BSB 7.0

BSBSUS211

PARTICIPATE IN SUSTAINABLE WORK PRACTICES

Aspire Learning Resources

BSBSUS211

Participate in sustainable work practices

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1

Learning Resources

Aspire also has learning resources available in these areas:

- Foundation skills
- LLN and employability skills (non-competency)
- Community services
- Early Childhood Education and Care
- Allied health

BSBSUS211 Participate in sustainable work practices, Release 1

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBSUS211 Participate in sustainable work practices*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

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

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

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

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Numeracy	▪ Calculates basic metric measurements to determine resource usage
Reading	▪ Recognises and interprets textual information to establish job requirements
Writing	▪ Completes documents using required formats
Teamwork	▪ Selects and uses appropriate conventions and protocols when communicating with co-workers in range of work contexts ▪ Collaborates and cooperates with others to achieve joint outcomes
Initiative and enterprise	▪ Implements actions according to requirements, taking some responsibility for sequencing and timing of tasks ▪ Analyses current practices to identify opportunities for improvement
Self-management	▪ Understands and adheres to legal and regulatory responsibilities related to own work
Technology	▪ Uses main features and functions of digital tools to complete work tasks and access information

What do you already know?

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

Topic	Key outcome		Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Measure sustainable work practices	1A	Identify sustainable work practices in own work role	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1B	Measure current usage of resources in own work role	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1C	Record and file resource usage documents	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1D	Identify resource inefficiencies from gathered information	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 2: Support sustainable work practices	2A	Comply with sustainability procedures	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2B	Identify environmental hazards	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2C	Report breaches to appropriate personnel	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 3: Seek opportunities to improve sustainable work practices	3A	Identify improvements to your work practices	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3B	Consult with others to improve sustainability	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3C	Suggest sustainability improvements in your work area	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic 1 | Measure sustainable work practices

1A Identify sustainable work practices in own work role

1B Measure usage of resources in own work role

1C Record and file resource usage documents

1D Identify resource inefficiencies from gathered information

1A Identify sustainable work practices in own work role

Sustainability is ensuring the long-term stability of your business, the environment and the wellbeing of employees.

Businesses can no longer run in a way that only satisfies day-to-day needs. Businesses must be sustainable, which means their practices must take the future into consideration as well as the present. The motivation for sustainability emerged after businesses realised they did not operate alone and relied on others for their continued success. As a result, businesses decided to show a greater awareness about thinking long-term rather than searching for quick profits, which harm the environment and employees.

Sustainability focuses on three main areas:

- Economic sustainability
- Social sustainability
- Environmental sustainability.

This section will focus on how to identify business practices within these three areas.

What is environmental sustainability?

Environmental sustainability promotes running a business in a way that preserves the environment for future generations.

So much of what we buy, do or use every day has an environmental impact or effect. Using petrol in our cars, electricity in our homes and paper in our offices makes an impact on the environment. In our modern lives, it is not realistic to expect that we stop using our cars or our appliances completely. But we can start to use them in a way that reduces their environmental impact.

A product that is produced with environmental sustainability in mind is a product that will not adversely affect future generations. To do this we have to respect the natural environment.

Sometimes, this means that we have to take approach industry in a different way, a slower way, in order to protect environmental resources.

For example, there are strict rules on how much of a forest can be logged to produce paper. The government acknowledges that businesses need certain supplies that require logged trees but it limits the amount that can be logged to produce these supplies.

Identify the resources you use

A key step in working sustainably is identifying what you use, when you use it and how much of it you use.

You should understand how your organisation uses resources. This will help you identify ways to minimise resource usage and reduce the organisation's environmental impact. Think about the daily work activities carried out by your businesses. Can you think of any activities that do not require the use of the following resources: paper, electricity, gas, water, petroleum products like plastic and packaging, or petrol?

Let's explore this more closely.

Typically, in a workplace, most people switch on their computer first thing in the morning, review their emails, print the important ones, make a coffee and start their day. Throughout their day, they will use electricity to power office equipment, lighting over desks, in corridors, bathrooms and kitchen areas and heating or cooling in most zones of the workplace; they will then use paper to print their work or write down notes; and petroleum products that come in a variety of different plastic materials to store food, decorate or organise their desk and as part of office furniture.

Now, think about your daily activities and what you use to carry them out. Critically reviewing the resources you use is the first step to using them more efficiently.

Paper	Office paper for printing, photocopying and faxing; kitchen towels; packaging materials; newspapers; magazines; cardboard products
Electricity	Computers, printers, faxes, copiers, heating, cooling, lighting, any office equipment, televisions, equipment on standby
Gas	Heating and hot-water systems, natural gas for vehicles
Petrol	Personal transport, freight distribution
Petroleum products	Most plastics including water bottles, containers, takeaway boxes, packaging, plastic bags, office equipment, polystyrene, cling-film food wraps
Water	Drinking; cooking; washing clothes, dishes and cars; showering and bathing; watering gardens and crops
Aluminium	Cans, vehicles, office machinery
Steel	Vehicles, office machinery, buildings, cans

Adjust how you use resources

Once you've identified the resources you use in your job role, you can adjust the way you use resources to be more sustainable.

Sometimes, you may not be able to affect how a resource such as electricity is used in your organisation. For example, the heating or cooling in your building is most likely set centrally, as are the lights for large, common areas.

You can, however, have a direct impact on the level of other resources you use.

- Use office equipment with power-save modes that reduce electricity use.
- Use dishwashers and washing machines that use less water, or choose the eco settings for each wash.
- Install compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of traditional incandescent bulbs; they are more expensive, but last longer and use less electricity.
- Encourage double-sided printing to reduce paper usage and use printed paper for scrap notebooks.
- Require staff to turn office equipment off completely when not in use; that is, not to leave it in standby mode.
- Adjust heating and cooling to reduce electricity usage.

What is financial sustainability?

Financial sustainability helps to ensure a business's long-term success and profitability.

A business interested only in making short-term profits will not survive in the long term. Most large and small businesses now realise that to achieve success, they must set their sights on long-term visions rather than short-term gain. A financially sustainable business will maintain good relationships with reliable suppliers, cut down on wastage, and work towards long-term goals while meeting short-term objectives and maintaining a wide range of customers.

For example, an office-based business may have to purchase a large number of computers and software. A short-term vision would be to look for the cheapest models, even if their software will soon become outdated. A more sustainable outlook would be to find computer models and software that will support the business well into the future, even if the initial cost is high.

Generally speaking, financial sustainability is a requirement that managers of a business must identify and implement. This does not prevent you from supporting your organisation in its long-term goal of financial sustainability.

Financially sustainable practices in your role

The actions you take in your role can benefit the financial sustainability of a business over the long term.

Strategic decisions to provide a business with long-term financial sustainability are not made within your work role; they are made by owners of a business or very experienced managers. Often, expert consultants are hired to provide advice

However, you will be tasked to identify practices that support this objective. These are practices that will support the business goal of long-term financial sustainability.

You may notice that there is some crossover between financial sustainability and environmental sustainability. This is because finding better environmental solutions are now often the cheaper alternative.

Maintain good relationships with suppliers	▪ Always provide positive feedback to a supplier when they are efficient with their deliveries ▪ Be pleasant and knowledgeable when talking to them via the phone or email ▪ Form positive working relationships by remembering suppliers' names and job roles
Cut down on wastage	▪ Dispose of wastage in appropriate bins ▪ Recycle when appropriate ▪ Answer colleagues' questions about disposing of waste
Work towards long-term financial business goals	▪ After consulting with your manager, align your task goals to the long-term business objectives
Develop good relationships with customers	▪ Speak calmly and courteously to all customers ▪ Respond accurately to customers' email and phone enquiries as quickly as possible ▪ Act on constructive customer feedback

What is social sustainability?

Social sustainability focuses on the wellbeing of employees and the larger community.

Traditionally, many businesses have focused on making a profit and not on their impact on the community in order to make that profit. On a large scale, this has resulted in some horrendous tragedies: oil spills wiping out entire industries, chemical spills having a devastating effect on lives, and unsafe products causing disease.

Social sustainability is achieved through a business's programs that are designed to create positive impacts on employees and communities, while also ensuring profitability. Social sustainability involves the following:

- Respect for human rights and human dignity
- Fair work-life balance
- Positive community attitudes
- Safety and wellness
- Promotion of diversity.

A business that achieves all these markers is a socially sustainable business.

Socially sustainable practices in your role

There are numerous ways you can participate in socially sustainable practices within your role based on how you treat other people that you work with.

At the core of these programs of social sustainability is an ethic of demonstrating basic respect for those you work with and work for, including customers and suppliers. If you demonstrate good manners and an appreciation of each person's worth as a human being, you are demonstrating the ethic that underpins social sustainability.

Below are some socially responsible practices you can perform in your everyday role.

Respect for human rights and human dignity	▪ Use positive and supportive language when talking to colleagues and customers ▪ Be prepared to offer assistance to those with disabilities and the elderly ▪ Avoid making demeaning comments about colleagues or customers
Fair work-life balance	▪ Take your holidays ▪ Support colleagues if they are struggling to complete tasks on time ▪ Speak with colleagues about the importance of using recreational time
Positive community attitudes	▪ Be willing to contribute to fundraising or community events ▪ Organise a charity initiative that benefits those in your local community ▪ Be willing to refer customers to other businesses

Safety and wellness	▪ Ensure a workplace is safe for employees and customers ▪ Contribute to a culture that regards work health and safety (WHS) as a priority ▪ Be willing to discuss mental wellness with colleagues and managers
Promotion of diversity	▪ Involve different groups in social events within a workplace ▪ Avoid jokes that demean certain groups of people ▪ Discuss different cultural groups, gender identities and sexualities in a positive way

Example

Social sustainability

QualityPaperSupplies is a paper and cardboard sales company that has won awards from the local business community for their social sustainability programs.

Since opening, they have made it their major priority to contribute to the social fabric of the community they work in.

First, they thoroughly train their employees in inclusive practices and anti-discrimination. The employees are encouraged to use these skills in the community as well as the workplace.

Second, all employees are offered a four-hour block every week to participate in community initiatives. These initiatives include helping at homeless shelters, participating in working bees, assisting at charities or fundraising for charitable causes. This gives employees a chance to play a positive role in their community.

Third, a primary focus of management is on preserving the work-life balance of employees. At QualityPaperSupplies, they believe that a worker who has time to pursue their interests outside of work is productive while at work. For this reason, each worker gets one day of paid leave per month. Employees report that they feel refreshed and ready for work after this day of leave.

Overall, employees feel respected and the local community is pleased with the contribution that QualityPaperSupplies makes. The company is a model of social sustainability.

Sustainability regulations that impacts your job role

Regulations, standards and codes can also be enforced to make you comply with sustainability requirements.

Governments have established rules to ensure businesses meet their sustainability requirements. Businesses that do not comply with these rules can be issued with penalties that include fines and, in extreme cases, criminal prosecution.

Description of law/ code/regulation	Impact on your work role and business	Type of sustainability impacted
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999	This federal law sets out procedures that local governments must follow when allowing businesses to impact the environment. This may impact your job role within the business or dictate what supplies you can use.	Environmental sustainability
Local council regulations. The specific regulations are dependent on the council your business is based in.	These regulations can determine waste management procedures, which equipment can be used and when; water, gas and electricity supply usage; charges or levies for using particular products.	Environmental sustainability
Australian product safety system (codes and regulations)	These codes and regulations establish the standards against which products and services must be sold in Australia.	Financial and social sustainability
Fair Work Act 2009	This federal law sets out the industrial relations system that employees and employers must follow, including: workers' rights, rights of workers with disabilities, hours to be worked and pay conditions. This act establishes what a work-life balance will be for each worker.	Financial and social sustainability
Competition and Consumer Act 2010	This federal law outlines the rules that each business needs to abide by when trading and selling with customers, including conduct when conversing with customers, return policies and product standards.	Financial and social sustainability
Industry codes (dependent on industry)	Some industries enter into voluntary codes that establish trading and behavioural expectations for all employees within that industry. For examples, employees who work with information technology have an ITPA code of ethics that sets the standard for honesty with customers.	Financial and social sustainability

Description of law/ code/regulation	Impact on your work role and business	Type of sustainability impacted
Code of Practice on managing the work environment and facilities	This Safe Work Australia (SWA) code of practice outlines the workplace conditions an employee should be provided with. It includes the right to clean dining, handwashing areas and private areas when needed.	Social sustainability
Code of Practice on the control of workplace hazardous substances	This SWA code of practice outlines the guidelines that all employers and workers must follow to ensure the safe handling, use and disposal of harmful chemicals and other materials.	Environmental sustainability

Practice Task 1

Question 1

Which practices promote environmental sustainability but do not affect work performance or output? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Turn off workplace lights when they are not in use.
- ◯ Use more energy-efficient resources such as LED light bulbs.
- ◯ Print on both sides of documents to save ink.
- ◯ Enforce a rule that office computers are to be switched off for one day per week.
- ◯ Carpool to work.

Question 2

Which of the following statements are examples of social sustainability? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Participating in a local charity fun run organised by your business	» Yes	» No
b) Avoiding fear of making a racist comment by not talking to your colleagues	» Yes	» No
c) Taking time from checking emails to help a customer with a disability through the door	» Yes	» No
d) Treating workplace safety seriously	» Yes	» No
e) Providing a Friday afternoon tea once work on a task has been completed	» Yes	» No

Question 3

Which business practices do you need to comply with to meet codes and regulations? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ WHS codes for the safe handling of hazardous goods
- ◯ Regulations about getting help to manage investments
- ◯ Council regulations about days and times for waste disposal pick-ups
- ◯ Industry code of practice requirements about standard of work
- ◯ Government regulations about smoking within a public office area

1B Measure current usage of resources in own work role

A key aspect of sustainability is being able to measure what you have used and how much of it you have used in your work role.

Businesses rely on precise information to make decisions. An example of the type of precise information they need is the measurement of which resources are being used and how much of each resource is being used.

Resources can include:

- Paper
- Ink
- Electricity
- Water
- Gas
- Aluminium
- Petrol.

These resources are required for businesses to function by meeting customer demands and producing products, while also meeting their environmental, social and financial sustainability requirements.

Why measure resource usage?

Measuring resource usage provides businesses with a precise assessment of how they are progressing towards meeting sustainability goals.

The aim of environmental sustainability policies is to use resources more efficiently and to produce less waste. A way of measuring the effectiveness of a policy or procedure is to measure resource usage. You measure the resource use before you start a procedure; then you use a current situation analysis to track how much you have improved. Measuring resource usage tells you where to focus your efforts.

Data on resource usage can be used to understand how your organisation compares to others, using best practice information. Your organisation may have measured its resource usage and discovered that, while they are recycling a large proportion of waste, electricity usage is way above the industry best practice. In this case, they may decide to implement initiatives that reduce electricity usage before those that reduce waste going to landfill.

Measuring resource usage also illustrates the link between environmental and financial sustainability. Finding ways to manage resources that meet environmental guidelines can also save the business money over the long term; thereby helping its financial sustainability.

Cost benefits of environmental initiatives
▪ Introducing paper-saving initiatives will reduce the amount of paper required by the organisation.
▪ Installing more efficient lighting systems will reduce the amount of electricity required.
▪ Using items with less packaging will reduce the amount of waste that needs to be collected.
▪ Measuring changes in resource usage helps you to calculate cost savings.

Techniques for measuring resource usage

Find simple and practical measuring techniques are the suitable for what you want to measure.

If you are going to measure the use of a resource regularly, it is important that the measurements are relatively simple to collect. If the measuring is too complex or requires people to record manually, it will possibly be inaccurate. Also, it may not be collected regularly because of the time it takes. Therefore, it is important to adopt techniques that use information that is readily available.

Techniques for measuring resource usage include: measuring consumption, observing usage, estimating waste production and calculating greenhouse gas emissions.

Measure consumption of resources

Measuring consumption involves measuring how much of a resource your organisation uses.

An easy way to do this is to track how much is purchased as a resource is used up.

- A useful tool to use is to check supplier invoices. You may need to consider how much is held in stock if you use this measure.
- Observing consumption yourself can enable you to verify how a resource is being used. It can tell you a lot about patterns of usage. For example, you may find it useful to count how many computers are left on at the end of the day, or whether lights are on in storerooms when no-one is in there.
- Regular stock checks may be a part of your organisation's inventory management and they can measure consumption.

Below are further examples of resource usage you can measure.

Examples of resource usage:
▪ Printer toner cartridges used ▪ Paper reams used ▪ Amenities consumed by staff, such as tissues, coffee pods, dishwashing liquid etc. ▪ Stationery used by staff, such as pens, textas, staples ▪ Supplies sold to customers, depending on the type of business

Estimate waste production

Generally speaking, a business should aim to put as much waste in their recycling bin as possible. Providing the community with resources that can be reused is an approach to social sustainability.

However, it is inevitable that businesses will produce non-recyclable as well as recyclable rubbish. Estimating how much waste is produced can be completed in a number of ways.

- Counting the number of bins emptied each day, or how much is collected by your waste contractor. Counting bins is not completely accurate because the bins may not be full when they are emptied.
- Measuring the weight of waste, or by conducting a physical audit. This is more accurate but requires scales or other specialised equipment.
- Keeping a log of what items are put in each type of bin. This can help you determine which items are being used most often. However, this will require the cooperation of all staff in accurately recording what they are putting into the bins.
- Performing a stocktake of items that are no longer kept in inventory. This requires accurate stock records to be maintained.

Calculate greenhouse gas emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions can be estimated by entering the amount of energy you've used in your work role into a greenhouse gas calculator. Many suppliers now calculate your greenhouse gas emissions and report the amount on your invoice.

Otherwise, use the energy figures from your supplier invoice and an online calculator to work out the figure.

A major challenge is separating your contribution to emissions from your colleagues' emissions.

These and other measurement techniques are provided in the following example. You may sometimes need more detail than these measures provide. For example, the supplier invoices for paper may be for the whole organisation when you are seeking information for your department. If the supplier cannot help you, you may be able to use the stationery requisition records or ask people to record each time they open a new packet. Remember that asking people to record something will provide less accurate measurements than using invoices or requisitions.

Measurement techniques and examples are described below.

Consumption patterns

How much of something does your organisation use?

An easy way to monitor this is to track how much is purchased. Supplier invoices are a very useful tool here. You may need to consider how much is held in stock if you use this measure.

Visual assessment

You can verify how a resource is being used by observing it yourself. This can tell you a lot about patterns of usage.

For example, you may find it useful to count how many computers are left on at the end of the day, or whether lights are on in storerooms when no-one is in there.

Tangible waste audit

You can estimate how much waste is produced by counting the number of bins emptied each day, or how much is collected by your waste contractor.

Counting bins is not completely accurate because the bins may not be full when they are emptied. A more accurate method is to measure the weight of waste, or to conduct a physical audit. Your waste contractor may be able to help.

Intangible waste audit

Intangible waste use can be estimated by entering the amount of energy used by your organisation into a greenhouse gas calculator. Use the energy figures from your supplier invoice.

Lighting assessment

Review the workplace and lighting used. Are lights on in areas where people are not working or in areas where there is sufficient natural light to see without them? Review the type of lighting used in each area and how efficient it is. Use a map of the area to show any patterns.

Heating and cooling

Check what temperature the heating and cooling is set to, and when it is operating. Does it automatically turn off after hours? On weekends? For holiday shutdowns?

Transport assessment

Measure the number of kilometres travelled by employees travelling to different locations. Can any of their activities be done by video- or tele-conference instead?

Measure resource use consistently

Collecting records in the same way each time will provide you with accurate statistics.

When collecting measurements over a period of time, it is important that you use the same approach every time. This helps make the measurements consistent and repeatable. For example, if you are conducting an assessment of how many computers are left on, it's important to always consistently. If 10 computers are left on during two separate checks, you might think there was no change. However, if the first check was of 30 computers and the second only 20, it would mean that a higher proportion of computers were left on during the second check. In this instance, you could avoid the problem by reporting on the percentage of computers that were left on (which increased from 33 per cent to 50 per cent in this example).

Creating a simple map or checklist can help ensure that you measure in the same way every time. Further, if another person collects the information instead of you, they can be sure to collect it in the same way. Below is an example of a checklist that can be completed every night to accurately record resource usage.

Resource use checklist
▪ Check 1st floor computers at 4.00pm ▪ Check 2nd floor computers at 4.10pm ▪ Check stationery lights at 4.15pm ▪ Check how many recycling bins are full at 4.20pm ▪ Check how many rubbish bins are full 4.25pm ▪ Check how many reams of paper are left in the photocopying room at 4.30pm ▪ Check how any dishwashers are being used at 4.35pm

Document resource usage

Documenting resource usage in every office and across the organisation demonstrates how serious environmental sustainability is to an organisation.

If you are going to collect the same data regularly, then a template helps make the collection quicker and ensures that you are always collecting the same data.

A template makes it easy to identify errors if, for example, the total paper requisitioned by each department does not equal the amount of paper ordered. If paper is held in stock, consider using a template to ensure the paper ordered matches the paper requisitioned. Measuring the paper requisitioned provides data at a higher level of detail than may be available from the supplier. It may also identify who is using the most paper.

Example

Paper use in an organisation

Sally is the receptionist at a law firm. She wants to record the organisation's paper usage in order to improve environmentally sustainable work practices. She creates the following template to document her findings.

	February	March	April	May
Data from supplier invoices				
Paper reams ordered this year	25	30	28	25
Paper reams ordered last year	30	32	30	28
Reams ordered this year (by department)				
Sales department	8	9	9	7
IT department	5	7	5	4
Finance department	7	8	8	8
HR department	5	6	6	6
Total paper requisitioned	25	30	28	25

Data comparison

Once the data is gathered, it should be analysed for trends and contributing factors.

It is useful to compare two periods of resource usage data. On first review you may conclude that paper use increased in March. However, there may be another contributing factor; for example, there may have been more working days in March than in February. An alternative would be to measure the average amount of paper used per working day.

In general, it's easier to compare data that has had variables removed (such as the number of employees in a department or workdays in a month). Dividing paper usage by the number of employees creates average usage per person. Dividing again by the number of workdays creates the average amount used per person, per day. This creates a figure that is easily compared across departments or even across organisations.

Before finalising decisions based on gathered information, the following questions should be asked.

Questions to ask:
▪ Has the information been accurately gathered? ▪ Were there any special events that influenced the figures? ▪ Can these figures be replicated over a similar time period again? ▪ Which parts of the figures were predicted, and which were not predicted?

Practice Task 2

Bin usage for OzSupplies (measured in bins emptied per month)				
Bin location	January	February	March	April
Rubbish bin (1st floor office)	4	5	7	8
Rubbish bin (2nd floor office)	3	3	5	6
Recycling bin (1st floor office)	1	1	2	2
Recycling bin (2nd floor office)	8	6	10	9

Question 1

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

a) The 1st floor office is increasing the amount of waste they produce » Yes » No

b) The 2nd floor office is reducing the amount of rubbish they produce » Yes » No

c) The 2nd floor office is more efficient at recycling their rubbish » Yes » No

d) The 2nd floor office produces more waste (recyclable and non-recyclable) overall » Yes » No

e) Overall, OzSupplies produces more non-recyclable rubbish than recyclable rubbish » Yes » No

Question 2

Which other resources can OzSupplies measure the usage of? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Paper and documents
- ◯ Ink cartridges
- ◯ Customers
- ◯ Water usage
- ◯ Electricity usage

Question 3

Your organisation receives an electricity bill for $25 720 for an 89-day period. What would be the average daily cost to supply electricity to your workplace? Tick the correct answer.

- ◯ $320.15
- ◯ $62.89
- ◯ $272.37
- ◯ $288.99

1C Record and file resource usage documents

Once usage has been measured, information should be recorded for future reference.

Organisations record information, create documents and file them for future use as part of daily business activity. Filing can be one of the most frustrating jobs for any employee, but when it is done in a structured way it can be done quickly and save a lot of time when a document is required in the future. You need to select the most appropriate method for recording information based on what you are recording, the nature of your organisation and any particular procedures and guidelines that already exist. You need to ensure you familiarise yourself with your organisation's requirements.

Why record and file documents?

Records provide permanent references to assess performance in managing resources.

The previous section explained the importance of measuring resource usage. This is because it helps provide information on how effectively an environmental initiative has reduced resource usage. It also identifies opportunities for improvement and helps us understand any cost savings made.

Recording data for managing resources is especially vital because the only way to properly gauge use of resources is across an extended time frame, usually measured in years rather than days. This makes accurate recording of data very important.

Compliance

There may be workplace policies and procedures in place that require this data to be collected and stored for a period of time. Often these procedures are to support legal requirements, so it is important that the records are kept and stored for audit purposes.

Trend data

Keeping records consistently over a period of time enables organisations to develop trend data; for example, comparing usage to the previous year. Filing data in a way that is easily accessible means this data can be used later. It can also be helpful for conducting further analysis.

Audit purposes

Different data may be required for different procedure audits; for example, ISO is an international standards body that certifies organisations for different environmental management procedures.

Daily operations

Many documents are retained simply to help employees carry out daily business. For example, invoices for products such as paper will be stored by your organisation's finance department.

Your role in recording and filing usage documents

As with other aspects of your job, recording and filing usage documents should be completed to a high standard.

It might be part of your job role to collect specific information relating to resource usage. You may simply be required to provide data for a report put together by someone else. Alternatively, you may need to produce a report yourself, to be distributed to your supervisor and management.

Different businesses might record and file information in a number of different ways. It is important to speak with your colleagues or supervisor and understand what system is in place in your organisation. If you think you can suggest improvements, discuss them with your supervisor before implementing them.

Consistency is critical to recording and filing data. If different reports on the same data are stored in different places, it will be more difficult for other people to identify and use this information. It may result in some work being duplicated. You may not record or file the information in exactly the same way as someone else, but it is important that your work is consistent, meets organisational requirements and could be identified by someone else. It is helpful if your reports show how you collected the information because this provides valuable context when people want to re-use or compare your results.

Organisational policies regarding the recording and filing of usage documents

Organisations should have policies and procedures governing how to record and file these documents.

You must follow the general policies and procedures of recording and filing documents so that you can complete these tasks to the standards expected in the workplace. These policies may be explained to you in an induction session, through training or through other organisational documentation. Below are some examples of policies concerning the recording and filing of resource usage documents.

Example

Organisational policies

- Some documents must be stored in hard copy; for example, a signed copy of a contract or purchase order. There may also be legal or taxation requirements about keeping original copies of some documents.
- All resource usage documents need to be stored digitally on either Word or Excel, or as scanned copies of written documents
- Documents must be stored in a way that protects confidentiality. Customer data, for example, must be protected so that it cannot be misused. Legal or financial documents should not be available to general staff and may have restricted access. When storing these documents electronically, they must be saved in an area where access is limited to people who have the authority to view them.
- All documents must be sent to certain managers or members of staff for review.
- Organisations may mandate that certain key resources should always be monitored and included in these documents.
- Documents need to be stored for a specific period of time before being destroyed (days, months or years) and this will be specified in the retention schedule.

Key information to consider when producing records

There are many things to consider when you are deciding how to record documents.

Taking the time to answer the following questions before you develop your document will help ensure that it meets the requirements of the organisation and does not create extra work for you.

What am I recording?

First, you need to clearly define what information is being gathered and presented. In most cases, this will relate directly to the measures you are collecting, but additional information may be required.

Why is the information being recorded?

If the information is being recorded as part of legal compliance or external standards requirements, there may be guidelines for how it is recorded. Your supervisor may help you identify these. If it is not clear why the information is being recorded, then it may be appropriate to question the need for recording the information.

Who needs the information?

How you present the information will depend on who is using it. If it is being used for further analysis, you might only need to enter the data into a spreadsheet or database, where it can be used and manipulated. If the information is for management review, you may need to present it as a report or in graphical format. If a graph is produced regularly, it may still be helpful to store the data in a spreadsheet or database to make it easier to create the report.

How often is the data being recorded?

If data is being collected regularly, such as on a weekly or monthly basis, you should establish a clear template for collection to minimise the amount of work done each time. You should also ensure that the presentation method is not too complex or time consuming if it is regularly presented.

Where is the information being presented?

If the information is distributed in a group presentation, visual representation may be better than a written summary of numbers. If it is being emailed to one person, then a short, written summary may suffice.

How often will the record be accessed?

If a regular record is required by different users, consider their needs when structuring the report. If appropriate, discuss the report with the users before creating it to understand what they require. Ensure that it is stored somewhere that is accessible to all users; for example, on an intranet site or a common server.

Who is authorised to update the record?

To avoid creating inaccurate data, it may be necessary to limit the people who can enter new information. Depending on how important the information is, it might be appropriate to have more than one person who can enter the data, so that it can be collected regardless of staff absence. If only one person can update the record, there can be problems if that person is away or leaves the company unexpectedly.

Format your document

How often you collect resource usage data will depend on the type of document you use to record your information. Generally, if you are collecting data regularly, it is most useful to record that data in a database format, whether in a spreadsheet or a database.

It is helpful, though not necessary, to name date columns with numbers, rather than text, as this helps keep them in order in some applications. For example, if you sorted months alphabetically your list would start with April, August, December and end with September. Putting the year before the month means that it is easier to compare the same month in different years without confusion.

How you structure your table will depend on how you wish to present your data. For future analysis, it is helpful to keep one master table that summarises the key information and then select different fields to create any graphs or diagrams. If data is stored in several places, it's much harder to analyse results.

Generally speaking, paper documents are less reliable and prone to being lost or destroyed. Handwriting can be misinterpreted or misread. Paper can be useful for logs that gather information but should be avoided when producing final documents that will be shared with others.

Label the document

When filing a digital document, you need to follow some identification protocols so that relevant personnel can access it.

How will you or others look for this information? By date? By category? By name or number? It's important to consider this before you set up a filing system. Names for files, whether electronic files or paper files, should be clear enough that someone can recognise what the content is without opening the file. Using folders for electronic filing is also a helpful way of sorting documentation.

Your organisation may have guidelines for how you classify documents. If so, you should follow these guidelines. When you are classifying documents yourself, however, you should aim to remain clear and consistent in your methods. That way, it will be much easier to locate documents in future, which will save you time.

Guidelines may include:
▪ Having rules or recommendations for folder and sub-folder structures
▪ Having a records management system to electronically manage key organisational documents and records
▪ Having a business classification scheme (generally used in conjunction with a records management system)
▪ Including dates in the naming system
▪ Including version numbers or dates

Where to file documents

Filing documents involves storing documents that will be kept safe over a long period of time.

Documents are filed so that they can be easily accessed at a future date, whether for further business use or for legal compliance requirements. Filing can be done either electronically or in hard copy. Files are increasingly being stored electronically because this is much simpler for organisations to manage, and easier to control access.

Where can resource usage documents be filed?
▪ On a shared network on the organisation's intranet ▪ Stored in a manager's email ▪ On an organisational database ▪ Paper copies can be stored in a filing cabinet ▪ Documents can be stored on portable hard drives or flash drives

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Which of the following are reasons for recording and filing documents? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ To ensure compliance requirements are met
- ◯ For use in daily operations such as records keeping and invoice management
- ◯ For auditing purposes
- ◯ To present marketing documents to customers
- ◯ To assess trends in resource usage within the business

Question 2

Which of the following statements can be organisational requirements when recording and filing resource usage documents? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Hardcopies of invoices and receipts should be kept and scanned	» Yes	» No
b) Documents must be sent to a manager for review	» Yes	» No
c) Statement or scenario should be followed by question	» Yes	» No
d) Documents that are stored must avoid breaching anybody's privacy	» Yes	» No
e) Employees must always produce digital records of these documents	» Yes	» No

Question 3

Draw a line to match each term to its correct definition.

» Trend data	» A word, spreadsheet or other software version of a document
» Filing system	» The period of time a document has to be kept before it can be destroyed
» Digital document	» A method of retaining documents so they are easy to find
» Retention schedule	» Data that presents long-term habits of how a business uses resources

1D Identify resource inefficiencies from gathered information

Gathering information allows employees and businesses to determine what resources are being used inefficiently.

You can play an important role in gathering information about resource usage within a business. You may be tasked with producing documents yourself or contributing to them. To recap, some of the gathered information that summarises resource usage can include invoices, logs, digital reports, paper reports and emails.

Once this information is gathered, you can identify 'resource inefficiencies'. This is a term that means the resources that businesses use (such as water, electricity, paper, among many others) are not used in a way that maximises financial and environmental sustainability. There are five categories for resource inefficiencies. These are when a business:

- runs out of a required resource
- purchases a resource that it doesn't use much of
- purchases a resource that is too expensive
- inadvertently purchases resources not needed for their operations
- purchases resources that are harmful to the environment.

Inefficient use of resources

Businesses need resources; running out of them will slow productivity and impact on quality standards.

A business that runs out of resources is a business that will struggle to meet customer demands, quality standards and productivity targets. A business office that runs out of paper might not be able to supply customers with invoices, photocopy key documents or put together booklets for important staff meetings. The business must then organise for the paper to be delivered. This could take hours or may divert an employee away from their task for an hour so they can go and buy new reams of paper.

Example

Running out of a resource

For this example, a stock card will help prevent businesses running out of resources. Look at the example below of a stock card measuring paper usage at OzSupplies.

Item description	Date	Quantity
White paper reams	June 1	20
	June 2	17
	June 3	13
	June 4	9
	June 5	7
	June 6	4
	June 7	1
	June 8	0
	June 9	0

Predictably, supplies of white paper reams dwindled as the week went on, and the business eventually ran out on 8 June. This is a major disruption to their operations. The stock card indicates they should have re-ordered on 6 June when they had four reams left. This would have given them a day to collect the stock.

You should seek permission to re-order stock if this is part of your work role. If it isn't a part of your work role, inform the relevant colleague they need to re-order a particular resource.

Purchasing excessive amounts of a resource

While running out of a resource will inevitably hurt the operations of a business, over-ordering a resource will have a different impact. While a business will still be able to carry on operating, its financial sustainability may be hurt. Below are three examples of the negative impacts a business may suffer from over-ordering a resource.

- OzSupplies has decided to purchase a pre-paid electricity plan that offers them 8,000 kWh a month for the fee of $3,200. However, you check the electricity bill and see your business only uses 1,000 kWh. After checking an online quote, you find this amount of electrify costs a business about $400. So, your business is overpaying by $2,800 a month or $33,600 a year. This is harmful to financial sustainability.

- A business misjudges the amount of fluorescent light bulbs they need and orders double the required amount. This will hurt their environmental sustainability.
- Over-ordering can also result in having stock that takes up too much inventory space around the workplace. Consider the OzSupplies stock card below.

Example

Purchasing excessive amounts of a resource

Item description	Date	Quantity
Yellow paper reams	June 1	30
	June 2	29
	June 3	29
	June 4	28
	June 5	25
	June 6	25
	June 7	25
	June 8	24
	June 9	22

In this case study, OzSuppplies has over-ordered yellow reams while under-ordering white reams. This paper won't be disposed of so it's not harmful to their environmental sustainability. However, all those reams of paper will have to be stored somewhere, and it's likely to cause logistical hassles and, perhaps, WHS issues. You should contact the staff member responsible to inform them of this discrepancy.

Purchasing resources that are too expensive

Spending too much money on resources is another example of inefficiency. A business has a limited supply of money and should avoid overspending on resources.

Part of your responsibility may be to source quotes for resources to be purchased. Quotes are documents that summarise the resource you want to purchase, the quantity and the cost the business plans to charge you. Gathering quote documents can help your business avoid this resource inefficiency.

Here are a few strategies to gather the most useful quotes.

- Gather at least three quotes before assessing the best deal.
- Make sure you get written quotes. Verbal quotes can't be claimed if you go ahead with the purchase.
- Don't just make your decision on the final price. Consider the repayment terms, the quantity they can provide and their delivery options.

Always retain digital copies of quotes that you can forward to your manager. And don't forget to follow procedures about whether or not you can place an order or must ask a supervisor to do it.

Purchasing the wrong resources

There is nothing worse than arriving at the office in the morning, having clear instructions about your work task for the day, and finding the wrong resources have been ordered so you can't complete the task. This impacts your performance and creates a cascading effect where other parts of the business can be impacted.

Below are some of the reasons why this may happen.

Reasons for the wrong resources being ordered:
▪ A verbal instruction was not heard or was misunderstood ▪ An incorrect order was filed with the supplier ▪ Correct ordering protocols were not followed ▪ A stock card was misread

Within your role, there are some actions you can take to avoid having the wrong resources ordered.

- Follow organisational ordering procedures consistently.
- This probably involves double-checking stock cards.
- Confirm with suppliers about the product being ordered.
- Seek written orders for a product rather than verbal ones.

Whether or not you have authorisation to order resources, you should focus on using gathered information correctly to ensure your business has the correct resources.

Inefficient use of resources

It is the responsibility of businesses to use resources in an environmentally sustainable way.

Another example of using resources inefficiently is when they are used without considering their environmental impact. Businesses have become better at sourcing environmentally friendly resources and then training their employees in how to use these resources efficiently.

Your role will most likely be using these resources efficiently. Below are some ways you can use common resources more efficiently if you discover that they are currently being used inefficiently.

Stock card indicates paper usage is too high	▪ You can print documents on both sides ▪ For informal paper use, use sheets already in the recycling bin ▪ Move around the office finding used paper that can be recycled
Electricity bills indicate electricity usage is too high	▪ Ensure your work station (computer, printer) is turned off at the end of each day ▪ Do a 'walkaround' at the end of workdays to switch off lights and appliances
Water bills indicate water usage is too high	▪ Only run office dishwashers when they are full ▪ Speak to your manager about installing more water-efficient taps

Practice task 4

Question 1

Are the following statements consequences of over-ordering resources? Select yes or no for each one.

a) The financial sustainability of the business can be put at risk » Yes » No

b) It can have a negative impact on environmental sustainability » Yes » No

c) It can lead to a loss of staff morale » Yes » No

d) It can pose logistical issues for your workplace » Yes » No

e) Customers will form a negative opinion of the business » Yes » No

Question 2

Which steps should you take to avoid inefficiently using resources? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Base your decision on verbal instructions
- ◯ If it's part of your work role, seek a clarification document from a supplier prior to ordering
- ◯ Follow organisational procedures prior to organising an order
- ◯ Double-check stock cards
- ◯ Seek written documents of resource requirements rather than verbal instructions

Question 3

Which of the following are examples of resource inefficiencies? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Your department has run out of paper three days after an order was received
- ◯ Your organisation is using 550 kWh of electricity daily compared to 760 kWh the month prior
- ◯ You open the paper drawer and find four reams of pink printing paper but there is no white printing paper
- ◯ The cleaners run the dishwasher every afternoon, in line with workplace policies and regardless of how empty or full it is

Summary

- Environmental sustainability means operating your business in a way that preserves the environment for future generations.
- Financial sustainability is defined as structuring your revenue and expenses so the business can survive long term.
- Social sustainability is the commitment by a business to create positive benefits for the community it trades in.
- In your work role, use resources in a way that preserves sustainability – resources are used wisely and in a responsible manner.
- You can contribute to social, financial and environmental sustainability without authorisation from a manager.
- Setting up a system to accurately measure resource usage is essential to long-term sustainability.
- Measurements of resources should be filed and easily accessible to relevant personnel.
- Documents recording measurements of resource usage need to be labelled accurately.
- Using resources inefficiently can involve using them in an environmentally friendly manner, over-ordering, under-ordering or ordering the wrong resources.
- Follow organisational procedures regarding the ordering of resources.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Measure sustainable work practices

Part A

1. From the list below, tick the sustainability code or regulation you must follow in your work role.

◯ Complying with local government regulations when disposing of waste

◯ Complying with your industry Code of Practice about respect for colleagues

◯ Following your industry Code of Practice regarding electricity consumption

◯ Product safety systems for standards on how goods and services must be sold
Local council regulations for dog off leash areas.

2. Draw a line to match each term about sustainable work practices to its appropriate type of sustainability.

» Contributing towards business charity events	» Economic sustainability
» Conserving resources such as electricity and paper	» Economic sustainability
» Courteously addressing suppliers	» Financial sustainability
» Providing quality customer service	» Financial sustainability
» Using recycling bins appropriately	» Social sustainability
» Using inclusive language towards colleagues	» Social sustainability

3. Which of the following are examples of identifying resource inefficiencies based on gathered information? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Identifying an over-purchasing of plastic products via a stock card	» Yes	» No
b) Finding a product quantity on a stock card	» Yes	» No
c) Using an electricity bill to identify inefficient environmental resource usage	» Yes	» No
d) A resource usage document shows stocks of cardboard were replenished the day before it all ran out	» Yes	» No
e) Identifying an under-purchase of resources via a supplier invoice	» Yes	» No

Part B

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

Case study

Abbie works as a clerical assistant at a software company. Part of her role is managing the resources used by reception staff for customer information, internal meetings and preparation of documents.

Each month Abbie keeps a log of resources used and breaks this information up in a week-by-week format. This month, she has kept some rough notes of the resources used and when they were used. She plans to input this information into the log template. Below is the rough information of resources used.

Week 1: 24 reams of paper, 3 reams of cardstock, 4 ink cartridges, 75 pens

Week 2: 5 reams of cardstock, 7 ink cartridges, 46 pens, 18 reams of paper

Week 3: 2 ink cartridges, 12 reams of cardstock, 31 pens, 39 reams of paper

Week 4: 18 reams of paper, 20 reams of cardstock, 12 pens, 16 ink cartridges

1. Based on the information above, complete the resource log for the month.

	Resource 1:	Resource 2:	Resource 3:	Resource 4: ....
Week 1				
Week 2				
Week 3				
Week 4				
Total				

2. Abbie's manager has requested that her completed log be formalised as a monthly resource report that will be used by the organisational sustainability committee. Number from 1 to 6 each step of the process she should follow for recording and filing the document.

- ◯ File the document by placing it in the appropriate intranet folder.
- ◯ Destroy the document once the retention schedule has expired.
- ◯ Record the information on the appropriate spreadsheet.
- ◯ Label the file with a filename that incorporates the information contained within, the date and version number.
- ◯ Format the document with appropriate headings, columns, footnotes.
- ◯ Establish a retention schedule, outlining how long the document will stay on the organisational intranet.

Topic 2 | Support sustainable work practices

2A Comply with sustainability procedures

2B Identify environmental hazards

2C Report breaches to appropriate personnel

2A Comply with sustainability procedures

Policies and procedures ensure employees understand what is expected of them, help supervisors and managers monitor the work being done in the organisation, and help ensure that employees complete their work in a way that ensures the organisation complies with any external obligations.

Organisations have procedures that govern how things are done. These procedures can range from verbal instructions to formal documented procedures.

Organisations develop workplace policies and procedures to explain how they want particular activities to be done. Workplace policies are often quite general, while workplace procedures are usually more detailed and may include specific work instructions.

Some have policies and procedures related to environmental, social and financial activities. An example of an environmental policy could be 'We shall strive to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions', while an environmental procedure may include specific work instructions such as 'Employees must switch off equipment and lighting at the end of the day'.

Australian and international standards of corporate social sustainability

Australian businesses and their workers need to comply with codes about their sustainability procedures.

Standards of corporate social responsibility have been established by both Australian and international bodies. These standards rest on the idea of a 'triple bottom line' where businesses have to account for their social and environment impact along with their financial success. Below are examples of national and international standards of sustainability.

- The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) argues that the issue of human rights is directly linked to the sustainability practices a business must implement, stating:
  - Human rights are relevant to the economic, social and environmental aspects of corporate activity. For example, labour rights requiring companies to pay fair wages affect the economic aspect. Human rights such as the right to non-discrimination are relevant to the social aspect. And the environmental aspects of corporate activity might affect a range of human rights, such as the right to clean drinking water.

- The International Organization for Standardisation's ISO 26000:2010 Guidance on social responsibility is an international standard that assists businesses in acting ethically, transparently and with respect for human rights. In concrete terms, businesses that meet this standard have fairer bargaining practices, programs in place to look after the wellbeing of workers, and they reduce environmental impact.
- Standards Australia's AS/NZS 5377:2013 is an Australian standard that outlines how a business should dispose of its e-waste, such as computers, printers and phones. This standard provides recommendations on how these materials should be stored, transported and disposed of.
- The United Nations' 'Standards of Conduct for Business' outline standards to ensure there is no discrimination within a workplace regarding gender or sexuality.
- ISO 14021 is an international standard that establishes guidelines for businesses on how to advertise to customers that they are environmentally friendly. This ensures that businesses who claim to be environmentally sustainable are meeting relevant benchmarks.
- The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* contains the Standard: Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010. This is a national standard that businesses must comply with by providing workplace access for people living with a disability.

Workplace sustainability policies

Organisations are compelled to produce financial, social and environmental sustainability policies for a number of different reasons.

How organisations develop policies and procedures may vary, depending on the size and nature of the organisation. Sometimes an organisation may simply document its current business practice, which creates a record of workplace procedures that can then be used for training new employees.

Some policies and procedures may be developed in response to external laws and regulations. Such procedures will include specific steps and measures to ensure that they comply with these laws and regulations.

Below are some examples of what may prompt organisations to develop new procedures to more effectively implement the three types of sustainability.

Financial sustainability
▪ A business finds most of its customers come from the same area ▪ Financial returns on products start to dwindle ▪ A business starts to struggle to pay its bills
Environmental sustainability
▪ A business is found to be non-compliant with environmental laws ▪ An environmental audit asserts that a business is not meeting its obligations ▪ Excess wastage is being produced by the business
Social sustainability
▪ Staff members are not interacting respectfully ▪ Employees feel overworked and overstressed ▪ Some employee rights are not being respected

Workplace sustainability procedures

Financial, social and environmental sustainability procedures exist to support the policies and objectives of the organisation.

Many businesses have existing sustainability policies in place that are designed to meet social, financial and environmental objectives. The procedures are the day-to-day steps and processes that must be followed by staff to ensure the expectations and standards of the policy are met.

The role you play in ensuring these objectives are met will be explained to you. You can identify them via workplace documents, strategic plans, task descriptions or in induction meetings.

Below are some examples of common workplace procedures which relate to sustainability.

Waste disposal (Environmental)

There may be many workplace procedures that determine how you get rid of workplace waste. Local councils regulate these practices, but individual businesses decide how they will comply. These procedures can involve which items are treated as rubbish and which can be recycled.

WHS (Social and financial)

Many organisations will have documented workplace procedures to ensure they comply with WHS laws. You should generally receive some training in these procedures when you join an organisation or new area. You have a responsibility to follow these procedures and to take reasonable care for your own safety. WHS procedures could include procedures for using appropriate protective equipment to ensure safety in areas with moving machinery, procedures for manual handling or for adjusting workstations to minimise injury risk.

Rights (Social)

It is important to understand what your employer can reasonably ask of you, and what you are obliged to do for them. Many organisations develop workplace procedures so that, if followed, the rights of both employee and employer are met and respected. For example, you may have a right to four weeks of annual leave, but your employer has a right to reasonable notice of when you plan to take that leave. There will be a policy stating how much notice you need to provide your employer so that you can take your leave at a mutually convenient time.

Equal opportunity (Social)

There are a range of federal and state laws that aim to protect people from all sorts of discrimination, including age, race, disability and gender discrimination. Many workplace policies and procedures exist to ensure that organisations comply with these laws. Procedures may include guidelines for how to write inclusive communications, procedures for inducting new employees or a general policy to encourage diversity in the workplace.

Example

Sustainability procedures

Many businesses document sustainability procedures so that all staff are aware of what they are and how to comply with them. Below is an example of an organisation's documentation about their sustainability procedures.

SUSTAINABILITY PROCEDURES

At OzQuickSupplies we aim to be a model of sustainability – financially, socially and environmentally. After consultation with employees and management, we have established a set of procedures that we expect will help us meet our sustainability objectives.

All employees must comply with the procedures below. Disciplinary action may be a consequence for those who do not comply.

If you are unsure about any of the following procedures, or if you need further training to comply with them, please consult your manager.

To be financially sustainable, we must:

- Request contact details from all customers
- Forward all invoices to the financial manager
- Direct all refund requests to the operations manager.

To be socially sustainable, we must:

- Always use inclusive language when talking to colleagues or customers
- Participate in one work-organised community event per year
- Complete our engagement survey within three working days.

To be environmentally sustainable, we must:

- Dispose of waste in the appropriate bins
- Turn off all appliances at workstations at the end of each day
- Turn off lights when exiting a room.

Following these procedures will help OzQuickSupplies become a sustainable organisation.

Understand workplace policy procedures

You should always seek clarification if you don't understand a sustainability policy or procedure.

It is important that you understand the workplace policies and procedures governing your specific job role, as well as your rights and obligations as an employee of an organisation. When you first start a job, you should receive training that provides you with some of this information. You must be aware of where information on workplace policies and procedures is stored, so that you can review it to ensure you are complying with all relevant procedures.

Once you have identified the sustainability procedures relevant to you or your job role, you need to be sure that you clearly understand what is expected of you. Even if you feel a little foolish asking questions, it is much better to be sure you know what to do ahead of time, rather than dealing with a mistake in the future.

While some mistakes are to be expected, and are part of the learning process, making an error relating to the environment, WHS or social outcomes can have broad consequences that are best avoided. Make sure you clearly understand what to do, and if in doubt, speak to your supervisor. Sometimes, your question can reveal something that needs to be clarified in the procedure, and this will benefit other employees.

Sources of information

Organisations have appointed staff members who can assist you with complying with sustainability policies.

Possible sources of information to assist you with organisational policies and procedures include: your supervisor, colleagues, internal intranet, human resources (HR) staff and workplace trainers.

Supervisors should be the first point of contact for any questions about procedures relating to daily tasks, complying with any workplace policies and procedures or sourcing current copies of policies and procedures. Colleagues in a similar position may also be able to offer assistance.

Organisations usually store workplace policies and procedures on the internal company website or intranet; they may display them on company noticeboards; or they may store them in binders that are kept in areas that are accessible to all employees. When you are reviewing a policy or procedure, make sure that you are reviewing the latest version of that policy.

HR representatives may be able to assist with procedures, such as those relating to your rights or equal opportunity. They may be able to source information about other procedures as well. If you received training when you joined the organisation or department, the workplace trainer may be able to provide further information on the procedures covered in the training.

The most likely source of assistance for complying with each type of sustainability procedure follows.

Social sustainability	Financial sustainability	Environmental sustainability
▪ Human resources department ▪ Direct supervisor ▪ Fair Work Ombudsman	▪ Financial manager ▪ Cashier/accountant ▪ Payroll department	▪ WHS officer ▪ Environmental sustainability officer ▪ Government regulators

Comply with sustainability policies

You need to support the sustainability policies of the business so that it can remain compliant.

Policies and procedures may be developed in response to external requirements. Organisations develop workplace procedures to ensure that their work practices are conducted in such a way that they comply with the appropriate laws and regulations.

Workplace policies and procedures exist to ensure that organisations comply with these and any other regulations. It is important for employees to participate in training about the policies and procedures and then follow them. This allows the organisation to comply with guidelines for the benefit of the environment and employees' own health and safety.

Below are some examples of how a business and its employees need to comply with sustainability procedures.

Type of sustainability	Compliance Requirements	Advantages of complying
Financial sustainability	▪ Financial reporting requirements including the retention of receipts and invoices ▪ Providing and retaining accurate quotes ▪ Providing accurate financial and product information to customers	▪ Business maintains better financial records ▪ Business develops better and more long-lasting relationships with customers

Type of sustainability	Compliance Requirements	Advantages of complying
Social sustainability	▪ Complying with wages and conditions ▪ Engaging in respectful and anti-discriminatory workplace practices ▪ Following WHS practices ▪ Ensuring the access of customers with disabilities is respected	▪ Workplaces are safer with more engaged employees ▪ Customers living with a disability are catered for ▪ Employees demonstrate an attitude of inclusiveness
Environmental sustainability	▪ Waste disposal regulations are followed ▪ Tools and materials used comply with environmental legislation	▪ Business contributes to a better environment ▪ Business manages waste more efficiently

Legal compliance

A business needs to meet its sustainability compliance requirements.

Tools commonly used by organisations to assess compliance with workplace policies and procedures will differ depending on the requirements being assessed and how the data will be used. For example, assessing whether or not a business complies with social sustainability requirements requires different tools to those for assessing financial sustainability requirements.

Best practice

Write out a step-by-step best practice procedure. Then write out the organisation's current procedure. Look for ways to move to the former. For example, a business might use a best practice template to increase staff collaboration and improve its **social sustainability**.

Audit or survey

Over two weeks, conduct an audit to check if computer screens in your work group are left on overnight. You could count the monitors left on or use a map each day to see if there are obvious trends. This method can assess a business's **environmental sustainability**.

Checklists

Checklists with key criteria are a good way to identify compliance. They provide a quick and easy way to rate how well a procedure is being followed. Examples are: consumer satisfaction, product reliability or customer service standards. These would assist **financial sustainability**.

Performance reporting

Make regular measurements using key criteria; for example, the amount of reported wastage. This can support **environmental sustainability**.

Risk register

Make a list of potential environmental hazards in your area. Consider whether they are in your control, whether they may cause legal compliance issues, and how severe the impact would be if there were an incident. This is a helpful tool for measuring **environmental sustainability**.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance is used to determine whether products or services sold by a business meet an acceptable standard. These can be used to measure the **financial sustainability** of a business.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Who can assist you in complying with sustainability requirements within your organisation? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ WHS officer
- ◯ Only your direct supervisor
- ◯ Human Resources Manager
- ◯ Financial Manager
- ◯ Fair Work Ombudsman

Question 2

Which of the following are sustainability procedures you could expect to follow in a workplace? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Computers must be turned off at the end of each work day	» Yes	» No
b) Default settings on printers should be set to double-page printing	» Yes	» No
c) Create a list of local/regional non-profit organisations or schools that can receive surplus resources and property	» Yes	» No
d) Collect rubbish and recyclables in one bin to reduce rubbish removal costs	» Yes	» No
e) Receive three written quotes for new supplies or products before making purchase	» Yes	» No

Question 3

Draw a line to match each sustainability benefit to the correct type of sustainability.

» Business manages waste more efficiently	» Financial sustainability
» Workplaces are safer with more engaged employees	» Environmental sustainability
» The business develops more long-lasting relationships with customers	» Social sustainability

Question 4

Which of the following are examples of sustainability standards? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ ISO 26000:2010
- ◯ Your direct supervisor
- ◯ Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
- ◯ United Nations has provided its 'Standards of Conduct for Business'
- ◯ AS/NZS 5377:2013

2B Identify environmental hazards

Workplace environmental hazards and risks must be understood before they can be controlled.

Workplace environmental hazards exist in all organisations. They are any practice, object or material that can cause harm to the environment. These hazards include air and noise pollution, hazardous chemicals and substances, and potentially hazardous materials. It is important to understand what these hazards are, how to identify them, and how to report them so that the risks to employees and the environment are kept to a minimum.

The term 'risk' has a separate definition. It is the likelihood that an environmental hazard will cause harm to the environment.

To use an example: the cords around a reception desk are a hazard. However, because most workplaces ensure these are out of the way, the risk of them causing harm is very low.

Workplace environmental hazards

Environmental hazards pose serious risks to the surrounding environment and must be identified.

Workplace environmental hazards include noise pollution, air pollution, chemicals, dust, fumes and disposal hazards. When considering the environmental hazards that might exist in a workplace, consider what might happen if things went wrong. For example, storing chemicals may not be a significant environmental hazard, but a leak or spill can create a more significant hazard. Therefore, when assessing environmental hazards, you should think about all possibilities, not just what happens in daily business.

Here are some examples of workplace environmental hazards.

Noise pollution

Prolonged periods in a noisy environment can cause damage to hearing, such as tinnitus (ringing in the ears) or permanent hearing loss. This can occur in manufacturing environments, for example. If you work in such an environment, you may be required to use protective equipment such as ear plugs or ear muffs to protect your hearing.

Air pollution

Air pollution can come from many sources, the most common being general smog levels, vehicle emissions and industrial emissions. Air pollution can cause a range of health problems, including eye and throat irritations, or more severe conditions such as bronchitis.

Chemicals

Many potentially hazardous chemicals are used in workplaces. These include corrosives such as sulphuric acid and caustic soda, irritants such as ammonia, and sensitising agents. Exposure can cause skin disease, poisoning or respiratory illness. These chemicals must be handled using the appropriate procedures and protective equipment.

Dust and fumes

Dust and fume hazards can be created in a variety of ways and may result in respiratory concerns. Most people are aware of the risks when handling lead or asbestos but some timbers, other building materials, paints and cement can also potentially affect your health and the environment. Be sure to use the appropriate protective equipment.

Disposal hazards

There are regulations for the correct disposal of many chemicals and other potentially hazardous materials. It is not appropriate to pour some chemicals down the sink or to throw some things, like batteries, into general rubbish. These materials are usually clearly marked and you should follow the instructions carefully.

Identify workplace environmental hazards

All employees must contribute to the process of identifying environmental hazards.

Risks arise when an environmental hazard may actually cause harm. The size of the risk depends on the likelihood that it will happen, the severity of the harm if it does happen, and how many people may be affected if it does happen.

Your employer is required to minimise environmental risks presented by such hazards. As an employee, you have a general duty to take reasonable care of your own health and safety and to cooperate with your employer's efforts to make your workplace safe. This may include following workplace policies and procedures, attending health and safety training, and identifying potential hazards and risks.

How to identify environmental hazards

All employees have a responsibility to cooperate with an employer's efforts to make a workplace safe. You can fulfil this responsibility by continuously observing your work environment and reporting any potential hazards. The responsibility to report hazards is not limited to environmental hazards. It extends to any potential workplace hazard that may impact health and safety.

Many hazardous substances must be clearly identified by law. You may have seen warning labels on containers or doors, such as 'hazardous material', 'HAZCHEM', a skull-and-crossbones symbol or signs like 'Danger: High Voltage'. You should always handle any of these substances or enter such areas with respect and caution.

Generally, you will identify a hazard by observing a work practice that creates a potential risk.

Some ways you can identify hazards include:
▪ walking around your work area and observing work practices, how materials are used and the general work environment
▪ using your knowledge of workplace procedures and potential safety hazards to identify any risk
▪ reviewing material safety data sheets (MSDSs) for chemicals and other hazardous products to identify possible concerns
▪ reviewing incident reports of injuries or potential injuries
▪ investigating any accidents that do happen to understand what caused them and take steps to prevent a recurrence.
▪ holding workplace consultation meetings because they can help identify hazards that managers are unaware of

Example

Identifying environmental hazards

Government bodies provide templates for businesses to manage their environmental hazards. Below is an example of an adapted safety plan that can be used to record environmental hazards. While there are other types of documents, this is the type you will most likely engage with in your work role.

When completing this, or contributing to it, follow the rules your organisation has set as to who should be notified about your entry, and when that should be entered.

Environmental hazard	Action required	Person responsible	Date of action to be completed	Review date and comment
High priority				
Medium Priority				
Low priority				

Relevant legislation, regulations and standards for identifying environmental hazards

Laws impacting environmental hazard identification are divided between state governments, but have similar principles.

The identification of environmental hazards is based on a federal act of parliament, which is based on state law models. Regardless of whether a hazard is covered by federal or state jurisdictions, all environmental hazard identification in the workplace and all safety laws share common principles. These include:

- Environmental hazard identification is a vital part of creating safe workplaces and protecting the environment
- Environmental hazard identification is a shared responsibility of employees and employers
- Environmental hazard identification is a formalised process that needs to be documented.

The model *Work Health and Safety Act (2019)* provides a framework of how all employees and managers within a workplace can manage environmental hazards. All managers and employees should be protected from workplace environmental hazards when this can be done effectively.

Before controlling an environmental hazard, the following questions need to be answered.

- What is the likelihood of a person being exposed to harm?
- How serious could this harm be?
- How can the manager or employee be trained to manage the hazard?
- Are there any other ways to eliminate or minimise the risk?
- How much will it cost to eliminate or minimise the risk?

The model *Work Health and Safety Regulations (2019)* explain in specific detail how the principles of the act are to be implemented in workplaces.

A duty holder (such as a WHS officer) must identify reasonably foreseeable environmental hazards that could harm employees or managers.

A duty holder must:

a) eliminate risks to health and safety when it can be done effectively

b) take actions to minimise the risk if it isn't practicable to eliminate the risk entirely.

The primary regulatory body of WHS is Safe Work Australia. They have released standards for environmental hazard identification. These standards provide examples of common and uncommon hazards, control measures and the need for consultation with relevant personnel. The Code of Practise can be found on the Safe Work Australia website: aspirelr.link/safeworkaustralia

Environmental legislation and environmental hazards

The Australian Government has created a variety of laws determining how businesses manage environmental hazards.

Similar to how workplace safety legislation is designed, environmental law in relation to environmental hazards is split between state and federal jurisdictions. The federal body responsible for policy is the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Each state government has its own regulatory body; for example, the Environment Protection Authority fulfils this role in Victoria. Their four main goals are to ensure that businesses:

- do not harm the environment excessively
- use environmental resources safely for workers
- know their legal requirements regarding environmental sustainability
- enforce penalties against those who breach laws.

Together, they provide legislation, regulation and standards outlining how business should manage environmental hazards. These are enforceable by law, and those individuals and businesses who don't comply are subject to fines or prosecution. You may be asked to follow these regulations in your own work role. Below are some examples.

Asbestos

- Only licensed removalists may move asbestos
- It must be disposed in designated areas.
- Full PPE must be worn when disposing of it

Illegal waste disposal

- Waste must be disposed of in designated bins or tips
- Waste disposed of illegally should be reported
- Local councils provide waste disposal service that should be used

Noise

- Noise created by business is measured and must be kept below a certain limit
- When business noise is excessive, business must purchase quieter equipment
- Noise limits are lower around residential housing

E-waste

- Businesses must separate e-waste from other waste
- Certain e-waste products, such as batteries, must not be stored in places that can be affected by weather
- E-waste disposal centres should be used, rather than landfill

Workplace resource hazards

A resource hazard is a workplace object with the potential to cause harm.

Hazards are present in all workplaces, schools and homes. However, they generally present minimal risk if they are appropriately managed. Typically, resource hazards are common objects found around an office area. An environmental hazard specifically relates to a material that creates a risk to the environment or to the workers as a result of that environment.

WHS legislation and regulations task the business and employees with the responsibility to minimise the risk posed by these hazards.

Some common workplace hazards you may encounter within your organisation are listed below.

Common workplace resource hazards
• Slips, trips and falls usually caused by office furniture cords and furniture • Ergonomic hazards caused by poorly designed workstations • Electrical hazards involving power boards and power points • Manual handling hazards caused by having to carry objects around the office

Practice Task 6

Question 1

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

- ◯ Asbestos
- ◯ Lack of lighting
- ◯ Extreme temperatures
- ◯ Gas leak from neighbouring factory
- ◯ Computer cabling

Question 2

Which of the following are purposes of environmental regulatory departments? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Ensure the environment is not harmed by businesses	» Yes	» No
b) Enforce penalties against business who break environmental sustainability obligations	» Yes	» No
c) Environmental resources are used safely by businesses	» Yes	» No
d) Inform businesses what their environmental obligations are	» Yes	» No
e) Ensure business marketing is non-discriminatory	» Yes	» No

Question 3

Read the manager's email below and answer the question that follows.

Dear staff,

After an extensive safety audit, we have isolated four workplace hazards:

- Computer cabling: We will immediately get covers as we believe the likelihood of an accident is high.
- Asbestos: This material has been found high in the ceiling. It is not a threat to anyone and will be left undisturbed.
- Loose door hinges: Three doors are extremely loose and heavy. They will be tightened immediately as the risk of an injury is high.
- Extreme temperature: While the glass doors make it slightly hotter than normal, the risk of injury is low.

Regards,
Terry Hamilton

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

- ◯ Asbestos is an environmental hazard and is low risk
- ◯ Extreme temperature is an environmental hazard and is low risk
- ◯ Loose door hinges on heavy doors are resource hazards and high risk
- ◯ Faulty light wiring is an environmental hazard and is high risk
- ◯ Computer cabling is a resource hazard and is high risk

2C Report breaches to appropriate personnel

Organisations need to have reporting protocols in place that identify breaches in order to resolve them.

Organisations develop environmental policies and procedures to help minimise risk to their employees and the environment. They also develop them so that they know their organisation will comply with the relevant laws and regulations, as long as the procedures are followed. A breach is any time the procedures are not followed. There may be a risk to employees and the environment, and the organisation may not be complying with external requirements.

This topic analyses how to respond to breaches and potential breaches of environmental law or hazard regulations.

Reporting workplace environmental hazards or breaches

All environmental hazards and potential hazards should be reported to ensure issues are dealt with in a timely manner.

Once you have identified a possible environmental hazard, you should report it to the appropriate personnel. There may be times when you identify an environmental hazard that is currently occurring. You must report this immediately. Even when you identify a potential future risk, it is still important to report this promptly so that appropriate measures can be taken to prevent it occurring. An environmental hazard can potentially cause illness or injury for a colleague or damage to the environment, so try to prevent them wherever possible.

A business that demonstrates a respect for its staff will welcome the reporting of hazards. While there have been some isolated examples of business not embracing employees who report hazards, most managers will welcome a conscientious employee who wants to make the workplace safer.

How to report environmental hazards and breaches

Every organisation has a different structure. Large organisations may have a workplace health and safety (WHS) department. Smaller organisations may have someone in each department who acts as a WHS officer. Others may have an environment officer who is responsible for environmental hazards, but not for other WHS issues. When reporting hazards and breaches you should follow key procedures, summarised below.

What is the hazard or breach?	When should a hazard or breach be reported?	How is the hazard or breach to be reported?
▪ Where the hazard was observed; for example, in the office, warehouse, kitchen or a specific department ▪ Who was involved, if appropriate; for example, if the hazard relates to a particular procedure not being followed ▪ The nature of the hazard; for example, a brief outline of what was observed ▪ The nature of the risk presented; for example, the likely outcome if the hazard continues ▪ When the hazard was observed; for example, the time of the occurrence or that it occurred when the weather was very hot or cold	▪ You should report any environmental hazard as soon as possible after it is identified. ▪ If this hazard currently presents a risk to you, your colleagues or the environment, you must report it immediately. ▪ If the hazard poses no immediate threat, make a written or digital record and send it to the appropriate person.	▪ Written or digital records such as emails ▪ Verbal reports, which can be used when a threat is immediate ▪ Forms such as risk registers or incident reports

Environmental risk register

An environmental risk register is a formalised record of all environmental hazards in a workplace.

Many organisations are required to compile an environmental risk register as part of their compliance with workplace health and safety regulations. This is a summary of the environmental risks present at the organisation and may include an assessment of the likelihood of the risk occurring, the severity of the potential risk and any preventative measures taken. The information you provide may become part of this register, so it is important that it is correct.

These documents can be distributed to managers, supervisors and WHS officers; they can be passed on when any of these roles are filled by a new person. These documents can also be used in safety consultation meetings or induction meetings to discuss hazards with relevant employees.

Example

Environmental risk register

Below is an example of an environmental risk register. You may be asked to contribute to a register in your work role. Note that the hazards identified are only environmental hazards, and some need trained professionals to adequately control them. This register is to be retained by the environmental duty holder or other appointed authority, and regularly reviewed.

No.	Environmental hazard	Cause	Risk level before control	Consequence	Control	Risk level after control
32	Asbestos inside roof	Asbestos insulation was installed when the building was constructed	Low	Potential environmental contamination and health hazards	As asbestos is not friable, best solution is to leave alone	Low
33	Opened bottles of cleaning chemicals in office area	Cleaners leaving chemical materials around after their job	Medium	Potential air pollution or leak into drains	Provide a confined area for bottles to be left in after use	Low
34	Dust particles have filled the air in third floor work area	Office renovations or sanding of walls	High	Decline in air quality, potential health hazards, potentially hazardous materials	Work to be stopped until type of dust is identified	Low

Breaches of environmental regulations

Breaches of environmental law are either accidental, unintentional, intentional or a potential breach.

A breach is a violation or breaking of an obligation or duty by someone who has a responsibility to perform it. A breach of a workplace procedure occurs when an employee acts in a way that violates that procedure. This can be in relation to any workplace procedure. Here are four ways in which breaches of environmental regulations can occur.

Accidental breach

A breach of a workplace policy or procedure may be accidental. If an employee has not received training in the policy or they have not been advised of the policy, then they may breach it without knowing. For example, they may not follow the office procedures for using recycled paper or printing on both sides, or they may handle chemicals without appropriate protective equipment.

Unintentional breach

A breach of procedures may occur when, even though the employee is aware of the procedure, they breach it without intentionally doing so. For example, an employee may be in a hurry to meet a printing deadline and ignore fumes and warning messages from a photocopier. Or, even though they know that there are special ways to dispose of hazardous chemicals, they may not be aware the cleaning solution they are pouring down the drain is classified as hazardous.

Intentional breach

Sometimes breaches are intentional, carried out in full knowledge of the policy. These breaches may result in disciplinary action for the employee. Like all breaches, they can also put employees and the environment at risk.

Potential breach

A potential breach could occur when an employee takes an action, knowingly or not, that could put the organisation at risk of violating environmental regulations. Some organisations describe these breaches as 'near misses' and encourage reporting of them. This is not to punish employees, but to identify potential risks to employees and the environment, and to take action that prevents the risk from recurring. Examples include identifying a spill that may cause a slip hazard or identifying hazardous materials stored in an area where they may be accessed by unauthorised personnel.

Identify breaches of environmental regulations

Just as all employees are responsible for identifying environmental hazards, you must also identify any breaches of procedures and regulations. This means that you need to be aware of the environmental procedures and regulations that are part of your daily work and you should consider how any of your actions may breach, or potentially breach, these procedures.

You should also remain observant of activities that take place around you and identify any breaches or potential breaches made by others. Generally, you may identify a breach or a potential breach by observing a work practice that violates the policy and procedure.

Remember, breaches of environmental regulations can place employees and the environment at risk. It is therefore important to identify these breaches.

You can ensure you are able to identify breaches or potential breaches of environmental regulations by:
▪ ensuring that you have completed the appropriate training so that you are aware of correct procedures and environmental regulations
▪ critically reviewing your own work and actions and ensuring they are consistent with workplace procedures and environmental regulations
▪ using your knowledge of workplace procedures to observe work practices in your area to identify any potential breaches
▪ regularly reviewing material safety data sheets for chemicals and other hazardous products and updating them to reflect procedural changes
▪ understanding any breach that may have been performed by others and ensuring you know how to avoid repeating this breach
▪ following any signage displayed in areas outside your normal work area
▪ asking for information from people who work in different departments to ensure that you follow their workplace procedures when relevant.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

You identify an environmental hazard in your workplace. What steps should you take to report the breach? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Prepare a written report identifying the time you noticed the breach and the location of the hazard
- ◯ Identify which member of personnel you need to inform
- ◯ Alert employees in the immediate area to move
- ◯ Fix the hazard yourself
- ◯ Prepare an incident report

Question 2

Are the following environmental hazards? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Extreme temperatures in the workplace	» Yes	» No
b) Faulty shower heads	» Yes	» No
c) Light switches that are shorting out circuits	» Yes	» No
d) A gas leak is smelled in the office	» Yes	» No
e) Some remodelling is being completed in the office and the air is filled with dust	» Yes	» No

Summary

- Environmental policies and procedures explain the expectations, standards and guidelines for workers to follow to ensure they are responsible in protecting the environment.
- Following environmental policies and procedures correctly ensures that the organisation complies with external laws and regulations.
- Breaching or violating environmental procedures and laws can put employees and the environment at risk and can also mean the organisation does not comply with external laws and regulations.
- Employees have a responsibility to identify and report any breaches of environmental regulations or workplace procedures to help minimise risk and prevent future concerns.
- Resource hazards are workplace hazards such as cabling, faulty equipment or confined spaces.
- Environmental hazards are hazards such as gas leaks, extreme temperatures and noise pollution.
- All employees should understand how to comply with their business's sustainability procedures.
- Employees should contribute to the tools that businesses use to assess sustainability compliance.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Support sustainable work practices

Part A

1. Draw a line to match each legislation, regulation or standard to the environmental hazard it impacts.

» Safe Work hazard identification	» Asbestos
» Anti-noise pollution regulations	» Chemical spill in business environment into adjacent waterway
» Asbestos disposal regulations	» Noise created by office space renovations
» *Pollution of Waters by Oil and Noxious Substances Act*	» All environmental hazards

2. Draw a line to match each term about hazards and risks to its correct definition.

» Resource hazard	» A hazard that can impact the environment around a workplace
» Risk	» A common workplace object or material that is dangerous to workplace safety
» Environmental hazard	» The likelihood a hazard injures employees

3. Draw a line to match each example of a hazard to its appropriate risk.

» Exposed wires coming from electrical appliances	» An environmental hazard that poses a high risk to safety
» A faulty air conditioning unit that does not regulate temperature	» A resource hazard that is a low risk to safety
» Faulty gas heater	» An environmental hazard that is a low risk to safety
» Workplace chairs that aren't ergonomic	» A resource hazard that is a high risk to safety

Part B

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

Case study

OzQuickSupplies is a business that sells stationery to other companies. It is a company with sales, reception, marketing, human resources departments and a distribution warehouse.

Recently the business has had difficulty with its employees not working in a sustainable manner. The business has suffered a decline in staff morale, loss of customers and an excessive amount of wastage caused by their operations.

In response, the business has established the following sustainability procedures.

- Training programs will be put in place to reduce inappropriate language regarding sexuality and gender.
- A checklist will be given to employees about how to dispose of printer cartridges, computers and other electronic waste.
- Better access to the building will be provided for people who live with a disability.
- Customer requests to only sell products with appropriate environmental packaging will be complied with.

1. From the following list, tick the advantages of successfully implementing the above sustainability procedures.

○ Customers will have their needs met and this will make the business more financially sustainable

○ Social sustainability will be supported due to reduced anti-discrimination

○ Environmental sustainability will be increased by reducing e-waste

○ Social sustainability will be supported by increasing access to the building for employees, suppliers and customers of all abilities

○ Workplace safety will be increased

2. After these procedures are implemented, you notice numerous breaches. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow to rectify the incident.

   - ◯ File a written report outlining the nature of the breach
   - ◯ Identify a breach of sustainability policies
   - ◯ Verbally report the breach to the relevant colleague
   - ◯ Determine which personnel member needs to be contacted
   - ◯ Follow up with the colleague to ensure they received the report

3. Draw a line to match each Australian or international sustainability standard to the correct procedure established by OzQuickSupplies.

» ISO 14021	» Social sustainability will be supported by training employees not to engage in discriminatory practices
» AS/NZS 5377:2013	» Allowing customers, employees and suppliers easier access to your workplace is socially sustainable
» The Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010	» Financial and environmental sustainability will be supported by only selling products that are environmentally sustainable
» United Nations has provided its Standards of Conduct for Business	» E-wastage of computers and printer equipment will be managed more sustainably by employees

Topic 3 | Seek opportunities to improve sustainable work practices

3A Identify improvements to your work practices

3B Consult with others to improve sustainability

3C Suggest sustainability improvements in your work area

3A Identify improvements to your work practices

Identifying sustainability work practices that you can improve on will not only help boost your work performance but also improve outcomes for the business

The most effective changes you can make to improve your sustainable work practices will be simple changes that require little or no financial investment. Those that do require investment will be those that develop skills you will need in all jobs and are transferrable across industries.

You should continually look for opportunities to improve sustainability practices and resource efficiency in your home, school or workplace. Identifying these opportunities gives you and your colleagues the chance to implement them and help reduce the environmental impact of your daily activities. It not only helps your career and your business's performance but also the wider community.

Reasons to identify opportunities for improving sustainable work practices

Identifying areas of improvement is an essential step in improving sustainability practices across the whole organisation.

Most workplaces have a number of opportunities for improving their sustainability practices.

This can be for various reasons, including that:

- current practices have been in place for a long time and have not been reviewed with the objective of reducing the environmental footprint
- staff changes have meant that procedures designed to improve sustainability are not being followed thoroughly
- existing procedures for supporting sustainability have been successfully introduced, but further refinement will increase their success
- other changes in the organisation have created additional opportunities for improving sustainability
- The business has been non-compliant according to sustainability legislation, regulations or standards.

Benefits of identifying ways to improve sustainability in your work area

Identifying potential improvements will provide long-lasting benefits to yourself and the business you work for.

The past three decades have seen a change in business outlook. Rather than be concerned solely with their own profits, businesses and industries have recognised that they are all interconnected – with customers, other businesses, their employees and the environment. Therefore, they know they should run their business in a way that does not risk potential harm for others. A United Nations video discussing business sustainability can be found at: aspirelr.link/promoting-sustainable-business

Below are some of the benefits of improving sustainability in your work area – both for you and also the business you work for.

Benefits to employee	Benefits to business
▪ Develops transferrable skills ▪ Contributes to business objectives ▪ Time is used more efficiently ▪ Employees who follow procedures meet task demands ▪ Decreased risk of injury	▪ Gains employees who are skilled in implementing sustainable practices ▪ Objectives are more likely to be met ▪ Tasks are completed by employees more efficiently ▪ Business can promote its sustainable workforce

How to identify opportunities to improve sustainability

You can gain ideas about how to improve your work practices from a wide range of sources.

Opportunities to improve your sustainability practices aren't always immediately obvious. Some employees have the ability to self-reflect and analyse where improvements can be made; whereas other employees need a 'new set of eyes' to look at existing work habits from an outside perspective. In some circumstances, an informal conversation with a staff member may help to identify how sustainability can be improved in a given work area.

Sometimes, more formalised processes are required, especially when there are major underlying issues impacting the sustainability of a business. These processes are more thorough but they are time consuming.

Below are some methods to identify opportunities to improve sustainability.

How to identify opportunities to improve sustainability practises
▪ Informal conversations with experienced colleagues ▪ Customer feedback ▪ Discussion with your manager in a formal meeting or ARM ▪ Comparison to a best practice model ▪ A sustainability audit conducted by an external company ▪ Government notification of non-compliance

Possible financial sustainability improvements to implement in your work area

You can contribute to a business' financial sustainability by following these practices within your role.

Financial sustainability is the ability of a business to survive long-term with procedures in place to run its operations over years and decades, rather than pursue short-term profit. At the management level, financial sustainability can be achieved in a few ways.

The list below shows how you can support these sustainability improvements in your own work area.

Sustainability improvements	How you can contribute
Knowing information about the wide range of products you sell	▪ Providing accurate product information to customers ▪ Passing on customer feedback to management
Engaging with a wide range of customers	▪ Speaking respectfully to customers ▪ Answering questions accurately or referring them to your manager ▪ Passing on marketing material to all customers
Knowing how to communicate with suppliers	▪ Interacting with suppliers courteously ▪ Providing them with required order information ▪ Immediately passing on any payment details to your financial manager
Reporting risks and threats to the business	▪ Reporting financial risks to the manager ▪ Following organisational procedures regarding money

Possible improvements to social sustainability in your work area

Social sustainability within your organisation can be supported by following these practices.

Social sustainability is when a business implements processes that support physically and mentally strong employees who can be positive influences in their families and communities. This type of sustainability focuses on our needs as humans to feel positive about ourselves in our work, and rests on the belief that happier workers are more productive workers.

Again, management is usually responsible for implementing improvements that support social sustainability. But you can support these in your own work role. Below are some examples.

Work-life balance improvements
▪ Participating in work-life balance programs ▪ Supporting an employee who is overworked (for example, by helping them complete tasks or notifying a manager) ▪ Informing your manager of when you intend to take leave
Community engagement improvements
▪ Participating in charity drives organised by your business ▪ Speaking courteously with local community groups when they contact your organisation ▪ Responding to community groups quickly and accurately
Equity and non-discrimination improvements
▪ Using inclusive language ▪ Being willing to go out of your way to help customers and colleagues who live with a disability ▪ Ensuring your rights are upheld by your business through maintaining work logs
Fair labour practice improvements
▪ Ensuring your labour rights are upheld by your business through maintaining work logs ▪ Clarifying any questions about your work rights with your manager. ▪ Being willing to report breaches of labour rights with government bodies

Opportunities to improve environmental sustainability and resource efficiency

Your work role will offer opportunities to contribute to environmental sustainability.

To find opportunities for improvement, consider the times you use common workplace resources such as paper, electricity, gas, fuel and water during your day. Is there any way you can reduce the use of these?

Whenever you put something in the bin, ask yourself whether that waste could have been avoided by using a different method, or whether it could have been recycled if there was a system in place. If you do this for a day or two, you are likely to identify several opportunities for improvement.

You can also use external sources to find opportunities for improvement. Learning more about what other organisations do may help you see opportunities in your organisation through using best practice methods. You might read an article in the paper about an environmental initiative at a different organisation. Your industry organisation may also have suggestions that are relevant to your industry.

Common opportunities for improvement in environmental practices and resource efficiency include:
▪ using renewable resources; for example, buying paper products made from recycled material
▪ accepting less packaging; for example, using re-usable packaging for deliveries or encouraging customers to use boxes instead of bags
▪ recycling more waste; for example, reminding employees to recycle office paper and increasing the number of recycling bins
▪ using less energy; for example, making sure computers and equipment are switched off rather than in stand-by mode
▪ using less water; for example, only running washing machines and dishwashers when they are full and using eco settings
▪ travelling less; for example, using teleconferencing and video conferencing where appropriate to reduce vehicle emissions and fuel usage.

Green office program initiatives

'Green offices' are businesses that consider the impact on the environment when evaluating all their business operations.

These business organisations consider supporting environmental initiatives just as important as making a profit. Many modern businesses are shifting in this direction. This could be because they notice customer preferences indicate they should become 'greener'.

There are a wide range of green office initiatives that your own organisation may be already taking part in. Any initiative that aims to reduce the amount of resources used or minimise waste generated could be considered as part of a green office program.

Some of the initiatives that may be managed as part of a green office program are:
▪ recycling programs such as paper recycling programs that encourage printing and copying to both sides of the page
▪ commingled recycling programs, where items such as paper, glass, cans and plastics are recycled together
▪ biodegradable recycling programs; for example, for composting food scraps
▪ electricity reduction initiatives, such as using power-save options on office equipment and switching equipment off when it is not in use
▪ lighting initiatives, such as changing to more efficient forms of lighting or installing sensor lighting in less frequently used work areas
▪ adjustments to office climates, so that the air-conditioning and heating systems run more efficiently
▪ waste reduction programs.

Example

Green office initiatives

TechXYZ is an office-based telemarketing company that wants to be more environmentally sustainable. They use lots of energy, particularly electricity because their modems and computers are required for researching information or customers. After hiring a consultant to perform an environmental safety audit, they are informed that they are under-performing in a few key areas.

So, they adopt a 'green office initiative', meaning that they want to become an office-based business that is helping to support environmental sustainability.

They bring in the following policies and procedures.

- Recycling programs such as paper recycling programs that encourage printing and copying to both sides of the page
- Commingled recycling programs, where items such as paper, glass, cans and plastics are recycled together
- Biodegradable recycling programs; for example, for composting food scraps
- Electricity reduction initiatives, such as using power-save options on office equipment and switching equipment off when it is not in use
- Lighting initiatives, such as changing to more efficient forms of lighting or installing sensor lighting in less frequently used work areas
- Adjustments to office climates, so that the air-conditioning and heating systems run more efficiently
- E-waste management programs.

All employees are trained in how to participate in these programs. After six months, the business finds their wastage is dramatically reduced, energy consumption has declined and more goods are recycled.

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Which of the following are sustainable work practices for employees? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ You develop skills that are desirable to employees
- ◯ Sustainability improvements can be time savers for you
- ◯ You contribute to task demands of your employer
- ◯ Only your employer receives benefits
- ◯ You will contribute to meeting long- and short-term objectives

Question 2

Which of the following potential improvements to your work follow social sustainability principles? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Responding to community groups quickly and accurately	» Yes	» No
b) Being proactive in assisting customers and colleagues who live with a disability	» Yes	» No
c) Informing younger workers of the importance of maintaining work-life balance	» Yes	» No
d) Passing on financial information to finance manager	» Yes	» No
e) Using language that is inclusive and non-discriminatory	» Yes	» No

3B Consult with others to improve sustainability

Improvements to sustainable work practices are more effective when they involve consultation with others.

While you may be a skilled and knowledgeable employee, it is effective practice to have your work habits reviewed in consultation with others. They can bring a new perspective to what you do in your daily tasks and can offer some insight based on their own experience, training and knowledge. Improving sustainability in your work practice can be reviewed in this way.

Consultation can take place in the following ways:

- Meetings with supervisors
- Working groups with colleagues
- Surveys and feedback
- Annual Review Meetings
- External audits
- Best practice modelling.

Consult with your manager or supervisor

Your manager is a good person to consult with because they are directly responsible for your work tasks.

If you want to introduce sustainable work practices, you can trial some of the simpler ones before consulting a supervisor or manager; for example, printing on both sides of the paper. With more complex practices that may involve funding, you can discuss the idea with your supervisor at a private meeting or raise it in a staff meeting.

Choose a time when you think your supervisor will be receptive to the idea and discuss it in private if you think there will be concerns.

Make your supervisor aware of any work required to implement the idea. Depending on how much set-up is required, or how much funding, you may choose to develop a short proposal to explain the benefits of the idea and justifying any funding required.

Organise a working group with your work colleagues

Working groups can be established to work on a particular task within an organisation.

When searching for ways to improve sustainability in your workplace, your colleagues are a useful source of information and ideas. You can have informal conversations with them about what needs to be done to improve the sustainability of the workplace. These are best suited to minor issues that can be solved quickly.

For more complex sustainability issues, working groups can be set up to discuss multiple solutions and allocate resources and staff to solving the problem. The following process should be applied when setting up a working group:

1. Identify the problem to be fixed.
2. Within the group, share ideas on how to solve the problem.
3. Agree on a solution.
4. Allocate responsibilities to group members to put solution into action.
5. At a later date, meet to review if the solution/s has been effective.
6. Decide if further actions are required.

Using surveys and feedback to improve sustainability

Discussing surveys and feedback can be an effective tool to identify ideas to improve sustainability.

Surveys and feedback provide a snapshot of what colleagues and management think about how the business is performing in a particular area. They differ from informal conversations in the type of information they provide and the way it can be collected. Informal conversations are free-flowing and usually not recorded.

Formalised types of feedback and surveys are formatted with a series of structured questions. They often require the respondent to tick a box or rate something out of 10. There may be some questions that require a longer response, but surveys and feedback will provide results easily tabulated. Digital tools such as Survey Monkey allow you to set up online surveys that employees can fill in and the results are automatically calculated and emailed to you.

Example

Sustainability surveys

This is an example of a sustainability survey you may be asked to respond to. You'll notice the survey is broken up into 'little picture' and 'big picture' sections. The little picture section includes questions based on your day-to-day tasks and how they contribute to sustainability. The big picture section focuses on wider issues of how you think the business is achieving sustainability.

All employees should fill in these surveys to give a business an accurate idea of how it is tracking. The business will gather the results, analyse the data and then decide on changes to existing policies and procedures, or develop new ones.

	Yes	Somewhat	No	Comments
Little Picture				
1. Do you turn off the lights after leaving a room?				
2. Do you hear inclusive language within the workplace?				
3. Do you speak respectfully to customers?				
4. Do you go out of your way to assist customers or colleagues who live with a disability?				
5. Do you use the correct bins when disposing of rubbish?				
Big Picture				
6. Does this organisation spend enough time discussing sustainability?				
7. Do you feel adequately trained in sustainability procedures?				
8. Are the sustainability goals within your work tasks clear enough?				
9. Are existing sustainability procedures making your work day easier?				
10. Are there some sustainability procedures you would like to stop?				

Conventions and protocols to follow when communicating

The manner in which you say something can be just as important as what you say.

Communication conventions are general principles you should follow when communicating with others, whether verbally or in writing. They can apply in work situations or life. Following these conventions enables you to build a rapport with those you are communicating with, and ensure your message is understood and received. Below are some basic communication conventions you should follow, especially when consulting about sustainability procedures.

Communication conventions
▪ Demonstrate respect for those you are listening to ▪ Be prepared to listen as well as talk ▪ Be clear and succinct with your message ▪ Maintain eye contact and demonstrate calm body language ▪ Use an appropriate volume and tone when communicating verbally

These conventions should be applied in all communication contexts. To determine the context, ask yourself:

- Is this formal or informal communication?
- Is this written or verbal communication?
- What tone and volume should I use?
- When should I listen and when should I talk?
- Does this communication require follow-up at a later time?

Protocols are communication procedures that are specific to a particular workplace. Usually, employees are made aware of these in induction meetings and managers enforce them with employees. Below are some possible examples, but protocols are usually designed by an organisation.

Potential communication protocols
▪ All emails must include an email signature ▪ Customers must be greeted in a certain way ▪ A meeting time must be booked before speaking to a manager ▪ Visual communication such as nametags must be worn ▪ Some words and phrases are not allowed to be used in the workplace

Practice Task 9

Question 1

Which of the following are examples of workplace communication conventions and protocols? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Design appropriate financial sustainability rules
- ◯ Book a meeting time to discuss an issue with a manager
- ◯ Be prepared to listen to the person you're talking to
- ◯ Include a signature in your staff emails
- ◯ Ensure you use the appropriate tone

Question 2

To establish sustainability improvement procedures, consultation between management and employees is integral. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow in a 'best practice' model to find better sustainability outcomes.

- ◯ Managers and employees will work according to the sustainability plan.
- ◯ Your managers will identify an example of a business that is successful in incorporating sustainability practices.
- ◯ Management and employees will plan how to implement parts of the model into the business, ensuring all employees know their role.
- ◯ Management will determine which parts of the model can be effectively used by the business.
- ◯ After a period of time, managers and employees will assess if the model has been successful and decide on the next action from there.

3C Suggest sustainability improvements in your work area

Suggesting sustainability improvements can make your workload easier and workplace more efficient.

Making suggestions for improvement can benefit the whole workplace, as well as the environment. How you make a suggestion can affect how successful you are in persuading your team or supervisor to participate. This section provides some information about how to make suggestions.

Making suggestions for improvement is part of your role as a member of a team or work group. If you have thought of something that makes your work easier or reduces the amount of resources used, you should share it so that other members of the team benefit. Your suggestions may help other people in the team and, in turn, they may also make suggestions that can help you.

How to make suggestions

You should follow these protocols when making suggested improvements to sustainability.

How you make suggestions will depend on several things, including the type of suggestion, the nature of your work group, the size of your work group and your supervisor's preferences.

In a relaxed, relatively informal work group, it may be appropriate to offer verbal suggestions during team meetings, without prior notice. This may work for simple suggestions, with little or no funding required; for example, suggesting that everyone use a cardboard box at their desk for recycling office paper to make it easier than walking to the recycling bin several times a day.

A written format may be appropriate for more complex suggestions; for example, ones that involve either a significant set-up effort or initial funding. In this case, you could develop a short proposal to present to your supervisor. Your proposal should include the objective, background, outline, funding, advantages, risks and recommendations. These are described in detail here.

Objective

Briefly explain what the suggestion should achieve; for example, reduce electricity usage, reduce paper cost by reducing the amount of paper used, or other improvements to the work environment. This section should present the key advantages of the suggestion.

Background

Provide relevant background information; for example, whether the suggestion helps resolve any concerns with a current procedure, whether it follows the successful implementation of another procedure, or whether it is a management request to improve environmental performance.

Outline

Briefly explain what is involved in the initiative. Depending on the complexity of the suggestion, you may include an action plan or a communications plan in this outline. The content here will vary widely depending on the suggestion and how much discussion or planning has been completed.

Funding

Summarise what funding is required to implement the initiative; for example, paying for new, energy-efficient light globes to be installed. It is important that any savings are also identified here, even if they will not occur for some time. For example, energy efficient light globes use less power and are generally replaced less often.

Advantages

Briefly summarise the advantages to the environment, the organisation and the work group. It is useful to put the items you think are most persuasive first if you are making a list.

Risks

Identify any risks, inconveniences or possible disadvantages with the suggestion. When identifying them, explain how these risks will be minimised. For example, the risk that people will not use the duplex function on a new printer will be minimised by asking the IT department to set it as a default for everyone's computer.

Recommendations

Briefly recommend implementing the suggestion, with some persuasive comments about the advantages. Use brief, clear sentences and bullet points where possible. A short proposal that generates interest and further discussion is often more effective than a longer, more informative one that could be put aside until your supervisor has time to read it.

Written suggestions may also be appropriate if you work in a more formal environment, or if you do not have regular team meetings where suggestions can be raised. Even if you have prepared a written document, it is usually more effective to arrange a meeting where you review the document with your supervisor, so that you can address any questions or concerns.

When to make suggestions for improvements

Choosing the venue and time to make a suggestion is vital to getting your idea considered.

Deciding how to present a suggestion will depend on your judgment. For example, think about how your supervisor behaves in team meetings. Do they respond favourably to new ideas? Or are they in a hurry to complete the agenda and finish the meeting? Does your supervisor like time to process an idea before deciding what to do?

For complex suggestions or those that may require substantial set-up effort or funding, you should generally try to raise the idea with your supervisor privately, before suggesting it to a group. You may still choose your time carefully; for example, don't make a suggestion if your supervisor seems rushed or under pressure. Wait until they have time to listen properly and consider the suggestion carefully.

If you have a regular private meeting with your supervisor, this is a good time to discuss suggestions. You may choose to raise it briefly with them and then offer to develop a written proposal that gives full details for their approval.

Employees who make well considered suggestions for improvement and follow them through are highly valued by their supervisors and managers.

Follow up your suggestions

You may not always get an immediate response; be prepared to follow up with key decision makers.

Businesses can be very busy places. The sustainability suggestion that you took time to prepare might not get an immediate response from your manager. This could be for several reasons. Perhaps, your manager has not had a chance to read it. Maybe they did read it but haven't had an opportunity to respond to you. Possibly, they could be waiting for a quiet time to discuss it further with you.

You should not get frustrated and assume your hard work has gone to waste. Most likely, there is a legitimate reason why you have not received a response. However, since your suggestion deserves a response, here are some steps you should take if you haven't received one.

- Send an email asking if your manager has had a chance to review your proposal
- Provide a time when you're willing to discuss it further
- Attach a brief reminder of what the suggestion is about.

It's important to maintain your manners and not get frustrated; workplace collaboration rests on good relationships.

Example

Following up your suggestions

Below is an example of an email you can send to follow up a suggested improvement to sustainability. You can use this as a guide and adapt it to your personal work circumstances. Emails are particularly useful if you work in a business where the relevant manager works at a different site or is regularly out of the office.

The text in red can be changed to suit your own details.

Hi Ms Smith,

I'm emailing you to ask if you have had a chance to review my proposal about the environmental initiative.

To remind you, my plan is to have a separate bin for e-waste such as printer cartridges, computers and mobile phones. They could be stored and then dropped off at one of the drop-off points. I was hoping you could design a roster to allow one of us the time to do this once per month.

I understand you're very busy. I'd appreciate the opportunity to discuss this suggestion in person so we could go over some of the finer points of the plan and why I think this is important. My available times are Monday 4.30pm–5.00pm and Wednesday 9.00am–9.30am.

Please let me know a suitable time and place.

Regards

This email effectively reminds your manager of the suggestion and requests a follow up, but also acknowledges they might be busy. The language is respectful but clear.

Packaging improvements

How you make suggestions for packaging improvements may vary, depending on what sort of packaging you are discussing. For example, buying office supplies in bulk or taking re-usable bags for smaller purchases are simple ways to generate less packaging, and they could be suggested verbally.

However, changing the packaging offered to customers or that is used in warehouse deliveries may generate changes in other parts of the organisation. You should gain supervisor approval for any changes that will affect customers but whether it is written or verbal will depend on how complex a suggestion it is.

Generally, changing packaging for warehouse deliveries will involve cooperation from the supplier. It may require some initial investment to fund re-usable pallets, for example, which may be paid for through ongoing savings from not using disposable packaging. This would likely involve the purchasing officer and should therefore be formalised with a written suggestion. Your purchasing team and the suppliers should be able to help with more information.

If you don't get a response initially, be prepared to follow up to seek clarification about your suggestion.

Using digital technology when suggesting improvements to sustainability

Improving sustainability within your work role can be supported by the use of digital tools. These digital tools include computers, smart phones and software, as well as other technologies. Modern employees need to develop their skills in using these technologies and incorporating them into their work roles.

Below is a summary of the functions of digital tools and their use in completing work tasks sustainably, as well as their research abilities.

Examples of digital tools	How they can help complete work tasks sustainably	Research functions
▪ Smart phones ▪ Tablets ▪ Measuring devices ▪ Laptops/computers ▪ Digital cameras ▪ Software programs	▪ Maintaining sustainability records and spreadsheets ▪ Producing documents that establish sustainability plans and targets ▪ Photographic and recording functions used to train new employees to wok sustainably ▪ Enabling immediate communication to clarify sustainability questions	▪ Research best practice models ▪ Finding sustainability procedures ▪ Finding suppliers that produce sustainable products ▪ Product comparison

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Which of the following are suggested improvements to sustainable workplace practices? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Building relationships with a wide range of customers
- ◯ Using more sustainable products
- ◯ Contributing to a sustainability audit
- ◯ Abolishing workplace inductions
- ◯ Participating in community events

Question 2

Which of the following statements about using digital technology for work and research tasks are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Digital technology can support sustainability practices	» Yes	» No
b) Smartphones can be used to research sustainability practices	» Yes	» No
c) You should try and find paper-based copies of sustainability documents	» Yes	» No
d) Digital technology is unreliable	» Yes	» No
e) Employees need to be skilled in using technology when performing sustainable work tasks	» Yes	» No

Question 3

When planning a sustainability improvement, outline the sequence of what you should do if your manager doesn't respond to you.

Number each step from 1 to 4 in the order you would follow.

- ◯ Attach a reminder of what your suggestion was about
- ◯ Send a follow up email
- ◯ Make an initial suggested sustainability improvement
- ◯ Suggest a meeting time

Summary

- Improving environmental sustainability can positively impact all other aspects of the business.
- Employees should continually review their work environment for ideas on how to improve environmental performance.
- Reviewing how we use common resources and seeking to reduce waste that is sent to landfill are effective ways to identify areas for improvement.
- By making suggestions for improvement in the most appropriate way, employees can benefit other employees, the environment and the organisation.
- Deciding when and how to suggest an improvement is essential to getting a positive response.
- Knowing how to use digital technology is essential to implementing sustainable practices.
- Consultation is an important step in refining ideas about sustainability.
- You must follow appropriate communication conventions and protocols when communicating with colleagues.
- There are numerous ways you can consult with colleagues; choose the most effective type.
- You should follow up with managers if they don't respond to you initially.

Learning Checkpoint 3
Seek opportunities to improve sustainable work practices

Part A

1. Draw a line to match each sustainable work practice to its specific benefit.

» Energy-efficient equipment is used in the office	» Employees feel less stressed
» You contribute to an environmental audit	» Business gains financial sustainability
» Establishing work-life balance practices	» Unsustainable practices are identified and removed
» You maintain good working relationships with customers and suppliers	» Energy usage in the office is reduced

2. Are the following examples of collaboration between staff in order to improve resource efficiency? Select yes or no for each one.

a) A one-on-one meeting results in the employee being sent for training to use resources more efficiently	» Yes	» No
b) An employee writes a note in their work journal to improve efficiency	» Yes	» No
c) The manager tells the receptionist to improve their customer service skills	» Yes	» No
d) Management establishes a working group to find ways to use appliances more efficiently	» Yes	» No
e) After an audit, the manager and employees discuss ways to recycle more water	» Yes	» No

3. Which of the following communication conventions or protocols can lead to joint outcomes between employees and managers when discussing sustainability? Tick all that apply.

   - ◯ Following organisational email protocols
   - ◯ Communicating courteously and respectfully
   - ◯ Establishing an agreed time and venue for a formal meeting
   - ◯ Talking louder so the other person must hear you
   - ◯ Listening to each other rather than just talking over the top

Part B

Case study question

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

Janette is employed by a telecommunications firm as a clerical assistant. She is a skilled employee who works efficiently and is tasked with talking to customers, managing documents and re-stocking supplies.

After getting feedback from colleagues about how resources are managed, she finds there are a few problems.

- Old appliances that use a lot of electricity are all around the office
- Lights are left on all day in unoccupied rooms as well as overnight
- Five taps are leaking, three of them with a steady stream
- The rubbish bin is overflowing and the recycling bin is nowhere to be seen

1. Which of the following improvements to the organisation's environmental sustainability can be suggested? Tick all that apply.

   - ◯ Find a new electricity supplier
   - ◯ Contact the Council for a recycling bin and ensure it is prominently displayed
   - ◯ Install sensors on lights so they shut off when a room is not used
   - ◯ Repair taps to ensure no more water is wasted
   - ◯ Purchase more energy-efficient appliances

2. Janette wants to convince her manager of the merits of these changes, so she decides to design a plan to get these changes implemented. Which of the following should be part of her plan? Select yes or no for each one.

a) Janette should be prepared to send a follow-up email after two days if she does not receive a response	» Yes	» No
b) Her first step should be to send her boss an email outlining the problem, her suggested fix and the costings involved	» Yes	» No
c) Janette should survey staff about their opinion on the issue	» Yes	» No
d) Janette should request a meeting time with her manager to discuss the plan	» Yes	» No
e) Environmental sustainability is important so she should start making the changes straight away	» Yes	» No

3. Janette's meeting was successful and she has received approval for the changes. How can Janette use digital technology to complete these tasks and access information? Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Using a laptop to email work tasks to her colleagues who can assist
- ◯ Using her smartphone to research quotes from suppliers for the light sensors
- ◯ Use her digital camera to take pictures and send to the plumber to fix the leaking taps
- ◯ Using a tablet that gives access to an energy efficiency app when shopping for more efficient appliances
- ◯ Using her smart phone to engage in social media marketing