

March 2015

# Workplace i S

/// Key stories inside

Alcohol, drugs and safety

Forklift safety

Joining up to Better Work



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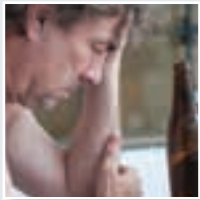
Shane Parker from Ecka Granules Australia Pty Ltd operating a forklift. For timely reminders about forklift reminders, see the article on page 8.  
Photo courtesy Ecka Granules Australia Pty Ltd.

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



# Make 2015 your safest year



The Hon Peter Gutwein, MP Treasurer

Supporting employers and workers as they manage safety is an important mission of the Tasmanian Government. A safe and healthy workplace means better productivity, less injuries and reduced downtime from any incidents; in these competitive times, what business doesn't want that?

Knowing where to start can be daunting. WorkSafe Tasmania makes it easier, especially for small business, with its Advisory Service. Safety Advisors and Wellbeing Advisors have been operating for many years now, helping employers, managers and workers with their practical, hands-on approach to making workplaces safer and healthier.

Now in 2015, we will be expanding the number of Advisors available around the state. This means the opportunities for you to get personal, customised support for your workplace needs are even greater.

- Safety Advisors will provide you with practical tools — checklists, worksheets and sample safe work procedures — to help you identify safety hazards in your workplace. They can help you implement solutions that are relevant, practical and affordable for your business. They'll also provide you with ongoing support and can meet with your workers and contractors, too.
- Wellbeing Advisors can help you develop practical strategies so you and your workers can improve your eating, exercise and lifestyle choices — and be more productive and energetic at work.

I'm also pleased to see a dedicated advisor will be operating under the three-year FarmSafe Tasmania program, focussing on improving the health and safety of workers across our agricultural sector. Our agricultural sector is an important part of Tasmania's economy and community, so it's vital that we do everything possible to reduce the risk of injury or illness to those who work in it.

This joint initiative with the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment builds on WorkSafe's history of working with the farming community. We'll be again working with the agricultural sector to reduce farm-work related death, injury and disease, and improve the health and safety of farming workers.

More and more, WorkSafe Tasmania is working with employers and workers around the state, providing practical advice and guidance to help you manage safety. I encourage you to take these opportunities with the Advisory Service and FarmSafe program today, and make 2015 a safe and healthy year for you and your workers.




## Read the mag? Now tell us what you think

**We want to make sure Workplace Issues gives you the practical information you need to manage health and safety, return to work and wellbeing in your workplace.**

What articles have met your needs in this edition? What do you want more of? And what could you do without?

Let us know at [wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au) with the subject line 'magazine'. Thank you!

# Alcohol, drugs and the



*Alcohol and other drug use is a serious and complex problem. It contributes to thousands of deaths, substantial illness, disease and injury, social and family disruption, workplace concerns, violence, crime and community safety issues.*



# workplace

## Health costs

**Tobacco smoking is the single most preventable cause of deaths, and is responsible for more drug-related hospitalisations and deaths than alcohol and illicit drugs combined.**

**Excessive alcohol intake, including short episodes of heavy alcohol consumption and long-term heavy drinking, is also a major risk factor for disease and death.**

**Illicit drug use is also a major risk factor for ill health and death. It has been linked to hepatitis C, malnutrition, mental illness and suicide.**

## Workplace costs

Using drugs and alcohol can also adversely affect workplace safety and productivity. This can include an increased risk of incidents, absenteeism and presenteeism.

It is estimated that alcohol use contributes to 5% of all workplace deaths. Lost productivity in the workplace because of alcohol costs \$3.5 billion annually, with alcohol-related absenteeism estimated at between \$437 million and \$1.2 billion.

The combination of alcohol and other drugs (excluding tobacco) in the financial year 2004–05 accounted for approximately \$5.2 billion in lost productivity costs.

## How workplaces might contribute to the problem

Work stress and conditions can affect people's alcohol and drug consumption. Dangerous work, shift work, poor industrial relations, low pay,

job insecurity, low job satisfaction, and workplace events such as serious incidents, industrial disputes and downsizing can increase people's levels of distress. As they seek to alleviate this stress, they may turn to using alcohol and other drugs.

Working long hours has been linked to alcohol abuse and injuries. Research has found that those who work more than 49 hours a week were 13% more likely to drink at risky levels than those who worked standard hours, possibly to alleviate the stress caused by work pressures and demands.

The research also found that drinking at these risky levels adversely affects businesses, because it can lead to absenteeism, inefficiency, poor performance, impaired decision making, damaged customer relations and injuries at work.

## What workplaces can do

The workplace is in a unique position to implement health promotion strategies that address productivity, worker wellbeing and community health. PCBUs are urged to prevent alcohol and other drug misuse by:

- developing and implementing a formal workplace policy on alcohol and other drug misuse (you can find a sample on the WorkSafe website. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'drug policy')
- providing education and training about alcohol and other drug misuse
- providing access to counselling and treatment.

Other relevant strategies that PCBUs might consider include:

- general health promotion, perhaps as part of a wellbeing program. WorkSafe's Wellbeing Advisors can

help you implement a wellbeing program, and have specific resources to address alcohol and other drug use. Call 1300 366 322 to arrange a Wellbeing Advisor to visit your workplace

- workplace drug testing.

If you're in the building and construction industry, Incolink can deliver an alcohol and other drug program that covers policy development, education and training. It can also provide counselling and support services. For further information about how Incolink can help your workplace, or to access support, call Kevin Harkins on 0491 376 362 or Leonie Farrugia on 0434 046 179.

*This article was supplied by Incolink Tasmania, which, in partnership with WorkSafe Tasmania, delivers these alcohol and other drug programs.*

## Some Tasmanian stats

According to the 2013 National Drug Strategy Household Survey:

- the proportion of daily smokers has fallen from 24% in 2007 to 16.7% in 2013. This is still the second highest recorded smoking rate after the Northern Territory
- Tasmania is slightly above the national average of people consuming five or more standard drinks at least once a month (single occasion risk), at just less than 30%
- the number of people who consume more than two standard drinks on any day sits at the national average of around 20%
- cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug, at about 10% of those surveyed.

# It's free! Become a member and gain the benefits.



Better Work Tasmania is an innovative, collaborative approach to supporting and improving WHS in Tasmania. Facilitated by WorkSafe Tasmania, Better Work provides PCBUs, WHS managers and others with a virtual meeting place to network, mentor and share WHS resources and ideas. You can find this meeting place via WorkSafe's website at [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/betterwork](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/betterwork)

To take advantage of these WHS tools and opportunities, you'll need to become a member. It's easy to do and it's free—just go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/betterwork](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/betterwork)

Better Work's networking and mentoring programs will be launched on 29 April at the Blundstone Arena in Bellerive (see details in box) and you're invited. To secure your place at the launch, you'll need to register: go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and click on the Events tab.

Better Work Tasmania's **networks** encourage safe work practices by allowing business to share information, ideas and practical solutions to WHS and wellbeing concerns.

These networks recognise that many businesses in your industry sector are making an important contribution to WHS and wellbeing — and are willing to share that information with others, for the benefit of everyone.

The networks (based around industry groupings such as construction or hospitality) will meet three or four times a year to discuss the issues that directly affect them.

By joining a Better Work network, you'll learn how other organisations deal with issues such as working at heights, storing chemicals or dealing with stress in the workplace. They might know the solution to a problem you've been wanting to sort out for years.

These networks are free — so it's easy to get on board with this new approach to WHS.

Better Work Tasmania's **mentoring** program connects businesses with mentors who can provide advice and practical help about WHS and wellbeing, workers compensation, and

injury management. Where possible, you'll be matched with businesses in the same industry.

The program runs for eight to nine months and includes onsite visits, discussions, and sharing industry specific information. So consider becoming a mentor or being mentored by someone — you'll benefit from taking a closer look at how other businesses manage WHS issues.

#### Put the launch details in your diary:

**Date:** 29 April 2015

**Place:** Western Stand Function Space Blundstone Arena, Bellerive

**Time:** 10:00am–12.30pm

**Registration:** [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) (click on events)

Light lunch will be provided.



# Body stressing injuries in the health industry

**WorkSafe Tasmania, with the WorkCover Tasmania Board, is undertaking a statewide project to reduce body stressing injuries in the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry.**

This project, which runs until December 2015, links to the targets for reducing the rate of claims for musculoskeletal disorders in the current WorkSafe Tasmania Strategic Plan and the Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012–2022.

The project's aims include:

- reducing body stressing injuries and subsequent claims for workers compensation in this industry
- evaluating the effectiveness of targeted organisations' current control measures for reducing body stressing injuries
- providing industry-specific tools and guidance material for reducing body stressing injuries.

To achieve these aims, WorkSafe Tasmania will work with PCBUs and workers. It will:

- interview workers who have submitted a claim for workers compensation for a body stressing injury
- interview organisations about their current control measures for reducing body stressing injuries
- provide information to the industry to help prevent body stressing injury.

For more information about the project and online resources to help you prevent body stressing injuries in your workplace, go to the WorkSafe website at [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'body stressing'.

## Injury statistics

During the 2012–13 financial year:

- this industry recorded 611 body stressing claims, at a cost of \$7.6 million
- the most frequent injuries were soft tissue injuries
- the back and shoulders were the most common body parts injured.





# Practical reminders for forklift safety

## WorkSafe inspectors are investigating a worrying increase in forklift truck incidents. Over recent months, these have included:

- a forklift operator reversing without looking, and striking a nearby person
- warehouse areas without painted lines and barriers to separate vehicle traffic and pedestrians
- poorly maintained and therefore unsafe forklifts (indicators, brakelights and headlights not working) and pre-operational checks not carried out to pick these faults up
- unlicensed forklift operators
- operators not wearing seatbelts
- a forklift operator driving at unsafe speeds.

These highlight some basic safety issues — that fortunately can be easily managed. So if you use forklifts in your workplace, make sure you follow this practical advice.

## Traffic management

Exclusion zones for pedestrian traffic in areas where forklifts operate are vital. There may even be some areas — for example, near tearooms, toilets, and exits/entrances — that are complete 'no go' zones for forklifts.

You can use permanent impact barriers to separate pedestrians and forklifts and other vehicles; but less permanent and

sturdy barriers (such as bollards and expandable fences) may be adequate for temporary demarcation.

You should also use signs, containment fences, boom gates, and even overhead walkways to ensure safety for pedestrians.

Commit your traffic management system to paper in a clear map or plan that identifies all the elements of your system: traffic flow, speed limits, parking areas, no go zones, pedestrian crossings and so on. Display this in your workplace, train/induct everyone in how it works and what they must do, and enforce it.

## Forklift maintenance

Forklifts must be in safe working order. The best way to ensure this is for operators to check the vehicle before using it.

These pre-operational safety checks should be done according to the manufacturer's instructions, and should cover the condition and working order of features such as tyres, fluids, lights and warning devices, brakes and controls, and more.

WorkSafe Tasmania has a couple of sample checklists you can copy and use. The sample safe work procedure for forklift trucks covers pre-operational checks, safe use, and refuelling checks. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and

search for 'SWP Forklift'. Our 'Safety Management Toolkit' also contains one that covers traffic management and licensing requirement too. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'GB315'.

If there are any problems, these should be reported to a manager or supervisor immediately, and the forklift should be isolated so it cannot be used.

## Licensing

To operate a forklift, you must have a high risk work licence.

Operating a forklift is classed as 'high risk work'. You cannot do this unless you hold a HRW licence, or you are formally enrolled with a registered training organisation and undergoing supervised training towards gaining assessment.

You can find details of how to apply for a licence on WorkSafe Tasmania's website. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'license to perform HRW'. WorkSafe's 'A Guide to High Risk Work Licensing Tasmania' also contains important detail about these licences; go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'GB101'.

## Operator training

Besides the training required to get a high risk licence mentioned above, ongoing training is required. PCBUs must provide their forklift operators with:



# Use the right stand for the job

- site-specific training and refresher training to maintain their operating skills
- familiarisation training for any new model of forklift
- training and induction in your traffic management system, safe work procedures and safety policies.

Make sure manufacturers' instructions and operating manuals are available to operators.

## Seatbelts

Where a risk assessment identifies the need for wearing a seatbelt, forklift operators must wear it.

Some forklifts cannot be operated if the seatbelt is not connected. If your forklift is an older model that does not have a seatbelt fitted, you should do a risk assessment of forklift operations. If this indicates a control measure that should include the fitting of a seatbelt, then consult the forklift manufacturer, any manuals, manufacturers' recommendations and operating procedures.

This article is based on our guide 'Forklift safety: Reducing the risks'. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'NHP001' to read the complete guide.

## The death of a mechanic while working under a vehicle that was supported only by a portable trolley jack, highlights important safety precautions for others performing and managing this work.

As the mechanic was undoing a tight nut, the force caused the vehicle to move. This movement was enough to dislodge the jack, and it skidded out from under the load. The mechanic was trapped, and suffered fatal injuries.

Jack stands were readily available and commonly used in this workplace; however, they were not used in this instance.

## What can you do to prevent a similar incident at your workplace?

Perform a risk assessment for each job, and be sure to use appropriate control measures. All suspended equipment should be adequately supported — in this instance, it would have been the jack stands — before you or your workers work beneath it.

When using vehicle support stands (such as jack stands), make sure they

are in good working order and good condition, and:

- use them on a hard level surface, preferably concrete
- use them in pairs
- make sure no part of the underbody of the vehicle will fall where the stands are positioned
- make sure the stands' locking mechanisms are fully engaged
- chock the unlifted wheels of the vehicle
- do not extend the height of the stand beyond its maximum working height.

Safety also begins when selecting vehicle support stands for your workplace. Make sure they:

- have been designed and tested in accordance with Australian Standard AS/NZS 2538:2004 vehicle support stands
- have the appropriate height adjustments
- have the appropriate load ratings
- are fit for the purpose they are being used for.

# How often should we do confined space training?

WorkSafe Tasmania's Helpline is frequently asked about training for working in confined spaces. Below is the section of the Code of Practice 'Confined Spaces' that Helpline inspectors refer to. You can find this code on the WorkSafe Tasmania website. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'CP103'.

Workers and their supervisors must have the skills and knowledge to understand the hazards associated with working in the confined space, the contents of any confined space entry permit, and the control measures implemented for their protection.

Training should be provided to workers who:

- enter or work in confined spaces
- undertake hazard identification or risk assessment in relation to a confined space
- implement risk control measures
- issue entry permits
- act as a standby person or communicate with workers in a confined space
- monitor conditions while work is being carried out

purchase equipment for confined space work

- design or lay out a work area that includes a confined space.

Re-training or refresher training should be provided as appropriate for a particular workplace. The frequency of this training should depend on how often workers are required to carry out tasks associated with entry to or work in confined spaces.

Records of all training provided to workers in relation to confined space work must be kept for 2 years.

## Regulation 76 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012

The training provided to relevant workers must cover:

- the nature of all hazards associated with a confined space
- the need for, and appropriate use of, risk control measures
- the selection, use, fit, testing and storage of any personal protective equipment
- the contents of any relevant confined space entry permit
- emergency procedures.

## What's a confined space?

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012, a confined space means an enclosed or partially-enclosed space that --

- is not designed or intended primarily to be occupied by a person; and
- is (or is designed or intended to be) at normal atmospheric pressure while anyone is in the space; and
- is (or is likely to be) a risk to health and safety from:
  - an atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level, or
  - contaminants, including airborne gases, vapours and dusts, that may cause injury from fire or explosion, or
  - harmful concentrations of any airborne contaminants, or
  - engulfment –
- but does not include a mine shaft or the workings of a mine.





# Making sure your pallet racks are safe

During recent workplace audits for high risk work, WorkSafe inspectors found some non-compliant — and therefore unsafe — racking installed and being used.

This article covers some of the essentials for racking. For further details, see our guidance note 'Pallet racking: Safe use and maintenance'. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'GN055'.

## Design and layout

Any racking you use should be:

- designed specifically for the size, shape and weight of the products being stored
- set up and maintained according to the manufacturers' instructions.

The layout of racking should:

- be compatible with the material handling equipment used in the workplace. For example, aisle width should match the turning circle of the forklift used for picking and replenishing
- consider emergency access, adequate lighting and any manual handling activities.

## Signage requirements

Racking must have signage that complies with Australian Standard AS 4084–2012 Steel storage racking. Our guidance note 'Pallet racking: Safe use and maintenance' details these requirements.

## Selecting pallets and goods on pallets

Pallet racking should take into account the nature of goods in the unit load. A competent person should assess any change to the pallet design, to prevent problems. These changes might include:

- changing from timber pallets to post pallets — will apply concentrated loads on racking beams and the pallets may not key into the beams
- using pallets larger than the racking design — can overlap pallets behind or push them off their supports
- using pallets smaller than allowed for in the racking — can make them drop through
- using skid pallets in racking without timber decks — can allow them to drop through.

Potential problems that may require changes to racking design include:

- boxes, cartons and other items overhanging the pallet they are stored on (unless the racking structure has the correct clearance)
- falling items from boxes, cartons and other loose loads stored on upper levels (unless this is prevented by wrapping, strapping or by some other means; for example, end frame extensions and pallet safety backstop).

You should note that overseas pallets often differ in size and may not fit Australian racking.

## Inspections

AS 4084—2012 requires inspections to be carried out on a regular basis, and at least once every twelve months, to:

- ensure the correct application and use of equipment
- ensure the working load limits are adhered to
- ensure the racking installation has not been altered. A copy of the load application and configuration drawings shall be retained for this purpose
- examine the extent of damage due to impact in the racking installation
- examine the out-of-plumb of the racking
- look for any dislocation and deformation of sections and connects for uprights and beams
- examine connectors for deformation or signs of cracking of the welds
- examine base plates and floor anchors.

## Procedures

Put procedures in place to ensure operations are done safely. As a minimum, these should include:

- correct use of the handling equipment
- rated capacities of the racking
- prohibitions on unauthorised alterations
- a clear process for reporting any damage as soon as it occurs.

# Everybody's Talking...

## Questions and answers from our Helpline

### Am I required to have samples tested for asbestos or asbestos-containing material by a NATA-accredited laboratory?

No, because the starting date of the relevant provisions [regulations 423(2) and 479(2)] has been deferred until 1 January 2017. Until these come into effect, Tasmania's Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 are silent on the question of which laboratories may undertake the analysis of a sample for the presence of asbestos or asbestos-containing material (ACM).

Of course, it is still necessary for PCBUs to ensure such work is undertaken by laboratories that are competent in the work.

It is important to be aware that the requirements to identify asbestos or ACM currently apply. In particular:

- regulation 422 requires a person with management or control of a workplace to identify the presence of asbestos or ACM, unless the person assumes that asbestos or ACM is present or has reasonable grounds to believe that asbestos or ACM is not present. Regulation 423(1) allows the person to identify asbestos or ACM by having a sample tested for it
- regulation 479(1) (which applies if there is uncertainty, on reasonable grounds, as to whether or not work is asbestos-related work) requires the PCBU to ensure a sample is analysed to determine if asbestos or ACM is present.

These codes (available at [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au)) will help you manage and control asbestos in your workplace:

- How to Manage and Control Asbestos in the Workplace (search for 'CP111')
- How to Safely Remove Asbestos (search for 'CP113').

For help identifying asbestos, you may engage an asbestos licence holder. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'asbestos removalists' or [www.yellowpages.com.au](http://www.yellowpages.com.au) and search for 'asbestos testing'.

### What are the changes to the process for applying for a construction induction 'white card'?

From the beginning of February 2015, the process for applying for these cards in Tasmania changed slightly.

You still do your training, either in a classroom or through an online provider. If you can't find a registered training organisation (RTO), go to [www.myskills.gov.au](http://www.myskills.gov.au) then search using the course code 'CPCCOHS1001A' and select your location from the drop down list.

Complete (but do not sign) the application form available from the WorkSafe Tasmania website. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'GF087'.

You then need to take to a Service Tasmania outlet:

- the completed but unsigned application form
- your current certificate of training/ statement of attainment issued by the RTO

- evidence of identity documents (listed on the application form)
- the current \$10.36 fee (until 30 June 2015).

If you have lost your current card and require a replacement, the form you need is also at [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) — search for 'GF017'. You must also lodge this at a Service Tasmania outlet.

### I've changed my home address. How does this affect the renewal of my high risk work licence?

If you change your postal address, you must notify WorkSafe Tasmania of your new address within 14 days. The easiest way to do this is to use our online form; go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'address'.

For renewals, you'll need to provide the renewal form that we send you, to the state authority wherever you have moved to. You'll find a list of Australian authorities and their contact details in 'A Guide to High Risk Licensing in Tasmania'. Go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au) and search for 'GB101'.

It is important that your licence is renewed within 12 months of its expiry date, otherwise you could be required to be re-assessed, which is likely to be an expensive and inconvenient process.

Of course, you must not undertake high risk work while your licence is expired.

For more information on applying for and renewing high risk work licences, go to [www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/licensing/high\\_risk\\_work](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/licensing/high_risk_work)