

SPRING 22

WORKPLACE ISSUES

WORKING AT HEIGHTS

How to prevent falls in your workplace

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Do you know the rules?

RISK ASSESSMENTS

FOUNDATION OF A SAFE WORKPLACE

SELF CARE IN THE WORKPLACE

NEW INDUSTRY SNAPSHOTS

Discover the latest data on emerging or existing WHS issues across industries



Work Safe
TASMANIA

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

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Attorney-General and Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, the Hon Elise Archer MP and Angela Davies, Department of Justice.

ELISE ARCHER MP

Attorney-General Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs

Welcome to the Spring edition of Workplace Issues.

As Attorney-General and Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs, I want to help ensure that Tasmanian workers return home safely to their families at the end of every day. Our Government is committed to improving the health, safety and wellbeing of all Tasmanian workers and we want to see fewer injuries in workplaces, both physical and mental. That is why we have been a long-standing supporter of WorkSafe Month activities.

An initiative of the WorkCover Tasmania Board and WorkSafe Tasmania, WorkSafe Month is held annually in October. This is its 26th year of supporting employers and workers to improve work health, safety and wellbeing, and helping us all achieve our health and safety goals.

This year's theme of 'Safe Bodies, Safe Minds' emphasises the

importance of safety, health and wellbeing at work, along with good return to work and stay at work outcomes. The range of sessions held during the month will cover a broad range of topics, including managing workplace conflict, how to create psychologically safe and respectful workplaces, the science behind sleep, and using technology and data to prevent injuries.

Everyone is encouraged to make health and safety a priority by attending at least one of the many events on offer. This year's WorkSafe Month will be delivered in a hybrid format, combining in-person and virtual engagement experiences. This means you can attend either in-person or online, from wherever you are in the State — or around the world!

The concluding event to WorkSafe Month is the Safe Bodies, Safe Minds Expo, taking place at the MyState Bank Arena in Hobart on Thursday, 3 November 2022.

The Safe Bodies, Safe Minds Expo is an opportunity for people of all ages to be inspired by and discover the latest in health, safety, wellbeing and rehabilitation to support them, their workplace, family members and the community to remain safe and well every day. Exhibitors on the day will showcase driver safety, mental health, safety management, literacy, safety technology and more.

During WorkSafe Month and at the Expo, you'll have invaluable opportunities to share best practice, build networks, and explore how to promote and enable safe and healthy working environments.

Those interested in registering for events during WorkSafe Month, including the Safe Bodies, Safe Minds Expo, can do so at: worksafe.tas.gov.au/events.

Finally, Tasmania has now transitioned out of the Public Health Emergency declaration. This is thanks to all Tasmanians who have maintained COVID-19 safe behaviours, especially in their workplaces, and worked together to keep our community safe.

However, the pandemic is not over, and this winter has also seen high numbers of influenza in our community. The responsibility for ensuring effective measures are in place has shifted from the Public Health Direction and into the hands of businesses to manage COVID-19 in their workplaces.

Therefore, I remind you to continue practising the COVID-19 safe measures you already have in place for keeping you and your workers, contractors, customers and visitors safe.

We all play a vital role in shaping workplace environments, but they can only be outstanding places to work if we do our utmost to ensure the health and safety of our workers.

Together, we can work towards, not just safer and healthier workplaces, but a better Tasmania for all of us.

As always, please look after each other, stay safe and take care.



ROBYN PEARCE

**Executive Director,
WorkSafe Tasmania**

Tasmania is moving out of the Public Health Emergency declaration, but it doesn't mean that the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

Many people may have 'COVID fatigue', or think the pandemic is over, or have become complacent about the health effects of COVID-19. They may think getting the virus won't make them too sick, so it's okay to be more relaxed and not worry about standing on the green floor dots at the supermarket or sanitising their

hands whenever they enter a shop.

But COVID-19 is still present in our community, our schools and our workplaces. As I write this, we are also seeing high rates of influenza in our community.

Both illnesses can significantly impact your business continuity if you or your workers need to stay at home due to illness. Yet you can keep your workers and customers safe from the transmission of these viruses in your workplace by continuing to apply your COVID-19 safety plan.

The move from a Public Health Emergency means that the responsibility for deciding the controls and behaviours needed to keep us safe rests with us, as employers and workers.

COVID-19 remains a workplace hazard that presents risks to our health and safety, and to business continuity. So as an employer, you have a duty under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 to provide a safe working environment for your workers, contractors and visitors to your workplace. That means managing the risks of COVID-19, just as you do any other workplace hazard.

Our message is: if the control measures that you currently have in place — for example, encouraging vaccination, wearing masks, density limits, social distancing and your cleaning regime — have worked for your business, then we encourage you to maintain them (with regular review to ensure they remain effective).

The best practice measures used during the emergency phase of the pandemic worked, so continue to ensure your workers stay at home if they are sick and

encourage them to get tested if they have symptoms. Encourage your workers to be vaccinated for COVID-19; support physical distancing where possible; ensure there is adequate ventilation; and provide hand sanitiser for workers and visitors. Consider face masks, especially for people working indoors and in close proximity or with people who are at risk of getting very sick.

While you are no longer required to document your control measures in a COVID-19 Safety Plan, it is still best practice. And if you already have a COVID-19 Safety Plan, now is a good time to review and update it. Remember to consult with your workers when you are developing or reviewing your plan. They will have great ideas on how to implement these measures so they will be practical and work in your environment.

Our inspectors will continue to visit workplaces to check for compliance with the work health and safety laws, and this includes inspecting how employers are managing the risks of COVID-19. They will continue to take a supportive approach, providing education, advice, and when necessary, directions on the actions you need to take to meet your responsibilities and keep your workers healthy.

I encourage you to go to our website fact sheets and templates that will help you conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment and then review or draw up your COVID-19 Safety Plan. You'll also find links to other important websites, including the dedicated Tasmanian Government website coronavirus.tas.gov.au, which has best practice guides for industry, any Public Health directions and restrictions, and the most current guidance for close contacts and people with COVID-19.

SIGN UP NOW FOR WORKSAFE MONTH & EXPO!

**OCT & NOV
2022**

This year WorkSafe Tasmania is offering even more ways for you to hear about the latest in WHS, experience professional development opportunities, and engage with business leaders.

WORKSAFE MONTH

WorkSafe Month in October will include free webinar presentations and in-person discussions. Explore the latest in safety, health, mental health, wellbeing, return to work and more.

In-person events will be held in Hobart, Devonport and Launceston. Webinars offer you the flexibility to learn in your own time and space, at your own pace.

SAFE BODIES SAFE MINDS EXPO

WorkSafe Month wraps up with the Safe Bodies, Safe Minds Expo, at MyState Bank Arena in the state's south on 3 November.

The Expo is an opportunity for people of all ages to be inspired by and discover the latest in health, safety, wellbeing and rehabilitation to support them, their workplace, family and community to remain safe and well every day.

Don't leave it until the last minute to register to participate in WorkSafe Month in October or the Expo in November.

The in-person events are sure to fill up fast, so act now to avoid missing out!

To see the full program and to register, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au/worksafemonth. For the expo, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au/expo.

A person wearing an orange safety jacket is holding a clipboard. The clipboard has a document with a risk assessment chart that features a diagonal pattern of green, yellow, and red squares. The person is holding a pen over the document.

Risk assessment: The foundations of a safe workplace

A safe and healthy workplace does not happen by chance or guesswork. You have to think about what could go wrong at your workplace and what the consequences could be. Then you must do whatever you can (in other words, whatever is 'reasonably practicable') to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks arising from your business or undertaking.

This process is known as risk assessment and involves these four simple steps:

- Spot the hazard: Find out what could cause harm
- Assess the risk: Understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening
- Fix the problem: Implement the most effective control measure

that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances and ensure it remains effective over time.

- Evaluate results: Review hazards and control measures to ensure they are working as planned.

This process will be implemented in different ways depending on the size and nature of your business or undertaking. Larger businesses and those in sectors where workers are exposed to more or higher risks are likely to need more complex, sophisticated risk management processes.

In our next edition, we'll go through these four steps in detail. But first, we'll cover other important factors you need to consider for a successful risk assessment process and a safer and healthier workplace.

Keep reading on page 14

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5	Risk assessments
6	Preventing falls
8	SWMS
10	Traffic management
11	Safety in construction
12	Industry snapshots

Prevent falls in your workplace

Falls are a major cause of serious injury and death in Tasmanian workplaces. In 2021, they accounted for 19% of Tasmania's serious injuries (748), and were the second highest cause of serious injury after body stressing. Falls can occur where work is carried out at height, but can also occur at ground level.

Using unsafe, incomplete or inappropriate scaffolding are hazards that contribute to falls. Using ladders as a work platform are also a hazard. Standard ladders should only be used as a way to access and leave a work area.

Reduce the risk

As an employer, you must do all you can to reduce the risk of falls in the workplace, including:

- identify which work activities put workers at risk of a fall
- identify which workers are at risk of a fall
- determine what processes are causing that risk
- identify if and what kind of control measures should be implemented
- check the effectiveness of existing control measures.

In detail, you must:

- manage the risks associated with someone falling from one level to another that is reasonably likely to cause injury
- ensure that any work with the risk of someone falling from one level to another is carried out on the ground or on a solid construction, if it is reasonably practicable to do so
- provide safe ways of accessing and exiting the workplace or work area where a person could fall from or through a structure (such as scaffolding or an incomplete stairwell).

Specific requirements

Carrying out work on the ground/on a solid construction means you are taking a great step to eliminating the risk of a fall.

However, if it's not possible to do work on the ground/on a solid construction, you must protect against the risk of a fall by:

- providing a fall prevention device; if this isn't reasonably practicable, then...
- providing a work positioning system; and if this isn't reasonably practicable, then...
- providing a fall arrest system.

A combination of these controls may be used if a single control is not sufficient. The code of practice 'Managing the risk of falls at workplaces' details these systems and control measures. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP122'.

USEFUL ADVICE:

Using ladders as a work platform are also a hazard. Standard ladders should only be used as a way to access and leave a work area.



Identify the hazards

Walk around your workplace and talk to your workers to find out where work is carried out that could result in falls.

Look at work tasks that are done:

- near an unprotected open edge: for example, near incomplete stairwells or leading formwork edges
- using equipment to work off the ground: for example, when using elevating work platforms or portable work ladders
- on any structure or equipment being constructed or installed, demolished or dismantled, inspected, tested, repaired or cleaned
- on or near a fragile surface: for example, cement sheeting roofs, rusty metal roofs, fibreglass sheeting roofs and skylights
- on a potentially unstable surface: for example, areas where there is potential for ground collapse
- on a sloping or slippery surface where it is difficult for people to keep their balance, such as on glazed tiles or wet surfaces
- near a hole, shaft or pit that a worker could fall into: for example, trenches, lift shafts, service pits or floor and column penetrations.



Safe work method statements

Regulation 291 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 classes a number of activities as 'high risk construction work'. These require you to prepare a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) before the work starts.

High risk construction work includes work that involves a risk of a person falling more than 2 metres.

See our article on the next page for more information on developing a SWMS.

Resources

For more practical guidance, see the code of practice 'Managing the risk of falls at workplaces'. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP122'.

DID YOU KNOW:

- **5 workers have died as a result of falls from height since 2013**
- **8 businesses have been prosecuted under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 for not complying with their duties regarding falls.**

SWMS: Everything

A safe work method statement (SWMS) is a planning document that covers high risk construction work activities.

you need



WorkSafe's inspectors report that many workplaces where high risk construction work is done don't have a safe work method statement (SWMS), or they're using generic ones that miss important factors and are not specific to the work being done.

Let's deep dive into how to create a SWMS that will make your workplace a safe one.

What is a SWMS and who needs it?

A SWMS is a planning document that covers high risk construction work activities. It helps supervisors and workers understand the control measures chosen to perform those high risk activities safely.

These activities are listed in the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012. You can find the full list with examples in appendix C of the 'Construction work' code of practice (go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP104'); some examples are work that:

- involves tilt-up or pre-cast concrete
- is done where powered mobile plant moves around
- is done on or near energised electrical installations/services
- is done in or near a shaft or trench with an excavated depth more than 1.5 metres
- involves/is likely to involve disturbing asbestos.

So if you do this kind of work, you must have a SWMS in place.

Your SWMS will set out:

- the high risk construction work activities to be carried out at your workplace
- the hazards arising from these activities
- the measures you'll put in place to control the risks, and how you'll implement and review them.

Can you use a generic SWMS?

Because of the high risk nature of the work, it's important that your SWMS reflects the specific workplace environment it covers, the work being done, and the workers doing that work.

Using the same SWMS for different worksites misses all these unique factors and may mean you can't ensure the safety of your workers (as well as not complying with the Regulations). For example, you may be using mobile cranes across many construction sites, but the terrain and other onsite activities may differ, which will affect the risks you need to control.

Can you use one SWMS for multiple tasks?

One SWMS can be prepared to cover a variety of tasks, if it takes into account the changing nature of the work environment.

Your alternative is to prepare a separate SWMS for each high risk construction work activity. In this case, consider situations where different activities impact each other, for example using powered mobile plant during the construction of a tunnel.

SWMS vs SOPs

A SWMS is different from other documents you may have that focus on specific tasks or processes, such as a job safety analysis or a safe operating procedure.

A SWMS is not intended to be a procedure. It is a tool to help you, your supervisors and workers confirm and monitor the measures needed to control these job-specific high risk construction hazards at the worksite.

How do you prepare your SWMS?

You must draw up your SWMS before any of the high risk construction works begins.

To make it easier and make sure you're covering all the essentials, we have a template. You can find it in the 'Construction work' code of practice (search for 'CP104' at worksafe.tas.gov.au).

Once finished, keep the SWMS at the

worksite in a place where workers can readily access it. You can even store it digitally so people can pull it up on their devices.

Make it specific

Keep your SWMS brief and focused — anything too long and detailed could be difficult to understand and apply at the worksite.

Make it clear what control measures are to be implemented. You don't want supervisors or workers to be having to work it out and make decisions on the day. For example, 'use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)' does not detail the specific control measures needed. Write 'wear hard hats' or 'wear leather gloves' if that's the case.

Consult with your workers

Consult with your workers (and their health and safety representatives) when

to know



you're preparing your SWMS.

Consulting is important so your workers understand the SWMS and what they have to do to implement and maintain the control measures. They are likely to have good ideas about how to do the job safely.

However, if you haven't engaged any workers at the planning stage, consult with them and provide them with the SWMS.

Provide your workers with training and instruction about the SWMS. You can do this in an induction, training session or toolbox meeting.

Make sure you take into account the literacy levels of your workers, and if any of them are from non-English speaking backgrounds. Pictures and diagrams might be more easily understood.

Consult with others

If the high risk construction work you're doing is being carried out in connection

with a construction project, your SWMS must take into account the WHS management plan prepared by the principal contractor.

You must provide the principal contractor with your SWMS before high risk construction work starts.

Implementing and reviewing the SWMS

High risk construction work must be carried out according to the SWMS. So you must put in place arrangements to make sure this is happening. This could be as simple as visiting the work site, both routinely and randomly, and observing if workers and supervisors are implementing the control measures.

If you find work is not being carried out according to the SWMS, then it must stop immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so. Review your SWMS and if necessary, revise it to reflect the safest way to carry

out the work that is reasonably practicable. Work must not resume until it can be done according to the revised SWMS.

You must also consult with your workers when you review your SWMS, especially those affected by the changes.

Your responsibility

You can delegate the work of implementing, monitoring and reviewing the control measures, for example to someone supervising the work such as a work crew's leading hand or supervisor.

However, your responsibilities as the employer are not transferable. You must be satisfied that the control measures are implemented, monitored and reviewed to ensure the health and safety of the workers.



Traffic management: Do you know the rules?

Under the WHS laws, employers have obligations to ensure a safe workplace. When it comes to working on public roads, footpaths, road verges, bicycle paths and other civil work sites where traffic needs controlling, this includes:

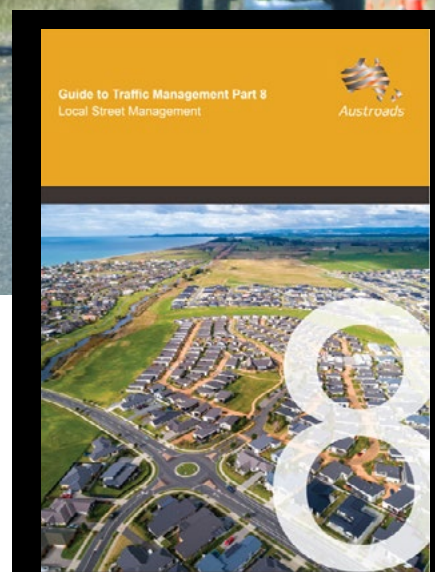
- preventing injury to workers due to vehicle hazards within the worksite
- protecting workers from oncoming or passing traffic
- protecting road users from hazards within the worksite.

What is temporary traffic management?

The purpose of temporary traffic management is to create a safe work area when construction, maintenance and other activities are being done on or near a road. It controls traffic movement through or past a worksite, to achieve safety and reduce inconvenience for both road workers and road users.

Temporary traffic management practices in Tasmania need to be conducted in accordance with:

- the Tasmanian Traffic Act 1925 and the Tasmanian Traffic (Road Rules) Regulations (available at thelaw.tas.gov.au)
- 'Traffic control for works on roads, Tasmanian guide 2020' (available at transport.tas.gov.au, search for 'temporary traffic management'). This includes training requirements for traffic management designers and traffic controllers.
- AS 1742:2019 Manual of uniform traffic control devices, in particular Part 3 Traffic control for works on roads (available at saiglobal.com)
- 'Austroads guide to temporary traffic management' (available at ausroads.com.au).



About the Austroads guide

The Austroads guide helps to improve traffic management practices and worker safety at road works sites.

It applies to all works on roads and near roads, plus off road development and activities that interact with and impact on the road environment.

It covers the planning, design and implementation of safe, economical and efficient temporary traffic management.



Do a risk assessment

Temporary traffic management commonly uses traffic control devices (such as signs, traffic signals, pavement markings and traffic islands), installed with the approval of the road agency that regulates and guides traffic (in Tasmania, that is Transport Tasmania).

However, before you start ordering bollards, you should do a risk assessment to ensure your methods of reducing risk for your workers and others are the right ones.

You should consider the following factors in your risk assessment:

- scope and duration of the project
- site layout, and specific hazards within the work site, such as excavations
- traffic density, flow and speed
- time required to perform activities
- time of day when tasks are to be performed
- pedestrian movement
- environmental factors such as wet conditions or poor visibility

- risks associated with plant and equipment
- experience and training of workers
- alternate routes available for road users and pedestrians, should a road or footpath be partially or fully closed.

For guidance on doing a risk assessment, see the code of practice 'How to manage work health and safety risks'. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP112'.

Control measures

You must use the hierarchy of control (see below), so far as reasonably practicable, to work out the best control measures for your worksite.

Use the highest-ranked control that is practical for controlling the risks to the health and safety of your workers and others. Only use lower-ranked controls as a last resort or until a more effective way of controlling risk can be used.

Sometimes using more than one control measure could be the most effective way to reduce the exposure to hazards.

Hierarchy of controls

- Elimination: Close the roads.
- Substitution: Program the work to be conducted when there is no risk or significantly less risk present.
- Isolation: Use approved temporary safety barriers to isolate workers and work activities from road users.
- Engineering controls: Use signs such as 'workmen ahead' and cones, bollards, delineators and barrier boards.
- Administrative controls: Implement safe work practices; provide your workers with training, instruction and information so they can do their work near traffic safely.
- Personal protective and safety equipment: Make sure your workers wear high visibility garments when working near moving traffic or plant. These garments should meet the requirements of AS/NZS 4602.1:2011: High visibility safety garments—Garments for high risk applications.

Due to the nature of civil works and changing risks, it is important to regularly review your temporary traffic management system, and update when needed. This will ensure you continue to effectively control the risks to the health and safety of your workers and others.

Updated: Safety in Construction kit

Our 'Safety in construction' kit is aimed at small residential builders, but also aims to help larger residential construction businesses that have more comprehensive requirements. It will help you:

- understand your obligations under the work health and safety laws
- develop a work health and safety (WHS) management plan for your business
- develop Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) for high risk construction work.

The kit includes 'Your guide to managing safety in housing and construction', which has been updated to ensure it is current and in particular, reflects changes in traffic management training requirements.

This guide follows the structure of a WHS management plan, so you can refer to it as you develop your own plan. It includes roles and responsibilities of people in a construction project, licences for high risk work, emergency preparation, induction, and safe work method statements.

To find the 'Safety in construction' kit, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'construction kit'.



INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

STATEWIDE SNAPSHOT 2021

See the latest edition of
Industry Snapshots at
worksafe.tas.gov.au/snapshots



► The workforce

Industries divided into
19 divisions.

Accommodation and Food Services.....7%	Information Media and Telecommunications.....1%
Administrative and Support Services.....3%	Manufacturing.....8%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing.....6%	Mining.....1%
Arts and Recreation Services.....1%	Other Services.....3%
Construction.....8%	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.....6%
Education and Training.....9%	Public Administration and Safety.....7%
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services.....2%	Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services.....1%
Financial and Insurance Services.....2%	Retail Trade.....10%
Health Care and Social Assistance.....16%	Transport, Postal and Warehousing.....5%
	Wholesale Trade.....3%

► The injuries

7,575

injuries across the state in 2021

40%

of injuries over
the last ten years
resulted in at least
one week off work

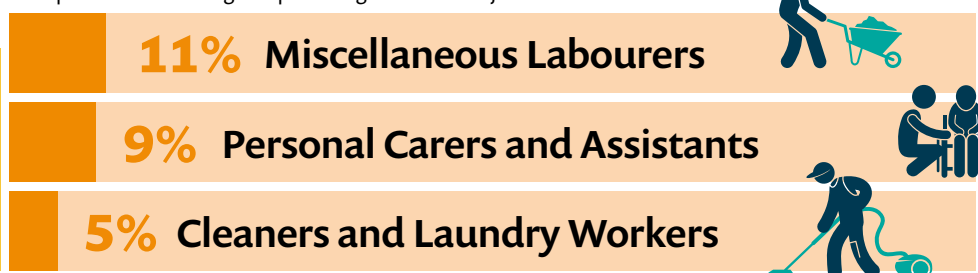


► The people

55–64 year olds

reported the highest serious injury
frequency rate of all age groups

Occupations with the highest percentage of serious injuries



► The causes

The most common causes of injury across the state:



16% of Tasmanian workers are employed in **Health Care and Social Assistance** making it the largest employing industry in the state

Statewide hours worked have increased in recent years

Transport, Postal and Warehousing is the industry with the largest increase in hours

Information Media and Telecommunications has seen the largest decrease in hours worked

10.5

serious injuries
per million hours
worked in 2021

**Serious injury
frequency
rate increased
slightly over the
last ten years**



Almost

1 in 5

workers seriously injured in
2021 worked in Health Care
and Assistance



**Electricity, Gas, Water
and Waste Services** reported the biggest
increase in serious injury frequency rate in ten years



**Information Media and
Telecommunications** reported the biggest
decrease in serious injury frequency rate in ten years



► Action areas

Priority conditions and causes identified in the WorkSafe Strategic Plan 2018–2023:



**MUSCULO-
SKELETAL
DISORDERS**



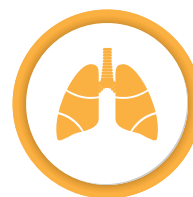
**HAZARDOUS
MANUAL
TASKS**



**SLIPS, TRIPS
AND FALLS**



**SAFE MOVE-
MENT OF VE-
HICLES AND
PLANT**



**ASBESTOS
RELATED
DISEASES**



**MENTAL
HEALTH
CONDITIONS**

cont. from page 5

Risk assessment: The foundations of a safe workplace

When to do a risk assessment

Managing WHS risks is an ongoing process. Conducting a risk assessment should be done both regularly and when any changes affect your work activities.

Examples of when you should do a risk assessment include but are not limited to:

- starting a new business, or expanding or purchasing an existing business
- changing work practices, procedures or the work environment
- purchasing new or used equipment, or using new substances
- learning new information about workplace risks becomes available
- responding to workplace incidents, even if they didn't cause an injury
- responding to concerns raised by workers, health and safety representatives or others at the workplace
- required by the WHS regulations for specific hazards.

It's also important to use the risk assessment approach when you're designing and planning products, processes or places used for work. This is because it's often easier and more

effective to eliminate hazards before they are introduced into a workplace by incorporating safety features at the design stage.

Involve your workers

The workers using the equipment or chemicals, performing the tasks and being in the work environment every day are essential to help you identify hazards.

Don't underestimate your workers' input: they often have first-hand knowledge, experience and ideas about how to reduce safety risks, make improvements and find solutions.

In case you need more convincing: it's actually a requirement under the Work Health and Safety Act for employers to consult with their workers.

When introducing any changes, make sure everyone knows what's being done and how you are controlling the hazards. Involving your workers in these ways reinforces the idea that safety is everyone's responsibility, and ensures you meet your requirements to consult with your workforce.

You must also consult with your workers' health and safety representatives, WHS

committee if you have one, and any volunteers, contractors or labour hire workers you have.

Show your commitment

Effective risk assessment starts with a commitment to WHS from employers and their managers.

Management commitment is about demonstrating you are serious about WHS and positively influencing others in your workplace to work safely.

To demonstrate your commitment, you should:

- get involved in WHS issues so that you understand the hazards and risks associated with your operations
- consult with your workers and others (as outlined above) on the hazards and risks, and how to control them
- invest time and money in WHS
- lead by example by applying WHS values and behaviours to your own work practices.

In the next edition of Workplace Issues, we will take you step by step through the four stages of doing a risk assessment.

*Involving your
workers reinforces
the idea that
safety is everyone's
responsibility*





Asbestos levy reduced

From 1 July 2022, the Tasmanian asbestos levy rate was reduced for the second year in a row. The current levy rate is 2% of workers compensation premiums, which is down from 2.5% in 2021–22. This is the lowest rate since Tasmania's asbestos compensation scheme began in 2011.

The levy is established under the Asbestos-Related Diseases (Occupational Exposure) Compensation Act 2011 and is imposed on workers compensation premiums, including those paid by licensed insurers, self-insurers and State Service Agencies. The levy is charged as a percentage of premiums payable by licenced insurers and the notional premiums of self-insurers.

The relevant Minister determines the amount of the levy each financial year.

The levy is paid into the asbestos compensation fund, which ensures that the scheme is self-funded.

The scheme provides Tasmanian workers, and certain family members of deceased workers, access to compensation to assist during a difficult time in their lives. The scheme is non-adversarial and pays lump sum compensation and certain other expenses for asbestos-related diseases contracted as a result of exposure to asbestos at work.

Since 2011, the scheme has received more than 200 claims for compensation, and has both raised and paid out over \$57 million in claims-related costs.

For more information go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and look under the asbestos compensation section. The 'Guide to asbestos compensation in Tasmania' also provides an easy to understand reference and can be found under the 'Asbestos compensation forms and guides' section.

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Picture: Richard Jupe.
Photo courtesy of Mind Games.



WORKCOVER TASMANIA BOARD PRIORITIES FOR 2022-23

The WorkCover Tasmania Board plays an important role in improving workers compensation and WHS outcomes for Tasmanian employers and workers. In 2022–23, the Board will support these projects and initiatives:

1

Develop an electronic workers compensation claim form and medical certificate:

Replacing current medical certificates with a certificate of capacity, review the current worker's claim for compensation forms, and develop a new system to support their use.

2

Reviewing the Tasmanian guidelines for the assessment of permanent impairment.

3

Workplace mental health strategy:
Developing a mental health strategy for Tasmanian workplaces to improve mental health outcomes for Tasmanian workers.

4

Improving injury outcomes in the Tasmanian State Service.

5

Engaging medical expertise to ensure that appropriate medical advice is available and to educate GPs.

6

Grants and special projects:
The Board may consider a focus on dust diseases/silicosis and the health care and social assistance sectors.



ABOUT THE BOARD

The Board continues to fund and work with Worker Assist Tasmania Inc and the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ltd, enabling these organisations to provide guidance and information for Tasmanian employers and workers. It funds WorkSafe's Helpline and Advisory Service; and supports the workers compensation area of the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT), formerly the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Tribunal.

7

Injury management co-ordinator (IMC) training:

The Board approved a new qualification for IMCs and will consider a mandatory Tasmanian-specific training module for IMCs to complete following their completion of the Certificate IV.

8

Family support framework:

Developing a framework, for the Tasmanian Government to consider, that supports seriously injured workers and families of workers who have died in a workplace incident.

9

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) review:

Developing and implement strategies to achieve awareness of PTSD among GPs, workers compensation scheme participants and others.

10

Reviewing the Tasmanian accreditation framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers (WRPs):

To ensure WRPs operating are following best practice and providing the best possible workplace rehabilitation service for injured workers.

The WorkCover Tasmania Board works to ensure a fair and equitable workers compensation scheme, good return to work outcomes and safer workplaces for all Tasmanian workers.

Suggested workers comp insurance rates for the coming year

Each year, the WorkCover Tasmania Board publishes a set of suggested premium rates for workers compensation for each industry.

The purpose of this is to better inform the marketplace of the cost of workers compensation insurance cover:

- licenced insurers may use these suggested rates as a guide to setting their premiums for the following year
- employers may refer to these suggested rates as they consider quotes for workers compensation from insurance companies.

The average suggested premium rate across all industries for 2022–23 is 2.03% of wages, which is a decrease of 0.8% of wages from 2.11% in 2021–22. At an industry level, the suggested rates vary from 0.40% to 9.48% of wages.

To find out the suggested rate for your industry, ask your insurer or broker for the ANZSIC code your business falls under then go to the WorkSafe Tasmania website at worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'suggested industry premium rates'.

Why are they 'suggested'?

It's important to note that the suggested rates are a guide only. The actual rates charged by insurance companies to individual employers may differ from the suggested rates, with each insurance company taking into account the industry and employer's risk factors, past claims and WHS circumstances.

However, if the actual premium you're charged for your workers compensation cover differs significantly from the suggested rate, or if you have any concerns about what you are being charged, contact your insurance company or broker.



Do I have to pay worker's comp claims if I disagree with it?

Yes. Weekly payments are to be paid regardless of whether you dispute liability for the claim.

They are sometimes called without prejudice payments, because the fact you make these payments cannot be used against you as an admission of liability.

Once you receive a worker's claim for compensation, you must start making weekly payments of compensation if they have been certified as totally or partially incapacitated for work.

You must also pay for reasonable medical and associated expenses while you are deciding whether or not to accept 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 liability should be disputed, discuss it with your insurer.

For full guidance on employers' responsibilities and the workers compensation claims process, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and look under the Compensation section, or search for 'GB010' to find the Workers Compensation Handbook: The Basics.



Picture: Richard Jupe.
Photo courtesy of Mind Games.



WorkSafe and WorkCover support Mind Games

The Mind Games, held on 13 May in Hobart, promote mentally healthy workplaces while raising money for research into workplace mental health through the Menzies Institute for Medical Research.

Competing teams (around 250 people from 50 local businesses) took part in fun activities

at different areas or 'stages' hosted by sponsors. Think 'race around the world' for mental health!

The stage put on by WorkCover/WorkSafe was a zone of 'Competitive Calm'. 'While other stages were a hive of hyper activity and elevated heart rates, our Competitive Calm

allowed teams to have a moment to chill, relax and regain their energy,' explained WorkSafe's Events Manager Stephanie Mirowski.

'Team members could do relaxing tai chi while sipping chai tea, do colouring in on a grand scale, and rake the sand into soothing patterns in our Japanese Zen garden.'



The WorkSafe Tas team
Picture: Richard Jupe. Photo courtesy of Mind Games.

WELLBEING

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Self care in the workplace

‘Self care’ is a phrase often used when talking of wellbeing (and often to sell you vitamins or a scented candle). But what does self care actually mean, how can you make it happen in your life – and how can you introduce it into your workplace?

What is self care?

A quick search around the internet throws up various ideas about what self care is.

But the most common belief is that self care is the ability to improve and maintain your health, and prevent (or cope with) illness and disease, with or without the support of a healthcare provider.

Self care doesn't mean you're being selfish and choosing yourself over your family and friends. Rather, it means you're mindful of your own needs, so you can better support the people you care about. When you take care of yourself, you are better able to meet the needs of others.

Self care strategies

You may already know what self care actions you should take to support your health and wellbeing. These might be making time to enjoy your morning cuppa without doing other things at the same time, listening to your favourite podcast, going for regular bushwalks, seeing or talking with your friends, getting a massage.

It's whatever recharges your battery, and what you should aim to make a regular part of your life.

If you're stuck for ideas, you can find lots on the internet. Start with the self care menu by Stay Chatty at staychatty.com.au/service.

WORKPLACES AND WELLBEING

Workplaces that support the health and wellbeing of their workers are known to have increased worker morale and engagement and lower workplace injuries.

What workplaces can do

Workplaces can support workers' wellbeing and encourage workers towards self care in many ways.

Having a workplace wellbeing program is one way to do this. It doesn't need to be complex or time consuming; you can have a simple set of initiatives that encourage workers to be more active, eat healthy foods, connect with others and look after their mental health.

For example, organising a lunchtime walking group and making sure there's healthy food options at any catered work meetings or events are simple steps to take.

To get started, go to our website at worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'wellbeing ideas'. To get going with a wellbeing program for your workplace, search for 'wellbeing program'.

Self care at work

There are ways that all of us can practice self care while at work without the framework of a wellbeing program — after all, that is what self care is about.

And while most resources break the areas down into physical self care, emotional self care, and mental/psychological self care, there's also professional self care.

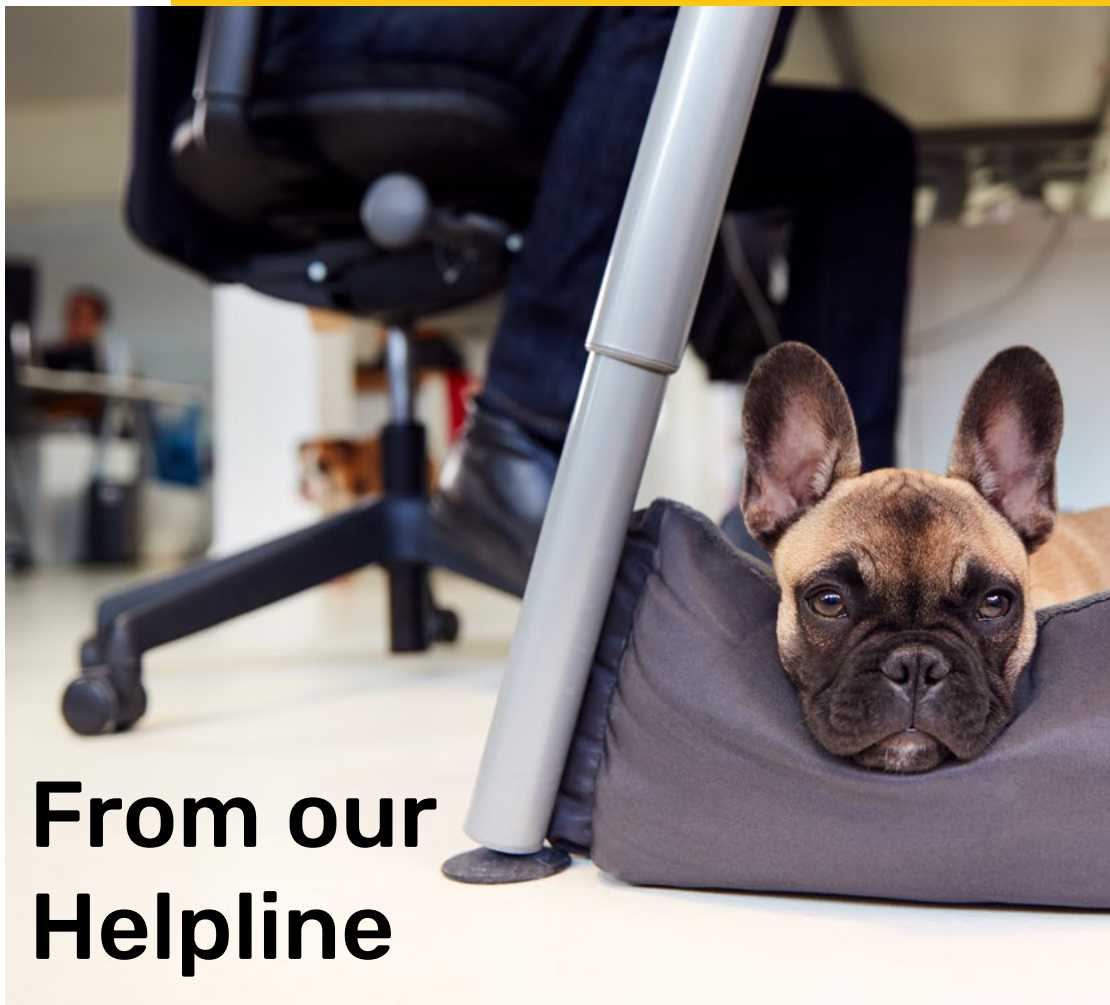
Examples include:

- take breaks, even short ones, and don't work through lunch
- leave on time and don't take work home with you. If you work from home, create a schedule that defines your work hours: not just for you, but so your colleagues know when you're not working
- set goals to motivate you and focus on your priorities
- make your individual workspace comfortable and 'yours'. That might be a pot plant, a photo from your last holiday, and your favourite mug (not a chipped one from the tearoom). If you don't have a desk, maybe you could tape that photo on the inside of your locker door
- catch up with workmates and talk about things other than work; also who the workmates are that you can go to for peer support
- if you've completed a project or hit a milestone, celebrate it!
- talk to your manager if your workload is becoming 'too much'
- create healthy boundaries with clients or workmates.

These are actions that we can put into practice as individuals. And notice when you've dropped your self care strategies; when you're busy or stressed is when you need them the most.

These are also strategies that managers and supervisors can support and encourage their workers to do; and do themselves to lead by example. Managers can also foster a supportive culture that values workers' health.





From our Helpline

There has been an increase in businesses implementing pet friendly policies, as there are known physical and mental health benefits to having your furry friends at work. It can reduce stress, improve morale, and even increase productivity.

However employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of workers and other people is not put at risk from any visiting pets you should consider factors such as:

- will having a pet at work adversely impact someone's health, such as a person with allergies or phobias?
- is your workplace a safe environment for the pet? Workplaces with mobile plant or with high volumes of people movements may not be safe
- how will you manage pets within your work environment to ensure they do not create a risk to others? For example, making sure the pet isn't a slip/trip/fall risk, that it won't attack anyone, and that it is healthy to prevent potential spread of infections?

Things employers can do include:

- ask your workers if anyone has allergies

or fears/phobias before the pet comes to work. If anyone objects, don't allow the pet to come to work

- make sure there's access to an outdoor area for pets to go to the loo
- make sure the pet owner knows where their pet is not allowed, such as kitchen areas, changerooms and toilets, and even certain offices/workspaces
- create a policy/guidelines so pet owners and others know what is expected and accepted.

Things pet owners can do include:

- follow your employer policy/guidelines and respect others who may not be so happy to see your pet
- supervise your pet at all times
- make sure your pet is healthy, vaccinated, and on regular worm, tick and flea treatments
- bring a bed, mat or crate and their own toys and food/water dish so the pet is comfortable and has its own designated place to stay when not being introduced to everyone
- consider a lead when walking your pet around the workplace
- take your pet on regular loo breaks outside.

REGULARS

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Making businesses accessible is just good business

Improving the accessibility of your business is not just about physical access; it covers the entire customer experience and does not need to be a high-cost exercise. You may not be able to improve everything, but small changes can lead to improved customer satisfaction, making it good for your business.

Tasmania has the highest rate of disability among all states and territories: 26%, which is higher than the national average of 18%. We also have the oldest population in Australia, with nearly 20% of the population aged 65 years and over. So it makes good sense to improve accessibility in your business.

Business Tasmania's accessibility guide (at business.tas.gov.au/accessible) offers practical tips and advice to make your business more accessible. Here we outline some key points from the guide.

You and your staff can provide respectful and inclusive customer service

Ways to do this include talking directly with the person with disability, not other people who may be with them (such as a sign language interpreter or friend).

It's important to ask the person first if they want assistance and, if they say yes,

ask how you can best assist them. Don't assume they need assistance, or that you know what they need. And, if a customer has an intellectual or learning disability, give them time to ask questions and check that they understand what you are telling them.

Make your premises more accessible

Consider relocating the entrance or providing a permanent or temporary ramp if it is not possible to provide level access without steps.

If you don't have an accessible toilet within your premises, find out where the closest one is so you can tell your customers if required.

Keep aisles or gaps between displays or furniture wide enough for wheelchair and scooter users, as well as people who have an assistance animal and make chairs available so customers can sit or rest.

Offer alternative ways for customers to purchase goods or services

It may not be possible for you to make your premises fully accessible, but you can still advertise and promote any alternatives. For example you could:

- offer home visits for hairdressing or other personal services

Further accessibility support:

Access Australia for resources on improving accessibility:
access.asn.au
03 5221 2820

Equal Opportunity Tasmania for information on your legal responsibilities, and guidance on inclusivity:
equalopportunity.tas.gov.au
1300 305 062

Digital Ready for Daily Life for digital literacy support:
digitalready.tas.gov.au/dailylife

Your local council or building surveyor for technical information on features such as ramps, handrails, toilets and signage

- organise an alternative accessible site for a meeting with a client with disability
- provide advice via an online meeting

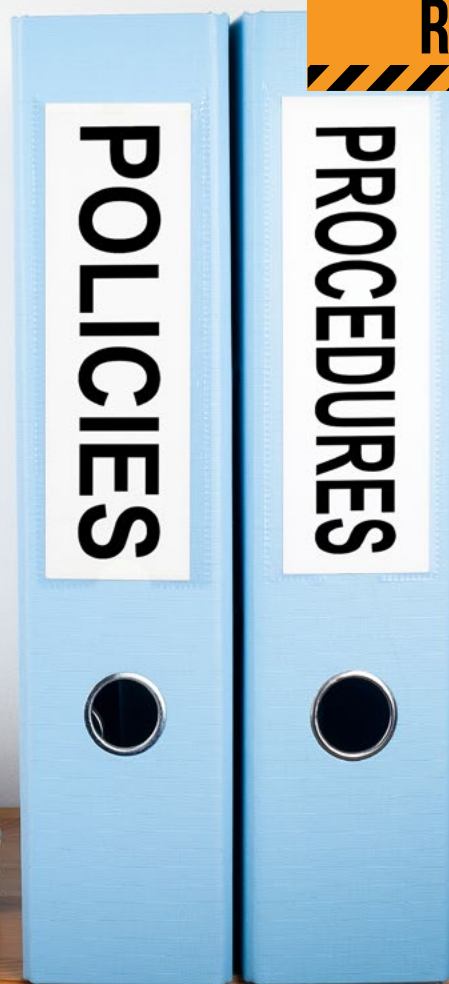
Tip: Conduct a quick assessment of your website's current level of accessibility and how it could be improved with the Digital Ready Check-up Tool at [checkup.digitalready.tas.gov.au](https://digitalready.tas.gov.au).

Business Tasmania

▶ all your business needs in one place

Get in touch with Business Tas
Mon-Fri from 9am and 5pm via:
Phone: **1800 440 026**
Web: **business.tas.gov.au**
Email: **ask@business.tas.gov.au**
Socials: **fb.com/BusinessTasmania**
twitter.com/businesstas

HOW TO CREATE A DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY



Drug and alcohol use (including over the counter and prescribed medications) can effect a person's ability to work safely. A drug and alcohol policy can help you manage the hazards associated with drugs and alcohol in you workplace.

We sat down with Advisor Sara who outlined the best steps to creating a policy.

Q. What should your policy cover?

Your policy should state that you will not allow drugs or alcohol in your workplace (except prescription or over the counter medication taken for genuine medical reason). It should state that you take their threat to personal and workplace health and safety seriously.

It should include ways you will reduce or remove drugs and alcohol from your workplace and the procedures and disciplinary actions you will take if you find someone drinking alcohol or using drugs at your workplace, or working under the influence of either.

Q. How should you put it into practice?

More important than writing a policy is enforcing it, fairly and consistently.

Make sure everyone knows and understands your policy. Send it around via email or hand copies to your workers, display it on notice boards, discuss it at staff meetings and training sessions, and make it a part of your induction for new workers.

Q. Where can I find a template?

A drug and alcohol policy supports your broad WHS policy. You can find a template to adapt on our website: go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'drug policy' to find our information page on drugs and alcohol with the template.

Q. What's the problem?

Even if someone drinks alcohol or uses drugs outside working hours, it can impair their judgement, co-ordination, concentration and alertness while on the job. This can lead to workplace incidents, injuries (to themselves or others) or damage to equipment, as well as increased absenteeism and reduced productivity.

Q. What's the law?

Both employers and workers have responsibilities under our WHS laws.

If you're a worker, you must not consume alcohol or drugs in the workplace. The exception is prescription drugs taken for legitimate medical reasons; you must tell your employer if this might affect WHS (for example, due to side effects).

If you're an employer, you must identify if there is drug and alcohol use at your workplace or if workers are coming to work under the influence of either.

Q. What else should you do?

If a worker tells you they have a drug or alcohol problem, treat the matter seriously and confidentially. Consider what factors (such as job demands) may influence them to turn to drugs or alcohol, and work with them to find ways to address these. Encourage them to see their doctor, use your employee assistance program or use a specialist service such as Alcoholics Anonymous. You can find details about these on our website: go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'drugs'.

FOUR THINGS TO DO NOW THAT YOU'VE READ WORKPLACE ISSUES!

1

START PLANNING YOUR RISK ASSESSMENT

Bought new equipment or chemicals? Changed work practices, or had a workplace incident? Then you need to do a risk assessment. See page 5 to get started.

2

BUILD SOME SELF CARE INTO YOUR WORKPLACE!

Support and encourage your workers' self care through your workplace wellbeing program. See our ideas on page 20.

3

CHECK YOUR COVID PLANS

Mandatory directions have changed but the need to protect your workers and customers from COVID-19 and other illnesses like influenza hasn't. Make sure you're still being COVID Safe on page 4.

4

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

A drug and alcohol policy supports your broad WHS policy. Our Advisors explain how to create one on page 23.
