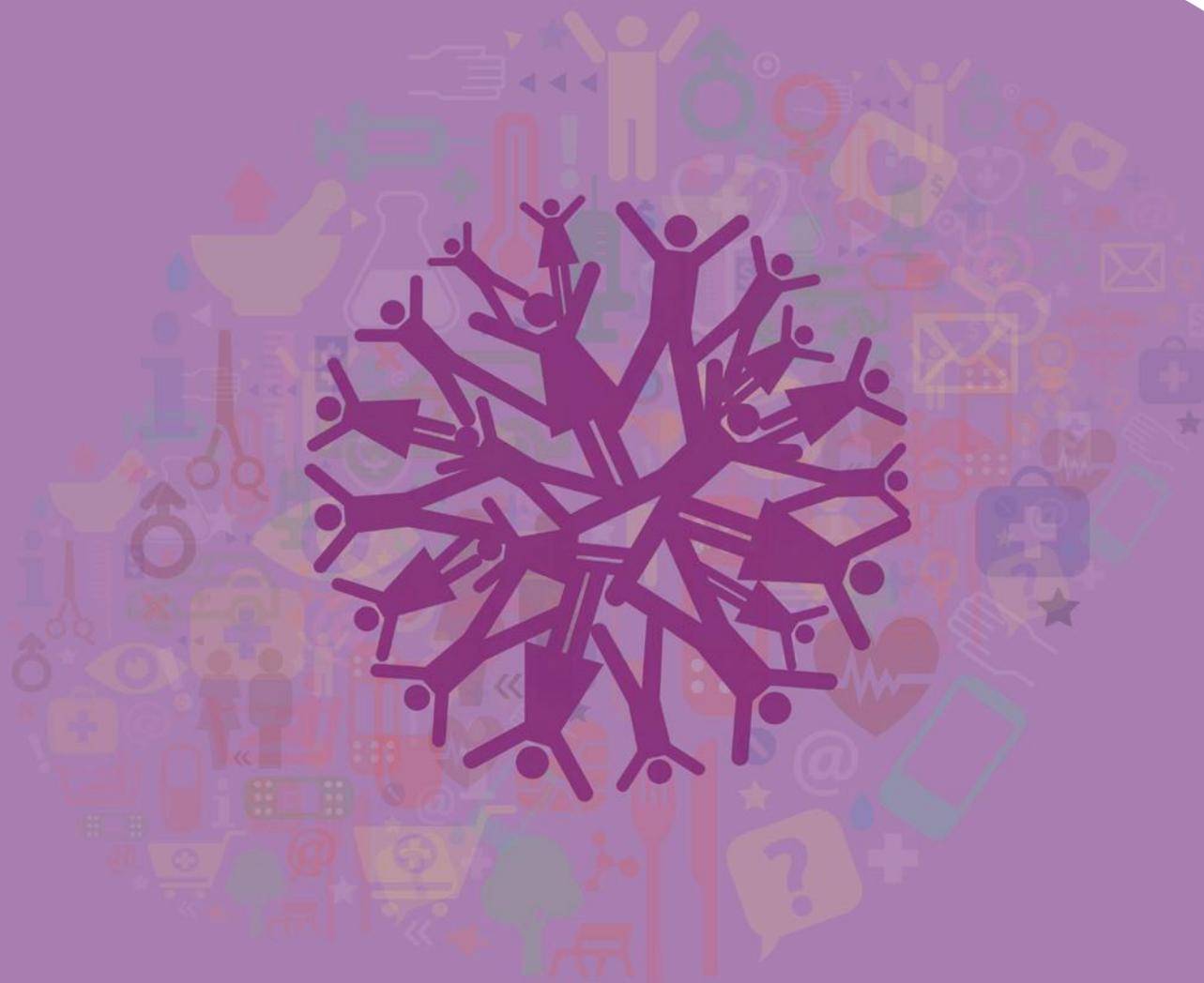


HLTWHS004

Manage work health and safety

Release 2



Learner guide

HLTWHS004

Manage work health and safety

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 1.3



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Version control and modification history

| Version | Release date | Modification |
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| Release 2, version 1.1 | April 2017 | First release |
| Release 2, version 1.2 | August 2017 | Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program |
| Release 2, version 1.3 | December 2018 | Minor corrections as part of our continuous improvement program |

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *HLTWHS004 Manage work health and safety*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

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

| Feature of the learner guide | How you can use each feature |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Learning content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake. |
| Examples and case studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks and learning checkpoints. ▶ Case studies highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations. |
| Practice tasks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete. |
| Video clips | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help  |
| Summary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic. |
| Learning checkpoints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt. |

Foundation skills

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

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

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

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

What do you already know?

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

| Topic | Key outcomes | Rate your confidence in each section |
|--|---|--|
| Topic 1 Establish work health and safety practices | 1A Access and interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and workplace policies and procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1B Develop procedures for hazard identification, assessment and risk control | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1C Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures to support legislative and regulatory compliance | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 1D Identify requirements for expert WHS advice, and request this advice as required | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| Topic 2 Facilitate consultation, cooperation and communication | 2A Develop and provide activities to provide WHS advice | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2B Monitor processes for ensuring that workers can contribute feedback on WHS issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2C Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |

| Topic | Key outcomes | Rate your confidence in each section |
|--|---|--|
| | 2D Develop and implement processes to ensure documentation of responsibilities, duties and accountabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 2E Implement and monitor training programs to ensure WHS training requirements are addressed | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| Topic 3 Monitor compliance with risk control processes | 3A Develop WHS record-keeping policies and procedures and provide information to workers | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 3B Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes to meet legislative requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 3C Evaluate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures for compliance with legislative requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| Topic 4 Evaluate and maintain WHS | 4A Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 4B Develop a WHS action plan taking account of priorities and training needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 4C Identify potential barriers to improvement | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |
| | 4D Establish processes to monitor achievement against the plan and update plan as required | <input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident |



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

1A Access and interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and workplace policies and procedures

1B Develop procedures for hazard identification, assessment and risk control

1C Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures to support legislative and regulatory compliance

1D Identify requirements for expert WHS advice, and request as required

Establish work health and safety practices

Work health and safety (WHS) is concerned with the health and safety of all people in the workplace. The main objective of WHS is to prevent injury or harm in the workplace. Many workplaces have formal processes, such as workplace inspections, incident reporting and health and safety committees (HSCs). The information in this topic will prepare you to participate in the WHS processes in your workplace.

1A Access and interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and workplace policies and procedures

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

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



Each state and territory has a regulatory body responsible for enabling and enforcing compliance with the WHS regulation. You should regularly visit your regulator's website to locate to the most up-to-date version of the Act, Regulation, Code of Practice and Industry Guideline.

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). The WHS legislation is made up of the model WHS Act, Regulations, Codes of Practice and a national compliance and enforcement policy. This model legislation was developed by the Commonwealth government to harmonise work health and safety laws across Australia. For the Act to be legally binding, it must be passed by the Parliament in each state and territory. At this time, not all Australian states and territories have implemented harmonised WHS laws based on this new Act.

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

- ▶ protect the health and safety of workers
- ▶ improve safety outcomes in the workplaces
- ▶ reduce compliance costs for business
- ▶ improve efficiency for regulatory agencies.

Role of regulators

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



- ▶ conducting workplace investigations, issuing notices for noncompliance, conducting necessary legal proceedings and prosecutions
- ▶ supporting and promoting work health and safety education and training
- ▶ providing work health and safety advice to duty holders and the community
- ▶ collecting, analysing and reporting data on the operation and effectiveness of the model Work Health and Safety Act
- ▶ supporting the relevant Minister by providing recommendations and advising on the operation and effectiveness of the model Work Health and Safety Act.

The state regulators

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

The national law is *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth). The Commonwealth health and safety regulator is Comcare, which can be accessed at: <http://aspirelr.link/comcare>

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Australian Capital Territory | <p><i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (ACT)</p> <p>The regulator for the Australian Capital Territory is WorkSafe ACT.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-act</p> |
| New South Wales | <p><i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (NSW)</p> <p>The regulator for New South Wales is SafeWork NSW.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/safework-nsw</p> |
| Northern Territory | <p><i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (NT)</p> <p>The regulator for the Northern Territory is NT WorkSafe.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-nt</p> |
| Queensland | <p><i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (Qld)</p> <p>The regulator for Queensland is Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-qld</p> |
| South Australia | <p><i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012</i> (SA)</p> <p>The regulator for South Australia is SafeWork SA.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/safework-sa</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Tasmania | <p><i>Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (Tas.)</i></p> <p>The regulator for Tasmania is WorkSafe Tasmania.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-tas</p> |
| Victoria | <p><i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic.)</i></p> <p>The regulator for Victoria is WorkSafe Victoria.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-vic</p> |
| Western Australia | <p><i>Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA)</i></p> <p>The regulator for Western Australia is WorkSafe WA.</p> <p>▶ http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-wa</p> |

Access legislation

WHS legislation is designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of all people in the workplace. You need to be aware of, and know how to access, current WHS legislation and other WHS documentation relevant to the community services environment. This documentation includes regulations, codes of practice and your organisation’s health and safety policies and procedures.

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

Examples of regulator resources can be found at the following websites:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/worksafe-tas-resources>
- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/safework-nsw-resources>

Regulatory requirements

The model WHS Regulations specify the minimum mandatory WHS requirements to help you comply with your duties under the WHS Act. It is important for you to understand what these requirements mean to you and your workplace so that you do not accidentally breach your duty of care.

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

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

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

There are specific regulatory requirements related to:

- ▶ high risk work
- ▶ major hazard facilities
- ▶ hazardous chemicals
- ▶ general diving work
- ▶ electrical equipment and installation
- ▶ confined spaces
- ▶ plant
- ▶ lead, asbestos and airborne contaminants.

Regulatory requirements in community services

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

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

- ▶ participation and representation, including the process for electing the health and safety representative
- ▶ risk management processes
- ▶ incident notification
- ▶ regulation exemptions
- ▶ duties in high risk areas and hazardous manual tasks.

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



Codes of practice

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

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

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

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

Example model codes of practice

- ▶ Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination
- ▶ First Aid in the Workplace
- ▶ Hazardous Manual Tasks

General duty requirements

General duty requirements apply to everyone working in community services. General duty refers to duties that the WHS Act places upon people to ensure their own safety at work, the safety of others at the workplace and the safety of anyone else who might be injured as a result of that work. These duties are assigned to those who are in a position to control the origin of the risk and must be carried out with due diligence, otherwise known as reasonable care.

The aim of these general duties is to prevent any death, injury or illness that may result from activities at that workplace.

General duties can be shared but never transferred, such as the duty requirement for raising WHS issues. Your community workplace should have a process for raising issues such as identified hazards, incidents and injuries to management. It is the duty of all workers to report these issues either directly to management or through a health and safety representative (HSR) where appropriate. The reporting line usually follows the governance line of the workplace and an issue will be raised up through the line management; for example, through the worker, HSR, the manager and the PCBU.

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

General duties

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

Code of conduct

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

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

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

Workplace codes of conduct might include:

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

Key responsibilities: PCBU

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



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

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

Key responsibilities: HSR

A health and safety representative (HSR) is a worker that has been elected to represent a designated work group. The HSR has key responsibilities to advocate for the WHS rights of the workers, communicate with the workers and PCBU and monitor the PCBU's compliance with the WHS legislation. The HSR may also request that the PCBU establishes a health and safety committee (HSC).



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

More detailed information on roles and responsibilities can be found at:
<http://aspirelr.link/whs-roles-and-responsibilities>

Rights and responsibilities of PCBUs

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

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

Responsibilities of the PCBU include, but are not limited to, the provision of:

- ▶ a safe work environment and safe systems of work
- ▶ workplace monitoring
- ▶ safe plant and structures
- ▶ safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances
- ▶ provision of facilities for the workers' welfare
- ▶ information, training, instruction and supervision.

Duty of care

Duty of care describes the legal obligation that individuals and organisations have to anticipate and act on possible causes of injury and illness that may exist in their work environment, or as a result of their actions. A person or organisation must do everything they can to remove or minimise the possible cause of harm.

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



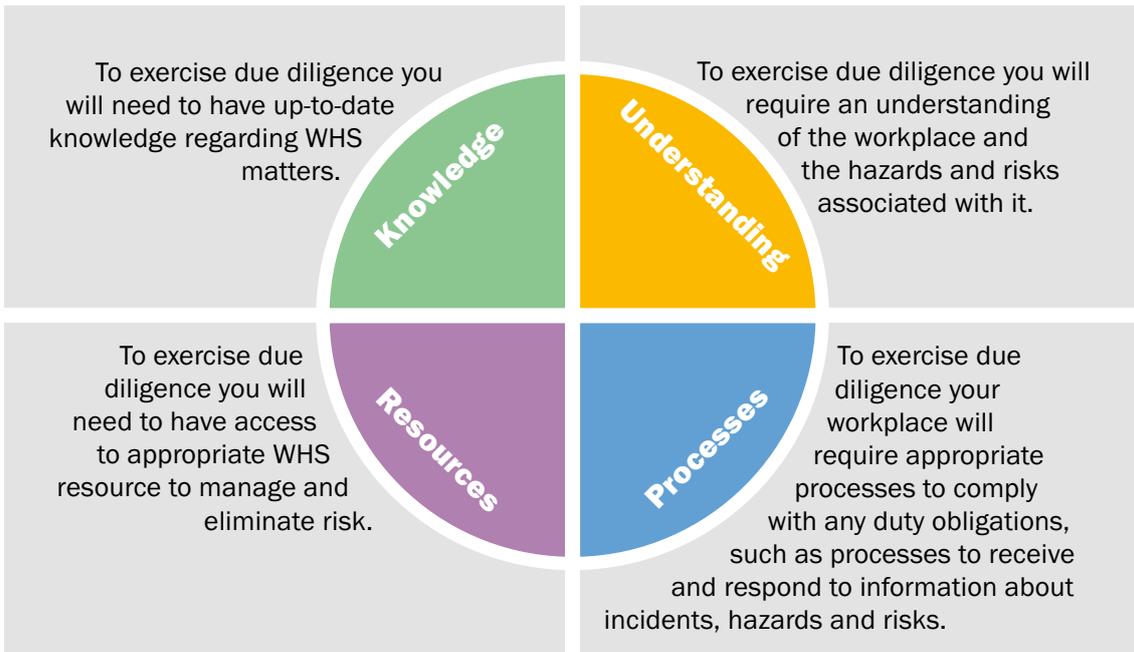
Due diligence

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

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

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

Here are some reasonable components that you must consider to follow due diligence.



Workplace duty holders

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



There are four main classifications of duty holders:

- ▶ PCBUs
- ▶ officers
- ▶ workers
- ▶ others (such as visitors and customers).

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

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

Workplace policies and procedures

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

A WHS policy is a written statement of how your workplace is committed to achieving a safe and healthy workplace. These policies should be developed in consultation with workers and clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of management and workers to achieve compliance with WHS legislation.

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

Workplace policies and procedures

- ▶ Hazard management
- ▶ Manual handling of people and objects
- ▶ Hazardous waste
- ▶ Infection control
- ▶ Incident reporting and investigation

Example

Access and interpret WHS legislation, regulations, code of conduct and workplace policies and procedures

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

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

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

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



Practice task 1

1. What are four sources that you can review to learn more about your role in work health and safety management?

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2. What are the responsibilities of a PCBU?

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3. What are some general duty requirements that you can perform to keep your workplace safe?

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Click to complete Practice task 1

1B Develop procedures for hazard identification, assessment and risk control

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

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

All workplaces are different – hazards present in one community services environment may not be present in another. Developing procedures for hazard identification, assessment and control are an important and mandatory requirement under WHS legislation.



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

Principles of hazard and risk management

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

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

| Risk management process |
|--------------------------------|
| Identify hazards. |
| Assess risks. |
| Control risks. |
| Review control measures. |

Hazard identification

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

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

Aspects of work that contribute to hazards include:

- ▶ the physical work environment
- ▶ the work tasks and how they are performed
- ▶ the equipment, materials and substances used.

How to identify hazards

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

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

Your workplace hazard identification plan may include:

- ▶ analysing injury and illness records
- ▶ analysing work processes
- ▶ collecting information on trends and developments in workplace health and safety
- ▶ consulting with employees, supervisors, HSRs and health and safety committee members
- ▶ investigating workplace incidents and near-miss reports
- ▶ performing inspections or safety audits
- ▶ reviewing new work practices or equipment introduced into the workplace.

Develop procedures for hazard identification

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

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

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

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

Infection control

- ▶ Conduct a workplace audit to check compliance with hand hygiene.

Manual handling

- ▶ Conduct a workplace manual handling task inspection.

Slips and trips

- ▶ Investigate workplace incidents and near-miss reports.

Stress

- ▶ Collect information on stress-related trends.

Principles of risk assessment

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

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

Here are the steps involved in the risk assessment process.

Risk assessment process

Evaluate the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring and the likely severity of that injury or illness.

Review health and safety information relevant to the hazard, such as incident reports, safety data sheets, results of workplace monitoring and inspections, and supplier information.

Identify factors that contribute to the risk such as the physical layout of the workplace, the knowledge, skills and experience of workers, and existing work practices.

Identify actions necessary to eliminate or control the risk.

Complete any relevant records.

Hierarchy of control

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

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

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

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <p>Level 1 control</p> | <p>Elimination</p> <p>Eliminating the risk at its source should always be the first choice. The source of the risk is the hazard, so this usually means removing hazardous material or abandoning hazardous work practices.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clean up a spill straight away to avoid anyone else slipping and falling over and hurting themselves. ▶ Stop using toxic substances that are not essential to the work. ▶ Repair or replace equipment. |
| <p>Level 2 controls</p> | <p>Substitution</p> <p>If elimination is not practicable, substitute the hazard with something of a lesser risk. This is also likely to be a less expensive measure to implement.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use less-hazardous chemical materials. ▶ Reduce the size of objects that need to be lifted. ▶ Break a task down into smaller chunks so there is not as much risk; for example, share a task with another person. <p>Isolation</p> <p>This involves physically separating the source of harm from people by distance or by using barriers.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Install guard rails around exposed edges and holes in floors. ▶ Use remote control systems to operate machinery. ▶ Store chemicals in a fume cabinet. <p>Engineering controls</p> <p>The next best possible solution is to implement engineering controls that involve changing equipment or tools.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide a trolley to move heavy loads. ▶ Use a hoist rather than trying to lift a consumer from the floor. ▶ Install ventilation to remove chemical fumes. ▶ Change the layout of work levels to minimise bending and twisting during manual handling. |

Level 3 controls

Administrative controls

This relates to work procedures and work organisation.

For example:

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

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Wearing and using personal protective clothing or equipment is the least effective hierarchy of control measure. The use of personal protective clothing and equipment can be a hazard if it restricts movement, sight or hearing, and is the last option for risk control.

Organisations must:

- ▶ provide appropriate protective clothing and equipment
- ▶ ensure the clothing fits well and is comfortable under work conditions
- ▶ ensure people use properly and when necessary
- ▶ train workers in why the clothing is necessary
- ▶ teach workers how to wear the right protective equipment for the task; for example, wearing waterproof foot protection when showering consumers will help you avoid having wet footwear, so you will avoid or minimise the risk of fungal infection and the risk of slipping and injuring yourself.

Risk analysis

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

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

1. What are the possible outcomes?
2. How likely is it that those outcomes will occur?
3. If those outcomes occur, what are the possible consequences?



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

Risk assessment matrix

A risk assessment matrix is a tool that allows you to evaluate the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring due to a hazard, and the likely severity of that potential injury or illness.

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

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

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

Develop procedures for assessment and control of risks

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

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

Your risk workplace assessment and control procedure should clearly outline:

- ▶ the methods for assessing risk
- ▶ risk classifications and priorities
- ▶ implementation of the hierarchy of control
- ▶ individual roles and responsibilities
- ▶ required communication, consultation, documentation and reporting
- ▶ recommendations concerning how and when to review the outcomes of the risk management process.

Manual handling

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

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

- ▶ Repetitive force or movement
- ▶ High force or heavy load
- ▶ Sustained or awkward postures
- ▶ Vibration

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

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



Example

Develop procedures for hazard identification, assessment and risk control

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

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

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

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

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



Practice task 2

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

Case study

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

1. What are some sources and methods that Amelia could use to identify hazards?

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2. What are the risk management steps that Amelia should take once she has identified potential workplace hazards?

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Click to complete Practice task 2

1C Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures to support legislative and regulatory compliance

The community services environment is always changing. Legislation, work systems, processes, technology, equipment, machinery and tools are constantly changing and being updated. Therefore, regular review of the hazard identification, risk assessment and control procedures is necessary to comply with WHS legislation and regulatory requirements. Monitoring controls and hazard-specific procedures enables early identification of new hazards and ensures that controls are maintained or adjusted in a timely manner to effectively manage workplace risk.



Monitor risk control and hazard-specific procedures

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

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

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

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

Common workplace hazards include:

- ▶ manual tasks
- ▶ gravity
- ▶ electricity
- ▶ equipment and machinery
- ▶ hazardous chemicals
- ▶ extreme temperatures
- ▶ noise
- ▶ radiation
- ▶ biological hazards
- ▶ psychosocial hazards.

Monitor procedures for compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements

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



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

Strategies for minimising hazards

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

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

Risk minimisation strategies

Procedures

Ensure procedures have clear roles, responsibilities and resources to enable workers to be accountable for their own health and safety and that of others.

Review

Regularly review and update work procedures in consultation with workers and representatives.

Update

Make sure hazard information sheets are current and the technology and equipment you are using complies with best practice standards.

Maintenance

Regularly inspect, test and maintain plant and equipment.

Training

Provide up to date training and insure staff have appropriate competencies to complete their work.

Example

Monitor risk controls and hazard-specific procedures

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

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

Gerald also consults with the people who are using the procedure and gets very positive feedback.

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



Practice task 3

1. Why is it important to monitor controls and hazard-specific procedures?

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2. What are some strategies to minimise hazards in the workplace?

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Click to complete Practice task 3

1D Identify requirements for expert WHS advice, and request as required

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

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

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

The appointed regulatory body can also act as a useful workplace support service depending on the nature of the WHS expertise required. It is recommended that you regularly visit the website of your state or territory regulator to keep up-to-date on the available WHS tools and resources.



Roles and requirements for WHS specialist advice

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

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

Sources of expert advice may include:

- ▶ medical specialists
- ▶ occupational hygienists and infection control specialists
- ▶ ergonomists
- ▶ engineers
- ▶ WHS inspectors and auditors
- ▶ injury management coordinators.

Example

Identify requirements for expert WHS advice, and request as required

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

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

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

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



Practice task 4

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

Case study

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

1. What are Malcolm’s rights as HSR regarding expert advice?

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2. What type of expert assistance might the consultant provide to help Malcolm manage this hazard?

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Click to complete Practice task 4

Summary

1. Work health and safety (WHS) is concerned with the health and safety of all people in the workplace. The main objective of WHS is to prevent injury or harm in the workplace.
2. The WHS legislation is made up of the model WHS Act, Regulations, Codes of Practice and a national compliance and enforcement policy. Each state and territory has a regulator to enforce legislation in their area.
3. Regularly accessing WHS information is essential to keeping policies, procedures and work practices in compliance with the legislation requirements. State or territory regulators provide valuable resources that can help you to comply with WHS laws.
4. Duty of care describes the legal obligation that individuals and organisations have to anticipate and act on possible causes of injury and illness that may exist in their work environment or as a result of their actions. A person or organisation must do everything they can to remove or minimise the possible cause of harm.
5. Everyone in the community services environment, including visitors, workers, officers and PCBUs, have duties under WHS legislation. The PCBUs and their officers have a higher level of responsibility that covers all aspects of the workplace. All workers have a duty to raise issues related to hazards, incident and injuries.
6. Your WHS policy is a written statement of how your workplace is committed to achieving a safe and healthy workplace. These policies should be developed in consultation with workers, should clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of management and workers and should be monitored regularly to ensure compliance with WHS legislation.
7. Hazard identification, risk assessment and risk management are performed by all duty holders and are essential to keeping the workplace safe. At each stage of the process, a high level of risk analysis, consultation and documentation is required.
8. The PCBU has a responsibility, where reasonably practicable, to either employ or engage a suitably qualified person to provide expert WHS advice to the HSC, HSR and workers as required.

Learning checkpoint 1

Establish work health and safety practices

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in establishing work health and safety practices to keep the workplace safe.

Part A

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

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

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3. What are the four types of duty holders under the model WHS act?

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4. What are some general duties that duty holders may have?

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

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6. For whom does a PCBU have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace?

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7. What are the roles of the state and territory regulators?

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Part B

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

Case study

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

Jill is the health and safety representative (HSR) for the nurses and Tim is the HSR for the combined allied health services.

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

1. What model WHS legislation and other supporting guidelines should the HCHC access in order to comply with the law?

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2. Write three examples of model Codes of Practice that may be applied to Miyuki's workplace.

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3. What are some sources that Miyuki can use to access WHS information?

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4. What WHS policies might the HCHC have to ensure compliance with WHS legislation?

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5. What procedures might the HCHC have regarding hazards and risks in the workplace?

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6. What are some methods that Jill could use to identify hazards in the workplace?

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7. What information should Miyuki find in the HCHC's hazard identification procedure?

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8. What is the correct reporting line that Miyuki should follow to raise issues related to hazards, incidents and injuries?

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9. What are the steps that Tim and Jill should follow when conducting a risk assessment?

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10. What are the levels of the hierarchy of control that Tim and Jill could implement to manage risks in their workplace?

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11. What information should Jill and Tim find in the risk assessment and control procedure?

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12. What are some things that Rhonda should consider when monitoring risk controls and hazard-specific procedures?

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13. When might Jacob need to engage the services of a suitably qualified professional to give expert WHS advice?

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Develop and provide activities to provide WHS advice**
- 2B Monitor processes for ensuring that workers can contribute feedback on WHS issues**
- 2C Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers**
- 2D Develop and implement processes to ensure documentation of responsibilities, duties and accountabilities**
- 2E Implement and monitor training programs to ensure WHS training requirements are addressed**

Facilitate consultation, cooperation and communication

The work health and safety (WHS) legislation requires consultation, cooperation and communication in every work health and safety process, including the provision of activities to distribute information, feedback channels, documentation processes and WHS-related training processes.

Consultation can be a formative process or as simple as regularly talking with workers. Consultation can also be undertaken through health and safety representatives (HSRs) and a health and safety committee (HSC); however, the legislation does not require these communication mechanisms unless a request for an HSR is made by a worker or a request is made by the HSR or five or more workers for a HSC.

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

2A Develop and provide activities to provide WHS advice

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

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

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

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

- ▶ identifying hazards, assessing risks and implementing controls
- ▶ changes to work practices and systems
- ▶ designing, implementing, reviewing and updating policies.

Consultative activities

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

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

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

Consultation about WHS issues may take place through:

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

Example

Develop and provide activities to provide WHS advice

Melinda is the PCBU of a large community service. Melinda has noticed that there has been very poor compliance with the instructions she emailed out in a memo last week.

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

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

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



Practice task 5

1. What information and decisions must a PCBU in the community services environment consult with their workers about?

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2. What are some consultation activities that your workplace can use to distribute important work health and safety information in the workplace?

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3. Why is it important in the community services environment to develop and implement consultative activities?

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Click to complete Practice task 5

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

Workers have a duty of care to participate in work health and safety issues by contributing to consultative processes. It is therefore important that processes exist within a workplace to enable workers to provide valuable feedback.

Processes for consultation should be monitored to ensure that the method for collecting feedback meets the WHS and Act and Regulation requirements, and is the most appropriate and effective way to gather this information. When reviewing feedback processes, it is important to consider the needs of the workers and ensure the feedback process includes a safe and supportive forum where opinions can be shared without fear and criticism.



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

Monitoring processes

Effective communication is highly unique to the individual needs of a work group. If a worker is unable to access information or does not feel comfortable providing feedback then they may not participate in the consultation process.

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

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



Ways of monitoring processes

When monitoring consultation processes it is important to identify whether or not the communication method ensures information is accessed in a reasonable time frame. For example, placing a memo on a staff room noticeboard will only ensure that it is seen by staff frequenting the staff room. Similarly, emailing the memo will only ensure that it is seen by those with regular access to a computer. Ensuring the process often includes two or more communication methods, which will increase the information distribution and feedback.

Important considerations for monitoring consultation processes are identified below.

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

Ensure participation

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

One useful method for increasing participation in WHS matters in the workplace is to write consultation requirements into workplace contracts, thereby outlining the expectation for workers to participate in the workplace and creating the contractual requirement to enforce participation.

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

Ways to provide workers with participation opportunities:

- ▶ Ensure consultation takes place during a suitable time within normal work hours.
- ▶ Ensure consultation occurs regularly during workplace meetings.
- ▶ Allow for different methods to provide feedback.

Example

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

Jason works for a community services environment within the team responsible for developing and updating WHS procedures. The infection control procedure is due to be updated and requires several changes to comply with the industry standards.

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

After two weeks, Jason has only received two emails providing the feedback he requested, so he discusses the issue with his manager Greg.

Greg explains to Jason that one email is probably not considered a ‘reasonable opportunity’ to participate in the process and gives John permission to run a few small information sessions to discuss the changes with staff members. Greg also recommends that John allows for an anonymous feedback form to be completed at the end of each session.

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



Practice task 6

1. Why is it important in the community services environment to monitor feedback processes?

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2. What are some methods that your workplace could use to ensure that workers participate in WHS consultative processes?

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Click to complete Practice task 6

2C Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers

By law, consultation with duty holders does not have to be documented unless it is specifically required under the WHS Regulations regarding high risk hazards. However, consultation records are a useful source of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the consultation requirements within the WHS legislation.

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

Examples of consultation records may include:

- ▶ training records
- ▶ meeting minutes, agendas and action lists
- ▶ emails, memos and information sheets
- ▶ records relating to the HSR election process and the establishment and constitution of the HSC.

Document consultation outcomes

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

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

What consultation outcome reports should document

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

Workplace communication

Workplace communication is the exchange of verbal and nonverbal information from one person to another. Effective communication is an important aspect of work health and safety.

Effective communication increases the efficiency and productivity of a workplace and is also an important aspect of minimising and resolving disputes.

Some important factors that influence workplace communication are outlined below.

Method

- ▶ Information should be simple and clear and may be delivered by written information, visual demonstrations and audible instructions.

Content

- ▶ The amount of information provided should be relevant, engaging and able to be understood by the audience.

Frequency

- ▶ Depending on the nature of the content, the information may need to be delivered only once or many times over to achieve the desired result.

Skills

- ▶ Getting a message across depends on the skills of the people giving and receiving the information. It is therefore important to consider literacy levels and learning styles when communicating.

Example

Document outcomes of consultation and communicate to workers

Eleanor is responsible for coordinating the trial of a new piece of equipment in her workplace and has been asked by her manager Adam to document the consultation process and outcomes.

Eleanor arranges for an equipment demonstration and information session and invites all of the people that may be affected by the change.

Eleanor keeps a record of everyone who attended the training and, at the end of the equipment demonstration, Eleanor hands out feedback forms and requests that the forms be returned via the comment box in the staff room within a fortnight. At the end of the fortnight Eleanor also emails everyone involved an electronic survey asking for specific information around the storage, access, ease of use and whether the equipment meets the need of the workers.

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



Practice task 7

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

Case study

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

1. What consultation records could Fung keep during this process as evidence that he has complied with his legislative duty to consult with workers?

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2. What are some factors that will influence how Fung communicates with his workers regarding this process?

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3. What information should Fung record and then circulate to his workers at the end of the process?

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Click to complete Practice task 7

2D Develop and implement processes to ensure documentation of responsibilities, duties and accountabilities

The WHS Act and Regulations require that eliminating hazards and controlling risk are taken into account as early as possible when planning or designing products, structures, machinery, equipment or processes. A key aspect of this safe design process is ensuring that processes are developed and implemented to document the responsibilities, duties and accountabilities of the workers involved.

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

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

Principles of safe design processes

Assigning responsibilities, duties and accountability to people who make decisions affecting the design process

Considering hazards and risks throughout the life cycle of the product or process

Applying hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control processes to the design

Ensuring that the people who are in charge of the design have the required skills and competencies

Using effective communication and documentation throughout the design process

Example

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

Sherrie works in a small team of people who are developing a procedure for equipment storage in their workplace. Unfortunately at the last team meeting two team members had completed work on the same thing without talking to the rest of the group. Not only had time been wasted by duplicating work, but the work produced did not take into account important safety considerations.



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

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

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

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



Practice task 8

1. What is safe design and when should it be used in the community services environment?

2. What are the principles of safe design processes that should be considered when developing and implementing workplace processes?

Click to complete Practice task 8

2E Implement and monitor training programs to ensure WHS training requirements are addressed

In your community services environment the PCBU has a duty of care to provide information, training and instruction to the workers so that they can safely carry out their work without risk to their health. All work health and safety training should cover the type of work, associated hazards and risks and the safety measures, such as use of PPE and emergency procedures, to manage workplace risk.

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



Training obligations

To ensure safe work practices are understood and followed, PCBUs have a duty of care to induct, train, supervise and provide instruction to workers so they can do their jobs safely. This applies to all workers including employees, casuals, labour hire, contractors and volunteers. To contribute to compliance with WHS legislation in the community services environment you work in, you may be required to provide workers, contractors, visitors or suppliers with information about common hazards in the workplace and how they should be managed.

There are additional specialised training requirements for high risk work, such as working in confined spaces, construction work, diving work and working with or near asbestos.

Types of workplace training may include:

- ▶ induction training
- ▶ task-specific training
- ▶ personal protective equipment (PPE) training
- ▶ emergency procedure training.

Induction training

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

- ▶ The health and safety procedures and policies required for specific tasks, such as manuals and safety data sheets
- ▶ Evacuation and other emergency procedures
- ▶ Hazards that workers may be exposed to while working
- ▶ Using, maintaining and storing PPE
- ▶ Hazard reporting and accident/incident/injury reporting procedures
- ▶ The organisation's alcohol and drug policy
- ▶ The organisation's relevant human resource policies such as the code of conduct, communication and dispute resolution policy



Task-specific training

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

Task-specific training may include how to:

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

Personal protective equipment training

You may be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) in the community services environment where you are working. PPE is clothing and equipment designed to protect workers from exposure to sources of harm. If your workplace supplies PPE, then you must use it by law.

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

Examples of PPE used in the community services environment are shown below.

PPE used in the community services environment

- ▶ Hygienic disposable gloves
- ▶ Hygienic disposable overalls
- ▶ Hygienic disposable shoe covers
- ▶ Hygienic disposable face mask
- ▶ Hygienic protective eyewear

Emergency procedure training

By law, the community services environment where you work must have a current emergency response plan that covers major incidents in the workplace. The plan must include all of the emergency procedures, the process for testing emergency procedures and specific information, training and instructions for the workers involved in the emergency planning and response. Emergency situations may include the following:

- ▶ Fire or explosion
- ▶ Violence and bomb threats
- ▶ Chemical threats
- ▶ Medical scenarios requiring treatment
- ▶ Natural disaster

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

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



Community services emergency procedure considerations

Emergency procedures should give clear and simple instruction about how to respond in emergency situations, include how to safely evacuate people from that workplace.

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

- ▶ The size, layout and location of the workplace
- ▶ The nature of the work being performed
- ▶ Assessment of all potential workplace hazards and the consequences of those hazards
- ▶ The number of workers and work groups in the workplace
- ▶ Skill competency, training and equipment requirements
- ▶ Allocation of roles and responsibilities

For more information on preparing emergency procedures, you can refer to the *Model Code of Practice – Managing the Work Environment and Facilities* found at the following site:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/work-environment-code-of-practice>

Example

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

David is in charge of fire safety and emergency management in his workplace. David’s team has recently attended an information session on the fire evacuation procedure, including who is in charge, what communication is required, the building exit plan and the evacuation meeting point.

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

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

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



Practice task 9

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

Case study

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

1. When does Ron need to provide training for his staff?

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2. What information should Ron's WHS induction training cover?

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3. What factors should Ron take into consideration when developing his emergency procedures and training?

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Click to complete Practice task 9

Summary

1. The WHS legislation requires consultation, cooperation and communication in every work health and safety process, including the provision of activities to distribute information, feedback channels, documentation processes and WHS-related training processes
2. When developing activities to provide WHS advice it is essential that the activity allows the sharing of information and an avenue for participation and providing feedback.
3. Processes for consultation should be monitored to ensure that the method for collecting feedback meets the WHS Act and Regulation requirements, and is the most appropriate and effective way to gather this information.
4. Workers are more likely to participate in WHS decisions and processes when they understand their legislative roles and responsibilities, and when their ideas are actively sought and thoughtfully addressed.
5. Consultation records are a useful source of evidence to demonstrate compliance with the consultation requirements within the WHS legislation and can also be used as a communication tool to update workers on consultation outcomes.
6. The WHS Act and Regulations require that eliminating hazards and controlling risk is taken into account as early as possible when planning or designing products, structures, machinery, equipment or processes. A key aspect of this safe design process is ensuring that processes are developed and implemented to document the responsibilities, duties and accountabilities of the workers involved.
7. A PCBU has a duty of care to provide information, training and instruction to the workers so that they can safely carry out their work without risk to their health. All work health and safety training should cover the type of work, associated hazards and risks and the safety measures, such as use of PPE and emergency procedures, to manage workplace risk.
8. By law, the community services environment where you work must have a current emergency response plan that covers major incidents in the workplace. The plan must include all of the emergency procedures, the process for testing emergency procedures and specific information, training and instructions for the workers involved in the emergency planning and response.

Learning checkpoint 2

Facilitate consultation, cooperation and communication

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

Part A

1. What are some factors that influence communication in the workplace?

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2. What are some types of training that might be included in a community services environment induction program?

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3. List three examples of personal protective equipment (PPE) that might be required as part of an infection control policy in the community services environment.

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4. What WHS legislative requirements apply to the community services environment regarding emergency management?

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5. What WHS emergency situations should be covered in the emergency procedures for the community services environment?

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Part B

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

Case study

Daniel works as a carer for Home Help, an organisation that provides care packages for eligible people who need assistance with showering, cleaning and shopping.

Emily, a fellow worker at Home Help, had a significant manual-handling incident last week and tore a muscle in her shoulder while assisting someone with their shower.

Janice is the local manager at Home Help and has been asked by the National Director, Isaac, to investigate Emily's incident and ensure that Daniel and the other workers are not at risk of a similar injury.

As part of the investigation, Isaac has asked Janice to conduct a safety audit of the Home Help systems, including the consultation framework, training and related documentation processes.

1. List three consultation activities that Janice might review to check for evidence of compliance with legislative consultation requirements?

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2. By law, what information should the Home Help workers have been consulted about regarding manual handling?

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3. Why does Isaac think it is important for Janice to review Home Help’s consultation and feedback processes?

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4. What Home Help consultation records might Janice review during her investigation?

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5. What type of information would Janice expect to find when she reviews documented consultation outcomes regarding manual handling?

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6. When Janice reviews the hazardous manual task policy, what evidence of safe design principles might she find?

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7. What evidence will Janice need to find regarding manual-handling training to demonstrate that Home Help complies with the WHS legislation training requirements?

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8. List some evidence that Janice might find to prove that Daniel, Emily and the other workers at Home Help have been given an opportunity to participate in WHS processes.

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Develop WHS record-keeping policies and procedures and provide information to workers**
- 3B Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes to meet legislative requirements**
- 3C Evaluate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures for compliance with legislative requirements**

Monitor compliance with risk control processes

Record keeping is an important and mandatory requirement under WHS legislation. Records provide valuable information on hazards, incidents and injuries that require investigation and further risk assessment and controls.

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

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

3A Develop WHS record-keeping policies and procedures and provide information to workers

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

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

It is important to be aware of the regulatory record-keeping requirements for:

- ▶ workplace hazards, incidents and injuries
- ▶ notifiable incidents
- ▶ high risk activities such as working with asbestos, hazardous chemicals, lead, plant and confined spaces.

Develop record-keeping policies and procedures

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

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

General record-keeping principles

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

Workplace incidents

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

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

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

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

Incident reports

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

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

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

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



Notifiable incidents

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

The person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a duty to inform the regulator immediately after they become aware of a notifiable incident occurring in, or as a result of, the business they are conducting. The PCBU can notify the regulator by telephone or in writing, in the form approved by the regulator.

If the regulator is notified by telephone they may also request a written account of the proceedings related to the notifiable incident.

Notifiable incidents include:

- ▶ the death of a person
- ▶ a serious injury or illness, such as a serious burn requiring immediate medical treatment
- ▶ a dangerous incident, such as the collapse of a structure.

Example

Develop WHS record-keeping policies and procedures and provide information to workers

Brad is the manager of Cosgrove aged care facility and recently engaged Greg, an external WHS consultant, to audit the record-keeping policies and procedures in his workplace.

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



Brad circulated Greg's report to Cosgrove's health and safety committee (HSC) and requested that, firstly, the HSC develop an overarching record-keeping policy that documented how Cosgrove would ensure accountability, integrity, protection, compliance, availability, retention, disposition and transparency in all record-keeping processes. Brad requested that, secondly, the committee update all WHS policies and procedures, such as the notifiable incident procedure, to include documented roles and accountability. Lastly, Brad requested that the HSC review Cosgrove's record-keeping technology and processes, such as incident reporting forms, to ensure they are current and record accurate information.

The HSC worked in consultation with Cosgrove's workers to update all of the record-keeping policies and procedures as requested. By the end of their efforts Brad was satisfied that the updated policies and procedures were a valuable source of WHS information to all of the workers at the Cosgrove aged care facility.

Practice task 10

1. By law, what WHS matters in your workplace have mandatory record-keeping requirements?

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2. What are the legal requirements of a PCBU regarding notifiable incidents?

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3. Under the model WHS legislation, what three things are considered a notifiable incident?

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Click to complete Practice task 10

3B Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes to meet legislative requirements

Under the model WHS Act, a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a responsibility to investigate incident and injuries that occur in the workplace with the aim of preventing it from happening again. The purpose of the investigation is to identify all of the factors involved in the incident and to determine what strategies will address the issues and prevent a recurrence.

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



Monitoring processes

Noncompliance is the failure to conform to the duties specified in the WHS Act or regulations, or the failure to achieve the same or a better standard of workplace health and safety than that described by relevant codes of practice. You have an important role to play in identifying noncompliance in the community services environment. The monitoring strategies used in your workplace will present you with opportunities to participate in this compliance process.

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

Incident and injury report monitoring factors

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

Your role in helping to monitor compliance

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

Work health and safety in the workplace should be everyone's priority and it is everyone's responsibility to participate in activities that monitor processes to ensure the workplace is safe.

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

Monitoring workplace WHS compliance

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

Use reporting processes in prevention strategies

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

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

When devising injury and incident prevention strategies it is important to identify all of the factors involved and then analyse them in the context of the relationship between the factors, the work task and the work environment.

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

Awareness

- ▶ Workers should be advised of existing and potential hazards in the workplace and what risk management controls have been put in place.

Culture

- ▶ A workplace culture of risk management and accountability should be promoted.

Competency

- ▶ Ensure workers have the knowledge and skills to participate in WHS processes.

Systems

- ▶ The systems of the workplace should ensure that the procedures and processes of the workplace are, as far as reasonably possible, without risk to the workers.

Example

Monitor hazard, incident and injury reporting processes to meet legislative requirements

Mandeep is the work health and safety consultant at an organisation providing community services. As part of his role as the WHS consultant, Mandeep investigates workplace hazard, incident and injury report data and applies it to the incident prevention strategies in his workplace.

Last month Mandeep noticed a significant increase in incident and injury reports related to trips and falls.

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

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

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

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

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



Practice task 11

1. What responsibilities does the PCBU have regarding investigating incidents in the workplace?

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2. What are four ways that you can participate in monitoring workplace compliance with WHS legislation?

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3. List five factors that should be considered when analysing incident report data.

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Click to complete Practice task 11

3C Evaluate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures for compliance with legislative requirements

Evaluation is a systematic approach to assessing the quality of a service and how well it achieves its proposed outcomes. It is important to evaluate the safety management systems of a workplace to ensure that the systems are achieving compliance with the WHS legislations through the provision of a safe workplace.

When evaluating a system it is important that there is quality at each level of the system, including the policies, procedures, work instructions or practice and also the workplace records that provide evidence of the delivered outcomes of the system.



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

Evaluate incident report data

Analysing data collected from incident, accident and near-miss reports can indicate whether WHS legislation is being complied with. A reduction in the number of serious occurrences may demonstrate that procedures and management systems are effective. Trends indicated in the reports, such as the possibility that people are disregarding the need to wear PPE, can lead WHS specialists to identify where stricter procedures may need to be developed.



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

Use quality system documentation

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

Each level of the documentation hierarchy should contain clear, concise and comprehensible information.

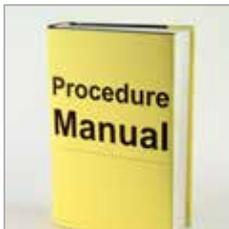
Key aspects that contribute to quality at every level of the documentation hierarchy are identified below.

Quality system documentation



Policy

Should clearly outline how the organisation will comply with specific WHS legislation requirements.



Procedures

Should describe the methods that will be used to implement the policy, including assigning roles and responsibilities, where the task should be done and what documentation is required.



Practices

Should provide very detailed instruction to achieve consistency in how work tasks are to be carried out.



Records

Should be an accurate account of the workplace activities that have been completed to fulfil the requirements of the policy, procedures and practices. Records can be used to track deviation from policies, procedures and practices, and indicate where corrective action is required.

Example

Evaluate WHS record-keeping policies and procedures for compliance with legislative requirements

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



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

Rhys requests that Janelle, a quality management system expert, evaluates the WHS record-keeping data to determine whether or not it accurately reflects the safety management system the LCHC has put in place.

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

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

Rhys updates the practice documents to include more detailed instructions and notices, over the course of the next 18 months, that the data is much more consistent. With this accurate data, Rhys identifies workplace trends and applies this information to incident prevention strategies at the LCHC.

Practice task 12

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

Case study

Amelia is the director of Clean-Bee, a community service that provides domestic assistance to eligible people who require assistance with making beds, cleaning and vacuuming.

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

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

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

1. Why is it important that Amelia has accurate, high-quality incident and injury reporting data?

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2. Why is it important for Joanne to evaluate the WHS record-keeping policies, procedures, practices and record-keeping methods?

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Click to complete Practice task 12

Summary

1. Your community services environment will have record-keeping policies and procedures to comply with WHS legislation.
2. It is important to be aware of the regulatory record-keeping requirements regarding workplace hazards, incidents and injuries, notifiable incidents and high-risk activities such as working with asbestos, hazardous chemicals, lead, plant and confined spaces.
3. Employees must record and report any hazards, incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace.
4. A workplace incident is any set of circumstances that have taken place and resulted in an injury or illness, or could have resulted in an injury or illness. Incidents are categorised into groups based on the severity of the possible outcome.
5. A notifiable incident includes the death of a person, a serious injury or illness, such as a serious burn requiring immediate medical treatment and a dangerous incident, such as the collapse of a structure.
6. The PCBU has a duty to inform the regulator, by phone or in writing, immediately after they become aware of a notifiable incident occurring in, or as a result of, the business they are conducting.
7. Under the model WHS Act, a PCBU has a responsibility to investigate incidents and injuries that occur in the workplace with the aim of preventing it from happening again. The purpose of the investigation is to identify all of the factors involved in the incident and to determine what strategies will address the issues and prevent a recurrence.
8. It is important to evaluate the record-keeping policies and procedures of a workplace to ensure that the WHS systems can be monitored based on accurate report data.

Learning checkpoint 3

Monitor compliance with risk control processes

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in monitoring compliance with risk control processes.

Part A

1. What are some factors that should be considered when monitoring incident and injury report data?

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

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3. What are the five categories that classify workplace incidents, based on the severity of the outcome of the incident?

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

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Part B

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

Case study

Po-shun is the WHS consultant at Care-Car, a community-based company that meets transport needs in the community by providing transport to and from medical appointments.

Edmund is the manager of Care-Car and is responsible for a team of drivers and reception staff.

Last week a very serious incident occurred, when Simon, one of the drivers at Care-Car, turned a blind corner in the car park and hit Fiona, an office worker.

Fiona was taken by ambulance to the hospital where she required several operations, and will likely need an extensive period of rehabilitation.

Edmund identified that a concerning factor of this case was that the incident report described the incident location as 'the blind corner in the car park' and when the incident was discussed at the next staff meeting, many workers volunteered stories of near-misses they have had in that same location.

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

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2. By WHS law, what immediate and follow-up actions should Edmund have taken as soon as he became aware of this incident?

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3. What information should the workers at Care-Car be able to find in their WHS record-keeping policies and procedures?

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4. What are some ways that Po-Shun can monitor Care-Car’s hazard, incident and injury reporting processes to meet legislative requirements?

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5. When evaluating the WHS record-keeping policies and procedures at Care-Car, how can Edmund discover why the system failed to identify the ‘blind corner’ hazard until it was too late?

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group**

- 4B Develop a WHS action plan taking account of priorities and training needs**

- 4C Identify potential barriers to improvement**

- 4D Establish processes to monitor achievement against the plan and update plan as required**

Evaluate and maintain WHS

Your community services environment should have a systematic and continuous improvement approach towards work health and safety (WHS) matters. Each workplace should establish work WHS priorities in consultation with the workers and develop and implement a WHS action plan that addresses the WHS priorities and training needs of that workplace.

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

Your WHS action plan should be a changeable document that can be updated as the plan is monitored and corrective actions are required.

4A Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group

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

The process for determining WHS priorities should be done in consultation with the work group affected by the WHS matters. Involving workers in this consultation process is essential for meeting WHS legislative consultation requirements; and for establishing a workplace culture that promotes health and safety; and for ensuring the workers' valuable first-hand experience and opinions are factored in to the decision-making process.

Consider the following factors when determining WHS priorities.

WHS legislative requirements

- ▶ The WHS model Act and Regulations set out the framework and requirements that a workplace must adhere to in order to establish a safe workplace. The very first consideration in WHS prioritisation should therefore always be compliance with the legislation, as this provides the foundation for all other WHS systems.

Risk assessment and control

- ▶ Risk management is the fundamental principle that governs all WHS decisions. Every WHS requirement aims to create a workplace where, as far as reasonably practicable, risk is eliminated or managed. When establishing WHS priorities, it is essential that priority is given based on the magnitude of the associated risk. A risk assessment matrix can be used to establish a risk-rating and prioritise accordingly.

Reasonably practicable controls

- ▶ The WHS legislation specifies that risk must be managed wherever reasonably practicable. This means that the time and resource spent on WHS priorities must be achievable within the available budget and be considered to be a reasonable practice. For this reason, WHS priorities will often be influenced by assigning priority to the WHS control that is cost-efficient, acceptably manages risk and meets the operational needs of the workplace.

Determine WHS priorities

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

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

Common WHS priorities include developing, implementing and monitoring:

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

Determine WHS priorities by consulting with the work group

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

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

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

Here are some more benefits of consulting with workers.

Benefits of consulting workers in the process of establishing WHS priorities

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

Example

Determine WHS priorities in consultation with the work group

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



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

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

Together, Anthony and the workers map out and prioritise all of the WHS issues for their community services environment.

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

Practice task 13

1. Which factors influence WHS priorities in the community services environment?

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2. What are the benefits of consulting with workers to establish WHS priorities?

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3. What are some common WHS priorities in a community services environment?

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Click to complete Practice task 13

4B Develop a WHS action plan taking account of priorities and training needs

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

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

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



Develop an action plan to address WHS priorities and training needs

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

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

Examples of key safety issues for community services environments:

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

Training plan details

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

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

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

An example of a community services WHS plan can be found at:
<http://aspirelr.link/community-services-action-plan>

Example

Develop a WHS action plan with priorities and training needs

Mario is the WHS consultant for the community allied health service team. The health and safety committee (HSC) recently established and prioritised the main workplace WHS issues, in consultation with the allied health workers. The HSC realised that, in order to address all of the identified WHS priorities, they will need a WHS action plan, and requested that Mario act as the project manager for coordinating the development and implementation of the plan.



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

The main sections of the plan include WHS policies; consultation in the workplace; hazard, incident and injury reporting; risk management of major workplace hazards; emergency response management; and WHS training needs.

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

Mario arranges for the team to meet once a month to track the progress of the WHS action plan and to ensure the identified priority safety strategies are being acted on.

Practice task 14

1. What is a WHS action plan?

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2. What type of information can typically be found in a WHS action plan?

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3. How should the WHS action plan address training needs in the community services environment?

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Click to complete Practice task 14

4C Identify potential barriers to improvement

To develop a successful strategy for workplace improvement, you must first identify and understand the potential barriers to change. It is important to understand that change will only occur as a function of dissatisfaction or danger from the current state of things; motivation from the vision of a better future; or an achievable and worthwhile sequence of practical steps.

Barriers to change will inevitably relate to one or all of these factors; the more factors involved, the more likely the intended change will be unsustainable.

It is important to identify barriers to change early on in any planned change in order to devise strategies that will successfully overcome those barriers in a consultative and supportive way.

Here are some methods you can use to identify barriers to improvement in your workplace.

Talk to key people

- ▶ Talking to key people who will be affected by a change is a quick and inexpensive way to gain understanding of particular benefits and potential problems that may arise as a direct result of the change.

Observe current practice

- ▶ Observing the issue you wish to improve provides insight into the current workplace behaviours and factors involved; this can be done informally or as a workplace audit.

Interview people involved

- ▶ Conducting face-to-face interviews or using a questionnaire is a good way to capture information on the beliefs, behaviours and knowledge of a work group.

Mind mapping

- ▶ Presenting an issue and allowing the people affected to map potential solutions to the problem is a powerful way to identify current beliefs, behaviours and knowledge. This method often discloses the best motivation to use when building a case for change.

Focus groups

- ▶ Conducting a facilitated group conversation using open questions can provide a solid evaluation of the range of beliefs, behaviours and knowledge within a work group.

Potential barriers

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

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

The contributing factors to barriers to improvement are outlined below.

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

Example

Identify potential barriers to improvement

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Practice task 15

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

Case study

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

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

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

1. People need to be motivated to change current practices to make them effective. What key requirements will motivate the reception staff to agree to this change?

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2. What are some methods that Kaveh can use to identify barriers to the new client management system?

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3. What are some barriers to change that Kaveh may need to identify and overcome?

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Click to complete Practice task 15

4D Establish processes to monitor achievement against the plan and update plan as required

A key element of successful project management is monitoring achievement against planned progress. When applying this process to the WHS action plan, the aim is to ensure that the WHS outputs, such as the control measures, risk management processes and emergency preparedness, are delivered within the planned time frame.

Senior management and the HSC, or the HSRs, team leaders and key workers should form a work group to be responsible and accountable for the progress of the WHS action plan. The work group should meet at regular intervals to track the progress of the plan.

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

Factors required to monitor the progress of the WHS action plan:

- ▶ Established objectives
- ▶ Delegated actions and assigned accountability
- ▶ Specified time frames
- ▶ Established performance measures
- ▶ Processes for collecting and analysing performance measure data.

Monitor achievements against WHS action plan

Your community service WHS action plan should have established performance indicators to measure the objectives of the plan. A performance indicator is a measurable value that can be used to determine how effective an organisation is at achieving its target outputs or objectives. These measures should be gathered at planned intervals through audits, routine checks, workplace inspections and testing.

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

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| Injury reduction | Performance measure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Compare total cost of workers compensation claims for current quarter with the same period from the past two years |
| Hazardous substances | Performance measure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Percentage of hazardous substances with an up-to-date SDS |
| Manual handling | Performance measures of training plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of training sessions delivered ▶ Percentage of total number of workers trained |

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|-----------------------------|---|
| WHS policy awareness | Performance measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of policies developed and approved ▶ Number of workers signed off on reading policy |
| Electrical safety | Performance measure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of pieces of equipment tagged and tested within time frame |
| Fire safety | Performance measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of drills completed successfully ▶ Number of workers involved in training drill |
| Risk management | Performance measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Number of hazard assessments completed ▶ Number of controls implemented |

Update WHS action plans

The development of the WHS plan should be an iterative process. An iterative process is a continuous improvement process of repetitive cycles of analysis and updates. At each new review cycle, analysis of performance measure data will indicate whether or not the plan is successfully achieving the workplace objectives, and indicate the need for corrective action.

As the community services environment is constantly changing, it is important that the WHS action plan is able to be updated as change in legislation, practice or need requires. The WHS action plan should be reviewed and updated at scheduled intervals after analysis of performance measure data, following an investigation into a workplace incident or as change in legislation requires.

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



Example

Establish processes to monitor achievement against the plan and update plan as required

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

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



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

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

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

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

Practice task 16

1. What factors are required in order to monitor the progress of a WHS action plan?

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2. Why is it important to monitor and update your community services environment WHS action plan?

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Click to complete Practice task 16

Summary

1. All workplaces must face the challenge of establishing and prioritising WHS matters. The process for determining WHS priorities should be done in consultation with the work group affected by the WHS matters.
2. Involving workers in the process of establishing WHS priorities is essential for meeting WHS legislative consultation requirements, establishing a workplace culture that promotes health and safety, and for ensuring the workers' valuable first-hand experience and opinions are factored in to the decision-making process.
3. A WHS action plan is a document that outlines how WHS requirements are integrated into the relevant policies, procedures and practices of a workplace to address the identified WHS priorities.
4. The WHS action plan will typically include the applicable legislation; codes of practice and industry standards; the scope of the plan; roles; responsibilities; consultation methods; identified hazards and risk management strategies; incident reporting; training requirements; and methods for monitoring, reviewing and adapting the plan to the needs of the workplace.
5. The WHS action plan should list each WHS priority individually, followed by any applicable legislation, codes of practice, guidelines or resources, and the intended actions of the workplace to address the issues, the responsible person, the intended time frame for completion and the intended review date.
6. To develop a successful strategy for workplace improvement, you must first identify, understand and overcome the potential barriers to change.
7. Common barriers to improvement include poor awareness and knowledge; lack of motivation to change; beliefs and attitudes; lack of skills; and practical, financial and political challenges.
8. As the community services environment is constantly changing, it is important that the WHS action plan is monitored and able to be updated as change in legislation, practice or need requires.

Learning checkpoint 4

Evaluate and maintain WHS

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in evaluating and maintaining WHS.

Part A

1. What information regarding workplace training should be included in a WHS action plan?

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2. How can motivation impact workplace change?

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3. List one potential WHS action plan objective and an appropriate performance measure.

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4. What is an iterative process and how should it be applied to the WHS action plan?

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Part B

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

Case study

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

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

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

1. How should Elizabeth and her officers identify and prioritise WHS issues at Real-time Meal-time?

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2. Why is it important for Elizabeth to consult with workers when identifying and prioritising WHS issues?

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

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4. What steps must Elizabeth and her officers take to develop and monitor a WHS action plan for Real-time Meal-time?

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5. List three methods Elizabeth might use to identify barriers to improvement at Real-time Meal-time.

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6. Why might Elizabeth use mind mapping as an activity to facilitate improvements at Real-time Meal-time?

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7. What are some WHS priorities that might be included in Real-time Meal-time's WHS action plan?

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8. When should Real-time Meal-time's WHS action plan be monitored and updated?

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9. How will Elizabeth know that the objectives of Real-time Meal-time's WHS action plan are being achieved?

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