



WELCOME *to the* **WORKPLACE**

*A work health
and safety guide
for new workers*



PLEASE NOTE

This information is for guidance only and is not to be taken as an expression of the law. It should be read in conjunction with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* and any other relevant legislation. To view, go to the WorkSafe Tasmania website at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au

Under these laws, the term 'Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking' or 'PCBU' is used rather than 'employer'. However, for simplicity, we have used employer in this guide.

We welcome your feedback on this guide. Send to: wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au

HOW TO USE WELCOME TO THE WORKPLACE

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Welcome to the Workplace is for new workers of any age or situation:

- // someone starting their first job either full-time, part-time or casual
- // someone re-entering the workforce after a break for study or family commitments
- // someone going to a new department, workplace or location within the same company
- // a trainee or apprentice
- // someone changing careers
- // a work experience student, vocational education and training (VET) student or a student doing workplace learning programs while still attending school.

Mention the term 'new worker' and many people think of someone straight out of school. As you can see, that's not always the case.

What's this guide about?

Welcome to the Workplace introduces some of the work health and safety aspects of being a new worker.

Both you and your employer (in the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 they are called 'Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking' or PCBU) have important roles and responsibilities for protecting the health and safety of yourself and of others while you're at work. This guide will tell you about these. There's also information about wages and conditions of your employment.

Keep Welcome to the Workplace as a useful reference to these issues.

Your employer or supervisor may work through this information with you, perhaps in a staff meeting or training session.



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IMPORTANT TIPS FOR NEW WORKERS

This section gives you some pointers for settling into your new workplace.

WELCOME TO THE WORKPLACE

As a new worker, you're probably full of nerves and excitement. You're probably eager to fit in and impress your new boss and workmates too.

There's a lot to learn when you start a new job. Chances are your workplace will feel a little strange and different. It's often difficult trying to remember everyone's name let alone what they do and where they fit in the workplace.

Maybe there are tools, equipment and chemicals you're not familiar with. Perhaps you're unsure exactly how to do your work tasks and you haven't had any training or information yet.

You may also be reluctant to ask questions or raise any concerns you might have about work health and safety. After all, you don't want to look like a troublemaker or like you can't do your job.

All these factors can actually put you and your co-workers at a greater risk of suffering injury or illness at work.

TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF BEING A NEW WORKER

Here are some pointers to get off to the right start in your new job, and make life a little easier. Some are courtesy. Some may be covered by your employer in the induction or training meetings that introduce you to your new workplace. If they aren't, ask your employer, your supervisor, or your new workmates.

Some are related to work health and safety, so think about the reasons for doing these and the dangerous consequences if you don't.

If you're unsure of anything, ask. Remember the only stupid question is the one that isn't asked.

- // Find out your work hours. Arriving late and leaving early probably won't win you any points.
- // Find out what people would like you to call them. It may not be right for you to call the boss by their nickname!
- // Find out how to let your boss or supervisor know if you're sick or not coming in to work. Do they prefer to speak to you in a phone call? Or is it okay to send a text?
- // Check your clothing, footwear or uniform requirements.
- // Find out if you need to wear an identification badge or security pass or carry a security key.
- // Remember confidentiality. Some information is 'for the workplace only'.



- // Watch out for the office gossip or politics.
- // Find out about tea breaks and rest breaks.
- // Find out your workplace's smoking policy and obey the laws about smoking in the workplace. Find out which areas are smoking zones.
- // Find out which areas are eating zones.
- // Find out if you need to wash up your own lunch or tea things (most workplaces have an unwritten rule: 'you make a mess, you clean it up'). Find out about the tea room roster.
- // Find out if you should bring your own mug and even your own tea, coffee, sugar or milk. Maybe there's a tea fund or coffee club you can contribute to.
- // Check which office equipment is okay to use. If you need to borrow anything from anyone, make sure you return it how you found it.
- // Find out if your workplace has rules about using your computer tablets, playing computer games or surfing the net.
- // Find out if your workplace has rules about making or receiving private phone calls, using your mobile or texting while you're at work.
- // Make sure your chatting doesn't distract your co-workers.
- // If you share an office or work area, ask your co-workers before you change things around.
- // Find out if there is a locker, drawer or cupboard to store your personal belongings while you're at work.
- // If you're tidying up, don't throw anything out without checking if it's important or not. You might also check where it should be filed, stored or properly disposed of.
- // Ask if it's okay for your family or friends to visit your workplace, and how they should do so.

THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

This section is about the information and training you need in work health and safety and the conditions of your employment.

INDUCTION

You should receive an induction when you start a new job. This may begin on your first day as a welcoming chat or a more formal meeting. You'll learn about the company and people you work for, their business or industry, and their customers. You'll also learn about the conditions and rules of your employment, and work health and safety in your workplace.

An induction is just as important if you are working for the same company but just moving to a different department or workplace location.

After the initial meeting, most inductions continue over a period of weeks or months and are followed up with on-going training.

At your induction your employer or supervisor should tell you:

- // how work health and safety is managed in your workplace
- // your workplace's work health and safety policy and safety committee
- // any hazards and risks involved with your job, and the strategies in place to control these
- // the safe systems of work (procedures)
- // how to use, store and maintain the chemicals, equipment and personal protective equipment you'll use
- // the procedures and forms for reporting workplace hazards, accidents, near misses, injury and illness
- // the emergency procedures, exits and equipment; and the first aid facilities.
- // the conditions of your employment.

Know your physical workplace

You should be shown:

- // facilities like toilets, meal rooms, first aid rooms and kits
- // emergency procedures, exits and equipment
- // safety signs, symbols and safety controls.



Meet the people you'll work with

You should be introduced to the people you can talk to about work health and safety. These could include your:

- // supervisor
- // co-workers
- // work health and safety representative
- // employer or manager
- // fire warden
- // first aider
- // union representative.

You should also find out what level of supervision you can expect and who you are directly responsible to (if this is not your supervisor).

TRAINING

Your employer will work out what skills and knowledge you need to work safely. They will consider the skills and experience you already have and how you can build on this.

Your training will also take into account your kind of workplace, the type of work being done and the equipment you use.

You'll probably need new training if there are changes to your workplace or your tasks and responsibilities. For example, if your employer receives new information about chemicals or equipment you use, you may need more training to make sure your work health and safety knowledge and skills remain up to date.

CONDITIONS OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT

Your position description

When you start a new job you should be told what's required of you, with:

- // a job description that outlines your key tasks
- // a list of the skills and experience you need to do your job
- // an outline of how your progress will be assessed and who will assess you.

Your employer should also tell you:

- // the name of the award or registered agreement that applies to you
- // your grade or classification
- // whether you're full time, part time or casual
- // your rate of pay.

It's best that you're given this in writing.

Awards

For the most part, your workplace will be covered by a state or federal award or registered agreement. Awards contain your legal minimum entitlements for things like your wage rates, annual leave, sick leave and hours of work and termination of employment.

If you're employed by the State Government you should contact your human resources section and/or union for any queries about your award conditions.

All other workers in Tasmania with questions about their award conditions should contact Fair Work Australia on 13 13 94 and/or their human resources section or union.

Unions

It is against the law for anyone to try to prevent you from joining a union. It is also against the law for anyone to force you to join a union.

You have an absolute right to choose whether or not to belong to a union, and to do so without threat. Union members have an unqualified right to be represented by that union.

You also have the right to take part in the affairs of the union and act as a union official or representative.

It is against the law for your employer to dismiss or threaten to dismiss you, or to victimise you in your job because of your involvement with a union or union affairs. Discrimination in the workplace because of your membership, or non-membership, of a union is an offence.

To find out more about unions, call Unions Tasmania on 6234 9553 or go to www.unionstas.com.au



IT'S THE LAW!

This section tells you about work health and safety legislation: who and what it covers.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION

Work health and safety isn't just about your employer being kind or caring, they are legally required to protect your work health and safety in the workplace. If they don't they are breaking the law and can be prosecuted.

Tasmania's work health and safety legislation includes:

- ▮ *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*
- ▮ *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (this applies if you suffer a work related injury or illness).

These laws set down the rules for employers and workers to follow and are intended to improve work health and safety in the workplace.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2012, for example, makes it clear who is responsible for work health and safety. As this guide shows you, everyone is responsible for improving and protecting your work health and safety, not just your employer or supervisor but also you and your co-workers.

It's not just people in your workplace who have work health and safety obligations. Contractors and self-employed people; designers, manufacturers and installers of plant; manufacturers, importers and suppliers of substances; and people in control of workplaces must also do what's reasonably practicable to ensure work health and safety.

WHAT DO THESE LAWS COVER?

Some of the issues they cover include:

- ▮ your right to get involved in work health and safety
- ▮ the storage and handling of hazardous chemicals
- ▮ what should happen if you suffer an injury at work
- ▮ the training requirements of employers and workers
- ▮ the licences required to operate certain equipment or perform certain tasks.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

This section explains how everyone is responsible for work health and safety, not just your employer or manager, but also you and your co-workers. You'll learn how working together is an important part of improving work health and safety.

YOUR EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Your employer must provide you with the following workplace conditions and items.

A safe work environment

Making your workplace safe means your employer must identify any hazards that may be present, such as unguarded machinery, chemicals, inadequate lighting levels, and poor ventilation.

It also means making sure there's no initiation horseplay or hijinks; these can be dangerous, intimidating or stressful. Playing games with equipment, machinery and tools can also be dangerous.

Safe systems of work

These are procedures that outline the safe way of doing your work.

Safe plant and substances

Your employer must make sure that any plant, equipment or substances used in the workplace are used, stored, packaged, transported, maintained, repaired and disposed of safely.

Information

This is information that relates to your work tasks, so you understand the hazards you may be exposed to when doing them. Your employer should also tell you about any other hazards that may exist in the workplace and include you in any discussions about health and safety.

Training

Training should focus on giving you the skills and knowledge you need to do your job safely.



Supervision

You should be supervised to make sure you're doing your work safely and according to your workplace's safe work procedures.

Protective equipment

You should be provided with personal protective clothing or safety gear if there are hazards in your workplace that can't be completely removed. This includes overalls, helmets, boots or other specialised footwear, glasses and goggles, respirators and masks, gloves, and ear muffs.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

There are things you need to do to contribute to a safe workplace too. You must:

- // obey all reasonable instructions
- // follow the safe procedures for doing your job
- // use any equipment (including personal protective equipment) safely and correctly
- // not put yourself or your co-workers at risk
- // report hazards, incidents or near misses
- // work with your employer and co-workers to improve work health and safety at your workplace.

YOUR RIGHTS

Your employer's responsibilities are closely linked to your rights. As a worker, you have the right to:

- // work in a safe workplace
- // work in a safe manner
- // ask questions and raise concerns about work health and safety
- // get information, be supervised and trained
- // be involved in work health and safety.

We also recommend you read the 'Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination – Code of Practice' available at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au (search for publication number CP135).

Your right to refuse work

If you believe the work you are doing is dangerous and there is an immediate risk to your health and safety you can refuse to do the work. It is against the law for your employer to fire you for this.

The first thing you must do is tell your employer, supervisor or work health and safety representative about your concerns.

Your employer is responsible for assessing the risk and working with you to find a solution to the problem.

In the meantime your employer should give you other work to do away from the danger.

You are still entitled to the same pay and benefits you usually get unless you leave the workplace without your employer's okay or refuse to do the other work they have suggested.

WHO TO SEE ABOUT WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your supervisor

Your supervisor must provide you with information about work health and safety and show you how to do your job safely. They should make sure you understand these things by regularly checking or watching you or asking you questions.

A Health and Safety Representative (HSR):

HSR represents you and your co-workers when dealing with your employer or manager on work health and safety issues, encourages safe working practices and tells you about any work health or safety hazards that they know about.

Any worker in a workplace can request the election of an HSR. An employer who receives such a request is then obliged to facilitate the election.

An HSR has a right to be trained in their role and simply needs to request their employer to arrange the training. This training must be undertaken during normal working hours.

Health and safety committees

If the HSR or five or more workers at a workplace request the formation of a work health and safety committee then their employer is required to establish one.

This group brings managers and workers together to discuss and settle health and safety issues affecting your workplace.



Others

Your employer may also employ a work health and safety officer to oversee work health and safety at your workplace. Your human resources officer may also be helpful.

You should also know who your fire warden, first aider and union representative are.

GET TALKING

It's important to talk with people at your workplace, discuss issues and situations, and share information. Some of your co-workers will have different experiences and knowledge. As a new worker, take the opportunity to learn from them and be safe.

What can you say?

Perhaps you're unsure how to raise a work health and safety issue with your supervisor or health and safety representative. You could say or ask:

- // I don't feel safe using that equipment by myself just yet.
- // Is there training I can do so I know I'm using these chemicals safely?
- // Using that machinery makes me feel like I might hurt myself or others.
- // Could someone show me how to do this task correctly and safely?
- // Could we go through the instructions for doing this task once more?
- // I'm not sure what the safest way to do this task is.
- // What protective equipment could I use when doing this so I don't hurt myself?
- // What can I do to make sure I don't injure myself doing my work?

You can't be sacked for raising work health and safety issues. So if you don't know - ask.

What can you do?

There are ways to get involved in work health and safety in your workplace. You could:

- // talk to your co-workers and gain their support and interest in work health and safety
- // talk about your work health and safety concerns at staff meetings
- // call the Helpline on 1300 366 322 for information and facts about work health and safety issues that affect your workplace
- // leave this kind of information in your lunch room where your co-workers can read it; show it to your supervisor, work health and safety representative or committee.

WORKPLACE INJURIES

This section tells you about workplace injuries and what to do if something happens to you.

THINGS CAN GO WRONG

Despite everyone's best efforts, you can suffer injury or illness at work. As a new worker, your excitement or nervousness, lack of experience or training means you have a greater risk of being injured or becoming ill through your work.

Here are some statistics to get you thinking:

- ▮ there were 388 reported 'lost time injuries' to workers under the age of 24 in 2014
- ▮ 52% of these injured workers were male.

WHAT IS A WORKPLACE INJURY OR ILLNESS?

You can be injured:

- ▮ by the way you perform a task. For example, a store worker may strain her back moving a heavy and awkward sack of potatoes
- ▮ using tools, equipment or machinery. For example, a baker may lose a finger using a bread-slicing machine
- ▮ through your workplace's environment. For example, a welder may trip over a cord on a messy floor and break his leg.

You can become ill:

- ▮ after being exposed to chemicals and dangerous substances. For example, a garden worker may suffer poisoning after handling herbicides without using protective gloves
- ▮ because of your workplace's environment. For example, a sales assistant may suffer stress from being bullied at work.

What does a workplace injury mean?

A workplace injury or illness may mean you can't work for a while until you are better. It may mean you can't do the same kind of job again, and have to do different work. Or it may mean you can't ever work again.

A workplace injury or illness can dramatically affect your life and the lives of your friends and family too.

Do you go fishing, play sports, run with the dogs along the beach? Hang clothes on the line, mow the lawn, do the vacuuming? What about your love life or your marriage? A workplace injury can affect how you do all these things and more.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU'RE INJURED AT WORK

- // Get first aid as soon as possible.
- // Tell someone with authority in your workplace as soon as possible. You must do this otherwise any claim you put in as a result of this incident may be disputed. If your workplace has a book for reporting incidents, it should be noted in this.
- // Get a workers compensation medical certificate from the doctor who treats you (they should produce this for you).
- // Ask your employer for a workers compensation claim form.
- // Fill in the details in the worker section of the claim form.
- // Remove and keep the brown copy of the medical certificate and the claim form.
- // Give your employer the rest of the claim form, the medical certificate and any accounts for treatment.

If you decide to make a claim, and it is your choice if you do or don't, then you should do so as soon as possible, but at least within six months of when your injury occurred.

Your employer is then legally required to complete their section of the claim form and pass it to their workers compensation insurer. They have five days to do this. The insurer will then process the claim.

If your medical certificate states you cannot attend work normally your employer must start making weekly payments to you the next pay day if possible or at least within 14 days of receiving the claim form. These weekly payments must start even if your employer disputes your claim.

This process applies if your employer is a self-insurer too.

WHAT'S INJURY MANAGEMENT?

Injury management aims to get you back to a fit state of work as quickly and safely as possible after suffering a workplace injury or illness. Doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists and/or other health service providers, rehabilitation providers and case managers may work with you and your employer to achieve this.

To help this process along, make sure you:

- // maintain regular contact with your employer while you're recovering
- // are involved in developing and reviewing your return to work plan with your employer and health service providers, including identifying suitable alternative duties
- // go to all your medical appointments
- // participate in the physical therapies recommended by your medical advisor
- // try to do any suitable alternative work duties. Remember to focus on what you can do (not what you can't do). Your employer must consult with the rehabilitation provider and medical service provider treating you before proposing any alternative duties.

If you are on a return to work plan try to make your medical appointments outside the hours of the plan. However this is not always possible, so talk with your employer about the best arrangement. You should not be penalised if you need to attend appointments for rehabilitation treatment for any workplace injury or illness during your working hours.

DEALING WITH DANGER

This section gives you an over view of managing and dealing with hazards in the workplace.

There are situations where you can make the changes yourself (for example, picking up a lead someone could trip over, or cleaning up a spill on the floor) but sometimes it isn't possible for you to take direct action. If you can't make the changes yourself, tell someone who is able to fix the problem: your employer, supervisor or health and safety representative.

Most likely your employer or supervisor will involve you as they work through these four SAFE steps.



THE SAFE STEPS

The best way to prevent injuries or illness in your workplace is to find the hazards that could cause injury or illness and fix them.

Your employer can do this by following these four SAFE steps:

STEP 1 — SPOT THE HAZARD

A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause injury, illness or damage to your health.

A hazard presents the risk of injury when a worker is exposed to it. Think of a large heavy box. It is only a hazard that presents a risk of injury if you try to move it.

Hazards can be biological (such as diseases), chemical, ergonomic (such as manual handling jobs), physical (such as noise), psychological (such as bullying) and radiation (such as ultraviolet radiation).

When spotting hazards, your employer may ask you which tasks you find dangerous, tiring, difficult or painful. They may watch you do your job to work out the hazards.

STEP 2 — ASSESS THE RISK

A risk is the likelihood of a hazard causing injury, illness or damage to your health.

Remember that large heavy box? Maybe it has no handles on it and you're lifting it down from a high shelf. There's a high risk that this task will cause you to strain and injure your body. How you move the box also influences how likely you are to get hurt. Lift and carry the box by yourself and there's a higher chance of suffering a body strain injury; use a removalist trolley, and there's a much lower risk of hurting yourself.

To work out if a job is high risk, low risk, or somewhere in between, your employer might ask:

- // how severe could the injury or illness be?
- // what's the worst possible damage the hazard could cause to your health?
- // would it require simple first aid only? Or cause permanent ill health or disability? Or could it kill?
- // could it happen at any time or would it be a rare event?
- // how often and how long are you exposed to the hazard?

STEP 3 — FIX THE PROBLEM

Your employer will now look for ways to fix the problem. This involves looking for ways to remove or reduce risks to an acceptable level (though they should always try to remove a hazard from your workplace completely).

Some solutions are better than others. Sometimes a combination of more than one solution can be used to reduce your exposure to hazards.

Your employer should involve you by discussing how these solutions would suit your workplace.

STEP 4 — EVALUATE RESULTS

This is an important step you might be asked to get involved in. Your employer may ask you:

- // are the changes making a difference to your work?
- // what do your co-workers think?
- // do the solutions reduce risks and prevent injury or illness in your workplace?
- // do they create new hazards or increase the risk of existing ones?

Perhaps you and your employer can even see ways to make further improvements.

Don't sit back and relax, though. Workplace injury and illness can occur at any time. Your employer needs to do these four SAFE steps in your workplace regularly.



HIDDEN HAZARDS

This section tells you about other workplace issues you may face in the workplace: stress, bullying, and alcohol and other drug misuse.

WHAT ARE HIDDEN HAZARDS?

Some hazards in the workplace are obvious: noise, heat, vibration, poor housekeeping, chemicals, lifting, and tools or machinery.

Some are less obvious; these could be called hidden hazards. They are:

- // workplace bullying
- // alcohol and other drug misuse
- // workplace stress.

These hidden hazards may directly affect a person's physical or mental health, causing illness or disease. They may indirectly put other people at risk of a workplace incident or accident, caused by inattention, fatigue, depression, physical illness or bad judgment.

A hidden hazard may exist by itself or it may develop with other hidden hazards. For instance a person who is under constant and significant pressure to meet unreasonable deadlines may become stressed. They might release their stress by bullying a co-worker or by drinking. The effects of all of these can spread throughout the workplace.

Just as your employer must manage physical hazards they also need to reduce or remove the risks these hidden hazards pose to work health and safety.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE BULLYING?

- // Persistent and repeatedly aggressive behaviour that makes you feel victimised, intimidated or humiliated.
- // Physical abuse (this is also a criminal offence).
- // Repeated verbal abuse, including yelling, screaming, personal comments, offensive language and sarcasm.
- // Inappropriate and unreasonably vindictive, offensive, cruel or malicious behaviour.
- // Gender or racial discrimination, sexual harassment.
- // Having your personal belongings, tools or equipment hidden or tampered with.
- // Initiation practices.

Who is at risk?

- // Young or new workers.
- // Older workers whose skills and experience are not appropriately valued.
- // Anyone who's seen as 'different': for example, workers who speak a language other than English, a female worker in a mostly male workplace, workers with a different sexual preference to others.
- // People working in the education, community services, healthcare and service industries. These workers are particularly at risk from violent clients, patients or customers.

Who are the bullies?

- // An employer, manager or supervisor in a position of authority.
- // A co-worker, especially if they have authority (real or perceived) over the co-worker they're bullying.
- // A client, patient or customer.

How does bullying affect work health and safety?

There may be increased accidents and injuries. Work health and safety can be affected by impaired job performance, lowered morale, poor teamwork or disciplinary problems.

What can be done?

Your employer should involve you in the four SAFE steps to find out if there is a problem with bullying (or potential problem). For example, they may use an anonymous questionnaire.

They should then develop a policy to manage and prevent bullying, and procedures for investigating claims of bullying, disciplining the bully, and supporting the victim and affected co-workers.

They may use a confidential counselling service, or offer training and mediation.

Tell your employer if you're being bullied, and at any time, not just when they ask. Keep a detailed diary of events; make a formal complaint to your employer in writing; talk with others in your workplace: your employer, supervisor, health and safety representative, union representative or co-workers.

For further advice contact WorkSafe Tasmania on 1300 366 322.



WHAT IS ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG MISUSE?

If you misuse alcohol and other drugs, it means you may be using these substances in a way that affects your ability to work safely.

Even if you're drinking or using drugs outside work hours, if your judgement, coordination or concentration is impaired, then you could cause a workplace accident, injury or illness. You can put yourself and your co-workers at risk.

Substances that can be misused include:

- // alcohol (the most commonly misused drug)
- // illegal drugs
- // prescription and non-prescription medication
- // solvents used as inhalants
- // tobacco.

Who is at risk?

Someone who misuses alcohol and other drugs doesn't conform to any common stereotype; they don't necessarily look like media images of drug addicts or alcoholics.

If you misuse alcohol and other drugs recreationally, this is still considered to be as big of a risk to work health and safety as someone who is regularly affected by these substances in the workplace.

What workplace factors can cause alcohol and other drug misuse?

Workplace factors that can cause alcohol and other drug misuse include psychological or physical stress, poor supervision, isolation, and the culture of the workplace. For example, shift workers may use alcohol, cannabis or sleeping tablets to sleep and caffeine or amphetamines to stay awake during long shifts.

How does alcohol and other drug misuse affect work health and safety?

There may be increased incidents and injuries or damaged equipment and other property. Work health and safety can be affected by increased stress for co-workers from dobbing in a workmate, covering for them or picking up their workload. Increased confrontations, disputes and violence caused by alcohol and other drug misuse can also affect work health and safety.

What can be done?

Your employer should involve you in the four SAFE steps to find out if there is a problem with alcohol and other drug misuse (or potential problem). For example, they may use an anonymous questionnaire.

They should then develop a policy and procedures to manage and prevent misuse, including introducing testing or screening.

If you admit to your employer that you have a problem with misuse, your employer should:

- ▮ help you to seek help from your doctor or a counselling service
- ▮ handle your admission confidentially
- ▮ treat your problem as a work health and safety issue, not cause for immediate dismissal or disciplinary action.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE STRESS?

Workplace stress is the harmful physical or emotional reaction that happens when your abilities, resources or needs do not match your workplace situation.

How do you experience stress?

We all have different ways of reacting to incidents or situations that cause stress and interpreting how intense these situations are.

A certain level of stress may be useful and your immediate response to stress can help you meet daily challenges. However if pressure is chronic and unrelieved you will always be 'ready for action'. Without relief from the pressures, your physical and emotional wellbeing can be affected, causing serious long term health consequences.

How is stress experienced?

- ▮ Physically through the body's responses: for example, raised blood pressure, intense headaches, stomach ulcers, heart disease, insomnia and fatigue.
- ▮ Emotionally through feelings: for example, becoming nervous or depressed, feeling hopeless or isolated.
- ▮ Behaviourally through actions: for example, becoming unmotivated or unable to concentrate, turning to alcohol or other drugs, or bullying others.



What workplace factors can cause stress?

- ▮ High levels of public contact, especially if there is verbal or physical confrontation, or exposure to physical or emotional suffering. The education, community services and healthcare industries are high-risk industries.
- ▮ Poor interpersonal relationships and personality clashes.
- ▮ Work overload, especially if you can't control the pace of work or don't have adequate training or resources to do the work.
- ▮ A poor working environment, with physical hazards such as heat, noise, odours, dust and chemical exposure.

How does stress affect work health and safety?

Stress affects your concentration and judgement and can be an underlying cause of workplace incidents, injuries, near misses and mistakes. It can also cause fatigue, which can limit your awareness or your ability to respond quickly and appropriately.

What can be done?

Your employer should involve you in the four SAFE steps to find out if there is a problem with alcohol and other drug misuse (or potential problem). For example, they may use an anonymous questionnaire.

They should then look at what's causing the stress and work with you on ways to tackle the problem: for example, controlling physical hazards, providing training, developing a policy to manage and prevent stress.

They may use a confidential counselling service.

Tell your employer if you're stressed by your work and at any time, not just when they ask. Talk with others in your workplace: your employer, supervisor, health and safety representative, union representative or co-workers.

You can also contact a counselling organisation directly.

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS

Welcome to the Workplace is aimed at new workers but there's some info for the boss too!

We recommend you work through this guide with your new worker, perhaps at induction, in a staff meeting or a training session.

We recommend you read the following guides for workers rehabilitation and compensation that are available online at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au (search the publication number) or by calling our Helpline on 1300 366 322:

- // Workers Compensation Handbook: The Basics (publication number GB010)
- // Injury Management: Making it Work (publication number GB197)
- // Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act summary poster (publication number GB014)

We also recommend you read, 'Work Health and Safety Consultation, Cooperation and Coordination – Code of Practice' available at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au (search for publication number CP135).

More information

For more information on work health and safety, licensing, resources and publications in more detail, go to the WorkSafe Tasmania website at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au

You can also call the Helpline for more information and publications on 1300 366 322 (in Tasmania) or 03 6166 4600 (outside Tasmania) between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday (except on state-wide public holidays). You can also email your query to wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au

To report a workplace incident, call the Helpline 24 hours a day seven days a week.



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Safe Work Australia — www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry — www.tcci.com.au

WorkSafe Victoria— www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

WorkCover NSW — www.workcover.nsw.gov.au

SafeWork SA — www.safework.sa.gov.au

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland — www.worksafe.qld.gov.au

WorkSafe Western Australia — www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe

Correct at November 2015



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

For more information contact

Phone: 1300 366 322 (within Tasmania)

(03) 6166 4600 (outside Tasmania)

Fax: (03) 6173 0206

Email: wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au

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