

QUICK FACT SHEET

Module 1: Introduction to work health and safety

The role of work health and safety law

It is important that the wellbeing of everyone in a workplace is ensured. By assessing and minimising risks, organisations strive to eliminate potential health and safety risks.

The WHS Act

Up until 2012, each state and territory had their own laws to deal with work health and safety issues. A set of uniform laws, the WHS Act, was introduced in early 2012 and adopted by the Commonwealth and some states and territories.

Categories of people given obligations under the WHS Act

- Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)
- Worker
- Officer
- Body corporate or corporation
- Person exercising management or control
- Health and safety representative (HSR)
- Health and safety inspector
- WHS entry permit holder

In Victoria, the terms PCBU and worker are not used. Rather, the terms employer and employee serve as their equivalents.

The meaning of reasonably practicable

The term "reasonably practicable" means that a duty holder must – within reason – do what the duty holder can at a particular time to ensure health and safety.

- Duties are not transferrable
- You cannot contract out of your WHS duties
- You can have more than one WHS duty
- More than one person can have the same WHS duty

The role of consultation, cooperation and coordination

Consultation is required in two different circumstances:

1. PCBUs must consult with workers about work health and safety matters.
2. People who owe duties in relation to the same matter must consult, cooperate and coordinate with each other.