



## Small Business Safety Solutions



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Since 1910



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SafeWork SA





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## Introduction

Every business owner/manager has a responsibility to manage all aspects of their business. This includes financial affairs as well as the health and safety of themselves, people who work for them casually, part-time, full-time, permanently, as volunteers or as outworkers, and any contractors or members of the public while they are in the workplace. Management of occupational health and safety (OHS) within every workplace is essential.

This guide has been developed to assist owners/managers of small businesses manage health and safety in their workplace. It has been put together specifically with the needs and limited resources of small business in mind and it provides the essential steps to effectively manage safety.

Every business should take steps to improve the way they manage health and safety.

This includes:

- Knowing legal responsibilities.
- Writing a policy and safe work procedures.
- Involving employees.
- Managing hazards.
- Keeping employees informed about OHS matters.
- Keeping OHS records.
- Monitoring and reviewing safety in the workplace.

There are significant legal responsibilities for anyone who can affect health and safety in the workplace. In addition to the general 'duty of care' to protect the health and safety of people in the workplace, there are other specific requirements in the principle State/Territory OHS Acts, OHS Regulations, Codes of Practice (please refer to your State/Territory OHS Authority as requirements vary from state to state) and Australian Standards.



## OHS laws apply to all small businesses

In many states/territories it is a requirement for employers to have a copy of the OHS Act and Regulations, which can be obtained from the OHS authority in their State/Territory (see the 'Tool Box' at the rear of this guide for contact details). Copies of most legislation can be downloaded from the internet.

It is equally important that staff are aware and capable of identifying OHS issues and risk situations in day-to-day operations.

This guide provides the basic information needed to start developing good health and safety practices in the workplace.

There are checklists at the end of each section in this guide to help monitor progress. A range of sample forms and checklists are included in the Tool Box section of this guide. These can be used, copied and modified as required.

## 5 keys steps to managing OHS

Step 1 – Commitment to a safe workplace

Step 2 – Employee involvement

Step 3 – Managing hazards (SAFE)

Step 4 – Maintaining a safe workplace

Step 5 – Safety records and information

Every business is different and has its own specific health and safety legal requirements. This guide will help employers to improve how they manage health and safety in their workplace. Further industry specific information is available from employer associations and local OHS Authorities.

See 'Contacts' list in the Tool Box section of this guide.



## Steps to manage OHS

### Step 1 – Commitment to a safe workplace

#### Safety begins with commitment

Effective management of OHS relies on a commitment from everyone in the workplace. People need to know what their responsibilities for OHS are and what is expected of them whilst they are at work.

Commitment can be demonstrated through a written health and safety policy. The health and safety policy needs to be simple, easily understood and developed jointly by the owner/manager and employees.

The policy should;

- acknowledge the owner is ultimately responsible for safety,
- document health and safety responsibilities of everyone in the workplace,
- commit to ongoing improvement (the objective should be no workplace accidents),
- be dated and signed by the owner,
- be displayed at the workplace,
- be shown to all employees and contractors.

In most States and Territories it is a legal requirement to have a health and safety policy.

See the Tool Box section of this guide for a sample 'Health and Safety Policy'.

#### Checklist for step 1

- The owner/manager understands their OHS legal responsibilities
- The owner/manager is committed to addressing OHS issues within the business
- The owner/manager has signed a health and safety policy developed with employees and demonstrated commitment to its implementation
- Everyone in the workplace is aware of their responsibilities under OHS legislation
- The health and safety policy is accessible to employees, contractors and the public
- The health and safety of everyone in the business has been considered
- There is a plan in place to review the health and safety policy

## Step 2 – Employee involvement

Involving employees in the health and safety program can encourage commitment to the achievement of the business' OHS goals.

Employees can be involved through briefing sessions, focus groups, toolbox talks and in some cases it may be appropriate to have a health and safety committee. Regular OHS information can also be provided on noticeboards, in newsletters, through memos and emails.

The following OHS issues need to be discussed with employees:

- The health and safety policy.
- Specific OHS responsibilities.
- Hazards in the workplace and suitable solutions.
- Changes affecting OHS in the workplace.
- Safety procedures.

It is important that the owner/manager talks with employees prior to making any significant change in the workplace that might affect their health and safety. Discussions need to take place as early as possible to achieve the best results.

Requirements for employee input varies across States and Territories – check with local OHS authorities or employer organisation.



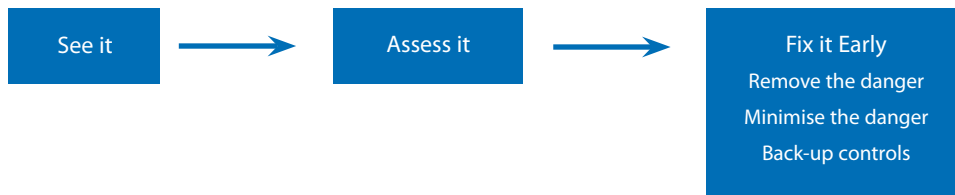
### Checklist for step 2

- Employees are actively involved in workplace OHS
- Employees are consulted on OHS issues through meetings, toolbox talks or OHS committee meetings etc.
- OHS information is provided via noticeboards, newsletters, memos, email etc.
- Employees have input into the development or review of OHS policies and procedures
- Employees participate in OHS activities in the workplace eg, hazard inspections
- Employees have the opportunity to make suggestions for improving workplace safety

### Step 3 – Managing hazards (SAFE)

#### See it, Assess it, Fix it Early

There are a number of ways to recognise hazards and make the necessary changes to remove or reduce the danger.



Although employers have the primary responsibility for providing a safe workplace, the most effective way of doing this is by working with employees and using the 'SAFE' (See it, Assess it, Fix it Early) approach to hazard management.

#### See it

The first step is to find the hazards in the workplace - find anything that may cause injury, illness or damage. Some hazards will be obvious because they will be common to the industry, but others won't be.

To find hazards:

- Walk around and look at the workplace.
- Involve and talk to employees.
- Use injury records to identify any trends that may show that a problem exists. If there are no written records, make a start now.

Don't overlook the things that people may have 'worked around' for years and don't just look for obvious hazards. A majority of workers' compensation claims are for sprain and strain injuries so be sure to check any tasks where pushing, pulling, lifting or twisting is involved.

The 'Workplace Safety Checklist' in the Tool Box is a useful tool for identifying hazards.



## Assess it

Assess the risk to determine the likelihood that a hazard may cause an injury, illness or death.

Consider how a person may be exposed to a hazard, for how long and how often. In some instances several hazards may be identified but the business may not be able to fix all of them at the same time. Risk assessment helps to prioritise hazards and plan actions to fix them. A risk assessment can determine if there is;

- the possibility of risk, but controls are already in place,
- no risk,
- a risk where action needs to be immediately taken,
- a need for more information or assistance to make a decision to fix it.

A 'Risk Assessment Tool' is provided in the Tool Box to assist in assessing the risk.



## Fix it Early

Prevention is the key. Don't wait for someone to be injured, take action to fix identified risks. Here is a list of options, starting with the preferred methods:

### Removing the hazard

The best way is to remove the hazard altogether. For example, replace faulty wiring or remove dangerous machinery. This should always be attempted first as it removes the hazard altogether.

### Minimise the hazard

Where removing the hazard is not possible, the hazard should be controlled through substitution with a safer item or by engineering another solution. For example, replace the hazardous substance, machine or task with a safe one, or add guarding to cover dangerous moving parts of machinery.

### Backup controls

Changing the way a job is done, for example developing and implementing safe procedures for hazardous jobs may also make a task safer.

Safety equipment, for example safety glasses, footwear and hearing protection, are the least effective for removing hazards and are generally used as short term control measures. They can be used to supplement other measures to control the hazard. Safety equipment should be used as a last resort and training should be provided to ensure employees can use and maintain it correctly.

REMEMBER...

ALWAYS TRY TO REMOVE THE HAZARD

If the hazard cannot be completely removed, it needs to be minimised wherever possible. Another way to minimise the hazard is to use back up controls.

Use the 'Safety Action Plan' provided in the Tool Kit to record the actions that need to be taken to fix the issues identified.



### Checklist for step 3

- Hazards in the workplace have been recognised and recorded
- Hazards have been assessed and prioritised
- Hazards have been controlled in a systematic way

## Step 4 – Maintaining a safe workplace

Identifying and managing workplace hazards is the first step but there are some other processes that need to be in place to ensure new problems do not occur.

### Safety checks

Regular checks will enable changes occurring in the workplace to be identified and ensure that the standard of health and safety is maintained. The responsibility of fixing of any hazards that are identified needs to be delegated to particular individuals to ensure that the required changes are made.

See the sample 'Workplace Checklist' in the Tool Box.

### Maintenance and repair

Preventative maintenance must be performed on all equipment and tools at the workplace. User manuals provided by the supplier of the equipment will provide guidance on maintenance requirements. Where equipment or tools are damaged they must be promptly removed from use until repaired. Records of all maintenance and repairs need to be kept.

### Reporting workplace hazards

Employees need to be encouraged to report any hazard they believe could cause an accident. Once reported there must be a process in place to ensure action is taken to remove the hazard.

This can be done by completing the 'Incident/Hazard Report Form' provided in the Tool Box.

### Information and training

Employees must be provided with easy to understand information and training on how to do the job safely. Training commences with induction when an employee first starts at the workplace. Training employees may not be enough on its own and regular supervision should also be provided. Employees need training in the following areas:

- How to perform the job in the safest way.
- The particular dangers associated with the job at the workplace, eg, the need to move heavy objects.
- The safe handling of equipment, machinery or products, eg, chemicals that may be used or produced.
- The use of safety equipment, eg, employees should be able to recognise when safety glasses or earmuffs must be used, and when they need replacing or repair.
- Emergency procedures.
- Reporting workplace hazards and incidents.

A sample 'Induction Checklist' is provided in the Tool Box.



## Supervision

The level of supervision needed will depend on the experience of individual employees and the risk associated with the work. It is important to make sure that employees, particularly new employees, are shown how to do their jobs safely and correctly.

## Incident investigation

Incidents resulting in injury, illness or damage need to be investigated to determine the reasons why they happened so that similar occurrences can be prevented. A situation where someone was nearly injured should also be investigated. Consider what can be done to prevent it happening again.

Where possible, recommendations should not concentrate on the actions of individual employees alone. It is important to look at the level of risk in the work environment, the safety processes, equipment and tools. Refer to the Incident/Hazard Report Form provided in the Tool Box to record the investigation findings.

## Planning for emergencies

Consider what types of emergencies could occur in the workplace. These could include fires, medical emergencies or chemical leaks. In addition, the potential impact of such emergencies on the workplace and any adjacent premises needs to be well understood.

How to get out of the workplace in an emergency also needs to be planned and explained to all who work there, as well as visitors. In addition, relevant employees will require specific training that may include:

- Use of fire extinguishers and equipment.
- First aid.
- Personal security.

## Checklist for step 4

- Regular workplace safety checks are conducted
- A preventative maintenance program is in-place
- Unserviceable tools and equipment have been withdrawn from use
- A process to encourage employees to report workplace hazards has been implemented
- Incidents are recorded, investigated and correction action taken to prevent recurrence
- Employees have been inducted
- Employees have been provided with relevant health and safety training
- An emergency plan has been implemented and employees have received instruction in emergency procedures
- There are trained first aid officers in the workplace

## Step 5 – Safety records and information

### Records and information must be kept

Records relating to hazards in the workplace, relevant State/Territory OHS Acts, Regulations, Standards and Codes of Practice, need to be kept at the workplace. The employer association or local OHS authority in every State/Territory can provide a list. As legislation and associated standards are subject to change, employers need to check periodically to ensure that they are complying with a current version.

Businesses can best ensure they maintain appropriate safety records by identifying what records must be kept, where they are kept and how long they must be kept for. Everyone in the workplace needs to be aware of the central point where the health and safety information is kept if ever needed. Some regulations have specific requirements for the retention of health and safety records and these may vary from State to State.

The Tool Box section in this guide contains samples of some records that must be kept:

- Workplace safety checklist.
- Incident/Hazard report form.
- Hazardous substances register.
- Plant and equipment information.
- Induction checklist.
- First aid record book.

There are also other records that must be kept, for example:

- Workers compensation insurance claim file.
- Licences/Competency to safely operate equipment eg, cranes and rigging equipment.
- Workplace safety rules.
- Records of any training (courses and on-the-job training) employees have undertaken while working in the organisation.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all chemicals kept in the workplace. These can be obtained from chemical suppliers.
- Maintenance and service records for equipment (such records could be kept in an exercise book) as well as any records of risk assessments that have been carried out.

See the sample 'Safety Action Plan' in the Tool Box for examples of how to record risk assessments and safety actions.

### Checklist for step 5

- Copies of the OHS Act and Regulations are located at the workplace and accessible to employees
- Relevant OHS records are maintained
- Licences to operate relevant equipment are copied and filed

Action	Tick when Completed
Checklist step 1:	
The owner/manager understands their OHS legal responsibilities	
The owner/manager is committed to addressing OHS issues within the business	
The owner/manager has signed a health and safety policy developed with employees and demonstrated commitment to its implementation	
Everyone in the workplace is aware of their responsibilities under OHS legislation	
The health and safety policy is accessible to employees, contractors and the public	
The health and safety of everyone in the business has been considered	
There is a plan in place to review the health and safety policy	
Checklist step 2:	
Employees are actively involved in workplace OHS	
Employees are consulted on OHS issues through meetings, toolbox talks or OHS committee meetings etc	
OHS information is provided via noticeboards, newsletters, memos, email etc	
Employees have input into the development or review of OHS policies and procedures	
Employees participate in OHS activities in the workplace eg, hazard inspections	
Employees have the opportunity to make suggestions for improving workplace safety	
Checklist step 3:	
Hazards in the workplace have been recognised and recorded	
Hazards have been assessed and prioritised	
Hazards have been controlled in a systematic way	
Checklist step 4:	
Regular workplace safety checks are conducted	
A preventative maintenance program is in-place	
Unserviceable tools and equipment have been withdrawn from use	
A process to encourage employees to report workplace hazards has been implemented	
Incidents are recorded, investigated and correction action taken to prevent recurrence	
Employees have been inducted	
Employees have been provided with relevant health and safety training	
An emergency plan has been implemented and employees have received instruction in emergency procedures	
There are trained first aid officers in the workplace	
Checklist step 5:	
Copies of the OHS Act and Regulations are located at the workplace and accessible to employees	
Relevant OHS records are maintained	
Licences to operate relevant equipment are copied and filed	



## Health and safety policy

This policy recognises that \_\_\_\_\_ (insert company name) is responsible for the health and safety of all employees in the workplace. In fulfilling this responsibility we have a duty to provide and maintain a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.

To meet the objectives of this policy, we are committed to regular discussions with employees to ensure that health and safety issues are regularly reviewed. Health and safety is most effective when a joint owner/ manager and employee approach is used to identify and solve problems.

Owner/Manager/Supervisor must ensure:

- Effective implementation of this policy.
- Their responsibilities under the OHS Act and Regulations are met.
- Agreed procedures for regular discussion between the owner/manager and employees are followed.
- Regular workplace inspections are conducted.
- Information, training and supervision for all employees in the correct use of plant, equipment, chemicals and other substances used, is provided.

Employees:

- Have a duty to take care of their health and safety and that of others.
- Must comply with safety procedures and directions.
- Must not wilfully interfere with or misuse items or facilities provided in the interest of health and safety.
- Must inform the business owner of dangers and accidents and near accidents occurring at the workplace.

Visitors and contractors:

- Must not put themselves or any of our employees at risk.
- Must abide by our safety policy and rules.
- Must not enter restricted areas without permission.

This policy will be regularly reviewed in the light of changes to the workplace and changes in legislation.

Management seeks cooperation from all employees in realising our health and safety objectives and creating a safe work environment.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:     /     /

## Workplace safety checklist

Checklist item Date:        /        /	Result of inspection		Action required	
	Person Conducting Inspection			
Person inspecting:	Good	Poor	Comments (date and sign)	Action completed
<b>Safety procedures</b>				
Procedures are clearly displayed				
<b>Fire/emergencies</b>				
Extinguishers in place, clearly marked for type of fire and recently serviced				
Adequate direction notices for fire exits				
Exit door easily opened from inside				
Exits clear of obstructions				
Fire alarm system functioning correctly (if installed)				
Emergency procedures available and displayed				
Fire evacuation drills carried out				
<b>Electrical</b>				
No broken plugs, sockets or switches				
No frayed or damaged cords				
Portable power tools in good condition				
No extension cords on the floor				
Emergency shut-down procedures in place				
Residual Current Device (safety switch) installed where required				
<b>General lighting</b>				
Adequate lighting for the job				
Light fittings clean and in good condition				
Emergency lighting operable				
All lights protected where required				
<b>Walkways, stairs and ladders</b>				
Oil and grease removed				
Entry and walkways kept clear				
No obstruction of vision at intersections				
Stairs in good condition				
Anti-slip tread on stairs				
Handrails in place				
Use of appropriate ladders in good condition				
Fall protection if required				
<b>Equipment and tools</b>				
Tools in good condition				
Adequately guarded				

Checklist item Date:        /        /	Result of inspection		Action required	
	Good	Poor	Comments (date and sign)	Action completed
Person Conducting Inspection				
Person inspecting:				
Adequately maintained				
Starting and stopping devices within easy reach of operator				
Provision for storage and waste				
Drip pans on floor to prevent spillage				
Adequate work space around machine				
Satisfactory task lighting				
No bending/stooping required				
Operators trained and licensed where required				
Controls clearly marked and maintained				
Correct tools used for task				
General housekeeping				
Clear of rubbish				
Tools not in use kept in place				
Rubbish cleared at regular intervals				
Storage				
Items stored correctly				
Storage designed to minimise lifting problems, eg, items located between knee and shoulder height				
Walking space clear				
General condition of racks and pallets				
Chemicals at the workplace				
Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) available				
Containers clearly labelled				
Correct disposal is undertaken				
Appropriate storage for chemicals				
First Aid				
First aid box/cabinet available				
Employees aware of location of first aid box/cabinet				
Adequate stocks available				
Records kept on use of first aid box				
Emergency telephone numbers displayed				
Adequate first aid available				

Checklist item Date:        /        /	Result of inspection		Action required	
	Person Conducting Inspection			
Person inspecting:	Good	Poor	Comments (date and sign)	Action completed
<b>Office</b>				
Photocopiers - fumes controlled				
Air conditioning system maintained regularly				
Stable non-slip floor coverings				
Workstations adequate for task				
<b>Manual handling</b>				
Unnecessary manual handling eliminated				
Loads to be within the employees capabilities				
Training provided on mechanical aids and proper lifting techniques				
Teamwork used when required				
<b>Violence/trauma</b>				
Adequate procedures to ensure personal safety and security				

## Risk Assessment Tool

### Step 1

Determine how likely it is someone may be exposed to the hazard you identified.

Very likely	Exposure could happen frequently
Likely	Exposure could happen, but not frequently
Unlikely	Exposure could happen, but only rarely
Very Unlikely	Exposure could happen, but probably never will

### Step 2

Determine how severe a potential injury/illness would be.

Fatality	May cause one or more fatalities
Critical	May cause more than 2 weeks lost time
Major	May result in 5 days to 2 weeks lost time
Minor	May cause 1 to 5 days lost time
Negligible	First aid treatment, no lost time

### Step 3

Match the risk of exposure with the severity on this table.

	Fatality	Critical	Major	Minor	Negligible
Very likely	1	1	2	3	3
Likely	1	2	3	4	4
Unlikely	2	3	4	4	4
Very Unlikely	3	3	4	5	5

### Step 4

Determine risk-rating priority using the rating given in table above.

1	Urgent
2	High
3	Medium
4	Low
5	None

### Step 5

Take action to control the risks using this hierarchy. Record actions on the 'Safety Action Plan' (see Tool Box).

Most Effective	Eliminate
	Substitute
	Engineer
	Administration
Last resort	Personal protective equipment

# Safety Action Plan

Company name: / / Date: / /

Item	Priority (assess)	Action required (Fix it Early)	Person responsible	Completion Date	Review date and comments
Example: Carrying large amount of stock	High	Purchase trolley Train staff on new processes Monitor and supervise new processes	Supervisor	11-09-04	11-01-05 No comments
Example: Poor storage areas in product development area	Medium	Determine storage requirements Purchase additional storage	Supervisor	20-10-04	20-12-04 No comments



Corrective Actions

What needs to happen	By when	Person responsible

Sign Off:

Person Reporting \_\_\_\_\_ Date / /

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date / /

Site Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Date / /

## Induction checklist

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Employee's Name:

Start Date:

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Position / Job:

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Supervisor:

### Introduction (explain)

- The industry, nature and structure of the business
- Roles of key people in the business
- Job, tasks and responsibilities

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### Job Introduction

- Demonstrate to the employee how to do the job safely
- Provide required information and supervision
- Introduction to other employees and the supervisor
- Introduction to the first aid officer and show location of first aid supplies
- Explain and demonstrate emergency procedures
- Show location of exits and equipment
- Show the work area, toilet, drinking water and eating facilities
- Show how to safely use, store and maintain tools, machinery and hazardous substances
- Show where to make phone calls and collect messages

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### Employment Conditions (explain)

- Work times and meal breaks
- Rates of pay and how payment is made
- Taxation (include filling out required forms)
- Superannuation and other deductions
- Leave entitlements
- Notification of sick leave or absences

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### Other Requirements (explain and show)

- Quality procedures
- Security issues
- Hygiene procedures and facilities

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### Health and Safety (explain)

- Health and safety policy and safe work procedures (provide a copy)
- Roles and responsibilities of people in the workplace
- Hazards in the workplace and how they are controlled
- How to report health and safety issues, and to who (including forms)
- How to address health and safety issues
- Workers compensation claims (including showing where forms are)

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Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_(name) \_\_\_\_\_(sign) date: / /

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_(sign) date: / /

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## Contacts

### Business SA

136 Greenhill Road

UNLEY SA 5021

Phone: 08 8300 0000

Fax: 08 8300 0001

Internet: [www.business-sa.com](http://www.business-sa.com)

### Safework SA

1 Richmond Road

KESWICK SA 5035

Phone: 08 0303 0400 or 1300 365 255

Internet: [www.safework.sa.gov.au](http://www.safework.sa.gov.au)

### Enquiries

Business Services 8300 0101 or 1800 088 105

Health, Safety and Environment

Injury Management

Workplace Relations

### Employers Mutual

Level 15

26 Flinders St

ADELAIDE SA 5000

International Business 8300 0105

Membership 8300 0100

Australian Apprenticeships Centre 8300 0255

Policy 8300 0009

Publications 8300 0113

Training 8300 0103

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General enquiries 08 8127 1100 or 1300 365 105

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Notes

