



HLTWHS002

**Follow safe work practices for
direct client care**

Learner Guide



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Unit of Competency

Application

This unit describes the skills and knowledge required for a worker to participate in safe work practices to ensure their own health and safety, and that of others in work environments that involve caring directly for clients. It has a focus on maintaining safety of the worker, the people being supported and other community members.

This unit applies to all workers who require knowledge of workplace health and safety (WHS) to carry out their own work, in both centre-based and home-based service provision.

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.

Performance Criteria

Element

Elements describe the essential outcomes.

Performance Criteria

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Follow safe work practices for direct client care</p> | <p>1.1 Follow workplace policies and procedures for safe work practices</p> <p>1.2 Identify existing and potential hazards in the workplace, report them to designated persons, and record them according to workplace procedures</p> <p>1.3 Identify any client-related risk factors or behaviours of concern, report them to designated persons, and record them according to workplace procedures</p> <p>1.4 Follow workplace policies and procedures to minimise risk</p> <p>1.5 Identify and report incidents and injuries to designated persons according to workplace procedures</p> |
| <p>2. Follow safe work practices for manual handling</p> | <p>2.1 Follow manual handling procedures and work instructions for minimising manual handling risk</p> <p>2.2 Identify manual handling hazards and report in line with workplace procedures</p> <p>2.3 Apply control measures for minimising manual handling risk</p> |
| <p>3. Follow safe work practices for infection control</p> | <p>3.1 Follow standard precautions as part of own work routine to prevent the spread of infection</p> <p>3.2 Recognise situations when additional infection control procedures are required</p> <p>3.3 Apply additional precautions when standard precautions alone may not be sufficient to prevent transmission of infection</p> <p>3.4 Identify risks of infection and report them according to workplace procedures</p> |
| <p>4. Contribute to safe work practices in the workplace</p> | <p>4.1 Raise WHS issues with designated persons according to organisational procedures</p> <p>4.2 Participate in workplace safety meetings, inspections and consultative activities</p> <p>4.3 Contribute to the development and implementation of safe workplace policies and procedures in own work area</p> |
| <p>5. Reflect on own safe work practices</p> | <p>5.1 Identify ways to maintain currency of safe work practices in regards to workplace systems, equipment and processes in own work role</p> <p>5.2 Reflect on own levels of stress and fatigue, and report to designated persons according to workplace procedures</p> <p>5.3 Participate in workplace debriefing to address individual needs</p> |

Foundation Skills

The Foundation Skills describe those required skills (language, literacy, numeracy and employment skills) that are essential to performance.

Reading

- In order to accurately read and interpret workplace safety policies and procedures including safety, signs, dangerous goods classifications and safety instructions.

The remaining foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit.

Assessment Requirements

Performance Evidence

The candidate must show evidence of the ability to complete tasks outlined in elements and performance criteria of this unit, manage tasks and manage contingencies in the context of the job role.

There must be demonstrated evidence that the candidate has completed the following tasks at least once in line with state/territory WHS regulations, relevant codes of practice and workplace procedures:

- Contributed to a workplace WHS meeting or inspection
- Conducted a workplace risk assessment and recorded the results
- Consistently applied workplace safety procedures in the day-to-day work activities required by the job role, including:
 - infection control
 - hazardous manual tasks
 - use of personal protective equipment
 - reporting incidents
- Followed workplace procedures for at least one simulated emergency situation.

Knowledge Evidence

The candidate must demonstrate knowledge of:

- State/territory legislation and how it impacts on workplace regulations, codes of practice and industry standards, including:
 - state/territory WHS authorities
 - rights and responsibilities of employers and workers, including duty of care
 - hazardous manual tasks
 - infection control
- Safety symbols and their meanings, including signs for:
 - poisons
 - emergency equipment
 - personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - specific hazards such as sharps, radiation
- Hazard identification, including:
 - definition of a hazard
 - common workplace hazards relevant to the industry setting including hazardous manual tasks, infection control risks and personal safety risks
 - workplace procedures for hazard identification
 - strategies minimising risk
- Safety considerations when working in a home-based environment, including:
 - rights and responsibilities of workers and clients
 - basic home fire safety including high-risk groups, behaviour that contributes to fire injury and fatalities, and smoke alarm placement, installation and maintenance.
 - risks to personal safety
 - common sources of infection and means to minimise transfer of infectious diseases
 - fundamentals of the musculoskeletal system and practices to minimise injury to self and clients
- Workplace emergency procedures
- Workplace policies and procedures for WHS.

Assessment Conditions

Skills must be demonstrated:

- In the workplace

OR

- In an environment that provides realistic in-depth industry validated scenarios and simulations to assess candidates' skills and knowledge.

In addition, assessment must ensure use of:

- Current workplace policies and procedures for WHS
- PPE relevant to the workplace and job role of the worker.

Assessors must satisfy the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015/AQTF mandatory competency requirements for assessors.

Links

Companion Volume implementation guides are found in VETNet -

<https://vetnet.education.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=ced1390f-48d9-4ab0-bd50-b015e5485705>

1. Follow safe work practices for direct client care

- 1.1. Follow workplace policies and procedures for safe work practices
- 1.2. Identify existing and potential hazards in the workplace, report them to designated persons, and record them according to workplace procedures
- 1.3. Identify any client-related risk factors or behaviours of concern, report them to designated persons, and record them according to workplace procedures
- 1.4. Follow workplace policies and procedures to minimise risk
- 1.5. Identify and report incidents and injuries to designated persons according to workplace procedures



1.1 - Follow workplace policies and procedures for safe work practices

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Identify how to follow workplace policies and procedures.

It is quite likely that your organisation will have developed numerous policies and procedures for the purpose of ensuring safety. The policies may pertain to the entire organisation or to the work carried out within specific departments. They should highlight the primary objectives and legal responsibilities of your organisation. There should be clarification regarding the work of specific employees and the standards that should be maintained.

Your organisational policies should clarify:

- Objectives for the achievement of health and safety standards
- Details of the steps that should be taken to meet health and safety aims
- Schedules for the completion of health and safety objectives
- Details of how the policies should be reviewed
- The specific responsibilities of managers and other staff members.

Health and safety procedures

The health and safety procedures will take the form of a sequence of steps that should be taken to meet health and safety objectives. They should be written in a clear and logical manner, for the understanding of all employees.

You may have organisational procedures for:

- Dealing with aggressive and potentially dangerous behaviour
- Organising evacuations
- Inspecting and monitoring the workplace
- Training and reviewing the knowledge of employees.



It should be emphasised that all employees have some responsibility for ensuring health and safety in the workplace. The types of responsibilities are likely to vary in accordance with the work carried out by your organisation. It may be necessary to follow procedures and policies on how to deal with intoxicated customers, store hazardous chemicals, or use industrial equipment.

Legal responsibilities

Your health and safety policies and procedures should be written in accordance with legislation pertaining to your line of work and Australian territory. Thorough research should be undertaken, to ensure that you are fully aware of the relevant laws and practices. You must comply with the work health and safety acts of Australia. The aim of your policies and procedures should be to eliminate or minimise the potential impact of hazards in the workplace. Safe work practices may include the substitution of chemicals with less harmful alternatives and the isolation of areas where employees are at considerable risk. Employees are expected to report dangerous working practices within 24 hours of identification.

Work health and safety (WHS)

Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) legislation replaced Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation in 2011.

WHS legislation stipulates that employers must provide their staff with:

- Safe premises
- Safe machinery and materials
- Safe systems of work
- Information, instruction, training and supervision
- A suitable working environment and facilities.



www.business.gov.au

Employees are also obliged to ensure that they work safely and do not endanger the safety of their colleagues, clients and others.

How WHS affects your work in health will vary according to your job role and your industry. In order to work safely and legally in your role, you should have been trained to do so by your organisation, as this is a legal requirement.

Where you identify possible or actual WHS breaches in your planned responses, they will need to be reviewed and amended to be compliant immediately before they are used again.

Infection control

When you have identified infection risks, you must respond to them according to infection control policies that are based on State legislation, National Standards and local regulations. The idea of this is that it provides a safe environment for staff, clients and any visitors.

You should read the following Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare at www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/cd33

This details a lot of policies and procedures that are in place in healthcare settings.

Think about how you can eliminate hazards, where reasonable – this could involve changing certain work methods. For example, if people are frequently handling sharps, how can you reduce their risk of injury and how would you deal with incidents if they did occur? The obvious answer is to incorporate the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when handling sharps and to have sterilisation kits for wounds available and readily accessible near any areas where sharps are handled. Following any sharps disposal protocols will reduce the risks to the bare minimum also.

If there is a risk of infection from a particular virus, consider the immunisation of all staff that will be exposed to it; you have to consider the cost of this versus the cost of losing these people to infection. This is the same model of thinking when health policies involve immunising certain demographics that are at high risk from viruses like flu.

Take time to read through your organisation's policies and procedures in relation to immunisation and infection control. These will provide guidance as to how activities should be carried out and ensure maximum safety for all those involved.

Home-based environment

As part of your role, you might be expected to carry out duties of care within the clients' home. In this case, you will need to be aware of the rights and responsibilities of both yourself and your client, to ensure that you are able to provide competent care in the best way.

Your responsibilities

Generally speaking, your responsibilities in a home-based environment are the same as they are in the workplace. You will be expected to take care for the client's physical and emotional safety, treating them with respect throughout your working practices. You will also be expected to take reasonable care for your own safety, as well as that of anyone else in the environment, such as family members.

It is a good idea to make yourself aware of some of the potential problems of working in a home environment.

Problems might include:

- Working in isolation without assistance for team handling
- The home not designed for health or personal care (for example low bed heights)
- Working in restricted workspaces such as small bathrooms
- The home being laid out to suit the client's preferences
- A change in the client's physical and mental condition between visits
- Workers from other agencies also providing assistance for the client.



https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/82503/community-working-safely-in-peoples-homes.pdf

Being aware of the potential problems will allow you to implement methods which can help to prevent such problems from escalating. For example, on entry to a client's home, you should scan the area for any obstacles which will prevent you from carrying out your work, and eliminate these (within the client's permission). Remember that the environment may change regularly (furniture moves, etc.), so this might need to be done on each entry.

The rights of clients

Ensuring and protecting the rights of your clients should be central to your work. You will need to work within the boundaries of these rights, making sure that clients are respected throughout all your working practices.

You will need to make yourself aware of the specific rights of the client in a home-based environment according to your workplace and governing legislation.

For example, HomeCare Australia outline the following rights of a client:

- Client has a right to be looked after properly
- Client has a right to be treated well and given a high-quality care and services
- Client has a right to receive the best care that home care services provide
- Client has a right to be treated with respect
- Client has a right to be involved in deciding what care will meet their needs
- Client should have a written agreement covering everything that a client and the service provider have agreed to
- Client has a right to have your care and services reviewed
- Client has a right for privacy and confidentiality of your personal information
- Clients should always be given information on how to make comments and/or complaints about your care and services
- Client should have a right to know the fees determined in a way that is transparent, accessible and fair.



<http://www.homecareaustralia.com.au/homecare-australia-blog/client-rights-and-responsibilities>

When working in a home-based environment, you are also exposed to infection risks different to those in the workplace. The key factor is that you are going to be working in a non-sterile environment. That is not to say that the client's home is not clean, but will likely not hold the same hygiene and safety standards as your workplace. This means that you will need to incorporate additional precautions to ensure the safety of the client and yourself. For example, you might need to practice additional sterilisation of equipment used in the home environment, ensuring that they are not placed on any sides or floors of the home.

Activity 1A

1.2 – Identify existing and potential hazards in the workplace, report them to designated persons, and record them according to workplace procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Identify existing and potential hazards
- Identify how to respond and record hazards.

Identifying hazards and risks

Health and safety hazards may be apparent in numerous areas of the work environment. There will be different levels of risk associated with each of these hazards. Workers will face a danger of slipping over and injuring themselves if damp areas aren't clearly signposted. Infection may occur as a consequence of failing to store harmful chemicals in the appropriate manner. It is essential to identify such hazards and take preventative steps for the safety of the workforce.

You are advised to carry out regular inspections and identify signs of danger. You should consider what would happen if employees were exposed to specific hazards in the workplace. Information regarding risks may be found in the manufacturer's instructions specific to certain chemicals and machinery. You are also encouraged to review the accident records and find out what types of hazards have already been encountered in your working environment. Some hazards and long-term risks may not be immediately obvious. However, research can be undertaken, and employees asked for details of any concerns.

You may arrange the following consultations:

- Toolbox talks
- Production meetings
- Team meetings
- Regular informal discussions.

The results may be outlined on a table, as follows:

Date of review	Type of hazard	Location of hazard	Risk associated with hazard	Action to be taken	Date for follow up inspection

Sources of personal risk include:

- Alcohol and/or drug use
- Behaviours of concern
- Personal risks may arise from clients, clients' families, the public, or animals
- There are risks associated with access to work (car parking would be an example), access to private homes, and the performance of work
- Incident reports may be used to identify situations with a higher risk of threat and client related. They may include information regarding care plans and case management meetings
- Working new, isolated, and / or potentially unstable environments.

Furthermore, workplace hazards that may be present in care homes, private homes and other locations may include:

- Biological hazards, including body fluids, contaminated food, soiled clothing and linen, clinical waste, syringes, and other 'sharps'
- Chemicals, such as toxic or hazardous substances, gases and liquids under pressure, and certain cleaning chemicals
- Electrical hazards related to use of equipment and faulty wiring
- Equipment including suitability for purpose and fitness for use
- Personal threat, such as through behaviours of concern of clients and / or visitors
- Work organisation issues such as shift work or irregular hours / on call
- Work-related environment, such as underfoot, lighting, space, noise, air quality, furniture / fittings, and car parking
- Work-related stress
- There are many ways an issue or threat can arise. You are advised to prepare for the widest range of hazards and risks. You should understand how they happen and the best means of response.



The above examples can be categorised into different types of risk:

- **Environmental:** these are caused by threats in the physical environment, such as trip hazards, fire hazards, contamination and other accidents. Potential hazards should be identified and minimised whenever possible. You should remove trip hazards and deal with fire hazards. Procedures will be established for dealing with contamination risks and biological hazards
- **Client-based:** this can range from clients becoming violent, or threats which may be made by someone in your care. There may be an infection risk, or injury sustained while moving/helping a client. Your organisation should prepare you by providing training on the correct movement of weights and avoidance of infection
- **Staff-based:** this can range from other staff being violent, unfit for work, or negligent. Staff should be monitored and trained in preparation for such events. There should be established procedures for dealing with staff-related problems
- **People-based:** this involves other people and can range from clients' families to the general public. This can cause numerous risks, from infection, to a person's dog being out of control. You should remain vigilant and ready to react to anything that may happen. Procedures will be put in place for dealing with certain events.

Your workplace should provide a certain level of training regarding hazard identification and procedures to follow. Not everything will be covered, of course, as hazards can emerge from anywhere at any time; in these instances, all you can do is make the best decision possible, based on your training for dealing with other, perhaps similar incidents.

Reporting hazards

This unit has focussed on identifying hazards. However, the next step is to report such issues to relevant staff members.

You may contact an:

- Elected Health and Safety Representative/employee representative
- Employer
- Health and Safety committee
- Other personnel with WHS responsibilities
- Supervisor.



The individual(s) responsible for managing WHS should be clearly identified within your workplace. There should be a designated process for you to follow when reporting such issues.

Communication methods can vary and can be:

- Written:
 - notes
 - memos
 - emails
 - report forms
- Verbal:
 - face-to-face
 - phone call
 - voicemail.



Your organisation should highlight the preferred methods of communication. If this isn't the case, then specification should be made. You should approach the relevant personnel and ask for details of how to file the report. It may be necessary to inform them upon first contact.

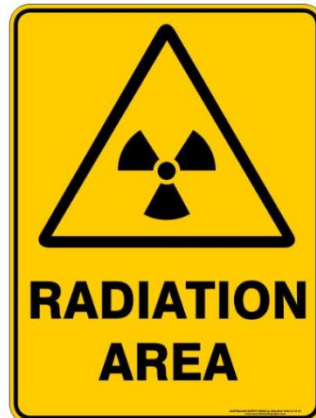
You should always report relevant issues and concerns. If you are unable to follow the usual method, then you should consider alternative means of communication. You could leave a note on their desk for later reference.

Safety symbols

Safety symbols are commonly used in workplaces as a warning of potential risks or hazards in the area. Safety symbols will be beneficial for you and your team members as well as any other person who will be in the workplace such as clients or visitors.

There are many different safety symbols which can be used for a variety of different purposes. It will be beneficial to familiarise yourself with the most commonly used safety symbols so that you are able to read them successfully.

Here are some examples of safety symbols:



Activity 1B

1.3 – Identify any client-related risk factors or behaviours of concern, report them to designated persons, and record them according to workplace procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Complete a table, identifying client-related risk factors/behaviours of concern.

The likelihood of encountering client-related risk factors and behaviours of concern will vary, depending on the nature of your working environment. Those of you working in the healthcare, social services, banking and retail sectors will be at a relatively high risk of encountering aggressive and unpredictable customers. You may also have to account for considerable risks when working with heavy industrial machinery. Your customers may become angry for a variety of reasons and vent their frustrations in different ways. The most common types of abusive behaviour include verbal insults, physical demonstrations of anger, and actual bodily harm. Managers and human resources personnel have a responsibility for assessing the risk of challenging behaviour and developing appropriate risk minimisation strategies.

These factors should be taken into consideration:

- The times at which there is a significant risk of challenging behaviour
- The environments in which employees and customers are at the greatest risk
- The arrangement and allocation of resources to help employees deal with aggressive behaviour
- Opportunities for training staff in the different ways of minimising risk and overcoming challenging behaviour.

Your employees should have the skills and knowledge required to identify various types of risks and defuse serious situations in the workplace.

They should know how to:

- Identify signs of behavioural change and aggression
- Monitor and deal with various challenging scenarios in the workplace
- Negotiate and establish reasonable limits in response to concerning behaviours
- Decide which actions to take as a consequence of challenging behaviour.



You can deal with distressed and angry customers in the following ways:

- Apologise
- Sympathise
- Accept responsibility
- Identify means of assistance.

Minimising and avoiding risk

Minimising and avoiding risk requires the attention and vigilance of everyone involved. Many accidents and incidents occur as a result of inattention, laziness, or ignorance. Steps may be taken for complete avoidance and necessary response by the organisation.

Minimisation or avoidance procedures and techniques may be specified by the organisation. Alternatively, they may be employed by suitably knowledgeable individuals.

Organisational procedures may apply to workplace issues, such as:

- The door to room 4A swings shut very fast, so be careful not to get hit by it
- The stairs to the first floor are very steep, so use the elevator to transport items
- You must wear shoes in the hallway, as the tiles can be slippery if you're only wearing socks.

General WHS guidance can also be applied:

- If you find a leak, then cordon the area off and arrange for repairs
- Sharps and syringes must only be handled by qualified staff. They must not be deposited in a sharps box
- Do not exceed the maximum occupancy of the elevator.



Such precautions should occur naturally to your staff members. They shouldn't need to be told specifically how to act.

Organisational procedures for managing risks include:

- Client assessment documents and care plans
- Communication, consultation, and issue resolution procedures
- Hazard management documents (including policies and procedures on specific hazards)
- Hazard and incident reporting (including follow up to sharps incidents) and investigation. Workplace inspections, maintenance etc.

- Hazard management policies and procedures (these may be integrated with quality, care, or separated as WHS policies and procedures)
- Human resources management procedures, such as harassment and grievance procedures. Induction programs, team meetings, management of performance levels, alcohol and drug policies
- Job procedures and work instructions; including medications policy and procedures
- Other related procedures; including waste management and security
- Post-incident/injury management; such as first aid, critical incident debriefing, compensation, and return to work
- Strategies for reducing the amount of manual handling required and manual handling risk
- Supporting people with behaviours of concern.

If everyone kept a look out for:

- Loose carpets
- Wet floors
- Faulty equipment.

And if everyone took relevant action, such as:

- Cordoning off the area
- Fixing something
- Arranging repairs or replacements
- Warning and informing other staff and service users.



Then many accidents and incidents would be avoided completely.

If one employee chooses to ignore a loose carpet in the hallway, then the next colleague could trip and fall. This could result in injury, especially if the incident happens close to a door frame or stairway.

Failure to implement organisational procedures may result in disciplinary action. You also have an ethical responsibility to recognise and respond to problems. Accidents and injuries may result in cost for organisations. They may need to pay staff compensation, insurance and reimbursements for forced time away from work. It is in the organisation's best interests to implement and monitor the applicable procedures.

Reporting issues

You have a responsibility to report concerning behaviour to a relevant superior. Some actions or suspicions are subject to mandatory notification; which means that they must be reported to designated authorities.

This generally applies to incidents or suspicions regarding:

- Abuse:
 - assault
 - negligence
 - neglect
- Staff that are unfit for work:
 - through drink
 - through drugs
 - through tiredness
 - through lack of training
- Sexual misconduct:
 - inappropriate relationships with clients
 - sexual misconduct with clients
- Missing residents.



We may consider the example of physical or sexual assault. Such events must be reported to the most senior supervisor, then the police, and social services. This includes suspicions and signs of assault. You should never wait to witness an actual attack before reporting to relevant personnel.

You will need to inform the senior supervisor on duty upon discovering that residents are missing. It will be necessary to make follow up contact with the police and social services within 24 hours.

Staff members who are unfit for work may pose a risk to themselves, their colleagues, and service users. There will be a significant risk of legal breaches if such employees are intoxicated, or attempting to carry out tasks which they are not qualified, trained, or authorised to do.

Events requiring mandatory notification should be reported to all care providers. Ignorance is not an excuse. Failure to report an issue is punishable by law and can have consequences for both yourself and the organisation. Care providers should feel ethically obliged to report issues; even if they are only suspicions.

There are many other issues and causes for concern that do not require mandatory notification. However, you should still report these instances to managers or supervisors for follow up action, where required.

You can report workplace hazards:

- Verbally:
 - face to face
 - telephone call
- Written:
 - memo
 - notes
 - report forms.



The organisation may have procedures in place for reporting concerns. You should follow such procedures, if possible and practical. You may not be able to follow organisation procedure if there is an emergency, for example. In these instances, you should follow any guidelines established by the organisation. There may be stipulations regarding the staff members who can contact the police.

Activity 1C



1.4 – Follow workplace policies and procedures to minimise risk

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Identify how to follow workplace policies and procedures to minimise risk using information provided.

Health and safety policies

Health and safety policies may be created specific to your entire organisation, and the work carried out within separate departments. You should include details of how to manage the different working environments for optimum safety. There should also be details of the responsibilities designated to different members of the workforce. The arrangements section should highlight the activities and functions that must be carried out for the wellbeing of all employees.

Employees with knowledge of various health and safety issues should contribute to the policies. If the entire organisation is involved, then there will be a shared commitment to the minimisation of risk. Health and safety policies should apply to various types of work and be written in accordance with the WHS Act. Methods should be established for the identification and removal of hazards in the workplace. It is also important to produce response documentation, highlighting details of incident investigation, notification and ways of dealing with emergencies.

The risk assessment

A thorough risk assessment should be carried out for the identification of potential dangers in the workplace. You are encouraged to monitor working practices and interview employees about areas of concern. It will be important to assess the relative impact of potential risks and prioritise those that pose the greatest danger.

You may record the findings on a table similar to the following:

Hazard categories	Potential impact on employees	Steps that are already being taken	Further preventative action	Date of assessment

You may identify the following means of minimising risk:

- Ensuring that employees/customers aren't exposed to hazards
- Developing low-risk work practices
- Providing protective equipment
- Integrating care and treatment facilities within the workplace
- Discussing risks with employees.

New and unstable environments

Working in unfamiliar or unstable environments will present further challenges to working safely. In a familiar environment, you will be more aware of your surroundings and able to move around with greater ease and confidence. You will also be more aware of potential issues and problems.

You will have to acquaint yourself with a new or unfamiliar environment and adapt your spatial awareness accordingly.

Organisational policies can help with this, as it may:

- Specify layout:
 - space between furniture
 - landings clear
 - storage
- Give you the chance to acclimatise yourself to the new environment
- Let you start in the new environment during a quiet shift
- Allow or require you to move things, such as stored items and consumables for your convenience.



Organisational policies should be designed with the wellbeing of the staff and clients in mind. The aim will be to ensure that staff can do their best in situations. You should always aim to follow organisational policy, as far as you can. It will provide you with guidance and protection if things go wrong.

Risk control methods

Risk control methods will vary from organisation to organisation. They are designed to provide staff with a framework to follow, when dealing with WHS issues and concerns.

Here is an example framework of risk control and outline of respective actions:

Hierarchy of risk control:

- Level One controls:
 - eliminate hazards
- Level Two controls:
 - substitute the hazard with something safer
 - isolate the hazard from people
 - use engineering controls
- Level Three controls:
 - use administrative controls
 - use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).



This links to explanations of formal and informal risk assessment. It details how to make decisions for action, based upon the answers to questions or observations made about hazards and situations.

The framework, procedure, or guidance is taught to staff, so that they can make independent decisions on appropriate actions. Staff should be able to identify problems, assess risks, and follow suitable procedure without having to consult a manager or other relevant member of staff.

You are advised to follow procedures and guidelines, when possible. However, if you are genuinely confused or uncertain, then you should ask for assistance. Failure to follow designated procedures can result in poor decisions. There may be negative effects, for yourself, and others.

Activity 1D

1.5 – Identify and report incidents and injuries to designated persons according to workplace procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Complete an incident form using information provided.

The causes of incidents and injuries fall into three categories. Immediate causes are usually quite obvious and may include contact with sharps and harmful substances. Underlying causes may include irresponsible behaviour and unsafe working conditions. There may also be root causes which lead to potentially serious scenarios. Such causes should be identified at the earliest opportunity so that negative events have the least possible impact on your organisation. You should carry out thorough research and evaluate different areas of the workplace for signs of risk.

You should be aware of the following causes:

- Fatigue
- Stress
- Slips
- Trips
- Unsecured objects
- Lifting
- Aggressive behaviour
- Unexpected collisions.



Dealing with incidents

Different staff are qualified and authorised to deal with specific incidents in the workplace. You should never attempt to deal with a serious issue, unless you've been provided the necessary authorisation, or training. You should complete the tasks that you are trained for, in accordance with your moral and legal responsibilities.

An example of a multi-level issue would be a fire in the building:

- General staff may be required to sound the alarm and evacuate clients
- A manager, or designated fire marshal, would be responsible for ensuring that everyone is out of the building. It may be necessary to call out names on a register, or do a sweep of the building
- Anyone may be required / permitted to call the fire service.

It is quite likely that nobody will be allowed to return to the building until a fire officer has granted approval.

All staff may be required to be aware of basic fire safety, such as:

- Behaviour that may contribute to fire injury and/or fatality
- High fire risk groups
- Identifying fire risks
- Optimum placement of smoke alarms
- Referring client for smoke alarm installation and maintenance
- Role of a working smoke alarm
- Smoke alarm testing and cleaning
- Types of smoke alarms
- What to do in the event of a fire
- Fire escape procedure
- Where the fire alarms are
- How to evacuate others
- What your responsibilities are.



It is essential to act within the limitations of your role, no matter whether you are responding to fires, floods, or bomb alerts. You will be expected to meet the organisational responsibilities and expectations.

Reporting incidents and injuries

You should ensure that there is minimal disruption to the scene of any incident or injury. The cause of such events may be immediately obvious. However, some clues may only be discovered upon later inspection. It is important to take details of the incident date, time, and location. You should also record the names of witnesses who may be able to provide helpful information.

Incidents and injuries should be reported to a member of the organisation who has responsibility for overseeing health and safety. It is also important to comply with legislation regarding the report of serious incidents and injuries.

The Occupational Safety and Health Regulation of 1996 states:

"If, at a workplace, an employee incurs an injury, or is affected by a disease, that results in the death of the employee; or is of a kind prescribed in the regulations for the purpose of this subsection, the employer of that employee shall forthwith notify the Commissioner in the prescribed form giving such particulars as may be prescribed."

There will be different levels of investigation based upon the likelihood of recurrence and the potential impact of similar events in the future. Appropriate strategies should be developed to minimise risk and ensure that the organisation is properly prepared.

Smoke alarms

To help reduce the risk of fire injury and/or fatality, smoke alarms will need to be placed, installed and maintained effectively. It will be worthwhile for you to understand each of these steps so that you can identify any potential risks both in the workplace and a home-based environment.

Where smoke alarms should be installed will be dependent on the size and layout of a building. For example, for optimum smoke detection in a home environment, smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, living area and hallway. Smoke alarms should be placed in the centre of the ceiling, although they can also be placed on walls where space allows. Bear in mind that incorrectly placed smoke alarms could become a nuisance. For example, they may regularly be activated if placed within a kitchen, or outside of bathrooms.

Correct maintenance of smoke alarms will ensure that they are able to work effectively.

The following maintenance is recommended:

- Monthly: Test by holding down the test button until you hear a loud alert tone, then release. Use a broom handle if you cannot reach but be careful you do not damage the smoke alarm
- Yearly: Vacuum around your smoke alarm vents with a soft brush attachment. This will remove a build-up of dust and cobwebs
- Yearly: Use a surface insect spray around the smoke alarm to prevent insects nesting inside. Do not spray inside the smoke alarm
- Yearly: Replace your 9-volt battery each year on 1 April. All smoke alarms – including mains powered alarms – have batteries. If your alarm has a 9-volt user-replaceable battery, you will need to replace the battery each year.



<https://www.dfes.wa.gov.au/safetyinformation/fire/fireinthehome/pages/smokealarmmaintenance.as>

[DX](#)

Activity 1E

2. Follow safe work practices for manual handling

- 2.1. Follow manual handling procedures and work instructions for minimising manual handling risk
- 2.2. Identify manual handling hazards and report in line with workplace procedures
- 2.3. Apply control measures for minimising manual handling risk



2.1 – Follow manual handling procedures and work instructions for minimising manual handling risk

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Follow manual handling procedures to lift and move an object, ensuring that risk is minimised throughout the process.

Manual handling procedures

Anyone engaged in any sort of manual handling activity should follow procedures, to ensure that they remain safe at all times. These procedures may be established in the form of work instructions, or manual handling procedures.

Work instructions may be:

- In a community language
- In English
- Provided visually, e.g. video, WHS signs, symbols, and other pictorial presentations
- Verbal
- Including care plans associated with risk management (with particular regard to manual handling risks and behaviours of concern)
- Written.

These instructions usually contain the organisational specifications regarding manual handling safety. Such specifications are made to ensure that staff meet specific requirements in the workplace.

Part of a manual handling procedure may be the completion of a risk assessment.

It might not be necessary to fill out a risk assessment form prior to lifting the goods. However, you will probably ask several questions, including:

- Is this too big?
- Is this too heavy?
- Can I do this by myself?
- Is there anyone else who can help me?
- Can I do this without twisting?
- Can I do this without bending?
- Can I use some equipment to help?



Your answers to these questions will determine whether you tackle the task and how you perform the necessary actions.

Procedures can be applied to different types of manual handling; for example, lifting a heavy object:

- **Plan the lift:** clear the area and decide how you are going to grasp and support the object
- **Hold the item close to you:** holding the item close to your body prevents your back being pulled forwards with the weight
- **Stand properly:** you need to stand in a stable position, which can mean keeping your back straight, feet apart and knees slightly bent
- **Hold / support the weight properly:** get a good grip and make sure it's comfortable to hold and move with
- **Don't bend your back:** keeping your back as straight as possible will prevent any slips or sprains, etc.
- **Don't twist:** twisting can hurt your muscles and tendons.

These general principles can be applied to any kind of heavy lifting; whether you are moving furniture, transporting boxes, or assisting clients.

It has become increasingly common for Australian organisations to adopt a 'no manual-handling policy' and insist that their staff use hoists and other pieces of equipment. The use of such equipment will also be subject to safe handling procedures, as in the following example, provided by WorkSafe Victoria.

This example explains how to transfer a client from chair to chair, using a slide board, and a chair that has removable arms to facilitate movement.

The guide explains how you should:

- Place the two chairs next to each other
- Remove or lower the chair arms that are in the way
- Place the slide board under the client and across to the second chair
- Help the client to grab the remaining arm of the second chair, if possible, in order to help themselves to move
- If the person is able, have them slide themselves across to the new chair
- If they are not able to do this themselves, then you should gently and smoothly transfer them across the slide board
- After you have done this, the slide board can be removed and the lowered or removed chair arm put back into position.



(Example taken from WorkSafe Victoria)

Activity 2A

2.2 – Identify manual handling hazards and report in line with workplace procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Identify and report manual handling hazards using information provided.

Manual handling

Manual handling may be an unavoidable part of your job. You will be expected to account for heavy lifting risks and hazards. It is essential to provide appropriate training for lifting and carrying items in the workplace. Workers must take responsibility for following instructions and guidance, for the purpose of avoiding injuries and accidents.

There are several reasons why manual handling may be required.

Examples can be as follows:

- Carrying trays and other items, such as:
 - folders
 - books
 - food
- Lifting tasks, such as:
 - moving a person in bed
 - assisting to stand
 - transfer to chair or wheelchair
 - lifting objects
- Pushing and pulling tasks, such as:
 - pushing trolleys
 - wheelchairs
 - shower chairs
 - dressing clients
- Reaching and postural tasks, such as:
 - feeding a person
 - showering
 - dressing clients



- Restraining tasks:
 - violent clients
 - clients who are falling
 - clients who are being moved from one place to another.

These examples include different types of manual handling; which can be categorised as:

- Moving people
- Carrying manageable items
- Moving heavy or bulky items
- Postural movements.

Each of these can cause different types of injury and pose specific hazards to staff and clients.

- **Moving people:** this can involve heavy lifting and postural considerations, on behalf of the staff member. If the client is unsupported or slips, then they may injure themselves. The care worker will also be at risk. Moving people requires specific training, covering aspects such as how to lift, lower, and support. Such tasks should be carried out in a way that is comfortable and safe for the client and staff member
- **Carrying manageable items:** this refers to items that are small enough to be carried by one person; even though they may be heavy. Heavier items can include boxes, files, and books. Lighter items can include trays of food, clipboards, and laundry. Appropriate care should be taken when carrying heavier items. You should consider your postural position means of holding the item. Larger items may obscure your vision and prevent you seeing your feet. This can result in a trip hazard. You should be careful and act sensibly when carrying out such tasks. Be prepared to use a trolley, where practical
- **Moving heavy or bulky items:** this can apply to the pushing and pulling of trolleys, wheelchairs, furniture, and other items. You should consider the effects on your back. It may seem easier to put your back into a movement involving the movement of a wheelchair. However, there will be a risk of damage. You might end up with slipped disks, muscle damage and spinal strain, if the appropriate safety measures aren't taken. You should also object to the lifting or movement of items that are too big or heavy for you. There shouldn't be any compromise over your own health and wellbeing. You should seek assistance in these instances
- **Postural movements:** this refers to the position of your back, spine and neck when manual handling. Bending, stretching, and twisting movements can cause serious injury to your spine, neck, and muscles. Such injuries may be caused by unnatural movement or undue strain placed on one area of your body, such as the lower back. The correct procedure for these tasks can protect you from hurting yourself.

Preventing injury and using assistive aids

You should be aware that there are many dangers associated with manual handling. There are also a wide variety of injuries and accidents that occur as a result of poor handling techniques. However, there is a good selection of equipment available for workers are required to lift and move heavy goods.

The purpose of this equipment is to provide workers with better techniques and options for the minimisation of bodily strain.

Suitable equipment in the care industry can include:

- Client hoists
- Slide sheets
- Standing lifters
- Riser / recliner beds
- Bath hoists
- Slings
- Transfer boards
- Turntables
- Wheelchairs
- Lifting cushions
- Other manual handling assistive devices.



You are advised to use any equipment available. This is a far better option than relying on your own strength. Many organisations and establishments ban their staff from attempting to lift other people and objects manually. They insist upon the use of assistive equipment. If you ignore such instructions and warnings, then insurance claims may be rejected. You may have to pay significant amounts for hospital care and treatment.

You should be aware that there are risks associated with the use of some lifting aids. You might injure yourself if such aids are used incorrectly. If you don't follow the guidelines and act in accordance with training, then you may be subject to disciplinary action.

Reporting manual handling hazards

Employees who identify manual handling hazards are expected to report immediately to their supervisors and health and safety representatives. The information may be provided during workplace discussions. Alternatively, there's the option of filling out hazard reporting forms and raising concerns during meetings.

Your reports should include details such as:

- The type and locations of hazards
- Staff members who are at direct risk
- The means of resolution that have been agreed and acted upon.

Activity 2B



2.3 – Apply control measures for minimising manual handling risk

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Complete a risk assessment, identifying control measures which could be implemented to minimise manual handling risk.

Assessing risk

The Manual Handling Code of Practice contains tools that you can use to assess the risks associated with specific activities.

The risk factor of manual handling activities can be influenced by:

- Duration and frequency of the task
- Environmental conditions, such as:
 - underfoot conditions
 - lighting
 - heat
- Forces exerted
- In people-handling the risk is also affected by the:
 - ability of the client to support / control part / whole of the body
 - predictability in movement and behaviours
 - pain levels
 - ability to follow instructions
 - any equipment attached to the client, such as catheters, and IVs
 - client clothing
- Movement undertaken
- Postures adopted.



The Manual Handling Code of Practice is specific to different States and Territories. You should always be aware of the details related to your geographical location.

Risk assessment tools

Risk assessment tools are usually:

- Charts
- Checklists
- Scales of danger
- Questionnaires
- And similar.



These tools can be used to pose predetermined questions regarding the danger of the activity. Specific forms can be universal, or apply to particular types of task.

These forms are available from government websites and/or from your organisation. The relevant workplace forms will provide more specific and relevant details of activities.

Rating scales give the task a value that determines the level of risk or danger to staff. You should know what level of danger to expect and attempt to reduce the associated risks, where possible.

Control measures

Control measures should apply for the minimisation of dangers and risks associated with manual handling.

These control measures may entail:

- Changes to the load, or client
- Changes to work organisation, or practices
- Changes to workplace layout
- Minimising amount of handling
- Provision of equipment
- Task-specific training.

These measures should be implemented for improved workplace safety. Being able to control the variables of a situation can allow you to create a more desirable and suitable environment for carrying out the task required.

The amount of manual handling work can be reduced significantly through the use of equipment and assistive devices. A lifting cushion or hoist may be used for the purpose of avoiding injuries which otherwise be sustained when lifting a fallen client from the floor.

You should aim to avoid manual handling in a practical manner. The less lifting and moving you do, the less likely you are to sustain an injury.

Activity 2C

3. Follow safe work practices for infection control

- 3.1. Follow standard precautions as part of own work routine to prevent the spread of infection
- 3.2. Recognise situations when additional infection control procedures are required
- 3.3. Apply additional precautions when standard precautions alone may not be sufficient to prevent transmission of infection
- 3.4. Identify risks of infection and report them according to workplace procedures



3.1 – Follow standard precautions as part of own work routine to prevent the spread of infection

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Follow precautions to prepare for direct contact with a client.

Standard precautions

All types of environments carry with them the risk of infection, and no matter how sterile you aim to keep your workplace, there is no way to combat this risk altogether. There are many different ways in which infection can be carried.

For example, infection control risks can include:

- Breathing in airborne germs
- Touching contamination objects or eating contaminated food
- Skin-to-skin contact
- Contact with bodily fluids.

It is essential that all workers are aware of the risks and take necessary precautions to prevent infection. Basic responsibilities include the need to wash your hands, maintain clean working environments and take applicable first aid training.

The Occupational health and safety act of 2004 specifies that all employees must ensure workplace safety and organise appropriate means of infection control.

Standard precautions can include:

- Appropriate reprocessing and storage of reusable instruments
- Aseptic technique
- Personal hygiene practices, especially washing and drying hands, such as before and after client contact
- Safe disposal of sharps and other clinical waste
- Safe handling of sharps
- Surface cleaning and management of blood and body fluid spills
- Techniques to limit contamination
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment.



Care home staff will enjoy the following benefits if preventative measures are taken:

- Staff don't get ill:
 - staff don't take time off, which means good staffing levels can be maintained and schedules adhered to
 - staff don't spread sickness to each other and the clients
- Clients don't get ill:
 - clients don't require additional care
 - clients don't spread sickness amongst themselves
 - clients don't infect staff.

Incorporating these actions into your daily routine and recognising the benefits can make a big difference to the sickness levels of everyone in the building.

Activity 3A

3.2 – Recognise situations when additional infection control procedures are required

3.3 – Apply additional precautions when standard precautions alone may not be sufficient to prevent transmission of infection

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Identify why additional infection control procedures are required
- Identify the relevant additional infections control procedures in response to a given scenario.

Additional precautions

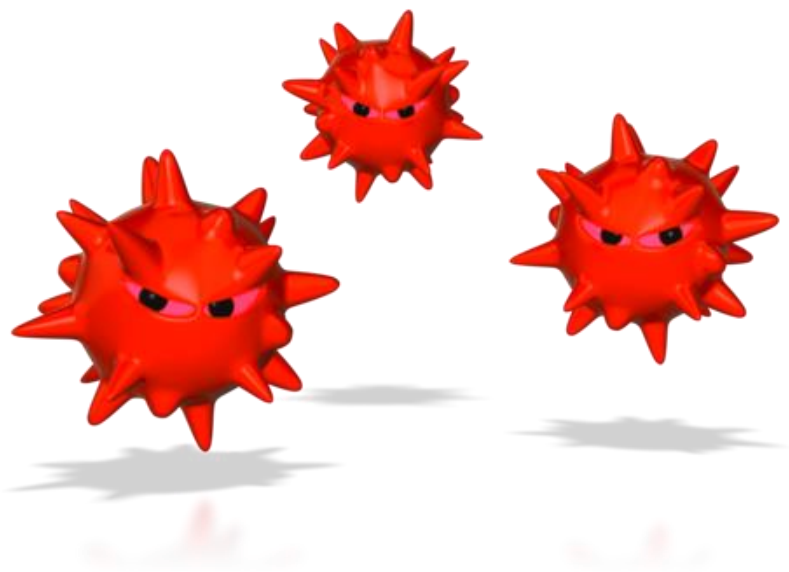
You may periodically be required to take additional precautions for the prevention of infection in the workplace.

Additional precautions may include:

- Additional use of Personal Protective Equipment
- Dedicated equipment for each client, or as appropriate to work function
- Special ventilation requirements.

Standard procedures are not guarantees of safety. They are merely measures which may be taken to help prevent the spread of infection. Further measures will be required in some instance.

You should take further steps to control infection if there is an increased risk or threat. You have a duty of care and an ethical obligation to yourself, clients, and other colleagues. You have responsibility for identifying the need for specific measures and ensuring their implementation whenever required.



Activity 3B and 3C

3.4 – Identify risks of infection and report them according to workplace procedures

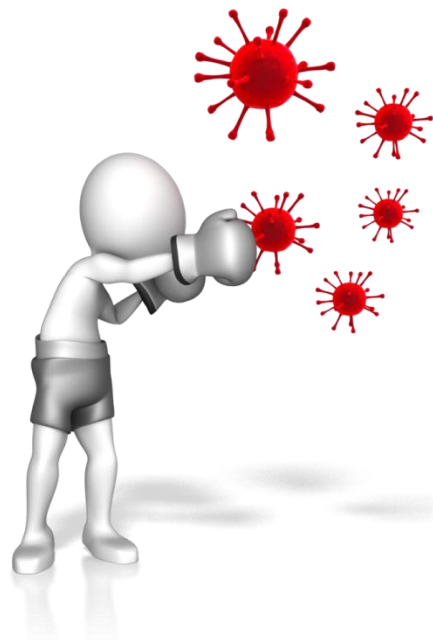
By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Complete a report form, identifying risks of infection.

Types of infection

You may be exposed to the following types of infection when working with vulnerable and unwell clients:

- Bacteria / germs:
 - Staphylococcus Aureus; a type of skin infection
 - Streptococcal bacteria; which causes upper respiratory infections. Also known as 'strep throat'
 - conjunctivitis
 - stomach upsets
- Viruses:
 - flu
 - colds
 - cold sores
 - AIDS
- Skin rashes:
 - scabies
 - shingles
 - dermatitis
- Contagious diseases:
 - Hepatitis A
 - measles
 - meningitis
- Lice/parasites:
 - head lice
 - crabs
 - ringworm



- Food poisoning:
 - E. Coli
 - Salmonella
 - Campylobacter.

There are many other infections you can catch through human-to-human contact. However, identifying standards and typical transmission techniques/preventative measures may be used for avoidance.

Infection methods

Infections typically happen in one of several ways, such as:

- Airborne
- Through skin contact
- Through shared surfaces
- Through bodily fluids:
 - mucus
 - pus
 - stool
 - blood
- Through wounds.



By establishing good practice, such as:

- Sterilising surfaces and equipment
- Wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as gloves
- Covering your mouth when sneezing or coughing
- Separating contagious people
- Being aware of those who are sick
- Washing hands.

You can avoid catching many infections and preventing their spread.

Many healthcare professionals are vaccinated against additional diseases, which may be encountered in the workplace.

Other sources of infection

Infection may result from contact with the following sources:

- Food poisoning:
 - undercooked food
 - spoilt food
 - poor hygiene
- Animals:
 - Cat Scratch Disease
 - Lyme Disease
 - Toxoplasmosis
 - Rabies
- Family members / friends / associates:
 - any type of infectious disease
 - parasites
- Poor housing:
 - chest infections from damp buildings
 - fungal infections
- Poor sanitation:
 - diarrhoea
 - stomach upsets.



You can catch viruses, illnesses, and many other types of infection encountered during day-to-day life. These conditions can easily spread to other colleagues and clients. You need to take excellent care of yourself in order to prevent infection. You should always bear in mind the effects your illness can have. Negative impacts include the infection of others, cause of job losses, and related expenses.

Activity 3D

4. Contribute to safe work practices in the workplace

- 4.1. Raise WHS issues with designated persons according to organisational procedures
- 4.2. Participate in workplace safety meetings, inspections and consultative activities
- 4.3. Contribute to the development and implementation of safe workplace policies and procedures in own work area



4.1 – Raise WHS issues with designated persons according to organisational procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

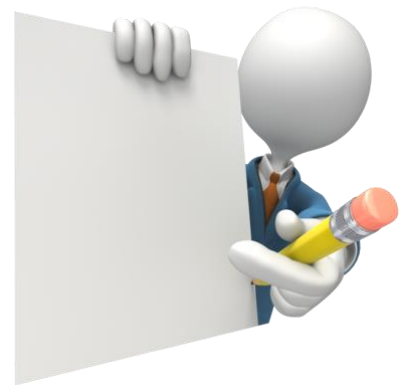
- Raise a WHS issue with a supervisor as part of a role-play activity.

Rights and responsibilities for WHS

Employers and employees are subject to rights and responsibilities in the workplace. This is to ensure the safety of all people affected and to establish mutually beneficial working arrangements. If employers provide a safe and supportive environment, then employees can work in greater comfort. Levels of efficiency will increase, and there won't be as many instances of workplace injuries/illnesses. The employer will benefit, as people will spend less time away from work. There will be less disruption to schedules and fewer compensation claims.

Employers must:

- Provide a safe workplace
- Provide safe equipment
- Provide:
 - training
 - information
 - supervision
- Provide adequate and suitable facilities, where required
- Check and maintain WHS systems and procedures
- Provide PPE, where required.



Employees must:

- Work safely
- Wear PPE, where required
- Follow safety procedures and requirements
- Not destroy or compromise equipment and resources
- Not interfere with safety equipment
- Not act in a way that compromises their own safety, or that of colleagues, clients, and the public

- Report any WHS
 - issues
 - hazards
 - injuries
 - accidents
 - near misses
 - concerns.



You should be provided with information on the rights and responsibilities of employees and employers. There should be clarification on what is expected of you. You should also be aware of your rights and safeguards in the workplace. This arrangement is based on lawful requirements, ethical obligations, and mutual respect. The specified measures are designed to benefit both parties.

Discuss issues and problems

Workplace issues and concerns can be discussed with several different people, including:

- Colleagues
- Supervisors
- Managers / team leaders.

You may contact these people for assistance when attempting to resolve problems. They are likely to understand the specifics of workplace issues. Those staff members who are familiar with your work and area should be able to understand your concerns and provide relevant advice.

Legislative requirements relating to WHS consultation and participation will include:

- National Work Health and Safety Model
- Current relevant State / territory WHS legislation
- Relevant state / territory Manual Handling Code of Conduct.

These will vary in different areas of Australia. You should always check the specifics.

The National Work Health and Safety Model is designed to provide a basis for more uniform and harmonised WHS laws, for use across Australia. It needs to be passed by the Parliament in each jurisdiction.

Current state / territory WHS legislation specifies the laws and legal requirements for that particular state.

The Manual Handling Code of Conduct is designed to offer guidance and protection for all workers engaged in heavy or awkward lifting.

Activity 4A

4.2 – Participate in workplace safety meetings, inspections and consultative activities

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Carry out an inspection of an area, identifying any health and safety issues
- Take part in a role-play workplace safety meeting, consulting with peers and discussing health and safety issues.

It is important to hold safety meetings on a regular basis and ensure the involvement of employees particular to the separate areas of your organisation. If there is general involvement, then there will be an excellent chance of identifying various workplace safety issues. The discussions may focus on the safety of specific working activities, supervision of staff members and organisation of training. Information regarding particularly effective safety measures may be shared among representatives from different departments. It may also be necessary to provide feedback on the resolution of incidents and injuries in the workplace.

Employees may participate in the following:

- Informal chats in the workplace
- Discussions during tours of the workplace
- Conversations about health and safety issues during general meetings
- Toolbox talks
- Focus groups.



It is important to highlight the responsibilities and safety duties which employees are expected to perform. Details of departmental safety plans, emergency action plans and fire prevention plans should be addressed. Employees should have the required skills and knowledge for emergency situations. It is also important to discuss the risks associated with specific processes in the working environment. You may consider security provisions, the appropriate use of equipment and relevant news regarding the risks specific to your industry.

Workplace inspections

Routine inspections should be carried out for the identification of hazards and associated risks in the workplace. It is also important to assess the work of employees and ensure that they are fulfilling their duties. The inspections should be carried out by employees with considerable knowledge of health and safety issues relevant to the areas that they are assessing. Workers may be asked to give feedback and demonstrate working practices in accordance with established standards.

These inspections may be carried out:

- Safety tours – Involving general evaluation of the workplace
- Safety sampling – Conducting sampling of potentially dangerous areas and practices
- Safety surveys – Asking employees for perspectives on health and safety
- Incident inspections – Assessing the workplace after a serious injury/illness or near miss caused by lack of care and concern for health and safety.

You should look out for the following issues:

- Unsafe working conditions – potential exposure to chemicals and other elements of the environment which pose significant risk
- Unsafe professional acts – failure to wear appropriate PPE, not working with the necessary level of caution etc.

Follow up

There should be an opportunity to discuss the findings of workplace inspections. The inspectors may agree to go away and draw up plans for follow up action. You may lack the time or resources to implement all of the suggested improvements. However, you should keep a record of the findings and produce reports for circulation among the workforce. You should analyse the measures that have been taken subsequent to the issue of previous inspection reports. Some minor risks may have become more significant. There may be a need to create additional health and safety plans.

Consultative activities

Representatives from different areas of your organisation should be involved in consultations regarding health and safety. Employees should also know who to consult if they are worried about the potentially negative impacts of workplace activities. It will be necessary to discuss essential WHS issues, concerns about particular practices, and relevant legislation. Employees should be encouraged to make suggestions, and appropriate follow up action should be taken. Consultations may take the form of informal discussions or organised meetings. You should also ensure the appropriate distribution of documentation specific to health and safety issues.

Consultations may include:

- Health and safety representatives – Designating personnel with responsibility for consulting on the behalf of employees. They may highlight areas of concern, training requirements and demanded improvements
- Health and safety committees – Employees and managers who come together for the analysis and improvement of WHS measures. Workers may enlist the support of union representatives for these consultations.

You may use these forms of communication:

- Intranet bulletins
- Email
- Team briefings
- Regular newsletters
- Video-conferencing.



Activity 4B

4.3 – Contribute to the development and implementation of safe workplace policies and procedures in own work area

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Develop safe work policies and/or procedures and create a plan outlining how these could be implemented.

Participative arrangements

Participative arrangements can be:

- Documented issue resolution processes
- Easy access to relevant written workplace information
- Formal and informal WHS meetings
- Health and safety committees
- Meetings called by Health and Safety Representatives
- Other committees, such as consultative planning, and purchasing
- Other means and processes for raising requests and concerns as well as contributing suggestions and reports to management
- Regular information sessions (using clear and understandable language) on existing or new WHS issues
- Team meeting and case management meetings.



Several participative arrangements may be implemented at your workplace. The specific arrangements will be dependent on your role, level of interest and department. You may, or may not, be required to participate in them. Your organisation should specify their expectations of you. They should provide details of how many meetings you should attend. The organisation may provide clarification on the means of contributing to the development of health and safety procedures. Contribution is normally encouraged. The generation of ideas and opinions results in more options and leads to follow. However, some businesses may choose to include only the relevant WHS staff and managers in their processes.

Contribution in each instance may refer to:

- Attendance at meetings
- Behaviour that contributes to a safe working environment which includes following WHS procedures
- Identifying and reporting risks and hazards
- Input to care plans
- Listening to the ideas and opinions of others in the team
- Recommendations on changes to work processes, equipment or practices
- Sharing opinions, views, knowledge and skills
- Using equipment according to guidelines and operating manuals.

Contribution will differ and vary from arrangement to arrangement.

Whatever your organisation chooses to do, you should always meet expectations. If you are interested and enthusiastic about WHS, then you should voluntarily attend meetings and workshops. You should provide input specific to workplace issues.

Inform supervisors

It is important that you inform your supervisors of hazards, incidents, and concerns in the workplace.

Your organisation may use these prompts for information:

- Moral and ethical obligation
- Legal obligation
- Mandatory notification
- Organisation policy
- Consideration
- Request.



You should always inform the correct person, or people, no matter the reason for your report. You should provide feedback in a suitable manner, in accordance with the requirements.

Taking action to control risks

Your organisation may have the following systems and procedures in place for controlling and preventing risks:

- Training staff
- Having a report / feedback system
- Following the law
- Manual Handling Code of Practice
- Providing lifting equipment
- Providing PPE
- Taking steps to prevent infection
- Abiding by the law
- Meeting restrictions and legislation
- Working compliantly
- Many more.



You need to follow and support the procedures outlined by your organisation. You should provide relevant assistance for colleagues and do your best to contribute to the maintenance and implementation of different procedures.

You are also encouraged to engage in the creation of participative arrangements utilised by your workplace.

Activity 4C

5. Reflect on own safe work practices

- 5.1. Identify ways to maintain currency of safe work practices in regards to workplace systems, equipment and processes in own work role
- 5.2. Reflect on own levels of stress and fatigue, and report to designated persons according to workplace procedures
- 5.3. Participate in workplace debriefing to address individual needs



5.1 – Identify ways to maintain currency of safe work practices in regards to workplace systems, equipment and processes in own work role

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Identify and outline three different ways to maintain currency of safe work practices in the workplace.

It will be necessary to continually update your health and safety policies and procedures in accordance with the development of your business. You should carry out regular inspections and ensure that employees are accounting for health and safety during everyday work practices. Equipment should be properly maintained and stored safely. It would be advisable to encourage employee feedback and respond to any concerns. You are also encouraged to consider a variety of 'what if' scenarios and develop plans and procedures accordingly. A process of continuous improvement should be established for the benefit of your organisation.

Employees should be given appropriate training and provided with clear information regarding the communication of risk factors in the workplace. Managers are encouraged to set a positive example and continually reinforce the importance of maintaining health and safety standards. There should be a shared commitment to maintain safe work practices, systems, and processes throughout the organisation.

Monitoring and evaluating health and safety

It is important to establish means of monitoring health and safety and reviewing the effectiveness of measures over time. You should consider the changing health and safety standards of your organisation in relation to the objectives that have been established in your policies. Questions should be asked if you are not making the expected level of progress. There should be numerous categories related to health and safety within your organisation.

You should create checklists specific to:

- The use of personal protective equipment
- The safety of different types of machinery
- The storage of chemicals and other hazardous business items
- Levels of cleanliness and tidiness in the working environment
- The accumulation and removal of waste
- The safety of procedures carried out in the workplace.



Safety audits

It may be deemed necessary to carry out a safety audit to ensure that your organisation is meeting the required standards. This may be carried out by a group of suitably knowledgeable staff members or an external agency. It will involve an analysis of your health and safety policies, work practices, and applicable legislation. A report will be compiled detailing any areas of non-compliance and the recommended steps for improved health and safety. You may carry out fresh safety audits every few months in order to identify progress and necessary steps for improvement. However, it will be necessary to continually monitor and make changes as soon as risks are identified. Employees should be trained and given responsibility for implementing safety measures.

Using equipment safely

You are advised to monitor and evaluate the risks associated with the use of equipment in the workplace. It will be necessary to identify the ways in which equipment is used during organisational inspections and safety audits. You are also encouraged to carry out regular tests and replace any equipment that poses a significant risk.

Equipment assessments should be based on:

- Manufacturer's instructions
- Environmental impacts (accounting for the effects of temperature, corrosion and weathering)
- The extent to which employees rely on equipment
- Understanding and skill shown when using the equipment
- The potential impact of breakdown and equipment malfunctions.

It might not be possible to completely eliminate the risk associated with the use of some equipment. However, you can take additional precautions for the safety of your workforce.

Measures include:

- Installing temporary guarding
- Ensuring safe access
- Providing suitable protective clothing and accessories
- Using equipment under supervision
- Arranging comprehensive training.



Ensuring the safety of work processes

Employees should be consulted for their perspectives on health and safety issues. Different members of the workforce should also be aware of their responsibilities for maintaining health and safety. Such details may be included in contracts and organisational policies. Your organisation should keep a record of any injuries or near misses that occur as a result of dangerous activity. It will be necessary to identify the need for improvement and carry out essential corrective action.

You should provide guidelines for the completion of high-risk processes in the workplace. Employees should be aware of the hazards and steps necessary for the assurance of safety. These instructions should be updated in accordance with the update and introduction of new work practices. You may include details of appropriate PPE, essential process steps, and risk control methods. Employees should be consulted regarding the relevance and understanding of process instructions.

Activity 5A

5.2 – Reflect on own levels of stress and fatigue, and report to designated persons according to workplace procedures

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Produce a 1-page summary reflecting on own levels of stress and fatigue.

It is fairly common for workplace demands and expectations to result in stress and fatigue. Employees may suffer to different extents, and the symptoms may not be immediately obvious. Those individuals who have negative emotional responses to routine work tasks are likely to feel some level of stress. However, stress can also be caused by personal circumstances outside the workplace. Prolonged stress can lead to fatigue as workers struggle to sleep. The fatigue may manifest in numerous ways, including lack of concentration, enthusiasm, and enjoyment.

The causes of stress and fatigue include:

- Workers placing themselves under undue amounts of pressure to meet high standards
- The breakdown of relationships inside and outside the workplace
- The exertion of considerable physical effort over sustained periods of time
- The level of mental effort required to complete work tasks
- Environmental factors, including the level of lighting and restricted spaces for work.

Employees may experience these symptoms of stress and fatigue:

- Increased blood pressure
- Chest pains
- Palpitations
- Stomach aches
- Headaches
- Sleep problems
- Fatigue
- Unusual behaviour
- Lack of concentration
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Lack of confidence.



Negative impacts in the workplace

It is an unfortunate truth that stress and fatigue can have overwhelmingly negative impacts in the workplace. Employees who feel great pressure on a regular basis are unlikely to be as productive as their colleagues. Stress and fatigue may also result in failure to turn up for work, diminished standards, increased risks of injuries and illnesses, and poor morale. The sense of negativity may well have an impact on other members of the workforce. Stressed employees are likely to feel guilty and place increasing amounts of pressure on themselves. There may be a vicious cycle of stress and fatigue.



Reporting procedures

It is important for employees to be able to report instance of stress and fatigue at the earliest opportunity. If such problems are rapidly identified, then there will be a good chance of developing effective solutions. However, it can be very difficult to break an ingrained pattern of stress and fatigue. Organisations are encouraged to highlight the means of communicating such issues. There shouldn't be any considerable fear regarding the consequences of reporting stress and fatigue. Employees should be treated fairly, with the appropriate level of respect and dignity. It is also important to maintain strict policies of confidentiality when dealing with such issues. Workers may even be given the option of reporting via health and safety representatives and unions.

Organisational responsibilities

Some employees may be reluctant to provide details of stress and fatigue due to concerns about job security and follow up action. However, employers should make it clear that such personal characteristics may have significant impacts in the workplace. Appropriate means of support should be established, so that employees are able to overcome problems and continue performing their duties. The employer must consider whether the stressed or fatigued worker is in a fit mental and physical state. It may be necessary to arrange a break from the workplace, so that the employee is free to resolve the issues and then return when they are happier and more relaxed. Workplace assessments may account for the number of hours worked, sleep patterns, events in the employee's personal life, and the level of mental and physical demand.

Activity 5B

5.3 – Participate in workplace debriefing to address individual needs

By the end of this chapter, the learner should:

- Take part in a workplace debriefing in which the needs of a client are addressed.

Debriefing in response to workplace incidents

The risk of workplace incidents varies, depending on the nature of the organisations and the level of care taken by employees. They may involve serious injuries and illnesses. Such events are bound to have a considerable impact on employees. However, it is essential to establish procedure for following up on such incidents. Meetings and necessary support should be arranged for the benefit of the workforce.

These measures may be agreed:

- Allowing time away from the workplace for recovery
- Counselling within and outside the workplace
- Thorough assessment of the working environment, to avoid any recurrences.



The debriefing should involve an assessment of actions that have been taken subsequent to negative incidents. Any employees who have been directly affected should be involved in the discussions and given the opportunity to provide feedback on the effectiveness of agreed measures.

Your organisation may adopt these strategies:

- Draw upon employee experiences to create a detailed account of events
- Address any questions and concerns
- Encourage open discussions about the incidents
- Identify immediate requirements
- Provide information on the different means of support
- Organise further meetings for the purpose of assessing and evaluating responses.

Structure of incident debriefing

There should be general agreement regarding attendance at workplace debriefings. Such sessions may begin with details of the agreed measures implemented subsequent to a negative event. Employees should be encouraged to air their views, without fear of recrimination. The details of health and safety plans should be analysed. It will also be important to consider the results of follow up action in light of agreed recovery objectives. Such issues should be addressed in a concise and understandable manner for all employees.

Other forms of debriefing

Debriefing sessions aren't always organised in response to workplace incidents. Businesses also have the option of organising regular debriefings for the purpose of assessing the risk and progression of projects. The workers should be invited to talk about any near misses or areas of concern that have been identified while carrying out routine duties. It is also important to recognise the important contributions that employees have made to health and safety. Employees may be praised and rewarded for setting positive examples in the workplace. This will be an excellent way of establishing a positive health and safety culture within your organisation.

Activity 5C

Summative Assessments

At the end of your Learner Workbook, you will find the Summative Assessments.

This includes:

- Skills assessment
- Knowledge assessment
- Performance assessment.

This holistically assesses your understanding and application of the skills, knowledge and performance requirements for this unit. Once this is completed, you will have finished this unit and be ready to move onto the next one – well done!

References

These suggested references are for further reading and do not necessarily represent the contents of this unit.

Workplace safety policy statement:

<https://nonprofitrisk.org/tools/workplace-safety/nonprofit/c1/policy.htm>

Work health and safety procedures:

<http://www.comcare.gov.au/preventing/governance/procedures>

What is the difference between a 'hazard' and a risk:

<https://worksmart.org.uk/health-advice/health-and-safety/hazards-and-risks/what-difference-between-hazard-and-risk>

Identify the hazards:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/identify-the-hazards.htm>

Dealing with difficult customer behaviour:

<http://www.davcorp.com.au/wpdata/files/43.pdf>

How to handle 8 challenging service scenarios:

<http://www.helpscout.net/blog/customer-service-scenarios/>

Dealing with customers: management and staff behaviour:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/violence/toolkit/customers.htm>

Workplace health and safety:

<http://www.healthyworkinglives.com/advice/Legislation-and-policy/Workplace-Health-and-Safety>

Managing risks in the workplace:

http://www.comcare.gov.au/preventing/managing_risks_in_the_workplace

Controlling the risks:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/managing/managingtherisks.htm>

Investigating accidents and incidents:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsg245.pdf>

Top 10 causes of workplace injuries:

<http://smallbusiness.chron.com/top-10-causes-workplace-injuries-11298.html>

Recording and reporting accidents, ill health and near misses:

<http://www.healthyworkinglives.com/advice/Legislation-and-policy/Workplace-Health-and-Safety/recording-reporting-accidents>

Notification and investigation procedures:

<http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/incidents-injuries-emergency/notification>

Workplace safety – infection control:

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Workplace_safety_-_infection_control

Good hygiene practices – reducing the spread of infections and viruses:

http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/diseases/good_hygiene.html

What your H & S committee will do:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/whatwillhsdo.htm>

All references accessed on and correct as of 11.06.2019, unless other otherwise stated.