believe their leaders are committed to health and safety and that any input workers have into the development or review of systems, policies and procedures is valued and followed.

Here are several benefits of participating in the consultation process.

Benefits of consultation
Helps PCBUs to become more aware of hazards and health and safety issues experienced by workers.
Improves management decisions regarding health and safety as the information comes from a wider source.
Enables workers to provide suggestions about how to address health and safety problems and contribute to determining how the work can be done safely.
May result in greater PCBU and worker commitment to health and safety and increased ownership of work outcomes.
Promotes increased openness, respect and trust between management and workers through developing an understanding of each other’s points of view.
May help reduce injury and disease because of timely intervention.

## Better consultation

Health and safety consultation is a two-way process. Workers need a mechanism to provide feedback regarding health and safety matters. The organisation should also use internal systems to provide health and safety updates to workers.

Here are two important points on the topic of consultation.

**Point 1**

If you want consultation to be truly participative, you must consider the:

- worker location and how they can contribute to health and safety issues; for example, whether they are on site, in a remote location or working from a home office
- nature of the work; for example, whether it is flexible, inflexible or systematic
- times workers are available; for example, during business hours, on shift work or rosters
- diversity of workers; for example, intellectual and physical capabilities, or domestic responsibilities.

**Point 2**

It is important to monitor all consultative arrangements to see how they can be improved. You can achieve this by asking workers for feedback and discussing the ways in which the arrangements can be improved. You may also seek advice from a health and safety specialist to determine whether your arrangements are as effective as possible.

## Provide feedback to PCBU's

Workers should understand the types of health and safety issues they can raise and the processes they should follow. PCBU's have a responsibility to make sure workers are aware of their responsibilities and who they can speak with.

Here are four examples of how you could assist this participation process.

**Example 1**

**Health and safety issue:**

- Identify or assess hazards or risks.

**Participation process:**

- Tell the HSR.

**Example 2**

**Health and safety issue:**

- Make suggestions about how to control risks.

**Participation process:**

- Tell the health and safety officer.

**Example 3****Health and safety issue:**

- Provide suggestions for resolving health and safety issues.

**Participation process:**

- Include the issue on the agenda for the next health and safety meeting.
- Write a complaint or raise an issue and place it in the suggestion box.
- Discuss the issue at a staff meeting.

**Example 4****Health and safety issue:**

- Propose changes to the workplace to improve their health and safety.

**Participation process:**

- Arrange a toolbox meeting.

## Provide information to workers

Establishing and maintaining communication between management, HSRs, health and safety officers, committees and workers is crucial. It is important to ensure workers understand the type of information health and safety personnel can provide and the strategies employed to disseminate the information, so the process is as participative as possible.

Here are some of the documents that are used to provide WHS information to workers and some of the communication strategies that may be used. Whatever technique you choose to apply, don't forget the principles of effective consultation.

**Documents**

- Current health and safety policies and procedures
- Health and safety surveys, checklists and audits
- Lists of identified hazards
- Complaint forms
- Incident, injury and near-miss reports
- Workers compensation forms

### Strategies

- Regular meetings with HSRs and HSC members
- Regular workplace inspections
- Hazard identification and risk assessments
- Health and safety issues on the agenda for every staff meeting
- Regular consultation with the health and safety officer
- Intranet notification system for WHS issues
- Suggestion box
- Health and safety signage and notices throughout workplace
- Formal health and safety issue resolution processes

### Principles

PCBUs are responsible for consulting with work teams on health and safety matters. Whatever methods are used, the following principles of effective consultation should apply:

- Information is regularly shared with workers.
- Workers are able to understand the information.
- Workers are given a reasonable opportunity to express views about the matter.
- Workers' views are taken into account.

## Understand the importance of follow-up

Workers should be aware of how the PCBU will deal with health and safety information they receive via both formal and informal processes. Management may:

- make decisions about the adequacy of facilities for worker welfare
- monitor workers' health and workplace conditions based on information received
- provide further information and training
- propose changes to the work performed at the workplace that may affect the health and safety of workers.

## Problems with participation arrangements

Just because your organisation has put in place health and safety participation arrangements, it does not mean they will be effective. The common failures of participation arrangements include:

- a strong legislative focus without consideration for workplace circumstances and culture
- a lack of PCBU commitment to health and safety consultation
- insufficient management capacity to adopt and support appropriate participation arrangements
- a lack of integration with other systems in the organisation.



## Example: implement participation arrangements

Here is a simple action plan for implementing effective participation arrangements.

Action plan for development of participation arrangements				
Ref #	Task	Responsibility	Target date	Sign-off
1	Establish a HSC including membership, purpose, function procedures and supportive documentation.	HR Manager	19/04	RF - 17/04
2	Ensure members of the HSC attend an external training course relevant to their participation in the committee.	Operations Manager	20/05	



## Practice task 4

1. Which part of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth) refers to consultation?

2. How does this legislation apply to your work area?

3. What participation arrangements are currently in place in your work area? Are they sufficient to meet the organisation's obligations under WHS legislation? Explain your response.

## 2B Resolve issues raised through participation arrangements and consultation

When health and safety issues arise, management should take all concerns seriously and act on them quickly. Workers must feel that their opinions are valued and that management sees health and safety as a top priority.

Under health and safety legislation, a PCBU cannot dismiss any worker or change their work function or role to that worker's detriment simply because the worker has raised health and safety issues or is part of a health and safety group. There are significant penalties for breaching this legislation.

### Health and safety issues

PCBUs should encourage workers and HSRs to deal with everyday problems as they occur (for example, replacing broken furniture or cleaning up non-toxic spills). HSCs and HSRs are responsible for taking follow-up action to resolve serious issues. However, if an HSC or HSR has not been appointed, the PCBU is directly responsible for taking action to resolve such issues.

Health and safety issues may also arise. These occur when a:

- worker identifies a hazard or danger
- worker identifies a potential hazard or danger
- dangerous incident (near miss) or accident is reported.



### Resolve issues

Your workplace must develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures to address the requirements for WHS reporting and resolution. These should provide direction and guidelines for all workers to comply with issue reporting requirements. They should also include a detailed health and safety procedure document.

Here are several points that need to be considered when resolving WHS issues and concerns.



#### Reporting issues

WHS policies and procedures must enable workers to report issues immediately and include steps to ensure the organisation responds appropriately and in a timely manner. This includes providing the appropriate forms needed to report these issues. If the risk to safety is serious, then workers can cease work immediately, report the incident to their manager, then complete a health and safety incident report form.



**Notifiable incidents**

Workplace incidents that are classified as ‘notifiable’ must also be reported to the appropriate state or territory health and safety regulator. Notifiable incidents are accidents or incidents resulting in death, serious injury or illness, or dangerous incidents arising from work carried out by a PCBU.



**Resolving issues**

Whenever possible, health and safety issues should be resolved at the workplace level through consultation between workers, management and the relevant HSRs. However, in some situations, expert advice may be required. The PCBU may seek advice from a health and safety specialist or consult with the state or territory health and safety regulator for advice and assistance.

**Example: hazard reporting and response procedure**

XYZ Communications developed a staff guideline outlining the steps in a hazard reporting and response procedure. This provided a formal way of resolving a particular safety issue in the workplace.

**Hazard reporting and response procedure**

- If a serious hazard or incident is identified, workers must notify the PCBU or HSR in any way possible. Where appropriate, the worker and their supervisor should take all reasonable steps to contain the hazard within the bounds of personal safety.
- When the hazard is controlled, an incident report must be submitted to the PCBU. It must include hazard details, associated risks, location, anyone who may have been affected, workers who have been exposed and recommendations regarding how to treat or rectify the problem.
- A hard copy hazard report form must also be submitted to the HSR or PCBU. You will receive a signed notification that the form has been received.
- The HSR must provide a written response within seven working days. A final response is required within 14 working days after the report has been received. It must detail all decisions made and why, consequent actions taken and proposed outcomes.
- If the report originator is dissatisfied with this response, they can request more information. The manager must respond within seven days of this appeal. If the report originator is still dissatisfied, they can appeal to the HSC or contact external health and safety authorities.

## Practice task 5

1. How are hazards reported and responded to in your organisation? Locate the procedure and list the steps.

2. Describe a recent hazard that was identified in your work area.

3. Was the hazard reporting and response procedure used in your workplace effective? Why or why not?

4. How was the issue of this hazard resolved?

## 2C

**Provide information about participation and consultation outcomes**

Management has a responsibility to record outcomes from health and safety discussions and communicate decisions and results to all participants and the wider organisation where other workers are affected. Managers need effective communication skills to ensure information is easy for workers to access and understand.

**Types of information**

Information derived from health and safety consultation should be distributed to PCBUs, workers, HSRs, health and safety officers and HSC members. Here are several examples of the types of information that could be distributed.

**Information to be distributed****1****Legislation and codes of practice**

Used to:

- interpret and apply new legislation to the workplace
- initiate staff training to ensure the organisation is fully compliant with the legislation.

**2****Health and safety policies and procedures**

Used to:

- develop and document all procedures
- provide staff training and refresher courses.

**3****Safety data sheets (SDSs)**

Used to ensure all relevant staff know how to manage hazardous materials and follow instructions on SDSs.

**4****Incident reports**

Used to investigate causes of workplace accidents and/or injuries and put risk controls in place.

**5****Minutes of health and safety meetings**

Used to disseminate meeting information and decisions to all members of the work group and staff in general.

**6****Auditing results and workplace inspection reports**

Used to address all deficiencies in a timely manner.

**7****Action plan outcomes**

Used to evaluate performance outcomes and update plans.

**8****Records of health and safety issues**

Used to record all issues and outcomes raised via informal discussion or the suggestion box in a register or database.

**9****Health and safety plans, targets and statistics**

Used to analyse and evaluate results to include in the formation of future plans.

**10****Copies of memos or letters or communication from management**

Used to file and action all correspondence indicating a need for health and safety participation and consultation.

**11****Records of disciplinary action**

Used to record verbal or written warnings, and dismissals in accordance with privacy requirements.

## Communicate appropriately

When communicating the outcomes of health and safety consultation, consider the specific needs of individuals and groups within the workplace. Before you communicate health and safety information, think about the questions you will ask.

Here are several examples of questions that may be posed.

Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the purpose of the communication?</li> <li>• What outcome am I trying to achieve with the communication?</li> <li>• What are the information requirements of the audience (for example, what do they already know and what do they need to know)?</li> <li>• What format will be best received by the audience?</li> <li>• What diversity exists in the area? Do I need to consider providing communication in a language other than English?</li> <li>• Do I need to provide the communication verbally and in written form, or use diagrams and pictures?</li> <li>• Does the communication need to be supported by appropriate workplace signage or warning signs?</li> </ul>

## Make it accessible

Health and safety information should be in a format that is accessible to all those who need it. Your procedures for communicating health and safety information should recognise and address factors that may limit accessibility to health and safety information.

Accessibility factors that should be considered:

- Does everyone have access to the internet or an intranet?
- Can everyone use email?
- Do remote and home-based workers have special requirements?
- Is there any shift, casual or contract workers who may be affected?
- Do any workers have language barriers or diverse levels of understanding?
- Should information be presented as signs, symbols, pictures or graphics?

## Keep it timely

It is important to communicate in a timely manner. Always provide health and safety information when workers are more inclined to absorb the information and respond appropriately.

When a matter requires prompt and immediate action, such as following a dangerous incident, emergency communication systems should provide information directly to each affected person.

Information of a less urgent nature, such as outcomes of a recent committee meeting can be communicated to recipients at regular intervals via the organisation's standard reporting procedures.



## Example: improve health and safety systems

A large civil and engineering construction firm wants to look at ways it can improve its health and safety system. At an organisational level, they review the health and safety management system and set objectives for the next two years; one goal being to improve the participation rate of staff and contractors in health and safety decision-making.

They employ an external health and safety advisor, who establishes a task force to set priorities consistent with the organisation's strategic goals.

- The first priorities for action are identified as:
- electing health and safety representatives
- setting up a health and safety committee
- reporting health and safety hazards
- inspecting workplaces
- investigating incidents.



New policies and procedures are written in plain English to assist in communicating to everyone. Half hour consultation groups are run to test draft procedures to ensure they are realistic. Training targets are then identified and action plans for on-the-job and external training options selected.

Finally an action plan for implementing and maintaining participation arrangements is developed. Resources required to implement the plan are identified and commitment is sought from senior management.

## Practice task 6

1. Why do you need to ensure you are providing information about participation and consultation outcomes?

2. Who should receive information derived from health and safety consultations?

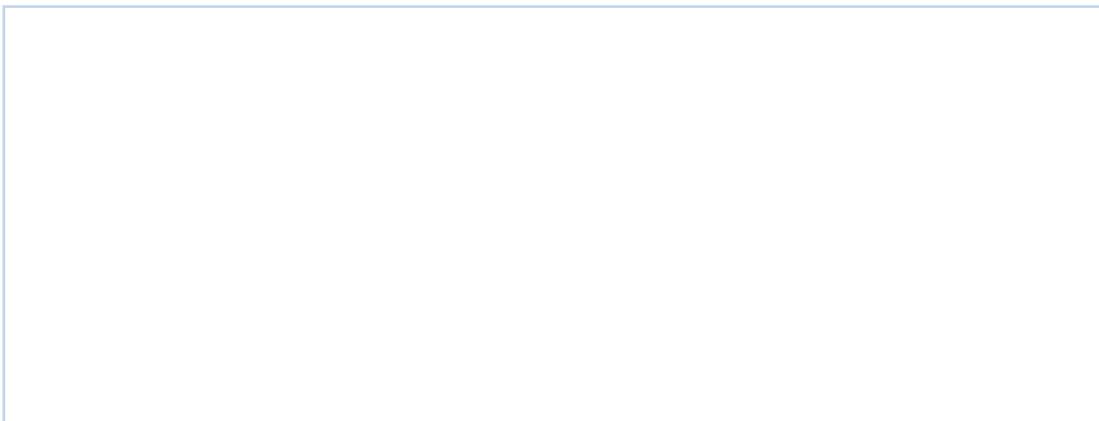
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3. What are four examples of the types of information that will need to be communicated?



4. How can you ensure the health and safety information is accessible to all relevant staff and contractors?



## Summary

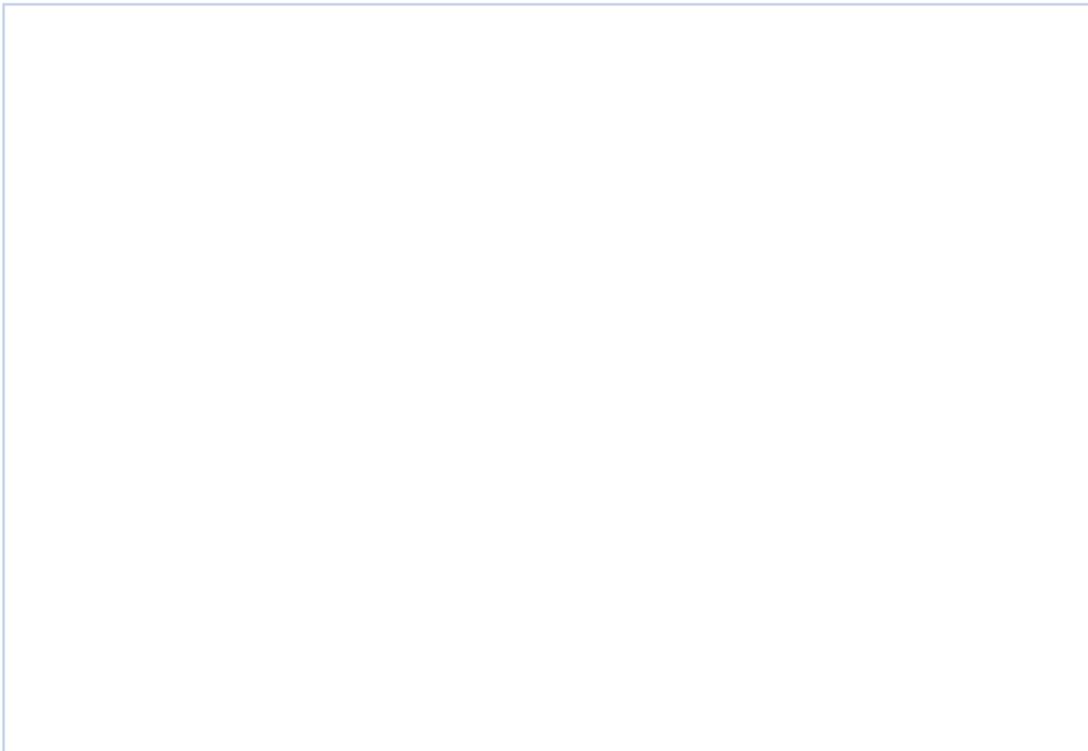
1. Workers have a legal right to consult with PCBUs on matters affecting their health and wellbeing.
2. Consultation must be used to identify workplace hazards and assess risks.
3. Effective consultation requires information to be regularly shared with workers. Workers should be able to understand the information and be given a reasonable opportunity to express views about the matter.
4. Take feedback from workers into account when addressing workplace safety issues or planning and implementing new health and safety strategies.
5. PCBUs are required to consult key stakeholders, evaluate factors, respond to requests and communicate to all relevant stakeholders regarding health and safety.
6. Effective communication systems with defined consultation and feedback channels are essential for successful health and safety management.
7. When communicating the outcomes of health and safety consultation, consider the specific needs of individuals and groups within the workplace.

## Learning checkpoint 2 Establish and maintain participation arrangements in a work area

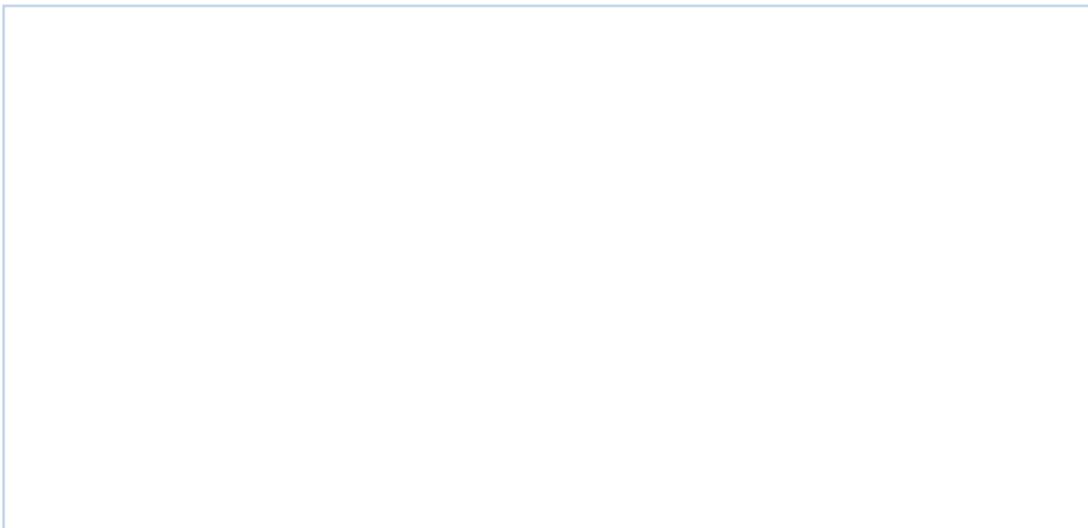
This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in establishing and maintaining participation arrangements in a work area.

### Part A

1. Identify at least four obligations imposed on PCBUs to consult.



2. Identify three ways that workers in your work area can bring concerns about health and safety matters to the attention of managers.



3. Using the table provided, complete the details for three examples where health and safety consultation was communicated in your work area.

Purpose of communication	Who it was aimed at	Method and format of communication	Strategy to evaluate effectiveness of communication

## Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

### Scenario

A major transport company operates a fleet of trucks around Australia 24 hours a day, seven days a week and employs approximately 40 interstate drivers. With driver fatigue becoming an increasing problem, senior management at the company consult a health and safety specialist to deliver an internal training program on managing fatigue. Management has also requested advice on how to improve their current health and safety participation arrangements, as there has been very little input from truck drivers.

The health and safety consultant identifies the following barriers/constraints to health and safety consultation:

- Truck drivers work excessive hours and many have unreasonable travel time deadlines to meet.
- Little time is spent at the depot with other work colleagues.

With these barriers and constraints in mind, you have been asked to provide recommendations on how the company can implement participation arrangements involving all personnel.

1. List three participation arrangements the company could use to increase the involvement of the truck drivers in health and safety matters.

2. Provide one suggestion the company could use to resolve the issue of driver fatigue through participation arrangements and consultation.

3. List three ways that the company could provide information to truck drivers to keep them informed of health and safety outcomes.



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## Topic 3

# Establish and maintain procedures for hazard and risk control in a work area

Hazards exist in every workplace and in all organisations. A workplace hazard is a source or situation that has the potential to cause harm, resulting in injury, illness or damage to property. A risk is the likelihood that a hazard may cause harm. Everyone has a legal duty to report any hazards they identify at work and this is critical for maintaining a healthy and safe workplace. PCBUs have a responsibility to implement and monitor procedures for identifying hazards and assessing risks.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Develop procedures for hazard identification and risk control
- 3B Ensure new hazards are not created from proposed changes in the workplace
- 3C Select and implement risk control measures
- 3D Identify inadequacies and provide resources to implement new risk control measures
- 3E Identify and act on requirements for expert WHS advice

# 3A

## Develop procedures for hazard identification and risk control

It is important to develop procedures for ongoing hazard identification and for the assessment and control of the associated risks within your work area.

Every industry has its own job-related hazards. For example, there are potential hazards when scuba-diving, spray painting, working in a mine, working in a hospital or serving food. Because of this, each industry also has specific standards and regulations that relate to hazards, and codes of practice that provide advice on how to meet the regulations. Many codes of practice are relevant to all organisations.

Here are several examples of situations that may require risk control.

### Risk control procedures

- First aid (accessing a first-aid kit and appointing first-aid officers)
- Noise levels in the workplace
- Manual handling
- Storing and handling dangerous goods
- Hazardous substances
- Cash in transit
- Air quality
- Ultraviolet radiation exposure from sunshine

## Identify hazards

Identifying hazards (obvious or not so obvious) is a key step towards managing risk.

Here are some points to consider in regards to identifying hazards.

### A legal responsibility

PCBUs have a legal responsibility to control workplace hazards, either by eliminating the hazard or minimising the hazard's effects. A hazard is defined as anything that may cause harm, injury or ill health to any person, property or environment in the workplace. When a hazard is identified, you must take steps to minimise any risk from the hazard, making the workplace safer, more efficient and more profitable.

### Be accurate and comprehensive

To ensure the process of hazard identification is accurate and comprehensive, it should be carried out as a dedicated task and not in conjunction with, or part of, other tasks. Only people with a thorough knowledge of the area, process or machine under review should carry out a hazard identification survey.

**Hazards may not be obvious**

- It is crucial to consider hazards that may not be obvious. For example:
- Sitting in the same position carrying out the same task for an extended period of time can cause occupational overuse syndrome
  - Bullying in the workplace can cause poor staff morale and illness
  - Staff illness may be the sign of poor air quality in the work environment



**Use existing processes**

There should be existing processes within your organisation to help identify and report the hazards within your work area. Make sure that they include details about the processes the PCBU and workers need to follow.

You will need to ensure the processes for reporting hazards that have been identified are simple and straightforward for staff to follow. These processes not only make it easier for staff, but also ensure you have documented evidence should the organisation be audited or inspected by a regulator.

Here are examples of the types of processes used to identify and report hazards.

<p>A close-up photograph of a hazard reporting form. The form has several checkboxes and text fields. A pen is resting on the form. The text on the form includes 'Hazard reporting forms', 'Injury/illness', 'Broken/lost', 'Following Incident (Check all that apply)', 'Name of Incident (Room)', and 'Name of Injury/Illness'.</p>	<p><b>Hazard reporting forms</b></p> <p>Hazard reporting forms should be available on the organisation intranet and in the health and safety manual for your work area.</p>
<p>A photograph of a worker in a blue uniform and yellow hard hat standing in a warehouse or storage area. The worker is holding a clipboard and looking at it. The background shows shelves filled with boxes.</p>	<p><b>Regular evaluation</b></p> <p>When you have developed a system for identifying and reporting hazards, your work area should be evaluated at least twice a year to minimise the likelihood of any health and safety issues.</p>
<p>A photograph of a person's hands typing on a computer keyboard. A mouse is visible on the desk next to the keyboard. The background is slightly blurred, showing a desk with a computer monitor and other office equipment.</p>	<p><b>Software programs</b></p> <p>The content of WHS procedures depends on the organisation's health and safety policy and the type of activities carried out in the work area. The system should include using software programs to input, store and retrieve this type of information quickly and securely.</p>



### Worker reports

Worker reports are one of the most effective ways to identify hazards. Workers have a legal responsibility to report any identified hazards to the PCBU who is legally required to take corrective action on those reports.



### Other methods

Other ways of identifying hazards include:

- regular workplace inspections
- results of accident investigations
- evaluating reasons for poor quality outputs
- industry information bulletins
- reports from customers or visitors to the workplace.

## A familiar work environment

To identify hazards you must be familiar with the work environment. You need a good overview of the team's duties, work practices and procedures, the equipment they use and the work environment.

Points to consider when identifying hazards in the work environment:

- Which parts of the work environment move? Is there anything about the doors, floors, wheeled furniture, lifts and so on that could be dangerous?
- What substances are used? Is there anything about the way these are stored or used that could be dangerous?
- What equipment is used? Is there anything about it or the way it is used that could be hazardous?
- Is there anything that you or others do that could be hazardous? Is there anyone inexperienced or untrained working in the team?
- Do work procedure shortcuts follow all safety procedures?
- Could anyone be hurt by modifications that have been made to tools or equipment?
- Does everyone still take as much care with workplace practices and procedures as they did when they first started in the workplace?
- What happens when cleaning, maintenance or repairs are done?

## Make a checklist

From time to time, management, HSRs or members of the HSC may carry out a formal workplace inspection. This usually takes the form of a walk-through survey of the work area to gather information about the work team and their work practices.

It is important to make a checklist that is tailored to your specific work environment. This provides a structure for collecting detailed information on equipment, processes and work areas for evidence of potential problems.

Here is an example what to include in a checklist.

<b>Area to check</b>	<b>What to check</b>
<b>Manual handling</b>	<b>Lifting and moving heavy objects</b>
<b>Housekeeping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Floors</li> <li>• Workbenches</li> <li>• Ladders</li> <li>• Walkways</li> </ul>
<b>Machinery</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct operation</li> <li>• Safety guards</li> <li>• Noise levels</li> <li>• Dangerous moving parts</li> </ul>
<b>Working at heights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ladders</li> <li>• Cranes</li> <li>• Platforms</li> <li>• Cherry pickers</li> <li>• Scaffolding</li> </ul>
<b>Chemical hazards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fumes</li> <li>• Storage</li> <li>• Labelling</li> <li>• Using protective clothing and equipment</li> </ul>
<b>Electrical safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimising potential for accidents</li> </ul>
<b>Fire safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimising potential for fire hazards</li> </ul>
<b>First-aid equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate to the environment</li> <li>• Sufficient quantities</li> <li>• Within the use-by date</li> </ul>

## Other sources of information

Here are some other sources of information that can help with hazard identification.

### Reports and claims

Reports about equipment failure, accidents and dangerous incident (near miss) reports, as well as compensation claims, may help you to determine workplace problems such as broken equipment, excessive noise, poor air quality, poor safety signage or lack of safety instructions.

### A job safety analysis

A job safety analysis (JSA) is a comprehensive tool used to identify each part of a work process to identify potential hazards and evaluate appropriate control measures. It may also be known as a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS). Each task should be separated into its component parts to identify any potential hazards; for example, a forklift operator drives the forklift across a warehouse, unloads items from the back of a tray truck and moves them to an overhead storage rack.

### Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the process of conducting group meetings with people who are familiar with the operation of the area under review. Encourage workers to provide details of any hazards they are aware of. The process must be non-threatening, with all suggestions listened to respectfully. Record all information relating to hazards and sort the results into priority order.

### Industry associations

WHS is often raised at industry association meetings or during informal discussions before or after meetings. You may gain useful information by attending such meetings. Notes from meetings are often made available to the general public through bulletins and safety updates.

### Manufacturers' manuals

Manufacturers' instruction books and safety data sheets (SDSs) provide advice and warnings regarding WHS hazards. It is important to ensure all instructions are understood and followed by all workers. Manufacturers' information, including SDSs, should be reviewed to ensure all equipment is the safest available and there are no hidden hazards.

## Hazard reporting follow-up

After a hazard report form has been submitted, the hazard examined, the risk assessed and a time line determined for resolving the hazard, the next steps are to nominate someone to be responsible for actioning the report, implement risk controls and, finally, sign off on the hazard report form.

## Analyse the risk

Risk analysis allows an organisation to work out what is required to control risks and decide the processes that are most appropriate and cost effective. To be effective, risk analysis should be repeated at regular intervals to ensure adequate measures have been put in place for risk control.



Consider these points about risk analysis.

#### Involves three steps

Risk analysis involves three steps. You must do the following:

1. Identify the source of any identified risks.
2. Identify the impact of risks on the work area.
3. Consider the likelihood of the risk occurring.

#### Relies on information

Risk analysis relies on information taken from the work environment and other appropriate sources; for example, an industry association or a WHS expert. Statistical analysis and calculations can also be used. Sources include:

- past records and experience
- relevant published literature
- market research
- outcomes of public consultation
- experiments and prototypes
- economic and engineering modelling or other simulation techniques
- specialist and expert judgments.

#### Requires consultation

Risk analysis requires consultation. Information must be gathered from workers, PCBUs, health and safety specialists and experts. Consultation is important to establish the context of the risk and determine its potential impact.

Where risks are classified as very low impact, the organisation may choose to monitor them rather than act to control them. However, these decisions should still be documented in the risk analysis plan to demonstrate that the process has been completed.

#### Includes these elements

An effective risk management program has these elements:

- Senior management shows leadership and commitment to health and safety issues.
- Each worker is actively involved in contributing to the health and safety of their workplace.
- Consultation processes ensure effective communication.
- Appropriate information, education and training are provided to everyone.
- Hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control measures are in place and regularly monitored.
- Health and safety management information systems underpin information and processes.

## Assess the risk

Assessing the risk associated with each hazard is also important. To correctly interpret data about hazards or risks, you need sound analytic skills:

- Be objective and methodical.
- Use a system and criteria so you know what you are assessing against.
- Never accept the first conclusion you make.
- Look at all the data, ask questions and reinterpret if necessary.



Always consider the likelihood of the hazard occurring and the potential impact of exposure to the hazard. The combination of these produces a level of risk.

## Standards and priorities

Before you can control risk, you must establish the level of health and safety that is acceptable, in your work area, your organisation and your industry. Standards vary from industry to industry, influenced by perceptions, current knowledge and who is paying for the risk reduction. Decisions must be made based on current standards, judicial interpretation and the public's expectation.

It is also important to establish priorities. You cannot deal with everything at the same time. Decide what you need to do immediately, in the short term (within a few weeks), in the medium term (within a few months) and in the long term (over the next year).

Consider the following when prioritising risk management tasks:

- The severity of the risk
- The number of people affected by the risk
- How easily it can be controlled
- Other benefits that may result from controlling the risk; for example, increased productivity
- Your organisation's policies and procedures relating to prioritising risk

## Control the risk

When a risk assessment identifies a hazard with unacceptable risks, put control measures in place to eliminate or reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Risk control is a legal requirement of all PCBU's. Practical guidance on how to control some hazards and risks is covered by regulations (for example, dealing with asbestos, manual handling and noise). Others are covered by a code of practice. Unions, industry associations, consultants, specialist WHS advisors, colleagues and HSRs can also provide information and advice.



## Monitor the risk

A risk control plan is a set of procedures addressing how risks in the workplace will be monitored and controlled. Health and safety officers should monitor risk control measures and may also be required to develop and implement the risk control plan.

Here is an example of how the process of consulting, identifying and assessing risks fits into the WHS risk control plan.

### Consult, identify and assess risks

**1****Consult all relevant personnel**

- Familiarise staff with the health and safety officer and/or HSC.
- Conduct regular health and safety meetings.
- Plan strategies to inform workers.
- Receive feedback from workers regarding health and safety issues.

**2****Allocate responsibility**

- Nominate personnel and resources needed for risk identification.
- Allocate specific functions to HSRs.

**3****Prepare a work plan**

- Decide how the plan will be structured (hazard by hazard).
- Prioritise hazards and resources.
- Encourage the work team to contribute to the risk control plan.

**4****Identify hazards**

- Involve HSRs in hazard identification.
- For hazard identification, include SDSs, team member reports, task observation and inspection reports.

**5****Risk assessment**

- Analyse information from the hazard identification process.

**6****Risk control**

- Use the hierarchy of risk control to address risk.

## 7

**Monitor and review**

- Monitor the workplace for any changes that may affect the existing risk control plan.

## Report incidents and dangerous occurrences

It is a legal requirement to immediately report any incident or dangerous occurrence to the health and safety regulator in your state or territory.

A dangerous occurrence (or a near-miss) is a situation where there is, or could have been, an immediate and significant risk to any person in the workplace. There does not need to be any injury or damage for an event to be considered a dangerous occurrence.

Here are examples of dangerous occurrences and beneficial outcomes of reporting them.

**Examples**

Examples of dangerous occurrences include:

- the collapse or overturn of industrial lifting equipment
- the collapse or partial collapse of a wall, floor, ceiling or building
- an explosion, fire or escape of any hazardous substance such as gas or chemicals
- an electrical short circuit, malfunction or explosion
- a flood, rock fall, or ground collapse.

**Reporting benefits**

When a worker reports a dangerous occurrence before it results in an injury or illness, PCBUs can take preventative action to make sure injuries or illness do not result. The benefits include:

- fewer injuries and illnesses
- less downtime from accident investigations
- lower machinery repair costs
- fewer instances of poor quality production
- safer and more efficient work practices.

## Example: hazards, risks and control measures

Here are some hazards, risks and suggested control measures.

### Hazards, risks and control measures



#### Boxes

##### Hazard:

Boxes cluttering the walkways

##### Risk:

- People may trip over them.
- Boxes are an obstacle to emergency evacuation procedures and may pose fire risk.

##### Control measures:

- Create storage area to contain extra boxes.
- Educate workers about safe storage and keeping emergency exits clear.
- Conduct regular inspections to ensure compliance with new storage arrangements.



#### Lighting

##### Hazard:

Poor lighting in office space

##### Risk:

Workers complaining of headaches and fatigue due to eye strain.

##### Control measures:

Improve lighting by providing extra lights over desk space or increasing wattage of lights.



#### Training

##### Hazard:

New workers are not educated about hazards in the workplace

##### Risk:

Accidents and ill health can occur from exposure to hazards.

##### Control measures:

A new worker induction program must be established and regularly revised as needed.

*continued ...*

... continued



**Racial harassment**

**Hazard:**

HR has received a number of complaints about racial harassment in the workplace

**Risk:**

- Workers may suffer psychological trauma.
- The organisation may incur legislative penalties.

**Control measures:**

- Research a workplace diversity program.
- Monitor relations between groups of workers.

## Practice task 7

1. How safety conscious is your work area? Use this table to:

- document a hazard
- list the risks associated with the hazard
- list the existing control measures for that hazard.

Hazard	Risk	Control measure

2. List the documents in your organisation that support the identification, assessment and control of risks.

3. Explain how these tools provide the opportunity to identify hazards, assess risks and apply controls.

# 3B

## Ensure new hazards are not created from proposed changes in the workplace

Changes in the workplace occur frequently. Change can introduce new hazards; change the risk level of existing hazards; or impact the way WHS should be managed.

Include hazard identification at the planning, design and evaluation stages of any change in the workplace to ensure that new hazards are not created by the proposed change and existing hazards are controlled.

### Changes at work

Common areas of change include staffing, property and work practices.



**Staffing:** hiring new workers, reducing staffing levels through retrenchment or transfer, and workers leaving or retiring



**Property:** moving premises, installing new workstations, plant or equipment, and introducing new technologies



**Work practices:** introducing new products or packaging, changing production shifts or changing suppliers

## Identify hazards early

Before introducing a proposed change, make sure you analyse the impact of that change on health and safety in the workplace. It is important to identify any new hazards as early as possible in the planning process and assess any new risks. By doing this, you will have time to design and implement appropriate control measures before the change is put into place.

Here are three common techniques for identifying hazards in the planning and design stage.

### Hazard and operability method (HAZOP)

HAZOP is a systematic, qualitative technique for hazard identification. A HAZOP study fully describes the process and systematically questions every element to determine how deviations can occur. It then decides whether these deviations can give rise to hazards. HAZOP studies are usually carried out by a small, multidisciplinary team of experienced people, led by an experienced team leader.

### Failure mode and effect analysis (FMEA)

An FMEA is an inductive hazard identification technique that explores the effects, severity and likelihood of failures or malfunctions of individual components within a system. This approach answers the question: 'If this part fails in this manner, what will be the result?' FMEAs can be applied to a number of situations where worker health and safety may be at risk through component failure.

### Task analysis

Task analysis is used to examine the human characteristics of systems, operations and procedures to identify likely sources of error. It studies what should happen and observes what does happen. When using task analysis, you need to define the functions and list every action performed. Each task and subtask is then described and 'errorlikely' situations are identified and ranked.

### Example: poorly planned change

At a large pharmaceuticals company, an efficiency assessment and WHS audit are conducted simultaneously. These result in a list of changes needed to maintain or improve WHS.

Of particular interest, the WHS audit noted an increase in worker absenteeism in the accounts department on the ground floor. A specialist noise measurement consultant noted excessively high noise levels from an adjacent diesel compressor used for the upper-floor laboratories.

Following minimal consultation and investigation into alternative locations, management chooses to relocate the generator to the rear of the building in a disused loading dock.

Within two months, several people working in the receiving dock at the other end of the building are sent home with unidentified illnesses or serious headaches.

The HSR authorises an investigation and study by an environmental health scientist, who finds excessive levels of carbon monoxide are entering the receiving bay from the hastily relocated generator.



### Practice task 8

Re-read the previous example, then answer the questions that follow.

1. What hazard was created when the diesel compressor was relocated? How did this happen?

2. Describe what the pharmaceuticals company should have done to implement this change.

# 3C

## Select and implement risk control measures

Implementing risk control measures requires different types of activity, depending on the nature of the organisation and its business. Activities may involve:

- eliminating the hazard
- modifying work practices or equipment to minimise the risk
- providing personal protective equipment (PPE).

The hierarchy of risk control is the most effective method of eliminating workplace risks and is required under the regulations.

### Safe place versus safe person

Developing and implementing risk controls relies on effective analytical and problem-solving skills. You will have to analyse relevant workplace information and data to identify and assess hazards, and then decide what type of risk control action to take.

Here are some basic approaches to reducing risk.

#### A safe place approach

A safe place approach focuses on controls that reduce risks associated with the work environment. Such controls are usually incorporated into designing equipment, engineering equipment, isolating hazards in the work environment and altering work processes.

#### A safe person approach

A safe person approach focuses on changing the behaviour of the people in the workplace. Introducing safe work methods, providing training in how to perform work safely and providing PPE are examples of controls that focus on the person.

#### An effective approach

Controls aimed at creating a safe place are usually more effective than controlling people, because they target the source of the hazard. While the prime objective is to eliminate hazards, it is also important to realise if a hazard cannot be eliminated, it must be minimised as much as possible. This can be done using the hierarchy of risk control.

## Hierarchy of risk control

WHS legislation requires ongoing risk management to minimise the impact on workers' health and safety. PCBU's must develop and maintain procedures that find the most appropriate way of eliminating or reducing any risks identified. Control measures can be sorted into categories with the most effective strategies listed at the top and the least effective at the bottom. This list of categories is collectively known as the hierarchy of risk control. Select control measures from as high on the hierarchy of risk control as possible. Sometimes the most effective method involves a combination of these controls.

You can read more about how to manage risks including the use of the hierarchy of risk control at: [www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/633/How\\_to\\_Manage\\_Work\\_Health\\_and\\_Safety\\_Risks.doc](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/633/How_to_Manage_Work_Health_and_Safety_Risks.doc).



## The hierarchy of control

Here is more information on the hierarchy of control.

### Level 1 control

**Elimination:** Eliminate the hazard at the source. For example, remove hazardous materials or abandon hazardous work practices.

### Level 2 controls

**Substitution:** Substitute the hazard with something of a lesser risk. For example, replace toxic materials with non-toxic materials.

**Isolation:** Isolate the hazard from the main work area. For example, store hazardous materials in a designated area away from where people are working.

**Engineering controls:** Use engineering controls to reduce the risk. For example, change equipment or tools being used, or install additional safety equipment.

### Level 3 controls

**Administrative controls:** Use administrative controls to lessen the risk. For example, introduce new work procedures and practices.

**PPE:** Use PPE. For example, provide and use hearing and eye protection, hard hats, gloves, masks and protective clothing such as coats and vests.

## Risk control plan

You may be responsible for developing a risk control plan for your team or work area. The plan should enable consultation, ongoing identification and assessment of hazards, and use the hierarchy of risk controls to control identified risks.

Here are five elements of a risk control plan.

### Consult all relevant personnel

- Familiarise staff with the HSR and/or HSC.
- Conduct regular WHS meetings.
- Plan strategies to inform staff.
- Receive feedback from workers regarding health and safety issues.

### Allocate responsibility

- Nominate personnel responsible for risk control plan.
- Allocate specific functions to HSRs.

### Prepare a work plan

- Decide how and when the necessary work will be done.
- Prepare time lines and resources.
- Document the plan.

### Prepare a risk control plan

- Document hazards, risk assessment and risk control measures or steps to be taken to reduce hazards.
- Identify resources needed.
- Record how risks will be controlled.
- Record time lines for implementation.

### Monitor and review

- Monitor implementation of risk control plan; for example:
  - Is it on time?
  - Are there any difficulties?
  - Are all staff aware of procedures?
- Establish ongoing evaluation of the plan to ensure its effectiveness and appropriateness. An HSR should be invited to be involved in ongoing evaluation.

### Example: apply risk control measures

Peter is new to his role as coordinator of a small team that are often out of the office setting up displays in shopping centres and at industry expos. On his first day, he trips over some resources that are sticking out from under someone’s desk. Looking around the office, he discovers boxes of display products and resources taking up floor space. When he points out to the team that the boxes and resources are a risk to other’s health and safety, he is informed that the team are very time poor and find it easier to keep the resources near them so they don’t have to spend time packing them away and then getting them back out the next day.

Peter looks at control measures he can use to address the issue. He downloads the policy and procedures and uses a team meeting to provide some professional development training for the team (administrative control). He focuses on the responsibility all people have, under the Act, as well as duty of care that each team member owe to one another.

Using workplace documents, Peter is able to categorise the hazard as a high risk and proceeds to look at eliminating the risk by instilling a practice of packing resources in the cupboards each day. He shortens the display times to allow enough time for staff to comply with the new procedure.



### Practice task 9

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

#### Case study

The national marketing team had a strategy in place to attend all the field days to introduce their new harvester to farmers around Australia. The team of three very excitedly went off to their first field day, enjoying their time out of the office. One team member remembered to pack a hat, but still managed to get bad sunburn on his lower face and neck. The other two members both ended up with very red and sore faces, necks and ears.

1. What is the WHS issue and why is it an issue?

2. What control measures could you put in place and why would you use those measures?

## **3D** Identify inadequacies and provide resources to introduce new risk control measures

Risk control measures for some hazards may not be adequate, or they may become ineffective as conditions or circumstances change.

An important aspect of your WHS responsibilities as a PCBU is to assess the effectiveness of risk controls, identify the inadequacies and report these inadequacies according to the hierarchy of control and WHS legislative requirements. You must also be able to locate and provide resources to enable the introduction of new measures of risk control.

### **Evaluate the effectiveness**

The effectiveness of any risk control measure should be evaluated soon after implementation and monitored on an ongoing basis.

Here are some techniques that can be used.



#### **Conduct post-control risk assessment**

One of the most commonly used strategies for evaluating the effectiveness of risk control is to conduct a second risk assessment following its implementation, and to compare the outcome with the original assessment.

This method relies on qualitative judgments, but delivers comparable data for analysis.



#### **Observe worker behaviours**

Risk registers can be used to generate monitoring checklists and conduct workplace observations. During these observations, PCBUs should evaluate the effectiveness of controls by observing and questioning worker behaviour. PCBUs should observe whether new procedures are being followed and question workers' understanding of those procedures.



#### **Survey key stakeholders**

Interviews, questionnaires and surveys enable a large number of people to comment on whether or not the proposed control systems are being used in practice.



**Analyse incident, accident and near-miss reports**

Regularly collate completed incident, accident and dangerous incident report forms and analyse them to identify trends. Where risk control methods are adequate, no WHS incident reports should exist.

## Risk assessment

Risk assessment is not infallible and a range of methods should be used to analyse the impact of a proposed change on the health and safety of the workplace.

Be aware that:

- risk assessment is subjective and has limitations – this should be taken into account when decisions on a proposed change are based on the outcomes of a risk assessment
- risk assessment on a proposed change should be as informed and equitable as possible
- risk assessment is a tool that is used to support decision-making related to change – it should not be the sole driver in such decision-making.



In a high-risk environment, make sure you include robust monitoring systems to identify any failures or malfunctions before putting a change into operation.

## Identify the inadequacies

It is also important to identify any inadequacies in existing risk control measures. Here are three considerations.

**Use**

**Use participation arrangements**

Use participative arrangements in the workplace to regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of any risk control system. WHS meetings are an important source of information for evaluating the risk control system, as is listening to feedback from workers and observing workplace procedures.

**Review****Review WHS records**

Reviewing WHS records may provide statistics and data that you can analyse to determine how effectively the risk control system is working. Incident reports and reports of near misses (dangerous incidents that nearly occurred) can indicate areas of the system that are inadequate in controlling risks. These records can also indicate where a trend is emerging in occupational injuries or disease in the workplace.

**Conduct****Conduct regular hazard and safety audits**

Records of regular hazard and safety audits can also indicate whether hazards or issues are recurring in the workplace due to the ineffectiveness of risk controls. You may find that strategies are being implemented to manage risks, but workers are not complying with them. Records such as worker absenteeism may also indicate problems brought about by inadequacies in the risk control system.

## Reasons for failure

Risk control measures fail for a variety of reasons. Many organisational factors have an impact on the effectiveness of risk controls. Here are several reasons for failure.

**Workplace culture**

Workplace culture related to WHS; for example, the level of commitment of workers to uphold WHS practices

**Commitment**

The commitment of PCBUs and supervisors to WHS; for example, whether equipment is regularly maintained, staff are supervised and staff are provided with WHS information and training

**Level of compliance**

The level of compliance with procedures; for example, whether WHS policies and procedures are explained and followed to ensure equipment and machinery are used correctly; whether there has been unauthorised use of equipment or access to restricted areas

**Pressure to override**

The pressure to override safe working practices; for example, meeting deadlines or cutting costs causing workers to adopt shortcuts or remove safety guards on dangerous machinery

**Characteristics**

The characteristics of the workforce, such as cultural diversity or language, literacy and numeracy skills; for example, workers may not be able to understand signage in the work environment

**Structure**

Workplace organisational structure and geographic location, especially for remote workers or multi-site organisations; for example, it may be difficult to convey WHS information or encourage and monitor safe work practices for remote workers

**Ineffective consultation**

Ineffective consultation; for example, expert WHS advice may not have been obtained, or control measures may be based on inaccurate information

**Inadequate installation**

Inadequate installation; for example, machinery may be incorrectly installed, so that risk control measures are ineffective

## Provide resources

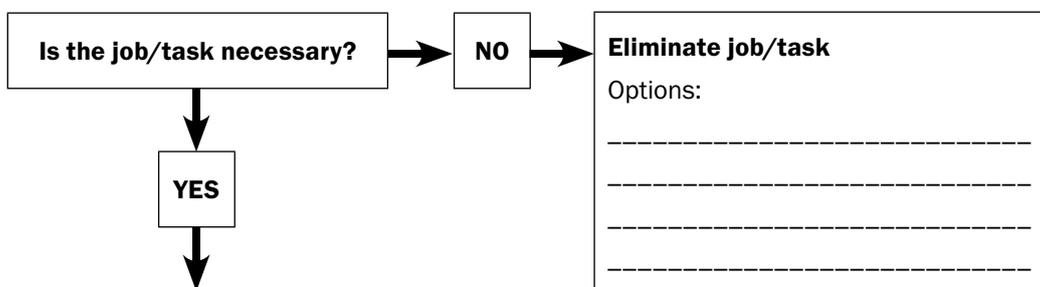
Once the inadequacies of existing control measures have been identified, new risk treatments must be introduced. However, this cannot happen without appropriate resources.

Resources may include:

- financial resources
- human resources, including WHS professionals
- training and education
- equipment or building modifications
- documentation, manuals and procedures
- personal protective equipment (PPE).

### Example: a risk control worksheet

1. Factors assessed as a risk.



2. Is reduction of risk by use of engineering controls practical?

Category	Options or actions	Time frame
Short term		
Medium term		
Long term		

3. Is reduction of risk possible by use of administrative controls?

Category	Options or actions	Time frame
Short term		
Medium term		
Long term		

4. Is reduction of risk by the use of personal protective equipment and clothing practical?

Category	Options or actions	Time frame
Short term		
Medium term		
Long term		

(Adapted from Worksafe Australia by Cancer Council of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.)

## Practice task 10

A necessary responsibility is to check whether control measures are effective. Use the information in this table to briefly describe risk controls in your workplace.

Questions	Yes	No	Comments
Are risk control measures in place?			
Are there any problem areas or workers who consistently hinder WHS improvements?			
Do risk controls actually achieve a reduction in risk as planned?			
Have changes created any new hazards or unanticipated effects?			
Is this reduction in risk likely to be ongoing?			
Does your organisation budget for implementing and maintaining health and safety risk controls? Specify how in the comments section.			
Is it possible to make further improvements to increase the reliability and effectiveness of the risk controls?			
Are there any lessons to be learnt that can be applied to other health and safety risks or risk control processes?			

# 3E

## Identify and act on requirements for expert WHS advice

Organisations have a legal responsibility to consult workers and HSRs on the adequacy of risk controls. HSRs should be involved in implementing risk controls because:

- they are able to represent the workforce and ensure the workforce is contributing
- their knowledge of the workplace allows better identification of all hazards and risk assessment; for example, shift work, manual handling, traffic or chemicals
- they may have useful ideas about how different control measures may or may not work.



### WHS experts

PCBUs may need to call on specialists for advice. However, it is important to evaluate their expertise and the relevance of their experience to the particular industry, problem and work context. It is also important to clarify how the specialist will interact with the work group to obtain the required information. A specialist working in isolation without any input from workers may result in flawed evaluations and inappropriate recommendations.

### WHS consultants

Depending on the WHS issue, you may need to use a specialist consultant.

Here are some commonly used WHS consultants and their areas of specialisation.

#### Safety professionals

Safety professionals provide advice on developing and implementing systematic approaches to managing health and safety and risk management.

The Safety Institute of Australia (SIA) is the professional body for safety professionals.

#### Ergonomists

Ergonomists design the job, equipment and workplace to fit the worker to ensure health, safety and productivity are maintained at the highest levels.

For example, they can be asked to set up an effective workstation.

**Hygienists**

Occupational hygienists apply a scientific, technical approach to identifying, assessing and controlling chemical, physical and biological agents that may affect the workers' health.

For example, identifying chemicals in office environments that workers may be exposed to.

**Health professionals**

Occupational health professionals design, implement and evaluate programs that maintain and enhance health, improve safety and increase productivity. They include occupational and environmental health nurses, occupational medicine physicians, industrial hygienists, environmental health surveyors, safety professionals and occupational health psychologists.

For example, an environmental health surveyor investigates working environments for exposure to microscopic biological hazards.

**Toxicologists**

Toxicologists plan and carry out laboratory and field studies to identify, monitor and evaluate the impact of toxic materials and radiation on workers' health, the environment and the impact of future technology.

For example, toxicologists test for radiation release and worker exposure around X-ray machines and radiation treatment machines in oncology departments.

**Audiologists**

Industrial audiologists specialise in identifying, diagnosing, treating and monitoring hearing disorders. They may assess and treat workers with hearing and related disorders. They may also fit hearing aids and provide auditory training.

**Safety engineers**

Safety engineers analyse plant and work systems to identify where faults can occur and propose safety requirements in design specifications to create safer work systems.

## Example: consult with a WHS specialist

Sue is the HR manager for a banking and finance company employing 600 staff. She has noticed an increase in the number of complaints relating to repetitive strain injuries to the back, neck, wrists and fingers. She has also seen an increase in the number of sick days taken for such injuries.

In discussion with line managers, Sue identifies that many people are remaining at their desks for long periods of time with minimal breaks, and are adopting poor posture at their workstations. Sue phones the Safety Institute of Australia for advice and they recommend employing the services of an ergonomist specialist.

Sue arranges for an ergonomist to perform the following services:

- Observe workers at their workstations to identify common issues.
- Conduct general ergonomic training with staff in small groups.
- Provide one-on-one workstation assessments with workers who are most at risk.

Three months after the visits by the ergonomist, there is a 50 per cent reduction in the number of reported repetitive strain injuries and also a 30 per cent reduction in the number of days of sick leave taken by staff.



## Practice task 11

Identify a task or process in your work area that requires WHS risk control intervention and specialist advice, then answer the questions that follow.

1. Describe the task or process in detail.

2. Describe the safety issues you have identified.

3. Use the internet to locate a specialist WHS consultant who should be able to provide relevant information and services you require. Write the name and contact details of the person or organisation.

## Summary

1. A hazard is defined as anything that may cause harm, injury, or ill health to a person, property or environment. Hazard identification is the first step in the risk management process.
2. Implement and regularly monitor a risk management process to ensure all hazards have been identified, risks have been assessed and adequate measures to control those risks are in place.
3. Prior to implementing any changes in the organisation, perform a thorough risk analysis and management program involving hazard identification, risk assessment and implementation of control measures. After implementation, evaluate the effectiveness of control strategies to make sure they are having the desired effect.
4. Control measures can be sorted into a number of categories. The list of categories is collectively referred to as the hierarchy of risk control.
5. A safe place approach focuses on risk controls that reduce the risks associated with the work environment. A safe person approach focuses on changing the behaviour of the people in the workplace.
6. When seeking specialist WHS advice, it is important to evaluate the expertise and relevance of the consultant's experience to the particular industry, problem and work context. It is also important to clarify how the specialist will interact with the work group to obtain information.

## Learning checkpoint 3

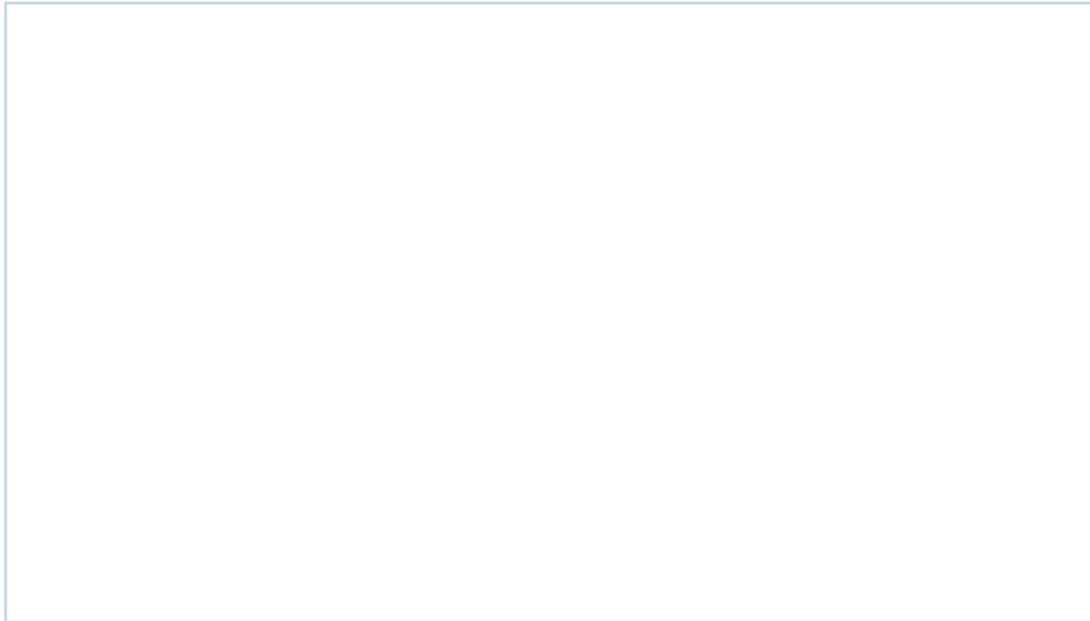
### Establish and maintain procedures for hazard and risk control in a work area

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in establishing and maintaining procedures for hazard and risk control in a work area.

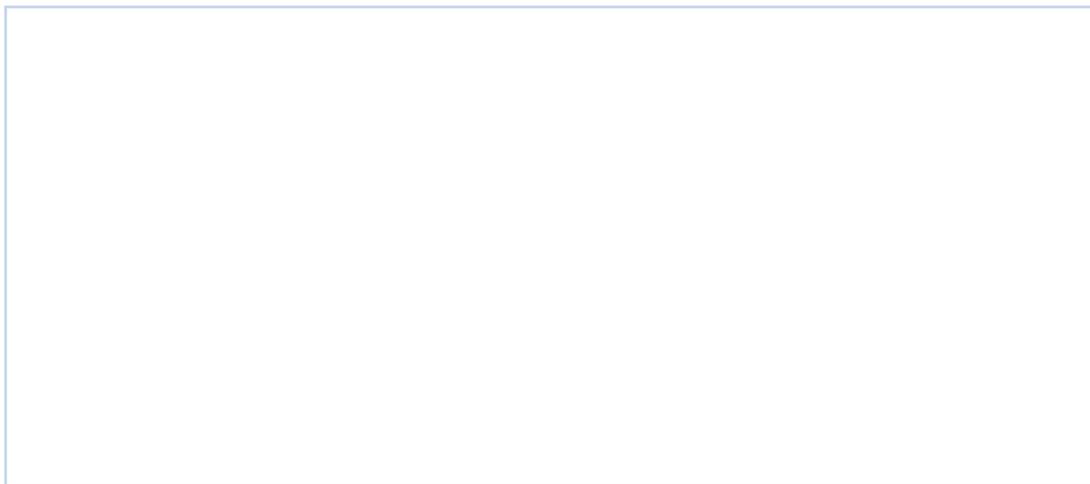
#### Part A

1. Name two procedures currently used by your organisation to identify and control hazards.

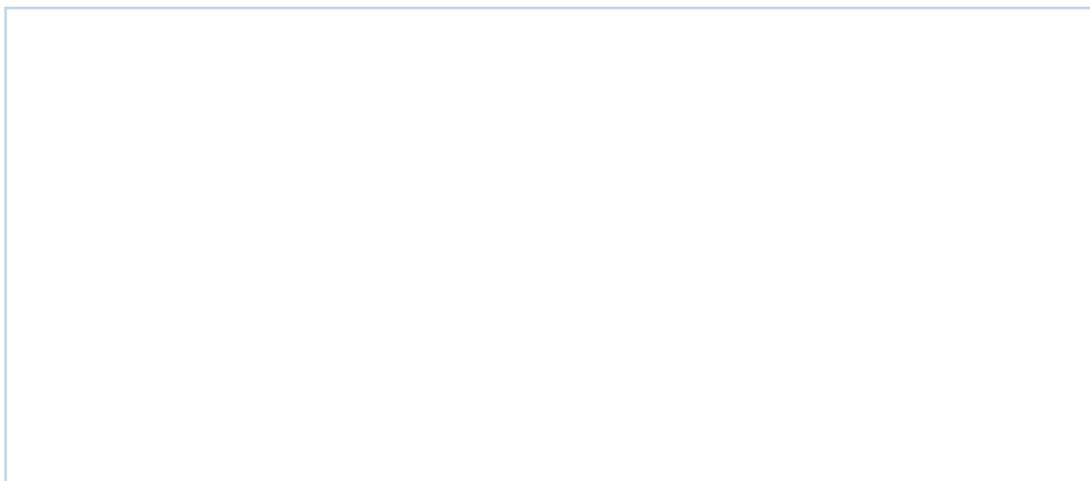
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the two procedures from question 1 against each of the following points:
  - a) Compliance with WHS legislative requirements
  - b) Ability to identify all possible hazards
  - c) Accuracy in assessing risks
  - d) Application to the hierarchy of risk control
  - e) User-friendly nature of the risk assessment tools



3. Explain two strategies to ensure new hazards are not created when proposed changes occur in the workplace.



4. Explain how you would apply the hierarchy of risk control to select and implement appropriate control measures. Use an example from your work area.



5. Using your example from question 4, identify two factors that may reduce the effectiveness of your proposed risk controls.

6. Identify two situations in your work area where you may need to call upon expert WHS advice. Explain why it is necessary to use these experts and the outcomes you hope to achieve.

## Part B

Read the scenario, then answer the questions that follow.

### Scenario

A manufacturer that produces aluminium window frames in their plant receives complaints of excessive noise from nearby residents. Workers have also complained to management about noise levels, with many of them reporting increased headaches. Current risk controls include workers wearing their own low-grade ear protection (earplugs or stereo headphones) and an administrative direction to close factory doors when making 'excessive noise', which is seldom adhered to. Management has not issued workers with any protective equipment. An environmental consultant is brought in to survey and assess occupational noise levels and provide solutions.

As a health and safety officer, you work closely with the environment consultant. It is your job to implement any recommendations.

1. What hazard was identified in this workplace and how is it currently being controlled? Why is this not effective? How was the inadequacy of the current control measures identified?

2. Suggest procedures this organisation should adopt so that any proposed change will not create new hazards and the existing hazards are controlled. Consider hazard identification, risk assessment, risk control, compliance and reporting.

3. List three resources you will need to implement your proposed control measures?



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## Topic 4

# Evaluate and maintain a work area WHS management system

All WHS management systems must be maintained and reviewed to make sure they comply with WHS legislation and the needs of the organisation and its workers. This may involve developing WHS training programs, reviewing WHS and worker records and measuring the WHS management system's performance. The focus of all WHS management systems is to identify hazards and develop programs to deal with hazards, ensuring worker health and safety and compliance with WHS legislation.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A Develop and provide a WHS induction and training program for all workers
- 4B Maintain WHS records to identify patterns of occupational injury and disease
- 4C Measure and evaluate the WHS management system
- 4D Develop and implement improvements to the WHS management system
- 4E Ensure compliance with WHS legislation

# 4A

## Develop and provide a WHS induction and training program for all workers

All workers must complete WHS induction training and ongoing refresher courses. Efficient and well-trained workers are essential to any successful business and managing worker health and safety is a legal responsibility.

Effective WHS systems enable PCBUs to protect workers, comply with legal requirements and provide a safe and healthy work environment.

Here are some key points on providing WHS induction and training.

### WHS policies and procedures

Preparing new workers for their job roles and ensuring they understand all relevant WHS policies and procedures and how they can contribute is a legal responsibility of all PCBUs. In the context of WHS, 'workers' includes all workers of the organisation such as contractors, sub-contractors and volunteers.

### WHS legislative implications

Workers should be aware of the legislative implications of WHS as well as relevant policies and procedures. Training programs should ensure workers are equipped to perform their roles in a safe manner with minimal risks to themselves and others.

### Health and safety

Health and safety training programs may differ depending on the type of work being performed. For example, office workers may need training in ergonomics, correct use of office equipment and emergency evacuation procedures; while construction workers may require training in using personal protective equipment (PPE), working at heights and working with excessive noise.

## Provide a WHS induction

All new workers should be provided with a WHS induction program. This usually involves a tour of the workplace (to identify emergency exits, safety signs and any restricted access areas) and a demonstration of PPE, workplace equipment and machinery, and safe work practices. Workers should also be provided with a hard copy of the relevant WHS policies and procedures, or told how to access them online.

Your organisation may have a WHS induction checklist to make sure that all of the relevant information is given to new workers during the induction period.



Here is an example of the information needed in an induction.

WHS induction information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An explanation of the WHS duty of care and implications for workers</li> <li>• Work instructions and any hazards and risks associated with specific tasks</li> <li>• Fire and emergency response requirements</li> <li>• First-aid facilities and procedures</li> <li>• General health and safety policies and procedures</li> <li>• Details of the health and safety committee, health and safety representatives (where appointed) and meetings schedule</li> <li>• Specific WHS training programs; for example, safe operation of equipment, PPE and risk management</li> </ul>

## Analyse WHS training needs

It is important to regularly identify worker WHS skills and knowledge gaps. A good way to do this is to conduct a WHS training needs analysis.

A WHS training needs analysis helps you work out what training must be completed to ensure that all workers have current WHS skills and knowledge. Training must be relevant to their job roles and the WHS issues that affect them in the workplace.

Here are the three steps for developing a WHS training needs analysis.

### Step 1

#### Benchmark WHS requirements

Start by analysing:

- workplace inspection data
- job descriptions
- audit reports
- job safety analyses
- incident reports
- minutes of HSC meetings.

Data from each of these sources will enable you to determine the standards by which you can measure worker performance.

### Step 2

#### Determine current skills and knowledge

Determine your team members' current skills and knowledge. This process may involve:

- one-on-one meetings
- surveys to identify current skills
- analysing each member's qualifications and experience
- general observation.

**Step 3****Identify competency gaps**

Compare team members' current skills and knowledge with the benchmark requirements to determine future training needs. These may be developed in a training plan or matrix to enable further monitoring and evaluation.

## Conduct mandatory training

Under WHS legislation and regulations, workers must attend mandatory WHS training programs. The following provides more information about this training.

**Possible topics**

Topics may include:

- WHS compliance requirements
- WHS consultation for HSRs and HSCs
- WHS duty of care for PCBUs
- WHS risk management for PCBUs and team leaders
- availability of first-aid officers or fire wardens
- industry-specific training (for example, working in confined spaces, working with infectious materials)
- emergency procedures.

**Training types**

Ongoing or refresher training may be required for workers who are involved in specialist activities that require specific licencing or regulatory requirements; for example, operating mechanical aids such as forklifts, cranes and other heavy machinery.

**Who conducts it?**

Training may be conducted by internal training personnel or a health and safety officer in the workplace. In some cases, training may need to be provided by an external training provider at an external location or by a WHS management specialist. This is determined by workers' needs and industry requirements or levels of regulation that apply to the workers and the activities they undertake.

## Coaches and mentors

Coaching and mentoring helps workers develop skills, attributes and knowledge designed to improve performance. This type of activity is often closely linked to ongoing training programs and organisational change.

For PCBUs, this may involve:

- creating positive WHS values and beliefs (for example, by encouraging everyone’s participation in WHS decision-making and valuing their contributions)
- providing multiple workplace learning opportunities
- leading by example
- reinforcing WHS messages and positive work behaviours
- providing assistance on a day-to-day basis.



### Example: WHS training matrix

Here is a WHS training program matrix for workers at the head office of a construction organisation.

**Key:** Mandatory training is boxed in grey. Ensure you insert the date the training occurs.

Training requirements (office staff)									
Employee name	Site induction	Basic fire extinguisher	Emergency procedures	First aid	Toolbox talks	Permit to work	Manual handling	Conducting risk assessments	Workplace inspections
David Johns	15/08	15/08	15/08	22/11	17/08	17/08			
Greg Knowles	15/08	15/08	15/08	N/A	17/08	N/A			N/A
Joseph Lee	15/08	15/08	15/08	N/A	17/08	N/A		N/A	N/A
Steven Davis	15/08	15/08	15/08	22/11/16	17/08	17/08			
Will Fry	15/08	15/08	15/08	N/A	17/08	17/08			

## Practice task 12

1. A new worker is going to take over the role of another person in your work area. What should be included in the WHS induction for this new worker?

2. How you will identify the specific WHS training needs of this new worker so that you can discuss their WHS training needs?

3. What is the best way to meet these WHS training needs?

4. How can you document these training needs so that you can monitor and evaluate the worker's progress?

# 4B

## Maintain WHS records to identify patterns of occupational injury and disease

To maintain the health and safety of your workplace and comply with WHS regulations, you must have a record-keeping system that allows you to identify the patterns of occupational injury and disease. You also need to keep a record of any WHS decision made, including the reasons for that decision.

### Store and maintain WHS records

All WHS records must be stored and maintained in a simple and easy-to-read format.

Here are some considerations when storing and maintaining records.

#### Access and security

It is important to be able to analyse and review WHS and relevant worker records. WHS records should be kept in a separate database or integrated into human resource management systems. Records should also be secure, with access only available to specific personnel in the organisation.

#### Types of records

The types of records kept by the organisation must meet legislative reporting requirements and the organisation's needs from a WHS management perspective. Records must be stored securely and are subject to the same privacy requirements as any other worker records.

#### Storage and maintenance

Storing and maintaining WHS records enables an organisation to meet its legislative obligations and effectively review and analyse information about WHS. These records also provide a useful tool for management decision-making because they can be analysed to indicate WHS priorities and activities in the organisation.

## Identify the main patterns

To identify the patterns of occupational injury and disease, you must analyse the documents in your workplace, some of which are outlined below.

### Injury/first-aid register

- Look for patterns such as an increased number of slips and trips.
- Analyse:
  - the number and types of incidents
  - whether there are peak times for incidents
  - the number of incidents per department
  - whether the same workers or job roles are involved.
- Work areas or work practices may need to be modified.

### Accident reports

- Consider the following:
  - Are similar accidents occurring?
  - Are accidents occurring in the same place?
  - Are accidents the result of new equipment, poor training or workers not wearing PPE?
  - Have WHS resources decreased?
- The remedy will depend on the identified issue/s.
- Increased WHS resources must be applied as appropriate.
- Serious injuries may be investigated by the relevant state or territory WHS regulator.

### Worker's compensation/ rehabilitation records

- Patterns of repeated claims by individual workers or staff from specific areas may be indicative of more serious problems (for example, poor work morale, poor training or unsafe work practices).
- Work processes in affected areas may need to be observed and modified, or treatments applied.
- Workplace psychologists may help to determine the cause of any morale issues.

**Sick leave/absenteeism records**

- Analyse these to determine reasons for absences (for example, there may be morale or bullying problems or multiple workers experiencing similar illnesses).
- Ask yourself questions such as the following:
  - Are there more men than women experiencing illness?
  - Is there a specific day it is occurring?
- You may need to conduct worker interviews and investigations to determine underlying causes.
- Where illnesses recur, environmental health surveyors may need to investigate.

**Hazardous substances register**

- Check that this is up to date.
- Check whether there is a correlation between an incident/accident and the substances present in the workplace.
- Storage and/or handling procedures may need to be revised.
- Consider substitution or elimination.

**Plant/equipment maintenance and testing reports**

- Records may identify malfunctioning equipment.
- Ask yourself questions such as:
  - Are there regular incidents concerning specific equipment?
  - Is maintenance up to date?
- Repair or replace equipment.
- In extreme cases, consider substituting or eliminating a hazard by outsourcing.

**Manufacturer and supplier information**

- Check whether WHS issues and incidents are occurring because workers are not following manufacturer guidelines.
- Training or refresher courses may be required by workers.
- Administrative controls may be needed to restrict access to suitably trained operators.

## Analyse other workplace documents

Here are examples of other workplace documents that should be analysed, the patterns you should look for and the resolution to that problem.

### HSC minutes/meeting agendas/documented discussions

**Patterns:**

Are there any WHS issues repeatedly raised and discussed?

**Resolution:**

Investigate whether WHS issues raised are being acted upon. All WHS issues need to be investigated and resolved at the earliest opportunity and appropriate resources applied to each situation.

### Audit documents/reports

**Patterns:**

These highlight areas where skills and knowledge are lacking; whether the work area is causing an increase in WHS incidents; or whether changes to processes have resulted in an increase in incidents.

**Resolutions:**

Audit outcomes must be prioritised and addressed. They may include previously unidentified hazards, training deficiencies and record-keeping issues.

### Induction, instruction and training

**Patterns:**

Is induction training effective? Are more incidents occurring during the first three months of a worker's appointment? Are incidents occurring despite training?

**Resolution:**

A training audit or validation may be required. Where deficiencies exist, you may need to source external training.

### Documented results

**Patterns:**

These may be from environmental testing, biological and physiological function testing and ergonomics assessments. Check records to see the results of workplace testing. Is there an increase in back problems or occupational overuse syndrome?

**Resolution:**

More training may be needed in setting up ergonomic work stations.

## Consider past performance

Considering past performance can help you assess the effectiveness of current risk control measures and whether you need to do a more detailed investigation.

For example, by cross-referencing the amount of money spent on hazard prevention in one year against the recorded number of incidents and illnesses, you can assess whether funds spent in this area have resulted in improved health and safety.

In the next year, the organisation may have spent more, but still recorded the same number of illnesses. This may indicate that the illnesses were caused by factors outside the workplace. On the other hand, records indicating that incidents increased as the WHS budget decreased may indicate the organisation is not applying the required duty of care.

## Follow organisational procedures

Always follow the organisation’s procedures for collating, analysing and presenting data; for example, use a spreadsheet to track and graph statistical trends. This information can be used to identify negative and positive trends, and will assist in WHS planning.

WHS records must be kept up to date. Ensure that:

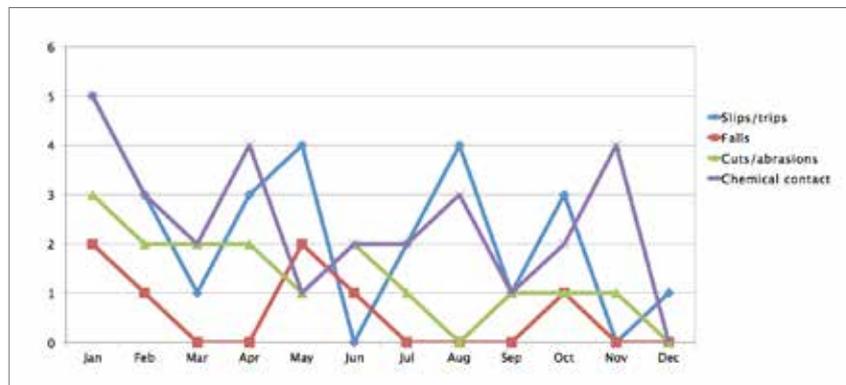
- essential documentation is backed up in the event of IT system failure
- relevant personnel keep information up to date and accurate
- information is analysed and communicated to relevant stakeholders as appropriate
- the privacy of all worker records is maintained.

### Example: WHS data analysis

#### Adverse effects of working on an oil rig

Agent of concern	Negative health effects	How it was identified
Noise	Progressive hearing loss	Results of workplace environment testing
UV radiation	Sunburn, skin cancer	Health and safety committee minutes Results of workplace environment testing

Cleaning department reported incidents (Jan–Dec 2015)



## Practice task 13

1. Name one type of document you can analyse to identify the patterns of occupational injury and disease in your workplace.

2. What patterns might you look for in this document?

# 4C

## Measure and evaluate the WHS management system

A quality systems framework within an organisation provides the benchmarks required to ensure that all systems, processes and procedures are of the highest standard and embrace the concept of continuous improvement. It is important to measure and evaluate the work health and safety management system against the organisation's own quality systems framework.

### WHS quality systems

In a WHS context, certain quality systems must be adopted by an organisation and addressed in their WHS policies and procedures. Here are examples of quality systems that may be used.

#### ISO 9001:2008

*ISO 9001:2008 Quality management systems – Requirements* is the benchmark for organisations with quality management systems in place, ensuring all systems, processes and procedures are of the highest standard and embrace the concept of continuous improvement.

#### AS/NZS 4801:2001

*AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational health and safety management systems – Specification with guidance for use* provides the specifications for, and application of, best-practice health and safety management systems.

#### ISO 14001:2004

*ISO 14001:2004 Environmental management systems – Requirements with guidance for use* details management specifications for sustainability and environmental impact reduction.

#### AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009

*AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 Risk management – Principles and guidelines* provides an overall risk management approach specification for organisations and industry, beyond (but inclusive of) WHS systems.

## Performance and results

The effectiveness of a WHS management system can be determined by measuring performance and results against defined benchmarks to see whether WHS objectives are being achieved.

Here is an example of how you can measure performance by using a mixture of lead and lag indicators.

Lead and lag indicators
A lead indicator enables an organisation to take pre-emptive actions to improve the chances of achieving strategic goals.
In a WHS context, this includes any measure or intervention that addresses or reverses a negative trend before it results in injury, damage or loss.
Lag indicators, on the other hand, are statistics or information that follow an event that has already occurred.
Lag indicators typically focus on measuring loss such as lost time injury (LTI) and costs of injury.
Data on accidents and illnesses are crucial to a final check on the effectiveness of WHS management systems.
However, organisations should be cautious and avoid using them as the sole measure of performance.

## Evaluate internal systems

You also need to evaluate your internal WHS systems to check whether they align with the quality systems framework your organisation has developed. The following provides more information.

### WHS induction system

**System:** A worker and contractor WHS induction system is established and implemented.

**Evaluation:**

- Induction has reduced the number of incidents that occur in the first three months of a worker's employment.
- Workers report that they understand their WHS responsibilities, and their actions confirm this.

### Roles and responsibilities

**System:** The roles and responsibilities of all workers and contractors are documented and procedures put in place to ensure these are disseminated and understood.

**Evaluation:** Workers consistently demonstrate they understand their job description and WHS responsibilities.

### WHS documents and forms

**System:** WHS documents and forms are prepared, easily understood, stored correctly and accessible.

**Evaluation:** Workers and those responsible complete appropriate forms correctly and promptly.

### WHS officers

**System:** A WHS officer is assigned and HSRs and HSC members are appointed where appropriate.

**Evaluation:** Regular WHS meetings occur, WHS is on the agenda for every worker meeting and workers are kept informed of WHS issues.

## Policies and procedures

Policies and procedures are useful for measuring internal systems. Here is some more information.

### WHS policy statements

#### System:

WHS policy statements are clearly written and regularly updated, providing information about:

- the statement of intent (how the organisation intends to keep workers and visitors safe)
- objectives (specific WHS targets the organisation wants to achieve)
- consultation (how the organisation intends to consult workers on WHS)
- training (how the organisation intends to provide WHS training to workers)
- roles and responsibilities (specific tasks of workers)
- accountability (who is responsible for specific WHS issues)
- monitoring (how the organisation intends to monitor WHS).

#### Evaluation:

- The policy is communicated to all workers.
- The policy is regularly reviewed.

**WHS procedures****System:**

WHS procedures are clearly written, address legislative requirements and are stored correctly. They include systems and procedures to ensure:

- premises are maintained and secure
- work practices are safe.

**Evaluation:**

Procedures are working when:

- injuries and illness are minimal
- worker absences due to workplace issues are minimal
- worker morale is high
- workers are committed to WHS.

## Controls and systems

Controls and WHS systems are also used for measuring and evaluating internal systems, as described below.

### Controls

**System:**

Controls are in place for suppliers, contractors and purchasers.

**Evaluation:**

- A statement is included on purchasing forms about the standard you expect suppliers to meet.
- Suppliers are asked to specify their WHS standards on quotes.
- Suppliers are asked to provide WHS information on items.
- Contractors are provided with a WHS induction, and required to comply with company guidance for WHS matters or risk contract termination.

### Monitoring and review

**System:**

Procedures are in place to regularly monitor, review and evaluate WHS policies, procedures and performance.

**Evaluation:**

- Workers are allocated responsibility for this task and carry it out on a regular basis.
- Results and recommendations are reported to management.

### Resources

**System:**

WHS is sufficiently resourced to ensure the organisation can meet its WHS obligations.

**Evaluation:**

Recommendations are taken on board promptly.

## Training and resources

You can measure internal systems by reviewing the training programs and monitoring your resources. Here is further information on this.

### Training

**System:**

Workers are provided with adequate training and supervision and other information to work safely, including regular WHS training to fill skills and knowledge gaps.

**Evaluation:**

- A decrease in WHS incidents correlates with increased WHS training.
- Workers show commitment to WHS after training.

### Resources

**System:**

WHS is sufficiently resourced to ensure the organisation can meet its WHS obligations.

**Evaluation:**

Recommendations are taken on board promptly.

## Proactive and reactive systems

When evaluating the WHS management system against quality standards, use a mix of proactive and reactive monitoring systems. This is the best way to evaluate the extent to which relevant policy, procedures and objectives are being met. You will need well-developed problem-solving skills to identify and practise the required proactive or reactive monitoring.

Here are some examples of proactive and reactive monitoring systems.

#### Proactive monitoring

- Implementing a cyclical audit schedule
- Monitoring the effectiveness of risk controls
- Reviewing WHS performance measures; for example, lost time or incident frequency statistics

#### Reactive monitoring

- Investigating the causes of accidents and incidents
- Evaluating hazard reports and risk assessment undertakings
- Assessing and acting on feedback from workers about WHS requirements

## Lead and lag indicators

Lag indicators are those measures we use after the fact; for example, we may count the number of falls in a workplace by checking the accident register. Whereas lead indicators are process measures that are predictive. Lead indicators are used to predict or influence the future. For example, you might want to reduce the number of falls by implementing training on slips, trips and falls.

### Example: lead and lag indicators

Here are some examples of lead and lag indicators.

Lead indicators	Lag indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress in completing risk-assessment program</li><li>• Monitoring compliance with risk controls</li><li>• Housekeeping standards</li><li>• Health surveillance reports</li><li>• Monitoring use of PPE</li><li>• Results of sampling reports (for example, noise and air)</li><li>• Monitoring effectiveness of WHS training</li><li>• Awareness of new standards and WHS legislation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Absenteeism due to ill health related to work activities</li><li>• Reported unsafe acts</li><li>• Reported unsafe conditions</li><li>• Reported dangerous incidents (near misses)</li><li>• Reported dangerous occurrences</li><li>• Reported major injuries</li><li>• Lost time injuries</li><li>• Incidents requiring first aid</li></ul>

## Practice task 14

1. List the WHS quality systems that have been adopted by your organisation.

2. How would you evaluate the internal WHS system in your workplace?

# 4D

## Develop and implement improvements to the WHS management system

All organisations must continually seek ways to improve organisational safety and reduce the risk of worker injury and illness.

Continuous improvement focuses on preventing problems, corrective action and performance to enhance health and safety in the workplace. Continuous improvement is a key concept in ISO-based health and safety management systems, and is central to the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle, created by William Edwards Deming (1900–1993).



In a WHS context, continuous improvement is the process of improving the WHS management system to achieve enhancements in overall performance. This is achieved through regularly reviewing the organisation's policies, procedures and practices embodied in its WHS action plan.

### Proactive approach

Ongoing improvement should be conducted as part of an organisation's WHS processes.

Once an issue requiring improvement has been identified, find its cause, determine the risks it poses and apply risk assessment techniques. You should then define a goal and set criteria against which the improvement can be monitored and evaluated for effectiveness. Records should demonstrate whether the improvement idea is worth applying to other areas, and what, if any, modifications are necessary.

Consider the following regarding WHS issues.

#### Adopt a proactive response

Senior management should adopt a proactive response with planned and sustained WHS initiatives. If the organisation is typically reactive in its response, this can be a sign that the WHS management system is failing.

A proactive response includes:

- researching new and more effective equipment, systems and work practices
- seeking advice on how to address the new requirements
- setting deadlines for implementing changes
- clearly assigning responsibility
- monitoring the implementation process
- regularly reviewing new arrangements to assess their effectiveness and value to the organisation.

### Form WHS objectives

You may review the organisation's WHS system by analysing its ability to meet WHS objectives and performance targets. Examples of WHS objectives may include the following:

- Five per cent reduction in lost time incidents for the year.
- Improvement in lost time incident frequency rate from every 14 days to every 28 days.
- Reduction in unplanned absences by three days per worker per year.
- Improvement in WHS compliance performance by 10 per cent across all areas of the organisation.

## WHS consultation

Consultation is crucial during the improvement process. For example, while it may seem that incidents occurred because workers did not use protective clothing and equipment, issuing PPE may not solve the problem. Consultation with workers may reveal that the protective equipment is unsuitable for the task or the workers involved. The solution may actually involve investigating some alternatives.



## WHS collaboration

Effective WHS reviews involve both senior management and individual business units. Senior management are committed to periodic reviews of the WHS management system. Individual business units undertake reviews of WHS within their sphere of responsibility.

Here is an example of the issues that are considered for reviews.

Reviews take into account:

- performance against organisation business objectives
- adequacy, effectiveness and suitability of the WHS management system
- overall performance of the WHS management system
- performance of individual elements within the WHS system
- internal and external factors affecting WHS management.

## Make a plan

Action plans are a key tool in continuous improvement. They should record actions and accountability issues and include information on reporting channels and follow-up instructions.

The steps for implementing continuous improvement actions are outlined below.

<b>Implementing corrective actions</b>
Communicate to management through management committees and formal WHS reporting channels.
Record with times for completion, dates for progress reports required and the person responsible.
Sign off on actual completion date by the relevant authorised person.

### Example: WHS action plan

<b>Organisation:</b> Library <b>Person:</b> Amanda Smith			<b>Area for improvement:</b> Phase out the use of A-frame ladders and replace with elevated work platforms (EWP), mobile scaffolds or platform ladders			
No.	Actions	Required outcome	Resources	Responsible	Target date	Sign off
1	Determine access equipment requirements to replace A-frame ladders currently in use.	List of quantity and working heights of EWPs, mobile scaffolds and platform ladders required for the site.		David – Site Supervisor	14/3	
2	Determine from list of requirements what items are to be purchased and what will be hired. Obtain quotes.	Most cost-effective solution to phasing out the use of A-frame ladders.	Supplier catalogues and price lists	Mike – Managing Director	15/3	
3	Order and arrange delivery of new access equipment.	New access equipment to be available on site.		Mike – Managing Director	16/3	
4	Prepare safe work method statements (SWMSs) for new access equipment.	Training reference for workers.	WHS regulations and codes of practice	David – Site Supervisor	16/3	

*continued ...*

... continued

No.	Actions	Required outcome	Resources	Responsible	Target date	Sign off
5	Provide training to all workers regarding correct application and use of new access equipment. Workers to sign Toolbox Talk minutes.	All workers to be aware not to use A-frame ladders and to be trained in use of alternative access equipment.	SWMSs and Toolbox talk sheet	David – Site Supervisor Workers	17/3	

### Practice task 15

1. What is meant by 'continuous improvement' in the context of WHS?

2. What process would you follow if you were acting proactively to an identified WHS issue?

3. What information is generally included in a WHS action plan?

## 4E

## Ensure compliance with WHS legislation

It is important for every organisation to review their management systems and maintain compliance with legislation. Structured reviews:

- ensure that policies and procedures are being applied effectively and comply with current legislative requirements
- drive continuous improvement processes
- provide opportunities to further develop the organisation's WHS systems and procedures
- enable the organisation to fulfil internal and external reporting requirements.



## Review WHS compliance

Organisations must continually review their compliance with WHS legislation and regulations.

Here are some elements to include in a review.

### Elements to review

- How well current WHS legislation, regulations and codes of practice are embedded in the organisation's policies and procedures
- Whether legislation, regulations and codes of practice have been revised or replaced
- How emerging WHS legislation will impact on the organisation
- How new or revised guidance from trade associations and industry bodies applies to the organisation.
- How new or amended instructions from suppliers apply to equipment and/or materials
- Whether workers are complying with key areas of WHS
- How effective implemented actions are compared to previous audit outcomes

## Conduct regular audits

The frequency and scope of any periodic review should be defined by the needs of the organisation. Here is more information on review processes.



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### Characteristics of the review process



#### Should be regular

A frequent misconception of the review process for WHS compliance is that it should only be carried out annually. To be truly effective, WHS reviews should be integrated into daily, weekly and monthly reporting processes. Where possible, supervisors should be involved in this process at an operational and strategic level.



#### Check for compliance

You should regularly audit the WHS system to check that it complies with appropriate standards, regulations, Acts and contract criteria. Only then can you judge whether the system adequately meets the organisation's WHS objectives and complies with statutory guidelines.



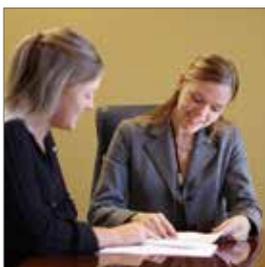
#### Make it effective

An effective system audit identifies the scope, frequency and methodologies to be used. It also determines whether the WHS system conforms to planned arrangements and complies with legislation and whether it has been properly implemented and maintained. It uses data from previous audits and provides information to management on the results of audits. It is also conducted by workers independent of those who have direct responsibility for activities being audited.



#### Use it to improve

It is important that the purpose of the audit is made clear to all who are involved. This will encourage positive participation in the process and enable accurate data to be gathered. The purpose of audits is not to find fault and point a finger of blame at those workers or departments that do not comply. Rather, auditing should be treated as a useful tool in improving organisational effectiveness and an essential part of an organisation's continuous improvement process.



#### Be prompted by change

Audits are usually performed on a regular basis, but may also be prompted by change to processes, products or services, or the need to follow up on corrective action that has already been taken. The frequency of audits, particularly internal audits, is usually set according to risk, with high-risk areas or processes being checked more often. Audits may be conducted without prior notice or warning, but this would usually only occur where there were security, business risk or compliance concerns.

## Use trained auditors

Auditors must be trained in auditing processes and be independent of the audited area to perform their role effectively. They should collect and analyse sufficient objective evidence to draw their conclusions about WHS compliance, and document their observations and recommendations. Cooperation with workers is crucial to this process, so audit procedures must be communicated clearly to workers. Auditors may need to ask questions, observe practices, sit in on meetings or read WHS documents. Confidentiality and security of information is essential.



## A defined process

Although the auditing process may differ between organisations, it should include a rigorous process. The steps are outlined here.



### Step 1: Set policy for the audit

- Establish purpose and scope of the audit.
- Determine which standards, procedures and tools to use.
- Provide details of the audit team.
- Formulate the audit program.
- Determine audit report format and arrangements for responding.



### Step 2: Conduct document review and prepare for on-site audit

- Supply relevant documentation to the audit team before on-site activities.
- Review documentation.
- Prepare the audit plan.
- Assign work to the audit team.
- Prepare work documents/checklists.



### Step 3: Conduct on-site audit

- Conduct an initial meeting with senior management to introduce the audit team and confirm audit arrangements.
- Interview relevant personnel and gather evidence using checklists, copies of records, documents, samples and photographs.
- Develop a list or report of noncompliance issues.
- Establish noncompliance register to monitor and review status.



**Step 4: Prepare audit report**

- Prepare a summary of the audit findings.
- Include details of any noncompliance.
- Develop a list of recommendations/considerations.



**Step 5: Conduct follow up**

- Review the noncompliance register to monitor progress.
- Check whether recommendations for improvement/compliance have been addressed.

**Example: noncompliance report**

Here is a noncompliance report that identifies deterioration in WHS performance and offers suggestions for improvement.

Noncompliance report		
Identification	Date of audit	16 March
	Location	Super Chook Palm Beach, Townsville
	Responsible manager	Mr Ian Rysse
	NCR number	340413
	NCR raised by	Rob Corrup
Corrective action	Actions required	Workers' food-handling procedures have been rated as poor, with members observed not washing their hands between handling raw chicken and cooked meats.  Workers must undergo a food-handling and hygiene refresher training within 7 days.
	Person responsible	Mr Ian Rysse
	Date to complete	23 March
Follow up	Describe actions undertaken:	
	Corrective action completed on:	
	Signature:	
Copies	<input type="checkbox"/> Audit file	<input type="checkbox"/> PCBU

## Practice task 16

1. How can you ensure that policies and procedures are being applied effectively and comply with current legislative requirements?

2. What processes can you use to drive continuous improvement processes?

## Summary

1. Every organisation must provide effective WHS induction for all new workers.
2. WHS legislation and regulations include an obligation for workers to attend mandatory training programs, as well as ongoing training when WHS skills and knowledge gaps are identified.
3. Conducting a WHS training needs analysis helps determine training needs to ensure all workers are aware of the WHS issues affecting them in the workplace.
4. Effective WHS record-keeping systems are essential to be able to identify patterns of workplace injury and disease.
5. Quality systems frameworks outline the organisational structure, procedures, processes and resources needed to implement quality management. Organisations must make sure their WHS system aligns with the quality systems framework.
6. When evaluating your WHS system against quality standards, use a mixture of proactive and reactive monitoring systems to evaluate the extent to which all WHS policies, procedures and objectives are being met.
7. Continuous improvement focuses on preventing problems, taking corrective action and improving performance to enhance health and safety in the workplace.
8. Reviewing management systems and maintaining compliance with legislation is a fundamental requirement in any organisation. Structured reviews ensure the organisation's policies and procedures are being applied effectively and in accordance with legislative requirements.

## Learning checkpoint 4

### Evaluate and maintain a work area WHS management system

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in evaluating and maintaining a work area WHS management system.

#### Part A

1. You are to provide induction training to a new worker in your work area. List five topics you should include in the training.

2. Identify three problems that the PCBU may have if they do not provide adequate training.

3. Identify two types of WHS records that must be completed and maintained by your organisation that apply to your work area.

4. Give three reasons why it is important to maintain WHS records.

5. List four WHS quality standards that apply to your role in the workplace.

## Part B

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

### Case study

The factory production area where Doug is the health and safety officer has been running for six months without a major incident. There have been three dangerous incidents (near misses) and one minor incident leading to three days of lost time during that period.

Before the factory began processing products, Doug helped supervisors with hazard identification and risk control processes to ensure the factory was safe for workers. He also helped develop a WHS training program for the factory workers.

The factory has set WHS performance targets of zero lost time incidents and zero major incidents. The targets for dangerous incidents (near misses) and minor incidents are less than one per month.

Doug wants to make sure all work practices continue to be compliant and begins reviewing WHS processes. Doug must also ensure improvements to WHS procedures are identified. He meets with factory workers to discuss current WHS processes and obtain feedback on areas that could be improved.

1. Outline the steps that Doug used to identify WHS training needs in the factory area.

2. The factory WHS performance objectives are used to measure performance. List two other methods of performance measurement.

3. List five records that Doug should store and maintain so that he can better review the performance of the work area and the effectiveness of the WHS management system?

4. Describe how Doug developed and implemented improvements to the WHS management system.