

# Health & Safety Refresher



The Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) mandates workers protect their own and others' welfare and follow employers' reasonable instructions. Employers (PCBU) have a duty to control risks due to their resources and authority over safe work practices.

## Awareness of hazards:

Workers should be informed of current hazards through meetings and training. Workers are also likely to be aware of workplace hazards and should notify management (worker participation). Good employers encourage workers to discuss health and safety matters (worker engagement).

Safety and health hazards can be defined as single-exposure and multiple-exposure hazards respectively. While safety risks are more immediate, long-term health harms are often more lethal. Mental health issues such as fatigue and anxiety are also workplace health risks in stressful or demanding roles.

## Understanding risks:

Because injuries and illness happen when a person comes into contact with a hazard,

## Eliminate or minimise risks (examples):

Risk controls focus on either the hazard or the behaviour of workers and others.

- **Eliminate the hazard.** The hazard is removed.
- **Substitute the hazard.** The risk is transferred to a less dangerous hazard.
- **Isolate the hazard.** Contact with the hazard is prevented by physical barriers, containment, distance or time.
- **Use engineered modifications.** Contact with the hazard is reduced or modified by a technology.

Focusing on human behaviours include:

- **Administration** of safe systems of work. Records and processes demonstrate safety behaviours. This includes training, safety plans, ACOPs, SWIs, certification, signage, inductions and meetings.
- **Personal protection equipment** (Personal behaviours). Workers manage personal clothing and equipment to minimise unavoidable exposure to hazards.

human behaviours can be a risk or a protective factor. A worker's mental, medical, sensory, or physical health factors increase the risk of injury when workers are unaware of or unable to react to hazards.

Safe behaviours include using PPE correctly, obeying safety instructions, operating tools and plant only if trained and authorised, keeping access and egress clear, storing materials safely, checking hazardous substances against SDS, being alert around moving plant, directing visitors to site management, and reporting unsafe practices to management.

Unsafe behaviours include interfering with scaffolding and EWPs, mistreating safety equipment, throwing things from heights, taking short cuts, and being mentally or physically unfit for work.