

Maintain Workplace Safety

This learner guide supports BSBWHS301A Maintain workplace safety in the BSB07 Business Services Training Package.

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Teachers, trainers and trainees are directed to the relevant legislation, regulations, codes of practice and guidance notes for an authoritative understanding of WHS regulatory requirements. This learner guide should be read in conjunction with relevant legislation and is not a substitute for it.

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BSBWHS301A Maintain workplace safety

Unit descriptor This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to implement and monitor the organisation’s work health and safety (WHS) policies, procedures and programs as part of a small work team.

Application of unit This unit applies to workers who have a key role in maintaining workplace safety in an organisation. In their role they closely monitor aspects of work associated with the safe delivery of products and services, and they have an important responsibility in influencing ongoing safety in the workplace.

At this level, work will normally be carried out within known routines, methods and procedures but may also involve a number of complex or non routine activities that require some discretion and judgement.

NOTE: The terms Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Work Health and Safety (WHS) are equivalent and generally either can be used in the workplace. In jurisdictions where the National Model WHS Legislation has not been implemented RTOs are advised to contextualise the unit of competency by referring to the existing State/Territory OHS legislative requirements.

Employability skills This unit contains employability skills.

Prerequisites There are no prerequisites for this unit.

Element	Performance Criteria	Page Reference
1. Assist with incorporating WHS policies and procedures into work team processes	1.1 Use WHS legislation as the basis for meeting the health and safety requirements of a small work team	7,148–162
	1.2 Assist in providing and clearly explaining information to the work team about the organisation’s WHS policies, procedures, programs and legislative requirements , including the legal duties, powers, rights, obligations and responsibilities of individuals and parties inside and outside the workplace	Throughout learner guide
	1.3 Assist in regularly providing and clearly explaining information to the work team about identifying hazards and the outcomes of risk assessment	4, 10–12, 19, 32, 35, 49–50, 60–62, 98–99, 125, 152–154

Element	Performance Criteria	Page Reference
2. Support participative arrangements for managing WHS	2.1 Implement and monitor organisational consultative procedures to facilitate participation of the work team in managing work area hazards	13, 129–130, 139, 164–169
	2.2 Promptly deal with issues raised through consultation according to organisational procedures for issue resolution	164–169
	2.3 Encourage and assist work team members to contribute to managing WHS	164–169
	2.4 Engage with individuals and work teams to identify and implement improvements in managing WHS feedback	164–169
3. Support the organisation's procedures for providing WHS training	3.1 Provide advice on WHS training needs of individuals and the work team	124–126, 129
	3.2 Provide advice on strategies and opportunities for developing work team's WHS competence	124–126
	3.3 Provide coaching and mentoring assistance to work team members to support the effective development of individual and team WHS competence	129–130
4. Participate in identifying hazards, and assessing and controlling risks for the work area	4.1 Provide advice on hazards in the work area according to organisational policies and procedures, and WHS legal requirements	19, 28–78
	4.2 Support the implementation of procedures to control risks using the hierarchy of control and according to organisational procedures and WHS legal requirements	17–24
	4.3 Identify and report inadequacies in existing risk control measures according to organisational procedures, the hierarchy of control and WHS legal requirements	31–78, 139–140
	4.4 Accurately complete and maintain WHS incident records in the work area according to organisational procedures and WHS legislative requirements	98–99, 139–140

Managing Risk

An employer must do what they can (what is reasonably practicable) to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks in their workplace. This process is known as *risk management* and involves the four steps listed below:

- 1 **Identify hazards** – find out what might cause harm.
- 2 **Assess risks** – how serious could the harm be and what is the likelihood of it happening?
- 3 **Control risks** – implement the most effective control that is reasonable practicable.
- 4 **Review control measures** – to ensure they are working.



Figure 1: The Risk Management Process.

The four stages of risk management are summarised below.

A risk management approach

Managing health and safety risks is an ongoing process that is triggered when any changes affect your work activities.

A risk management process should be instigated when:

- changing work practices, procedures or the work environment
- purchasing new or used equipment or using new substances
- planning to improve productivity or reduce costs
- responding to workplace incidents
- responding to concerns raised by workers or others

As supervisor it is helpful to have an overview of the risk management process, and where your role fits into this. The remainder of this section is written with this aim in mind.

Consulting workers

The Model WHS Act requires employers (persons conducting businesses or undertakings (PCBUs)) to consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers directly affected by a work health and safety matter.

Consultation with workers is required at each step of the risk management process.

Consultation involves sharing information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and taking those views into account before making decisions on health and safety matters. For more information on consultation see section 6.

Hazard Identification

(Risk Management Step 1)

A ‘hazard’ is an actual or potential source of personal injury, ill health or disease in the workplace. Hazard identification is the process of investigating any item, activity, situation, product or service that could give rise to injury or illness in the workplace.

Hazards can arise in any number of ways:

- by an *activity* such as operating or maintaining machinery
- by a *situation* such as power cables running overhead or trailing across a floor
- by an *arrangement* such as poor warehouse stacking and storage technique
- by a *circumstance* such as a wet floor in a hotel foyer
- by an *event* such as unloading of a ship’s cargo
- by an *action* such as the movement of a hoist overhead
- by a production *process* involving hazardous substances or heat.

Note that hazards may be pre-existing, new or potential.

Typical hazards and harm

Workplace	Typical hazard	Typical injury or disease
Office	Typing without rest breaks	Occupational overuse syndrome
Smelting plant	Heat, processing molten metal	Burns, poisoning by toxic fumes
Warehouse	Manual handling	Back injury
Building site	Physical environment	Trip, slip, fall injuries, cuts and crushing
Carpet factory	Airborne fibres, poor ventilation	Respiratory disease
Farm	Noise from plant, chemical use	Hearing loss, disease
Manufacturing plant	No personal protective clothing	Toxic poisoning, injury by moving parts

Identifying hazards

Supervisors should use the following methods to identify hazards in the work area:

- 1 Physical site inspection (floor walking with the aid of a checklist).
- 2 Checking equipment before and during use.
- 3 Consulting with work team members, WHS representatives, WHS committee, other supervisors and managers (see section 6 of this learner guide).
- 4 Analysis of records relating to the supervisors work area, including:
 - records of past accidents and incidents (see page 134 of this learner guide)
 - equipment maintenance records
 - dangerous goods storage sheets and hazardous chemical records, including labels and safety data sheets (see page 48–50 of this learner guide)
 - training plans and WHS Managements plans (see section 4 of this learner guide)
- 5 Task analysis (looking at job descriptions and the tasks involved, observing the actions of workers and identifying hazards arising).
- 6 Process analysis (analysing the production or service delivery process from cradle to grave, identifying hazards arising at each step).

Identification of some hazards requires specialist or technical advice, research or consultation with a WHS professional.

Clearly explain to the work team relevant information about any identified hazards.

Exercise 2

- 1 Briefly describe the activities and operations that take place at your workplace (or a workplace of your choice).

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2 List three typical hazards that are present/might arise at your workplace (or a workplace of your choice). Look at section 2 to assist.

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b.....

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c.....

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Hazard identification and the role of the supervisor

Supervisors should encourage the whole work team to take part in hazard identification. This will increase worker awareness of potential hazards and foster cooperation in addressing those hazards. Encourage the work team to report hazardous situations or safety issues according to the procedures set up in your workplace as soon as they arise or are identified. Workers should feel able to offer any suggestions they feel appropriate for improving safety.

Supervisors need to conduct work area inspections with the aim of identifying hazards. To do this effectively you will need a good understanding of hazard types in your work area. For a description of a range of common workplace hazard-types including occupational overuse syndrome, plant and electrical hazards, manual handling, noise, confined workspaces, bullying and stress, see section 2 of this learner guide.

Supervisors will need to provide information and advice on work area hazards to the work team, management and WHS representatives.

Risk Assessment

(Risk Management Step 2)

When to do a risk assessment

Many hazards and their associated risks are well known and have established control measures. In these situations, formal assessment of the risk is unnecessary. The model WHS Act's approach to risk management is to focus on allowing the duty holder to identify the risk and if the risk cannot be eliminated, go straight to controls where the control measures are well known or obvious. For all other hazards, a risk assessment is necessary.

Many hazards and their associated risks are well known and have established control measures. If, after identifying a hazard, an employer already knows the risks and how to control them, they may simply implement the standard accepted controls. They do not need to do a risk assessment. For all other hazards a risk assessment is necessary.

Risk assessment involves working out the likelihood of a hazard harming somebody and how badly they could be harmed. In this way, hazards present in the work area can be ranked and risk control measures properly prioritised.

How to do a risk assessment

All hazards have the potential to cause different types and degrees of harm, ranging from minor discomfort to a serious injury or death. Risk assessment involves the following steps:

- 1 Work out how hazards may cause harm.
- 2 Work out how severe the harm could be.
- 3 Work out the likelihood of the harm occurring.
- 4 Rate the risk according to the severity of harm and the likelihood of harm occurring.

1. How will the hazard cause harm?

Risk assessment involves analysing information gathered during the hazard identification process. All risks need to be addressed, irrespective of whether the risk is serious or mild, or whether controlling it is easy or difficult. Look at possible scenarios that result from a hazard. For each scenario consider:

- Who will the hazard affect? Assessment must include risks to non-workers (contractors, the public) who may be affected by the organisation's activities.
- Will different groups have different needs? The needs of particular groups of workers especially at risk (young, inexperienced, disabled workers) must be considered specifically as part of the overall assessment.
- Could a small event escalate into a much larger event with more serious consequences? Could one failure lead to another failure? (For example, if lights fail in an emergency could this lead to people not identifying exits and being trapped in a building?)

Do not assume human behaviour always obeys the logic of common sense – common sense is less common than generally assumed.

Hazard identification/risk assessment should occur at two levels:

- 1 Identification of intrinsic hazards that arise through the organisation's operations and activities, products or services and the work area environment itself.
- 2 Identification of transitory hazards that might arise through human error, adverse weather conditions, non-observance of the written rules or failed controls such as non-wearing of personal protective clothing or removal of guards from machinery in contravention of standard operating procedures.

More than one sequence of events or scenario might need to be considered in relation to each hazardous situation – each with its own specific level of risk. The full range of hazard scenarios should be taken into account in the course of hazard risk assessment.

2. What is the likelihood of the harm occurring?

Assess the likelihood of occurrence by asking:

- How often is a particular task carried out? Does the frequency increase or decrease the risk?
- How close do people get to a particular hazard?
- Has the hazard scenario occurred before, either at this workplace or elsewhere?
- Has the hazard resulted in any near misses?

3. How severe could that harm be?

From each possible scenario identified, work out what degree of harm would result. Consider what factors could influence the severity of harm.

4. Assess the Risk based on its severity and likelihood of occurrence

The level of risk associated with a particular hazard can be worked out using the table and key below. For instance, a hazard with potentially fatal consequences (Consequence 1 below) which is unlikely to occur but *might* occur (Probability C below) is still a high risk hazard and appropriate controlling measures should be implemented accordingly.

Key: Severity of harm and probability of harm arising from hazard

<u>Consequences 1–4</u>	<u>Probability A–D</u>
1. Fatal (could cause one or more deaths)	A. Very likely (could happen frequently – continuous exposure to hazard)
2. Major injury/illness (serious, potentially irreversible harm requiring medical intervention and ongoing treatment)	B. Likely (could happen occasionally – occasional exposure to hazard)
3. Minor injury/illness (damage to health – limited medical intervention and time off)	C. Unlikely (could happen, but rarely)
4. Negligible injury (first aid, no time off)	D. Highly unlikely (extremely rare occurrence that could eventuate but probably never will)

Table: Assessing risk level based on likelihood of occurrence and probability of harm

	A	B	C	D
1	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK
2	HIGH RISK	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK
3	HIGH RISK	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK
4	MEDIUM RISK	MEDIUM RISK	LOW RISK	LOW RISK

The employer should keep a record of risk assessment exercises carried out. Breaking down the components of the risk in the manner described above enables a proper analysis of the problem to be recorded.

You will perform a risk assessment exercise later in this learner guide.

Risk assessment and the supervisor's role

Encourage workgroups to participate in risk assessment exercises. Understanding and contributing to the risk assessment process will make workers more aware of assessing possible hazards. They will also be more aware of the case by case circumstances that may affect possible hazard scenarios.

Exercise 3

Which of the following hazards should be controlled first? (Circle correct answer).

- a A wet, slippery floor over which heavy boxes are about to be carried
- b A leaking battery in a cupboard
- c Goods stacked too high in a storeroom

Controlling Risks

(Risk Management Step 3)

Hierarchy of risk control

The accepted way to control workplace risks to safety is to consider each hazard in relation to three levels of controlling action, known as the hierarchy of control. The controls are ranged from the highest level of protection to the lowest, shown in figure 1 below.

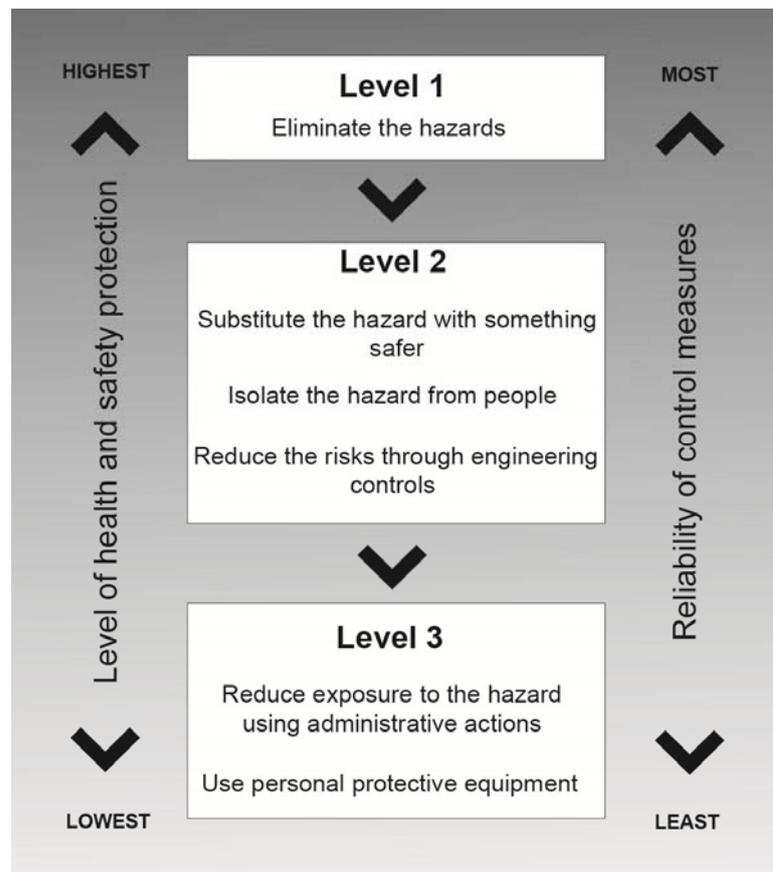


Figure 1: The Hierarchy of Risk Control (From: *How To Manage Work Health and Safety Risks; Code of Practice*, Safework Australia)

The hierarchy of control guides an employer to take the most appropriate practicable action in relation to a hazard. Level 1 in the hierarchy is considered the preferable option with level 3 the least preferable method for control. Effective control of a risk may involve more than one level.

Level 1	Elimination	Remove the hazard from the workplace completely. The permanent solution. Otherwise the risk can never be entirely eliminated, e.g. phase out use of a hazardous substance.
Level 2	Substitution	If removal is not possible, substitute the hazard with something less dangerous instead, e.g. a less toxic substance than the substance currently in use.
	Isolation	Isolate the hazard from the people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> fit protective screens, safety barriers or fence-off hazardous areas
Level 3	Use engineering controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> modify tools or equipment install ventilation systems
	Use personal protective clothing or equipment	Make safety goggles, gloves, footwear, overalls or headgear available as appropriate.

Exercise 4

Name a hazard at your workplace which is guarded or otherwise separated from people:

Under which level for controlling hazards, 1–3, would you classify such a safety measure?
 Answer: Step no. ____

Risk control and the supervisor's role

Supervisors should understand the employer's obligation to apply the hierarchy of controls to identify suitable controls for hazards. You will need to consult appropriately with work teams, management and health and safety representatives regarding potential hazards and controls.

Supervisors will need to be able to identify situations where suitable controls are not being used and deal with these immediately via the correct procedures set up in their workplace. Workers can stop working in situations dangerous to them, see Section 5 of this learner guide to find out more about this and other legal rights of workers.

Identify and fix simple hazards immediately. Simple everyday hazards such as sharp objects protruding from workbenches or power cords lying around should obviously be dealt with as soon as they are noticed. Hazards not remediable then should be reported in accordance with the organisation's reporting procedure for appropriate action.

A supervisor will likely be involved with level 3 controls in the following ways:

- 1 ensuring workers are self-checking
- 2 checking that workers are following standard operating procedures
- 3 checking workers are using personal protective equipment.

More information on each of the above three points follows.