



HLTWHS001

Participate in workplace
health and safety

LEARNER GUIDE



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This Learner Guide

HLTWHS001 - Participate in workplace health and safety (Release 3)

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required for workers to participate in safe work practices to ensure their health and safety and that of others.

The unit applies to all workers who require knowledge of workplace health and safety (WHS) to carry out their work, either under direct supervision or with some individual responsibility.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian/New Zealand standards and industry codes of practice.

A complete copy of the above unit of competency can be downloaded from the TGA website:

<https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/HTLWHS001>

About this Unit of Competency Introduction

As a worker, a trainee, or a future worker, you want to enjoy your work and become known as a valuable team member. This unit of competency will help you acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as an individual and in groups. It will give you the basis to contribute to the goals of the organisation which employs you.

It is essential that you begin your training by becoming familiar with the industry standards to which organisations must conform.

This Learner Guide Covers

Participate in workplace health and safety

- I. Follow safe work practices
- II. Implement safe work practices
- III. Contribute to safe work practices in the workplace
- IV. Reflect on own safe work practices

Learning Program

As you progress through this unit of study, you will develop skills in locating and understanding an organisation's policies and procedures. You will build up a sound knowledge of the industry standards within which organisations must operate. You will become more aware of the effect that your own skills in dealing with people have on your success or otherwise in the workplace. Knowledge of your skills and capabilities will help you make informed choices about your further study and career options.

Additional Learning Support

To obtain additional support you may:

- Search for other resources. You may find books, journals, videos and other materials which provide additional information about topics in this unit.
- Search for other resources in your local library. Most libraries keep information about government departments and other organisations, services and programs. The librarian should be able to help you locate such resources.
- Contact information services such as Infolink, Equal Opportunity Commission, Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, Union organisations, and public relations and information services provided by various government departments. Many of these services are listed in the telephone directory.
- Contact your facilitator.

Facilitation

Your training organisation will provide you with a facilitator. Your facilitator will play an active role in supporting your learning. Your facilitator will help you at any time during working hours to assist with:

- how and when to make contact
- what you need to do to complete this unit of study
- what support will be provided.

Here are some of the things your facilitator may do to make your study easier:

- Give you a clear visual timetable of events for the semester or term in which you are enrolled, including any deadlines for assessments
- Provide you with online webinar times and availability
- Use ‘action sheets’ to remind you about tasks you need to complete, and updates on websites
- Make themselves available by telephone for support discussion and provide you with industry updates by email where applicable
- Keep in touch with you during your studies

Flexible Learning

Studying to become a competent worker is an interesting and exciting thing to do. You will learn about current issues in this area. You will establish relationships with other students, fellow workers, and clients. You will learn about your own ideas, attitudes, and values. You will also have fun. (Most of the time!)

At other times, studying can seem overwhelming and impossibly demanding, particularly when you have an assignment to do and you aren't sure how to tackle it, your family and friends want you to spend time with them, or a movie you want to see is on television.

Sometimes being a student can be hard.

Here are some ideas to help you through the hard times. To study effectively, you need space, resources, and time.

Space

Try to set up a place at home or at work where you can:

- keep your study materials
- be reasonably quiet and free from interruptions
- be reasonably comfortable, with good lighting, seating, and a flat surface for writing.

If it is impossible for you to set up a study space, perhaps you could use your local library. You will not be able to store your study materials there, but you will have quiet, a desk and chair, and easy access to the other facilities.

Study Resources

The most basic resources you will need are:

- a chair
- a desk or table
- a computer with Internet access
- a reading lamp or good light
- a folder or file to keep your notes and study materials together
- materials to record information (pen and paper or notebooks, or a computer and printer)
- reference materials, including a dictionary

Do not forget that other people can be valuable study resources. Your fellow workers, work supervisor, other students, your facilitator, your local librarian, and workers in this area can also help you.

Time

It is important to plan your study time. Work out a time that suits you and plan around it. Most people find that studying, in short, concentrated blocks of time (an hour or two) at regular intervals (daily, every second day, once a week) is more effective than trying to cram a lot of learning into a whole day. You need time to ‘digest’ the information in one section before you move on to the next, and everyone needs regular breaks from study to avoid overload. Be realistic in allocating time for study. Look at what is required for the unit and look at your other commitments.

Make up a study timetable and stick to it. Build in ‘deadlines’ and set yourself goals for completing study tasks. Allow time for reading and completing activities. Remember that it is the quality of the time you spend studying rather than the quantity that is important.

Study Strategies

Different people have different learning ‘styles’. Some people learn best by listening or repeating things out loud. Some learn best by ‘doing’, some by reading and making notes. Assess your own learning style and try to identify any barriers to learning which might affect you. Are you easily distracted? Are you afraid you will fail? Are you taking study too seriously? Not seriously enough? Do you have supportive friends and family? Here are some ideas for effective study strategies:

1. **Make notes.** This often helps you to remember new or unfamiliar information. Do not worry about spelling or neatness, as long as you can read your own notes. Keep your notes with the rest of your study materials and add to them as you go. Use pictures and diagrams if this helps.
2. **Underline keywords** when you are reading the materials in this Learner Guide. (Do not underline things in other people’s books.) This also helps you to remember important points.
3. **Talk to other people** (fellow workers, fellow students, friends, family, or your facilitator) about what you are learning. As well as help you to clarify and understand new ideas, talking also gives you a chance to find out extra information and to get fresh ideas and different points of view.



Using this Learner Guide

A Learner Guide is just that, a guide to help you learn. A Learner Guide is not a textbook. Your Learner Guide will:

1. Describe the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve competency for this unit.
2. Provide information and knowledge to help you develop your skills.
3. Provide you with structured learning activities to help you absorb knowledge and information and practice your skills.
4. Direct you to other sources of additional knowledge and information about topics for this unit.

How to Get the Most Out of Your Learner Guide

Some sections are quite long and cover complex ideas and information. If you come across anything you do not understand:

1. Talk to your facilitator.
2. Research the area using the books and materials listed under Resources.
3. Discuss the issue with other people (your workplace supervisor, fellow workers, fellow students).
4. Try to relate the information presented in this Learner Guide to your own experience and to what you already know.
5. Ask yourself questions as you go. For example, ‘Have I seen this happening anywhere?’ ‘Could this apply to me?’ ‘What if...’ This will help you to ‘make sense’ of new material, and to build on your existing knowledge.
6. Talk to people about your study. Talking is a great way to reinforce what you are learning.
7. Make notes.
8. Work through the activities. Even if you are tempted to skip some activities, do them anyway. They are there for a reason, and even if you already have the knowledge or skills relating to a particular activity, doing them will help to reinforce what you already know. If you do not understand an activity, think carefully about the way the questions or instructions are phrased. Read the section again to see if you can make sense of it. If you are still confused, contact your facilitator or discuss the activity with other students, fellow workers or with your workplace supervisor.

Additional Research, Reading, and Note-Taking

If you are using the additional references and resources suggested in the Learner Guide to take your knowledge a step further, there are a few simple things to keep in mind to make this kind of research easier.

Always make a note of the author's name, the title of the book or article, the edition, when it was published, where it was published, and the name of the publisher. This includes online articles. If you are taking notes about specific ideas or information, you will need to put the page number as well. This is called the reference information. You will need this for some assessment tasks, and it will help you to find the book again if you need to.

Keep your notes short and to the point. Relate your notes to the material in your Learner Guide. Put things into your own words. This will give you a better understanding of the material.

Start off with a question you want answered when you are exploring additional resource materials. This will structure your reading and save you time.

Introduction



Specific health and safety concerns will vary according to your job role and the conditions of your working environment. All workers need to be actively involved in maintaining a safe and healthy environment. This Learner Guide introduces the topic of workplace health and safety. You need to refer to workplace policies and procedures as you work. These will give you more detailed information on particular WHS needs and requirements.

Work health and safety (WHS) is a professional requirement to engage in safe work practices that ensure your safety and the safety of your colleagues, visitors and the public. WHS also ensures the workplace environment does not cause physical or psychological harm. This workplace environment includes all places where any aspect of work is conducted. WHS is not optional. Your WHS responsibilities are required by government legislation and should be reflected in the policies and procedures of your workplace.

In this learner guide, you will learn how to do the following:

- Follow safe work practices
- Implement safe work practices
- Contribute to safe work practices in the workplace
- Reflect on own safe work practices

I. Follow Safe Work Practices



There are hundreds of work-related injuries, deaths, and illnesses each year in Australia. Whilst it will never be possible to eliminate all risks, there are things you can do to minimise the risks and protect yourself and others from harm. These include the following:

- Identify hazards upfront.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken when hazards are identified.
- Follow safe workplace practices and the service's policies and procedures.

As a worker, you are responsible for identifying and reporting workplace hazards. Where appropriate, you must take action to minimise or eliminate these hazards.

In this chapter, you will learn how to do the following:

- Follow workplace policies and procedures for safe work practices
- Identify, report and record existing and potential hazards in the workplace
- Follow workplace emergency procedures

1.1 Follow Workplace Policies and Procedures for Safe Work Practices

Your workplace will implement a set of policies and procedures. These will guide you in performing your responsibilities according to safe work practices. These policies and procedures are based on WHS legislation. You must follow these workplace policies and procedures as you work. Doing so is your way of ensuring your organisation and its practices are legally compliant.

1.1.1 Work Health and Safety Legislation

Throughout this unit, you will learn different policies and procedures related to Work Health and Safety (WHS). These are based on national and state/territory WHS legislation. WHS legislation and guidelines are in place to minimise or prevent health and safety risks in the workplace. In general, WHS laws cover various situations that workers in any field may encounter. WHS is a set of legislation and guidelines that set best practices in:

protecting your own health and safety at work

preventing any threat to you and your colleagues' health and safety

preventing any threat to the health and safety of the people you support and other members of the community.

Safe Work Australia is the national government entity that develops and evaluates [model WHS laws](#). From these model laws, states and territories develop and implement their respective WHS laws. These local laws ensure that WHS principles are effectively applied to their context.

The table below contains links to WHS legislation and regulations that apply to each state:

State/Territory	WHS Legislation and Regulations
Australian Capital Territory	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
New South Wales	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017
Northern Territory	Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011
Queensland	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
South Australia	Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012
Tasmania	Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012
Victoria	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017
Western Australia	Work Health and Safety Act 2020 Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022

1.1.2 Work Health and Safety Codes of Practice



Codes of practice provide practical information on how organisations and workers can meet WHS legislation and regulations requirements. The requirements in WHS legislation serve as bases for developing codes of practice related to particular WHS issues.

The model WHS Act and Regulations have a counterpart model code of practice. A model code of practice takes legal effect in a certain jurisdiction when that jurisdiction's WHS regulator has approved it. It is important to note that approved codes of practice are not laws. The codes are practical guides to achieving the standards of health and safety required under the model WHS Act and Regulations.

Further Reading



There are different codes of practice related to work health and safety depending on the work activities covered. Access the link below from Comcare for more information.

[Codes of Practice under the WHS Act](#)

1.1.3 Work Health and Safety Industry Standards

Industry standards show information on applying WHS requirements to specific work industries. The workplace risks are different depending on the industry that you are working in. It is important to have industry-specific WHS standards. These will guide workers on how to address risks that are specific to their work role and environment.

State/territory WHS legislation contains the general legal requirements related to WHS. The legislation impacts industry standards by providing the basic concepts and requirements. Industries must use these as the basis when developing their industry-specific standards.

1.1.4 State/Territory WHS Authorities

The Commonwealth, state, and territory WHS authorities are responsible for implementing, regulating, and enforcing WHS laws in their jurisdictions. In jurisdictions where the model laws have been implemented, each state/territory must make variations to ensure the laws operate effectively in their jurisdictions. In the table below, you will find the website of the WHS regulator for each state/territory:

State/Territory	WHS Regulator Website
Australian Capital Territory	WorkSafe ACT
New South Wales	SafeWork NSW
Northern Territory	NT WorkSafe
Queensland	WorkSafe Queensland
South Australia	SafeWork SA
Tasmania	WorkSafe Tasmania
Victoria	WorkSafe Victoria
Western Australia	WorkSafe WA

1.1.5 Rights and Responsibilities of Workers and Employers

Rights and Responsibilities of Workers

A set of rights and responsibilities governs your work. *Rights* refer to your basic entitlements as a worker. *Responsibilities* refer to what work you must perform and in what manner. These rights and responsibilities are reflected in legislation. They can also be found in the terms and conditions of your employment.

Your rights to work and rights in work are parts of your economic rights. According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), these rights include:

- right to work
- right to just and favourable conditions of work
- right to initiate and participate in trade union activities.

Based on Right to work and rights in work, used under CC BY 4.0.

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You also have rights protected by legislation on:

- discrimination
- fair work
- work health and safety
- privacy and confidentiality.

The related legislation for each right is shown in the table below:

Rights	Related Legislation
Right against any form of discrimination	Age Discrimination Act 2004 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 Sex Discrimination Act 1984
Right to fair work	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010
Right to a healthy and safe workplace	Model WHS laws
Right to privacy and confidentiality	Privacy Act 1988

Your WHS responsibilities as a worker can be found in your state/territory's WHS legislation. Below are some examples of worker responsibilities related to WHS:

Protect your own health and safety.

Do not place others at risk.

Treat others with respect.

Report safety concerns.

Based on [Worker responsibilities](#), used under CC BY 3.0 AU. © Government of South Australia

You may access your state/territory's WHS legislation for more information on your responsibilities.

Duty of Care

Legal obligation to protect others from harm whilst in your care, exposed to your activities, or using your services is a *duty of care*. You should always act toward others with watchfulness, attention, caution, prudence and care.

If workers do not follow the correct standards of care, then the duty of care can be breached. A *breach* occurs when something should have been done or if somebody failed to do something and an individual was harmed or at risk of harm. When you begin a new job, one of the first things you need to know is your employer's exact expectations.

You can find out what is expected of you in the workplace by:

talking with your direct supervisor

reviewing workplace policies and procedures.

Your specific rights and responsibilities, including those related to duty of care, can be found in the WHS legislation of your state/territory.

Rights and Responsibilities of Employers

Similarly, your employer will also have a set of rights and responsibilities. Your employer is responsible for effective and compliant operation and delivery of services. To meet this responsibility, they have the right to:

- initiate, renew, suspend and terminate employees based on legal grounds
- expect adequate work performance from employees according to agreed-upon standards
- make changes to workplace policies and procedures if necessary.

However, remember that in exercising their rights, your employer must not violate your rights as an employee. In the same way, when you exercise your own rights as an employee, you must not violate your employer's rights.

Employers owe a duty of care to their employees. They are responsible for the health and safety of everyone in the workplace. In relation to WHS, your employer has the following responsibilities:

Providing a safe work environment

Providing safe work information, instruction, supervision and training

Providing safety equipment

Recording and resolving WHS issues and incidents

Coordinating with authorities regarding WHS concerns

Monitoring the health and welfare of employees

Consulting employees on workplace safety concerns

Like employees, the rights and responsibilities of employers, including duty of care, can be found in the state/territory WHS legislation.

1.1.6 Workplace Policies and Procedures

Health and safety policies should set out how the workplace will protect all who come in contact with the service. This will also guide you on health and safety practices to implement. Ultimately, putting these practices into place will help you sustain a safe and healthy work environment.

WHS policies and procedures should encompass the ‘whole person’ approach and cover social, mental and physical well-being. They should focus on safety in the workplace. They must reduce or minimise injury or disease and ensure the well-being and health of employees, visitors, and clients. Health and safety policies, procedures and daily practices are your tools to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all.

The purpose of these policies, procedures and practices is to protect:

- employees
- clients
- visitors
- other persons who go to your workplace.

Since everybody is responsible for workplace health and safety, each worker needs to know the location and content of the organisation's policy and be aware of their responsibilities.

The following are examples of topics of workplace policies that may apply in any workplace:

Emergency planning

Emergency equipment

First aid

Accident and incident reporting

Hazard identification & control (Risk Assessment & Hazard Register)

Electrical safety

Harassment and bullying

Workplace stress

Security

Injury management

WHS Information

You should first be introduced to workplace health and safety policies, procedures and practices during your orientation/induction. This is conducted on or before your first day of work.

You will be introduced to the organisation's WHS policies and procedures during this process. This may include information such as:

worker responsibilities

location of toilets and other services

accessible areas

evacuation points

emergency response plans.

Your job description will also have statements about your duties and responsibilities related to work health and safety.

Training and consultation are the most effective way for employees to be updated and knowledgeable about workplace health and safety.

Training

Examples of training that may be delivered or required by a workplace include:

- induction training for new employees
- first aid training for all employees
- ongoing WHS hazard-specific training (e.g. in-house training sessions, posters, information sheets etc.)
- emergency response drills (e.g. emergency, evacuation and fire drills).

Consultation

Consultation helps ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of what is expected of them. It helps workers implement quality practices and be accountable for their actions.

Consultation can occur through a process that is either formal or informal and may involve representational or direct participation. Effective consultation can be done by:

- including WHS matters on all staff meeting agendas
- requesting suggestions from staff
- bringing up concerns to WHS representatives
- referring to WHS matters and information in staff newsletters
- conducting staff surveys on WHS issues
- issuing and displaying WHS information on staff notice boards.

Workplace Procedures

Workplace procedures are specific actions that employees are required to perform. Organisations set procedures for common workplace situations. These procedures must align with related organisational policies. Procedures are also based on legislation and guidelines. However, legal provisions do not provide specific actions to take. This allows an organisation more flexibility in implementing policies. They can align legislation to their workplace context. Procedures may continuously change and improve. They are reviewed and modified to better align with policies and industry best practices.

You must first access and read through workplace policies and procedures. This will help you clarify your understanding of safe work practices. Your organisation has policies and procedures related to different areas of workplace operations. Safe work practices are covered in sections on WHS.

WHS procedures will cover actions that workers must take concerning different health and safety practices, such as:



Read the procedures and see how they apply to your work role. For example, what is expected of you in cases of emergency? How should you report WHS incidents? Your organisational WHS procedures will clarify all of these and similar concerns.

You may also seek help from your supervisor or your workplace health and safety representative when accessing these procedures. They can help you be more compliant with policies and procedures. For example, they will be able to explain further about your responsibilities when it comes to WHS. If some steps are not clear, you can also bring these up with them.



Further Reading



Work safe Tasmania published templates for sample safe work policies and procedures. This will give you an idea of what documents to expect and look for in your workplace. Access these resources through the link below.

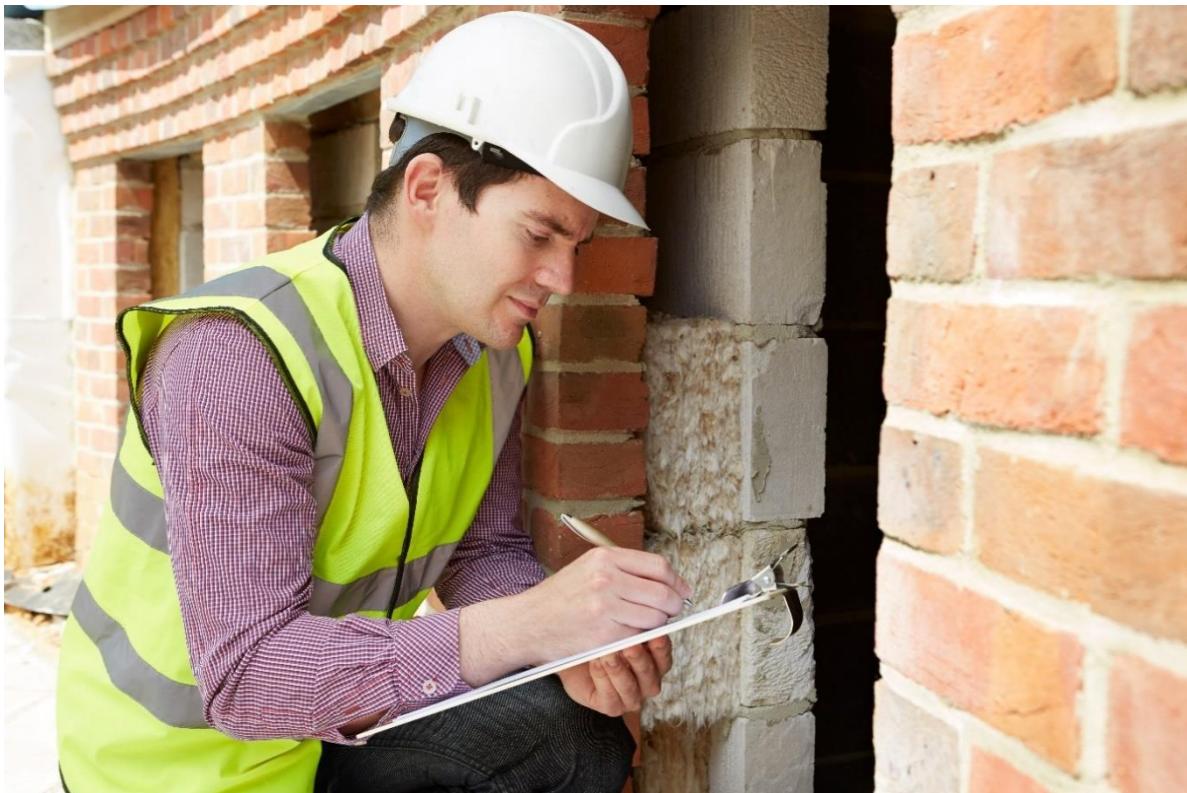
[Safety Policies and Procedures](#)

Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Duty of care is your legal obligation to protect persons under your care from harm.
2. WHS policies and procedures must cover all individuals' social, mental, and physical well-being in a workplace.

1.2 Identify, Report and Record Existing and Potential Hazards in the Workplace



Hazard management is a three-part process. This involves the following:



Hazards are objects, settings or situations that may potentially cause:

- harm to people
- damage to property
- disruption to productivity.

Workplace hazards arise from the following:

Poor work design

Poor workplace environment design

Inappropriate systems and procedures

Inappropriate human behaviour and work practice

Workplace hazards come with risks. *Risk* is an assessment of the probability of a hazard causing harm, damage or disruption in the workplace.

Your responsibility is to identify, report and record workplace hazards and risks. When you promptly report and record hazards, your organisation can respond to eliminate these hazards immediately.

There are two types of workplace hazards: *health hazards* and *safety hazards*.

Examples of *health hazards* include the following:

Chemical hazards, such as cleaning agents

Hazards that involve temperatures, such as radiation from UV rays from the sun, microwaves or computers

Stress or harassment

Viruses and bacteria

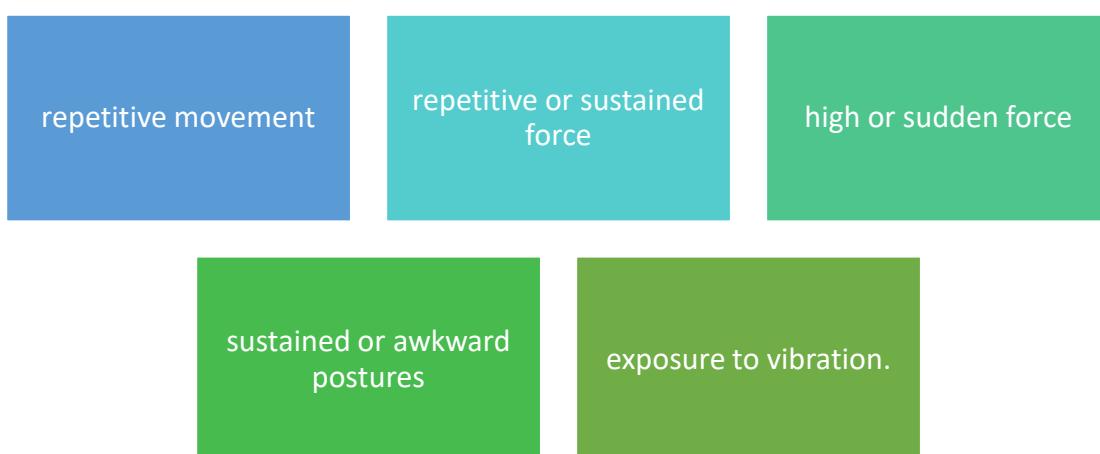
Safety hazards are mainly associated with manual handling, faulty equipment and fire. Every accident, injury or work-related illness is derived from a hazard.

Manual Handling

Manual handling involves tasks that require moving objects or persons by:

- lifting
- lowering
- pushing
- pulling
- carrying
- holding
- restraining.

Manual handling hazards are possible sources of harm resulting from manual handling tasks. Manual tasks become hazardous when they involve:



*Sourced from Lifting, pushing and pulling (manual tasks), used under CC BY 4.0.
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Hazardous manual tasks can lead to risks of injury if not identified and reported early. Identifying and reporting manual handling hazards will help your organisation respond to them. This will help in minimising risks for workers. To identify and report manual handling hazards, you need to perform hazard identification. This will be discussed in the sections under this subchapter. Every organisation will have a proper procedure for hazard identification and reporting.

Hazardous manual tasks may cause risks of injuries for workers. This is why states and territories regulate hazardous manual tasks. You will find state/territory legislation and guidelines related to hazardous manual tasks in the table below.

State/Territory	Hazardous Manual Tasks Legislation and Guidelines
Australian Capital Territory	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety (Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice) Approval 2020
New South Wales	Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 No 404 Hazardous manual tasks – overview
Northern Territory	Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 Hazardous manual tasks
Queensland	Work Health and Safety Act 2011 Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 Hazardous manual task resources
South Australia	Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 Hazardous manual tasks
Tasmania	Work Health and Safety Act 2012 Hazardous manual tasks: Code of practice
Victoria	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 Compliance code: Hazardous manual handling
Western Australia	Work Health and Safety Act 2020 Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 Code of Practice - Manual tasks

Below are some safety measures related to manual handling:

- **Minimise lifting where possible.**
 - Use equipment to carry or lift heavy equipment (e.g. lifting straps, furniture trolleys).
 - Squat or kneel rather than bending from the waist.
 - Ensure large, bulky equipment is stored appropriately and use two people lift or a trolley to move.
- **Ensure equipment is stored effectively.**
 - Position shelving at appropriate levels and provide step ladders to access higher stored items.
 - Store heavy items between the shoulder and knee heights with lighter equipment higher if necessary.

Slips, Trips and Falls

The following may cause you to slip, trip or fall at work:

- Uneven floor surfaces like cracked tiles or torn, curled carpets
- Steps and different floor levels
- Tools, equipment and trolleys left in pathways or doorways
- Clothing caught on furniture or appliances
- Poor lighting
- Wearing the wrong shoes
- Slippery floors

How can you prevent slips, trips or falls at work? You can do the following:

- Remove obstacles in all areas, ensuring clear pathways so that there is nothing to trip over.
- Clean up spills straight away and use wet floor signs to alert others of hazards.
- Use mats on slippery floors.



Hazardous Substances



A *hazardous substance* is any solid, dust, liquid or gas that may cause harm to you. These may include:

- cleaning products (e.g. detergents, disinfectants)
- medications.

Listed below are some ways to prevent risks from hazardous substances:

- Always ensure you read the labels of all products.
- Do not put them into recycled drink or food containers.
- Follow all directions on the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). An MSDS tells you about a hazardous substance and how to use it safely.
- Use PPE (gloves, masks, safety glasses, aprons) when around or handling them.
- Attend training sessions about hazardous substances.

Chemicals can:

cause cancer, asthma and dermatitis

cause a burn to the skin or eyes

destroy throat and nose membranes through repetitive exposure

be absorbed through ingestion, inhalation or through skin contact

be explosive and flammable.

Employers and supervisors must ensure you are trained in using any chemical or hazardous substance used at work. However, you must also look after your health and safety and those of others. This means following workplace policies, procedures and instructions for the correct usage and storage of chemicals.

The most immediate source of information about chemicals are labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

The MSDS detail:

- a chemical's ingredients
- its effects on health
- first aid instructions
- precautions to follow when using the chemical
- information on safe handling, storage disposal
- an emergency contact number.

Ensure you know where the MSDS are stored in your workplace. If in doubt, ask your supervisor to show you.

When handling chemicals, take note of the following important guidelines:

- Always carefully read the MSDS or labels.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- Be aware of potential hazards.
- When an accident occurs, know what action to take.

- Ensure all chemicals are correctly labelled.
- Do not use food or drink containers to store chemicals.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for storage.
- Keep different chemicals separate from each other and leave space in between containers.

Infection Control

No matter how advanced or sophisticated, all facilities face the risk of infections. Infections can have significant consequences. They may cause hospitalisation or even the loss of life in the worst-case scenario. Fortunately, infections are preventable. They can be avoided through proper infection prevention and control practices. These practices aim to stop the spread of infections.

Infection control legislation provides a basis for safe work practices. Each state/territory has its legislation related to infection control. Infection control provisions are found in public health legislation for each state/territory. You will find the related legislation and guidelines for each state/territory in the table below:

State/Territory	Public Health Legislation and Guidelines
Australian Capital Territory	Public Health Act 1997
New South Wales	Public Health Act 2010 No 127 Notification of Infectious Diseases under the NSW Public Health Act 2010
Northern Territory	Notifiable Diseases Act 1981
Queensland	Public Health Act 2005
South Australia	South Australian Public Health Act 2011
Tasmania	Public Health Act 1997
Victoria	Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019
Western Australia	Public Health Act 2016 Public Health Regulations 2017

The spread of infection happens when pathogens are transferred from one person to another. Infections can be transmitted to people through:

breathing in of airborne pathogens

skin contact with contaminated objects

consuming contaminated food

contact with contaminated body fluids.

State/territory legislation will provide the general guidelines for infection control. The legislation will be the basis for workplace regulations, codes of practice and industry standards that workers must follow. In your case, the infection control practices and procedures that you need to follow will be outlined in your organisation's policies and procedures.

To reduce the risks of infection, you must understand and comply with the standard precautions of your organisation. *Standard precautions* are basic precautions for infection control and prevention.

Standard precautions include:

- hand hygiene practices
- hand care practices
- use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
- cleaning procedures
- handling, transporting and processing linen
- disposal of contaminated waste
- handling and disposal of sharps.

1.2.1 Identify Existing and Potential Hazards

Hazards may be classified based on their current state. *Existing hazards* can cause reasonable harm to people in the workplace in their current state. For example, frayed or loose electrical wires are existing hazards. They will cause harm to people who will accidentally come in contact with them. You must address existing hazards as soon as possible. This will ensure that they do not harm people, damage property or disrupt productivity.

Potential hazards may not cause any consequences in their current state. However, these hazards may cause harm when under certain conditions or circumstances. For example, sharp objects such as scalpels, needles and knives are potential hazards. They will not cause harm if used properly and according to standards and guidelines. However, they have the potential to cause harm if used inappropriately or without care.

The common workplace hazards that you must recognise and identify are as follows:



Psychosocial hazards



Physical hazards



Chemical hazards



Ergonomic hazards



Biological hazards

In the table below, you can see descriptions and examples of each type of workplace hazard:

Type of Hazard	Description	Examples
Psychosocial	Hazards that may potentially cause psychological or physical harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workplace bullying ▪ Fatigue ▪ Mental stress ▪ Workplace violence ▪ Changes in the workplace ▪ Client aggression
Physical	Human and environmental factors or conditions that can harm health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hazardous manual tasks ▪ Body stress and strain ▪ Confined spaces ▪ Electricity ▪ Heat ▪ Heights ▪ Noise ▪ Vibration
Chemical	Chemicals in the workplace that may harm persons through inhalation, skin contact or ingestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skin irritants ▪ Carcinogens ▪ Respiratory sensitisers ▪ Chemical explosions and fire ▪ Corrosion ▪ Chemical reactions

Type of Hazard	Description	Examples
Ergonomic	Environmental and physical factors that may cause musculoskeletal injuries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Equipment layout and operation ▪ Lifting, pushing and pulling ▪ Lighting ▪ Noise ▪ Systems and computer programs ▪ Task, job and workplace design ▪ Workstation design
Biological	Organic substances that present threats to health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Viruses ▪ Biological toxins ▪ Spores ▪ Fungi ▪ Pathogenic micro-organisms ▪ Bio-active substances

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Workplace Procedures for Hazard Identification

The common way to identify hazards in the workplace is through physical inspections. An *inspection* involves observing work surroundings for existing or potential hazards. This is usually part of the responsibilities of a supervisor or manager, but you may help by identifying hazards in your assigned work area. By reporting any identified hazards to your supervisor, you will help yourself and others in the workplace to avoid risks of harm.

Look around you and ask yourself the following questions:

Does the environment pose risks of harm to yourself and other workers?

Can the demands of work tasks and activities possibly result in forms of harm for workers?

Are tools and equipment well maintained so as not to cause injuries to users?

Are there any recent changes in the workplace which may affect health and safety or cause harm to workers?

You may identify hazards while performing your other tasks. Ensure to list down these hazards to report them to your supervisor later on. If the identified hazard presents immediate risks to health and safety, you must act to minimise or eliminate the hazard. This mostly applies to hazards that can be easily addressed. For example, if you see a cord from an electrical appliance blocking a hallway, you do not have to wait to report this to your supervisor. You can easily remove the obstruction by yourself. However, you may also feel like you cannot minimise or eliminate the hazard right away. In this case, seek immediate help from others, such as your co-workers or supervisors.

1.2.2 Report Hazards to Designated Persons

After identifying hazards, you must report this to designated persons in your workplace. *Designated persons* are people in the workplace in charge of addressing hazards.

Depending on your organisational structure, the designated person may be in the following roles:

A supervisor or manager

A health and safety representative (HSR)

A health and safety committee (HSC) member

To properly report hazards, you must first identify the designated person in your workplace. In this case, your reference will be the organisational policies and procedures. You can determine the designated person by accessing your organisation chart.

After identifying the designated person, you may proceed with reporting the identified hazard. To do this, you must follow your organisation's procedure for hazard reporting. Review your organisation's policies and procedures and check the steps you must take in reporting hazards.

1.2.3 Record Hazards According to Workplace Procedures

After reporting hazards, you must also ensure that they are properly documented. This will provide your organisation with a reference if these hazards must be further investigated. Hazard records are also useful references in conducting risk assessments for the workplace. Recording hazards will also give you and your colleagues an idea of preventing the same hazards from reappearing in the workplace.

Your organisation may also have a procedure for recording hazards. This is usually done using a hazard record or report form. If there is such a form in your organisation, you may use that to record the identified hazard. You may also be required to record hazards without a template, so you have to write the report from scratch. This will be a simple task as long as you have all the details about the hazard you have identified.

A basic hazard record will require you to provide the information shown in the table below:

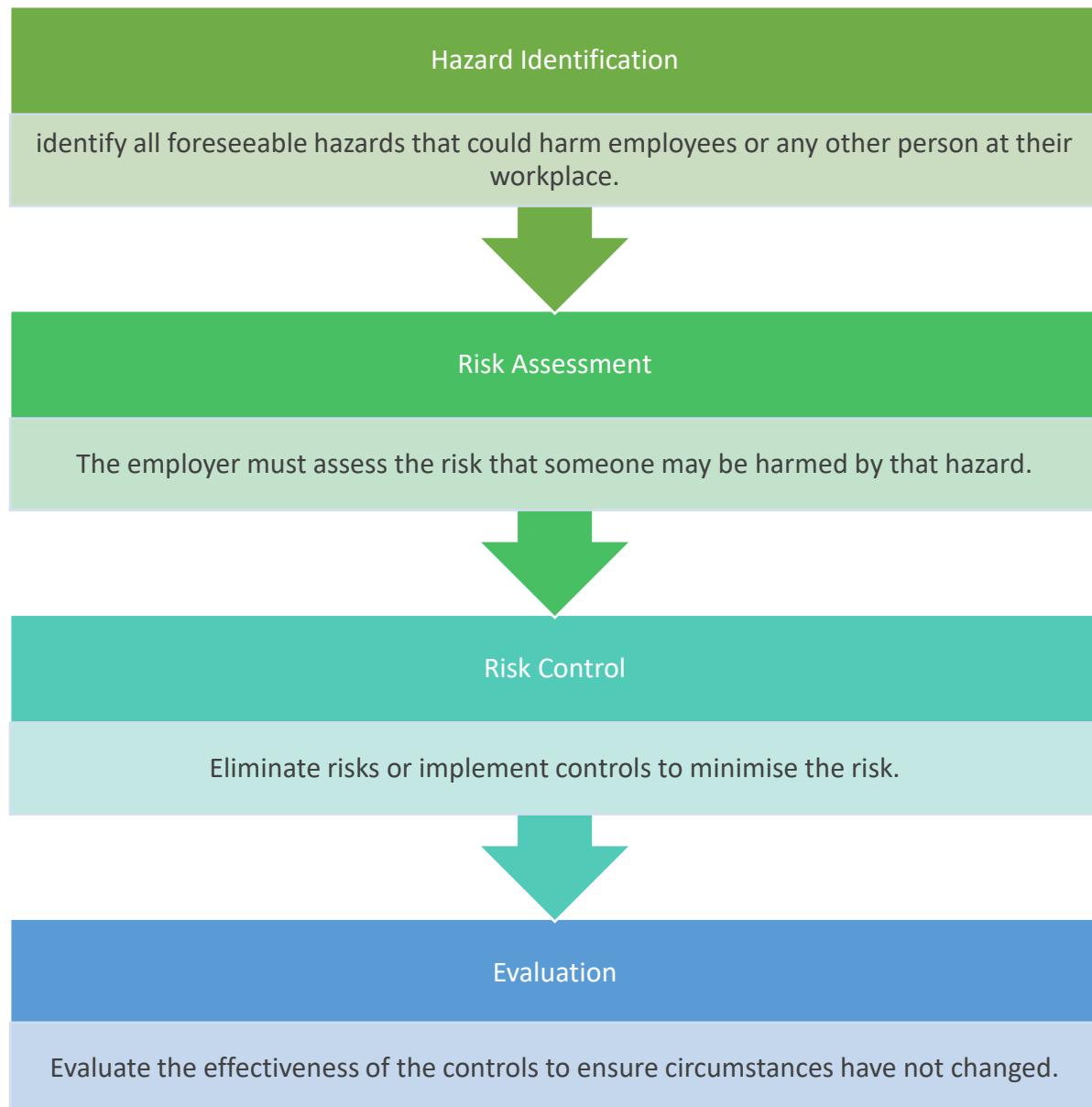
Parts of a Hazard Record	Required Information
Reporter's information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name ▪ Designation ▪ Supervisor's name ▪ Contact details
Hazard details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Date and time identified ▪ Location ▪ Description of the hazard
Risk assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possible injuries, illnesses and incidents resulting from the hazard, and their severity ▪ Likelihood of these injuries, illnesses and incidents ▪ Level of risk
Action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Description of the actions taken (if the hazard was immediately addressed) ▪ Suggestions for corrective actions or control measures (if the hazard has not been addressed at the time of writing) ▪ Persons responsible for implementation ▪ Deadline for implementation

After filling out the hazard record, submit this to your supervisor. This will inform the organisation of the hazard. Your organisation can use this information and consider steps to minimise or eliminate the hazard.

Risk Assessment

The process of hazard identification will often require a risk assessment. A risk assessment will dictate if action must be taken to address hazards. It will also determine how immediate the action must be implemented.

When a risk assessment shows that people are at risk due to a hazard, employers must take action to eliminate the hazard or minimise the risk. The Smart Art below shows this process:



Access your organisation's risk assessment form and fill out the required information. The risk assessment will generally contain the following details:

- **Date when the risk was identified**

This refers to the date when you identified and recorded the risk.

- **Description of the risk identified**

This describes the harm that could potentially occur and is thereby being assessed.

- **Likelihood of the risk occurring**

This is a scale that rates how likely the identified risk will occur. This may also be represented through a numerical scale depending on the template used. The table below shows the different levels of the likelihood that may be assigned to a risk:

Likelihood	Description
Almost certain	Is expected to occur in most circumstances
Likely	Will probably occur in most circumstances
Possible	Could occur at some time
Unlikely	Not likely to occur in normal circumstances
Rare	May occur only in exceptional circumstances

- **Impact on the workplace if the risk occurs**

This is a scale that rates how significantly the risk will affect the workplace if it occurs. This may also be represented through a numerical scale depending on the template used. The table below shows different levels of impact that may be assigned to a risk:

Impact	Description
Insignificant	Injuries not requiring first aid
Minor	First aid required
Moderate	Medical treatment required
Major	Hospital admission required
Severe	Death or permanent disability

- **Risk rating**

This is an overall rating given to the risks based on the likelihood of the risk occurring and the impact or consequence if the risk occurs. This risk rating is used to determine the level at which a risk must be prioritised. The matrix below shows the different risk ratings based on the likelihood and impact of a risk:

Likelihood	Consequence				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Severe
	1	2	3	4	5
A (Almost certain)	High	High	Very High	Very High	Very High
B (Likely)	Moderate	High	High	Very High	Very High
C (Possible)	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Very High
D (Unlikely)	Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
E (Rare)	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High

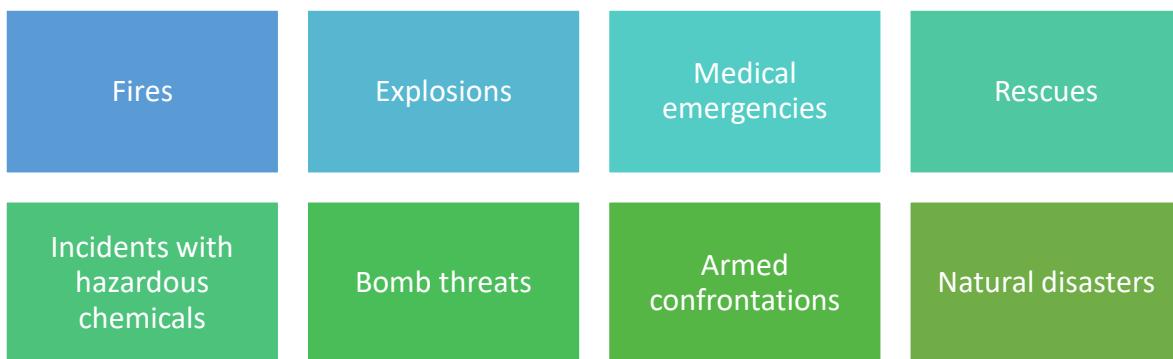
Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Hazards are objects, settings or situations that may potentially cause:
 - harm to people
 - damage to property
 - disruption to productivity.
2. Existing hazards are those that can cause reasonable harm in their current state. Potential hazards may cause harm when under certain conditions or circumstances.

1.3 Follow Workplace Emergency Procedures

Workplace emergencies are unforeseen incidents in the workplace that may cause harm to people. Emergencies may include the following:



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As part of WHS procedures, there are specific procedures to follow in emergency cases. WHS laws and regulations require organisations to provide an emergency plan for the workplace. This emergency plan includes the following:



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Each part of the emergency plan will contain important information like the following:

- **Emergency procedures** – What to do in cases of emergency
- **Evacuation procedures** – What to do when the workplace must be evacuated
- **Notification of emergency service organisations** – Who to contact in cases of emergency
- **Medical treatment and assistance** – How to provide treatment and assistance in medical emergencies
- **Effective emergency communication and coordination** – How to communicate and coordinate the emergency response to people in the workplace
- **Testing of emergency procedures** – How to and how often to test if emergency procedures are effective
- **Information, training, and instruction for workers** – What workers must know in emergency cases



You must know the organisational protocols for emergencies. In the table below, you can see examples of emergencies and the procedures you must follow for each:

Emergency	Procedures
Fire emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evacuate clients/visitors/staff from the area of immediate danger to a safe location and close doors. 2. Raise the fire alarm. 3. Dial 000 and provide details. 4. If necessary, evacuate clients/visitors/staff from the building using the proper exit routes. 5. Do not allow any people to re-enter the building following evacuation. 6. Assemble everyone in the nominated evacuation assembly area and complete a roll call. 7. Before leaving the area, report the evacuation status to the manager/fire brigade. 8. Report any clients/visitors/staff still in the building to the manager/fire brigade.
Medical emergency	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply first aid. 2. Dial 000 and provide details. 3. Follow the operator's instructions.

Emergency	Procedures
Bomb threats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not interrupt or hang up on the caller. Let them finish their message. 2. If asked for a response, keep it short. 3. Record all information (i.e. when the bomb is timed to explode, where the bomb is located, the type of bomb, what it looks like and what will detonate it). 4. Try to attract the attention of people around you without alerting the caller. 5. Try to keep the caller in conversation and listen carefully—you should try to gauge the caller's state of mind (e.g. highly stressed, anxious). 6. Avoid saying anything that will upset the caller or increase their anxiety levels. 7. After the call, alert emergency services and start evacuation procedures.

Evacuation Plan

Some emergencies will require you to evacuate the building. An *evacuation plan* provides procedures that must be followed in an evacuation. Evacuation plans should include the following information:

- How to alert building occupants in the event of an emergency
- The duties and responsibilities of the nominated supervisor in an emergency
- How to proceed to the designated assembly area
- The order of evacuation when evacuating from multilevel buildings
- The locations of the designated assembly areas

The evacuation plan should be displayed throughout the workplace and include a floor plan of the workplace layout, clearly showing exit locations and mustering points. The plan should also allocate specific duties and responsibilities to individual staff members.

In summary, to ensure that you follow workplace emergency procedures, you must take the following steps:

Define and clarify your role in the organisation.

Look at the scope of policies and determine which responsibilities apply to your role.

Review and follow emergency procedures related to your role and responsibilities.



Multimedia

For more information on emergency procedures, watch the video below:

[An Introduction to Emergency Preparedness](#)



Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Workplace emergencies are unforeseen incidents in the workplace that may cause harm to people.
2. WHS laws and regulations require organisations to provide an emergency plan for the workplace.



Learning Activity for Chapter 1



Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

II. Implement Safe Work Practices



Workplace safety procedures exist so you can create a safe, healthy environment where hazards are kept to a minimum. Organisations establish these WHS procedures and practices to ensure that all employees know what to do:

- to minimise risk in the workplace
- when incidents or injuries occur
- to manage existing risks or hazards.

In this chapter, you will learn how to do the following:

- Identify and implement WHS procedures and work instructions
- Identify and report incidents and injuries
- Maintain safe housekeeping practices in own work area

2.1 Identify and Implement WHS Procedures and Work Instructions



No policy or procedure can guarantee safety. By implementing good practice principles, organisations promote the well-being and safety of all individuals. In the process, they can also minimise the risks of harm.

Training and education ensure that everyone in an organisation understands their responsibilities. All staff should feel confident and comfortable in discussing safety issues.

Training and support also promote an awareness of the appropriate standards of safety. This ensures organisations meet their duty of care to all individuals present in the workplace at any given time.

A *policy* describes the guideline or rule to be followed. A policy states the organisation's stance on various topics relating to the service provided. A policy also gives a framework for decision making and ensures consistent practice.

Procedures detail what actions can be taken to adhere to policies. They also outline the implementation process for these actions.

Work Health and Safety Procedures

Procedures may be further broken down into the following parts:



As mentioned in Section 1.1.6, to identify WHS procedures, look for guidelines that relate to health and safety practices, such as:

- ergonomic requirements
- critical incidents
- decision-making and consent
- reporting and notification
- medication administration
- emergency response
- infection control.

Part of identifying these procedures is knowing how they relate to your work role. This will help you filter out which procedures you should pay attention to. WHS procedures cover the entirety of practices that an organisation must follow. Some procedures may be the concern of some work roles but not of others. You must focus your time on your responsibilities and see how they relate to the responsibilities of your colleagues.

After identifying the WHS procedures, you can now focus on how to implement them. *Implementation* means performing your workplace tasks while remaining compliant with WHS procedures. To ensure the proper implementation of WHS procedures, use these steps as a guide:

1. Identify the workplace task.

What task will you be performing in the workplace?

2. Identify the WHS procedures relevant to the task.

What procedures must you follow to perform the given task satisfactorily?

3. Perform the task as required in WHS procedures.

What actions must you take to complete the task while being compliant with WHS procedures simultaneously?

Work Instructions

A *work instruction* is a sequence of steps that describe the work required to achieve a task efficiently and safely using the tools in your workplace.

A work instruction will be written by experienced staff who will consider the following factors:

- Hazard inspection
- Risk assessment
- List of PPE required
- List of tools and equipment required
- Work sequence and required job outcome

To implement work instructions, you must perform your workplace tasks according to these instructions. Following the work instructions should allow a new staff member to safely and efficiently complete the task after an example demonstration.

You may encounter work instructions in the following forms:

Visual (e.g. videos, photos, signs and symbols)

Verbal (e.g. your supervisor's verbal instructions)

Written (e.g. workplace procedures)

Visual work instructions may include videos on how to perform tasks. There may also be instructional documents with photos showing how to perform certain tasks. Some tasks may require visual demonstrations, especially if they have to be performed in a certain way to guarantee safety. You may consult your supervisor or co-workers about accessing visual resources. They will be able to help you locate where to find visual resources that will help you perform your work.

Verbal instructions will mostly come from your supervisor. Before performing a task, your supervisor may give you guidance on how to do the task in a way that minimises risks. This usually happens when you are a new employee or doing a certain task for the first time. Ensure to listen to your supervisor's instructions to avoid missing important precautions and other details. Practise active listening by being focused on what they are saying. Ask questions to clarify information that you do not understand. You must completely understand a task before performing it to avoid risks.

You can also follow work instructions by accessing written workplace documents. Your organisation may have documents containing procedures for specific tasks related to your role. These procedures will be better contextualised in your workplace. For example, say your organisation uses specific equipment for certain tasks. Your organisation must provide written procedures on safely using these pieces of equipment.



Multimedia

For more information on workplace safety, watch the video available below:

[Workplace Safety](#)



Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. A policy gives a framework for decision making and ensures consistent practice.
2. WHS procedures detail what actions can be taken to adhere to a workplace WHS policy.
3. Implementation means performing your workplace tasks while remaining compliant with WHS procedures.
4. A work instruction is a sequence of steps that describe the work required to achieve a task efficiently and safely using the tools in your workplace.
5. Visual work instructions may include videos on how to perform tasks.
6. Ask questions to clarify information that you do not understand. You must completely understand a task before performing it to avoid risks.



2.2 Identify and Report Incidents and Injuries

The process for identifying incidents and injuries is similar to those for hazards and risks. The only difference is that for hazards and risks, identification is pre-emptive. This means you identify hazards and risks to minimise and prevent harm before anything happens. In contrast, incidents and injuries refer to events that have already happened. This means you identify incidents and injuries to address the harm or damage they caused.

Incidents are unexpected events or occurrences which may result in serious injury, illness or property damage. Below are some common incidents you may encounter while working:

Fire or explosion

Equipment malfunction

Electrical shocks

Building/structure collapse

Severe weather conditions

Substance leakage/spillage

Spread of infectious diseases

You must be particularly aware of *notifiable incidents* for work health and safety. An incident is notifiable if it results in:

- a person's death
- a person's serious injury or illness
- a dangerous incident.

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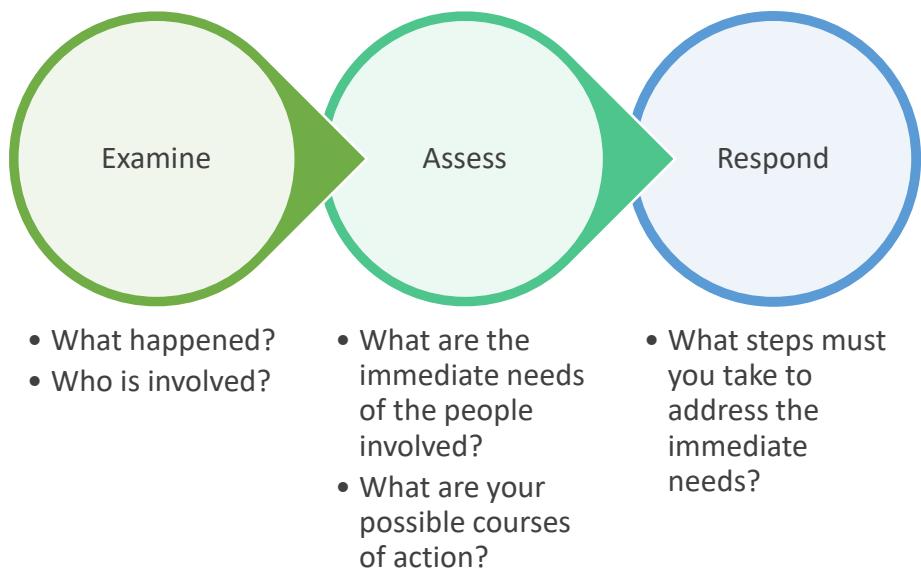
Injuries are physical damages to a person's body because of an unexpected event or occurrence. The table below shows some common injuries that may result from incidents:

Injury	Description
Strain	Tearing of muscles due to overstretching
Bruise	Skin pain and discolouration caused by breaking of blood vessels
Sprain	Stretching or tearing of ligaments
Fracture	Breaking of bones
Concussion	Brain injury caused by head trauma
Cut	Tearing of the skin surface
Abrasions	Open skin wound caused by the rubbing of skin against a rough surface
Burn	Damage to layers of the skin and/or tissue caused by friction or heat

Your organisation will provide you with procedures to guide you in identifying incidents and injuries. These procedures should also be covered during your pre-employment orientation. Incidents and injuries may happen anytime, so you must always be prepared with the proper course of action.



Incident and injury identification will follow this general process:



An *examination* involves going to the site of the incident/injury and making observations. Your goal is to gather as much information as you can. After which, you must prepare a response by assessing the situation. Based on your examination, you must identify the people's immediate needs involved in the incident/injury. You must consider all your options for response and decide on the best course of action. Finally, you must respond to the incident/injury based on your assessment. You must respond first before reporting. Ensure that the people involved in the incident/injury get the care they need. You must also ensure that the incident site is safe. The site should not cause further harm to people in the area. These three actions are presented as steps. However, remember that you will be encountering emergency incidents. This means you must be quick in examining, assessing and responding.



Incidents and injuries must be reported to designated persons. In your case, you must report incidents and injuries to at least one of the following designated persons:



Your *supervisor* has the authority and experience to address different incidents and injuries. They will be familiar with different situations that you may encounter at work.

The *HSR* is an employee elected as the representative in work health and safety matters. The HSR ensures the organisation follows health and safety practices. As such, the HSR can also help you address incidents and injuries. The HSR can help you record incidents and injuries so that they can be prevented in the future.

It may also be necessary for some workplaces to have a *Health and Safety Committee (HSC)*. The HSC is in charge of discussing and addressing health and safety issues in the workplace. The advantage of having a committee is that all workplace sectors are well-represented. The committee can discuss different incidents and injuries. They can implement decisions to address health and safety issues.

In the previous section, you learned how to identify incidents and injuries. Reporting will involve informing designated persons about the details of the incident/injury. This is usually done after you have identified the incident/injury and responded to the immediate needs of the affected people. However, you will have to report right after identifying an incident/injury in some cases. This applies to cases that you have not been trained to respond to. For example, the incident involves equipment that you do not know how to operate. Attempting to move the equipment may cause further damage or injury. In this case, it is best to report to your supervisor or another designated person immediately.

In reporting incidents and injuries, you must follow workplace reporting procedures. Doing so ensures that the incident/injury is addressed correctly, without causing any further damage or harm. Workplace procedures will inform you about what to do when encountering an incident or injury.

The following is an example of a step-by-step process showing how to report incidents and injuries:

Verbally report the incident/injury to a designated person. Provide them with the details you found during the identification phase.

Seek advice on the next steps you can take to respond to the incident.

Respond to the incident following the designated person's advice.

Document the incident using the Incident Report Form.

Submit the completed Incident Report Form following workplace procedures.

Your organisation may follow a similar process. Remember to check your organisation's policies and procedures to confirm reporting details. For example, your organisation may prescribe a different form to use when reporting. In this case, you must obtain a template for this form and use it to make your report.

Reporting to the WHS Regulator

There will also be incidents that will require the organisation to report to the WHS regulator. You must notify your regulator about serious safety incidents. As a recap, notifiable incidents are those that result in:

- a person's death
- a person's serious injury or illness
- a dangerous incident.



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For notifiable incidents, the employer must report to WHS authorities. In your role, you must be aware of the proper line of reporting. In the case of notifiable incidents, follow the usual reporting process to your direct supervisor. Notifiable incidents are serious cases that require the attention of regulatory authorities. In such cases, you must report to your supervisor as soon as possible so that your employer can also fulfil their reporting duties.



Further Reading

Your employer has the responsibility to contact the authorities during notifiable incidents. Learn more about notifiable incidents through the links below:

[Report an incident in the workplace](#)

[Responding to an incident](#)



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. In reporting incidents and injuries, you must follow workplace reporting procedures. Doing so ensures that the incident/injury is addressed correctly without causing further damage or harm.
2. When reporting incidents, you must be as detailed as possible to come up with appropriate responses and control measures. Follow your organisation's incident reporting procedures for guidance.

2.3 Maintain Safe Housekeeping Practices in Own Work Area

Housekeeping refers to maintaining cleanliness and orderliness in work areas to avoid hazards that could cause harm to people in the workplace. Workplaces should be kept neat, tidy and free from clutter. Objects should not obstruct walkways and spills should always be promptly mopped up.

A large part of your job role and responsibilities towards WHS involves ensuring proper and regular housekeeping. Every worker plays a role in keeping the workplace safe. The table below shows common housekeeping practices for different workplace areas:

Areas	Housekeeping Practices
Benches, tables, and chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clean all benches, tables and chairs after use with warm soapy water. After the initial cleaning process, a disinfectant can be used if required. ▪ Check that all furniture items are clean and ready for the morning at the end of the day. ▪ When cleaning benches, tables and chairs, clean both the top and bottom surfaces. ▪ Clean the legs of all furniture. ▪ Stack chairs to one side rather than placing them on tabletops when you clean the floor.
Floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Always place a ‘slippery when wet sign’ near any spill or while mopping to notify everyone of the risks. ▪ Sweep and mop floors regularly to ensure the floor is safe from slip and trip hazards. ▪ Clean the floor with environment-friendly floor cleaners. ▪ Use the appropriate bucket and mop for each area being cleaned. ▪ Do not mix different floor cleaners unless instructed to do so.

Areas	Housekeeping Practices
Bins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep and maintain separate bins for different types of waste. ▪ Ensure that bins containing bodily excretions, food waste or medical waste are always covered and emptied at the end of each day. ▪ Clean bins regularly, following the schedule required by your organisation.
Toilets and bathroom areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clean the toilets and bathroom areas every day. ▪ Clean any water spillages immediately to avoid slipping accidents. ▪ Clean all parts of the bathroom, including the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inside and outside of toilets ○ Hand basins ○ Taps ○ Window ledges and windows ○ Mirrors ○ Floors ○ Bins ▪ Clean bathroom areas with hot water, detergents and disinfectants to avoid the spread of germs.

Checkpoint! Let's Review



1. Housekeeping refers to maintaining cleanliness and orderliness in work areas to avoid hazards that could cause harm to people in the workplace.
2. Your housekeeping responsibilities will vary depending on your work role. Everyone in the workplace must contribute to effective housekeeping.



Learning Activity for Chapter 2



Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

III. Contribute to Safe Work Practices in the Workplace



Your biggest contribution to safe work practices in the workplace is to follow policies, procedures and work instructions accurately. You must constantly monitor hazards and risks while carrying out your duties and performing your job role.

In some instances, WHS policies and procedures may need to be updated. For example, there could be a reason why a staff member cannot follow them. This may be because the staff member does not fully understand, or they may need some extra training and guidance about what is required. The supervisor must be informed of these circumstances. You must not ignore this as it could lead to some major workplace health and safety issues later.

Your experiences and suggestions will help improve your organisation's safe work practices. If you and your colleagues do not contribute, safe work practices may not improve. Practices may not be able to adapt to future emerging care situations.

In this chapter, you will learn how to do the following:

- Raise WHS issues with designated persons according to organisational procedures
- Participate in workplace safety meetings, inspections and consultative activities
- Contribute to safe workplace policies and procedures in own work area

3.1 Raise WHS Issues With Designated Persons According to Organisational Procedures

It is important to raise WHS issues following workplace policies and procedures. Each workplace is different, so you must note the process that must be followed when you start work.

Employees and employers must work together to make their workplace and work practices safe and effective. This means taking a team approach. Adopting a team approach to maintaining WHS can help build a culture of safety. Developing a culture of safety is an effective way of reducing and preventing accidents. It does, however, rely on the attitudes, beliefs, actions and behaviours of all involved.

Staff can be notified of hazards through several communication tools, including the following:

Memos	Emails	Flyers
Pamphlets	Minutes from WHS meetings	Tags on equipment (e.g. 'out of order')
Warning signs (e.g. 'wet floor' signs)	Handwashing posters displayed near sinks	Information posters (e.g. posters on the proper use of PPE)

Workers are entitled to comprehensive information about any work processes or substances being used. Such information includes labels on chemical containers and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). These data sheets have become a recognised means of communicating the potential hazards of processes and substances.

Warning signs provide safety information. An example is a 'No smoking' sign displayed near chemicals. You should display signs, using either symbols or relevant community languages, at appropriate places to cater to non-English speaking employees. Safety signs will be discussed further in Section 4.1.1.

Raising WHS issues is covered in Section 48(1)(b) of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. Workers must be given the opportunity to raise any WHS issues they have in the workplace. They must also be consulted during the process of handling these issues.

A WHS issue may become apparent in many ways, including where a worker:

becomes aware of a potential hazard

becomes aware of an existing hazard

experiences a near miss or an accident.

WHS issues may result from hazards and risks in existing work settings. However, issues may also arise from implementing new work settings (e.g. new equipment, processes and procedures).

If there are issues that you feel pose a risk to work health and safety, you should follow procedures set by your workplace. Generally, this involves reporting your concerns to designated persons. Designated persons in your organisation may include:

- your direct supervisor
- health and safety representative (HSR)
- health and safety committee (HSC).

Below are some sample procedures for reporting WHS issues:

- Report all issues encountered to your supervisor.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality when making reports.
- Document and report any client issues, including changes to the client's condition, to your supervisor.
- Report all hazards and incidents to your supervisor using the appropriate workplace forms.

If your workplace does not have a procedure in place, the WHS Regulations 2011 has a default procedure which can be found in Section 23. Under regulations, the procedure begins when any party to the issue tells the other party about the issue and its nature and scope.

(4) The parties must have regard to all relevant matters, including the following:

- (a) the degree and immediacy of risk to workers or other persons affected by the issue;
- (b) the number and location of workers and other persons affected by the issue;
- (c) the measures (both temporary and permanent) that must be implemented to resolve the issue;
- (d) who will be responsible for implementing the resolution measures?

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If all parties have agreed to a resolution, details of the issue and the resolution can be set out in a written agreement. A copy of this written agreement must be provided to all parties to the issue and to the health and safety committee if requested.

If a resolution has not been reached, any party to the issue may refer it to the regulator, who will then appoint an inspector to assist.



You may also report your concerns to a health and safety representative. A health and safety representative is elected by workers in a workgroup and has the following functions:

To represent members of the work group in matters relating to WHS

To monitor the compliance of the organisation with the WHS act in relation to members of the work group

To investigate work health and safety complaints from members of the work group

To investigate potential risks to the health and safety of members of the work group, arising from the conduct of the PCBU

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Larger organisations will also have health and safety committees (HSC). This committee, composed of representatives from different sectors, will address WHS issues.



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. You may raise WHS issues with designated persons, such as:
 - your direct supervisor
 - health and safety representative (HSR)
 - health and safety committee (HSC).
2. Resolutions on WHS issues must be agreed upon, in writing, by all parties involved.

3.2 Participate in Workplace Safety Meetings, Inspections and Consultative Activities



All organisations will hold meetings, inspections and consultative activities regularly. These activities will be the best time to raise workplace health and safety issues. You may raise identified hazards or incidents that have occurred at the workplace.

It is best to report safety issues to your supervisor. This is the usual practice in most organisations. Even if you feel like you can resolve issues yourself, it is still best to consult a supervisor. The supervisor needs to be aware of workplace health and safety issues. Such issues need to be documented for future reference to inform decisions and responses.

WHS Committees and Representatives

WHS committees and representatives are involved in all safe work practices. They have a significant role in meeting obligations in providing a safe workplace. The WHS committee provides a forum for management and employees to consult about workplace hazards.

The WHS Committee may identify hazards through:

consultation with employees and management

consultation about proposed changes to equipment or work processes

monitoring of a formal hazard reporting system

monitoring of incident/accident reports

workplace inspections.

3.2.1 Workplace Safety Meetings

Safety meetings are held regularly to discuss maintaining health and safety concerning specific work tasks. The frequency of these meetings will depend on the nature of your work. If there are many hazards and risks associated with your work, safety meetings might be held more often.

In safety meetings, you can contribute by:

- helping in reviewing safe work practices
- discussing how recent incidents were managed (the cause and response, how it can be prevented, etc.)
- discussing actions taken to eliminate or minimise recently reported hazards and risks.

Take along any observations, checklists or hazard reports you have completed to team meetings. These documents can support your discussions. Always think about ways to solve any issues you will raise. Your managers and supervisors will ask for your input on resolving issues. If you have already researched the issue beforehand, you can share your informed suggestions and solutions. This shows that you are willing to contribute to developing and implementing policies and procedures.

Workplace meetings can range from short informal discussions to more formal meetings with written agendas, a chairperson and someone appointed to record the minutes. You will attend staff meetings, which means that you can talk about issues that concern you. Some workplaces may include WHS as a permanent item on every meeting agenda. However, sometimes, weeks will go by without mentioning hazards or policies and practices. The fact that it is there as a permanent item means you have the opportunity to draw people's attention to things that need change or improvement.

3.2.2 Inspections

You can expect two general types of inspections at the workplace. These include:

internal inspections

inspections by WHS inspectors.

- **Internal inspections**

Organisations use inspections to prevent workplace injuries proactively. Inspections help identify and address hazards before they cause harm. These may also occur after an incident has happened or when a new process or procedure is introduced.

The process of inspecting involves observing the following work aspects:

- Physical work environment
- Equipment, materials and substances used
- Work tasks and how they are performed
- Work design and management

They are usually conducted by a health and safety representative (HSR) or WHS practitioners and advisers.

Your input is important during inspections. Your firsthand experience will help the inspectors identify possible sources of workplace hazards. You can contribute to internal inspections by cooperating with the inspectors. During internal inspections, you can contribute by:

- providing inspectors with your observations when:
 - moving around your work environment
 - using different equipment, materials and substances
- sharing challenges that you face when performing work tasks
- sharing identified workplace hazards
- answering questions that the inspectors may have regarding the workplace.

▪ Inspections by WHS inspectors

A WHS inspector is an individual who a regulator has appointed. They may be a staff member of the regulator, appointed under a corresponding WHS law, or a person in a prescribed class.

A WHS inspector may inspect to:

- monitor compliance with WHS standards
- investigate a complaint or incident
- assist with dispute resolution.



Based on content from [Regulatory guide - Inspectors' powers relating to documents and interviews](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia 2020

The WHS Act 2011 contains sections relating to your responsibilities as a worker during inspections. During inspections, you must:

- give the inspector reasonable help to exercise their powers
- tell the inspector who has custody of, or access to, certain documents
- produce required documents for the inspector while the inspector is at the workplace or within a specified period
- answer any questions asked by the inspector.

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Multimedia

Safe Work Australia provides tips for conducting safety inspections in the workplace through the video below:

[Top tips for doing a safety inspection in your workplace](#)



3.2.3 Consultative Activities

WHS management works best if everyone is actively involved in its development and implementation. Consultative activities use the knowledge and experience of all employees in the workplace. Employees are familiar with workplace processes and hazards and often have useful ideas about risk control.

WHS legislation requires the establishment of committees and representatives to encourage consultation. There are many ways to consult. The key is to adopt an approach that works in a particular work environment. For example, a particular consultation process suitable in an office setting may not work in a medical facility.

Consultative activities start with the election of a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) or the formation of a Health and Safety Committee (HSC). To review, the HSR is the workplace representative in charge of addressing work health and safety matters. The HSC is a group of workplace representatives tasked to discuss and address work health and safety issues.

Consultative activities are led by the HSR or the HSC. Consultative activities include the following methods:

Consultations with individual workers on health and safety concerns

Consultations with management on the implementation of health and safety policies and procedures

Discussions and fora on emerging health and safety issues in the workplace

You can contribute to consultative activities by:

- asking questions and raising concerns about health and safety
- reporting health and safety problems that you encounter while working
- sharing your opinions on current work health and safety practices
- suggesting steps to take in addressing health and safety issues.

Effective consultation with employees leads to more accurate risk assessments. This will result in practical solutions to reduce workplace hazards. It may also result in increased staff morale and productivity. Consultation may also provide opportunities to address other work issues aside from those related to WHS.

Regardless of which consultation method is used, the input of all employees must be valued and encouraged. Successful consultation requires:

- regular opportunities for employees to provide input
- a non-threatening environment
- a positive workplace culture embracing collaborative problem-solving
- management representatives who listen to and act on agreed solutions
- employees who are willing to change work practices when necessary.

Staff involved in consultative activities need support, such as:

access to WHS consultants or representatives for advice

interpreter or counselling services

guidance on conflict resolution.

Support should be formally organised and clearly understood by all stakeholders. Employers may develop policies and procedures related to consultation. Organisations must support employees who are active in the consultative process. This will help in the timely and equitable resolution of WHS issues.



Further Reading

Codes of practice provide guidance on how workers and organisations can discuss health and safety matters. Learn more by accessing the link below.

[Codes of Practice Under the WHS Act](#)



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Workplace safety meetings are held to discuss maintaining health and safety in the workplace.
2. Safety inspections may be conducted through the following:
 - Internal inspections
 - Inspections by WHS inspectors.
3. Effective consultation with employees leads to more accurate risk assessments. It may also result in increased staff morale and productivity.

3.3 Contribute to Safe Workplace Policies and Procedures in Own Work Area

Preparing a policy demands consultation with WHS representatives, the WHS committee, employees, and, if requested, relevant unions and employer associations.

These people must also be consulted when the policy is reviewed and updated.

Service practices must be based on policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly. All staff members should be involved in reviewing and developing policies. This supports an understanding of organisational practices. As an employee, you might have some concerns about a policy or procedure. A co-worker may raise concerns about the facilities. There may also be updates to relevant legislation and documentation. These are all reasons why policies and procedures require review.

Review and development may involve simple amendments or more extensive research. However, they should address the following:

Compliance with legislative requirements

Consistency in practice

Needs of staff members, families and management

Current and effective implementation

The first step in a policy review is to consult with all stakeholders. This presents an opportunity for everyone to contribute. Policies are examined and areas that need to change are identified. Research is then carried out, both internally and externally. Then a draft policy is written to be reviewed by everyone. When final amendments have been made, the policy is then trialled, evaluated and finally endorsed, replacing any previous version.

Development of Policies and Procedures

You can make suggestions for additions or changes to policies and procedures based on your work experience. You can also suggest new policies and procedures that must be developed to address certain WHS issues.

Your employer may consult with you on the following matters to help develop safe workplace policies and procedures:

Potential hazards and their associated risks from the work you perform

Ways to eliminate or minimise risks

The working environment (e.g. facilities, conditions such as temperature, light, noise)

Changes that may affect the health or safety of workers

Decisions about the procedures related to the health or safety of workers

Opportunities and ways to provide information and training to other workers

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You can contribute to the development of safe work policies and procedures by:

- attending and participating actively in WHS-related meetings
- providing your input on organisational documents
- listening and building upon ideas and opinions of other team members
- making recommendations on changes to work practices.

Implementation of Policies and Procedures

You may also contribute to the implementation of safe work policies and procedures. Managers and supervisors are mainly in charge of implementing policies and procedures. You can help them by reporting any issues in implementation. For example, you can report these to your supervisor if there are unclear procedures. Misunderstandings in interpretation may lead to improper work practices.

In your work role, implementing policies and procedures means:

- following safe work policies and procedures in your practice
- identifying, recording and reporting hazards and assessing risks
- identifying and reporting breaches to policies and procedures
- using equipment according to guidelines and operation manuals
- interacting with colleagues, clients and other stakeholders according to policies and procedures.

Health and Safety Committees

You may also choose to contribute to your organisation as a member of the health and safety committee (HSC). The WHS Act 2011 grants workers the right to request the establishment of a health and safety committee. This committee is composed of workers and representatives chosen by the organisation.

The committee is responsible for:

facilitating cooperation between the employer and other workers in developing and implementing measures to promote and maintain workers' health and safety

assisting in developing health and safety standards, rules and procedures

any other functions prescribed by legislation or as agreed upon by the employer and the committee.

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Being a member of your organisation's health and safety committee is a great opportunity for contribution. You can contribute to the development and implementation of WHS policies and procedures. Committee members have access to information such as risk assessments and incident reports. This allows the committee to discuss changes that will improve working conditions.



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Contributing to the development of policies and procedures involves suggesting ways to:
 - add provisions related to safe work practices
 - modify existing provisions to address emerging WHS issues.
2. Contributing to the implementation of policies and procedures involves reporting issues. These issues relate to how WHS provisions are being currently implemented.
3. All staff members should be involved in reviewing and developing policies. This supports an understanding of organisational practices.
4. You can report unclear procedures to your supervisor to prevent misunderstanding. These misunderstandings in interpretation may lead to improper work practices.



Learning Activity for Chapter 3

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

IV. Reflect on Own Safe Work Practices



In the previous chapter, you learned about different ways to contribute to safe work practices. Your contributions will help the organisation review and improve practices. Aside from helping the organisation improve, you should also know how to improve your practices. Ongoing learning and reflective practice can be used to build your professional knowledge and develop understanding.

Reflection is a continuous process of thinking honestly, deeply and critically about all aspects of professional practice. It is about looking back on how you performed your work role. What did you do well? What can you improve? How can you improve? Reflection on your practice will lead to individual improvement. This will help your organisation deliver safe services. Without self-reflection, you will not know how to improve your work role. Organisational compliance may also be affected when your practice does not improve.

Through reflection, you will be able to identify how to maintain the workplace's safety. It is also an important practice that you can use to take care of your psychological health.

In this chapter, you will learn how to do the following:

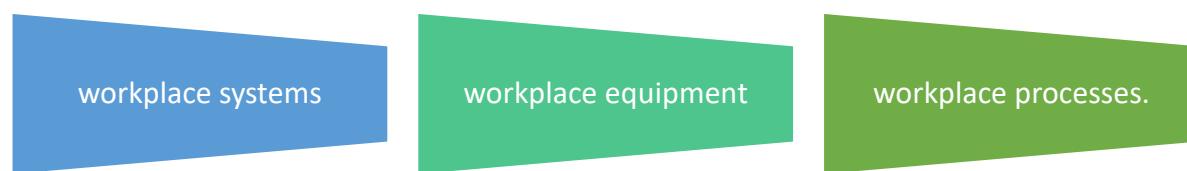
- Identify ways to maintain currency of safe work practices
- Reflect on and report own levels of stress and fatigue

4.1 Identify Ways to Maintain Currency of Safe Work Practices

Maintaining currency involves continuous review and analysis of safe work practices. You are looking at possible areas of improvement. You will analyse practices based on guidelines, regulations, policies and procedures. You must identify ways to maintain the currency of safe work practices so that:

- you remain compliant in your practice
- your organisation remains compliant with WHS laws
- your clients receive the best services.

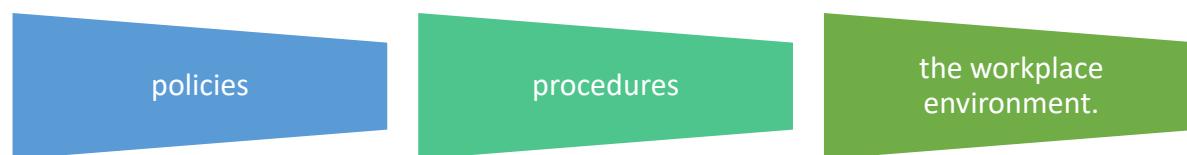
Safe work practices may relate to:



All of these must be regularly maintained and updated to ensure that you provide the best care for clients.

4.1.1 Workplace Systems

A *workplace system* refers to the organisation's approach to:



A good workplace system has documented policies and procedures. This will ensure compliant and effective workplace practices.

Review and Updating of Policies and Procedures

WHS policies and procedures need to be reviewed regularly. Organisations need to check if these still meet legislative and industry requirements. This will also help in identifying the needs and capabilities of workers. Their effectiveness in achieving health and safety standards must also be examined. The frequency of reviewing depends on the work involved. The process of reviewing involves consultation between the management and the workers.

Inspection of the Workplace Environment

Workplace inspections are regular examinations of the workplace. These should be regularly done to identify and address issues addressed as quickly as possible. Inspection of the work environment should involve both the physical and psychosocial aspects. In the table below, you will find some guide questions you can use when inspecting the work environment.

Aspects of the Work Environment	Guide Questions
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are workers provided with the right tools and resources? ▪ Are housekeeping practices observed? ▪ Are there hazards that need to be addressed?
Psychosocial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are workers consulted on matters that will affect their health and safety in the workplace? ▪ Are workers given tasks appropriate to their skill level? ▪ Do workers receive sufficient training? ▪ Do workers have access to employee assistance programs? ▪ Does the workplace actively promote policies against discrimination, harassment and bullying? ▪ Are policies and procedures consistently and fairly implemented?

These considerations are within the control of the management of the organisation. However, as a worker, you have a say in the kind of workplace environment you need. Organisations need input from their workers to identify workplace systems problems.

As a worker, you are the most aware of what you need to perform your role effectively. Coordinate closely with your organisation to maintain a good workplace environment. You may meet with your colleagues to identify areas for improvement. Together, you can bring concerns up to your supervisors.

Seeking Training on Workplace Systems

Now and then, your workplace may introduce new systems. These may be in the form of:

- new policies and procedures
- changes in the work environment
- changes in processes and equipment.

Whenever new workplace systems are introduced, you must seek proper training on these systems. Doing this will help you stay updated with the safe work practices involved in the new systems.

The table below shows some key safety guidelines for different aspects of safe work practices.

Aspects	Key Safety Guidelines
Personal safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use PPE or personal protective equipment (e.g. aprons, mesh gloves, shoes, masks, eyewear) when necessary. The safekeeping and maintenance of this equipment is the responsibility of the employee. ▪ Follow safety instructions when carrying out routine tasks. Do not rush, take shortcuts or get distracted. ▪ Do not overload trolleys. Always push rather than pull. ▪ If carrying a load, do not pile it too high. ▪ Lift correctly using your legs, not your back. ▪ Use a ladder to reach items stored up high. Ensure the ladder is stable and well balanced. ▪ Ensure that electrical equipment is well maintained. ▪ Follow safety rules for the use of chemicals.

Aspects	Key Safety Guidelines
Electrical safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check all electrical appliances and power outlets ▪ Use all equipment for the purpose for which it is intended. ▪ Do not touch electrical equipment with wet hands or when standing in water. ▪ Check regularly for frayed cords, loose connections, exposed wires, etc. ▪ Take care with electrical leads (e.g. ensure they are not too long, avoid running over them with equipment and wind loosely during storage). ▪ Do not unplug an appliance by pulling or yanking the cord. This will loosen the connection between the cord and plug and cause sparks and short circuits. ▪ Store equipment correctly. ▪ Check power outlets for broken/cracked plates, overloading of circuits, etc. ▪ Request maintenance staff to check the equipment annually.
Maintenance of floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dry floors immediately after cleaning them. ▪ Wipe up spills immediately. ▪ Use the appropriate hazard signs to warn passers-by of spill hazards. ▪ Cover floors, especially in the back of house areas, with non-slip materials. ▪ Check carpets for any torn or loose edges.

Aspects	Key Safety Guidelines
Chemical safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling chemicals. ▪ Read the material safety data sheet. ▪ Store dangerous chemicals in a separate storeroom that is well ventilated and well lit. ▪ Ensure all chemicals are clearly labelled with instructions for use and safety precautions. ▪ Do not store chemicals in empty soft drink bottles or other food/beverage containers. ▪ Prohibit smoking near dangerous chemicals. ▪ Ensure that employees are trained in the proper handling, application and disposal of chemicals.
Storage safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Floors in storage areas should be easy to clean and finished with a non-slip surface. ▪ Store most frequently used items where they can be easily reached. ▪ Stack items on high shelves safely and at an appropriate height. ▪ Do not store anything on the floors of passageways, as this prevents easy traffic flow. ▪ Use ladders to reach items stored on the top shelves. Never perform a balancing act by stacking tables and stools on top of each other.

Meaning of Work Safety Signs

Another way to maintain safe practices is by following work safety signs. Safety signs are only effective if you understand their meaning. Safety signs are composed of standard and commonly used imagery related to health and safety.

Universally recognised signs are identified by their background colour, text or image colour and shape. Standard safety signage should be displayed throughout the workplace to alert staff of any potential risks and hazards in the area.

Signs and symbols you see in the workplace remind you of the presence of hazards. These physical reminders will help you follow good workplace health practices.

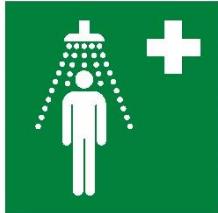
Below are some examples of safety signs:

Dangerous Goods		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Explosives	This sign indicates that there is an explosive nearby. These explosives can produce hazardous amounts of gas, smoke, sound or heat.
	Flammable	This informs the presence of flammable or combustible materials.
	Oxidising	The sign indicates the presence of oxidising substances that may cause or intensify the fire, such as bleach or oxygen used for medical purposes.
	Gases under pressure	This sign is used to inform the presence of gases stored under pressure, which may explode when heated or cause cryogenic burns.

Dangerous Goods		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Toxic	This sign indicates infectious chemicals that, at low and very low levels, can cause damage to health.
	Health hazard	Also known to mean 'caution', this indicates the presence of harmful and irritant substances.
	Corrosive	This indicates the presence of chemicals that can destroy living tissue on contact nearby.
	Serious health hazard	Also known to mean 'long term health hazards'. These indicate chemicals that can cause serious and long-term damage to health.
	Environmental	This sign indicates the presence of chemicals that may be harmful to the environment.

Fire Emergency Information		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Fire blanket	This sign indicates the storage location of a fire blanket. A fire blanket is a specialised material used to extinguish a fire by removing its oxygen supply.
	Fire telephone	This sign indicates the location of the fire telephone. A fire telephone (or fireman's telephone) allows firefighters to communicate with each other from the location of the fire.
	Fire hose reel	This sign indicates the location of the fire hose reel. The fire hose provides a supply of water that building occupants can use to fight fire in its early stages.
	Fire equipment	This sign indicates the location of fire equipment. These are equipment such as blankets, hoses, extinguishers and others that building occupants can use in a fire.
	Fire stairs	This sign indicates the location of the fire stairs. Fire stairs serve as a means of exit from a building caught on fire.
	Fire extinguisher	This sign indicates the location of a fire extinguisher. Fire extinguishers are fire protection devices that contain fluids that can put out or control small fires.

Emergency Equipment		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Automated external defibrillator (AED)	This indicates the location of an automated external defibrillator (AED). The defibrillator is used to save a person's life in cardiac arrest. It sends electric shocks through the chest and into the heart.
	Emergency exit	This indicates the location of an emergency exit that can be used for evacuation.
	Break to obtain access	In cases of not being able to open the emergency exit, this indicates a cover that requires breaking to obtain access to the emergency exit device.
	Emergency eyewash station	This indicates the location of an emergency eyewash station. Emergency eyewash stations provide on-the-spot decontamination. They allow workers to flush away hazardous substances that can cause eye injury.
	First aid	This indicates a first aid station/area nearby, which provides immediate emergency care to an injured person.

Emergency Equipment		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Emergency shower	This indicates the location of the emergency shower. The emergency shower is an area where workers flush away hazardous substances from their bodies and clothing to minimise the effects of accidental exposure to chemicals. Emergency showers can also be used effectively to extinguish clothing fires or flush contaminants off clothing.
	Emergency stretcher	This indicates the location of an apparatus used for moving patients who require medical care.
	Emergency breathing apparatus	This indicates the location of an emergency breathing apparatus. This self-contained breathing apparatus provides breathable air in an immediately dangerous environment.
	Signal lamp	This sign indicates that a portable lamp, also known as an Aldis lamp, is available. An Aldis lamp has a trigger operated shutter used to transmit Morse code.

Emergency Equipment		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Emergency phone	This indicates a phone specifically provided for making calls to emergency services and is most often found in a place of special danger.
	Emergency stop button	This indicates the presence of a kill switch, which is used to stop a machine quickly when there is a risk of injury or when the workflow requires stopping.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Protective eyewear must be worn	This means that protective eyewear such as goggles must be worn to prevent eye injuries from flying debris, dust, radiation, and chemical splashes.
	Hearing and eye protection must be worn	This means that hearing protection (e.g. earmuffs) and eye protection (e.g. goggles) must be worn to protect the worker from occupational noise and debris.
	Face mask must be worn	This means that face mask must be worn to help block large-particle droplets, splashes, sprays or splatter that may contain germs (viruses and bacteria).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Safety shoes must be worn	This means that safety shoes must be worn to prevent foot injuries due to slippery surface, rolling objects, sharp piercing edges, hot objects, splinters, electricity, chemicals, etc.
	Hard hat must be worn	This means that hard hats must be worn to protect the head from flying objects, collision, falling debris, and shock from falling objects, among other hazards.
	Gloves must be worn	This means that gloves must be worn to save the user's hands and fingers from unnecessary wounds such as cuts, blisters, splinters, skin punctures or heat and chemical burns.
	Apron must be worn	This means that apparels such as apron must be worn to protect the worker from any spills and contaminated surfaces that can lead to health conditions when touched without any protective layer.

Hazards		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Poisonous substance	This sign indicates the presence of substances that can cause poisoning.
	High voltage	The sign warns against the possible risk of electric shock.
	Tripping hazard	This sign prevents tripping or falling from uneven floors and steps that no one might notice.
	Caution: Hot surface	This warns the person that hot surfaces are present and contact should be avoided to prevent injury.
	Highly flammable	This notifies personnel of potential fire hazards and combustibles in the area.

Hazards		
Sign/Symbol	Name	Meaning
	Beware of moving vehicles	This sign is placed in the vicinity where many moving vehicles are found. It warns of potential accidents from wandering personnel, such as children.
	Biological hazard	This indicates the presence of organic substances that threaten the health of humans and other living organisms.
	Caution: Slippery when wet	This sign warns people that they can slip and fall on the floor when wet.
	Sharps disposal	This sign identifies the location of receptacles that are specifically allocated to dispose of sharps, such as used syringes and blades.
	Radiation hazard	The symbol identifies sources or containers of radioactive materials and areas of potential radiation exposure.
	Sharp objects nearby	This sign indicates the presence of sharp objects that can cause cuts, scrapes, and possible infection.

4.1.2 Workplace Equipment



Your work role will require you to use different types of equipment regularly. You must maintain your knowledge of practices involving workplace equipment. You must always familiarise yourself with the latest equipment used in your line of work. This will include knowing how to do the following:

- **Operate equipment safely**

When providing new equipment, your organisation must also provide you with instructions on using the equipment. When you are not provided with adequate instructions, you may risk injuring yourself or others while using the equipment.

- **Maintain equipment so that it can be used safely**

Maintenance checks need to be performed regularly. Equipment malfunction may cause injuries to yourself and others in the workplace. When performing maintenance checks, keep the following in mind:

- Is the equipment working as it should?
- Are there any damages to the equipment?
- Are faulty equipment or machines tagged appropriately (i.e. marked as ‘not for use’ or ‘maintenance in progress’)?
- Is there enough space around the equipment to allow proper operation?

Maintaining currency of safe work practices in relation to workplace equipment will involve the following:

Undergoing training on how to operate and maintain new equipment

Seeking supervision in operating new equipment

Accessing online and print resources about best practices related to new equipment

4.1.3 Workplace Processes

Workplace processes refer to how your organisation operates. These include processes for:



Workplace processes may be regularly updated to reflect current and best practices in client care.

Performing Workplace Tasks

Participating in safety meetings is a good way for you to refresh your knowledge of performing tasks. Other topics that may be discussed in safety meetings are:

- responses to incidents or injuries
- actions taken to address hazards and risks.

You will also be kept updated on health and safety issues present in your workplace by attending these meetings. You can also ask your supervisor to observe you as you perform your tasks. This way, you can immediately get feedback and take steps to improve your performance.

Risk Management

Risk management is identifying hazards and risks and taking measures to remove or minimise them. The processes within risk management are:

- hazard identification
- risk assessment
- risk control
- review of the effectiveness of control measures.

Hazards can be observed in:

the physical work environment

the equipment and materials used

the performance of work tasks

work design and management.

Regular assessments of the workplace should be observed so that:

- existing hazards can be immediately addressed
- potential hazards can be proactively dealt with.

Of course, if you observe a hazard outside of the scheduled assessment, there is no need to wait for the scheduled time. Immediately inform your supervisor or another designated person. Remember to follow your workplace's policy for reporting hazards.

Emergency Preparedness

Your organisation should have an emergency plan that all workers should be familiar with. Your organisation should also provide training in the form of:

- regular fire and earthquake drills
- first aid seminars
- demonstrations of an emergency shutdown of equipment.

For more information, review the discussions under Subchapter 1.3.

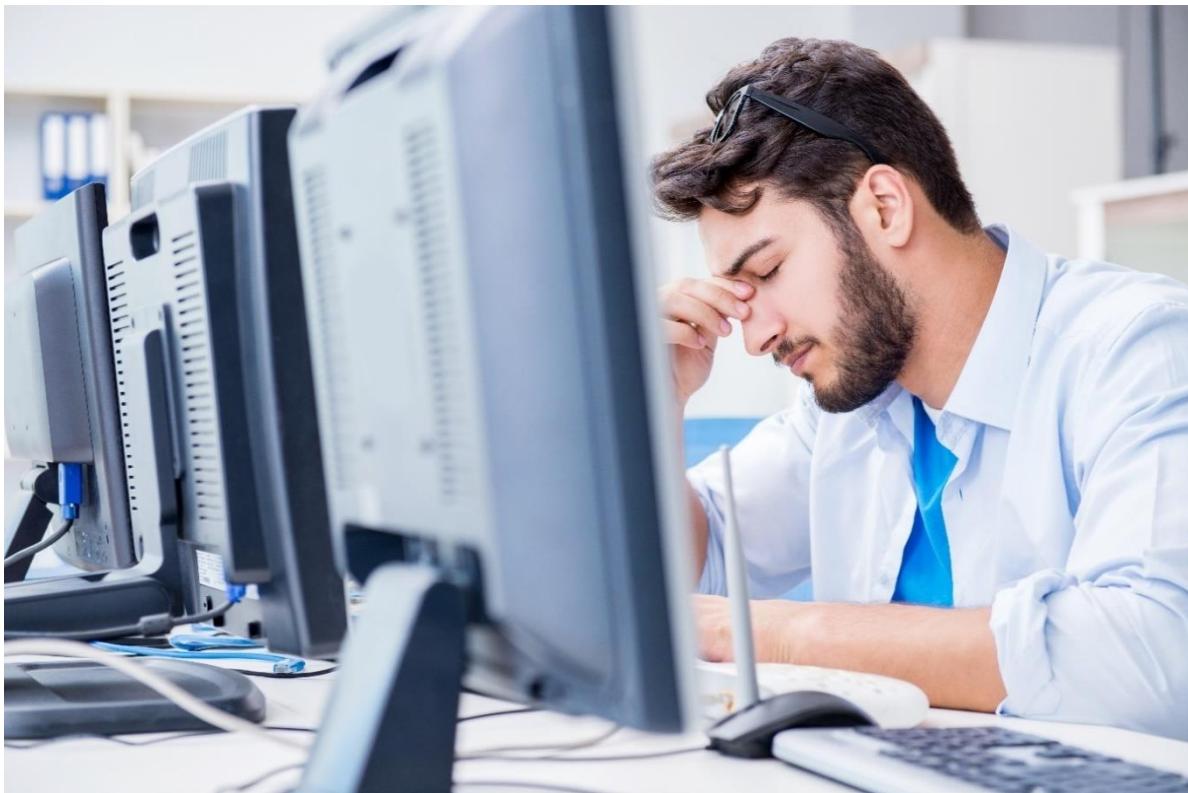


Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Safe work practices may relate to workplace systems, equipment and processes. These practices must be regularly updated to follow legislation and standards.
2. Maintaining the currency of safe work practices will ensure that:
 - you remain compliant in your practice
 - your organisation remains compliant with WHS laws
 - your clients receive the best services.



4.2 Reflect on and Report Own Levels of Stress and Fatigue



Stress and fatigue are known as psychosocial hazards, or hazards that may cause psychological or physical harm. Health covers both psychological and physical aspects of your well-being. Taking care of your mental and emotional state is just as important as ensuring your physical safety. Stress is a hidden hazard that affects different people in the workplace and at home. In Australia, numerous employees are placed on 'stress leave' under workers' compensation each year. Stress is a normal response to everyday activities. Some level of stress is necessary to function and can help to motivate us. However, an ongoing, stressful workplace or too much stress can be a health hazard when it affects a person's health.

Stress

Stress is a state where you experience emotional or physical tension. At work, you may experience stress when the demands of your work role exceed your capabilities as a worker.

Safe Work Australia identifies the following hazards that can lead to stress in the workplace:

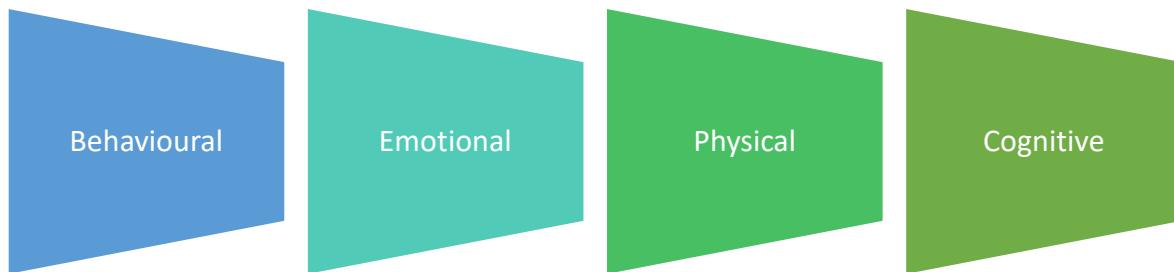


- **Level of job demand**
 - Unreasonable deadlines
 - Excessive workload
 - Highly repetitive tasks
- **Poor support**
 - Workers do not have enough information or training to do their job
 - Workers do not have access to employee assistance programs
- **Poor workplace relationships**
 - Discrimination
 - Harassment
 - Bullying
- **Poor role clarity**
 - Poorly defined work roles
 - Conflicting job expectations
- **Poor organisational change management**
 - Changes to the organisation are poorly managed
 - Changes to the organisation are not communicated to workers
- **Poor organisational justice (how a worker judges their organisation's behaviour in terms of fairness)**
 - Inconsistency or bias in the implementation of procedures

- **Poor environmental conditions**
 - Exposure to extreme weather conditions
 - High noise levels
- **Remote or isolated work**
 - The worker is not provided with a method of communication in case of emergencies
- **Violent or traumatic events**
 - No access to counselling or therapy
 - Lack of support from co-workers and supervisors

Based on [Preventing Psychological Injury Under Work Health and Safety Laws fact sheet](#), used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.

The symptoms of stress may fall under the following types:



In the table below, you will find different symptoms of stress related to each type:

Types of Symptoms	Symptoms of Stress
Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problems in relationships ▪ Increased nicotine, alcohol or caffeine use ▪ Reduced engagement with enjoyable activities ▪ Avoidance of stressful situations that need to be dealt with
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tension ▪ Anxiety ▪ Irritability ▪ Lack of enthusiasm

Types of Symptoms	Symptoms of Stress
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Headaches ▪ Difficulty sleeping ▪ Increased heart rate ▪ Nausea and fatigue ▪ Muscle aches and pains ▪ Increased sweating ▪ Constipation or diarrhea ▪ Changes in appetite
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Negative thoughts/worrying ▪ Loss of concentration ▪ Forgetfulness ▪ Difficulty making decisions ▪ Bad dreams

Based on *Recognising and managing stress*. © WayAhead – Mental Health Association NSW

Long-term stress can develop into more serious medical conditions such as:

- clinical depression
- migraines
- ulcers
- strokes
- heart disease.

When a person is highly stressed, the body goes into ‘fight or flight’ mode (i.e. preparing to fight or run away from the situation). It does so by closing down certain bodily functions, such as digestion and heart rate. You may also experience an increase in blood pressure and rate of respiration. A large amount of fat and sugar is also released to prepare the body to fight off possible injury. If this happens often enough, the body becomes exhausted and too weak to fight off infections. This can leave your immune system suppressed, putting you at higher risk of becoming ill.

All industrial awards recognise the need for workers to have breaks to refresh and recuperate while on the job. The nature of your work, the hours you are employed, and/or the contract you signed on commencing work will determine the length and the number of breaks you are entitled to in any shift you work.

Harmonious working relationships are important in avoiding stress. When entering a new workplace, you need to be prepared to adjust to the dynamics of the organisation and the team. Familiarise yourself with the range of staff members' roles and get to know your fellow employees more personally. Workplace relationships are important for the smooth running of the workplace. When working relationships are harmonious, workers become more productive. This will lead to better services for your clients.

However, difficulties may sometimes arise in your work relationships involving:

stress

conflict with co-workers

adjustment issues for new staff

personal issues at home

problems around decision-making.

Conflict occurs when there is a disagreement between two or more people. The disagreement may involve differences of opinion about priorities, beliefs or values. When serious conflict occurs in the workplace, *conflict resolution* may be required to resolve differences of opinions through mediation involving a neutral third party.

Below are five possible outcomes of using conflict resolution:

1. Win-Win: the collaborative approach

This approach focuses on the needs of the parties rather than personal demands. This makes both parties feel empowered, enabling a decision to be made more easily.

2. Win-Lose: the force approach

In this approach, one person believes that the other is gaining more from the situation. The outcome tends to be a power struggle which usually escalates into more conflict.

3. Lose-Lose: the avoidance approach

The parties involved try to avoid further conflict by not discussing the issue. This can allow both parties to calm down and refocus in the short term. However, this may cause issues to pile up in the long term and lead to more problems.

4. Lose-Win: the accommodation approach.

In this case, your side loses the conflict. Giving in to the other person without addressing your concerns is not desirable. This should be avoided, especially if the issue involves the client's best interests. However, if you realise that your side is in the wrong after the discussion, you must also take responsibility for it.

5. Split-Compromise

This involves reaching a neutral decision that both parties can agree on.

When negotiating conflict resolution, both parties should be respectful of each other. Ensure to hear out each person's needs, wants and concerns. Outline the problem plan and set goals together. Gather information required to discuss the issue. Most importantly, be positive and open-minded.

Workplace bullying and harassment are major issues in the workplace. There are laws to protect staff from being bullied and harassed in the workplace in NSW and other states. Organisations usually have procedures for complaints, mediation, resolution strategies and access to counselling. Unions can also provide information on these.



Fatigue

Fatigue is a physical state characterised by a lack of energy. When you are fatigued, it affects the way you work. It may slow down your pace of work or cause you to lose focus altogether.

Causes of fatigue include:

prolonged or intense mental or physical activity

sleep loss and/or disruption of your internal body clock

organisational change

travel

exceptionally hot or cold working environments

work scheduling

excessively long shifts

not enough time to recover between shifts

strenuous jobs

long commuting times.

Sourced from *Fatigue*, used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.

Signs of fatigue include the following:

- Tiredness even after sleep
- Reduced hand-eye coordination or slow reflexes
- Short term memory problems and an inability to concentrate
- Blurred vision or impaired visual perception
- A need for extended sleep during days off work

Sourced from *Fatigue management - a worker's guide*, used under CC BY 4.0. © Commonwealth of Australia.

Reflecting on Levels of Stress and Fatigue

You can adapt the risk management process and use it as a self-reflection tool to identify and assess your emotional and mental well-being. The table below shows steps (with guide questions for reflection) you can take when reflecting on your stress and fatigue levels:

Steps	Guide Questions
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is causing you stress? ▪ What is causing you fatigue?
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What signs of stress and/or fatigue are you feeling? ▪ How are stress and/or fatigue affecting the quality of your work? ▪ How are stress and/or fatigue affecting your life outside of work?
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How can you address the factors causing stress and/or fatigue? ▪ How can your co-workers or supervisors help you manage stress and/or fatigue? ▪ What external options do you need? (e.g. counselling, therapy or medical advice) ▪ Do you need a break from work to reduce stress and fatigue?
Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are you taking steps to address stress and/or fatigue effectively? ▪ What should be changed in your approach to stress and fatigue?

Procedure for Reporting Psychosocial Health

You have the following obligations under the WHS Act:

- Take reasonable care of your health and safety.
- Take reasonable care that your actions or omissions do not affect the health and safety of other persons.

On the other hand, your organisation has a duty of care or obligation to ensure the health and safety of workers. If you are concerned about your psychosocial health, you must inform your supervisor, especially when the quality of your life or work is already being affected. Your organisation is responsible for maintaining the high-quality psychosocial health of workers.

After reflecting on your stress and fatigue levels, you must report your reflection to designated persons. Since your health condition affects your work performance, you must report problems caused by stress and fatigue. The designated person may be your supervisor or a human resources (HR) officer in your organisation. In the table below, you can see the responsibilities of these designated persons in helping you address stress and fatigue:

Designated Persons	Responsibilities
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assigning work tasks and managing workloads ▪ Monitoring your progress and issues in accomplishing work tasks ▪ Maintaining your health and welfare while at the workplace ▪ Providing resources that will help you minimise stress and fatigue at work
Human resources officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring each employee's work performance ▪ Reporting on aspects that positively and negatively affect work performance ▪ Providing programs and initiatives to promote employee welfare, health and safety ▪ Recommending and organising counselling or psychological support for employees ▪ Reviewing work conditions that may affect the stress and fatigue levels of employees

Your supervisor can help you address concerns related to your work responsibilities. An HR officer can manage your overall concerns regarding your workplace or organisation. This may include the following:

How you relate to other employees

How you are affected by certain workplace processes

You must follow workplace procedures when reporting about your stress and fatigue levels. You must let your organisation know about your stress and fatigue levels. However, there are proper procedures to follow in doing so. If you informally discuss your concerns with your colleagues, your organisation will not be aware of your problems. There will also be no actions taken to help you address your stress and fatigue levels. Following workplace procedures for reporting will ensure that:

designated persons fully understand your concerns

your concerns are given due attention

your concerns are properly recorded and documented

designated persons can help you come up with solutions to address your concerns.

Workplace procedures for reporting stress and fatigue levels may provide guidance on:

- who to talk to about stress and fatigue and how to approach them
- what to discuss during meetings and consultations about stress and fatigue
- what information to provide to designated persons about your stress and fatigue levels
- how to document reports regarding your stress and fatigue levels.

You may follow these steps in reporting your stress and fatigue levels:

1. Schedule a meeting with the designated person.

You will be sharing work experiences that may have increased stress and fatigue levels. You must have the full attention of your supervisor or the HR officer during this discussion. An adequately scheduled meeting will allow you to focus on discussing your current health condition.

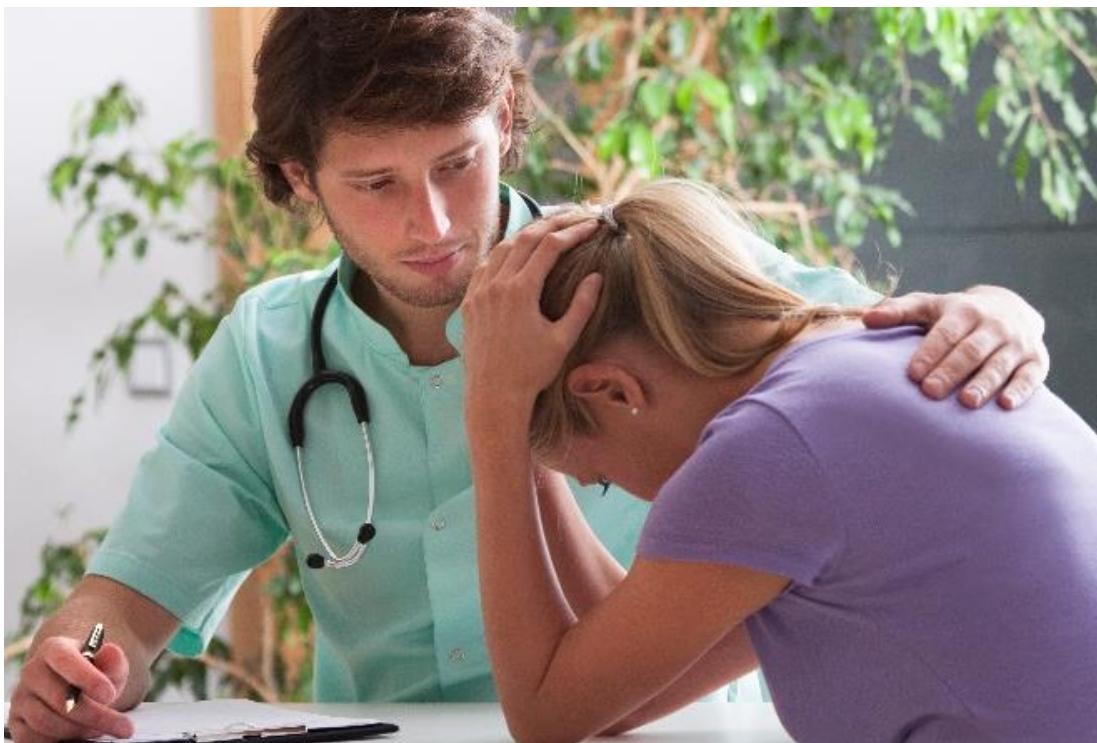
2. Talk about your reflection.

When you reflect on your stress and fatigue, remember that you conducted a risk assessment for yourself. You can share your reflection with the designated person so that they can better understand your problem. You can tell them what parts of work are causing you the most stress and fatigue. Identifying these problem areas will help you come up with solutions together. They can help you develop an action plan to reduce your stress and fatigue levels.

3. Seek the designated person's advice.

This helps you lessen work-related stress and fatigue. You must discuss your problem in detail so that they can provide you with sound advice. After discussing your sentiments, ask them what you and the organisation can do to lessen your stress and fatigue. For example, your supervisor can give you advice on tackling work tasks so that you do not easily burn out. You can also agree on modifying your work tasks to lessen your stress and fatigue levels. On the other hand, an HR officer can recommend programs to help you address stress and fatigue levels. For example, they can suggest options for counselling or psychological support.

You must let designated persons know when you are experiencing high stress and fatigue. If no action is taken, you may risk long term health effects. It is in the organisation's best interest to ensure that workers are healthy. Stressed and fatigued workers will tend to be less productive and may make more mistakes. Everyone in the organisation must work together to ensure a healthy working environment.





Multimedia

Stress and fatigue are just some parts you need to manage for your psychological health and safety in the workplace. Learn more about this by watching the video below.

[Psychological health and safety in the workplace: a national guide](#)

Job design - doesn't have to be complicated



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Stress is when you experience emotional or physical tension. Fatigue is a physical state characterised by a lack of energy.
2. You can address stress and fatigue issues by using the risk management process as a self-reflection tool to assess your well-being.



Learning Activity for Chapter 4

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

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