

# EASY TO DO WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

A small business toolkit



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This toolkit explains the seven components of work health and safety to help you create a safer, healthier and more successful business



### Your commitment

Commitment means leading by example with your actions and attitude, to develop a successful safety culture in your business.



### Consultation

Consultation about work health and safety is an important two-way conversation in your business. It uses everyone's knowledge and experience to achieve a safer and healthier workplace



### Managing risks

Managing risks is an ongoing process of identifying, prioritising and controlling anything that can cause harm.



### Reporting

Reporting is a procedure that gives everyone the opportunity to raise health and safety incidents and issues for you to action.



### Worker capability

Worker capability means a worker has the ability to perform the tasks expected of them without risk to health and safety.



### Safe working environment

A safe working environment means designing and maintaining your workplace to minimise physical and mental health risks.










### Workers compensation and recovery at work

Understanding your workers compensation obligations will assist you to support your workers to recover at work following a work-related injury or illness.

# Checklist

1. **How do you rate?** Complete the checklist.
2. **How can you improve?** Use the toolkit.
3. **Commit to action.** Write your plan.

<p><b>Your Commitment</b></p> 	<p>Do you demonstrate WHS as a priority in your business?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Does everyone understand their WHS responsibilities?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Unsure <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you have what you need to meet your WHS responsibilities?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Unsure <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Are WHS issues fixed promptly?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>All <b>green?</b> Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red?</b> You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Your Commitment</b> section in the toolkit - page 2</p>	
<p><b>Consultation</b></p> 	<p>Do you have an agreed consultation arrangement to discuss WHS?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes, it's working well <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it isn't working well <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you involve workers in WHS decisions?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>Do you consult with other businesses, where you share WHS responsibilities?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>All <b>green?</b> Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red?</b> You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Consultation</b> section in the toolkit - page 5</p>		
<p><b>Managing Risks</b></p> 	<p>Have health and safety risks been identified?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Some <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you have the right controls to manage these risks?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Unsure <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you regularly review your risks and controls?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Are your tasks and the way you use equipment designed to be safe?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Unsure <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>All <b>green?</b> Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red?</b> You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Managing Risks</b> section in the toolkit - page 7</p>	
<p><b>Reporting</b></p> 	<p>Do you have a procedure to report WHS issues?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it is not working well <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you encourage reporting of WHS issues?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>Do you act on these reports?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Always <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> Never</p>	<p>All <b>green?</b> Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red?</b> You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Reporting</b> section in the toolkit - page 10</p>		
<p><b>Worker Capability</b></p> 	<p>Do you induct your workers?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you provide them with WHS information that suits their individual needs?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you make sure they are trained and competent?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you provide your workers with the right supervision?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>All <b>green?</b> Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red?</b> You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Worker Capability</b> section in the toolkit -page 12</p>	
<p><b>Safe Working Environment</b></p> 	<p>Does the design and layout of your workplace allow tasks to be done safely?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Unsure <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you maintain your workplace so that it is healthy and safe?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you protect your workers from mental health risks at work?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Sometimes <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you have emergency plans and are they tested?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Yes, but not tested <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>All <b>green?</b> Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red?</b> You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Safe Working Environment</b> section in the toolkit - page 15</p>	
<p><b>Workers Compensation and Recovery at Work</b></p> 	<p>Is your workers compensation insurance policy up to date? Does it reflect the type of business?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it doesn't reflect the type of business <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Is the <i>If you get injured at work</i> poster displayed in your workplace? Does it include details of your workers compensation insurer and return to work coordinator?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it is not up to date <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you have a return to work program?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Unsure <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>Do you have an injury reporting system?*</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Yes, but workers don't use it <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>On returning to work, are workers given suitable work and do they have a recovery at work plan?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it doesn't always work well <input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>All <b>green?</b> Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red?</b> You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Workers Compensation and Recovery at Work</b> section in the toolkit - page 18</p>

# Introduction

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Work health and safety is everyone's business.

Even if you're self-employed, you are legally responsible for the health and safety of yourself and everyone in your workplace, including workers, visitors, customers, clients and volunteers.

Every year, workplace incidents take lives in NSW.

Compliance with work health and safety (WHS) legislation helps to save lives, and reduces injuries and illnesses to NSW workers.

SafeWork NSW is the state's WHS regulator.

We work with the NSW community to reduce work-related fatalities, serious injuries and illnesses, and make it easier to do business safely.

## **Making it easy to do WHS**

We understand small businesses don't always feel they have the time, resources or expertise when it comes to managing health and safety in their workplace.

Keeping your workplace healthy and safe doesn't have to be difficult.

This toolkit is written for small businesses, including sole traders, and will help you:

- understand your legal obligations and comply with the law
- create a safer, healthier and more successful business.

It's also a great way to demonstrate to your workers and customers that their health and safety is important to you.

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## Your commitment

Staff notice what you do. When you show a commitment to safety and make positive changes they know you are genuine.

Dimitri, seafood merchant, Pyrmont

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## Managing risks

We were surprised how simple it was to address our safety risks.

Bea, agricultural supplier, Cooma

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## Worker capability

Inductions are conducted off-site, results reviewed, deficiencies identified and problems rectified before workers arrive on-site. It's foolproof, simple to use and saves us money.

Jenni, shed manufacturer, Prestons

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## Workers compensation and recovery at work

My workplace did everything reasonable that they could think of to accommodate my return to work. They were coming up with suggestions and solutions even before the return to work plan was in place.

Skye, psychologist, Sydney

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## Consultation

For us, consultation is an open discussion regarding a safety issue and working through the best way for the whole business to manage it.

Tracey, joinery business, Gateshead

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## Reporting

I now feel confident airing any safety concerns I have when visiting a building site.

Teresa, architect, Oyster Bay

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## Safe working environment

The new layout and other improvements were easy to do and with minimal costs, but have made a big difference to the safety of our staff and customers.

Gai and Emma, kitchenware supplier, Pyrmont

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# Your commitment

## What does good management commitment look like?

Good management commitment means:

- health and safety is a priority for you
- you make sure effective controls are in place to protect workers
- everyone's health and safety responsibilities are clearly defined
- you provide time and money to improve health and safety
- your actions show your workers that you are serious about health and safety
- safety is built into your business plans.

## Make health and safety a priority in your business

Demonstrate that health and safety is a priority:

- Talk about it with your workers and supervisors.
- Lead by example – eg participate in safety training, attend safety meetings and wear personal protective equipment, if required.
- Don't take short cuts – always follow your work health and safety procedures.
- Encourage workers to talk openly about work health and safety.
- Give positive feedback for good safety performance.

Demonstrate your commitment by:

- building health and safety into business plans
- making sure production demands don't override health and safety
- making health and safety the first topic at team meetings.

## A guide to understanding responsibilities

Responsibility	Owner	Manager	Supervisor	Worker	Visitor
You understand and apply your WHS duties	✓	✓	✓		
Make sure appropriate resources and processes are available so workers are healthy and safe	✓				
Consult with workers on all matters relating to health and safety (see 'consultation')	✓	✓	✓		
Eliminate or minimise all hazards and risks (see 'managing risks')	✓	✓	✓		
Develop a WHS reporting procedure (see 'reporting')	✓	✓	✓		
Investigate WHS reports and take action (see 'reporting')	✓	✓	✓		
Make sure workers are capable of performing their tasks by giving them information, training, instruction and supervision (see 'worker capability')	✓	✓	✓		



Responsibility	Owner	Manager	Supervisor	Worker	Visitor
Make sure the workers compensation insurance policy is accurate and up-to-date (see 'workers compensation and recovery at work')	✓	✓			
Have a written return to work program describing the steps you will take if a worker is injured (see 'workers compensation and recovery at work')	✓	✓			
Have a safety policy displayed in the workplace, visible to workers and visitors	✓	✓			
Lead by example and promote WHS at every opportunity	✓	✓	✓		
Supervise to ensure safe work procedures are followed	✓	✓	✓		
Participate in the planning and designing of the workplace, work tasks and items of plant	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Take reasonable care of your own health and safety, and the health and safety of others	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Follow health and safety procedures, instructions and rules	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide first aid equipment and make sure people trained in first aid are available to assist	✓	✓			
Participate in health and safety training and discussions	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Report health and safety hazards, injuries and incidents	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Notify us if a serious injury or illness, a death or a dangerous incident occurs	✓	✓			
Use safety equipment and personal protective equipment, as instructed	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leave the workplace in a safe condition	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

As your business grows, you can consider appointing roles including:

- a first aid officer
- a fire warden
- a health and safety representative
- a return to work coordinator.

Clearly communicate all health and safety responsibilities to your workers, including:

- making sure all workers have access to health and safety information and training that are relevant to their work tasks (see 'worker capability')
- making sure workers with specific health and safety responsibilities, such as first aid officers, health and safety representatives and fire wardens have access to specialised training and resources, so they have the skills, qualifications and confidence to fulfil their roles
- letting your workers know who holds specific roles, and what they are responsible for. When these responsibilities change, let workers know of the changes.





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Clearly communicate all health and safety responsibilities to your visitors, including:

- how to use equipment safely
- what hazards and risks are in the workplace, and how to control them
- emergency procedures, such as how to evacuate, assembly points, exit locations and fire wardens
- where to find the first aid kit.

### **What you need to help you meet your responsibilities**

- Time spent on safety is good business practice - it often translates to reduced workers compensation costs, less time lost to injuries, and better productivity.
- Make resources available so everyone can fulfil their health and safety responsibilities, and perform their job safely.
- Provide information to improve health and safety knowledge in the workplace.
- Provide access to personal protective equipment that is safe and fit-for-purpose.
- Allow workers time to attend health and safety training and safety meetings, and do tasks like workplace inspections.

### **Fix health and safety issues promptly**

- Take immediate action to control identified hazards and risks.
- Monitor safety reports to identify trends and improve controls.
- Encourage workers to raise health and safety issues and propose solutions.

## Commit to action Write your plan

# Consultation



## What does good consultation look like?

- Your business has agreed consultation arrangements with your workers and you tell them about consultation outcomes.
- You consult with workers before making decisions that impact their health and safety.
- You have regular, honest talks with your workers about the consultation process, how it's working and how it could be improved.
- There is a good representation of all workers in the consultation process, including diversity of their age, ability, language or literacy.
- Workers suggest and support timely improvements that benefit your business.
- You consult, cooperate and coordinate work health and safety activities with other businesses that have shared duties.

## Consultation arrangements

### What is a consultation arrangement?

How you consult with workers is called a consultation arrangement. It can be as simple as talking to your workers regularly and considering their views when making health and safety decisions. Your workers must agree to the arrangement.

### Why consult?

Consultation is an essential part of managing work health and safety in your workplace. You must consult with workers who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a health and safety issue in your workplace.

### How to consult

You can consult with workers in a variety of ways, including:

- holding regular meetings, formal or informal
- electing a health and safety representative
- appointing a health and safety committee.

You can use a mix of consultation arrangements.

When deciding how to consult, consider:

- the size of your business
- the way work is arranged
- what suits your workers.

### When to consult

Consultation must be regular and ongoing. You must consult with your workers when:

- identifying hazards and assessing risks
- deciding how to eliminate or minimise risks
- proposing changes that may affect the health and safety of your workers
- making decisions about workplace facilities.
- making decisions about how you will:
  - consult with your workers
  - resolve workplace health and safety issues
  - monitor your workers' health



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- monitor workplace conditions
  - provide information and training to your workers.

## Involve workers in decisions

Your workers are affected by your decisions, so you must involve them in all work health and safety decisions. They can help you identify better controls, improve decision-making and reduce incidents.

## Consult with other businesses

### Who to consult

If you share work health and safety duties with another business, you must consult with them and their workers. For example, if you have contractors or labour-hire workers, you share a duty of care and you must consult with the businesses that provide their services.

### What to consult

- Employer responsibilities.
- Procedures for consulting and resolving issues.
- How work affects others and who is affected.
- Hazards, risks and control measures.
- How controls will be checked and updated.

### How to cooperate

- Listen to and consider the views of others.
- Act upon your agreed commitments.

### How to coordinate

- Plan and work together.
- Check and update control measures regularly, to make sure they are working well.

# Commit to action

## Write your plan

# Managing risks

## What does good risk management look like?

- Your tasks, items of plant and workplace are designed to be safe.
- Effective risk management processes are in place to identify hazards and control risks.
- Highest-level controls are used to eliminate or minimise risks.
- Controls are checked to make sure they don't create new risks.
- Controls are reviewed regularly.
- Workers are consulted throughout each step of the risk management process.
- Workers understand risks and control measures.

## Identify health and safety risks

You must find out what your health and safety risks are, particularly those that could cause harm to your workers.

It's important to understand that risks are caused by hazards or situations in the workplace.

To find hazards take regular walks around the workplace and look out for potential hazards including:

HAZARD		RISK
Type of hazard	Example of hazard	Example of harm caused
Manual tasks	Heavy lifting, repetitive movement	Muscular strain
Electricity	Working with live electricity	Shock, burns or death
Machinery	Blade, conveyor belt, auger	Lacerations, crushed or loss of limbs
Tools	Knife	Cut
Working at heights	Ladder, scaffolding	Broken bones from falls
Ergonomic	Desk height set incorrectly	Neck or back pain
Hazardous chemicals	Exposure to toxic chemicals	Illness and disease
Extreme temperatures	Exposure to adverse weather, hot or cold environments	Dehydration, heat stroke, frost bite
Noise	Prolonged exposure to noisy machinery	Permanent hearing damage
Radiation	Exposure to ultra violet light, welding arc flashes, micro waves and lasers	Burns, cancer or blindness
Biological	Exposure to blood or bodily fluids	Disease, skin allergies, irritations
Psychosocial	Bullying, stress, fatigue	Anxiety, depression
Housekeeping	Untidy work area or floor space	Slips, trips and falls

Managing risks



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## Control measures

Managing risks



### Elimination

Remove the hazard completely. Eliminating the hazard is the most effective way to manage risks.

Where it is not practical to eliminate a hazard, risks must be minimised.

Use one or more of the following

#### Engineering

Change the design

#### Substitute the hazard

Replace the hazard with something safer

#### Isolate the hazard

Separate the hazard from people

Minimise any remaining risk by using administrative controls

### Administration

Health and safety procedures and policies  
eg - safe work procedures, staff training

If risks remain, the possible impact on people must be controlled using PPE.

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

eg - safety glasses, hard hats, protective clothing  
This is the least effective way to manage risks

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## Regularly review your risks and controls

Controlling risks is an ongoing process that must be reviewed regularly. Review and, if necessary, revise control measures when:

- an incident occurs
- the control measure is not working
- a new risk or hazard is identified
- consultation suggests a review is necessary
- workplace changes – eg to layout or equipment – are planned
- a health and safety representative requests it

Set up a process to manage your controls and educate your workers. This is called a health and safety system and includes a combination of safety procedures, training for workers, and/or warning signs for hazards.

You must involve your workers at each step of the risk management process. By using the experience, knowledge and ideas of your workers, you are more likely to find safety issues and choose better control measures.

## Design tasks and the use of equipment to be safe

When designing tasks and processes, give your workers:

- manageable workloads
- reasonable hours
- appropriate duties – eg avoid excessive manual handling or repetitive tasks.

When using new equipment, make sure:

- the item is fit-for-purpose
- equipment is safely guarded
- it is stored correctly
- workers know how to use it safely.
- you get safety data sheets and operating manuals from your designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers.

To avoid problems, talk to experienced workers before you buy new machinery and equipment.

For more information, see 'safe working environment'.

# Commit to action

## Write your plan

Managing risks



# Reporting

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## What does good safety reporting look like?

- Systems and procedures are in place for reporting safety issues and incidents.
- Health and safety issues and incidents are always reported and acted upon.
- Risk controls are always reviewed following an incident.
- You notify us of serious incidents, near misses and fatalities.

Reporting helps you identify:

- health and safety issues and solutions
- health and safety priorities
- why incidents occurred
- trends in issues and incidents
- incident and injury prevention measures.

## Health and safety reporting procedures

Talk to your workers before developing or reviewing a reporting procedure, because they witness most of the health and safety issues in your workplace and can help make sure the procedure suits your business.

### What to report

- Injuries, illnesses and fatalities
- Near misses
- Damaged or faulty equipment
- Housekeeping issues
- Health and safety hazards
- Suggestions and improvements.

Serious and life-threatening hazards must be reported immediately.

If there is a:

- death
- serious injury or illness
- potentially dangerous incident

call us immediately on 13 10 50.

### Who to report to

Workers should report health and safety issues to their:

- supervisor
- manager, or
- health and safety representative or health and safety committee.

#### Reporting



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## How to report

Workers can raise health and safety issues by:

- talking to a manager or supervisor
- completing a hazard/incident report form
- raising it at a staff meeting.

A register should be kept for all issues and incidents.

## Who actions reports

Appoint someone to action hazard and incident reports. This could be a supervisor, manager or health and safety representative.

## Encourage reporting

- Train all your workers in the reporting procedure.
- Train your workers to recognise hazards.
- Encourage them to speak up quickly about safety issues.
- Praise them for reporting safety issues, including near misses.
- Encourage regular discussions about opportunities to improve health and safety.
- Consider appointing a health and safety representative or forming a health and safety committee.

## Act upon reports

- Let workers know you have received their report, keep them updated on progress, and advise them of the outcome.
- Address the issue immediately, if possible, and track progress until it is resolved.
- Investigate each report to find why it happened – eg if there are any new hazards, if control measures are not working, or if your workers are not following procedures correctly.
- Use effective control measures to manage the risk. See 'managing risks'.
- Review your reports regularly to identify trends.

Commit to action  
Write your plan





# Worker capability

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## What does good worker capability look like?

You provide workers with information, instruction, training and supervision so they understand:

- the potential health and safety risks of their work
- the systems and control measures in place
- how to work in a healthy and safe way
- how to respond to emergencies.

## Induct workers

Before they start work, you must give new workers training to help them become familiar with their tasks, environment and the people working around them. This is called induction training.

You should tell them:

- how safety is discussed
- how to use equipment safely
- what hazards and risks are in the workplace, and how to control them
- their obligations regarding health and safety
- about emergency procedures, such as how to evacuate, assembly points, exit locations and fire wardens
- where to find the first aid kit.

Also give them contact details for people with health and safety responsibilities such as:

- first aid officer
- health and safety representative
- return to work coordinator
- employee assistance program.

Give them a copy of their job description and let them know their expected work hours and rest breaks.

Make sure every new worker demonstrates that they understand the training.

## Provide information to suit individual needs

### Who needs work health and safety information?

Everyone: business owners, supervisors, workers, work experience students, volunteers and contractors.

### What does each person need?

Information and training depends on:

- a worker's duties, skills and experience
- hazards and control measures in your workplace
- the worker's health and safety responsibilities – eg supervisor, first aid officer, health and safety representative.

Some workers may also need a licence to operate high-risk equipment, such as forklift or crane; others may need a certificate to work in high-risk places, such as a construction site; and others may need industry-specific training, such as handling asbestos, working at heights, operating machinery, working around hot surfaces, using hazardous chemicals or manual handling.



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## Provide information that is easy to understand

Make sure workers are given information that considers their literacy, language and ability.

At-risk workers – workers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, migrant workers, young workers, and labour-hire workers – may need extra consideration.

## Check that workers understand their responsibilities

Ask workers:

- if they understand what's expected of them?
- if they have the knowledge and skills to work safely?
- if they are working as they have been trained?
- if more training or information is needed?
- what improvements can be made?

## Make sure your workers are trained and competent

### What is competency-based training?

Competency-based training makes sure your workers gain the skills and knowledge they need to perform work tasks, and can demonstrate they are able to do them safely.

It's not enough to give a worker a procedure and expect them to perform it correctly.

### Provide training

Let workers know what to expect. Demonstrate each task, step-by-step. Train workers before introducing new equipment or procedures.

### Assess competence

Watch each worker do a task and assess their ability to complete it safely.

Your positive assessment means a worker has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to safely carry out their work tasks.

### Check licences

Check your worker's licence details. Do they have the correct licence for the machinery they'll operate? Is the licence current? Are they the licence holder?

Have your worker demonstrate that they can safely operate the machinery for which they are licensed.

### Keep a record

Keep a record of all training completed by your workers. It helps keep track of who has been trained, how they performed, and what further training is required. It also helps keep track of any formal training that is due to expire, so you can organise refresher training.

Training records should be signed-off by both workers and managers, to show that the training was completed.

### Review training

Review your training frequently, to make sure it is up-to-date and working well.

Worker  
capability



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Whenever there is a change to the workplace or work practices - eg when introducing new machinery or changing the role of a worker - review your training, and update if necessary.

Anyone affected by change in the workplace must be given proper notice, information and training before the change takes place.

### **Provide the right supervision for workers**

Supervising workers makes sure your systems and processes are followed correctly. Good supervisors help improve productivity and maintain healthy and safe practices.

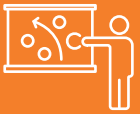
The level of supervision depends on:

- the level of risk in the job
- the experience of the worker
- the skills of the worker
- the existing controls.

High-level supervision is necessary where inexperienced or new workers are expected to follow new systems or carry out difficult and high-risk work. You must consider any requirements of workers with disabilities, cultural differences and language difficulties.

## Commit to action Write your plan

**Worker  
capability**



# Safe working environment

## What does a safe working environment look like?

- Workplace is designed to be healthy and safe.
- Safe and clean workspaces.
- Emergency plans are in place, and reviewed regularly.
- A fully-stocked first aid kit is available.
- Machinery and equipment operate safely.
- Mental health is a priority.
- Hazardous chemicals are used, handled and stored safely.
- Safety data sheets are available and up-to-date.

## Design and layout of workplace

Make sure the design and layout is safe and meets the needs of your business. Consider:

- **workplace layout** – workers can enter, exit and move about the workplace without risk, under normal working conditions and in an emergency. Make sure fall protection is in place – eg safety railings.
- **entry and exit** – slip-resistant, clearly marked and free of hazards.
- **work area** – clean, tidy and well-maintained.
- **floors and surfaces** – slip-resistant and free of hazards - eg cables and loose tiles.
- **moving plant** – separate moving plant from workers – eg effective traffic management.
- **lighting** – allows workers to move around and do their job safely.
- **amenities** – clean, safe and accessible toilets, clean drinking water, hand washing facilities, eating and break facilities, first aid equipment, secure storage for personal items.
- **ventilation** – fans, air-conditioning, windows or doors; use exhaust ventilation to remove dust or fumes.
- **working in extreme temperatures** – keep away from sources of extreme heat and cold, minimise time exposed to extreme temperatures, provide personal protective equipment.
- **outdoor work** – provide shade and shelter, plan regular breaks, minimise time exposed to adverse weather, provide personal protective equipment.
- **remote or isolated work** – install security cameras for people working alone, use appropriate communication systems, provide accommodation.
- **temporary or mobile workplaces** – provide access to toilets and hand washing facilities.
- **electrical work** – always use qualified licensed electricians.

## Maintain a healthy and safe workplace

You should:

- clean spills immediately
- keep walkways clear
- store work materials neatly
- remove waste
- replace consumables, like soap and toilet paper
- keep electrical appliances in good working order
- replace damaged furniture, fixtures and fittings.

Safe working environment



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## Check equipment

Before you buy new or second-hand equipment, make sure it is fit-for-purpose. Test it, and consult with your workers to make sure it won't introduce new problems.

## Hazardous chemicals

Many chemicals used for commercial and industrial purposes are dangerous to human health.

You must identify all harmful substances and materials and prevent or control exposure by:

- making sure labels are correct
- cleaning chemical containers when emptied
- keeping a register of chemicals used, stored and handled
- having a safety data sheet for all chemicals
- displaying warning signs
- keeping chemicals stable
- managing spills and leaks
- storing, handling and disposing of chemicals safely
- supervising your workers.

Chemical manufacturers, importers and suppliers have additional requirements. See the 'Code of practice for managing hazardous chemicals in the workplace'.

## Mental health risks

Poor mental health negatively impacts your business and your workers. You must protect your workers from mental health risks at work, such as:

- **bullying and harassment** – repeated and unreasonable behaviour towards a worker, or group of workers, which creates a risk to health and safety - eg abuse, unfair criticism, rumours.
- **fatigue** – mental or physical exhaustion, which reduces a person's ability to do their work safely and effectively - eg intense mental or physical activity, repetitive tasks, excessive working hours, shiftwork.
- **stress** – the overwhelming feeling of strain and pressure, which can be caused by unrealistic job demands, poor role clarity and lack of support.

Evidence suggests the following actions improve mental health outcomes for businesses and deliver a positive return on investment:

- Train managers to improve their understanding of mental health and increase their confidence and skills to support workers.
- Implement a mental health skills program to help workers proactively manage their mental health.
- Develop a return to work program that supports workers through the recovery at work process (see 'workers compensation and recovery at work').

Other ways you could control the risk to mental health include:

- Have an open-door policy and genuine conversations about mental health with your workers.
- Develop a policy to prevent and manage bullying and harassment.
- Match jobs to workers, based on their skills and abilities.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- Involve workers in decision making (see 'consultation').

- 
- Make sure workers take breaks, drink enough water, and exercise.
  - Help workers raise health and safety issues and respond quickly to incidents (see 'reporting').
  - Connect workers with independent, publicly available support services

## Emergency plans

You must identify emergency situations and plan your response for each. An emergency situation may be a fire, explosion, gas leak, chemical spill, medical emergency, natural disaster, bomb threat or violence.

Your emergency plan depends on the:

- type of work you do
- workplace safety issues
- size of your workplace
- location of your workplace
- number of workers.

Your plan should include:

- information on how to use alarms and alert staff and other people of an emergency
- contact details and responsibilities of first aid officers, fire wardens, traffic controllers and the like
- a floor plan, showing the location of emergency exits, utilities, fire extinguishers and first aid supplies
- emergency contact details of all workers (including out of hours)
- actions for those with special needs
- information on how to use and maintain emergency equipment, such as spill kits, fire extinguishers, gas monitors, smoke detectors and sprinklers
- information on when to review your plan
- frequency of emergency procedure test – eg fire drills at least every 12 months
- information about training workers on your emergency plan.

### First aid

You must give workers access to first aid equipment and facilities. Keep first aid kits close to areas where there is a higher risk of injury or illness, such as the kitchen, warehouse and inside all work vehicles.

Additional first aid requirements vary depending on the nature of the work, type of hazards, workplace size and location, as well as the number of workers. To identify your requirements, see the 'Code of practice for first aid in the workplace'.

## Commit to action

### Write your plan

Safe working  
environment



# Workers compensation and recovery at work

## What does workers compensation and recovery at work look like?

You :

- have a current workers compensation insurance policy that reflects the nature of your business
- update your insurance policy when your business grows or changes
- display the *If you get injured at work* poster at your workplace
- keep a record of all work-related injuries or illnesses in a register of injuries
- notify your insurer of all workplace injuries within 48 hours
- notify us immediately on 13 10 50 if there's a death, serious injury or illness, or potentially dangerous incident
- have a return to work program that describes the steps you will take if a worker is injured in line with the State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) guidelines for workplace return to work program ([sira.nsw.gov.au](http://sira.nsw.gov.au))
- maintain contact with your injured worker and support them to 'recover at work'.

## Keep your policy up-to-date

You must have a workers compensation insurance policy that is right for your business. It must reflect the number of workers, wages paid to workers, and the type of business you run. If your business grows or changes over time, you must update your policy.

## Where do you get a workers compensation insurance policy?

You can obtain a workers compensation policy that is right for your business through a licensed insurer ([sira.nsw.gov.au](http://sira.nsw.gov.au))

The State Insurance Regulatory Authority is the government organisation responsible for regulating the NSW workers compensation system. For more information, visit [sira.nsw.gov.au](http://sira.nsw.gov.au) or call 13 10 50.

## Display the *If you get injured at work* poster

Display the *If you get injured at work* poster in a prominent place in your workplace. The poster lets your workers know what to do and who to contact if they get injured at work.

## Where to get the poster?

You can download a copy from our website.

## Create a return to work program

A return to work program outlines your procedures for handling work-related injuries and illnesses. It is your commitment to the health, safety and recovery of an injured worker.

You must have a return to work program within 12 months of becoming an employer and it must be developed in consultation with your workforce. You must provide a copy to your workers upon request.

It must be aligned with the insurer's injury management plan, written in plain English and reviewed at least every two years.

For more information, visit [sira.nsw.gov.au](http://sira.nsw.gov.au) and if you are a small employer download a return to work program template. Larger employers can use the SIRA checklist to tailor their return to work program to their business.



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## Set up an injury reporting system

Keep a record of all injuries and illnesses – even minor ones that don't need an insurance claim.

Your register of injuries must include:

- name of the injured worker
- worker's address
- worker's age at the time of their injury or illness
- worker's occupation at the time of their injury or illness
- industry in which the worker was engaged at the time of their injury or illness
- time and date of their injury or illness
- nature of their injury or illness
- cause of their injury or illness.

### Who do workers report an injury to?

Injuries and illnesses should be reported to a:

- supervisor
- manager
- health and safety representative or health and safety committee
- return to work coordinator.

### What must you do?

Train your workers to use your injury reporting system and make sure they understand it.

When a workplace injury or illness occurs, you must:

- provide first aid immediately
- make sure the injured person gets the right care, including emergency transportation if necessary
- tell your worker to let their health care provider know they were injured at work
- record the details of the injury or illness in your register of injuries
- let your insurer know about the injury or illness within 48 hours
- call us immediately on 13 10 50 if there is a dangerous incident, or if the injury or illness is serious or results in death.

### Report injuries to your insurer

When reporting an injury to your insurer, you will be asked:

Who did it happen to?	The worker's name, address, contact telephone number, date of birth and position at the workplace
What happened: an overview?	Description of the injury and details of how the incident happened
When did it happen?	Date and time
Where did it happen?	Incident address  Details that describe the specific location of the incident – e.g. section of the warehouse or the equipment that the incident involved
How and where are they being treated (if applicable)?	Name of the treating doctor, contact telephone number or name of the hospital
Name of the business owner?	Legal and trading name  Business address (if different from incident address), ABN/ACN and contact details including phone number and email

Workers  
compensation  
and recovery  
at work





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What has/is being done?	Action taken or intended to be taken to prevent recurrence (if any)
Who is notifying?	Notifying person's name, contact number and position at the workplace. Name, contact number and position of person to contact for further information (if different from above).

When the injury has been reported to the insurer, you will be given a case number. Make a note of this number and give a copy to your worker.

## Give your workers suitable work

### Stay in touch with your worker after injury

You, your health and safety representative, or return to work coordinator should have regular contact with the worker following their injury or illness.

Stay connected and focused on their recovery and return to work.

Suitable work must be provided when your worker is unable to return to their normal duties immediately. Outline these tasks in a recover at work plan.

### What is a recover at work plan?

Together with your worker, plan the tasks they can perform safely until they can resume their pre-injury role. This is known as a recover at work plan.

You must:

#### Understand what your worker can do

Consider the worker's current work capacity/ability, medical advice and individual situation.

Your worker's treating doctor will assess what they can do safely and will provide a certificate of capacity/fitness. Review the certificate with your worker to have a good understanding of their health and ability.

#### Identify suitable work

When the worker can return to work, give them suitable tasks that will help with their recovery.

Try to find tasks that are comparable to their pre-injury duties. Also consider:

- changing their hours of work
- modifying their duties
- giving them a different job
- providing training opportunities
- a combination of the above.

It's important to focus on what the worker can do, not what they can't.

#### Develop a plan

The tasks and hours in the recover at work plan are often increased gradually as the worker recovers. Use the 'recover at work planning tool' at [sira.nsw.gov.au](http://sira.nsw.gov.au)

Give a copy of the plan to your worker and their doctor.

## Commit to action

## Write your plan



# Action plan

After assessing your work activities and hazards, use this plan to record the actions you will take to improve health and safety in your workplace. Consult with workers when developing and reviewing your plan.

For more information, call us on 13 10 50 or visit [safework.nsw.gov.au](http://safework.nsw.gov.au)

Business name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name of reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date plan developed: \_\_\_\_\_ Review date: \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR COMMITMENT						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

CONSULTATION						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments



**MANAGING RISK**

Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

**REPORTING**

Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

**WORKER CAPABILITY**

Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

WORKERS COMPENSATION AND RECOVERY AT WORK						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments



# Need more help?

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Visit [safework.nsw.gov.au/easywhs](https://safework.nsw.gov.au/easywhs)  
or call us on 13 10 50

## What do you need?

<b>Templates and forms</b>	Get tools to help you implement your action plan, including an induction checklist, hazard/incident report form, training record register and register of injuries/illnesses.
<b>Advice on a specific issue</b>	Find codes of practice, safety alerts, fact sheets and guides.
<b>Licences and registrations</b>	Apply for a licence. Register your machinery and equipment.
<b>Education</b>	Attend a webinar. Join our mentor program.
<b>Free on-site support</b>	Ask for a visit to your workplace for tailored advice.
<b>Get healthy</b>	Get a free health check. Get help to develop a simple workplace health program for your business.
<b>Financial help</b>	Apply for a \$500 rebate to help you install a safety item in your business.
<b>Research and testing</b>	Access research, data and reports, to help you improve health and safety in your business.
<b>Recognition for your effort</b>	Enter the annual SafeWork NSW Awards.
<b>Glossary</b>	A list of useful terms is on our website.



# Register of injuries/illnesses

Employer's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Website: \_\_\_\_\_  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

- Employer's name
- The name of the person who reported the hazard/incident
- A description of the hazard/incident
- The date and time the hazard/incident was reported
- The location of the hazard/incident
- The name and position of the person who investigated the hazard/incident
- The date and time the hazard/incident was investigated
- The actions taken to resolve the hazard/incident
- The date and time the hazard/incident was resolved
- The name and position of the person who resolved the hazard/incident

## Induction checklist

Employer's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Worker's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Employment start date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position/job title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Manager/supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department: \_\_\_\_\_

### Explain

- The site
- The tasks

### List and describe their responsibilities

- Manager
- Supervisor
- Co-worker
- Health and safety representative
- Fire warden

### Explain

- Name and position of the person who reported the hazard/incident
- Location of the hazard/incident
- Date and time the hazard/incident was reported
- Name and position of the person who investigated the hazard/incident
- Date and time the hazard/incident was investigated
- Actions taken to resolve the hazard/incident
- Date and time the hazard/incident was resolved
- Name and position of the person who resolved the hazard/incident

## Hazard/incident report form

Use this form to report health and safety hazards and incidents.

### Hazard/Incident Report Form

**Brief description of hazard/incident:** (Describe the task, equipment, tools and people involved. Use sketches, if necessary. Include any action taken to ensure the safety of those who may be affected.)

Where is the hazard located in the workplace?

When was the hazard identified? Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_am/pm

**Recommended action to fix hazard/incident:** (List any suggestions you may have for reducing or eliminating the problem - for example re-design mechanical devices, update procedures, improve training, maintenance work)

Date submitted to manager: Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_am/pm

### Action taken

Has the hazard/incident been acknowledged by management? Yes/No

Describe what has been done to resolve the hazard/incident:

Do you consider the hazard/incident fixed? Yes/No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Need more help?





**Disclaimer**

This publication may contain information about the regulation and enforcement of work health and safety in NSW. It may include some of your obligations under some of the legislation that SafeWork NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website [www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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Website [www.safework.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au)

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# Notifying SafeWork NSW

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SafeWork NSW is the regulator for work health and safety.

Call 13 10 50 immediately if there is a serious injury, illness, death or potentially dangerous incident at your workplace.

**You must also:**

- provide first aid and ensure the injured worker gets the right care
- take care not to disturb the incident site until an inspector arrives – you can help an injured person and make sure the site is safe
- record it in your register of injuries
- notify your insurer within 48 hours.

Penalties apply for not notifying incidents.

To find out more, visit [safework.nsw.gov.au](https://safework.nsw.gov.au) or call us on 13 10 50