HLTWHS003

Maintain work health and safety

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Release 3

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1

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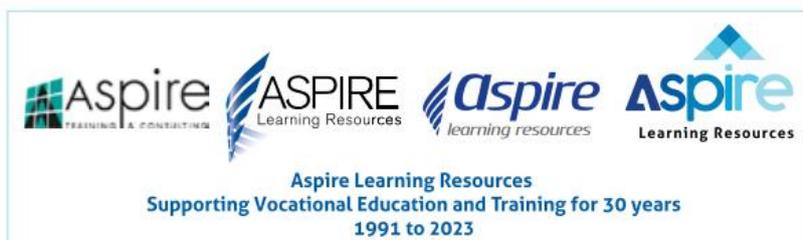
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Contents

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *HLTWHS003 Maintain work health and safety*, Release 3.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

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

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life. They are an integrated part of a unit of competency and are included as part of the learning content.

These skills are listed below:

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	• Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents • Understanding industry and job-specific terminology • Interpreting key information in relevant documents • Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	• Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents • Communicating through written letters, email and online • Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	• Clarifying instructions • Providing information • Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution • Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	• Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance • Interpreting measurements
Learning	• Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities • Managing your work and seeing how well you are going • Making goals for yourself at work • Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Problem-solving	• Identifying problems • Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes • Reviewing the outcome
Initiative and enterprise	• Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas • Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something • Making suggestions to improve work
Teamwork	• Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Planning and organising	• Planning your workload and commitments • Implementing tasks • Completing work on time • Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Self-management	• Understanding and applying decision-making processes • Reviewing your behaviour and the impact of your decisions
Technology	• Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely • Accessing, organising and presenting information • Using equipment correctly and safely

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

What do you already know?

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

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Contribute to workplace procedures for identifying hazards and risks	1A Identify and record existing and potential hazards	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1B Develop strategies for implementing risk controls	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1C Implement and report issues with risk controls	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 2 Implement policies and procedures into work team processes	2A Provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the team	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2B Provide information about identified hazards, risk assessments and controls	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2C Monitor housekeeping practices	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2D Maintain WHS incident records	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 3 Support consultation, cooperation and communication	3A Encourage work team participation in consultative activities	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3B Report health and safety issues	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3C Encourage team members to contribute to WHS	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic 1
Contribute to workplace procedures for identifying hazards and risks

1A   Identify and record existing and potential hazards
1B   Develop strategies for implementing risk controls
1C   Implement and report issues with risk controls
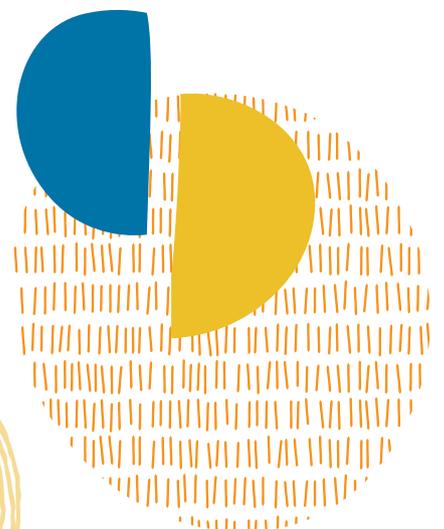
1A Identify and record existing and potential hazards

Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility to work safely and keep themselves and the people they support safe.

Part of this responsibility includes talking about safety, identifying when something is not safe and reporting any problems to the appropriate person.

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

Keeping your workplace safe is a requirement under work health and safety (WHS) laws. You and your organisation must comply with these laws.

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

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

As a manager, you are obligated to support people to work safely. There may be **risks** to workers' safety. Risks in aged care, disability support and home and community care include those related to manual handling, infection transmission, working at night or behaviours of concern. You have a legal and ethical obligation to reduce the risks faced by support workers. Identifying and recording possible and existing **hazards** and supporting workers to identify and record them is an essential part of your role in maintaining a safe workplace.

It is essential to follow workplace policies and procedures, government legislation, industry standards and codes of practice. The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) outlines the responsibilities of the employer and the rights and responsibilities of the employee in keeping workplaces safe.

Employee responsibilities

These responsibilities apply to all employees. Once you have undergone training, the main things to remember are to:

- work safely, following all training, policies and procedures

- do everything you can to ensure people's safety and not put anyone else in danger in line with your duty of care requirements

- report any hazards or incidents, including near misses

- follow any instructions you are given

- use equipment, including personal protective equipment (PPE), according to your training and the manufacturer's instructions

- cooperate with your supervisor and employer

- understand that your rights and your responsibilities are equally important.

Complying with what you have learned during your training is as important as receiving training in the first place. It is also important that you follow your workplace policies and procedures and report any hazards or potential hazards you notice to the appropriate person.

This will usually be your supervisor or the health and safety representative (HSR).

Workers have a duty of care to keep themselves, the people they support and others safe; therefore, they need a basic understanding of the risks associated with various hazards.

Because workplaces may change, information about WHS policies and procedures should be provided regularly to work teams.

Employee rights

All employees have the **right** to:

- have an elected HSR

- be protected from hazards at work

- receive information, training and supervision to help them work safely

- be provided with adequate protective clothing and equipment

- talk to managers about WHS problems (either directly or via the HSR)

- stop work if they feel unsafe.

> **Rights**
> Legal or moral entitlements that a society creates and that determine what is required, allowed or not allowed.

Employer's responsibilities

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

- implementing safe processes and procedures to ensure work can be done safely

- providing training and supervision to ensure employees know how to work safely

- maintaining and safely storing equipment, aids and chemicals

- consulting and cooperating with employees about safety (the most recent WHS Act states that employers must include all workers in the consultation process, including contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, trainees and students on work experience)

- providing necessary protective clothing or equipment (e.g. goggles, disposable gloves).

In certain circumstances, the employer must also:

- help with the election of a workplace HSR or health and safety committee (HSC)

- inform the HSR about potential or existing risks to worker health and safety, any

changes to workplace practices that may affect worker health or safety and any accidents or incidents that occur

- allow the HSR to take paid time off to carry out their WHS duties

- allow the HSR to take paid time off to undertake an accredited WHS training course within three months of requesting it and pay all course fees and any other reasonable associated costs.

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

HSRs

HSRs are a key link between employees and employers. They inform employers about employees' health and safety concerns and help employers to ensure the effectiveness of WHS processes and procedures. To be an HSR, you must:

- be employed at the workplace

- be elected by members of the work group

- undertake WHS training (or have previously undertaken training) that is approved by the regulator.

HSRs are responsible for:

- liaising with employees about health and safety

- inspecting workplace areas

- reporting hazards in the workplace

- immediately investigating accidents or risk of serious injury or harm

- staying current with employer information about workplace hazards

- liaising with government and other bodies

- referring relevant health and safety matters to the HSC (if the workplace has one)

- attending health and safety discussions between the employer and an employee on request of the employee.

HSRs have the right to:

- be given paid time off to attend accredited WHS training

- be given paid time off to attend to their WHS duties

- be provided with facilities to help them undertake their WHS duties (for example, storage space to store records and information)

- be notified of any changes in the workplace that may affect employees' health and safety

- be informed by the employer about dangerous situations or accidents

- be informed by the employer about when an inspector visits the workplace.

HSCs

Some workplaces may have an HSC. A committee is a group of people who regularly meet to share information and make decisions about a certain topic. An HSC will be responsible for discussing and solving WHS issues.

The HSC may include:

- support workers

- maintenance staff

- other health professionals

- supervisors or managers.

Ideally, committees should include people from all parts of the organisation. This way, all organisational members can share ideas. For example, the absence of a representative from the maintenance team may mean that the committee fails to hear ideas about keeping equipment operating safely. Everyone on the HSC is responsible for thinking about ways to make the workplace as safe as possible. They will then share their ideas with the managers or employer.

WHS legislation

On 1 January 2012, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) came into effect, replacing the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (Cth).

This model **legislation** was developed by the Commonwealth Government to harmonise WHS laws across Australia.

Legislation
The written law produced by the government.

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

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

- ensuring risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and eliminated or controlled

- promoting and maintaining the health, safety and welfare of people at work

- protecting people at work from injury and illness

- protecting the health and safety of the public in workplaces

- involving employers and workers in the process of maintaining workplace health and safety

- providing rehabilitation and maximum recovery time for injured workers.

Codes of practice

Codes of practice (also known as compliance codes) are industry guidelines that provide guidance to employers and workers about how to achieve the standards required by Acts and regulations.

While a **code of practice** is not law, it should be followed unless there is an alternative course of action that achieves the same or better standards. Codes of practice are developed through consultation with industry groups, professional bodies, trade associations, industry representatives, employers and workers.

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

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

Codes of practice:

- may be incorporated into regulations

- are not necessarily related to standards

- may be called upon as evidence in court or other enforcement action.

Industry standards

Standards
In community services, standards are benchmarks or minimum requirements that must be performed in your workplace every day.

Standards detail the preventative actions that must be taken to avert injury, disease and death for all people within a workplace.

Standards set out safety and specification details and guide those working in certain areas (e.g. community services). They are produced by national or international bodies, including Standards Australia, WHS regulators and industry bodies.

Some standards are advisory only, designed to suggest best practices or guide users of other standards. Standards are only legally binding if they are included in legislation, in which case they become mandatory and may be called upon as evidence in court or other enforcement action.

Standards relate to many areas of community service, including building design specification, emergency evacuation procedures and signage and environmental hygiene such as basins and soap for hand-washing.

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

State/territory WHS authorities

Each state/territory has its own statutory body responsible for regulating and enforcing WHS laws.

The table below lists the WHS authority for each state and territory in Australia.

ACT	WorkSafe ACT aspirelr.link/worksafe-act
NSW	SafeWork NSW aspirelr.link/worksafe-nsw
NT	NT WorkSafe aspirelr.link/worksafe-nt
Qld	WorkSafe Queensland aspirelr.link/worksafe-qld
SA	SafeWork SA aspirelr.link/worksafe-sa
Tas.	WorkSafe Tasmania aspirelr.link/worksafe-tas
Vic.	WorkSafe Victoria aspirelr.link/worksafe-vic
WA	WorkSafe WA aspirelr.link/worksafe-wa

Regulatory requirements

Legislation is the law, while regulations are the rules for how to apply the law.

Each state/territory in Australia has its own regulations to support WHS legislation.

Regulations establish the specific requirements, duties and procedures for particular areas of work. Some regulations are very specific and apply to individual industries. These are then used to create individual workplace policies and procedures.

Regulations, policies and procedures may relate to:

• personal protective clothing and equipment

• standard precautions

• handling hazardous/dangerous materials and goods

• emergency procedures and general safety precautions

• standard housekeeping.

Hazards in the workplace

A hazard is a source or situation with the potential for harm in terms of human injury or illness, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.

Hazards vary depending on the type of environment you work in or manage. The potential consequences of each hazard must be assessed. Some hazards are inherent in the work, such as mechanical hazards, noise or toxic substances. Others may result from equipment or machine failure and misuse, chemical spills, structural failure or when work demands exceed a worker's ability to cope.

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

Manual tasks	Overexertion or repetitive movements, which can cause muscle strain. Requirements are stipulated in the *Hazardous manual tasks: Code of practice.*
Gravity	Falling objects, falls, slips and trips, which can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, concussion, permanent injuries or death.
Electricity	Potential source of ignition; exposure to live electrical wires can cause shock, burns or death from electrocution.
Machinery and equipment	Being hit or caught by moving parts can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, permanent injuries or death.
Toxic chemicals	Chemicals (e.g. acids, heavy metals) and toxic dust (e.g. asbestos and silica) can cause respiratory illnesses, dermatitis and cancers.
Extreme temperatures	Heat can cause burns, heat stroke or fatigue; cold can cause hypothermia or frostbite.
Noise	Exposure to loud noise can cause permanent hearing damage.
Radiation	Ultraviolet light, welding arc flashes, microwaves and lasers can cause burns, cancer or blindness.

Video: Hazard identification

Watch the following video: aspirelr.link/yt-hazard-identification

Pay attention to the various types of hazards and the examples provided. Think about the types you are most likely to encounter when working in health and community services.

Your workplace will have specific procedures for managing risks in the workplace.

Follow procedures to ensure that your actions are in line with industry

standards, codes of practice and legislation. The following table describes hazard identification procedures.

Step 1: Identify hazards	• What is the hazard? Identify all the hazards involved with a work setting or task. • A workplace hazard is something with the potential to harm the health and safety of people at work.
Step 2: Assess risks	• Assess the risk by working out how badly the hazards could affect people – this means thinking about all the things that can happen and the range of effects. • Decide whether the hazard carries a high, medium or low risk.
Step 3: Control risks	• Decide on how to control the risk.
Step 4: Review control measures	• Review the control measures to ensure they are working as planned.

Risks in the workplace

A risk is the likelihood that something negative will happen.

The level of risk reflects:

• the likelihood of an unwanted event happening

• the potential consequences if the event happens.

A risk assessment involves considering what could happen if someone is exposed to a hazard and the likelihood of it happening.

A risk assessment can help you, as a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), to determine:

• the potential severity of a risk

• the effectiveness of existing control methods

• the action you should take to control a risk

• how urgently the action needs to be taken.

A risk assessment should be done when:

• there is uncertainty about how a hazard may result in injury or illness

• the work activity involves several different hazards, and there is a lack of understanding about how these hazards may interact with each other to produce new or greater risks

• there are changes in the workplace that may reduce the effectiveness of existing control measures.

Risk control methods

Once an unfavourable risk is identified, control methods need to be applied to eliminate or minimise the potential negative outcomes of that risk.

The most important step in managing risks involves eliminating them as far as is reasonably practicable. If a risk cannot be eliminated, it should be minimised as far as is reasonably practicable.

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

If a **risk assessment** results in an unfavourable risk level, steps can be taken to ensure that the activity can continue, including the application of one or more risk control measures.

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

If a hazard or emergency is reported early, its impact may be reduced. For example, if you smell smoke and report it immediately, your quick action could lead to a fire being discovered and extinguished before it causes extensive damage.

Reports may be made in person, over the phone or via a memo or report form.

> **Video: Hazards vs. risks**
> Watch the following video: aspirelr.link/yt-hazards-risks
> Take note of the difference between a hazard and a risk. Can you think of examples of hazards and risks in your workplace?

Reporting WHS problems

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

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

The following outlines typical hazards and incidents that a worker might report to the HSR:

Trip hazards	Torn carpets that may cause someone to trip or fall
Disposable gloves	Failure to wear gloves when handling soiled linen or clothing
Electrical faults	Faulty plugs on electrical items
Equipment problems	A broken or faulty hoist

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

Writing a report	Report the hazard in the communication book or hazard identification form. Your written report must be factual and easy to understand.
Speaking to the appropriate person	Ask the HSR, committee chairperson or your supervisor for advice.
Putting alert tags on faulty equipment	Attach tags to faulty equipment to alert staff to the problem and ensure it is not used.
Notifying all staff	Inform any staff member taking over your shift about any identified hazards.
Telephoning your supervisor	Support workers may need to report a hazard or risk as soon as possible if it is serious; for example, if the front steps of an older person's house have collapsed.

It is important to note that organisations have a legal responsibility to report certain types of workplace incidents to the state/territory regulator. These are known as notifiable incidents, which include any incident that results in:

- the death of a person– this could be an employee, contractor or visitor

- a serious illness or injury.

A dangerous incident may also need to be reported if it exposes anyone to a serious risk, even if no injury is sustained.

Issues to consider when reporting

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

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

Changing conditions

The health and physical condition of people you support often worsen over time.

Consider the following scenario: You have been assisting a person with their personal care for almost a year. Their condition has declined so gradually that you did not notice it. One day, you notice that they are having difficulty walking because of the pain, and you need to provide more assistance than you did before. You must let your supervisor know because the person is now at an increased risk of falling and may need a frame or wheelchair, or you may need more time to do the task to avoid become stressed or rushing the client.

Equipment needs

It is important to have the correct equipment to follow your workplace processes correctly. As an older person's condition changes, the equipment may also need to change.

Consider the following scenario: When you started working at a specialist disability accommodation two years ago, only two people needed hoist transfers. Now, with different people living in the accommodation who have higher needs, workers are doing more hoist transfers. There are now eight people who need hoist transfers and only one hoist. This makes it difficult for workers to complete their work on time because most of them need to use the hoist. Management should be formally notified about the situation so that they can purchase another hoist.

Communication

When your workplace changes its policies or buys new equipment, managers need to consult with all affected team members. It is the manager's responsibility to provide you with information and training about new policies or equipment. It is your responsibility to attend training or read the information so that you know what to do.

Feedback

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

Effectiveness

There may be times when risk control procedures are not effective. Consider the following scenario: You have reported a loose step at the home of a person to whom you are providing home support. You completed the feedback form and received a follow-up report stating that the problem has been fixed. A few months later, the same problem happens again. This could be because the step was nailed when it should have been screwed in place. You will need to complete another feedback sheet so the step can be properly repaired.

Training needs
You need to have up-to-date information to do your job properly. Most workplaces have regular training sessions for staff. For example, they will provide annual first aid, infection control and manual handling training updates. It is your responsibility to make sure you are up to date with training. For example, if you need training on how to use a hoist, you should ask your supervisor to arrange it for you.

Example
Identify and record existing and potential hazards

Kelly works for an aged care service provider. She hears yelling coming from Mrs Smith's room. As she enters the room, she sees two visitors screaming at each other and throwing their arms around. The room smells strongly of alcohol. Mrs Smith is crying and is being comforted by a third visitor, her daughter. The two abusive visitors are threatening Mrs Smith's safety, her daughter's safety and Kelly's safety. Kelly must immediately let her supervisor know what is happening.

Practice Task 1

Question 1

Number the following steps from 1 to 4 to show how you would manage the risks arising from this situation.

	Identify the hazard
	Review control measures
	Control the risk
	Assess the risk

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select Yes or No.

a.	Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth), organisations must report all WHS incidents, including accidents and near misses, to their state or territory regulator.	Yes / No
b.	WHS authorities are responsible for enforcing WHS laws in their state or territory.	Yes / No
c.	Standards set out the safety and specification details and guide those working in certain areas such as community services.	Yes / No
d.	Codes of practice are legally enforceable.	Yes / No
e.	PCBUs have a legal responsibility to ensure that safe processes and procedures are in place so that employees can carry out work safely.	Yes / No

Question 3

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

- ❑ Manual tasks
- ❑ Electricity
- ❑ Hazardous chemicals
- ❑ Information disclosure
- ❑ Noise

1B Develop strategies for implementing risk controls

Risk control measures refer to the devices and methods employed to eliminate a risk or, where this is not practicable, minimise the risk.

When determining the appropriate type of risk control for a given situation, the primary reference is the hierarchy of control. The hierarchy of control ranks the actions that should be taken to control a risk; that is, if the highest level is not effective or applicable, then move down to the next level, and so on.

Hierarchy of control

The **hierarchy of control** is a commonly accepted model that lists in descending order the risk control measures an assessor should apply to an identified hazard.

These control measures occur across four levels. Level 1 is the elimination of hazards and is the preferred option. Level 4 is the use of PPE.

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

When determining the most appropriate control measure, it is advisable to also consider the possible consequences of and the potential exposure to the hazard. For example, will exposure be frequent or infrequent? Where the consequences are potentially serious or beyond the scope of your responsibility, you must report the issue immediately to management through the appropriate channels.

Generally, it is within the scope of your role to directly address minor issues such as easily resolved physical hazards (e.g. cleaning up spills or picking up objects from the floor). These issues can be resolved quickly and without assistance from outside the work group.

The following table lists the four levels in the hierarchy of control.

> **Hierarchy of control**
> A system used to control risks in the workplace.

Hierarchy of control	
Level 1: Eliminate hazards and risks	• Eliminate the hazard and the risk it creates
Level 2: Reduce the risk	• Substitute the hazard with 'something safer' or 'something less risky' • Isolate people from the hazard • Use engineering controls or changes to systems or work

Level 3: Administrative controls	• Use administrative actions to minimise exposure to hazards and to reduce harm
Level 4: PPE	• Use PPE to protect people from harm

Control measures

To identify the measure that should be applied, use the hierarchy of control.

The hierarchy stipulates that the first and best level of control is to eliminate the hazard. The second-best level is to substitute the hazard with something safer. This continues down the levels until the final (and least effective) level, which is to use PPE.

The following table provides examples of control measures for each level of control.

Eliminate risk	Eliminating the risk at its source (i.e. the hazard) should always be the first choice. This usually means removing hazardous materials or abandoning hazardous work practices. Examples include: • cleaning up a spill immediately to avoid slippages • eliminating toxic substances that are not essential to the work • repairing or replacing faulty equipment.
Substitute	If elimination is not practicable, the next best control is to substitute the hazard with something that carries less risk. This is also likely to be a less expensive measure to implement. Examples include: • using less hazardous chemical materials • reducing the size of objects that need to be lifted • breaking tasks down into smaller chunks or sharing a task with another employee.
Isolate	Isolation involves physically separating the source of harm from people by distance or the use of barriers. Examples include: • installing guard rails around exposed edges or holes in floors • using remote control systems to operate machinery • storing chemicals in a fume cabinet.
Engineering controls	Engineering controls involve a physical change to equipment or tools. Examples include: • providing a trolley to move heavy loads • installing ventilation to remove chemical fumes • changing the layout of work levels to minimise bending and twisting during manual handling.

Administrative controls	Administrative controls relate to organisational work procedures. Examples include: • developing policies and procedures to minimise risks in the workplace • reducing the time of exposure to hazards (e.g. job rotation) • ensuring equipment is maintained regularly • limiting access to hazardous areas • performing risk assessments • providing safety awareness signage • providing training in infection control, manual handling, chemical handling, fire and emergency procedures and safe equipment use.
PPE	Wearing and using PPE is the least effective control method. Organisations must: • provide appropriate PPE • ensure the PPE fits well and is comfortable under working conditions • ensure people use it when necessary • train users in why the PPE is necessary, the right PPE for the task and how it must be worn.

Combine measures to suit

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

The following table provides examples of the use of multiple measures to increase safety.

Working outdoors
• Administrative controls: safe working hours, taking breaks in the shade, clothing requirements, monitoring fellow workers • PPE: sunhats, safety shirts, sunscreen, sunglasses

Liquid chemical hazard
• Substitution: less hazardous chemicals • Administrative controls: designated ventilated areas, mandated use of ventilation equipment, authorised (trained) user list, dedicated first-aid station with eye bath, directions not to mix certain cleaning agents • PPE: ventilators, goggles, disposable gloves, safety aprons

Infection or contamination hazard
• Elimination: contracting cleaners or caterers to perform cleaning and food preparation duties • Administrative controls: training staff in hygiene, providing hand-washing directions on posters or signs, supplying cleaning agents • PPE: disposable gloves according to duties

Implement control measures

The introduction of a risk control measure often requires an adjustment in the workplace, particularly where the measure is being applied to an existing risk for which there was no previous control. If there have been no previous injuries, illnesses or emergencies, staff may be sceptical about the need for a control measure. In this situation, your leadership is important to reassure the work group of the value of the implemented control in making the environment and task safer (less hazardous) than it was previously. You must always implement controls in line with organisational policies and procedures, as outlined here.

Workplace culture

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

Prioritise safety

Factors that can influence the workplace culture include the cultural or religious background of employees and their family members. If a specific nationality or religious affiliation is strongly represented in the organisation, this must be considered whenever an action is taken in the workplace. However, the priority is and must always be workplace safety.

Introduce new controls

When new control measures are applied, they must be accompanied by staff education. Employees are more likely to participate in and accept the new controls if there is a shared understanding of why they are needed and how they are to be used.

Education may involve a short briefing if the change is small or organisation-wide training in the case of broader controls.

Once all staff members understand the need for controls and how they are to be used, the final step is to provide adequate support to staff members to adhere to the new controls. Forms of support include being available to answer questions, providing positive feedback when staff are seen doing the right thing and providing constructive feedback if improvements are needed. Effective communication is key to

ensuring that everyone understands exactly what is required and how to implement controls. It is important to ensure that you are complying with organisational policies and procedures when introducing new controls.

Education should include:

- what the control measure is

- why it has been implemented

- how it is to be applied; that is, how to use equipment and how to apply new instructions.

Follow WHS policies and procedures

In any situation, you should refer to your workplace **policies** and **procedures** for guidance. If you are unsure, ask your supervisor. Strategies and procedures to reduce risks may be found in:

- risk management policies and procedures

- care plans and assessment documents

- procedures for manual handling, such as always being assisted by another person and operating designated hoists

- procedures for using mobility equipment

- procedures for PPE

- human resource plans to address induction, duress, harassment and grievances

- emergency procedures, including fire and incidents

- team meetings

- post-incident debriefing sessions.

Policies
A course of action proposed by an organisation as a basis for making decisions.

Procedures
An established or official way of doing something.

Example
Contribute to the development of strategies for implementing risk controls

Kim is the coordinator of seven volunteers at Best Outcomes Youth Support. Following an organisation-wide WHS audit, Kim's work unit finds three areas of concern for which new WHS risk control measures are to be implemented. The identified hazards are (i) slippery tiles in the kitchen area; (ii) malfunctioning (continually tripping) electrical safety switches, which were installed to prevent electrocution; and (iii) workers and volunteers failing to wear disposable gloves when handling food.

The agreed controls for these hazards are as follows:

- Purchase new rubber mats for the wet areas of the kitchen and implement a new cleaning protocol to thoroughly disinfect the rubber mats monthly to avoid health issues.

- Contract a qualified electrician to check and repair or replace all electrical safety switches in the building.

- Provide education and training for all staff and volunteers regarding the need for hand hygiene and disposable gloves when handling food.

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

Practice Task 2

Question 1

A person you support uses a wheelchair and needs assistance when transferring from their wheelchair to the shower. Name two risk control measures (and their associated hierarchy of control level) you could implement in accordance with manual handling requirements.

Question 2

Match each hierarchy of control to the relevant methods.

Level 1		Use administrative controls
Level 2		Use PPE
Level 3		Substitute the hazard with something safer Isolate the hazard from people Use engineering controls
Level 4		Eliminate the hazard

Question 3

Choose the two most appropriate control measures from the following list for each hazard in the table.

- Elimination: contract cleaners or caterers
- Substitution: use something less hazardous
- Administrative: take breaks in the shade
- PPE: hats and sunscreen
- PPE: disposable gloves
- PPE: googles and ventilators

Working outdoors	
Use of liquid chemicals	
Infection or contamination	

Question 4

List three documents where you might find strategies and procedures for reducing risks.

1C Implement and report issues with risk controls

All workers must be aware of the risks associated with each task they perform, especially in cases where workers are so engrossed in the task that they fail to recognise the risks.

Occasionally, a suggested risk control measure may not perform as expected in reducing or eliminating the risk.

Supervisors must be observant and monitor team members as they perform their duties. In doing so, they will be able to recognise situations and actions that may present a risk to staff members. This may be particularly obvious if a new risk control measure is deficient or has generated new risks. Observing a team member perform a task and employ all designated risk control measures should allow you to establish whether a risk still exists or there are any areas for improvement.

Residual risk

Even after a control measure has been implemented, risk can sometimes still remain.

Residual risk is when a risk still exists following the implementation of a control or corrective action. It must be reported to management for documentation according to organisational procedures.

Residual risk often occurs in the short term once the initial steps to remove a hazard have been taken. For example, if an electrical appliance such as a fan is malfunctioning, it may be removed from use and placed in a storeroom with a sign attached stating, 'Faulty – do not use'. The residual risk is that someone may fail to see the sign and use the fan, resulting in potential harm. If all workers are aware of the hazards, the controls in place and the residual risk, the risk of harm can be reduced to an almost negligible level.

Reporting residual risk may include updating the workplace hazard register and verbally reporting at a meeting to ensure all staff members are aware of and understand any risks. The next step is typically to implement higher-level control measures such as purchasing new and safer equipment, replacing faulty devices, eliminating tasks or implementing administrative controls.

Risk control issues

There may be times when the risk control measure chosen generates issues or comes with problems.

Several factors may cause an existing risk control measure to be deficient, as shown here:

External influences	It is difficult to predict all contingencies. Some risk control measures, which would have worked under usual circumstances, may become less effective under external influences. For example, a specific administrative control applied to a piece of equipment may be negated if the equipment breaks down and is replaced by another with different specifications.
Control introduces risk	There may be times when a risk control measure itself presents further risks. For example, requiring employees to wear mitts when handling hot plates or pots in an organisation's kitchen can lead to a loss of dexterity and an increased chance of dropping the handled items.
Incorrect training	When control measures or their application are not adequately explained, they may be used improperly or neglected altogether. For example, hospital workers (e.g. doctors and nurses) learn proper hand-washing techniques to ensure hygiene, but how many workers in your industry are shown these same techniques? Another example may be the use of PPE such as disposable gloves, where a worker may use the same pair of gloves when going from handling food to dispensing medicine.
Inappropriate PPE	Occasionally, the type of PPE purchased or implemented is inadequate (often to save on costs). For example, several types of disposable gloves are available for purchase, and an organisation may decide to purchase the cheap latex version. However, three workers develop allergic rashes on their hands from the latex, while another worker complains that the gloves are too thin and tear easily.
Inappropriate measures	There are times when the measures themselves are simply not appropriate or better options are available. During an outing to the beach, for example, it may be specified that hats should be worn while neglecting to mention sunscreen or sunglasses, or sunscreen is recommended where long sleeves would be more appropriate.
Incorrect assessment	As part of a risk assessment, you need to consider all possible factors that may contribute to the risk conditions. This is not always possible, particularly where the risk environment is unfamiliar, or the hazardous task or equipment used falls outside of the context in which the assessment was done. For example, a risk assessment may have determined that using a particular cleaning chemical in a large, well-ventilated area poses no risk; however, this task is often performed in small, enclosed areas, where the chance of inhaling harmful fumes is high.

Address and report issues

Once an issue has been identified, it needs to be addressed and/or reported as soon as possible and according to workplace procedures to further reduce any existing risk.

In some of the previous examples, it may be well within the supervisor's capabilities to address and correct the situation; for example, in the case of purchasing more expensive rubber disposable gloves.

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

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

When reporting an issue, you must include:
• a description of the risk (the original risk and risks relating to the deficiency)
• the existing control measure
• the reason it is or perceived as being inadequate
• a remedy (such as further control measures), where possible.

Example
Identify and report issues with risk controls, including residual risk

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

Daisy, a supervisor at the service, notices that although all support workers use disposable gloves when preparing food, they frequently fail to wash their hands after wearing rubber gloves for an extended period (particularly when cleaning). This is highlighted when two residents develop minor skin irritations, which is traced back to contact with a support worker who had sweaty (unwashed) hands.

After considering the options, Daisy prepares a memo for the HSR and manager of Long Beach Aged Care, reporting:

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

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

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Define residual risk and provide a workplace example.

Question 2

Match each risk control issue to the appropriate scenario.

External influences	Wearing mitts when handling hot plates or pots in an organisation's kitchen leads to an increased chance of dropping them because of a loss of dexterity.
Control introduces risk	Administrative controls applied to a piece of equipment become irrelevant when the equipment breaks down and is replaced by one with different specifications.
Incorrect training	Purchasing cheap latex gloves results in workers developing allergic rashes on their hands.
Inappropriate PPE	A risk assessment concludes that the use of a particular cleaning chemical may pose no risk if the assessment is completed in a large well-ventilated area; however, this task is often performed in a small, enclosed area.
Incorrect assessment	A worker is seen using the same pair of disposable gloves when handling food and dispensing medicine.

Question 3

List two things you should do if you identify an issue with a risk control.

Summary

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

- Under WHS legislation, employers and employees have key responsibilities to maintain a safe work environment.

- Each state/territory has a WHS authority in charge of regulating and enforcing work health and safety laws.

- You must follow WHS legislation and regulations, industry standards and codes of practice and organisational policies and procedures when identifying and recording or reporting hazards.

- Risk management involves identifying hazards, assessing the associated risks and implementing risk control measures to remove, eliminate or control risks.

- You should use the hierarchy of control to determine the most effective risk control measures.

- Residual risk may occur after controls are implemented. You must learn how to identify possible issues associated with controls.
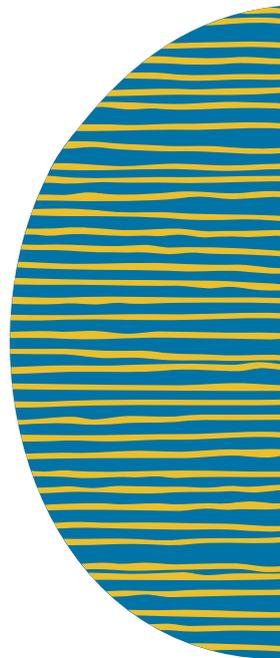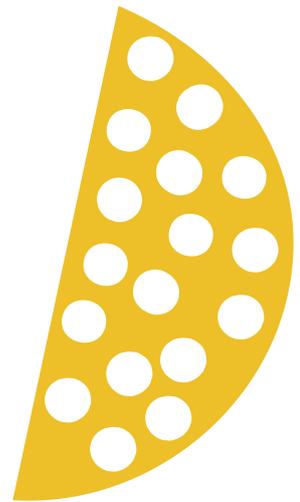
Learning Checkpoint 1

Contribute to workplace procedures for identifying hazards and controlling risks

Part A

1. Identify three hazards common to the workplace and explain how they may cause harm.

2. Match each term about risk to its correct definition.

Hazard identification procedures	Used to eliminate or minimise risk
Risk assessment	Used to identify hazards and their potential harm
Risk controls	Four levels of control, containing six control measures – elimination, substitution, isolation, engineering, administrative controls and PPE
Hierarchy of control	The risk that remains or is caused by controls
Residual risk	Involves working out the potential harm to you or others

3. Match each term to its correct workplace and legislative requirements.

State/territory WHS authorities	Must consult and cooperate with all employees, including indirect workers such as contractors, subcontractors, volunteers, trainees and students on work experience, regarding WHS issues
Employees	Are responsible for regulating and enforcing WHS laws
PCBUs	Establish the standard precautions to be taken in specific industries; for example, personal protective clothing and equipment to be used, the handling of hazardous/dangerous materials and goods, standard housekeeping practices and general safety precautions
Regulatory requirements	Must report hazards and incidents, including near misses

4. Explain the hierarchy of control and how it is used.

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

❑ Transferring a person from a bed to a chair or vice versa

❑ Carrying a large, heavy or awkwardly shaped box

❑ Repetitive movements

❑ Using chemicals to disinfect work benches

❑ Putting on disposable gloves

Part B

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

Case study

Victoria works for an aged care service provider as a supervisor. When Victoria begins her employment, she reviews the hazard register and notices a high incidence of falls. She is not sure if this is simply to do with the age of the people supported by the organisation. She believes that this hazard could be better controlled.

1. List three general strategies Victoria could implement to better control risk in line with workplace procedures and policies.

2. When Victoria conducts a risk assessment of the hallway, where the majority of falls occur, she notices that there is a significant slope in the floor, which may be contributing to the high incidence of falls. There is also a hall carpet that could cause trips, especially if not flat. Provide two examples of risk control measures Victoria could implement in line with the hierarchy of risk control.

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

4. Which of the following should Victoria report in relation to issues with risk controls and residual risk? Tick all that apply.

❑ A description of the original risk

❑ The existing control measures

❑ The reason the original risk was not eliminated

❑ The reason the control measures are inadequate

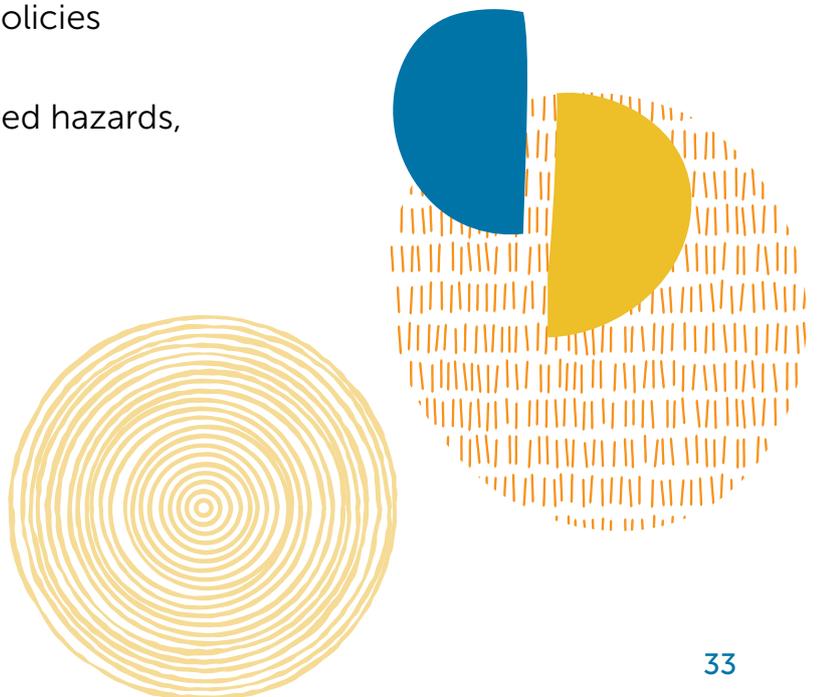❑ A remedy (such as further control measures), where possible

Topic 2
Implement policies and procedures into work team processes

2A Provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the team

2B Provide information about identified hazards, risk assessments and controls

2C Monitor housekeeping practices

2D Maintain WHS incident records

2A Provide information about WHS policies and procedures to the team

All supervisors must have sufficient WHS and workplace knowledge to provide advice on any WHS concerns.

To provide useful and specific advice when receiving queries, you must understand the applicable laws, regulations, codes of practice and standards as well as be aware of everyone's responsibilities. You are not expected to have all the answers to WHS queries from the team; however, you are expected to know who to refer queries to when you are unable to answer a question.

Organisations must adhere to Commonwealth, state and territory legislation. These include having a WHS policy, maintaining registers of hazards and incidents in the workplace, and having procedures for emergencies, evacuations, incident and accident reporting and investigations and conducting safety audits.

You must be able to identify all relevant policies and procedures applicable to your team and extract the relevant elements. The information in these policies and procedures is relevant to anyone associated with the organisation, including full-time, part-time and casual staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors. Information may include:

- hazard, incident and injury reporting

- hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control

- human resource policies and procedures such as harassment and grievance procedures, induction programs, team meetings and alcohol and drug policies

- consultation and participation

- incident investigation

- quality system documentation.

Remain current

Employers need to ensure that WHS policies and procedures reflect current legislation, workplace regulations, codes of practice and industry standards.

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

Safe Work Australia is the peak national authority on WHS policy development.

WHS policies and procedures

A WHS policy is a written document that outlines how an organisation intends to fulfil its commitment to workplace health and safety. In practice, it contains details of principles, objectives and commitments to that effect.

Therefore, a WHS policy is simply a method of stating how workers, contractors and visitors are expected to behave when they are on the organisation's property or performing activities on behalf of the organisation. The law requires organisations to provide a safe system of work. To comply with the law, organisations need methods of communicating, duplicating and implementing safe working practices. A WHS policy forms the basis of this practice. The WHS policy will include an aim that outlines what the policy intends to achieve and will be achieved in terms of compliance and best practice.

> Organisations must have clearly written WHS policies and procedures that cover all aspects of the workplace's operations.

The depth or extent of a WHS policy depends on the size of the organisation and the industry or sector. Policies may relate to:

- manual handling
- noise
- PPE
- fatigue management
- hazardous substances
- hostile intruders
- hot work
- hygiene
- infection control
- infectious waste.

Procedures prescribe the sequence of activities, tasks, steps and processes to produce the described result or outcome. For example, a hand-washing policy may state that all workers must wash their hands following all bathroom visits and before any food preparation, while a hand-washing procedure outlines the steps involved in washing hands correctly.

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

Emergency evacuation	This procedure would include a general evacuation plan for several possible events (e.g. fire, earthquake, terrorist attack, gas leak, electrical fault or bomb threat). Typically, it would also include the responsible parties (chief and/or area wardens), exits and exit procedures, assembly areas and rollcall procedures.
Electrical safety	This procedure would include the safe use of electrical equipment, including safety devices for exposed power outlets, electrical equipment maintenance, safety inspection scheduling and safe storage of electrical devices.
Vehicle operation (car or minibus)	This procedure would include safe operating instructions, alcohol and prescription drug use restrictions, use of co-drivers and basic vehicle servicing and maintenance.

Read Worksafe Queensland's, guide on 'Working safely in people's homes' here: aspirelr.link/worksafe-qld-workplace-risks

Manual tasks

Manual tasks
Task involving the use of your body to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, hold or restrain a person, animal or object.

Manual tasks relate to the handling of heavy objects, people or animals.

Manual tasks may result in muscle fatigue or strain and can cause back injuries or other musculoskeletal disorders such as hernias. Injury may result from repetitive strain or overexertion.

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

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

Infection control

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

Infection control is any process or activity designed to reduce the likelihood of infections being transmitted.

Infection control activities include hand-washing, respiratory etiquette, wearing PPE and cleaning and sanitising objects and areas.

Like all policies and procedures related to WHS, infection control policies and procedures are designed to reduce the incidence of illnesses. Organisations' infection control policies and procedures will vary depending on the sector and setting in which they provide their services. Different federal, state and territory legislation and government policies apply to different agencies and services, workplaces and job roles. Despite these differences, all infection control policies and procedures share certain common features, such as the requirement to adhere to Australian and New Zealand Standards for infection control.

Infection control policies and procedures are designed to facilitate:
• the identification of hazards
• the assessment of risks
• the identification of the people involved
• the development and implementation of risk reduction strategies
• the minimisation of the potential or actual spread of infection

You can also find the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare at the National Health and Medical Research Council website:
aspirelr.link/nhmrc-infection-control-guidelines

Emergencies

An emergency is a sudden, unexpected event or situation that requires immediate action to prevent or limit casualties.

Although emergencies are unforeseen, organisations can still plan their response should they occur. During an emergency, staff will look to their supervisor for guidance and leadership. The supervisor plays a critical role in implementing the immediate required action by coordinating the actions of their team and complying with evacuation orders or other appropriate workplace procedures.

Examples of emergencies include the following:

Falls	A fall causing a serious injury such as a broken arm or leg
Evacuation	Events that require evacuation, including fires and explosions, gas leaks, chemical spills and bomb threats
Security	Security emergencies such as armed robberies, intruders and disturbed persons
Internal	Internal emergencies such as loss of power or water supply or structural collapse
External	External emergencies and natural disasters such as floods, storms or traffic accidents affecting the organisation

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

Following standards and guidelines for the correct implementation of emergency response procedures will ensure that a workplace has the correct processes, procedures and equipment in place to address all emergencies.

Equipment	Procedures relating to the use of emergency equipment cover the correct use of emergency equipment and/or PPE. There are procedures for the use of lifesaving appliances (such as respirators and automated defibrillators) and fire extinguishers.
Drills	Drills are often the best way to reinforce actions that need to be performed in an emergency. Drills involve the repetition of a series of actions until they become embedded in people's memories. During an emergency, when a sense of urgency or panic makes it difficult to solve problems, the responses embedded in the subconscious become second nature.
Access	For emergency procedures to be effective and useful, they must be accessible to all staff and visitors. To ensure everyone is aware of the procedures, workplaces can run emergency evacuation drills. However, new staff and visitors require access to procedures outside of these times. Therefore, procedures must be readily accessible to all stakeholders (e.g. in a policy and procedures manual or on signs).
Acknowledgment	The best way to ensure the team understands and can access procedures is to instigate a 'read and sign' sheet or some other type of acknowledgment that provides supervisors with evidence that the members of the team have read and understood the workplace emergency procedures.

Provide information to the team

Workers must have access to organisational policies and procedures to assist them in performing their duties.

There are several ways to provide information contained in policies and procedures to a team. When there are many policies and procedures, delivering the information through presentations, lectures or meetings can be impractical. Instead, organisations should maintain a current version of their policies and procedures, either in a hard-copy manual or electronically on the workplace intranet, to ensure they are easily accessible or on display to all workers and visitors. Supervisors or trainers should provide new workers with a copy of the organisation's policies and procedures during their induction and ensure that they are understood.

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

Provide information verbally
Providing information verbally about policies and procedures is more appropriate when there are amendments or additions. This can be done by having all workers attend a meeting, then updating the policy and procedures manual and ensuring all people have access to it.

The requirement for a supervisor to have a good understanding of WHS processes, from both a legislative (regulatory) and workplace perspective, becomes apparent when providing advice to the team. You must only provide WHS advice according to your level of knowledge and area of responsibility and must never provide advice without having specific training or knowledge. In other words, it is important to understand your limitations. If you are not qualified to advise or believe the inquiry or issue needs to be dealt with at a higher level, you should refer to the human and physical resources that you have at your disposal, such as the HSR or manager of the organisation.

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

Rhada and Ahmed work at High Street Aged Care, and their supervisor is Rory. Here is how Rory checks for understanding and practises evacuation procedures.

Check understanding	• On Thursday, workers at High Street Aged Care are scheduled to practise the fire drill they recently learned at an information session conducted by a senior officer from the metropolitan fire brigade.
	• Rory informs the workers that this drill will be different from the last one. They are also asked to form a mental picture of how to reach the nearest exit.
	• Rory had checked the previous week to ensure that all staff, including his team, had read and understood the evacuation procedures by having them email him with confirmation as well as any questions, queries or feedback.
	• The workers had to pay particular attention to assisting people with mobility issues to evacuate as safely and quickly as possible. This was addressed in the information about the fire drill.

Evacuation procedures	• When the fire alarm sounds at an unspecified time, Rhada and Ahmed are instructed to stay as low to the ground as possible when evacuating because the air is cleaner at lower levels.
	• They are also instructed that they have a time limit of less than five minutes to gather and evacuate everyone from the building.
	• From their knowledge of the layout of the building and understanding of the evacuation procedures, Rhada and Ahmed know the best routes to the exits. They work together to evacuate people with mobility aids. They need to quickly survey the route to ensure that there are no obstacles.
	• Service users and workers are successful in reaching the exits and designated safe meeting points. The drill makes the workers aware of how quickly time can pass, especially when assisting people with mobility aids.

Practice Task 4

Question 1

Match each of the following to whether it is a policy or a procedure.

A requirement for employees to do manual handling training		Procedure
Where to assemble in an emergency evacuation		Policy
When electrical cords need to be checked		Policy
A reference to the relevant legislation for the safe disposal of infectious waste		Procedure

Question 2

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

Question 3

Which of the following statements relating to an emergency procedure are correct? Select Yes or No.

a.	When the fire alarm sounds, bend low and leave the building via the fire exit.	Yes / No
b.	Gather in the designated meeting area in the car park with the assigned supervisor.	Yes / No
c.	After vacating the building, you can go home for the day.	Yes / No
d.	Give your name to the supervisor once you have reached the designated meeting area.	Yes / No
e.	Return to the building only when clearance has been provided.	Yes / No

Question 4

Which of the following would apply to infection control policies and procedures? Tick all that apply.

❑ Outline steps to identify hazards and risks associated with spreading infection

❑ Adhere to Australian and New Zealand Standards for infection control

❑ Include activities such as hand-washing, respiratory etiquette, wearing PPE and cleaning and sanitising objects and areas

❑ Adhere to the *Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003* (Qld), regardless of industry sector or state/territory

❑ Outline how to minimise the impact of any potential or actual spread of infection

2B Provide information about identified hazards, risk assessments and controls

All managers must provide information to the team about hazards and risks, the outcomes of risk assessments and the required risk controls.

This information should be provided in an accessible and understandable format; for example, in a hard copy stored near the policies and procedures or on the intranet where workers can use their technical skills to access it.

It may be difficult for someone unfamiliar with WHS to accurately understand or describe the difference between a hazard and a risk, which are often used interchangeably. However, even though they both relate to maintaining a safe work environment, they have very different meanings. It is important to accurately differentiate between hazards and risks so that all team members understand how they may affect their work environment.

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

As mentioned in the previous topic:

Hazard	A hazard is something that may cause harm in terms of human injury or illness, damage to property or the environment or a combination of these. For example, a loose carpet square in a room represents a trip or slip hazard for workers and people being supported; the poor maintenance of alarm systems represents a communication hazard.
Risk	A risk is the chance or probability that a hazard will cause harm, injury or illness and is measured in terms of likelihood and possible consequences.

Hazard identification procedures

Hazard identification procedures
Process for examining a workplace with the aim of identifying any hazards inherent in the job.

To reduce risks to everyone in the workplace, **hazard identification procedures** need to be in place.

These procedures are generally part of a broader risk management process that is implemented through workplace HSCs or HSRs.

If procedures do not exist or are vague, you must motivate the team and promote

a culture of safety to ensure that every team member is vigilant and aware of what constitutes a hazard.

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

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

Messy staffroom	Health and safety risks related to bacteria, insects (e.g. cockroaches, ants) and slipping or tripping on clutter
Faulty neon light tubes or poor office lighting	Health risks related to eye soreness/strain, headaches and fatigue
Worn or loose carpet squares	Health risks related to trip hazards, which can cause minor or major injuries
General clutter	Health and safety risks related to the possibility of fire; for example, in an evacuation scenario, a cluttered environment may cause delays that could be costly in terms of everyone reaching a safe place
Faulty air conditioner	Health and safety risks related to possible health effects from bacteria from faulty filters (e.g. *Legionella*) or fire hazards if electrical
Personal hygiene	Health risks such as cross-contamination and germs spreading when hands are not washed or appropriate PPE (e.g. disposable gloves) is not worn during food preparation, injury treatment or cleaning

The role of a supervisor

Supervisors are charged with observing and ensuring team compliance with hazard identification and reporting processes while promoting WHS by example.

To do this effectively, supervisors must have a good working knowledge of any risks in the work environment and be able to educate the team about how to identify and eliminate hazards and residual risk.

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

Consider:

- the effectiveness of existing controls
- the likelihood of harm, with consideration of the frequency of exposure and potential severity of the consequences.

Principles of hazard and risk assessment

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

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

The four steps of risk assessment are:

1. gathering information about each identified hazard

2. considering the level of exposure to the risk (i.e. the number of people exposed and the duration of the exposure)

3. using the information to assess the likelihood of harm (very likely, likely, unlikely, highly unlikely)

4. assessing the potential consequences of the hazard (death, significant injury, minor injury, negligible injury).

Risk assessment

Risk assessment involves determining the probability or likelihood of the risk occurring and the severity of the harm incurred.

A risk assessment helps guide you in your decision-making in terms of the risk control measures that need to be implemented. Therefore, a risk assessment is a tool used to determine the risk profile (viability) of a certain task or function. A risk assessment matrix can be used to conduct a risk assessment.

Risk assessment matrix
Matrix used to work out a risk-rating for a particular hazard.

Risk assessment matrix

A **risk assessment matrix** is used to allocate risk ratings to the risks that you identify based on two intersecting factors: (i) the likelihood (or probability) of a risk-based event occurring and (ii) the consequences (or impact) if it did.

Here is a description of the risk assessment matrix.

Purpose
A risk assessment matrix assists in determining the level of risk that an activity or area of the organisation may pose. You use a risk assessment matrix to evaluate a risk by assessing the likelihood of an event occurring and its potential consequences. The matrix allows people to: • consider what could potentially go wrong • determine the likelihood of it going wrong • determine what the negative consequences or impact would be • determine the risk level.
Using the matrix

• First, use the y-axis to determine the likelihood of the hazard occurring (rare, unlikely, possible, likely or almost certain).
• Second, use the x-axis to determine the possible consequences of the hazard (insignificant, minor, moderate, major or catastrophic).
  - Insignificant: the consequences are insignificant, with negligible illness or injury.
  - Minor: minor injury or illness, with no time lost.
  - Moderate: moderate injury or illness, with some time lost.
  - Major: major injury or illness, with significant time lost.
  - Catastrophic: permanent incapacity or death.

Risk levels
Once the likelihood and consequences have been determined, locate where they intersect on the matrix to establish the level of risk. The result will be: • Low: The risk is acceptable and can be overlooked because it does not represent a significant threat. • Medium: The risk requires some steps for prevention but is not a priority. • High: Unacceptable risk that requires immediate action. • Very high or extreme: Unacceptable risk that requires immediate action.

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

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

Develop a nomogram

Nomogram
A pictorial representation of a complex mathematical formula.

A risk score **nomogram**, also known as the risk score tie line or risk calculator, represents the connection between the risks identified and the level of consequences for such risks.

The following provides instructions for developing and using a nomogram.

1. Encourage participation

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

2. Probability and exposure

To assess risk using a nomogram, you need to work from left to right to determine the likelihood of the risk occurring (represented by the 'Likelihood' line), the frequency of undertaking the task (represented by the 'Exposure' line) and the potential consequences (represented by the 'Possible consequences' line).

3. Likelihood

In relation to the hazard, determine the likelihood (probability) of an event occurring. This ranges from 'practically impossible' (e.g. a worker in the car park is killed by an aeroplane falling on them) to ''might well be expected at some time' (e.g. a worker will almost certainly be injured if they are expected to carry a 30 kg box of equipment upstairs with no assistance). Mark this point on the line.

4. Frequency

Next, the frequency of exposure to the hazard is selected using the options on the next vertical line (from 'Continuous' to 'Very rare'. Mark this point on the line. You then need to draw a line from the 'Likelihood' point, through the determined frequency ('Exposure') and continue the line to finish at the 'tie line' in the centre of the nomogram. Please note that the tie line could be either at the top or the bottom of the nomogram.

5. Consequences of hazard and action

Next, determine the possible consequences of the hazard and mark this point on the third vertical line. In this case, the possible consequence is determined to be 'Serious'. Draw a line from the end of the first line, through the point on the 'Possible consequences' line until it reaches the 'Risk score' line on the right. Where this second line ends establishes the risk. What action do you think would be appropriate in this case?

Example: Nomogram
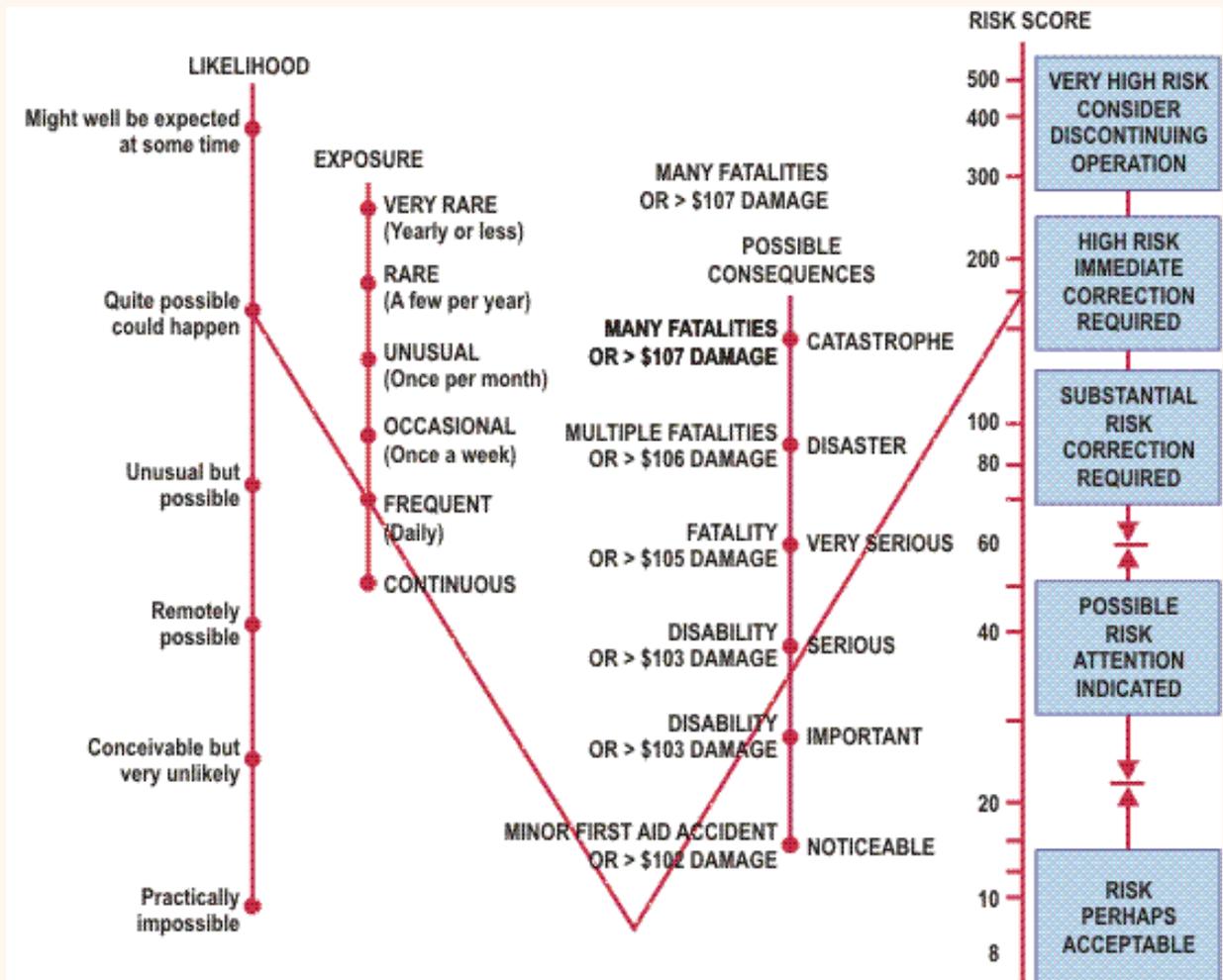
Limitations of risk assessments

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

The limitations include:

Assessor subjectivity	The principal weakness of a risk assessment is that it is purely subjective – it is the assessor's perception of what the risk is. The same assessor under different circumstances may make a different judgment regarding the risk of a particular hazard.
Quality and quantity of information	An accurate risk assessment also relies on the assessor having all the possible information about a particular hazard and assessing all possible factors affecting the outcome, which is often impractical, unachievable or even impossible.

Provide information about risk assessment

Use effective communication when providing information to your team about risk assessment procedures.

You should provide a specific training session dedicated to risk assessment processes, including identifying hazards, analysing risk using a nomogram or risk assessment matrix, implementing controls and reporting risks. As well as verbal communication, you should support training by providing written procedures, examples of completed documentation and nomograms.

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

Ensure your team is familiar with risk assessment processes and offer opportunities for individual training and supervision to ensure that the correct WHS procedures are followed.

Provide information about risk control

Your team needs to know how to respond if a hazard is identified.

In Topic 1, you learned about possible risk control measures according to the hierarchy of control. Risk control measures are the devices and methods employed to eliminate the hazard altogether or, where this is not practicable, minimise the risks associated with the hazard. When determining the appropriate risk control measure, the primary reference should be the hierarchy of control. The six risk control measures in the hierarchy are ranked in the preferred order; that is, if the top level does not work or is not applicable, move down to the next risk level, and so on.

Provide information about PPE

As the last line of defence for all workers where a hazard exists, organisations are required to provide PPE.

PPE refers to any clothing and/ or equipment that is worn to protect people from hazards by providing a physical barrier between the person and the hazard.

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

Examples of PPE
• Head protection, such as broad-brimmed sunhats and bicycle helmets
• Face and eye protection, such as safety goggles, sunscreen or sunglasses
• Respiratory protection, such as compressed air systems, surgical masks, gasmasks, ventilators or respirators (these are not usually required in a community services environment)
• Hearing protection, such as earmuffs and earplugs (again, these are not usually required in a community services environment)
• Hand protection, such as disposable gloves and mitts
• Clothing and footwear, such as enclosed anti-slip footwear, long trousers, aprons and hairnets

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

A WHS review is conducted in the kitchen of an aged care facility to determine the availability and functionality of PPE. The kitchen supervisor, Jill, who is also in charge of all staff and volunteers who help prepare the meals, inspects the safety equipment, including several different types of safety gloves and oven mitts, aprons and even safety goggles. As staff members or lunch volunteers enter the kitchen, she also inspects their footwear to ensure that it is enclosed, non-slip and not worn or ill-fitting, thus providing adequate foot protection.

Jill understands exactly what is required in the kitchen and observes that not all food preparation areas have mitts (for hot food) or disposable gloves (for food handling). She reports this to the manager.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

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

Question 2

Match each PPE category to the types of equipment provided.

Head protection		Gasmasks, ventilators, surgical masks
Face and eye protection		Mitts, disposable gloves
Respiratory protection		Goggles, glasses, sunscreen
Hand protection		Anti-slip shoes, aprons, long trousers
Clothing and footwear		Sunhats, bicycle helmets

Question 3

Which of the following statements are correct? Tick all that apply.

❑ A risk assessment matrix assists in determining the level of risk that an activity or area of the organisation may pose.

❑ A minor consequence refers to minor injury and no time lost as a result of the event.

❑ A moderate consequence refers to major injury or illness, even permanent incapacity or death, with a significant amount of time lost.

❑ Risks deemed high should be acted on as soon as possible, while those deemed low may require little action.

Question 4

List two examples of important information you should provide about conducting risk assessments and implementing risk controls.

2C Monitor housekeeping practices

Part of your role includes monitoring housekeeping practices, including how WHS is managed and implemented in the workplace.

Housekeeping
Management of duties involved in running a household.

Housekeeping is the practice of maintaining order and adhering to standards of presentation and performance in the workplace to ensure a safe and healthy environment.

Here is a summary of important housekeeping practices:

General workplace cleanliness and tidiness	Keep the workplace free from debris, spills and mess to decrease the chance of fire hazards, blocked exits, pest infestation, cross-contamination and associated health risks.
Unobstructed walkways and emergency exits	Ensure general tidiness and proper storage protocols to prevent items or objects being stacked or placed in walkways or near exits, which could hinder evacuation processes.
Underfoot conditions	Ensure floors are free from spills or slip and trip hazards (such as uneven surfaces or loose tiles or carpet), provide anti-slip or anti-skid floor coverings, and ensure indoor and outdoor surfaces are safe and in good repair.
Workspace around equipment and machinery	Clutter is the cause of many workplace accidents, especially around machinery or equipment. This is especially the case where clutter prevents easy access to equipment or encroaches too closely onto moving machinery parts. Several hazards are present in this case, including fire, electrical and mechanical hazards.
Functioning services	Workspaces without adequate lighting or ventilation present a number of health and wellbeing risks to those working there, including asthma and allergy-related illnesses.
Storage	This includes access to and availability of PPE. If PPE is stored incorrectly, it can deteriorate. Storage areas may also become hazards if they are neglected, or items are not stored properly. This can cause manual handling issues (e.g. a heavy box that requires two people to lift being stored on a top shelf).

Signage	Signs are now found everywhere in workplaces, marking emergency exits, first-aid points or fire extinguishers or simply guiding the safe use of the photocopier. As a minimum, there is a legal requirement for workplaces to adequately signpost emergency exits, evacuation procedures and emergency contact numbers.

Monitor housekeeping practices

It may be your responsibility to monitor housekeeping practices routinely to help ensure the safety of the team.

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

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

Video: Housekeeping practices
Watch the following video: aspirelr.link/yt-housekeeping-principles
Pay attention to the housekeeping practices that can be followed to reduce workplace injuries.

Methods used for monitoring

Workplace procedures are designed to ensure that safe working practices are followed and exposure to risk is minimised.

Following procedures is not about complying with management directives but about maintaining safe working practices that ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone in the organisation. Those in leadership positions need to understand

existing processes and procedures and have a good working knowledge of their application. This enables a supervisor or team leader to confirm that all members of the team are compliant with the procedures and, by monitoring the work standards of those in their team, recognise any deviations. Supervisors should also lead by example by maintaining a high standard themselves.

Here are some methods you could use to monitor safe practices in the workplace:

Observation	Observe and encourage others to regularly observe the conditions of the workplace. Check for clear walkways and fire exits. Ensure PPE is stored correctly. Monitor floors for trip hazards.
Hazard reports	Hazard reports must be completed if hazards are identified. They should specify where and what the hazard is and its possible effect.
Maintenance reports and requests	Machinery and equipment need to be regularly monitored for usability. Maintenance reports should be regularly reviewed to ensure equipment is serviced when necessary.
Daily hazard identification checklist	A checklist can be completed daily. Check off each area once its safety has been reviewed. For example, check that the first-aid kit is safely stored at the end of each day.
Incident reports	Incident reports are used if an incident occurs. They should detail the nature of the incident and the actions taken.
WHS audit	The supervisor, in consultation with the HSR, will carry out safety audits to check that safety records are being maintained and updated. They might check that forms are kept in the right place and that policies and procedures about safety are kept where everyone can find them.

Safety audits

Audit
Management of duties involved in running a household.

WHS **audits** are conducted to determine the effectiveness of current WHS management systems and identify where improvements can be made.

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

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

Hand-washing	Check that workers are washing their hands properly before and after handling food, after using the toilet and before and after physical contact with individual people.
Infection control	Check to make sure that waste products are being disposed of correctly and PPE is worn when necessary.
Electrical safety	Check that plugs and cords are in good working order and not frayed or damaged. A licensed electrician may be contracted to test all electrical equipment every six months.
Equipment safety	Check that all equipment (e.g. hoists) is being used according to safe handling procedures.
Disposal of incontinence pads	Check that incontinence pads are disposed of according to strict soiled waste procedures.

Example

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

The following is an example of a housekeeping form that may be used to monitor WHS work practices.

Housekeeping Form		
Area inspected: Date of inspection: Inspected by:		
Area	**Action**	**Corrective action**
Office areas and amenities	• Offices are free of clutter and piles of paper. • Shelf storage is orderly and floor coverings intact. • No exposed computer leads, double adaptors in use or frayed electrical cords. • Employee lunch areas are clean. • Tables and food preparation benches are free of rubbish. • Microwaves and fridges are regularly wiped clean.	
Stairs/ passageways	• Passageways are free of obstructions. • All stairs are free of rubbish, oil and grease. • Treads and toe boards are intact, and handrails are intact and secure.	
Fire and emergency	• Fire doors are closed. • Fire extinguishers are not freestanding, are secured in holders to the wall and have signs stating use for the type of fire to be fought.	
Tools and equipment	• Tools and equipment are correctly stored in their proper place when not in use. • The area is kept clean of rubbish.	
Outdoor areas	• The surrounding grounds and parking areas are free of rubbish and unnecessary materials.	

Source: 'Safe housekeeping guidelines' excerpt, reproduced courtesy of University of Western Sydney Occupational Health & Safety Information Services.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

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

Question 2

Describe four ways you can monitor safe work practices.

2D Maintain WHS incident records

WHS incident reports should be maintained in line with legislative requirements.

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

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

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

Other WHS legislative reporting requirements relate to:

- registered plant (equipment)

- hazardous substances and dangerous goods

- environmental monitoring

- health surveillance

- serious incident and injury reporting.

Legislative requirements for WHS reporting

WHS laws state that certain serious incidents must be reported to the appropriate WHS authority for your state or territory.

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

Failing to report a notifiable incident is also an offence and penalties apply. A notifiable incident refers to:

- the death of a person

- serious injury or illness of a person

- a dangerous incident.

The following information comes from the Incident Notification: Information Sheet produced by Safe Work Australia. Under WHS legislation:

- A notifiable incident must be reported to the regulator immediately after the organisation has become aware of it.

- If the regulator asks, written notification must be provided within 48 hours of the request.

- The incident site must be preserved until an inspector arrives or directs otherwise (subject to some exceptions).

Example
Maintain WHS incident records in the work area according to requirements

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

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

Zhou regularly inspects the known hazards in the workplace to ensure that all control measures are in place. However, he neglects to assess the effectiveness of hazard reporting until a near miss occurs that is related to a hazard that had been reported but never actioned.

A small mat had been placed across a carpet edge that had lifted, creating a trip hazard. The mat was only intended to be a quick fix until the carpet could be repaired; however, over time it was forgotten by whoever put the mat down. One afternoon, a support worker was bringing out lunch, and the mat slipped under her. She managed to steady herself but dropped the lunch. Thus, attention was drawn to the mat once again.

In evaluating the reporting process, Zhou finds that a hazard identification report about the carpet had been lodged the previous month. However, the hazard reporting process had failed, partly because of a misunderstanding of the correct process, partly because the mat had become a fixture and people no longer noticed it and partly from lack of communication (i.e. others who had noticed the potential hazard assumed it had been reported by someone else and failed to follow it up).

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

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Which of the following statements about WHS incident records is correct? Tick the correct answer.

❑ You are legally obligated to maintain WHS incident records for 8–10 years in case of a subpoena.

❑ You are only legally obligated to maintain WHS incident records if it becomes a WorkCover claim.

❑ You are legally obligated to maintain WHS incident records for 5–10 years in case of a subpoena.

❑ You are legally obligated to keep WHS incident records in a hard-copy folder.

Question 2

Which of the following statements are correct? Select Yes or No.

a. A notifiable incident must be reported to the regulator immediately after the organisation has become aware of it.	Yes / No
b. Written notification must be submitted to the regulator within 48 hours of the request.	Yes / No
c. A notifiable incident can sometimes be recorded and filed internally if it is considered low risk.	Yes / No
d. The incident site must be preserved until an inspector arrives or directs otherwise.	Yes / No

Summary

- Organisations are required to have a WHS policy, maintain registers of identified hazards and incidents in the workplace and put in place procedures for emergencies, evacuations, incident and accident reporting and investigations, and safety auditing.

- Use a variety of methods to regularly provide information about WHS policies and procedures to your team, including meetings and briefing sessions.

- Clearly outline all procedures, including emergency evacuation procedures.

- Support your team to use appropriate hazard identification methods and risk assessment processes such as risk assessment matrices and nomograms.

- WHS housekeeping refers to the everyday practices intended to keep a workplace safe, such as storing PPE correctly.

- Use appropriate methods for maintaining incident records in the workplace, such as ensuring information remains private.
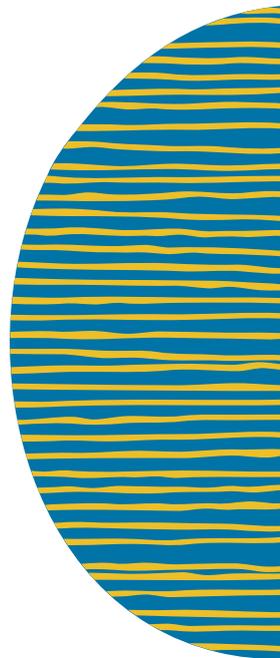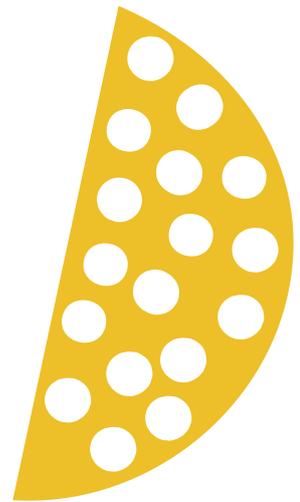
Learning Checkpoint 2

Implement policies and procedures into work team processes

Part A

1. Which of the following are covered under WHS policies and procedures? Tick all that apply.

   ❑ Infection control

   ❑ Use of PPE

   ❑ Emergency procedures

   ❑ Manual tasks

   ❑ Information disclosure

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

3. Match each of the following terms to its correct description.

Hazardous manual tasks	Stipulated in *Hazardous manual tasks: Code of practice*
Requirements for manual tasks	Implemented to ensure infection control is managed in the workplace
Infection control	Include overexertion or repetitive movement, which can cause muscle strain
WHS policies and procedures	Include the correct use of PPE and hand-washing techniques

4. Which of the following statements relate to monitoring housekeeping? Tick all that apply.

❑ Observe how people perform tasks and demonstrate correct practice if a task is incorrectly performed.

❑ Refer to your infection control policy for advice on general housekeeping.

❑ Provide your team with information and/or training on the organisation's WHS policies and procedures.

❑ Include general cleanliness, safe storage of PPE and removal of clutter as part of monitoring housekeeping.

❑ Keep track of your team's whereabouts as part of monitoring housekeeping.

Part B

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

Case study

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

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

2. List two examples of information related to identified hazards and the outcomes of risk assessment and risk controls that Ali may need to share with the team.

3. When workers assist a person with showering or toileting, they need to use disposable gloves. Give two examples of information Ali should provide about the use of PPE if he is verbally explaining procedures in a team meeting.

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

5. When using a hoist to lift a client one day, one of the workers, Samuel Hayes, uses the hoist incorrectly. As a result, the client is bruised on the hip and complains of pain. Ali needs to file an incident report in conjunction with Samuel. Which of the following information needs to be included in the incident report? Tick all that apply.

❑ Name and job title: Ali Khan – Supervisor.

❑ Hazard: Faulty hoist.

❑ Scenario: Samuel Hayes used the hoist to lift a client and did not use the hoist correctly. The client was bruised on the hip.

❑ Action: The client's injury was evaluated. Samuel was trained to use the hoist correctly.

❑ Control measure: Substitute hoist for two-person assisted (manual) lifting
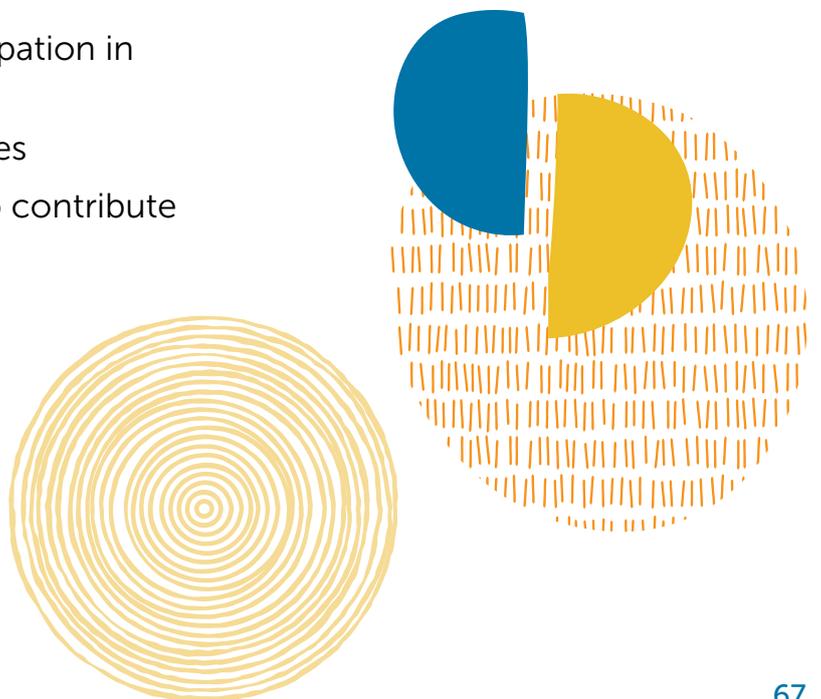
Topic 3
Support consultation, cooperation and communication

3A Encourage work team participation in consultative activities

3B Report health and safety issues

3C Encourage team members to contribute to WHS

3A

Encourage work team participation in consultative activities

Consultation is a critical element of success in any WHS process.

It is a legal requirement for PCBUs and workers to engage in open communication about WHS matters. **Consultation** is also about talking with team members and encouraging them to raise any concerns or questions about WHS. Consultation usually occurs in either one-to-one or group meetings.

All forms of consultation have benefits and drawbacks. The benefit of one-to-one consultations is confidentiality and that individuals may feel that they can speak more freely about issues; however, this comes at the expense of not having group knowledge to resolve issues immediately. Therefore, the ideal forum for consultation in the workplace depends on personal preference and may involve a combination of the two options.

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

Consultation and participation

Consultations will centre on raising and discussing key WHS issues.

The WHS issues that you may discuss with your colleagues and the various methods of consultation are outlined here.

WHS issues
• Changes to policies, procedures and work practices
• Changes to premises, plant or substances used at work
• Conducting workplace risk assessments
• Incorporating new WHS requirements imposed by legislation, regulations and codes of practice
• Making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the health and safety of workers
• Making decisions about the organisation's consultative procedures
• Reviews of policies, procedures and work practices
• Risk control

Methods of consulting
• Appointing an HSR and providing them with reasonable access to staff during working hours
• Involving workers in workplace inspections and/or asking for feedback during workplace inspections
• Involving workers in risk assessments and/or asking for feedback during risk assessments
• Encouraging WHS discussion at regular team meetings
• Forming an HSC and providing HSC members with reasonable access to workers during working hours
• Asking for feedback during informal conversations

Video: Consultations

Watch the following video: aspirelr.link/yt-consultations

Pay attention to the various methods the organisation uses to conduct consultations.

Formal and informal consultation

Formal arrangements for WHS consultation involve HSRs and/or HSCs. Your workplace will have a procedure that sets out how these are established.

Informal arrangements are integrated into day-to-day activities in the workplace. These take place in:

- daily communications between managers and workers

- development and review of risk assessments

- development and review of safe work method statements

- responses to occurrences logged in the reporting system

- meetings

- team briefings

- one-on-one meetings

- site inductions.

You can find more information about consultation, cooperation and coordination at: aspirelr.link/swa-consultation-cop

Seek contributions

> To ensure an effective WHS management system, input from employees is vital.

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

During meetings, you may:

- report on recent workplace incidents

- report on production time lost to workplace injuries

- report on new practices to improve workplace health and safety

- ask team members to raise WHS issues

- ask team members to describe any hazards that have been identified

- provide a copy of the minutes of recent HSC meetings.

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

Record and communicate outcomes of consultation

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

Commonwealth, state and territory legislation and regulations require organisations to maintain both a record of any incidents or accidents (a WHS incident register) as well as a record of any WHS issues raised by members of the organisation (a WHS hazard or risk register). The following information must be recorded in relation to the outcomes of WHS consultation.

WHS consultation record-keeping requirements
• The name of the person making the inquiry or raising the issue
• The name of the person who received the inquiry or was informed of the issue

- A description of any advice offered

- The name and position of any party to whom the issue was referred

- The date, time and place of the report

- Any additional pertinent information such as actions taken, particularly if they were contrary to the advice provided

Communicate WHS issues to the team

There may be times when a WHS issue raised poses an immediate threat to people's health and safety and needs to be reported or acted upon immediately. Examples include fires or other emergencies, fallen power lines or electrical equipment malfunction.

Where issues are not so critical but hazards still exist, everyone still needs to be kept informed. Alerting everyone to a potential or existing hazard following consultation allows people to avoid it where possible or to be aware of it in the meantime. When communicating outcomes, the important thing is that all workers are made aware and that the message is communicated concisely and efficiently. Encourage workers to communicate with each other when hazards are identified.

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

Ways to communicate WHS information
• Face-to-face meetings allow supervisors to communicate more detailed information as well as answer questions anyone may have.
• Information sheets can contain details about a hazard, including the outcome of discussions related to it. They can be attached to doors, walls or machinery where the hazard exists.
• Notices can be posted on the noticeboard for all to see.
• 'Read and sign' documents can be given to all staff members, who must initial them after reading.
• Group emails can be used and include a reader confirmation, so the supervisor can be sure all members have opened the email.
• Public-address systems, if available, allow for the rapid and wide dissemination of information and are useful to alert all staff of an immediate or urgent hazard.

Example
Encourage work team participation in consultative activities

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

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

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

Practice Task 8

Question 1

List two reasons why it is important to encourage participation in WHS activities.

Question 2

Match each of the following to either a consultation method or a WHS issue.

Consultation method	Changes to policies, work practices and procedures
WHS issue	Making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the health and safety of workers
Consultation method	Risk control
WHS issue	Appointing HSRs and providing them with reasonable access to staff during working hours
Consultation method	Involving workers in workplace inspections and/or asking for feedback during workplace inspections
WHS issue	Involving workers in risk assessments and/or asking for feedback during risk assessments

Question 3

Write a brief description of formal WHS consultation and informal WHS consultation.

Question 4

Which of the following statements are WHS consultation record-keeping requirements? Select yes or no for each one.

a. The name of the person making the inquiry or raising the issue	Yes / No
b. A description of any advice given	Yes / No
c. The date of birth of the person making the inquiry	Yes / No
d. The name and position of the party to whom the issue was referred	Yes / No
e. The date, place and time of the report	Yes / No

Question 5

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

3B Report health and safety issues

It is a legal requirement that all health and safety issues are reported in line with legislation and workplace procedures.

The record-keeping requirements specified in state, territory and Commonwealth legislation are designed to facilitate an investigation should an incident occur.

The documentation of hazards, risks, training and incidents provides a history from which an organisation can learn and incorporate continuous improvements. Having thorough and accurately documented WHS records also stands the organisation in good stead should an incident lead to any legal action against a person or the organisation.

Various records are required in relation to WHS under Commonwealth, state and territory legislation, regulations, standards and codes of practice, depending on the industry or sector. Industry associations may also have further requirements under the terms of membership.

It is important to note that there may be specific time limits with respect to lodging some forms and notifications. Certain WHS incident reports must be lodged with the appropriate government agency within a certain period. For example, if there is a fatality, Comcare (the Australian Government WHS regulator) must be notified within 24 hours. Failing to do so may result in prosecution in some circumstances.

WHS legislative reporting requirements relate to:

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

Legislative and workplace requirements

Understanding what to report, who to report to and by when is fundamental in meeting legislative, industry and work requirements.

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

Legislative and workplace requirements
• Comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) in relation to what information is shared and how it is stored.
• Comply with WHS legislation with respect to correct reporting of serious incidents and injuries.
• Use appropriate forms according to WHS legislation when making a report.
• Ensure accuracy and completion of reports.
• Complete documents according to organisational policies and procedures.

Accuracy and timeliness

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

- the correct form or record has been completed

- all forms are fully completed and signed

- the information is accurate in terms of content, spelling and grammar (especially the spelling of people's names and accuracy of dates and times)

- any attachments have been completed correctly and are attached

- records are completed within specified timelines (usually as soon as possible after an incident) and forwarded to the relevant person or agency.

Report processes and evaluation

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

Report on progress action plans
A WHS action plan describes how and in what time frame the identified WHS issues will be addressed. In other words an action plan is the 'how and when' with respect to implementing control measures. Action plans are generally straightforward and, in most cases, simply constitute a few columns at the end of a hazard identification form. Plans should be followed, with progress updates given to management and all relevant staff at regular intervals. For example, is the plan being followed and implemented according to the timelines? Have any difficulties been identified with the plan? Does the plan need to be revised? At times, the implementation of WHS action plans can be stalled by the appearance or identification of new or unexpected hazards that must also be dealt with. An action plan template can be found at: aspirelr.link/sw-nsw-whs-action-plan
Evaluate reporting process
Simply identifying a hazard and reporting it is not sufficient. Reporting procedures should be regularly reviewed, and any reported hazards should be logged in the hazard register for the purpose of identifying risk control measures. Hazard reporting procedures can be evaluated by following up on reports made by the team and checking whether recently reported hazards have been registered and acted on appropriately.

Hazard, incident and non-compliance reporting processes

While knowing how to identify WHS issues and hazards is fundamental, understanding how to report and document these is equally important.

Hazards, incidents and instances of non-compliance can be identified and reported using the following processes.

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

Maintenance	If an identified hazard is the result of faulty machinery, generally a maintenance request or report is required. For example, a faulty refrigerator in the kitchen may not present an immediate problem but could lead to food going bad if not attended to. The report should highlight the fact that a fridge is not cooling properly, which may lead to food poisoning. If your organisation does not provide maintenance requests or reports, those reporting should be encouraged to complete a hazard report to ensure the problem is recorded and reported adequately.
Inspections	Hazards may also be identified as a result of a daily inspection, a safety audit, an internal (annual) audit, an investigation or a special inspection of a new area or piece of equipment. Often inspections require the use of a specific checklist to ensure that all areas are adequately assessed. These checklists can highlight previously unidentified hazards, which must then be reported on completion of the inspection in the form of a written report and in conjunction with the inspection checklist.
Incident reports	An incident report should be completed following an incident that has affected or may affect a person's safety. This includes a near-miss situation in which a person was nearly injured or exposed to danger so that the hazard can be removed. Incident reports include a detailed description of what happened and where, the hazard that was identified, who was involved, any injuries sustained and any treatment given. An incident report should be completed as soon as possible after an incident or near miss to ensure the hazard is removed.
Non-compliance	If a worker does not comply with work procedures, they may be putting themselves and others at risk of injury or illness, thus introducing a new hazard to an otherwise controlled risk. Non-compliance may also occur because procedures are inadequate, which should then prompt a review. Any occurrences of non-compliance should be reported verbally or in writing to your manager and contain a description of exactly what you saw and any actions you took.

SafeWork NSW has a range of report templates available:

aspirelr.link/sw-nsw-reporting-template

Example

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

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

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

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

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

Practice Task 9

Question 1

List three examples of legislative requirements and workplace procedures you should comply with when making WHS reports.

Question 2

Match each report to its correct description of when it should be used.

Hazard report	Should be completed as a result of a daily inspection, a safety audit, an internal (annual) audit, an investigation or a special inspection of a new area or piece of equipment
Maintenance report	Should be completed after an incident has occurred that has affected or may affect a person's safety
Inspection report	Should be completed when an identified hazard is the result of faulty machinery
Incident report	Should be completed if procedures are inadequate, which should then prompt a review
Non-compliance report	Should be completed when there are immediate safety issues

Question 3

Which of the following statements relate to accuracy and timeliness when developing WHS reports? Tick all that apply.

❑ Checking that the correct form or record has been completed

❑ Checking that any attachments have been completed correctly and are attached

❑ Checking that records are completed within specified time lines and forwarded to the relevant person or agency

❑ Checking the rosters of employees when the issue occurred

❑ Checking that forms are fully completed and signed

3C Encourage team members to contribute to WHS

All workers and volunteers within an organisation have a responsibility to contribute to a safe work environment.

Workers require an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of their designated HSR and HSC. By understanding the roles and responsibilities of these entities, all personnel can then access the information and resources they provide to assist in maintaining a safe workplace.

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

Ensure workers follow WHS policies and procedures

WHS processes in the workplace function best when everyone works together to look after one another.

Ensuring that your colleagues are wearing disposable gloves when attending a person with an open wound or that they wash their hands after blowing their nose helps to maintain a work environment that is free of incidents and illness. Consider the following.

Avoid shortcuts	Some people may take a shortcut to complete their tasks faster; for example, a worker may decide it is quicker to assist a person with toileting activities without wearing disposable gloves. This, however, puts the worker at risk of contracting an illness such as gastroenteritis, which can then be passed on to others.
Follow procedures	It cannot be stressed enough that practices, policies and procedures related to WHS must be followed at all times, and not doing so is a breach of responsibilities. Processes can be put in place to ensure that everyone knows the correct practices and procedures that are in line with organisational policy.

The two-person rule

When a potentially hazardous task needs to be performed, most safe work practices or procedures stipulate that at least two people must be present – one to undertake

Two-person rule
Control mechanism used to achieve a high level of security by having two people present at all times during critical operations.

the task and the other to observe, guide or assist. The **two-person rule** should be applied when necessary; therefore, resources (such as extra staff) must be available. For example, if there is a heavy piece of equipment in the outdoor area that needs to be moved, the safe work practice would be to have two staff members carefully lift and move the equipment. All workers should be aware of situations in which the two-person rule is applied; for example, when lifting heavy or awkward objects or when closing the premises after dark.

Safety monitors

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

Equipment registers and checklists

Where the work or task is by nature solitary and cannot be observed (e.g. assisting a person with showering), a solution may be to have a safe work register or checklist that the worker signs or initials on completion of the task. There could also be a wall chart or poster above hot water taps reminding workers to ensure the water temperature is not too hot.

A safety equipment register and condition report, to be completed when signing out, can be used to identify when a worker has used specialist or valuable safety equipment (such as hot water thermometers or sterilising equipment) and to monitor the equipment's condition.

Education and workplace culture

Maintaining a safe and healthy workplace involves trusting those with whom you work to adhere to the required practices.

There is a chain of responsibility under WHS legislation for PCBUs and managers to ensure that workers comply with safe working practices.

The following explains the importance of education and culture.

Education	If all members of an organisation are properly trained in the performance of their duties and informed about WHS policies and procedures, they should be able to complete their tasks safely. Education can simply be an information session or team meeting in which a WHS matter is discussed. How these sessions are structured depends on the workplace context and having a workplace culture of acceptance.
Culture	A positive workplace safety culture encourages participation from all members of an organisation by including them in all facets of the WHS process. A positive workplace safety culture is fostered by giving workers a sense of responsibility for WHS processes, which may be achieved by including everyone in all facets of WHS applicable to their work areas.

Regular reviews of overall staff performance (monthly, every two months or quarterly) with respect to WHS can indicate whether employees have complied with or neglected WHS practices in the preceding period. These should then be discussed at team meetings to ensure all workers know what is and is not being achieved in terms of safety practices.

Team WHS training needs

All members of an organisation should be familiar with the laws, regulations, standards and codes of practice that apply to them and must comply with WHS policies, procedures and practices. Communicating information about individual compliance need not involve a formal course of instruction; rather, it may be held as one or a series of information sessions. Consider the following.

Training days	Organisations often institute annual training days at the start of each calendar or financial year. Existing and new workers are trained, the year ahead is previewed, and organisational policies, procedures and practices are explained.
Opportunities	Annual training days present opportunities to reinforce and remind workers about their WHS responsibilities, train them in new or better safe work practices and identify any training needs that can be addressed immediately or in the future.
General needs	Other general training needs may include ensuring that all workers understand evacuation procedures. Workers are shown the correct procedures for safely and efficiently evacuating the building or premises and undertake a mock evacuation.

Address training needs

If a training need does exist, it may be addressed immediately or reported to management (or the HSR) so that training can be arranged for another time. For example, if a new worker does not demonstrate the correct procedure for assisting a person to move from their chair to the bed, this could be addressed immediately

by demonstrating the correct procedure and then having the worker demonstrate the procedure again. You can then follow up a few days later to ensure they are still following the correct procedure. However, if a training need relates to a more serious issue, such as a worker not having a current first-aid certificate, this would require the worker to be trained by an appropriate provider such as St John Ambulance.

All team members are required to undertake a WHS induction, which must cover job-specific WHS information. Managers and supervisors must determine the WHS training required for the workers under their supervision to fill the gap between workers' current knowledge and skills and the training required to satisfy generic, hazard-specific and task-specific competencies.

Here are the steps for determining individual training needs:

Identifying the task to be performed	Identify the tasks that are being performed by group members as well as the existing hazards they are exposed to in their daily duties. For example, if a new assistant has started in an aged care residence, consider their responsibilities, which may include providing support to people, providing food and assisting with personal hygiene tasks.
Considering the hazards related to a task	Consider the hazards related to each task; for example, personal hygiene tasks necessitate the wearing of disposable gloves; assisting a person to move from their chair to their bed necessitates using the correct procedure.
Considering ways to address hazards	Ask the worker if they can confidently address each hazard; that is, perform the duty according to the correct procedure. You can also have the worker demonstrate or explain the procedure to you. Asking someone a question about how they would react or what they might do in certain circumstances can often provide an insight into where a training need exists.

Identify training solutions

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

Sharp implements	• Training need: Working with needles to assist a person with type 1 diabetes • Training solution: Safe handling of medical sharps • Optional training: First-aid training
Chemicals	• Training need: Working in locations where toxic cleaning chemicals are stored • Training solution: Dangerous goods handling • Optional training: Poisons and first-aid training

Encourage ongoing knowledge of WHS practices

People can only contribute to a healthy and safe work environment if they have the skills and knowledge to do so.

All employees should have the WHS policies and procedures of their workplace carefully explained to them and receive adequate training for their job. Staff should individually take steps to maintain and update their knowledge of WHS issues in the workplace to ensure they keep themselves and others safe. The requirements for maintaining and updating knowledge of WHS issues are described here:

Employer requirements	• The legislation places a significant responsibility on employers to ensure workers are adequately trained for the tasks they are required to undertake. • Training in WHS issues ensures that all workers are aware of their responsibilities and is crucial for enabling employees to work safely in a particular workplace. For HSRs, WHS legislation requires that they attend accredited training programs to enable them to effectively carry out their responsibilities. • Currency of knowledge of WHS issues and practices may also extend to ensuring that workers and supervisors are aware of any changes to systems, procedures or equipment that may affect the way in which a task is carried out. Ongoing training should be provided as circumstances change.
Worker requirements	• Ensure staff are aware of and follow your organisation's procedures as they relate to their work role. This includes identifying and reporting hazards, incidents, injuries and near misses, using correct protective clothing and equipment, following emergency response procedures and participating in issue resolution and consultation as required. • In some circumstances, ensuring currency of skills and knowledge may be a mandatory part of a person's job requirements. For example, in community and health services, all support workers may be required to maintain a current first-aid certificate. • Employees can maintain and update their knowledge of WHS issues by attending any required training, reading and applying the information in WHS documentation or workplace bulletins and discussing WHS issues with their supervisor or HSR.

Example
Encourage and assist work team members to contribute to WHS

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

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

Remaining current
As part of his daily routine, Johann scans the newsletter for information related to the running of the centre that may affect his co-workers. Today, Johann notices an update regarding a type of electrical outlet safety plug. During a risk assessment at a Melbourne centre, the safety plug was found to fall out easily after being used a few times, enabling access to the electrical outlet. After checking with the centre, Johann discovers that this type of safety plug is used extensively in the recreation rooms.

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

Practice Task 10

Question 1

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

Question 2

Match each term to the correct requirement of knowledge of WHS practices.

Employers	Helps you maintain and update your knowledge of WHS issues
Providing WHS training	Ensures that all workers are aware of their responsibilities and is crucial for enabling employees to work safely in a particular workplace
Employees	Must ensure workers are adequately trained for the tasks they are required to undertake
Attending WHS training	Must be aware of and follow organisational procedures as they relate to their work role

Summary

- Consultation with a team on WHS issues can take the form of one-to-one or group meetings.

- Supervisors should be available and knowledgeable enough to offer advice on most routine WHS issues faced by their team.

- If you are unsure how to deal with a WHS issue or the issue is beyond your professional knowledge, you should refer to an appropriate person for guidance.

- WHS issues should be dealt with promptly to ensure everyone's safety and according to your organisation's policy and procedures.

- WHS issues can be referred to internal or external personnel.

- Maintain a list of appropriate contacts to refer to or call upon.

- Records of the outcome of the WHS consultation process should be kept and promptly communicated to the team to ensure that everyone is aware of how a situation has been resolved or referred.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Support consultation, cooperation and communication

Part A

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

2. Describe three WHS consultative methods you could use in the workplace.

3. Match each type of report to the relevant scenario.

Hazard report		A worker completes a daily checklist of the dining room area
Maintenance report		A worker finds a tear in the carpet
Inspection report		A supervisor notices a worker not following the correct resident lifting procedures
Incident report		A worker notices that food is going bad in the fridge
Non-compliance report		A worker trips over an electrical cord and falls over, sustaining a knee bruise

4. Which of the following about WHS work processes are correct? Select all that apply.

❑ The two-person rule should be applied when undertaking a potentially hazardous task.

❑ Safety monitors are used to safeguard against workplace theft.

❑ Equipment registers and checklists should be applied when the task is by nature solitary and cannot be observed.

❑ Safety monitors should be applied to ensure colleagues follow correct practices.

❑ The two-person rule can only be used when there are five or more employees on shift.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

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

1. List two processes that Ruby could use to encourage and assist team members to contribute to WHS.

Glossary

Audit

An official systematic examination of something.

Code of practice

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

Consultation

The action of seeking the opinion of others.

Hazard

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

Hazard identification procedures

Process for examining a workplace with the aim of identifying any hazards inherent in the job.

Hierarchy of control

A system used to control risks in the workplace.

Housekeeping

Management of duties involved in running a household.

Infection control

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

Legislation

The written law produced by the government.

Manual task

Task involving the use of your body to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, hold or restrain a person, animal or object.

Nomogram

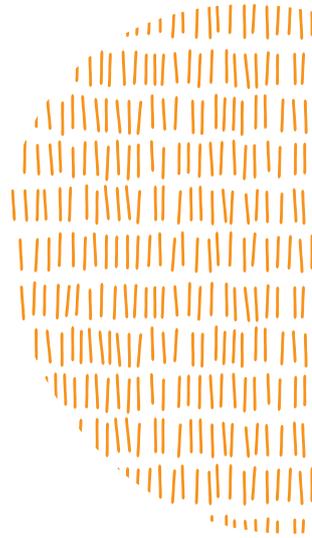A pictorial representation of a complex mathematical formula.

Policy

A course of action proposed by an organisation as a basis for making decisions.

Procedure

An established or official way of doing something.

Right

Legal or moral entitlements that a society creates and that determine what is required, allowed or not allowed.

Risk

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

Risk assessment

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

Risk assessment matrix

Matrix used to work out a risk-rating for a particular hazard.

Standards

In community services, standards are benchmarks or minimum requirements that must be performed in your workplace every day.

Two-person rule

Control mechanism used to achieve a high level of security by having two people present at all times during critical operations.