

# Safety Fundamentals

A small business toolkit



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



### Your commitment

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



### Consultation

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



### Managing risks

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



### Reporting

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



### Worker capability

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



### Safe working environment

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










### Workers' compensation and recovery at work

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

# Checklist

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

 <p><b>Your commitment</b></p>	<p>Do you demonstrate WHS as a priority in your business?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Does everyone understand their WHS responsibilities?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Unsure  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you have what you need to meet your WHS responsibilities?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Unsure  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Are WHS issues fixed promptly?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>All <b>green</b>? Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red</b>? You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Your commitment</b> section in the toolkit – page 2</p>	
 <p><b>Consultation</b></p>	<p>Do you have an agreed consultation arrangement to discuss WHS?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes, it's working well  <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it isn't working well  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you involve workers in WHS decisions?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Always  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> Never         </p>	<p>Do you consult with other businesses, where you share WHS responsibilities?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Always  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> Never         </p>	<p>All <b>green</b>? Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red</b>? You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Consultation</b> section in the toolkit – page 4</p>		
 <p><b>Managing risks</b></p>	<p>Have health and safety risks been identified?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Some  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you have the right controls to manage these risks?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Unsure  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you regularly review your risks and controls?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Are your tasks and the way you use equipment designed to be safe?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Unsure  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>All <b>green</b>? Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red</b>? You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Managing risks</b> section in the toolkit – page 6</p>	
 <p><b>Reporting</b></p>	<p>Do you have a procedure to report WHS issues?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it is not working well  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you encourage reporting of WHS issues?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Always  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> Never         </p>	<p>Do you act on these reports?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Always  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> Never         </p>	<p>All <b>green</b>? Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red</b>? You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Reporting</b> section in the toolkit – page 11</p>		
 <p><b>Worker capability</b></p>	<p>Do you induct your workers?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you provide them with WHS information that suits their individual needs?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you make sure they are trained and competent?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you provide your workers with the right supervision?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>All <b>green</b>? Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red</b>? You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Worker capability</b> section in the toolkit –page 13</p>	
 <p><b>Safe working environment</b></p>	<p>Does the design and layout of your workplace allow tasks to be done safely?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Unsure  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you maintain your workplace so that it is healthy and safe?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you protect your workers from mental health risks at work?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Sometimes  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you have emergency plans and are they tested?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Yes, but not tested  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>All <b>green</b>? Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red</b>? You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Safe working environment</b> section in the toolkit – page 16</p>	
 <p><b>Workers' compensation and recovery at work</b></p>	<p>Is your Workers' compensation insurance policy up to date? Does it reflect the type of business?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it doesn't reflect the type of business  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Is information about how to notify an injury and make a workers' compensation claims always available to your workers?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it is not up to date  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you have a return to work program?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Unsure  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>Do you have an injury reporting system?*</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Yes, but workers don't use it  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>On returning to work, are workers given suitable work and do they have a recovery at work plan?</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Yes  <input type="radio"/> Yes, but it doesn't always work well  <input type="radio"/> No         </p>	<p>All <b>green</b>? Great. Keep it up. Any <b>orange</b> or <b>red</b>? You still have work to do. Go to the <b>Workers' compensation and recovery at work</b> section in the toolkit – page 20</p>

\* These questions may not apply if you are a sole trader, unless you work with sub-contractors, labour hire workers, volunteers, work experience, etc.

# Introduction

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Work health and safety is everyone's business.

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

Every year, workplace incidents take lives in Queensland.

Complying with WHS legislation helps to save lives and reduces injuries and illnesses to Queensland workers.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) is the state's WHS regulator.

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

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

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

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










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

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

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

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# Your commitment

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## What does good management commitment look like?

Good management commitment means:

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

Responsibility for safety starts at the top. By demonstrating your commitment to safety, your workers will see that you're serious about protecting their wellbeing. Some of the benefits of being committed to safety are below:

- Your workers are among your greatest assets, so it makes good business sense to protect them.
- Showing that you're committed to safety will help build a positive workplace culture.
- If your workers see that work health and safety is important to you, they're more likely to follow safety procedures and raise safety issues.

## Lead by example

Leaders in an organisation set the tone for workers to follow. Leading by example will set the right tone and can include:

- showing interest and enthusiasm about your workers' health, safety and wellbeing
- leading health and safety activities in the workplace
- participating in safety training and wearing personal protective equipment if required
- not taking short cuts – always follow your work health and safety procedures.

## Demonstrate that health and safety is a priority

If work health and safety isn't seen to be priority of yours, it's unlikely it will be a priority for your workers. Demonstrate the importance of safety by:

- encouraging open discussion about work health and safety and opportunities for improvement
- making health and safety a key and regular topic at team meetings
- giving positive feedback to individuals and teams for good safety performance
- explaining and demonstrating that getting the job done isn't more important than worker safety.

## Build health and safety into your business plans

Often safety is seen as an add-on or separate to the day-to-day operations of an organisation and when the pressure is on it gets forgotten about. Building safety into your standard processes and procedures will make sure it's central to the organisation's operations. You can achieve this by:

- having a clear health and safety policy
- setting business goals/targets for health and safety performance
- including health and safety responsibilities in people's job descriptions



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- implementing procedures and processes for working safely.

## Allocate resources to health and safety

Things won't get done if there aren't resources available to do them. Safety is no different. This means:

- making sure your workers understand their health and safety responsibilities
- giving your workers time to perform their work safely and participate in training and meetings
- allocating work time to your workers with special safety roles
- making sure your workers have the equipment they need to work safely.

## Make sure everyone at the workplace knows their responsibilities

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

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

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

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

## Fix problems quickly

Things that get fixed quickly are seen to be important. You can do this for safety by:

- monitoring your business' safety performance
- taking effective action immediately to fix problems
- correcting poor or unsafe worker behaviour fairly, respectfully, and quickly
- understanding why workers are not complying with your procedures and make changes to your processes where possible.

## Commit to action - [write your plan for your commitment](#)

# Consultation

## Consultation



### What does good consultation look like?

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

### Why consult?

Having a conversation with your workers lets you gain first-hand knowledge and experience that will help make your business safer and healthier. Your workers are directly affected by your decisions and can often see things that you may overlook. Consultation enables you to share information and take workers' views and suggestions into account.

There are also legal requirements for employers to consult with workers and others in the [Work Health and Safety Act \(QLD\) 2011](#).

### Benefits of consultation

Consulting with your workers has a range of benefits including:

- getting input on hazards, risks and solutions from people who understand and do the work
- being involved in making decisions means people are more committed to implementing them
- regular communication on health and safety helps build co-operation and trust between employers and employees.

### Who should I consult?

You must consult with any workers of the business whose health and safety is likely to be affected.

#### Health and safety representatives

If you have an elected health and safety representative, they must be involved in any consultation that may affect the members of their work group.

#### Consult with other businesses

There may be times when you need to consult with other businesses. Examples of this include:

- when more than one business is operating at a workplace such as shopping centres, construction projects or multi-tenanted office buildings
- when you have contractors or labour-hire workers.





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## When should I consult?

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

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

## How to consult

You can consult with workers by:

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

Some workplaces have regular meetings of all staff, sometimes called 'toolbox talks', others establish health and safety committees or elect health and safety representatives to consult and represent safety concerns to management.

If your workplace is small and there are no health and safety representatives, then meetings or face-to-face discussions may be the best way to consult.

However you decide to consult in your workplace, make sure you and your workers agree on the process and all your workers know the consultation processes.

## Commit to action - [write your plan for your consultation](#)

# Managing risks

## Managing risks



### What does good risk management look like?

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

In every work environment, there are hazards that could cause your workers harm. The word risk describes how likely that harm is to happen, and how severe that harm could be.

Some risks are obvious, like the risk of falls from an unmarked ledge or burns from a hot oven. Other risks are harder to see, like muscle strain from repetitive work activities or the stress caused by bullying.

### What are my risk management responsibilities?

Your business must have a clear process in place to eliminate or minimise risks to your workers. There are two key reasons why:

1. Managing and reducing risks prevents incidents before they happen, protecting your workers' safety and productivity.
2. Taking steps to manage risks is a condition of doing business in Queensland. If an incident occurs, you'll need to show the Regulator that you've used an effective risk management process. This responsibility is covered by your primary duty of care in the [Work Health and Safety Act \(QLD\) 2011](#).

### How can I design a safer workplace?

A great way to reduce the number of risks in your business is to design your place of work, work tasks and the way you use equipment to be safe. This will mean you're less likely to introduce risks that then have to be managed.

For example, when designing your workplace, make sure:

- work flows smoothly and sequentially
- workstations are adjustable to suit workers of different sizes and capabilities
- people are physically separated from moving vehicles and dangerous equipment
- health and safety are considered in plans for relocations, refurbishments or when introducing new engineering systems.

When designing tasks and processes, give your workers:

- manageable workloads
- reasonable hours
- appropriate duties - e.g. avoid excessive manual handling or repetitive tasks
- sufficient time to perform their required tasks.

When using new equipment, make sure:

- the item is fit-for-purpose

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- equipment is safely guarded
  - it's stored correctly
  - workers know how to use it safely
  - it's regularly maintained
  - you get safety data sheets and operating manuals from your designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers.

## When should I manage risks?

Risk management is an ongoing process. You should review risks on a regular basis, or whenever there are changes in the way your business works. Triggers for risk management are:

- starting or buying a business
- changing work practices, procedures or the work environment
- buying new or used equipment
- using new substances
- planning to improve productivity or reduce costs
- responding to new information about workplace risks
- responding to workplace incidents (even if they have caused no injury)
- dealing with concerns raised by workers, health and safety representatives or others at the workplace
- as required by the WHS Regulation for specific hazards.

## How do I manage risks in my business?

To protect your workers from injury, all Queensland employers should follow a four-step risk management process. This will help you identify hazards, assess risks, find ways to control those risks, and then make sure those controls keep working.

Following this simple process will help your business meet its responsibilities under work health and safety laws.

## Four steps to managing risk

### Step 1. Identify hazards

The first step to managing risk in your business is to identify any hazards.

A hazard is anything that could cause harm to people. Some hazards are part of the work process, like machinery, stairs or toxic chemicals. Others are failures, like broken equipment or human error.

Common work hazards include:

- manual tasks with heavy loads or repetitive movements
- machinery or equipment with moving parts
- hazardous chemicals like acids or dusts
- hot or cold temperature extremes
- psychosocial hazards like work-related stress.

Learn more about [work-related hazards](#).



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## How to identify hazards at work

Put together a full list of all hazards in your place of work by:

### Inspecting your business

Walk through your place of work, looking at the environment and work processes, like how workers are using equipment or chemicals. You should also record any general housekeeping issues.

Don't forget hazards you can't see, or that could affect your workers' health over a longer period of time. These could be things like workplace bullying or shift work causing stress or fatigue.

### Talking to your workers

Discuss your workers' health and safety concerns, near misses or unreported incidents. You could also use a confidential survey to identify problems that are less obvious, like workplace bullying.

### Reviewing available information

Look at information from a range of sources to identify other hazards. Your sources should include:

- information from regulators, industry associations, unions and technical specialists
- workers' compensation data for your organisation and your industry
- plant, process and chemical-specific information in instructions and datasheets from manufacturers and suppliers
- business-specific information from your own records, including any recorded incidents, sick leave or worker complaints.

### Step 2. Assess the risk

Next, you'll need to assess the level of risk posed by each hazard. This information will help you choose the best ways to control that risk.

You can use this risk assessment template to guide you and record your assessments.

## When should I perform a risk assessment?

Many common hazards already have well-known risks and controls, such as slip and trip hazards. If you can quickly eliminate the risk from these common hazards (e.g. removing trip hazards from a walkway), you can skip the risk assessment process. But managing risks is an ongoing process and many workplace hazards won't be obvious right away. It's best practice to complete the full risk assessment process, especially when:

- your workplace layout or practices have changed
- new equipment, materials or work processes are introduced
- there is an injury or near miss.

## How to assess risks at work

For each hazard, work out:

- the severity of harm it could cause (from discomfort to serious injury or death)
- how likely that harm is to occur (from certain to unlikely or rare)
- what controls are already in place to reduce the risk of harm
- how urgently additional action needs to be taken.

The level of risk you assess for each hazard will depend on all these factors. For example, meshing gears in an enclosed gearbox can cause severe crushing injuries. However, this injury can only happen when the gearbox is open during maintenance. This means the risk during normal operation may be low – but during maintenance the risk may be quite high.





### Step 3. Control the risks

Once you know the risks in your place of work, you need to protect workers by controlling the risks effectively.

A control is any measure that reduces a risk. Sometimes, a single control might be enough to eliminate a risk, like removing a tripping hazard from the work environment. Other risks might need several control measures.

You should choose the controls that either remove the hazard or reduce the risk most effectively. The law requires you to implement controls that minimise risk as far as reasonably practicable.

Always include your workers in any decisions about risk control. Their experience will help you choose control measures that work on paper and in practice.

### How to control risks at work

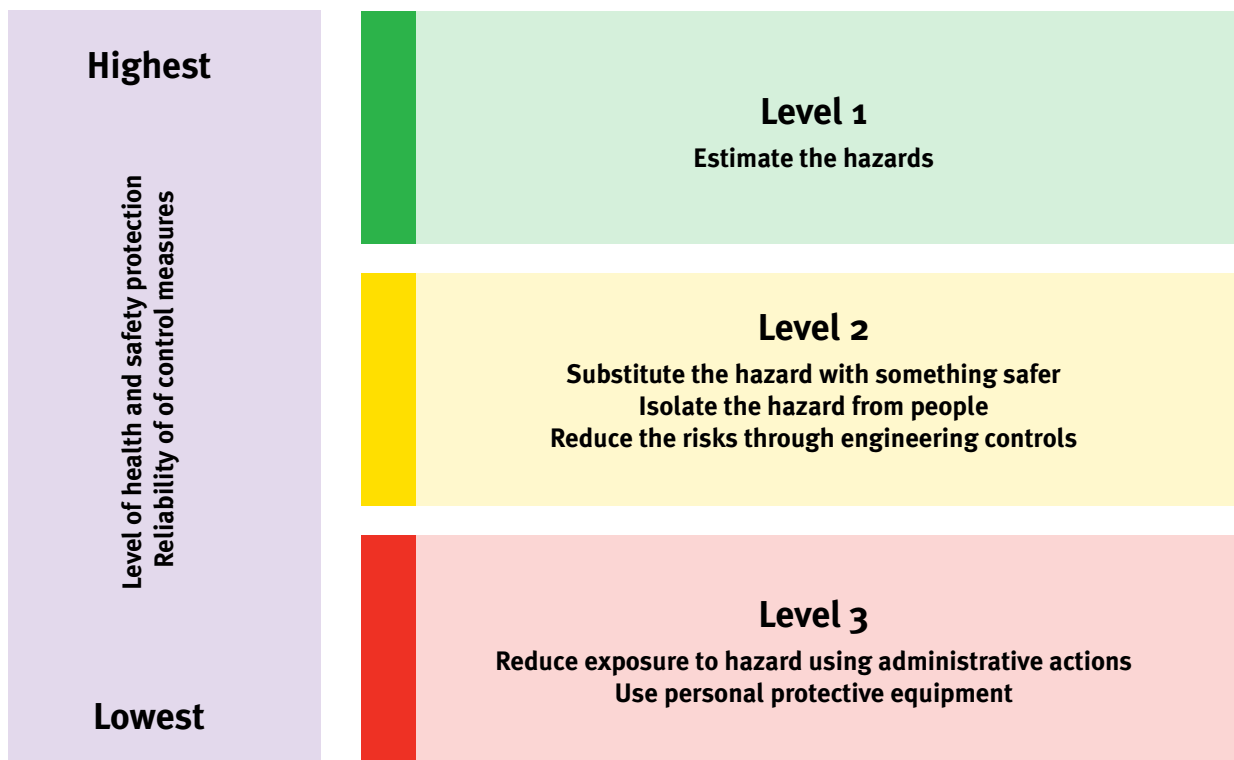
Use the hierarchy of controls to help you decide how to eliminate and reduce risks in your place of work. Always choose controls from the highest level you can, while balancing the unique circumstances in your business.

Use the practical advice in the [How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2011](#) to help you develop effective controls in your place of work.

### Understanding the hierarchy of controls

The hierarchy of controls ranks types of control methods from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest. It's a step-by-step approach to eliminating or reducing risks.

You must work through the hierarchy of controls when managing risks, with the aim of eliminating the hazard, which is the most effective control.



Level 1 controls eliminate the hazard, removing the risk completely. For example, you can eliminate the risk of a fall from height by doing the work at ground level.



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Level 2 controls eliminate as many of the risks associated with the hazard as possible. These controls include:

- substituting the hazard for something safer, like replacing solvent-based paints with water-based ones
- isolating the hazard by physically separating people, like installing rails around exposed edges
- using engineering controls, like trolleys, hoists and safety switches.

Level 3 controls rely on human behaviour and supervision and are the least effective way to reduce risk. You should only use level 3 controls as a last resort, or in addition to other control measures. They include:

- setting up administrative processes, like procedures, rules and warning signs
- using personal protective equipment, like ear muffs, respirators or protective eye wear.

#### **Step 4. Reviewing controls**

Risk management should be an ongoing process in your business, and you should review your control measures regularly. Don't wait for something to go wrong.

In some situations, WHS legislation requires you to review controls. These are:

- when you become aware a control measure is not effectively controlling a risk
- before a change that might give rise to a new risk
- when you identify a new hazard or risk
- when consultation with workers indicates a review is needed
- after a health and safety representative requests a review.

#### **How do I review my business' control measures?**

You can repeat the 'identify hazards' step of the risk management process to review your existing controls. If you find problems, you should then work through the full risk management process to develop more effective ways to manage risk.

The [How to manage work health and safety risks Code of Practice 2011](#) includes a list of questions to help you identify any issues.

#### **What sort of records should I keep?**

You should keep a written record of all your business's risk management decisions and activities. This will make future risk assessments simpler and easier. If an incident occurs, well-kept records will also help you demonstrate that you've met your duty of care for your workers.

You should record:

- the types of hazards, the assessed risks and the chosen control methods (including any hazard checklists and worksheets you've used)
- how and when you implemented, monitored and reviewed the control measures
- the names of any people you consulted with
- records of training
- any plans for changes.

There are specific record-keeping requirements for some hazards, like hazardous chemicals and carcinogens.

## **Commit to action - [write your plan for managing risks](#)**

# Reporting

## What does good safety reporting look like?

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

Reporting helps you identify:

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

## Reporting



## Why have a safety reporting process?

A good safety reporting process:

- encourages your workers to speak up about issues and potential issues
- clarifies responsibilities for reporting incidents and hazards
- motivates everyone at work to join in
- provides regular discussions about health and safety and opportunities to join in
- helps improve your safe work procedures and training
- reports back on the actions taken to resolve issues
- makes it clear what the law requires in case of a serious injury, serious illness or death at your workplace.

## What to report?

Many of your workplace health and safety issues will be minor and can be resolved without the need for documentation. But, when there is a significant safety issue, you need to keep records or safety reports that include all the details.

Some things you should encourage workers to report include:

- injuries, illnesses and fatalities
- near misses
- damaged or faulty equipment
- housekeeping issues
- health and safety hazards
- suggestions for improvement.

**By encouraging the reporting of hazards, near misses, and maintenance problems, you can help stop incidents from occurring.**

**Importantly, some injuries, illnesses and incidents must be reported to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland by law.**

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## Where do I start?

Involve your workers when developing a safety reporting process.

Together, you should decide:

- what issues to report
- how to report them
- who to report the issues to
- how to fix issues.

Your process doesn't need to be complicated. You could use an online form or place a dedicated notepad or whiteboard in your lunchroom.

The most important thing is to let your workers know that you are listening and willing to act when needed.

## How do I act upon reports?

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

## When do I need to report an incident to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland?

Workplace fatalities and certain serious incidents must be reported to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland within a certain timeframe.

If an employee is injured, there are also reporting requirements to your [workers' compensation](#) insurer.

Learn about your [legal responsibility to report health and safety incidents](#).

## Commit to action - [write your plan for reporting](#)



# Worker capability

## What does good worker capability look like?

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

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

**As an employer, it is your responsibility to give your workers the information, training and supervision they need to stay safe at work.**

## What are my training and supervision responsibilities?

Your business must provide workplace health and safety training to your workers.

You need to provide your workers with information about:

- potential risks associated with their work
- the safety policies and procedures you have in place
- how to work safely
- how to deal with emergencies.

The information you provide must be easy to understand.

This responsibility is covered by your primary duty of care in the [Work Health and Safety Act \(QLD\) 2011](#).

## What types of training should I use?

Training can be a mix of formal and informal processes. The type of training needed will vary depending upon the level of risk involved in doing the work.

Some workers will need formal training to do their work safely. This includes:

- operating high-risk equipment, such as a forklift or crane
- working in high-risk places, such as a construction site.

Other workers may only need informal on-the-job training such as buddy training. Make sure your workers can do their jobs safely by following these three steps.

### 1. Provide induction and workplace safety training for new workers

Before they start work, you must give new workers training to help them become familiar with their tasks, their place of work, and the people working around them.

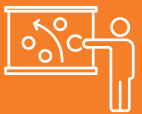
This helps them understand how to do their work safely and lets them know that you take safety seriously.

#### What to include in your induction

Induction topics should include:

- [workers' responsibilities](#) regarding health and safety
- what [hazards and risks](#) are in the workplace and how to control them
- safe work procedures and how to use equipment safely
- emergency procedures, such as how to evacuate, assembly points, exit locations and fire wardens

Worker  
capability



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- where to find the first aid kit.

You should also give them contact details for people with health and safety responsibilities such as:

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

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

Use a checklist to make the induction easier and more thorough. Keep the list on file as a record of employee training.

### **Returning workers**

Workers returning after a long absence should repeat the induction process to make sure they are aware of any changes to health and safety processes and procedures.

Use our [induction checklist](#) to help you plan your induction process.

## **2. Train workers for their specific tasks**

Your workers must have supervised, hands-on training in the tasks they'll perform — before they start a job.

Train your workers to:

- perform tasks safely
- operate machines and equipment safely
- use and maintain any personal protective equipment
- follow safe work procedures.

Make sure each worker demonstrates that they can:

- follow the safe work procedures
- perform their work tasks safely and without direct supervision.

## **3. Provide ongoing training and supervision**

The most important part of training is following up. Make sure you:

- regularly observe your workers to check they're still following safe work procedures
- conduct informal discussions or toolbox talks with them to talk about specific health and safety issues
- encourage workers to provide feedback.

Newer workers will need closer and more regular supervision than experienced workers. Also, consider the requirements of those with disabilities, cultural differences or challenges with reading and writing.



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### **Training records**

Keep training records so you know who has been trained, how they performed and what further training is required.

The law requires that you keep training records for certain tasks, such as working in confined spaces and working with certain types of hazardous chemicals. However, it is good practice to maintain records of all training including induction.

## **Commit to action - write your plan for worker capability**

**Worker  
capability**



# Safe working environment

## What does a safe working environment look like?

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

A safe and healthy work environment doesn't just happen—it's created by working together. A safe and healthy work environment is good for worker health, safety and wellbeing, business sustainability and the economy.

While poor physical work environments can put workers at risk of physical and mental ill-health, your work environment is more than your physical surroundings. It includes the way that you do your work, the materials and equipment that you work with and also the emotional and psychological demands on workers.

## Physical work environment

The physical environment workers work in can have a big impact on their health and safety so it should be well designed and laid out. This includes:

- well designed floor surfaces, for example non-slip surfaces
- walkways are clear of cables, wires and other obstructions
- changes in floor height are clearly marked and physical barriers installed
- work being performed at a comfortable height, so workers don't have to bend, twist, reach or squat a lot
- heavy objects being lifted and moved using mechanical devices like cranes and trolleys
- physical separation between people and moving vehicles
- the workplace being well lit and having good ventilation
- basic amenities like drinking water, toilets and hand washing facilities.

To find out more about the requirements of the physical work environment and managing manual tasks, see the [Managing the work environment and facilities Code of Practice](#) and the [Hazardous manual tasks Code of Practice](#).

## Equipment and PPE

Having the right tools for the job is essential for working safely and efficiently. The best way to ensure equipment is safe is to assess risks new equipment will create and control those risks before buying or hiring it.

Equipment you already have needs to be managed as well. This includes:

- guarding moving parts that people could come in contact with
- connecting electrical equipment to a safety switch
- protecting workers from the noise equipment makes

Safe working environment



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- ensuring the controls of the equipment are easy to understand
  - regular maintenance
  - training workers to use any equipment they need to operate.

See the [Managing risks of plant in the workplace Code of Practice](#) for more information.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is very common in workplaces but needs to be selected carefully and used in the right way. Choosing the wrong type of PPE or using it incorrectly will mean it won't provide the protection workers need.

## Harmful chemicals

Many workers use chemicals every day at work that could potentially harm their health and safety.

There are workplace health and safety laws that clearly outline how to handle these substances and what you must do to keep workers healthy and safe.

## Remote work

You must also consider the safety of workers, no matter where they are working. Make sure that:

- there are ways to communicate with remote or isolated workers or people who are working from home
- there is suitable accommodation for workers who are travelling or staying away from home
- your workers are supported to maintain a safe work environment when they're working from home or on the road.

## Mental health risks

Workers and employers need to understand and manage the impact of psychological hazards at work.

Psychological injuries at work are typically caused by worker exposure to bullying, fatigue, stress and violence. It is important that workers and managers are aware of these issues in the work environment and how they impact on mental health and business outcomes.

Some simple strategies can make a big difference though, for example:

- train managers to improve their understanding of mental health and increase their confidence and skills to support workers
- develop a policy to prevent and manage bullying and harassment
- don't overload people with too much work
- match workers to jobs they have the right skills for
- clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations
- have an open-door policy and genuine conversations about mental health with your workers
- connect workers with independent, publicly available support services.

Learn more about how to build a [mentally healthy workplace](#) and keep your workers healthy and safe.

## Workers of all ages are valued and included

With more people working for longer there is a growing diversity in the ages of workers. A healthy and safe work environment provides support for workers of all ages.

Learn how to build a healthy and safe environment for an [ageing workforce](#).

Learn how you can support your [young workers](#) and lay the foundations for healthy and safe working lives.

Safe working environment



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## General health and wellbeing

A healthy and safe work environment also considers workers' general health and wellbeing. Businesses can't always control the health risks their workers face, but recognising health and wellbeing risk factors at work will help ensure workers stay healthy and reduce the number of workplace injuries.

## Maintain a healthy and safe workplace

A safe work environment won't stay that way by itself. You should:

- clean spills immediately
- keep walkways clear
- store work materials neatly
- remove waste
- replace consumables, like soap and toilet paper
- get electrical equipment tested regularly by a qualified electrician
- replace damaged tools, equipment, furniture and fixtures.

Also consider how maintenance and cleaning work is done. It is important that:

- maintenance and cleaning tasks are identified and planned
- workers know how to perform required maintenance and cleaning tasks
- protections are in place if maintenance or cleaning tasks must be where it's usually too dangerous to work
- checks are in place to ensure maintenance and cleaning tasks have been completed adequately.

## Emergency plans

A safe work environment is prepared for emergencies with everyone aware of their roles and responsibilities. Think about the different types of emergencies that could occur and plan your response for each. An emergency could be:

- a fire
- an explosion
- a gas leak
- a chemical spill
- a medical emergency
- a natural disaster
- a bomb threat or violence.

Your emergency plan depends on the:

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

Document your emergency plans, train your workers in them and rehearse emergency responses at regular intervals.



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## First aid

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

Additional first aid requirements vary depending on the nature of the work, type of hazards, workplace size and location, as well as the number of workers. To identify your requirements, see the [First aid in the workplace Code of Practice](#).

## Commit to action - [write your plan for a safe working environment](#)

Safe working environment



# Workers' compensation and recovery at work

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

You:

- have a current workers' compensation insurance policy that reflects the nature of your business
- update your insurance policy when your business grows or changes
- display the 'If you get injured at work' poster at your workplace
- keep a record of all work-related injuries or illnesses in a register of injuries
- notify WorkCover Queensland of all workplace injuries within eight business days
- notify Workplace Health and Safety Queensland immediately on 1300 362 128 if there's a death, serious injury or illness, or potentially dangerous incident
- work with WorkCover Queensland, your injured worker and their treating medical providers to develop a rehabilitation and return to work plan
- maintain contact with your injured worker and support them to 'recover at work'.

If you have a business in Queensland and employ workers, you must have a current workers' compensation insurance policy, an injury reporting system and a rehabilitation and return to work program.

## Workers' compensation insurance

An accident insurance policy covers employers for the cost of work-related injuries. It also provides injured workers with compensation, medical costs and other benefits to support them in their recovery and return to work.

## What must you do?

Unless you are a licensed self-insurer, you must take out an accident insurance policy with WorkCover Queensland to insure your workers. This is required by the [Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003](#).

Your insurance policy needs to reflect the type of business you run and the total wages you pay your workers. If your business grows or changes over time, you must update your policy.

## When an injury happens

Keep a record of all injuries and illnesses – even minor ones that don't need a workers' compensation claim. A good safety reporting process within your business will ensure you know about all injuries at your workplace and have all the details you need to provide to your insurer if a claim is lodged.

Your register of injuries should include:

- injured worker/s name
- worker's age
- worker's occupation at the time of the incident
- date and time of the incident
- task being performed
- nature of injury or illness
- cause of the injury or illness
- any steps you've taken to try and prevent further incidents or illnesses

Workers'  
compensation  
and recovery  
at work





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- sign off by the injured worker (if possible) and their supervisor that the details above are accurate.

You are also responsible for reporting all work related injuries where an employee may be able to access workers' compensation. A [form](#) has been developed to help you report these types of injuries.

Injuries and illnesses should be reported to a:

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

Injured workers should also lodge a claim with WorkCover Queensland if they are likely to incur expenses as a result of their injury.

## What must you do?

Train your workers to use your injury reporting system and how to lodge a workers' compensation claim.

When a workplace injury or illness happens, you must:

- provide first aid straight away
- make sure the injured person gets the right care, including emergency transportation if necessary
- tell your worker to let their health care provider know they were injured at work
- record the details of the injury or illness in your register of injuries
- let WorkCover Queensland know about the injury or illness within eight business days
- call Workplace Health and Safety Queensland straight away on 1300 362 128 if there is a dangerous incident, or if the injury or illness is serious or results in death.

## Return to work for injured workers

You are responsible for helping a worker return to work if they have experienced an injury. This process should start as soon as you become aware that they have been injured.

You should contact your worker and ask about their injury as soon as possible. The worker is more likely to return to work and have a successful recovery if you maintain contact with them during their recovery.

The insurer will develop a rehabilitation and return to work plan for the worker. You are responsible for identifying suitable duties available in the workplace for the worker. It is important to remember that workers do not have to be fully recovered from their injury to perform suitable duties.

Each worker will have individual recovery needs. Workers may experience the same injury, but the impact of the injury can be very different. Have regular conversations with the worker to make sure you know how the injury has affected them and what you can offer to support their recovery.

*Did you know: Injured workers who are offered and participate in suitable duties are likely to recover more quickly than those who don't.*

## What must you do?

If your business meets [the criteria](#), you must have rehabilitation policy and procedures and appoint a rehabilitation and return to work coordinator.

You must document your rehabilitation policy and procedures within six months of setting up your workplace and starting to employ workers. You also need to review your rehabilitation policy and procedures every three years and keep them up to date.

Workers'  
compensation  
and recovery  
at work



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They should detail how you manage rehabilitation within your workplace and refer to the standard outlined in the [Guidelines for Standard for Rehabilitation 2nd Edition](#). These guidelines have been developed to help you understand your important role in helping a worker return to their normal job.

If you have a worker who has experienced a work-related injury or illness, you can help them return to work by:

- contacting the worker as soon as possible
- advising the worker that they can return to work even if they haven't recovered 100 per cent
- modifying the worker's hours and tasks to suit their capacity
- keeping the worker up to date with what's happening at work
- involving the worker in each stage of return to work planning.

## **Commit to action - [write your plan for workers' compensation and recovery at work](#)**

Workers'  
compensation  
and recovery  
at work



# Action plan

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

For more information, call us on 1300 362 128 or visit [WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](http://WorkSafe.qld.gov.au)

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

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

Your commitment						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

Consultation						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments



Managing risk						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

Reporting						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

Worker capability						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

Safe working environment						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments

Workers' compensation and recovery at work						
Task	Action required	Responsible	Resources required	Timeframe	Date completed	Comments



# Hazard/incident report form

Use this form in your workplace to report health and safety hazards and incidents within your workplace.

## Hazard/incident

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

## Where is the hazard located in the workplace?

## When was the hazard identified?

Date:	Time:	<input type="checkbox"/>	am	<input type="checkbox"/>	pm
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## Recommended action to fix hazard/incident:

(List any suggestions you may have for reducing or eliminating the problem - for example re-design mechanical devices, update procedures, improve training, maintenance work)

## Date submitted to manager:

Date:	Time:	<input type="checkbox"/>	am	<input type="checkbox"/>	pm
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## Action taken

Has the hazard/incident been acknowledged by management?

Yes  No

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

## Do you consider the hazard/incident fixed?

Yes  No

Name:	Position:
Signature:	Date:



# Need more help?

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Visit [WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](http://WorkSafe.qld.gov.au) or call us on 1300 362 128

## Need more help?

### What do you need?

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#### **Templates and forms**

Get tools to help you implement your action plan, including an induction checklist, **hazard/incident report form**, training record register and register of injuries/illnesses.

#### **Advice on a specific issue**

Find **codes of practice**, **safety alerts** and **guides**.

#### **Licences and registrations**

Apply for a licence. Register your machinery and equipment.

#### **Education**

Attend an event or webinar.

#### **Free on-site support**

Ask for a visit to your workplace for tailored advice.

#### **Recognition for your effort**

Enter the annual Queensland Safe Work and Return to Work Awards.

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# Notifying Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

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Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is the regulator for work health and safety.

Call **1300 362 128** immediately if there is a serious injury, illness, death or potentially dangerous incident at your workplace.

You must also:

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

Penalties apply for not notifying incidents.

To find out more, visit [WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) or call **1300 362 128**.

## Disclaimer

This publication does not constitute a formal occupational health and safety assessment and should not be regarded as such. Should a user have any specific health issues or other occupational health and safety concerns, a formal occupational health and safety assessment should be requested. Compliance with the information or material in this publication does not relieve users of their legislative obligations. Any information or material given is done on the basis that users will make their own independent assessment of what action is necessary to ensure compliance with legislation.

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