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WORKPLACE

ISSUES

PSYCOSOCIAL HAZARDS

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FOUR STEPS
TO A SAFER
WORKPLACE

HOW STRONG IS YOUR
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Read about the changes to
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Work Safe
TASMANIA

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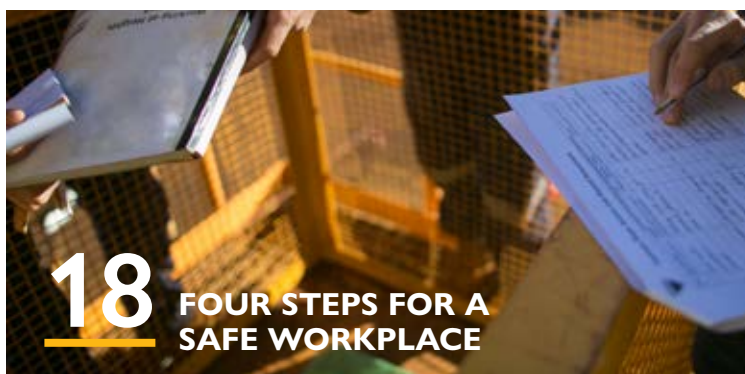
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ELISE ARCHER MP

Attorney-General

Minister for Workplace Safety and Consumer Affairs

Ensuring every Tasmanian is safe and healthy at work is a key commitment of the Tasmanian Government.

A fundamental way we do this is having laws in place to protect our health and safety, and updating these from time to time to remain contemporary and reflect advances in knowledge and community expectations.

Amendments to section 27 and section 87 of the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* are being progressed as I write this.

The changes to section 27 will ensure that firefighters from the Bushfire Risk Unit are given the same presumption as to the cause of certain cancers as the protection other firefighters currently receive under this provision. Section 87 will reduce the disadvantage experienced by older workers by extending the period of time before the age-related provisions apply to those injured close to reaching their pension age.

The *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* will also be amended. These changes will improve record keeping and operator training for amusement devices; state that complying with Australia and Australia–New Zealand Standards is not mandatory, unless specified; and set requirements for dealing with workplace psychosocial hazards.

While all these amendments are important, this last one around psychosocial hazards is particularly significant and

important to me. We all understand how important it is to ensure workers are safe from workplace bullying, traumatic events, occupational violence and aggression, and physical and sexual assault, and our laws make it mandatory for workplaces to prevent these from happening.

Our Government's commitment to improving safety, health and wellbeing is also demonstrated in our proud support of WorkSafe Month, a long-running initiative of the WorkCover Tasmania Board and WorkSafe Tasmania, that has grown from strength to strength.

Since it began 26 years ago, WorkSafe Month (held annually in October) has successfully engaged with employers and workers. It has helped change behaviours and attitudes, and skill employers, managers and workers to better manage workplace hazards, manage positive return to work and injury management outcomes, and improve mental health for themselves and in their workplaces.

The annual Health and Safety Representatives Conference in Launceston and Hobart was part of this year's WorkSafe Month, and the concluding event was the Safe Bodies, Safe Minds Expo in early November.

These events and options mean everyone can explore the latest developments in work health and safety, mental health, wellbeing, return to work and better work–life balance. I hope you were able to attend, take part or listen to these discussions.

Such initiatives acknowledge and raise awareness of the importance of good physical and mental health, and what everyone can do to make their work safer, healthier and more productive. Establishing a positive organisational culture and leadership will drive improved mental and physical health and wellbeing outcomes at work, which is good for business.

We should not underestimate the way culture and leadership can lead to physical injuries occurring. Sadly, while the overall injury tally has been steadily declining, mental health injuries have increased over the past 10 years. In this period, there has been an 86 per cent increase in the number of reported mental health injuries in Tasmanian workplaces.

While we often think of our mind and body as separate, our mental health and physical health are closely interconnected. Good mental health can positively affect physical health, and on the flip side, poor mental health can negatively affect physical health.

It is my view that businesses need to provide the right support and education to help workers understand the relationship between physical and mental health. In turn, they will have a more productive workforce and a good culture within it.

This could include encouraging workers to be more active and engaging with workers to identify stressors in the way their work has been designed, or identifying ways for everyone to achieve a better work–life balance.

I hope as you wrap up and reflect on 2022, you can see opportunities for improving safety, wellbeing, and return to work outcomes in the year ahead, in your workplace.

As always, please stay safe and I wish you a healthy holiday season and a productive 2023.



ROBYN PEARCE

Executive Director, WorkSafe Tasmania

Over the last few years, we have seen an increase in the figures for mental health injuries caused by 'psychosocial hazards': excessive workloads, micromanagement, workplace bullying, traumatic events, occupational violence and aggression, physical and sexual assault.

In Tasmania, mental health injuries have increased 86% over the last ten years. There were 857 mental health injuries reported in 2021–22. Just over one injury in every 10 is mental health related, whereas ten years ago, mental health injuries accounted for only one in every 20 injuries.

I recognise that these increases may be due to an increase in reporting. If this is the case, it is encouraging that people are now more empowered and supported to speak up and make a claim, whereas previously people may have

been ashamed, told to put up with it, or suffered in silence. Our communities now are more open to talking about — and doing something about — mental health in the workplace.

So it's difficult to say if there is an increase in the actual occurrence within our workplaces. But the increasing number and their increasing proportion of total injuries, for whatever reason, is concerning.

On average, work-related mental health injuries have longer recovery times, higher costs, and require more time away from work than any other injury. They cause disruptions because of staff turnover, absenteeism, fractured workplace relations between workers, poor staff morale, and even bad business reputations. These things are not good for your business.

But I don't want you to forget that this is not just about business and dollars: it's about people.

The impact of someone directly experiencing burnout or micromanagement or even witnessing workplace bullying, violence and assault can be significant. Someone might become anxious, depressed, withdrawn, fearful, or develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or have an increased risk of suicide. They might not be able to sleep, they may turn to alcohol or drugs to cope, or they might develop headaches, muscle tension, and digestive problems.

There has always been a requirement in our work health and safety laws to manage hazards in the workplace; I would say it's the cornerstone of ensuring people are safe from the risk of injury and illness from their work, and of ensuring people go home at the end of each working day safe and well.

Over the last few years we — WHS regulators around the country, employers, workers, employer associations and unions — have recognised that managing hazards extends to managing the psychosocial hazards.

For example, in the last ten years, WorkSafe and the WorkCover Tasmania Board have produced guidance material and awareness campaigns focusing on workplace bullying and mental health; we've hosted events and webinars on these topics at WorkSafe Month.

Now, in a big step forward, psychosocial hazards have been specifically named up in our WHS laws. *The Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* are being amended to include a specific regulation, which explicitly sets out the legal requirements workplaces have to prevent psychosocial hazards from occurring and managing them when they do. This change came into force on 30 November 2022.

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Email your feedback to wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au.

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

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Coming early next year will be a new code of practice for managing psychosocial hazards at work. This code delivers the practical 'how do you do it' guidance, so employers, managers and workers can work together to achieve a safer workplace in this area. The code recognises the broad range of psychosocial hazards in the workplace. It's not all just about bullying and harassment. In fact, work pressure is actually the cause of the majority of mental health injuries in Tasmania.

Managing psychosocial hazards very much comes back to people. You need to have assessed the risk of psychosocial harm in your workplace and put systems in place: policies that clearly state your expectations for acceptable behaviour, training and supervision to support mentally safe workplaces, and reporting systems that allow anyone experiencing or witnessing harmful behaviours and actions to safely report it.

But systems need to be backed up by leadership and commitment — *your* leadership and commitment.

If you're an employer or senior manager,

workers need to see you lead by example — to practice what you preach. How do you speak and interact with your workers and other managers? How do you positively influence the daily interactions, relationships, behaviours and ways of thinking — the culture — of your team to create a safe and inclusive workplace for everyone?

It's about building on the positive aspects of your workplace, but being open to hearing what needs to change.

Use the free psychosocial risk assessment tool People at Work (peopleatwork.gov.au) to understand the hazards in your workplace.

Help your staff learn about psychosocial hazards using the free competency-based Head4Work training and assessment program (head4work.com.au).

Talk about why it's important to put the spotlight on psychosocial hazards at your toolbox meetings, in staff emails, at training sessions and in inductions.

Consult and collaborate with your managers and workers to identify ways to reduce the risks, whether they be

unrealistic job demands, lack of job control, lack of recognition, or bullying, harassment and workplace violence.

Encourage your workers to report if they're being targeted, and make sure you act on those reports to make a change, and support your workers.

Truly empower and support your workers to speak up about workplace stressors that make them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Apart from paying the bills, work is good for our health and wellbeing. It provides purpose and contributes to our sense of identity, helps us grow and develop new life skills, and provides important social relationships and friendships. Let's work together to make sure our workplaces nurture everyone to feel safe and well, every day.

CREATING A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE IS ABOUT BUILDING ON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF YOUR WORKPLACE, BUT BEING OPEN TO HEARING WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE.

ROBYN PEARCE

LAWS UPDATE: WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

In December 2022, the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* were 'remade' to ensure they stay up to date with industry developments and community expectations.

These changes (and the Regulations in general) provide clarity and detail for duty holders on how to fulfil their obligations, specifying what is required to prevent injury, disease and death to persons in the workplace.

Specific changes to the Regulations are:

- a new regulation to deal with psychological health
- an amendment to improve recording of amusement device infringements and operator training. This will ensure that details of statutory notices issued by any WHS regulator and evidence of operator training are included in the device's log book
- an amendment to make it clear that it's not mandatory to comply with standards (such as the Australian

Standards) under the model WHS laws, unless this is specifically stated.

This edition of *Workplace Issues* looks at the new regulation that covers psychological health with a focus on bullying, sexual harassment and other harmful behaviours — and how workplaces can comply with this regulation.

Our next edition will focus on the job characteristics, design and management hazards which may cause workplace stress and mental health injuries.

SPOT THE BULLYING HAZARDS IN YOUR WORKPLACE

There's a risk of workplace bullying wherever people work together. There may not be obvious signs of bullying at your workplace, but this doesn't mean it's not happening.

Here's how to find out if bullying and harassment (or even unacceptable behaviours that don't stack up to bullying) are happening in your workplace.

▶ Ask, look and listen

- Get feedback from workers who leave the business, through exit interviews. Ask for honesty, and listen openly.
- Recognise any changes in workplace relationships between workers, customers and managers.
- Monitor incident reports, workers compensation claims, patterns of absenteeism, sick leave, staff turnover, and records of grievances. This may show regular patterns or sudden unexplained changes.
- Regularly consult with your workers, managers, health and safety representatives, and health and safety committees. Talk with them, or have an anonymous survey.

▶ Check for these factors

The following factors may increase the risk of workplace bullying. Do you have these in your workplace?

- leadership styles that are strict, dictating, and don't involve workers in decision making; or where little

or no guidance is provided to workers; or responsibilities are inappropriately and informally delegated

- poor communication, isolation, low levels of support, work group hostility, abusive behaviour
- work stressors such as high job demands, organisational change (such as restructuring), job insecurity
- systems of work: lack of resources, lack of training, poorly designed rostering, inappropriate scheduling and shiftwork, unreasonable performance measures or deadlines.

▶ Who is most at risk?

Workers who are more at risk of workplace bullying include:

- young workers, new workers, apprentices/ trainees, older workers
- injured workers and workers on return to work plans
- workers in a minority group because of their ethnicity, religion, disability, gender or sexual preferences.

▶ Why people don't report it

Don't think because there are no reports of bullying that it doesn't exist in your workplace. It's difficult to quantify the extent of bullying across workplaces because it is often under-reported. Reasons for under-reporting include:

- thinking nothing will change
- fear of retribution from the bully
- uncertainty about where to seek help
- fear of being called a 'dobber' (this is especially so for witnesses)
- not knowing if there are policies and procedures in place for reporting and managing bullying
- thinking their opportunities for promotion at work or in the wider industry will be affected.


▶ Getting it right

So it's important for employers to have robust processes to manage bullying and to tell workers about these processes, and that bullying and harassment will not be accepted.

It's also important that workplace leaders themselves behave respectfully at all times — essentially setting a good example. You should actively nurture positive workplace cultures where people feel accepted, are supported if they're experiencing any difficulties, and look out for one another and can speak up if something's not right.

▶ What next?

In our next edition of Workplace Issues, we'll delve deeper into the processes for preventing and managing bullying: creating reporting and response procedures, building awareness through training, and more.



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IT'S NOT BULLYING, BUT...

Rudeness can be damaging to a workplace culture, so how do you manage it?



You may have processes and policies in place to manage and talk about bullying in your workplace.

But what about behaviour that's not necessarily bullying, but is still inappropriate and disrespectful? Rudeness can be damaging to a workplace culture, so how do you manage it?

► Rudeness in the workplace

Rudeness in the workplace can be intentional or not. Examples include:

- someone speaking over you or cutting you off in meetings, or ignoring your input
- taking calls midway through a conversation, or using their devices throughout
- talking to you disrespectfully, using sarcasm or crude or offensive language
- taking credit for your work, spreading rumours, or taking their frustrations out on you.

These behaviours basically signal 'I don't care about you'.

But how we treat one another at work matters — after all, it's where most of us spend a great deal of our time.

Most of us spend more time with our work colleagues than we do with our family members. We should never feel uncomfortable or vulnerable at work because of the behaviours of our workmates.

► The effects on people

The effects of poor behaviour can radiate throughout the whole workplace if it isn't stopped. It can damage morale, productivity, relationships between workmates, and even people's commitment to their workplace. In summary, it can cause mental health injuries through workplace stress.

At the root of a dysfunctional workplace is often:

- one or many disrespectful and unprofessional relationships

- a culture of gossip, rumours, and blame, restructuring, role conflict, job insecurity

In these situations, we see workers withdrawing, careful to protect themselves from discomfort at the expense of productivity and team spirit.

► Turning it around

It's good practice to remind ourselves — at times of high stress, long hours, productivity demands and job insecurities — that our relationships with our work colleagues are professional relationships.

Most of us know and expect that our friendships and family relationships require regular maintenance, yet we often expect our work relationships to manage themselves.

Another way to think about this is that we invest time, energy and money into our work projects and businesses — and sometimes forget the needs of us as people.

A simple, quiet conversation may be all it takes for someone to realise that the way they speak to their workmates is hurtful, or that their swearing at the photocopier offends people.

► Talk about standards

You can discuss disrespectful behaviours as a team, as you would any safety issue. If things are really toxic, you may need to engage an external facilitator, but there are things you can do first:

- develop a set of organisational values with your staff including descriptions of the behaviours everyone expects to see if they are living the values
- have a fresh look at your code of conduct; test how it is understood and followed; and communicate it at inductions and regular staff meetings
- don't have a code of conduct? Create one! Consult with your workers as you would when developing any workplace policy or guiding document. Involving your workers means whatever you do reflects your workplace, and becomes a realistic guide for making your workplace a safe and respectful one
- talk about what you and your workers consider to be inappropriate and disrespectful. Make sure these discussions are respectful!
- be careful of rewarding those who may do good work or bring in good results for your company, but who are rude or disrespectful to their colleagues
- set an example: treat people the way you would like to be treated
- take any complaints seriously — follow them up before they start to fester.

This is not about taking the joy and humour out of the workplace — if anything, it may help people feel valued and productive, and enjoy being at work again. It's about recognising that some behaviour is just not socially acceptable anywhere, any place or anytime.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE



MANY EMPLOYERS ALREADY PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE RESPONSES WHEN HARASSMENT OCCURS, BUT THAT IS NOT ENOUGH – ALL EMPLOYERS ALSO HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ACTIVELY PREVENT HARASSMENT HAPPENING IN THE FIRST PLACE.

KATE JENKINS

The first thing to understand about workplace sexual harassment is that it occurs in every industry, in every location and at every level within organisations across the country.

In 2018, the Australian Human Rights Commission's National survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces found that 1 in every 3 people have experienced sexual harassment at work in the last five years.

Despite the high rate, the National survey found that most people who experience sexual harassment at work do not make a formal report or lodge a complaint.

The impacts of workplace sexual harassment are profound and devastating for both individuals and workplaces. It can cause physical and psychological harm to the person it is directed at, and to anyone witnessing it – and here in Tasmania, the majority of sexual harassment claims caused mental disorders.

The average time lost for each sexual harassment claim was 47 days and the average cost for each claim was \$110,000. Compare that to a body stressing injury, where the average time lost is 22 days and the average cost was \$10,400.

Australian law states that sexual harassment occurs when:

- a person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the

person harassed; or engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the person harassed

- in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Workplace sexual harassment can happen in the workplace or during a work-related activities such as a conference or social event.

To prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, it's important to understand the key underlying drivers of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is a social problem. Stopping it is not just about altering the behaviour of individuals; we need to change the culture and environment of workplaces in which it occurs.

The Respect@Work Council identifies four key factors perpetuating a culture where workplace sexual harassment occurs. These are:

- workplaces that support or condone sexual harassment against women

- power imbalances between men and women
- rigidly sticking to gender roles and stereotyped ideas of masculinity and femininity
- male relationships that emphasis aggression and disrespect towards women.

Who is at risk?

The 2018 National Survey clearly showed that sexual harassment is an issue for men as well as women. However, women were more likely than men to have been sexually harassed in the workplace in the previous five years (39% of women compared with 26% of men).

Others likely to experience sexual harassment include:

- workers under 30 years of age
- workers who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or people with another gender or sexual identity
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders
- workers with a disability.

The 2018 National survey also confirmed all previous research in finding that the majority of workplace sexual harassment (79%) is perpetrated by men — this was true for both women harassed (93%) and men harassed (58%). That's not to say that most men are harassers, only that most harassers are men.

What are the laws?

Sexual harassment is covered by:

- the WHS laws, because it is a workplace hazard that creates physical and psychological risks to health and safety
- the national *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and Tasmania's *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998*.

Some behaviour or actions (such as indecent exposure, stalking, sexual assault, and obscene or threatening phone calls, emails, text messages and social media posts) may be offences under criminal law. Victims may want to report criminal offences to the police.

YOUR WORKPLACE SHOULD FOSTER A HEALTHY AND RESPECTFUL WORK CULTURE WHERE SEXUAL HARASSMENT IS NOT TOLERATED. EVERYONE FROM MANAGERS TO WORKERS SHOULD MODEL AND ENFORCE RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOURS.

What are your WHS duties?

Employers must provide a safe physical and online work environment. This means as an employer, you must do all you reasonably can to prevent sexual harassment — just as you do for any other WHS risk.

This means:

- identifying how, where and when sexual harassment might happen
- assessing the likelihood that a worker may experience sexual harassment and how it may affect their physical or mental health
- implementing the most effective control measures to prevent sexual harassment from happening
- working out how you will address sexual harassment if it does happen
- checking that your control measures are working and whether there is anything more you can do.

You must also provide your workers with:

- procedures to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, including reporting

sexual harassment informally, formally, or anonymously and confidentially

- a workplace policy that sets out how you will prevent and respond to sexual harassment, including acceptable standards of behaviour of all workers
- information on what sexual harassment is, so everyone understands the variety of behaviours that are sexual harassment and who is at risk, and on support services available.
- training in how to respond if you experience or witness sexual harassment, including strategies for addressing inappropriate behaviour.

You must do all of these things in consultation with your workers and their health and safety representatives.

As a worker, you have a duty to take reasonable care of your own health and safety, and not adversely affect the health and safety of yourself or others. This means you must not sexually harass co-workers or other people at the workplace.



What is workplace sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated, where that reaction is reasonable in the circumstances.

Sexual harassment can happen at a worker's usual workplace or in other places where they work, such as a client's home. It can also happen during a work-related activity such as a work trip, conference or an event.

Sexual harassment can take many forms and be overt, covert or subtle. It may include:



unwelcome touching or physical contact



unwanted invitations to go on dates or requests for sex



suggestive comments or jokes



sexually explicit emails, text messages or online interactions, such as social media posts



sexually offensive pictures



There are positive duties in work health and safety laws to prevent sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unlawful. Everyone in your workplace needs to understand and meet your workplace policies and the behaviours expected of them.

Everyone should have information and training on what sexual harassment is, what to do if they are sexually harassed or if they witness someone else being harassed, and how to report it.

Further advice and support services

Detailed guidance on how you prevent and respond to sexual harassment can be found at www.swa.gov.au.

If you need help, please contact your [work health and safety regulator](#).

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

- 1800Respect
1800 737 732
- [Sexual assault support services](#)





NEW INDUSTRY SNAPSHOTS AVAILABLE

There were 16% fewer injuries in 2021 compared to ten years ago, but the proportion of serious injuries (those requiring at least one week of work) has increased from 36% to 49% in that time.

Body stressing remains the most common cause of injury. Injuries resulting from mental stress have increased by 50% in the last ten years, now making up 16% of all serious injuries.

These and other statistics are contained in WorkSafe Tasmania's 2021 Industry Snapshots.

Data collected in the Industry Snapshots highlight the safety performance of each industry in Tasmania, comparing data from the current year to previous years and between industries too.

Some other findings of note from the 2021 industry snapshots:

- half the state's workforce are employed in one of four industries: Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail, Education and Training, or Accommodation and Food Services.
- almost 1 in 4 workers seriously injured in 2021 worked in Health Care and Social Assistance.

The report also highlights the key areas that WorkSafe Tasmania will focus on with each industry to help improve safety performance.

Find the 2021 Industry Snapshots for your industry at worksafe.tas.gov.au/snapshots.



Scan the QR code to read more about the latest WHS statistics and download a copy of the Industry Snapshots publication

Almost 1 in 4

workers seriously injured in 2021 worked in

Health Care and Social Assistance



34%

of serious injuries in 2021 were caused by body stressing

Mental stress has increased significantly in recent years



Falls, slips and trips was the second most common cause of injury in 2021



15%

of serious injuries in the last ten years were caused by being hit by moving objects



Body stressing injuries

have reduced approximately **21%** in the last ten years





Picture: Tony Lomas - Island 26

WORKSAFE TASMANIA MONTH: ALWAYS EVOLVING TO MEET YOUR NEEDS AND WANTS

Over the years, WorkSafe Month has successfully helped workers, managers and employers learn how to manage workplace hazards, comply with the laws, understand their rights and responsibilities, manage positive return to work outcomes, and become healthier too. This year was no exception!

On behalf of the WorkCover Tasmania Board, WorkSafe Tasmania again provided enginised online and in-person events.

'WorkSafe Month is always evolving to meet the information needs and wants of employers and workers,' said Stephanie Mirowski, WorkSafe's Manager Events.

With the theme 'Safe Bodies, Safe Minds', WorkSafe Month saw expert speakers, business leaders and health and safety

professionals deliver webinars on topics covering WHS, wellbeing, mental health, injury management and return to work.

Offering both online and in-person events continues to allow individuals and groups, no matter where they are based, a greater opportunity to choose how they participate in the 13 webinars and 25 in-person events.

This year nearly 3,000 registered to attend an event, with people not just from Tasmania, but nationwide as well.

'It was great to see how successful this year has been with everyone embracing the move back to in-person events,' said Stephanie, who has been involved with the Month since 2008. 'The feedback we've received from presenters and participants has been overwhelming.

'Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders has been the key to the success of this project, and we will continue to do this to ensure a safer and healthier Tasmania through WorkSafe Month.

'We would also like to thank all presenters who generously give their time to provide WHS information without charge.'

WorkSafe Month in Tasmania supports

Safe Work Australia's National Safe Work Month.

Catch up with the webinars and in-person sessions on WorkSafe Tasmania's YouTube channel at youtube.com/worksafetas.



Thank you it was brilliant so informative and presented so very well, has given me options and resources to implement into the workplace. Fantastic opportunity.

Excellent presentation, very professionally delivered.

This webinar was very informative and I intend to investigate/take up some of the recommendations—Thank you.

Great presentation—I got a lot of useful information out of it to support my staff.

Great course. Presenter was excellent and such a good speaker. Thanks!





Picture: Linda Higginson, Solstice Digital

SAFE BODIES, SAFE MINDS EXPO: BRINGING HIGH-VIS TO HEALTH, WELLBEING, SAFETY AND INJURY MANAGEMENT

The Safe Bodies, Safe Minds Expo, held at MyState Bank Arena, provided a chance for everyone to be inspired and discover the latest in health, safety, wellbeing and injury management in the workplace.

The Expo brought to a close this year's WorkSafe Tasmania Month. It provided a chance for everyone to be inspired and discover the latest in health, safety, wellbeing and rehabilitation to support them, their workplace, and the Tasmanian community to remain safe and well every day.

With over 50 exhibitors and almost 400 attendees, the Expo offered a day of informative seminars that went beyond the standard approach to WHS and wellbeing, with Alexander Technique demonstrations, an introduction to clinical yoga, working at heights demonstrations, somatic integrative therapy and cooking demonstrations.

The Expo highlighted the WorkSafe Month 2022 theme of 'Safe Bodies, Safe Minds', which acknowledges the importance of good physical and mental health, and highlights things that everyone can do to make their work safer, healthier and more productive.

Congratulations to Mark Mann who attended and won the tickets to Bon Iver at MyState Bank Arena, playing as part of 2023 MONA FOMA.



Scan the QR code to read more about the full list of WorkSafe Month and Safe Bodies Safe Minds Expo Exhibitors.

In our Spring 2022 edition, we explained why doing a risk assessment is so important for managing safety in your workplace. In this edition, we explain how to carry out your risk assessments.

Doing a risk assessment is the foundation for how you manage safety in your workplace. With just four steps, it's the best way to prevent work-related injuries or illness.

► Step 1: Spot the hazard

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause injury, illness or damage to your health. Hazards at work may include manual handling tasks, untidy workplaces, unguarded machinery, chemicals, and inadequate management systems (for example, no procedures for performing tasks safely). Don't forget bullying and violence are also hazards (you can read more about how to spot those hazards starting on page 6).

To find the hazards in your workplace:

- ask workers and contractors about any hazards they may have noticed
- look at the physical structure of your workplace, including stairs, floor surfaces, exits, driveways
- check all machinery, appliances and vehicles used for work
- examine how substances are stored, used and moved from one place to another

- review your injury records, including 'near misses'
- review information from designers, manufacturers or suppliers of the equipment and substances in your workplace.

Use a checklist

A checklist can help you examine your work environment, the tasks your workers do, and your machinery/equipment.

You can find samples on our website; go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'checklists'. Print them off, grab a pen and do a walkabout, talking to the workers involved in the environment, task or equipment you're checking.

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. They often have first-hand knowledge, experience and ideas about how to reduce safety risks, make improvements and find solutions.

Involve everyone — employers, managers, workers and contractors — in every step of your risk assessments, and make sure they communicate and work together.

Doing this reinforces the idea that safety is everyone's responsibility, and ensures you meet your requirements to consult with your workforce.

RISK ASSESSMENT: THE FOUR STEPS TO A SAFE WORKPLACE

► Step 2: Assess the risk

Your list of hazards may be long, with some hazards posing more safety risks than others. So you need to work out which hazards are more serious than others and deal with those first.

A risk is the likelihood of a hazard causing injury, illness or damage to health. To assess the risk associated with each hazard, ask:

What is the potential impact of the hazard?

- How severe could an injury or illness be?
- What's the worst possible damage the hazard could cause to someone's health?
- Would it require simple first aid only? Or cause permanent ill health or disability? Or could it kill?

How likely is the hazard to cause harm?

- Could it happen at any time or would it be a rare event?
- How often are workers exposed to the hazard?


Also consider how many people are exposed to the hazards, and remember that everyone is different. A hazard may pose more risk to some people than others because of differences in physical or psychological wellbeing, experience or training.

S POT THE HAZARD

A SSESS THE RISK

F IX THE PROBLEM

E VALUATE RESULTS



**INVOLVE EVERYONE —
EMPLOYERS, MANAGERS,
WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS
— IN EVERY STEP OF YOUR
RISK ASSESSMENTS, AND MAKE
SURE THEY COMMUNICATE AND
WORK TOGETHER.**

**DOING THIS REINFORCES
THE IDEA THAT SAFETY IS
EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY,
AND ENSURES YOU MEET YOUR
REQUIREMENTS TO CONSULT
WITH YOUR WORKFORCE.**

► Step 3: Fix the problem

You should always aim to remove a hazard completely from your workplace. Where this isn't practical, you should work through the other alternatives systematically.

Some problems may be fixed easily and straight away, while others will need more effort and planning. Concentrate on the most urgent hazards without neglecting the simpler ones that may be easily and immediately fixed.

Hierarchy of controls

Use the hierarchy of controls to remove or reduce risk in your workplace. It starts with the most effective control method (removing the hazard from your workplace completely) and finishes with the least effective (wearing personal protective equipment [PPE]).

You must use the highest-ranked control

that is practical for controlling the risk. Only use lower-ranked controls (such as PPE) as a last resort or until a more effective way of controlling risk can be used. And sometimes using more than one control measure could be the most effective way to reduce the exposure to hazards.

Find the hierarchy at worksafe.tas.gov.au by searching for 'four steps'.



Scan the qr code to
find out more

► Step 4: Evaluate results

If you think you've fixed the problem, check! Talk to workers affected by the changes and see what their experience now is. Look at your incident records to see if numbers are going down. Make sure your solution doesn't introduce new hazards.

Maybe you and your workers can even see further improvements. Set a date to re-assess the risk; choose a timeframe appropriate to the task and the risk involved. Your control measures must be monitored, to ensure they remain effective.

If the work process changes or new equipment is introduced, then you must review your risk assessment and current control measures.



ALL YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PUBLIC HOLIDAYS (AND MORE)

Without a doubt the information you search for the most on our website is ‘public holidays’ (because: public holidays are important!).

Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for ‘public holidays’, or use the QR code below, to find the listing of all the public holidays — for this year and for the next couple of years, too (however, we don’t keep previous years).

For your next pub quiz, here are some interesting facts about public holidays:



- they are mandated by the *Statutory Holidays Act 2000*
- this act covers the statewide public holidays (that everyone gets, such as Australia Day and Easter) and the regional or local ones that only residents in certain municipalities get (such as Burnie Show, which is only for

the municipal areas of Burnie, Waratah-Wynyard and West Coast)

- public holidays can be changed, but only by amending the *Statutory Holidays Act 2000* through a proper legislative process, which usually involves public consultation.

It’s important to check our website for any changes to public holidays to avoid confusion. For example in recent years, we’ve seen the Agfest event move to August — but the Agfest public holiday (occurring in the municipal area of Circular Head only) remains in May.

And just because a day is listed as a public holiday doesn’t automatically mean you get the day off work or get paid more for working on that day. So as well as checking our website, we recommend you check your award and/or National Employment Standard, or ring the Fair Work Ombudsman on 13 13 94.

Happy holidays!

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FIRST AID

Workplace first aid is about having more than just a box of band aids — for some workplaces, it is much more. So how do you work out what you need? In this edition, WorkSafe Advisor Paul Kilby explains how to work out what you need in your first aid kit and more.

You must make sure that you provide first aid equipment, and workers can easily and quickly access it. You must also make sure someone is trained to administer first aid and there's a room or a space for it to be administered.

To get all that in place, do a risk assessment in consultation with your workers and think about:

- the type of work done at your workplace
- the hazards at your workplace
- how likely it is that an injury will occur and what that injury may be.
- the size and location of your workplace (you may need multiple first aid kits throughout your workplace)
- the number of workers and other people at your workplace, including contractors, volunteers and visitors.

You should also look at any past injuries, illnesses and near misses. You'll then have an idea what specific first aid equipment, facilities and training you'll need.

When it comes to a first aid kit, there are basics that every kit should have. You can find a full list in the code of practice 'First aid in the workplace' on WorkSafe's website at worksafe.tas.gov.au by searching for 'first aid'.

Add-ons must then be specific to your work tasks. Do you do welding, handle or store chemicals, handle infectious materials? Relevant safety data sheets, codes of practice, manufacturers' instructions and even talking to a doctor can help you decide what you need to stock in your kit.

Talking to a WorkSafe Advisor can also point you in the right direction. We can come to your workplace and help you work out what first aid equipment (such as eye wash stations or defibrillators) will be appropriate for your workplace hazards, and what training and information is needed to support this.

Keep your kit where it can be easily and quickly reached, and close to areas where there's a higher risk of injury or illness (for example, workshops). You may need more than one kit and it may stock different things in the different areas. And don't forget portable kits for the work vehicles for your remote workers and those who drive a lot for work.

You may also need other equipment, such as eye wash equipment or showers for dealing with exposure to hazardous chemicals or infectious substances.

When it comes to the person who provides first aid, you have two options:

- training one or more of your own workers to administer first aid, or
- arranging for a person who doesn't work for you to administer first aid to your workers, provided they have been trained to do so. This person must be close and ready to attend quickly if needed.

Finally, regularly review your first aid arrangements and kits (in consultation with your workers) to make sure they are adequate and effective.

If you've had an incident and had to administer first aid, evaluate whether the first aid provided was adequate, and make changes as necessary to your kit or equipment, the number of trained first aiders you have, and even the level of training they receive.

If you introduce new chemicals, equipment or work tasks, you'll need to undertake a new risk assessment, so use that time to make sure your existing first aid procedures, equipment and people are sufficient, or whether 'upgrades' are required.

Again, WorkSafe's Advisors are here to help you with your first aid questions or any other health and safety issues you may need to manage in your workplace. We can come to your workplace, for free, so call us on 1300 366 322 or go to worksafe.tas.gov.au/advisoryservice to book a visit.





CYBER SECURITY FOR YOUR BUSINESS

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/businessstas

Many small business owners and operators don't dedicate time or resources to cyber security. This means small businesses often have poorly protected websites, accounts and network systems — making them easy targets for cyber attacks. Cyber attacks can severely disrupt business operations and can also compromise the security of customer data (as we have seen in the news recently with well known companies).

The good news is the cyber security of your business can be significantly improved by knowing the risks and having suitable defences in place. Below are five actions you can take to enhance the cyber security of your business.

▶ **1: Be aware of the types of scams and how they work – and ensure your staff are also aware**

Scams and cyber attacks have become extremely sophisticated and can be easily mistaken for legitimate operations or communications. Having a basic knowledge of the types of cyber security risks out there means you and your team will be more vigilant and more likely to identify a cyber security risk and avoid a devastating breach.

▶ **2: Use multi-factor authentication and passphrases**

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) is a security measure that requires two or more proofs of identity to grant you access. The Australian Cyber Security Centre tells us that 'MFA typically requires a combination of something the user knows (pin, secret question), something you have (card, token) or something you are (fingerprint or other biometric)'. This means that even if one of your sign-in methods is compromised, your account remains inaccessible. If you can't use MFA, a secure option is to use a passphrase: using four or more random words as your password.

▶ **3: Keep backups of your data**

A backup is a digital copy of your business' most important information; for example, customer details and financial records. This can be saved to an external storage device or a secure cloud storage location. It is a precautionary measure that will shorten downtime for your business if your data is stolen, damaged or deleted.

▶ **4: Keep your computer, app, and anti-virus software up to date**

Software updates often include security patches, not just a new look or features. Set your updates to happen automatically if you can, to protect your device from known risks.

▶ **5: Know where to seek help**

You can be prepared and still be unsure where to begin or how to respond if you experience a cyber attack. There is help available.

We have compiled a list of excellent resources for you at Business Tas. This includes free one-on-one advice through the Tasmanian Government's Digital Ready for Business program, guides for small businesses from the Australian Cyber Security Centre, common scam definitions from Scamwatch, and a recording of a recent Business Tasmania webinar with our cyber security expert.

Business Tasmania
▶ all your business needs in one place

BE SAFE WITH ASBESTOS

With holidays approaching, perhaps you have home renovations on your to-do list. Before you start, make sure you are asbestos aware.

Be asbestos aware

Did you know that 1 in 3 Australian homes contain asbestos? If your home was built or renovated before 1987, it is highly likely that it has products containing asbestos such as cement roofing, walls, flooring, insulation and vinyl tiles.

Research shows us that the next wave of asbestos-related disease will be amongst DIY home renovators, with an estimated 200,000–250,000 adults at risk of exposure to asbestos every year through unsafe home renovation activity. These are the men and women who are renovating their homes themselves and the family members, friends and tradespeople who help them.

Tradies who work on domestic properties are more likely to come across asbestos every day of their working life, so it's vital they learn to identify and manage asbestos safely.

With an estimated 4,000 Australians dying from asbestos-related diseases every year, it is important to understand where asbestos is around your home, and the dangers of disturbing or removing it unsafely.

(Statistics: the Australian Government Asbestos Safety Eradication Agency)

What about building inspection reports?

It's not mandatory for building inspection reports to identify asbestos in homes. The seller is not obliged to tell you if the house contains asbestos, either. Therefore, it's possible that asbestos may be present in your home.

As a general guide, if your house was built:

- before the mid-1980s: it's highly likely it contains some asbestos products

- between the mid-1980s and 1990: it's likely it would contain asbestos
- after 1990: it's unlikely it would contain asbestos.

Get an expert

To know where asbestos is in your home, especially if you're planning renovations, get a licenced asbestos assessor. They'll do an asbestos survey to help you learn the location and condition of any asbestos, and give guidance on how to manage the risk. To find one, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'assessor search'.

They will:

- conduct an audit of your property to identify asbestos containing material
- provide you with a report with recommendations on removal or management strategies.

You may also consider getting an asbestos survey done before you purchase a property. Carefully read the report and recommendations made by the asbestos assessor. If you're unsure about any aspects of the report, ask them for further advice or explanation.

You should also provide a copy of the report to any tradies who intend to carry out work on your home, so they're aware of the presence of asbestos in your property.

And importantly, if you suspect you have asbestos, don't cut it! Don't drill it! Don't drop it! Don't sand it! Don't saw it! Don't scrape it! Don't scrub it! Don't dismantle it! Don't tip it! Don't waterblast it! Don't demolish it! And whatever you do...don't dump it!

WHETHER YOU'RE A DIY RENOVATOR OR A TRADIE, FIND PRACTICAL CHECKLISTS AND INFORMATION AT ASBESTOSAWARENESS.COM.AU TO HELP YOU BE ASBESTOS SAFE.



WHS UNDERTAKING: CROSSROADS CIVIL CONTRACTING

The incident

On 3 October 2019, a semi-trailer loaded with high-density polyethylene pipes arrived on an urban subdivision being developed by Crossroads Civil Contracting Pty Ltd.

The excavator operator and the supervisor at the site were rolling up the trailer's load restraint straps with the truck driver, when some of the pipes fell.

The truck driver was pinned against the side of the truck by a falling pipe. The supervisor was pinned to the ground under two 150 kilogram bundles of pipes. They both sustained serious injuries; the supervisor was incapacitated and unable to perform work for more than 7 months.

The WorkSafe investigation found there was unsafe loading/unloading of the pipes:

- the pipes were not loaded according to the Load Restraint Guide 2018
- there was no safe system of work for unloading or to manage the risks associated with this task
- a number of lifting slings were damaged and unsafe to use.

WorkSafe also found that deliveries should not have been made directly to the site.

The breaches

Crossroads Civil Contracting failed to comply with a health and safety duty: Category 2, section 32 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*.

Summary/cost of activities to be undertaken

Crossroads Civil Contracting approached the Regulator to enter into a WHS undertaking rather than be the subject of judicial review.

Under the WHS Undertaking, Crossroads Civil Contracting has committed to ensuring the behaviour, activities and other factors that caused or led to the incident have stopped and won't happen again. The management team is committed to driving a higher level of safety culture.

Activities to deliver benefits to the workplace (\$15,000) are:

- engaging an external consultant to audit its safety management system, and implementing any recommendations
- implementing an internal audit schedule to audit its safety management system.

Activities to deliver benefits to industry (\$59,500) include:

- sponsoring a Northern and Southern Tasmania Civil Contractors Federation Industry forum
- developing a training module for industry with TasTafe about securing loads and unloading deliveries safely
- developing a re-enactment and education video about the incident and presenting it at a future WorkSafe Conference that Crossroads will sponsor.

Activities to deliver benefits to the community (\$20,000):

- developing a program with Launceston City Council to educate local school children about road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists around construction sites.

Other/remedial work done since the incident (\$380,000):

- establishing a safety committee that meets monthly
- providing leaders and workers with coaching, mentoring, training and toolbox presentations in various aspects of WHS (including risk management, hazard reporting)
- implementing an online induction program
- reaffirming delivery requirements with suppliers and transport companies
- improving safety processes, particularly for high-risk activities
- creating a safety alert about the incident and communicating this throughout the Hazell Bros group that owns Crossroads
- communicating with contractors and suppliers on WHS matters.

Reasons for accepting the undertaking

The Regulator accepted the WHS undertaking on 23 June this year under Part 11 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, and is satisfied that the strategies proposed/actions taken in this undertaking are likely to deliver long-term, sustainable safety improvements in the workplace, industry and community; are superior to Court proceedings; and proportionate to the incident.



WINNERS ANNOUNCED: 2022 HEALTHIER, SAFER AND PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACES GRANT PROGRAM

The WorkCover Tasmania Board congratulates the successful recipients of the Healthier, Safer and Productive Workplaces Grant Program 2022: The University of Tasmania and Spring Bay Distillery.

The 2022 Healthier, Safer and Productive Workplaces Grants Program provides grants for innovative solutions that create safe and healthy Tasmanian workplaces.

The University of Tasmania

Initiative: Improving return to work outcomes for workers experiencing mental health conditions program.

This initiative seeks to improve the return to work experiences and outcomes

for workers returning to work after experiencing a mental health condition, with a particular focus on those employed in health care, social assistance and community services.

Researchers will examine the lived experience of people who have returned to work from mental health conditions. This will provide fresh insights into processes, experiences, challenges and support needs associated with return to work from mental ill-health.

These insights will be used to co-design, test and evaluate two suites of resources (for returning workers and for their managers) to guide and support people through the process of returning to work from a mental health condition in ways that optimise return to work experiences and outcomes.

Spring Bay Distillery

Initiative: Working at heights risk reduction.

Spring Bay Distillery has developed a program to identify hazards across all areas of its manufacturing process to reduce risk of harm to its workers.

One of the key priorities identified during this process is the safe racking of barrels.

This grant will support Spring Bay Distillery in custom-building a barrel cage to allow workers to move the barrels more ergonomically, prolonging the life of distiller's tendons, muscles and joints.

WHAT IF I CAN'T PROVIDE SUITABLE DUTIES FOR AN INJURED EMPLOYEE?

An injured worker may not be able to perform their normal work tasks, but they may have the capacity to carry out duties other than their normal ones. In these circumstances, you must provide your injured worker with suitable alternative duties to perform. These are duties that:

- the worker is suited to, and are not demeaning or token duties
- take into account the nature of the worker's incapacity and their pre-injury employment and skills
- take into account medical advice or restrictions on what they can and can't do
- are set out in a return to work plan that has been agreed to by you and your injured worker.

You must consult with your injured workers to identify these duties.

To help you in this process, see our guidance note 'Register of alternative duties within the workplace'. It lists activities that can help employers, workers and doctors identify what workers can safely do as they return to work. It's listed by activity, not industry or workplace type, to help you think 'outside the square' about tasks new to the worker but ones they are certainly capable of. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'GB199'.

But what if you believe it's not practical, possible or reasonable to provide suitable alternative duties?

Your first step is to contact your workers compensation insurer, who can help make sure you have considered all the options. If, following that discussion, it is agreed that suitable duties in your workplace cannot be provided, then you must provide your worker with written

notice of the reason for this. You can be penalised under Tasmania's workers compensation laws for failing to provide this written notice of reasons.

Your injured worker will still receive their workers compensation entitlements.

Focus on what the worker can do

Getting an injured worker back to work as soon as possible is good for their physical and mental health. However, depending on their degree of injury, they may not be able to return to their pre-injury work capacity.

Whatever the injured worker's circumstances, it's important that plans for their return to work and injury management are developed and agreed between you as their employer and the worker and their treating doctor. The focus should be on what they can do — not what they can't do.

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

1

START MANAGING PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

Claims for mental health injuries are up, and new regulations focus on preventing hazards such as bullying, stress and sexual harassment. Learn more in our Executive Director's column on page 3.

2

CHECK YOUR CYBER SECURITY

Protect your business operations with advice from Business Tasmania on page 20.

3

SORT OUT YOUR FIRST AID

Make sure your first aid supplies, equipment and personnel are adequate for the hazards at your workplace. Our Advisors explain how on page 19.

4

BOOK YOUR HOLIDAYS FOR NEXT YEAR!

Pencil in the public holidays for 2023. See all the details on page 18.

Work Safe
TASMANIA