

September 2015

Workplace

Key stories inside

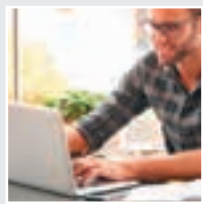
How to make a
workers comp claim

FIFO, farm and water safety

How to write a WHS Policy

Work Safe
TASMANIA

Contents

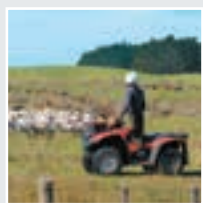


COVER STORY

Farming is one of the most dangerous industries to work in, but there are ways farmers can work safely and still be productive. For full story see page 6.

NEWS + EVENTS

Safe Work Australia: Virtual Seminar Series 2015	11
New learning options this WorkSafe Month	13
What you told us: Results from our reader survey	15



SAFETY

Safety issues facing our farms	6
Mental health and FIFO workers.....	8
Life jackets: On-the-water essential	10
How do I develop an emergency plan?	12

WORKERS COMPENSATION



Workers comp claims: What to do if you're a worker, an employer	4
Worksafe Month celebrates 5 years with decreased injury statistics	14

RETURN TO WORK

New Service to help doctors with return to work	16
Body stressing injuries in health care and social assistance ..	16



REGULARS

From the Minister	3
Build a safety system: Writing a WHS policy	18
Everybody's Talking	19

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Throughout, the acronyms 'WHS' stands for work health and safety and 'PCBU' stands for person conducting a business or undertaking.

Committing to safety every day



Every day we must strive to ensure work health and safety stays ‘front of mind’: as an important priority for business owners, managers and supervisors, and workers to ensure we work safely and can go home at the end of each day to our families and communities.

Every October we re-focus this commitment to safety awareness and learning, with the WorkSafe Month and WorkSafe Awards. These long-running initiatives — the Awards celebrate their twentieth year in 2015 — have successfully engaged thousands of people over the years.

The Month has helped workers, managers and employers learn how to manage workplace hazards, work safely, understand their rights and responsibilities, manage positive return to work outcomes, and become healthier, too. The acclaimed Awards have celebrated those who have made a difference with their commitment to work health and safety.

Over the years, we have heard inspiring experts deliver informative seminars, and seen equally inspiring Tasmanian businesses and individuals, from small and large organisations, improve the safety culture, practices and performance in their workplaces.

This year, both the Awards and the Month have evolved, to better meet your needs and business practices.

Awards categories now better reflect how businesses approach innovation and manage safety, wellbeing and return to work. Special awards will recognise the achievements of winners over the twenty year history of the Awards.

It promises to be yet another prestigious event, and I look forward to meeting the people who make such a significant contribution to a safer Tasmania.

This year WorkSafe Month offers free online learning options: webinars, live streaming of interactive panels, and video presentations by work health and safety professionals, business leaders and experts.

These exciting developments mean that regardless of your working hours or location, business size or industry, or role at work, there's sure to be an option that suits you.

You'll find the Program of Events included with this magazine, as well as online at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and I encourage you to register for one or more events — and use these October opportunities throughout the business year, to help all Tasmanians be safe and healthy at work.

Turn to page 18 for the first in a new series to help you build your safety management system. This edition we'll show you through the practical steps to writing a WHS policy.

Workers comp claims: What to do if you'

I'm an employer, and one of my workers has been injured at work. What must I do?

Step 1: If the injury is a notifiable incident (according to the Work Health and Safety Act 2012), report it to WorkSafe Tasmania by the fastest possible means — usually by calling 1300 366 322.

Step 2: Tell your workers compensation insurer about the incident. You must do this within 3 working days.

Step 3: Give your worker a *Notice of Right to make Worker's Compensation Claim*. This is not a claim form, but lets your worker know they can make a claim. Get this from our website (go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'GF172') or get a copy from your insurer. You must give this to your worker within 14 days of you being told about the incident.

Step 4: If your worker asks for a *claim form* (available from your insurer), you must supply it and not obstruct the claim. Once your worker has given you their claim form and a *workers compensation medical certificate* (from their doctor), you must tell your insurer within 3 working days.

Step 5: Complete the employer's section of the claim form. Send this and the workers compensation medical certificate to your insurer within 5 working days. You must start making payments to your worker, preferably on

their next pay day. If payment on pay day is not possible, it must be made within 14 days of receiving the claim.

Step 6: Notify your worker of the status of their claim within 28 working days.

What happens next

Your insurer will tell you and your worker that they've received the claim. They will also give you and your worker information about your rights, roles and responsibilities during the workers compensation process. Continue to promptly forward any medical certificates and invoices to your insurer.

Weekly payments

You must make weekly payments of compensation if your worker has been certified as totally or partially incapacitated for work.

Medical expenses

You must pay for reasonable medical and associated expenses while deciding about acceptance of liability. These payments are initially limited to a maximum of \$5,000 until the claim is accepted or a dispute is heard and resolved.

If you believe a claimed expense is not reasonable or necessary you should discuss this with your insurer.

Medical accounts

Your worker must give you any account for a medical or other expense within 7 days. Once you receive the account, you must forward it to your insurer within 7 days.

For further help

For further workers compensation guidance and information, go to:

- your insurer: for information and support
- WorkSafe Tasmania Helpline (call 1300 366 322): for advice about compliance and procedures
- WorkSafe Tasmania's website (go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'workers compensation'): for guides for you and your worker.



re a worker, an employer

I'm a worker and I've been injured at work. How do I make a workers comp claim?



Step 1: Tell your employer that you've been injured; seek medical attention. Your employer must tell their insurer and give you a ***Notice of Right to make Worker's Compensation Claim***. This is not a claim form, but lets you know you can make a claim.

Step 2: Your accredited doctor will give you a ***workers compensation medical certificate***.

Step 3: If you want to claim, ask your employer for a ***claim form*** (from their insurer).

Step 4: Complete the worker section of the claim form, give it back to your employer with your workers compensation medical certificate. You should also pass on any medical accounts or receipts, but keep copies of everything.

You have now made your claim.

If you have ***not*** given your employer ***both*** the claim form and the medical certificate, you have not made a claim. So please follow the above steps if you wish to claim workers compensation for your injury.

What happens next

Your employer must start making payments for time off work or medical expenses.

For further help

For further workers compensation guidance and information, go to:

- Worker Assist (call 1300 027 747): for information and support
- WorkSafe Tasmania Helpline (call 1300 366 322): for advice about compliance and procedures
- WorkSafe Tasmania's website (go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'workers compensation'): for guides for you and your employer.
-

Safety issues facing our farms



Deaths and injuries on our farms continue to make news around the country. During National Farm Safety Week (20–24 July), Farmsafe Australia released figures for the first six months of 2015:

- number of deaths on farms: 24
- deaths involving quad bikes: 8
- deaths involving tractors: 8
- deaths involving children: 4.

Safe Work Australia statistics show the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector is the second highest for worker fatalities. Safe Work Australia's 2013 report into work-related injuries and fatalities on Australian farms is still relevant for its overview of the industry — and the safety issues confronting it:

- farming is 'one of the most dangerous industries in which to work' because of its unique combination of factors such as equipment, chemicals, animals, and environmental exposure
- agriculture has the highest proportion of self-employed workers of any industry. So 'self-employed farmers face the demands and

stress of running a business [on top of] undertaking the hard physical labour involved in farm work'

- farm workers often work alone, which means fewer opportunities for sharing practices, observing and learning from others. Farm workers also often work remotely, at a distance from help or first aid should an incident occur
- agriculture employs a higher proportion of older workers than any other industry. While increasing age brings increased experience and skills, it also means some physical skills may not be sharp and strong, and may increase the likelihood of serious or even fatal consequences
- finally, farms are unique as they are often both workplaces and family homes.

Safe farms, better business

National Farm Safety Week made the link between good safety practices and better productivity.

'Having safety as a major aspect of our business will not only reduce risks to those who work and live on our farms, it will also improve our bottom line,' said Farmsafe Australia Chairperson Charlie Armstrong.

'Even non-fatal injuries can have major cost implications on things such as delays in harvest, damage to equipment and downtime needed to recover from injuries.

'We want farming to be both profitable and safe, and we can do both if safety is promoted as a core value for your business.'

Farmsafe Australia's practical steps for farmers to make safety a 'core value' include:

- having a safety plan that identifies potential hazards and takes action to fix them
- making sure all new workers, including contractors, are inducted onto your property. Farmsafe has a free induction app available on Google Play or iTunes store



- always being on the look out for new hazards, and fixing them as soon as possible
- setting clear safety procedures for risky work
- making sure everyone working on the farm understands and uses your safety procedures
- having an emergency plan for any incidents.

Farmsafe has free resources available on its website at www.farmsafe.org.au. You'll need to become a member, but it's free and simple to do.

Farm safety in Tasmania

Safe Farming Tasmania is a new farm safety initiative that aims to reduce farm-work related death, injury and disease and improve the health and safety of workers in Tasmania's farming industry by:

- raising awareness of farm safety issues, including packing and processing
- producing targeted information about farm safety
- working with industry stakeholders to provide training and education on farm safety issues.



'I'll be providing practical guidance to rural workplaces, looking at what they're doing to manage safety, and either providing direction myself or referring workplaces to other services,' explained Safe Farming Tasmania's Phill John.

'I'll also be focussing on education about farm safety issues, and working with industry groups and stakeholders to reduce deaths and injuries on our farms.'

Safe Farming Tasmania is a joint initiative of WorkSafe Tasmania and the Department of Primary Industries, Park, Water and the Environment (DPIPWE). To talk to Phill, call 0407 015 400.

What can you do?

New guides are in the pipeline, but you can find rural-specific information at the WorkSafe Tasmania website. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'GB308' for a practical explanation of how the WHS laws apply to your farm. There are chapters on animal handling, children, chemicals and equipment.

To create the safe work procedures and emergency plans recommended by Farmsafe Australia, use the samples available on the WorkSafe website. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'sample'.

While the codes of practice are not specific to the rural industry, they cover many of the work tasks, practices and features found on farms, such as chemical use, confined spaces, manual tasks, plant/equipment and electrical risks. These practical and easy to understand codes will help you manage these issues. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'codes of practice' for the full list.



Mental health and FIFO workers

You might hear the term ‘FIFO’ — fly-in fly-out workers — and think of mining and resources workers in Western Australia, maybe Queensland. While the FIFO work system is more prevalent in WA than anywhere else in the country, there are tradespeople who come into Tasmania to work on this basis, and there are certainly Tasmanians who work interstate this way too.

So the June 2015 report by the Parliament of Western Australia on ‘The impact of FIFO work practices on mental health’ has important messages for Tasmanian workers and employers.

Report aims

The WA inquiry looked at the impact of FIFO work arrangements on mental health in the resources industry.

This inquiry was a response to ongoing community and media concerns at reports of nine FIFO worker suicides within 12 months.

Research findings

The typical FIFO resource worker comes from the demographic most at risk for mental illness and suicide: males aged 18 to 44 working in a trade or labouring role. The report said that ‘to ignore this

demographic profile is to ignore a clear indicator that members of the FIFO workforce may be vulnerable [to] mental illness’.

‘FIFO takes such an individual regularly away from home, [isolates him] from his family and other social supports, subjects him to fatigue, and then controls his life within the camp environment,’ the report stated. ‘Understandably, this can have a significant impact on his emotional health and wellbeing.’

The report used three studies which suggested ‘the prevalence rate of mental health problems amongst the FIFO workforce could be approximately 30 per cent, significantly higher than the national average of 20 per cent’.

Suicide risks

The report stated that ‘a person does not need to be suffering a diagnosable mental illness in order to consider suicide.’ It went on to say that ‘even if higher mental illness and suicide risk based on demographic factors is ignored, it is clear that ordinary people who suffer from stressful life events, particularly relationship breakdowns, are vulnerable to suicide’.

It then described the FIFO environment: ‘Scenarios that may contribute to

relationship breakdowns, such as regular and prolonged absences from home, may make a person more vulnerable. Cultures that encourage alcohol and drug use may make a person more vulnerable due to the disinhibiting effect of such substances.’

Recommendations

One line of thought is that some people are better suited than others for FIFO work. However, the report dismissed this, saying ‘rather than trying to screen for and recruit workers able to withstand the challenges of a FIFO role, industry’s emphasis should be on tailoring FIFO roles to accommodate the mental health needs of workers’.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (www.abs.gov.au) defines fly-in fly-out (FIFO) work as ‘circumstances of work where the place of work is sufficiently isolated from the worker’s place of residence to make daily commute impractical’. FIFO also covers other long distance commuting employment arrangements, such as drive-in drive-out.



One of the report's major recommendations was that a code of practice be developed to address FIFO work arrangements and their impact on workers' mental health. The report wanted the proposed code to address or acknowledge issues such as:

- rosters that support mental wellbeing, rather than leading to fatigue and posing risks to mental health
- the impact fatigue has on mental health
- the stigma that surrounds mental health issues
- the impact of FIFO (and related financial pressures and employment volatility) on personal relationships
- the need for better communication technology so workers can stay in touch with their families and friends 'back home'.

Peer support programs and buddy systems were also noted as important support for workers who might be reluctant to use formal assistance programs.

The report called on industry leaders to 'embrace a commitment to mental health within their organisations. Training is needed at every level – for leaders,

managers, supervisors and workers – to ensure that the industry is equipped to handle mental health issues within their teams and amongst their colleagues'.

Another recommendation was legislative changes covering WHS in the mining and petroleum industries; for example, clarifying which jurisdiction applies at which site, and extending WHS provisions to accommodation facilities. Reporting suicides and attempted suicides, whether or not they were considered work related, was also discussed.

What can you do?

This report has important messages for anyone managing workers who work remotely, have FIFO or drive-in drive-out arrangements, or who fall into the 'at risk' demographic of men aged 18 to 44 in labouring trades.

The report made recommendations on rostering systems, fatigue management and mental health, buddy / peer support systems, and communication technologies. These are factors you can review in your own business practices to see if they support or jeopardise mental health.

To find practical resources for creating mentally healthy workplaces, go to the Heads Up website at www.headsup.org.au.

www.headsup.org.au (Heads Up is a national initiative of [beyondblue](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) and the Mentally Health Workplace Alliance). You'll find guidance tailored for employers to create workplace programs, and for individuals to take care of themselves at work.

You'll also find resources at the [beyondblue](http://www.beyondblue.org.au) website at www.beyondblue.org.au

WorkSafe's Wellbeing Advisors can also help you manage mental and emotional wellbeing. Call 1300 366 322 to arrange a free visit.

To find the full June 2015 report by the Parliament of Western Australia on 'The impact of FIFO work practices on mental health', search for 'WA FIFO mental health report' in your web browser.

If you need help

- Lifeline: 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au
- MensLine: 1300 789 978
www.mensline.org.au
- Working Away Alcohol and Drug Support Line on 1800 721 997

Life jackets: On-the-water essential

In the aftermath of a commercial fisherman who drowned while retrieving craypots, there is renewed emphasis on the importance of wearing life jackets or personal floatation devices for anyone using a dinghy.

Sadly, too many people drown while fishing, setting or retrieving craypots — too often, they are not wearing a life jacket when out on the water.

The commercial fisherman who drowned while collecting craypots in the state's south had gone out into two to three metre waves by himself. He was not wearing a life jacket and his upturned dinghy was found near a partly submerged rock along the shoreline.

The Coroner investigating the death made recommendations for the industry, including:

- a person should only operate a dinghy alone in favourable weather, not where there is a reasonable possibility of capsizing (your risk assessment should consider these factors)
- when a person operates a dinghy alone, there should be a watch kept, so if there is an incident, there can be an immediate response
- a code of practice specific to the rock lobster industry be developed.

Life jackets

When assessing the risks of doing any work on the water, it is important to recognise the hazards of drowning, and what steps you need to take to manage this risk. A life jacket is the minimum control measure necessary for working on the water.

Quite simply, life jackets are a vital piece of safety equipment when you're working on the water.

However, they only work if you're wearing them. So make putting on your life jacket part of your routine before you get on your boat or dinghy.



Important factors to remember about life jackets:

- make sure the life jacket is fitted correctly and snugly over the clothes you'll be wearing while on the water
- look for crotch straps: these stop the jacket from floating up too high and away from your body
- make sure all fastenings are done up and as tight as possible
- be familiar with your life jacket and how to use it
- have your life jacket regularly inspected and serviced by an authorised agent of the manufacturer. This will ensure the inflation system is working and other components aren't defective or deteriorated. Replace or upgrade your life jacket if necessary.

Go to the Marine and Safety Tasmania (MAST) website at www.mast.tas.gov.au and search 'awareness day' to be directed through to an informative video that shows some of these tips in action.

You can also search the MAST website for 'life jackets' to see the different levels of life jackets available, and the conditions and operations they are suitable for.

Workplace Issues thanks MAST for its assistance with this article.

According to MAST, an approved life jacket must be provided for each person on board:

- it is compulsory to wear a life jacket in any recreational motor boat or motor-propelled tender that is under six metres in length while under power
- it is compulsory for children under the age of 12 years to wear a life jacket in a recreational motor boat or motor-propelled tender of **any** length while under power.



safe work australia



Throughout October, Safe Work Australia hosts a series of free online seminars that showcase the latest thinking, innovation, research and development in work health and safety.

Engage with Australian and international health and safety experts, academics and leaders through our live broadcasts and online Q&A sessions. Be part of the conversation using the hashtag #virtualWHS or on our LinkedIn page.

This year's seminars discuss good work design and safety throughout supply chains and focus on the construction and manufacturing industries.

Download a range of resources including case studies, research, and ideas to support your own work health safety activities.

www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/vss



How do I develop an emergency plan?

WorkSafe Tasmania's Helpline is frequently asked about emergency planning at workplaces. Below is the section of the Code of Practice 'Managing the Work Environment and Facilities' that Helpline inspectors refer to. You can find this code on the WorkSafe Tasmania website. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP124'.

You can also find further guidance on emergency plans and procedures in AS 3745—2010 *Planning for Emergencies in Facilities*. To purchase this standard, go to the SAI Global website at <http://infostore.saiglobal.com> and search for '3745'.

Emergency plans

There are different types of emergency situations, including fire or explosion, dangerous chemical release, medical emergency, natural disaster, bomb threats, violence or robbery.

In preparing and maintaining an emergency plan, the following must be taken into account:

- the particular work being carried out at the workplace
- the specific hazards at a workplace
- the size and location of a workplace
- the number and composition of the workers and other people at a workplace.

The plan must be based on an assessment of the hazards at the workplace, including the possible consequences of an incident occurring as a result of those hazards. For example, a cleaner working by themselves in a city office building will be subject to different hazards to a worker in a chemical plant. The varying nature of the hazards requires the risks of the particular job to be assessed, and an appropriate emergency procedure put in place.

The impact of external hazards that may affect the health and safety of workers should also be taken into account (for example, a chemical storage facility across the road).

The preparation of an emergency plan for a workplace shared by a number of businesses (for example, a shopping centre, construction site or multi-tenanted office building) should be co-ordinated by the person with management or control of the workplace (who may be the property manager, principal contractor or landlord) in consultation with all tenants or businesses at the workplace.

If the business is conducted at such a workplace and an emergency plan has already been prepared, the types of emergency situations that may arise from the business must be taken into account in the emergency plan. Workers and their health and safety representatives must be consulted when reviewing, and if necessary revising, the emergency plan by the person responsible for preparing it.

A plan must be developed if there is no emergency plan at the workplace. If the workplace presents a significant hazard in an emergency, consultation with the local emergency services when developing the plan should occur.

Preparing emergency procedures

The emergency procedures in the emergency plan must clearly explain how to respond in various types of emergency, including how to evacuate people from the workplace in a controlled manner.

The procedures should be written clearly and simple to understand. Where relevant, the emergency procedures should address:

- allocation of roles and responsibilities for specific actions in an emergency to persons with appropriate skills, for example appointment of area wardens

- clear lines of communication between the person authorised to co-ordinate the emergency response and all persons at the workplace
- the activation of alarms and alerting staff and other people at the workplace
- the safety of all the people who may be at the workplace in an emergency, including visitors, shift workers and tradespeople
- workers or other persons who will require special assistance to evacuate
- specific procedures for critical functions such as a power shut-off
- identification of safe places
- potential traffic restrictions
- distribution and display of a site plan that illustrates the location of fire protection equipment, emergency exits and assembly points
- the distribution of emergency phone numbers, including out-of-hours contact numbers
- access for emergency services (such as ambulances) and their ability to get close to the work area
- regular evacuation practice drills (at least every twelve months)
- the use and maintenance of equipment required to deal with specific types of emergencies (for example, spill kits, fire extinguishers, early warning systems such as fixed gas monitors or smoke detectors and automatic response systems such as sprinklers)
- regular review of procedures and training.

Emergency procedures must be tested in accordance with the emergency plan in which they are contained.

Evacuation procedures should be displayed in a prominent place, for example, on a noticeboard. Workers must be instructed and trained in the procedures.

New learning options this WorkSafe Month

A more comprehensive plan may be needed to address high risk situations such as:

- people sleeping on site (for example, hotels)
- large numbers of people at the site at the same time (for example, stadiums)
- high risk chemical processes and major hazard facilities
- significant cash handling, particularly outside normal business hours.

What do the regulations say?

Regulation 43 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 state that the PCBU must ensure an emergency plan is prepared for its workplace that provides for emergency procedures, including:

- an effective response to an emergency
- evacuation procedures
- notifying emergency services at the earliest opportunity
- medical treatment and assistance
- effective communication between the person authorised by the PCBU to coordinate the emergency response and all persons at the workplace.

The emergency plan must also provide for:

- testing the emergency procedures (including how often they should be tested)
- information, training and instruction to relevant workers about implementing the emergency procedures.

This year WorkSafe Tasmania is offering even more ways for you to access information about safety, wellbeing and return to work.

These exciting developments mean that regardless of your working hours or location, business size or industry, or role at work, there's sure to be an option that suits you.

Online options

For the first time, we are offering a range of delivery modes, providing you with greater convenience and flexibility.

There'll be webinars, live streaming of interactive panels, and video presentations by WHS professionals, business leaders and experts.

Topics cover how to manage hazards, how to set up a safety management system, return to work and workers compensation, and the full spectrum of wellbeing topics.

Whether you're an employer, supervisor or workers, you'll be able to learn in your own time, at your own pace.

Venue events

WorkSafe Month is supporting the 'Fit for Life, Fit for Work' events. Held in Hobart, Launceston, Devonport and Smithton,

these events will look at how your health, wellbeing and fitness may change over your working life. They'll also explore how this affects work demands, work performance, and safe work practices; and your life outside of work.

Other events

Other events to look out for include the Beach to Bay Strahan Fun Run, the HSR Conferences, and Safe Farming Tasmania activities on King and Flinders Island.

For more information, see the Program of Events.

How do I take part?

You can read about all the offerings in this Program of Event, included with this magazine or online at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au.

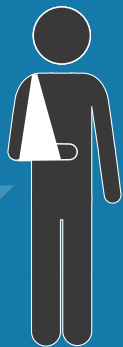
To register to participate, go to WorkSafe Tasmania Month at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au — please note that you must register even for the online events; and that one person can register for a workplace group.

All events are free unless otherwise stated in the Program of Events.



WorkSafe Month celebrates 5 years with decreased injury statistics

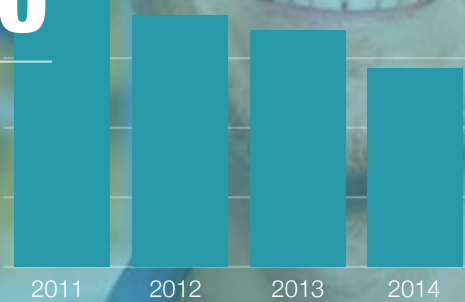
17%



Number of injuries has dropped (from 9,231 to 7,681)

11%

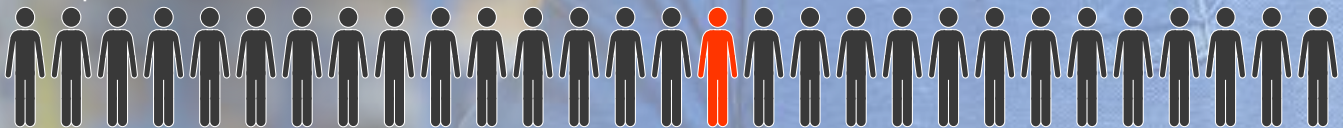
Incidence rate has dropped 11% (from 38.4 to 34.4 claims per 1000 workers)



Caption goes here



Incidence rate drop equates to approximately **1 in 26** workers injured in 2011, compared to **1 in 29** workers in 2014



Lost time injuries have dropped **16%** (from 4,055 to 3,402)

Lost time incidence rate has dropped **10%** (from **16.9** to **15.2** lost time injuries per **1000** workers)

Lost time incidence rate drop equates to approximately **1 in 66** workers having a lost time injury in 2011, compared to **1 in 59** in 2014

Note: Data is based on a comparison of 2011 and 2014 calendar years, on date of injury.

What you told us: Results from our reader survey

Thank you to everyone who completed our online reader survey earlier this year. Our last survey was conducted in late 2011, so it was time to once again test whether Workplace Issues meets your needs and remains relevant.

Must-reads

Updates on the laws were the most popular kind of article to read, closely followed by **practical articles** to help you manage hazards, tasks and equipment. This continues the clear message from the 2011 survey: you want a source of practical, topical information regularly and directly delivered to you.

One reader said they wanted 'practical advice ... to improve your health, safety and wellbeing'; another said they wanted to know 'how problems can be resolved'.

Of our regulars, once again it's our Helpline's **Everybody's Talking** column that tops your list: the 'Q&A sections ... have helped me identify/manage similar situations we have had at our workplace'.

The **prosecutions** column is another perennial favourite: 'you learn things from reading what other business don't do to ... protect their workers'. We're working to reinstate this column after an absence from our pages.

Using the magazine

It's good to know Workplace Issues is a valuable tool for you to communicate safety in your workplace.

Almost half of survey respondents share the magazine with others in their workplace (and also at home); and almost a third keep it for future reference. Many use it in training and staff meetings.

One reader said the magazine is 'a useful tool to generate workplace discussions about safety' and 'a regular reminder to keep workplace safety a priority'. Another said 'we give a copy ... in our training courses and encourage clients to sign up'.

What a great idea!



Increasing knowledge

The magazine helps readers understand their rights and responsibilities (almost 26%) and make or suggest changes to improve safety (almost 25%). It 'provides knowledge and inspiring information' said one reader.

Local focus

Readers emphasised the desire to keep content, issues and messages local. Readers praised the 'topical Tasmanian coverage focussing just on our state', 'local industry news' and the fact that it's 'pertinent to Tasmania where I work and live'.

And online?

Despite rapid changes in technology and society's rapid uptake of smartphones and tablet and other devices, Workplace Issues readers remain staunchly loyal to the printed copy. Perhaps one reader said it best: 'I prefer the [printed] magazine to online as this enables me to share a copy with staff to read'.

So as we said after the 2011 survey, we'll keep delivering Workplace Issues to your letterbox!

Prize WINNER

Congratulations to **Wendy Hatton** from Pioneer in the state's north-east who chose a \$100 office supplies gift voucher. Wendy has been reading the magazine for the past five years.

'Reading Workplace Issues opens my eyes to things I wouldn't normally think about,' she said. 'It also keeps me informed on what others are doing to manage safety.'

Body stressing injuries in health care and social assistance



In previous editions of *Workplace Issues*, we've covered WorkSafe Tasmania's project that's focussing on body stressing injuries in the health care and social assistance (HCSA) sector. To recap, this project aims to:

- improve manual handling for PCBU's and workers in this sector
- reduce body stressing and subsequent workers compensation claims for workers in this sector.

Research

Research was conducted by Jeffrey HR on behalf of WorkSafe Tasmania. Over 200 interviews were done with PCBU's and workers who had recently made a workers compensation claim for a body stressing injury.

Summary of findings

From this research, we've seen broad issues that apply to the sector as a whole:

- policies and procedures for manual handling tasks must be seen as realistic and achievable so they will be followed as standard operations. Unfortunately, workers see some current policies (such as 'no lift') as unrealistic given patient-care needs, and therefore may be ignored
- there is too much acceptance of the 'inevitability' of body stressing injuries, both by workplaces and individuals. This complacency can lead to workplaces and individuals paying only superficial attention to good safety practices
- workplace culture and management's attitude/behaviour have a major impact on the number of claims and on claimant's behaviour/response to body stressing injuries
- factors such as the aging workforce, differing physical characteristics, and fitness for work contribute to the difficulty in managing body stressing injuries

- the increase in obese patients/clients/residents with specialist needs presents challenges. Even with specialist equipment to help, workers still need to be skilled to deal with obese patients.

What next?

WorkSafe Tasmania is currently developing strategies to address these findings.

What can you do?

Attend our free seminars running during WorkSafe Month. These discuss WorkSafe's body stressing project and explore factors that may help manage and reduce body stressing, including policies and procedures, workplace culture, and patient and workforce influences. There are two seminars, one for workers and another for PCBU's. The seminars will be held in Launceston, live-streamed, and recorded for those unable to attend.

Find full details in the Program of Events included with this magazine. To register to participate, go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au

New service to help doctors with return to work

The WorkCover Tasmania Board's new Medical Advisory and Mentoring Service (MAMS) service will put doctors in touch with other doctors to improve the medical management of workers compensation patients — and ultimately, to ensure better outcomes for everyone involved in return to work.

'MAMS will improve the health outcomes of injured workers by increasing the information, support and advice available to medical practitioners who are part of the workers compensation scheme,' said WorkCover Tasmania Board member Dr Rob Walters.

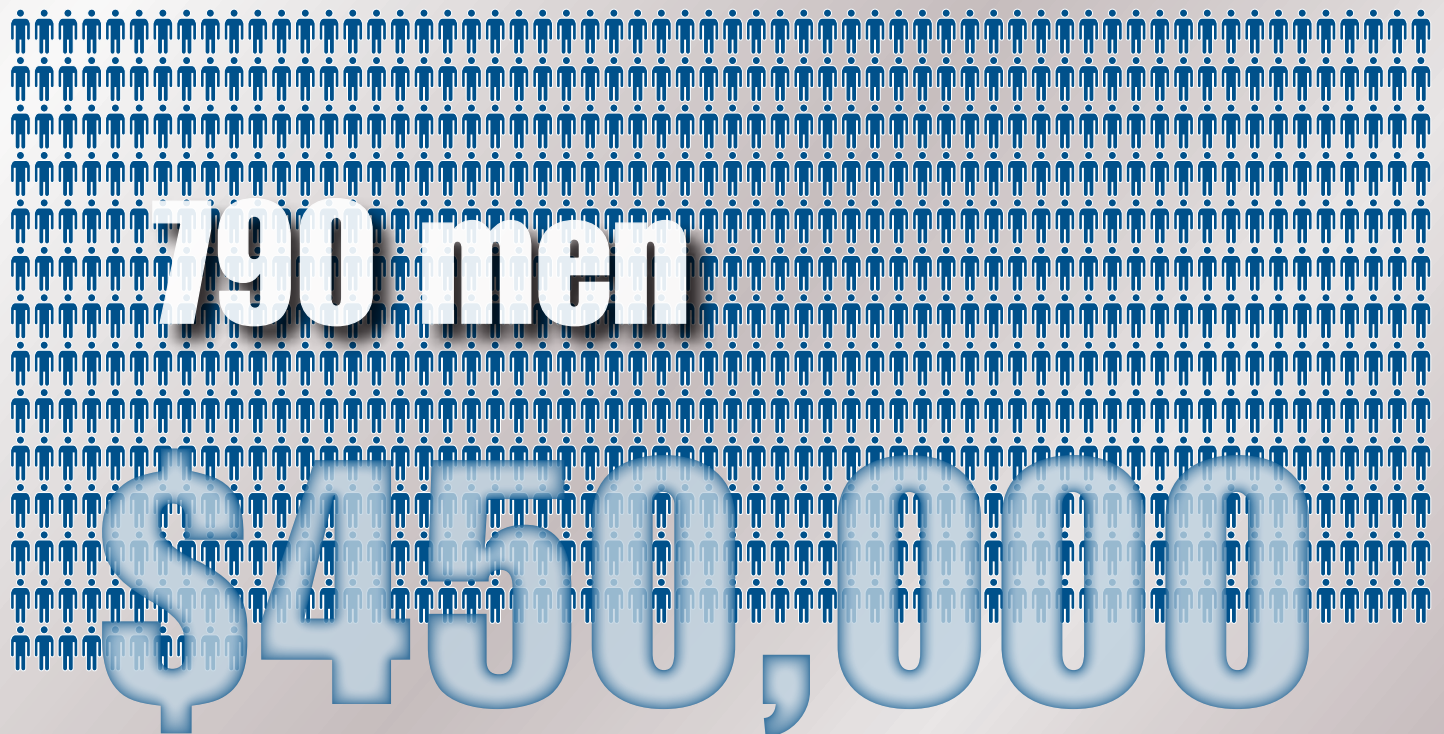
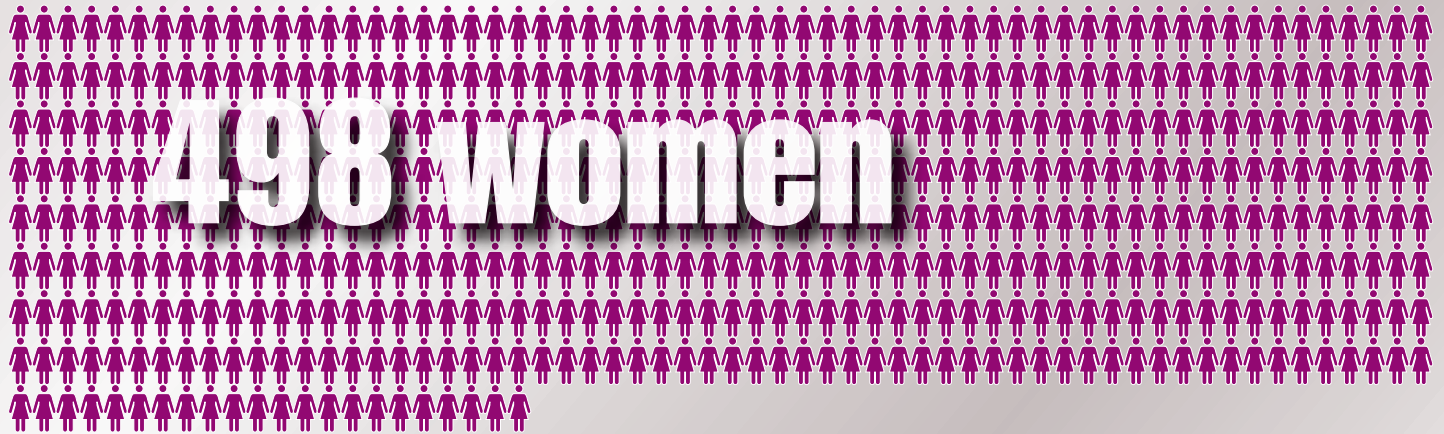
'Through this scheme, doctors with skills, experience and confidence in the Tasmanian workers compensation system can help more than just their patients.

'These experienced doctors will mentor other doctors by providing information and support to their peers that will help them to work more effectively, resulting in better outcomes for injured workers.'

If you're a doctor who needs help identifying treatment options, assessing work capacity or identifying alternative duties for your workers compensation patient, call the WorkSafe Tasmania Helpline on 1300 366 322 (during business hours) to be put in touch with one of MAMS' medical mentors.

INJURIES in the workplace

This many people have been injured at work in the past 3 months in Tasmania



\$450,000

is what these injuries cost Tasmanian businesses **EACH** day, **EVERY** day

Top 3 injured occupations:



Miscellaneous
Labourer



Personal Carers
and Assistants



Farm, Forestry and
Garden Workers

Top 3 causes of injury

Body stressing

Being hit by moving objects

Falls, trips and slips
of a person

Safety is good for business. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au for resources to help you

Build a safety system: Writing a WHS policy

One of the cornerstones of managing WHS in your workplace is to have a policy about it. But don't panic — it's not as difficult as you think! We'll step you through why you need a policy, and how you can easily create one tailored to your business needs and activities, and people.

Why have a policy?

A policy shows you're serious about people's safety: about preventing work-related injury and illness. It puts this commitment down on paper (and then, up on walls and noticeboards).

If you run a small business with only a handful of workers, don't assume everyone knows what is required for WHS. And don't assume that safety is 'common sense'.

Write a policy so everyone, from your manager to workers, knows what you expect of them, and what you'll provide for them.

Getting started

For samples to get you started with the words and structure, go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'sample policies'. You'll find a sample WHS policy you can save and adapt.

If you're part of an industry association, ask if it has a template that reflects your business needs and activities.

Or ask other business owners or managers you know if they'll share their policy with you, to give you a starting point.

State what management will do

It's good to have a statement about your overall safety goal or aim; for example, 'We will provide a workplace free from risks' or 'We aim to reduce our injury rates'.

But it's more important to clearly state how you'll do those things. What are the practical things your managers, supervisors and the PCBU will be

responsible for to manage WHS? Your policy should include your commitment to:

- providing / maintaining a work environment free from risks to health and safety
- providing / maintaining safe equipment, structures and safe systems of work
- ensuring the safe use, handling and storage of equipment, structures and substances
- providing adequate facilities for the welfare of workers (for example, toilets and tea rooms)
- providing any information, training, instruction or supervision that's necessary to protect people from risks to their health and safety arising from work activities
- ensuring that the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace are monitored for the purpose of preventing illness or injury of workers arising from work activities
- consulting with workers on all matters relating to WHS.

State what workers will do

Workers have rights and responsibilities, so state clearly and simply the rules and standards you expect them to follow:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care that what they do (or what they don't do) doesn't adversely affect the health and safety of other people
- comply (so far as they are reasonably able to) with any reasonable instruction given by management
- co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure for WHS that has been communicated to them (you may want to mention the safe work procedures you have in place)

- not misuse or interfere with anything provided for WHS
- report all incidents and near misses immediately, no matter how trivial
- engage in consultation with management to identify, assess and control hazards and the effectiveness of such controls
- report all known or observed hazards to their supervisor or manager.

Make sure you involve your workers (or their representatives) as you develop your policy. That way it becomes a shared commitment to WHS.

Have you covered everything?

Make sure you:

- note or refer to your risk management process. Does your policy reflect the nature of your workplace activities and scale of WHS risks you have?
- list any Australian Standards and laws other than the WHS act and regulations that you need to comply with
- include any measurable safety targets you're working towards, or specific safety issues you want to address as an organisation
- define the consultation process you have to ensure all your workers are included in decision making for safety. List how you'll provide safety information to your workers, contractors and visitors
- explain how you'll implement your policy

Finally, make sure the policy is supported and signed off at the highest level; for example, the managing director or chief executive officer.

What next?

Congratulations — you've written your WHS policy.

But don't stick it on the shelf or wall and forget all about it. Here's what you should do next:

- go through it with your workers at the next toolbox or staff meeting. Make sure everyone understands it. If workers have low literacy levels or speak languages other than English, you may need to go through it with them personally or enlist an interpreter. Remember what we said earlier: don't assume anything
- include it in inductions for your new workers and contractors
- display it on noticeboards and in your reception area or public entrances. Be proud and promote your commitment to safety
- make a date in your calendar to review it in a year's time. Does your policy still reflect your business activities and needs or risks? Or have things changed and the document needs updating?

This is the first in a series that will help you build your safety management system. If you have particular issues you would like addressed, email us at wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au with the subject line 'magazine safety article'.

Everybody's Talking...

Questions and answers from our Helpline

I need to start work on a new building site tomorrow and I've lost my white card. I've been told I'm not allowed on site without it!

First get the replacement application form for your construction induction card from our website: go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'GF017'. Complete this and take it to a Service Tasmania shop, and keep the payment receipt.

The current laws do require you to keep your white card available for inspection — but this doesn't apply if your card's been lost, stolen or destroyed, and you've applied for a replacement and not yet received it.

So you can work while you wait for your replacement: just provide another form of evidence, such as your card number (available by calling the WorkSafe Tasmania Helpline on 1300 366 322) and your Service Tas receipt.

If you've only just completed the training, paid for your card at Service Tas but not yet received it, the workplace should accept your certificate of completion issued by the training provider and your Service Tas receipt.

My forklift licence has just expired. Do I have to be re-trained and re-assessed before I can renew it?

No, but this is a very common belief in Tasmania.

The current laws allows you up to 12 months to renew your licence (known as a high risk work licence) after it expires. But if you don't renew it within

12 months, then be ready for re-training and re-assessment.

Remember it's unlawful to do work requiring a high risk work licence while you're unlicensed.

To renew your expired licence, simply download a replacement form: go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'GF086'. Complete this and take it to a Service Tasmania shop; we suggest you take in your expired licence as proof of identity.

At the same time, make sure WorkSafe Tasmania has your correct address — you're legally required to notify us within 14 days if you change your address.

For more information on high risk work, including our Guide to High Risk Work Licensing in Tasmania, go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'high risk'.



WorkSafe Tasmania Awards 2015



**Join MC Tom Gleeson
as we recognise
and celebrate the
achievements of all
entrants, finalists and
winners in the 2015
WorkSafe Awards.**

- Date:** 24 October 2015
Time: 6.30pm for 7pm
Venue: Blundstone Arena, Western Stand, Bellerive
Tickets: \$110 each, \$990 table of 10, includes 3 course dinner and drinks
Bookings: online at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/awards
Dress: Jacket and tie after five



1300 366 322 www.worksafe.tas.gov.au