

APRIL 2021

WORKPLACE ISSUES

HOW TO

Consult, investigate,
manage noise and falls

RESETTING CONTRACTOR SAFETY

Changing culture and safety
in forest industry

SAFETY, WELLBEING

Mental health, domestic violence,
alcohol, sexual harassment and more

Work Safe
TASMANIA

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Resetting contractor safety

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Alcohol and your health

Find out how workplaces can support their workers who wish to reduce their drinking.

Publisher

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Online

To see current and past editions, our warnings about telefraud and graphic images, and to subscribe, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au then choose the 'Resources' button then the 'Workplace Issues magazine' link.

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Throughout, the acronyms 'WHS' stands for work health and safety and 'PCBU' stands for person conducting a business or undertaking.

ROBYN PEARCE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WORKSAFE TASMANIA

Consult with your workers



Having a safety policy and set of safe work procedures in place, machine guarding on your equipment, locked storage for your chemicals, mechanical aids to lift heavy loads — all are important for the safety and health of your workers.

But underpinning all these measures, and crucial to their ongoing success, is consultation with your workers. It's the essential foundation of every step you take to improve safety and health in your workplace.

Consultation means providing your workers with information and taking into account their views before making decisions affecting WHS: so, before writing your policy and procedures, designing a new building, buying the trolley for moving supplies, or installing the machine guarding.

By drawing on the knowledge and experience of your workers (and their representatives, and your contractors and any volunteers), you can make more informed decisions about how the work in your business should be carried out safely. Don't underestimate your workers' input: they often have first-hand knowledge, experience and ideas about how to reduce safety risks, make improvements and find solutions.

Consultation is legally required under our WHS laws. There are some very specific times when you must consult, including when identifying hazards and assessing risk, and making decisions about what measures you'll put in place to reduce or remove those risks; and when proposing changes to your work environment, processes, practices, or purchasing decisions (for example, of chemicals or equipment) that affect workers' health and safety.

What specifically does safety consultation look like? It's discussing new initiatives or existing challenges face to face with your workers, or sending emails where you ask your workers for their input and feedback on the matter at hand. It's having safety representatives and committees who are active and engaged with their

in the workplace, regularly talking with you and with your workers. It's engaging with workers through safety sessions at inductions, toolbox meetings, and in training sessions. It's welcoming their input, giving it serious consideration and giving feedback on whether or not the input is being accepted.

But I would encourage you to think beyond mere compliance. As well as shaping your hazard management, genuine and thorough consultation can contribute to a positive, robust workplace culture, where everyone has shared safety values, where safety is top of mind always, and prevention is prioritised. In best practice it moves beyond consultation to co-designing solutions with safety intentionally part of the process design. It's where everyone thinks and acts safely.

A safe workplace is more easily achieved when everyone involved in the work communicates with each other and works together to identify hazards and risks, talks about any WHS concerns, and works together to find solutions.

And the benefits of those outcomes are higher productivity, less staff turnover and stress leave. I'm sure every employer or business owner wants to achieve that.

To see a workplace put consultation in action for positive safety outcomes, see our article on Sustainable Timber Tasmania on the next page.

The WorkSafe Tasmania Awards are back!

WorkSafe Tasmania welcomes all Tasmanian businesses and individuals that have made a commitment to work health, safety, wellbeing or injury management to enter the 2021 WorkSafe Tasmania Awards.

The Awards recognises businesses, organisations or individuals who are leading the way in work health and safety around the state.

Whether you've developed a workplace health and wellbeing initiative, an injury management system or created an innovative work health and safety solution, the Awards are a great opportunity to gain recognition.

The Awards are held biennially but were postponed last year due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently this year we have added an additional award to recognise excellence in the responses made by workplaces to rapidly changing working environments, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2021 categories are:

- ▶ **Category 1: Excellence in work health and safety systems**
- ▶ **Category 2: Excellence in implementing a work health and safety solution**
- ▶ **Category 3: Excellence in work health and safety culture**
- ▶ **Category 4: Excellence in contributions to work health and safety**
- ▶ **Category 5: Excellence achieved by a health and safety representative**
- ▶ **Category 6: Excellence in injury management**
- ▶ **Category 7: Excellence in an individual's contribution to injury management**
- ▶ **Category 8: Excellence in a workplace health and wellbeing initiative**
- ▶ **Category 9: Excellence in a workplace response to COVID-19**
- ▶ **Leadership Excellence Award (closed category; entrants for this category are chosen from categories one to nine by the WorkSafe Awards judging panel).**

Finalists and winners will be announced at a dinner presentation during WorkSafe Month in Hobart on 1 October at the Hotel Grand Chancellor.

Entry is easy—simply go to worksafe.tas.gov.au/awards to enter, or call us on 1300 366 322 or email wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au.

Entries will close at 11:59pm on 31 May 2021.



Celebrating excellence at work

The WorkSafe Tasmania Awards are an initiative funded by the WorkCover Tasmania Board.



Empowering workplaces.

People
AT WORK

Helping your people at work with mental health



The new, free People at Work digital tool is dedicated to helping employers create mentally healthy workplaces and meet their responsibility under work health and safety laws to identify and manage psychosocial risks in their workplace.

Workplaces have a duty to protect the psychological health of workers in the same way they protect their physical safety.

People at Work is free for Tasmanian businesses to help you identify, assess and manage work-related psychosocial hazards and factors. Importantly, it doesn't need an expert to interpret the psychosocial risk assessment results.

As an employer, you can send a clear message to your workers that you value their mental health and wellbeing. You can also reap the benefits of reduced workers' compensation claims and improved worker productivity, satisfaction and engagement.

The hazards measured by the People at Work survey are based on decades of research highlighting the factors that influence a worker's psychological health and safety. The psychosocial hazards are also based on guidance from Safe Work Australia.

The online platform lays out an easy to follow five-step process with resources, interactive learning modules, a self-administered survey, and automated custom reports. It enables you to:

- self-administer the People at Work survey to your workers (please note you must have at least 20 people to complete the survey. However, if you are a small business with less than 20 people, you can still use the other online resources)
- add custom demographics like workgroups and roles
- receive automated reporting with key breakdowns to identify high risk areas, with recommended control measures, benchmarking, and guidance.

Australian work health and safety regulators have jointly funded People at Work to provide free tools and resources. Funding partners are WorkSafe Tasmania and the WorkCover Tasmania Board, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, SafeWork NSW, WorkSafe Victoria, Comcare, Safe Work Australia, SafeWork SA, NT WorkSafe, WorkSafe ACT and WorkSafe WA.

Learn more about People at Work at peopleatwork.gov.au.

Resetting contractor safety

After experiencing its worst year of serious incidents and rising lost time injury frequency rates, Sustainable Timber Tasmania knew it had to do something different — before someone died.

Over a 12 month period, with tremendous investment, commitment and co-operation by everybody, Sustainable Timber Tasmania and its contractors turned the situation around from being the worst in a decade to the point where no serious incidents have been recorded since this safety 'reset'.

'In early 2019, we had a spate of serious incidents, and we knew we had to put together a plan to turn this around,' said Sustainable Timber Tasmania's Work Health and Safety Manager Theresa Weller. 'We were averaging 16 serious incidents over a 12 month rolling period. That's more than one a month.' A high proportion of these had the potential for someone to die; almost as high as the risk of someone suffering permanent or extensive injuries.

The first step Sustainable Timber Tasmania took was to gather its contractors together; a meeting that Theresa admits was 'very sombre'. Everyone knew the toll these incidents were having personally and in the industry, and 'dreaded the phone ringing in case it was another extreme incident'. 'We were all afraid a fatality was just around the corner,' said Theresa.

There was consensus that previous ways of managing safety were not working. Sustainable Timber Tasmania was in a position to provide greater support and resources to its empower and skill its contractors, ultimately so forest workers could go home safely at the end of each working day.

As a result of many month of consultation and work, and with the full support and commitment of Sustainable Timber Tasmania's Board and General Management team, three new tools were developed: Safety Culture training, a safety manual, online induction program, and incident investigation training.

'We needed a single reference document which outlined Sustainable Timber Tasmania's standards of safety practice clearly and simply, that staff and contractors would follow to maintain safe work practices,' said Theresa. 'The Forest Safety Code, the standard that the industry works to, is currently being reviewed, but we couldn't wait for that to be completed. So we looked at our current procedures, consulted with our contractors and discussed what guidance they needed.'



Since it was first produced, the manual has been reviewed to ensure it remains relevant and accurate for everyone using it. Sustainable Timber Tasmania has made it available in printed copies and online to all contractors.

'Our contractors have welcomed it as an on-site reference for them. It's clear and easy to follow; it's a single consistent safety reference,' said Theresa.

The previous induction system was also overhauled. 'We used a manual paper process before, and only the principal contractor was required to complete it,' explained Theresa. 'Now it's online, built in-house to our specific needs and operations, and every single contracted worker must complete it before starting work with us. This means everyone learns the safety requirements.'

One innovative feature is the induction's voice over narration. 'We recognise that the literacy levels in our industry varies, and the voice over ensures people understand what is required.'

The third tool was providing investigation training to contractors. 'We expected our contractors to provide a good investigative report to us following an incident,' said Theresa. 'But if you don't know what to look for or what to ask, it's easy to simply say it was the operator's fault.' Now contractors are trained to look for factors surrounding an issue to get to its cause: the plant and equipment, the work environment, work systems and procedures, and organisational issues (see our article on page 11 for more about conducting your own investigations).

in forest industry

Getting a clear understanding of the cause of an incident has allowed Sustainable Timber Tasmania to roll out Incident Learnings. These safety communication tools provide notice of safety-related incidents and actions that workers and contractors should take to prevent similar occurrences.

Again, contractors' responses have been positive. 'We have provided the tools for contractors to work out why an incident has happened. Our contractors are getting some satisfaction from knowing they can prevent it from happening again, so their workers can go home to their family and friends.'

The resources and support from Sustainable Timber Tasmania has also enabled contractors to improve their own business operations and the way they manage and approach safety. For small or micro businesses, and those working for other clients besides Sustainable Timber Tasmania, this has been invaluable.

The final major initiative that Sustainable Timber Tasmania is currently in the last stages of rolling out for its contractors is the Safety Circle program. This approach to safety, which Sustainable Timber Tasmania has had in its own business for 20 years, is about making safety personal: shifting people's focus to their personal reasons for being safe at work, such as family, friends, and the things that are important outside of work, and how their lives would be affected by an injury. It also empowers everyone, 'whether it's the CEO or the guy using the chainsaw', to speak up if they see something unsafe or the potential for an incident to occur.

A pilot program ran in mid-2019 for the north east native forest harvesting operations followed by the southern native forest harvesting operations. Classroom training sessions and in-field 'go and see' visits were held; and everyone was included: the bush bosses, their Sustainable Timber Tasmania supervisors, and all workers. This ensured everyone was on the same safety page.

'I must admit, I wasn't sure if talking about personal motivations would go down well with some of the men!' admits Theresa. 'But you could see people's attitudes change, see when people understood the value of thinking about their reason for working safely. It also empowers people to stop someone if they see something unsafe and get them to make a better choice and reset. It's really simple and it has worked.'

Since introducing the Safety Circle approach, and undoubtedly combined with the implementation of the other tools, Theresa reports there have been zero incidents with serious potential and

no lost time injuries in this operational area. 'This is a credit to all the participants' genuine commitment to the goal of everyone getting home safe and well today and every day,' said Theresa.

The difference in statistics is stark, but it goes further than that.

'We have seen the attitude and culture towards safety change. Our contractors have gone from saying safety was 'too hard' and that they often ignored unsafe acts.

'Now they are telling us there is a significant improvement in communication on site, and more positive working relationships, and people have the confidence to interrupt and call out unsafe acts if they see them.

'Our contractors are giving us good feedback and stories, so we're not just reporting incidents any more — we're also communicating good news, too. And when people know how others are working and thinking about safety, it creates a momentum for everyone to do the right thing.'





CHECK IN TAS MANDATORY FROM 1 MAY 2021

Many businesses and organisations will be required to use the free Check in TAS app to collect contact information about everyone who spends time at their premises or event.

This means that Tasmanians and visitors will also be legally required to check-in through the app when they visit these premises from 1 May.

Check in TAS is available for patrons to download from the Google Play Store and Apple App Store. If you don't have a smartphone or are unable to use one, others in your group can check-in for you or staff at the premises will be able to check you in manually.

For more information, to see if this applies to your business or organisation and to register visit www.checkin.tas.gov.au or call the Public Health Hotline on **1800 671 738**.

**KEEP
ON TOP OF
COVID**

www.checkin.tas.gov.au

Domestic and family violence: It *IS* a workplace issue

SAFETY

Like bullying and mental health in recent years, domestic and family violence is being increasingly acknowledged and addressed by our governments, the media, and within our communities.

You may be reading this and thinking, isn't domestic and family violence a private matter? Outside our responsibilities as an employer?

Domestic violence in Australia

Approximately 1.4 million Australian women are living (or have lived) in an abusive relationship. Of these women, over half are in the paid workforce. And perpetrators are, too. Men can also be victims of violence and abuse.

According to the Diversity Council Australia (dca.org.au), domestic violence is a critical issue for the workplace, especially as COVID-19 blurred the line between home and office, while also driving a documented spike in violence against women.

So chances are someone in your workplace is affected.

How domestic violence is a workplace issue

Domestic and family violence can affect a person's attendance, performance, concentration and productivity. It can make it difficult for them to get to work, and can mean they have to take time off work: to deal with legal matters, doctors or counselling appointments for themselves or their children.

According to the Diversity Council Australia's CEO Lisa Annese, 'It's a myth that domestic and family violence doesn't have anything to do with the workplace. If an employee is living with, or using, domestic or family violence, it will have an impact on the workplace through absenteeism, presenteeism and the costs of replacement hiring.

'While workplaces may have concerns about implementing policies like paid leave for domestic violence, research shows that they have a hugely positive impact for employees and business alike, for a relatively small cost.'

The violence may also extend into the workplace, with the perpetrator harassing the victim with phone calls or emails, or entering their workplace.

This risk is increased if the victim works in an industry with public access, such as the retail, hospitality or health sectors.

Perpetrators often use work phone, email and IT resources to carry out their abuse. They may also extend their abuse to your other workers and clients.

How workplaces can make a difference

Economic factors are the most significant predictor of whether a woman stays or leaves an abusive relationship. Having a job provides financial independence that supports a woman's choices.

An informed and supportive workplace can make someone feel safe to disclose their situation.

Safety planning for the workplace can protect them and their co-workers, and enable them to maintain their productivity and meaningful contribution to your business.

Workplaces can also ensure that a perpetrator's use of work resources for their abuse is not tolerated.

Increase security

Whatever you plan, always include the person experiencing the violence. You might consider:

- ensuring safe work access and parking: well-lit, close to the main entrance
- using an internal code word known to all staff that signals help is needed
- ensuring co-workers and workplace systems can protect the worker's privacy
- adjusting the worker's hours or place of work.

Manage emails, phone calls at the workplace

If it doesn't prevent the worker from performing their duties, consider removing their name or phone number from public information.

Notify the police and workplace security immediately of any emails or phone calls that breach a restraining order.

Ask the person experiencing the violence to keep a record of emails and phone calls. This can be used as evidence to help obtain a restraining order or prove an existing order has been breached.

Raising awareness, providing support

A few years ago there was stigma surrounding mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. Now there is openness and support in many workplaces. Raising our awareness about the issues helps people get help.

CEO of Our Watch (ourwatch.org.au) CEO Patty Kinnersly said, 'There has been a huge shift in the community conversation about this issue in recent times. Violence against women is recognised as the serious and highly prevalent crime that it is, and most people understand that addressing this crisis is the entire community's responsibility.'

'Given workplaces are where we spend so much of our time and have such a huge influence over our lives, it's critical they take an active role in promoting gender equality and addressing the drivers of violence against women.'

May is Domestic and Family Violence Month.

Resources for workplaces:

- ▶ Family and domestic violence at the workplace: Safe Work Australia. Go to safeworkaustralia.gov.au and search for 'family violence'
- ▶ Support someone experiencing domestic and family violence: Queensland Government. Go to qld.gov.au and search for 'support someone'
- ▶ Myth Busting Domestic and Family Violence at Work: Diversity Council Australia and Our Watch. Go to dca.org.au and search for 'myth busting domestic'

Resources to help individuals:

- ▶ 1800respect.org.au: the national sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling service
- ▶ engenderequality.org.au: a Hobart-based not-for-profit providing specialist counselling services for women who are currently or have experienced family and domestic violence
- ▶ www.oneinthree.com.au: for male victims of domestic violence
- ▶ your employee assistance program, especially if it has expertise in this area.

Outdoor workers: Working safely in the cold

A cold winter's day in Tasmania can put outdoor workers at risk of injury or illness. The symptoms are not likely to be extreme, but can lead to an increase in minor incidents and injuries and loss of productivity. Cold muscles are also more prone to sprains and strains from manual handling tasks.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia can result from extended exposure to cold temperatures or a cool, damp environment. It doesn't have to be snowing: even at temperatures of about 15° C, mild hypothermia can set in.

While hypothermia can happen in cold winter weather with low temperatures or low wind chill factors, it can occur under mild conditions as well. A rain shower that soaks you to the skin on a cool day can lead to hypothermia if you don't move inside to warm up and dry off. Sweating is the same.

Other causes include inadequate clothing and neglecting to cover your head, hands and feet; fatigue and exhaustion; dehydration; and alcohol intake.

Signs and symptoms

These symptoms are not always likely to be recognised, but rather put down to fatigue or just feeling off colour. Train your outdoor workers in the symptoms, risks and prevention strategies for hypothermia.

Mild hypothermia is where the body's core temperature, which is normally 37° C, drops to 37–35.5° C. Signs and symptoms include:

- shivering that's not under voluntary control
- not able to perform complex motor functions but still able to walk and talk
- numb hands and feet.

Moderate hypothermia is where the body's core temperature drops to 35–33.8° C. Signs and symptoms include:

- dazed or 'fuzzy' thinking
- loss of fine motor coordination, particularly in hands
- slurred speech
- violent shivering
- irrational behaviour; an 'I don't care' attitude.

Look for the 'umbles': stumbles, mumbles, fumbles, and grumbles.

Safety risks

Obviously even the mild symptoms can create a hazard on an outdoor worksite. Lack of mental and physical co-ordination could put fellow workers at risk.

While many outdoor worksites recognise the need to protect their workers in hot weather — providing sun protection and adequate rest and rehydration breaks — it's worthwhile performing the same risk assessment on outdoor workers in cold weather.

What workplaces can do

- Consider whether outside work can be delayed or completed at a warmer part of the year.
- Adjust the pace of work to reduce overheating, which can lead to sweating.
- Provide heating in cabs and warm break out/rest rooms.
- Provide protection, such as a hut or the cabin of a vehicle.
- Provide warm and waterproof clothing. Loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing is best. Outer clothing made of tightly woven, water-repellent material is best for wind protection. Wool, silk or polypropylene inner layers hold more body heat than cotton does. Look for fabrics that wick moisture away from the body. Where workers move between different temperatures or become hot and sweaty due to physical activity, make sure they have a spare change of dry protective clothing.

- Arrange work tasks to prevent sitting and standing for long periods of time, and instead allow workers to keep their body moving to keep warm and limbs awake.
- Enable workers who are not used to working in cold conditions to acclimatise.

What workers can do

- Stay as dry as possible. In the winter, pay special attention to your feet. Working in wet boots and socks in low temperatures can lead to a condition known as 'trench foot' or 'immersion foot', which is similar to frostbite but without freezing.
- Avoid activities that would cause you to sweat a lot. The combination of wet clothing and cold weather can lead to rapid heat loss. Sweating increases dehydration, so make sure you keep your fluid intake up.
- Wear a hat or other protective covering to prevent body heat from escaping from your head, face and neck. If your job entails wearing a hard hat, then wear a thermal cap or balaclava that is thin enough to allow you to maintain a correct fit of your hard hat.
- Wear gloves or mittens (depending on the work to be performed). Mittens are more effective than gloves because mittens keep your fingers in closer contact with one another, but may be impractical for some tasks.
- Avoid coffee and alcohol, as they lead to dehydration and impair the body's ability to regulate heat. Warm/hot drinks are best for warming up the body.

Get the code

Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'facilities code' to get the code of practice on Managing the work environment and facilities.



From our Advisors: How to run an effective incident investigation

In our new regular column, our Advisory Service will bring you practical guidance about issues they see in the workplaces they visit. This edition, Senior Advisor Brett Hislop guides you through the principles and practices of running your own workplace investigation.

An incident is defined within Australian Standards as 'any unplanned event resulting in, or having a potential for injury, ill health, damage or other loss'. It is therefore reasonable to state that incidents are not planned in workplaces. However when they do occur, there is a responsibility by the employer to identify the cause/s and take reasonable action to prevent them from reoccurring.

All too often, investigations are inadequate or poorly done. They attempt to apportion blame on the worker or workers involved in the incident and focus too much on human error.

Most incidents are the result of system failures, inadequate risk assessment, poor work practice, work culture, defective or poorly maintained equipment, inadequate training, time pressure and so on.

What to do first

If an incident does occur in your workplace, there are some initial steps you should take:

- make the incident scene safe
- treat injured workers (if applicable)
- take photographs of the incident scene; too many is never enough
- get the names of people associated with the incident (regardless of who they are)
- take witness statements as soon as possible after the incident.

If the incident is a notifiable incident, you must notify WorkSafe Tasmania immediately. For information on how to do this and requirements around matters such as not disturbing the incident site, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and choose the red Notify button.

Questions to ask

Once these have been achieved, then keep in mind the famous saying by Rudyard Kipling: 'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew), their names are What and Why and When and How and Where and Who'.

Use these points when framing questions about the incident: what happened? When did the incident occur? How did it happen? What did you see?

Start a timeline of events that covers all elements of the activity, from the start of the shift until the incident occurred, and actions taken post-incident until you begin your investigation.

This would also include a review of all associated documents such as your risk assessments, safe operating procedures, plant pre-start checks, worker competencies, and notes from any pre-start meeting.'

Following this, dig deeper and assess environmental conditions around the time of the incident, shift arrangements, hours worked, staffing levels for the task, time constraints, supervision and so on.

Essentially, your investigation should consider all elements of the work system:

- environment
- work methods
- equipment
- materials
- people
- organisational culture.

Training and external help

If you can, having key workers or WHS personnel trained in a form of recognised incident methodology (such as ICAM, TapRoot, 5 Whys) is a real bonus if you're serious about finding the causal factors that lead to incidents occurring, and ensuring that your controls are implemented in the correct areas of your operations to prevent recurrence.

Or you might consider using the services of external workplace incident investigators to ensure the investigation, findings and proposed actions are undertaken in an impartial manner.

What to do next

Don't just ask questions during your investigation: look for solutions and control measures to prevent a similar incident occurring again. Ensure the controls you identify are implemented within the operational areas where deficiencies were found.

The 'SMART' acronym is worth considering: make sure your controls are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. Implementing controls that are complex, expensive, difficult to get in place, unrealistic and take long periods are not always practical in achieving a successful outcome. However, the exception is changing your workplace culture; this may require planning and time to gain a reasonable outcome.

Consultation

You should complete a report of your investigation in the shortest possible timeframe. Provide it to your managers for review, as well as to your workers.

You should also consult with your workers about any proposed changes in the workplace, explaining why the changes are needed and how these will improve workplace safety.

No business owner or worker wants to see or be involved in a workplace incident. Therefore every effort should be taken to prevent incidents from occurring. But if they do, then take the time and the energy to truly find out what happened, where the system was deficient, and how similar incidents can be prevented from happening again.

To book your free and confidential visit with an Advisor, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au/advisoryservice



Alcohol and your health

Drinking more

You've probably heard in the media how Australians drank more alcohol, more frequently, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. And anecdotally, it's probably something many of us may have acknowledged, too.

A study by the Australian National University last year found that simply spending more time at home (either due to lockdowns, carer responsibilities or working from home) meant an increase in alcohol consumption during those months. Increased stress levels also contributed: for men, due to job loss or fewer working hours; for women, because of the demands of child-caring (anu.edu.au). A glass of wine or a beer at the end of a tough day felt like a good way of coping.

Since then, we've also had Christmas, summer holidays, Easter and long weekends, too, with end-of-year parties and barbecues.

So maybe you're looking for ways to cut back on how much you drink, for whatever reason. Here are things that individuals can do, and ways workplaces can support anyone who wishes to reduce their drinking.

How much is too much?

The Australian Government recommends that healthy men and women drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week, and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.

A standard drink is a can or stubbie of mid-strength beer, 100ml of wine, or a 30ml shot of spirits.

To find out how many standard drinks you're having, check your drink label, and go to health.gov.au and search for 'standard drinks'.

Alcohol and your health

Drinking heavily can put you at risk of short-term injury or illness. The effects can also accumulate, harming your health over your lifetime. Long-term effects can include:

- increased risk of weight gain
- diabetes
- cancers such as breast, bowel and liver cancer
- high blood pressure, heart damage and heart attacks
- brain damage, stroke and dementia
- depression, anxiety, increased risk of suicide
- impotence and fertility problems.

It can also be a factor in violent and anti-social behaviour, family violence, road accidents and other accidents.

Drinking less: What you can do

These tips may help you cut down:

- have a few alcohol-free days each week, to help you stay healthy and break any unhealthy habits (such as reaching for a drink each day after work)

- limit how much alcohol you keep in the house. Just like chocolate or chips, if it's not the house, you can't be tempted!
- change your after-work routine from using a glass of wine or beer to unwind, to something that doesn't involve drinking, such as taking the dog for a walk
- delay that first drink of the day; and drink only when dinner is served (no pre-dinner drinks)
- set yourself a drinks limit and stick to it. This means counting your drinks; remember, a drink in a bar or restaurant might contain more than one standard drink
- drink water before you start drinking alcohol, and drink water or a non-alcoholic drink between alcoholic one
- drink slowly, and finish your drink before you start another; if you 'top up', you might lose track of how many you've had.

For more ideas, go to alcoholthinkagain.com.au and search for 'tips reduce'.

You may also find online support that can help. Hello Sunday Morning has information and resources, including an app, to help you change your alcohol use. Go to hellosundaymorning.org.

There are ways we can support those who are reducing their alcohol intake. For example, don't make fun of them for ordering a soft drink at an event (maybe order one, too, to support them) or say 'just one won't hurt, you're no fun!'.



WorkSafe Advisory Service

See us at Agfest 2021



Drinking less: Workplace strategies

These strategies can be part of your workplace wellbeing program:

- provide information and resources about reducing drinking, understanding triggers, and the health benefits that lowering alcohol consumption will bring. Maybe organise a guest speaker who can talk about these matters
- if you normally serve alcohol at work functions, try a 'dry' event once in a while, or at least offer low and no-alcohol drinks. Or if end-of-week socialising is usually done at the local pub, organise a catch up that doesn't involve drinking
- offer time off to see your employer's assistance program, their doctor, a counsellor, a support group, or a service such as Alcoholics Anonymous (aa.org.au) or the Tasmanian Alcohol and Drug Service (dhhs.tas.gov.au/mentalhealth/alcohol_and_drug)
- promote events such as Febfast (febfast.org.au) and Dry July (dryjuly.com). These are light-hearted challenges that people can (voluntarily) take part in with their co-workers, friends and family, and help a good cause at the same time (both raise money for charities).

WorkSafe Tasmania will be Agfest this year (5–8 May) in the Tasmanian Government tent.

This year, as part of its commitment to providing a COVID safe event, all tickets to Agfest must be pre-purchased online.

To buy your tickets and for more information, go to agfest.com.au.

Want your workplace to be healthy and safe?

Free help is at hand



Spotlight on Education and

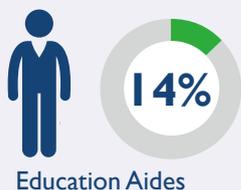


Each edition we focus on different industries that WorkSafe has identified as priority industries. This edition we will throw the spotlight on the Education and Training (Education) industry and the Wholesale Trade (Wholesale) industry.

EDUCATION INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT 2019



Occupations with the highest percentage of serious injuries



TASMANIA'S EDUCATION INDUSTRY

Education workforce

The Education industry covers not just schools, but also pre-schools, universities, adult and community education, and educational support services (such as curriculum development and exam development services). School education is by far the biggest employer in the industry (and indeed in the state), making up 62% of the industry.

Over half of workers in the Education industry are employed full-time, a lower proportion than the 62% of workers employed full-time statewide.

Education has a higher percentage of workers aged 45 and over than the statewide average. Five in ten workers in Education are aged 45 or older, compared to around 4 in 10 statewide.

Education injuries

There were 700 injuries across the industry in 2019. A third of all these injuries required at least one week off work.

School education had the highest serious injury frequency rate. School teachers reported the highest percentage of serious injuries, followed by cleaners/laundry workers and then teachers aides.

Workers aged 55 and over reported the highest serious injury frequency rate.

Workers in this industry are likely to be injured at work due to body stressing, falls slips and trips, and mental stress.

Education resources

Our Education and Training industry web page has links to relevant resources that cover common hazards its workers are exposed to, such as slips trips and falls, hazardous manual tasks, occupational violence and aggression, fatigue and more. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'education'.

Wholesale

All data, unless otherwise noted, is for 2019.

A serious injury is one that results in the worker requiring at least one week of time off work due to their injury. Injury frequency rates are calculated as the number of injuries per million hours worked.

TASMANIA'S WHOLESALE INDUSTRY

Wholesale workforce

This industry covers businesses that buy and sell finished products to other businesses. This covers the gamut from grocery and liquor wholesaling, motor vehicle parts wholesaling, machinery and motor vehicle wholesaling, to agricultural products wholesaling — and everything in between.

It is only 2% of the total Tasmanian workforce.

85% of Wholesale workers are employed full-time, much higher than the 62% employed full-time statewide. And 18% of its workers are employed in Grocery, Liquor and Tobacco Product Wholesaling, making it the largest employing group within the industry.

Wholesale injuries

The Wholesale industry reported 223 injuries in 2019.

The industry's serious injury frequency rate in 2019 was 25% higher than ten years earlier (in comparison to the statewide average, which decreased by 9% over the same period).

As the industry's largest employing group, the Grocery, Liquor and Tobacco Product Wholesaling group had the highest serious injury frequency rate, accounting for 38% of injuries.

Storepersons reported the highest percentage of serious injuries.

Wholesale resources

Our Wholesale industry web page has links to relevant resources that cover hazards such as hazardous manual tasks, noise, plant, and slips trips and falls. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'wholesale trade'.

Industry snapshots

WorkSafe's Industry snapshot report and posters, which these columns draw on:

- survey the WHS performance of each industry group
- identify emerging or existing WHS issues for evaluation and action
- compare most current WHS performance relative to previous years and, where applicable, to other industries across Tasmania.

Find your industry's snapshot: go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'industry snapshots'.

WHOLESALE INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT 2019



Occupations with the highest
percentage of serious injuries



Falling from heights: Are you at risk?

Falling from height is the most common cause of fatalities on building and construction sites. Particularly hazardous situations for construction workers include working:

- from unsecured ladders
- near unprotected open edges of floors or roofs
- near unguarded excavations, trenches or shafts
- from unstable structures such as incomplete or incorrect scaffolding.

Employers at building and construction sites must put in place control measures that remove or reduce the risk of their workers falling from heights. This article guides you through the steps to achieve this.

Ask the right questions

To start the process, ask these questions:

- Can the work be done on the ground, to eliminate the need to even work at height at all?
- Can a fall be prevented by working on a solid construction? That is, in an existing building or structure (such as a flat roof with permanently installed guard rails around the edges)?
- Can the risk of a fall be reduced by providing and maintaining a safe system of work, such as a fall prevention device (like installing guard rails); or if that's not practicable, a work positioning system (like an industrial rope access system); or if that's not practicable, a fall arrest system?

Working your way through these questions and options — in this order — will help you come up with the best solutions (which may even be a combination of measures).

Consider your control measures

Work on the ground or a solid construction that can safely support workers and the materials and tools they need to do the job.

When this can't be done, your first control option is a **fall prevention device**. This is equipment that prevents a fall from temporary work at heights. Examples include scaffolds, elevating work platforms, perimeter and other guardrails, and secure fencing. Once in place, these don't need any ongoing adjustment, alteration or operation to ensure their integrity.

If these options are not practicable, then consider a **work positioning system**. This includes any plant or structure, other than a temporary work platform, that enables a person to be positioned and safely supported at a location in such a way that a fall is prevented.

For example, a harness can be connected by a lanyard to a suitable anchorage point or static line. This equipment is set up in a way that prevents the worker from reaching an unprotected edge that they could fall from.

Fall arrest systems such as harnesses and safety nets — which safely stop a worker falling an uncontrolled distance and reduce the impact of the fall — are only to be considered and used if it's not practicable to use a fall prevention device or work positioning system, or if these higher level controls might not be fully effective in preventing a fall on their own.

Consultation and training

Make sure you involve your workers and contractors who work at heights as you work through these questions, and consider

your control measures. The people doing the work will have valuable insights and experience into problems and possible solutions.

Once you have arrived at the option (or options) best suited to your worksite and risks, don't forget the work you need to do to make these controls work effectively:

- develop safe work procedures for them, which includes a schedule for inspections and maintenance. This may need to include emergency procedures for what to do if someone falls
- train your workers in how to use them correctly
- supervise your workers, especially if they're unfamiliar with the working environment or they're being trained in how to use the control measure
- make sure your workers are fit to perform the work and not be affected by alcohol or drugs including prescribed medication which may affect or impair their ability to work at height.

And don't forget to review whatever option you choose, to make sure it is working as planned and isn't introducing new problems.

Get the code

There are two codes of practice that offer practical advice and full details on control measures for preventing falls:

- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Managing the risk of falls in housing construction.

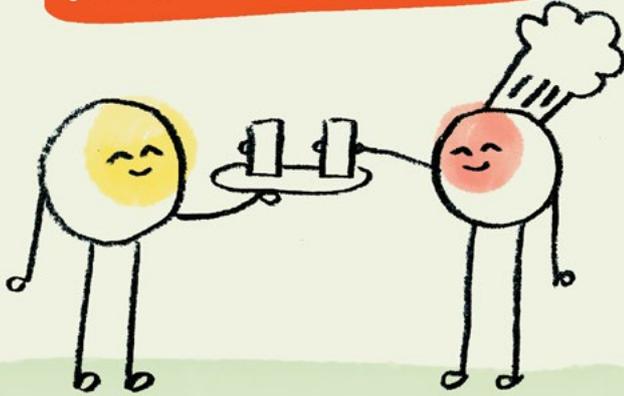
Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP122' and 'CP127'.

See *Prosecutions later in this edition for a working from height incident.*

**IF YOU'RE A
BUSINESS OWNER**

**we've GOT YOU
COVERED at**

checkin.ORG.AU



Running your own business can be tough at the best of times, and even more so with all the recent challenges.

That's why the Mental Health Council of Tasmania has created checkin.org.au, to help you check in on your own mental wellbeing and create a mentally healthy workplace that supports you, your colleagues and workers. You'll discover great websites, training, chat support and services that suit you and your workplace needs.

There's never been a better time to #checkin on your mental wellbeing, so head to checkin.org.au to find out how.

Tasmanian resource for creating a mentally healthy workplace



HEAD4WORK

Creating a mentally healthy workplace is everyone's job. And now, more than ever, we need to be aware of our own mental health and look out for signs of distress in those we work with.

Head4Work is an online training tool that will help workers, supervisors and managers know how they can reduce workplace mental health risks and support themselves and their co-workers when concerns about mental health arise. It is suitable for small businesses (20 or fewer workers).

It is simple to use and requires no prior knowledge of workplace mental health. It will quickly identify the skills and knowledge you need, and has over 40 short videos and checklists to help your learning.

Head4Work can be done anytime and on any device, including your mobile phone. Available 24/7, it's a great workplace mental health information resource to have on hand all year round.

Head4Work has 3 easy steps to improving workplace mental health:

- Step 1: Know what you don't know. By completing the interactive quizzes you will identify any skills or knowledge gaps you might have about workplace mental health.

- Step 2: Personalised learning. The program can then point you to its extensive range of videos, checklists and links specific to what you need to know.
- Step 3: Resit only the questions you missed. After getting feedback about any questions you may have answered incorrectly, you will have the opportunity to test your knowledge of these areas again.

You can even use Head4Work to get a snapshot of your workplace's risk profile. By getting your workers to complete the online survey, you can access a report that provides a detailed understanding of where critical shortfalls in workplace mental health safety may exist within your organisation. This data provides you with a tailored evidence based approach to identifying and addressing workplace mental health risks.

The Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, through a grant from the WorkCover Tasmania Board, is providing Tasmanian businesses with free access to Head4Work.

To access Head4Work, go to head4work.com.au



How workplace rehab providers can help return to work

A workplace rehabilitation provider (WRP) is an organisation, accredited by the WorkCover Tasmania Board under the *Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, to provide workplace rehabilitation services.

A WRP helps injured/ill workers remain at work, or return to work, by providing expert advice/services (see below). This must be done in consultation with workers, employers, insurers, treating doctors and other health providers, and must be tailored to the worker's specific circumstances.

Workplace rehabilitation services

The services that are prescribed under the Act are very specialised and must be delivered by people who have the appropriate qualifications (in an allied health or health related field), experience and expertise.

These services include assessing the functional capacity of the injured worker; job analysis, advice about job modification, and rehabilitation counselling. Find the full list on the WorkSafe Tasmania website; go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'WRP'.

A WRP identifies and addresses the critical physical, psychological, social, environmental and organisational risk factors that may affect a worker's ability to successfully return to work.

The benefits of engaging a WRP in the return to work process include the use of clinical reasoning within the injury management process, interpretation of medical information, understanding of the literature in terms of any risk and hazards that might arise, and knowledge of evidenced based practice. Engaging a WRP ensures safety in practice through accreditation.

How to become an accredited WRP: Changes

In 2018, the Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities (HWCA) initiated a review the Nationally Consistent Approval Framework for Workplace Rehabilitation Providers (the Framework). In 2019, HWCA agreed that each state would develop its own principles-based framework for accreditation of WRPs and delivery of their services. The WorkCover Tasmania Board is consulting with WRPs and other stakeholders to do this for Tasmania.

In the meantime, the current Framework's approval and ongoing monitoring processes remain in place. For updates as they become available, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'WRP'.

Workplace scenarios

- A worker with a diagnosed psychological condition can achieve a successful return to work with the implementation of appropriate mental health and wellbeing support for both the worker and their employer. This can be facilitated by effective WRP communications with the worker, treating doctors and workplace managers, to develop awareness and improved understanding. The worker needs medical professional involvement to optimise health and to provide suitable strategies. At the same time, the employer can help by applying good mental health support and providing suitable duties. This co-operative approach will support a successful return to work. The WRP will support the best health outcomes for the worker, and effective operational outcomes for the employer.
- The optimum recovery from a physical condition can be achieved by applying evidence based treatments and interventions from an early stage. WRP involvement can facilitate these outcomes. A WRP is well-positioned to ensure good work design is employed and to make recommendations for any workplace adjustments needed to ensure safety. This will reduce any potential risk for the injured worker. The goal is to deliver the best possible health benefits in order to achieve maximal medical improvement in the shortest timeframe.

This article supplied by the Tasmanian Association of Vocational Rehabilitation Providers tavrp.com.au

Resources

For more information about WRPs, becoming an accredited WRP, and a list of accredited WRPs in accredited as workplace rehabilitation providers in Tasmania by the WorkCover Tasmania Board, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'WRP'.

About workers compensation: What to do when there is a dispute

Most employers, insurers and workers work together harmoniously during a workers compensation claim, to make sure the injured worker is supported and compensated as they get treatment, recover and begin the return to work process.

However, we recognise there are times when not all sides agree, and the process becomes rocky. Disputes are commonly over:

- issues around weekly payments: starting or stopping the payments, the amount, any reduction
- liability for a claim: for example, whether the injury was work-related
- payment of medical, rehabilitation or other expenses
- return to work or rehabilitation programs.

So what happens if there is a dispute?

The process

Disputes are dealt with by the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Tribunal.

Anyone can refer a matter to the Tribunal: the injured worker, the employer or the insurer. The Tribunal has specific forms you must use; contact the Tribunal (workerscomp.tas.gov.au and 6166 4750) for the correct form.

The Tribunal deals with most referrals through a conciliation process. If the dispute cannot be resolved this way, the Tribunal holds an arbitrated hearing to resolve the matter.

Of course, not all disputes escalate to the Tribunal. Injury management disputes should be handled by the injury management co-ordinator, who must try to resolve the dispute through informal mediation before resorting to the Tribunal.

What workers can do

If you need support and information during a dispute, call Worker Assist on 1300 027 747. Worker Assist provides free and confidential advice on the workers compensation process, how the Tribunal works, and what should happen during a dispute.

What employers can do

Workers compensation payments are to start even if they dispute liability for the injured worker's claim. They are sometimes called 'without prejudice payments', because the fact the employer makes these payments cannot be used against them as an admission of liability.

An employer has 84 days to dispute liability to pay compensation. If they don't dispute liability within 84 days, it is taken that they have accepted liability for the claim, and the Tribunal can order the employer to pay compensation.

How workers comp differs around Australia

Do you employ workers across different states, or work between different states yourself? Then a recent Safe Work Australia report could be a useful overview of each state's workers compensation laws, and recent developments and changes in their legislation and requirements. Find it at safeworkaustralia.gov.au by searching for 'summary workers compensation'.

PROSECUTED

Electrician severely injured; electrical company convicted and fined

February 2021

The incident

Artec Synergy was engaged to complete electrical work as part of a renovation at a Launceston café.

On 20 November 2018, Robert Neighbour, the director/owner of Artec Synergy, went to the café to complete the installation of an alarm keypad.

Mr Neighbour set up a ladder to gain access to the work area. He subsequently fell off the ladder from a height of 3 metres. He sustained a serious head injury requiring long-term rehabilitation. The fall also caused traumatic impact to café staff and members of the public who witnessed the fall.

Contributing factors

WorkSafe Tasmania's investigation found the ladder used:

- was made for domestic purposes, not industrial/work uses
- was placed with the feet — which were not slip resistant — on a sloping polish cement floor
- was placed excessively away from the wall (twice the recommended distance), causing it to be in a precarious and unsafe set up
- was not tied off or secured
- had a damaged rung which could result in serious injury used.

The investigation also found Mr Neighbour did not consider the work to be high risk, so did not create a safe work method statement, which is required for working at heights that involves the risk of someone falling more than two metres.

The investigation recommended that:

- staff be re-trained in the safe use of ladders and the risks of working at height
- safe work method statements be written and used
- the damaged ladder be removed from service and an industrial ladder be used, and used correctly
- an overall safe system of work to manage the risk of falls be implemented.

The penalties

Artec Synergy Pty Ltd (as the Trustee for Artec Synergy Unit Trust) was charged with:

- one count of failing to ensure the preparation of a safe work method statement (contrary to reg 299 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012)
- one count of failing to reduce the risk of a fall by providing adequate fall protection (contrary to reg 79(2) of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012).

It pleaded guilty to both charges, and was fined \$3,500 for each charge, totalling \$7,000.

Resources

The code of practice 'Managing the risk of falls at workplaces' gives guidance on using ladders in the workplace. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP122'.

For guidance on safe work method statements, go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'SWMS'.

Preventing workplace sexual harassment

Safe Work Australia has released new guidance on how workplaces can prevent workplace sexual harassment, reinforcing the message that sexual harassment is a WHS issue. This includes sexual harassment between workers and from other people at the workplace like customers and clients.

Sexual harassment is now recognised as a systemic risk, with industry, environmental and individual risk factors present in every workplace.

To identify the potential for sexual harassment, you must gather information about the hazards in your workplace and assess the associated risk.

Safe Work Australia's guide 'Preventing workplace sexual harassment' has detailed information on identifying the potential for sexual harassment in your workplace, and ways you can prevent it from happening.

The guide shows that there is a lot that employers can do beyond responding to a complaint; as the title suggests, it aims to prevent sexual harassment as you would any other WHS hazard.

Workplace violence, aggression

Safe Work Australia has also released guidance on preventing and responding to workplace violence and aggression. This covers both physical and psychological violence and aggressive behaviours that happen face-to-face, on the phone or online.

It also provides examples of hazards and risks which may lead to violence in higher-risk industries such as retail and hospitality, education, health care and community services and sets out examples of practical control measures to manage those risks.

Find the resources

Go to safeworkaustralia.gov.au and search for 'preventing sexual' or 'preventing violence'.

Volunteer organisations and WHS

For organisations covered by the WHS laws, volunteers have the same rights and responsibilities as other workers. This includes emergency service volunteer organisations.

What to do: Organisation

If you're an organisation that engages volunteers, you must:

- provide your volunteers with a safe working environment
- consult with them on WHS matters
- provide them with the information, training and supervision they need to work safely.

If you engage volunteers to work in their own homes, you must still talk to them about health and safety. You can:

- give them information on how to set up a safe works area
- make sure they have the equipment they need.

If you engage volunteers to work in someone else's home, find out and tell them if there are specific hazards, such as dogs in the yard or steep stairs. It's not a requirement that two volunteers go to a home together, but you may decide.

What to do: Volunteers

If you're a volunteer, you must:

- take reasonable care for your own health and safety, and that of others
- carry out your tasks in a safe way
- follow the reasonable safety instructions given to you by the organisation you volunteer for
- co-operate with the reasonable safety policies and procedures of

the organisation you volunteer for.

If you're a volunteer working from your own home, you still need to work safely. While this means your organisation has limited ability to ensure your safety, it can:

- give you information on how to set up a safe work area
- make sure you have the equipment you need.

If you're a volunteer working in someone else's home, your organisation should find out and tell you if there are any specific hazards, such as dogs in the yard or steep stairs. It's not a requirement that two volunteers go to a home together, but your employer may decide this is a good way to ensure your safety.

Further resources

Safe Work Australia has guides and information sheets for organisations who engage volunteers, and volunteers. It also has decision-making guidance if you're unsure whether the WHS laws apply to your organisation.

Go to safeworkaustralia.gov.au and search for 'volunteers'.

17–23 May is National Volunteer Week

NATIONAL 17-23 MAY 2021
VOLUNTEER
WEEK
RECOGNISE. RECONNECT.
REIMAGINE.

Business Tasmania

▶ all your business needs in one place

We're Business Tasmania. We're here to help.

Hi, Business Tasmania here. We're looking forward to another year of bringing you useful information in each edition of Workplace Issues magazine.

Make your online presence felt

Businesses worldwide, in every sector and industry, have been responding to the opportunities and challenges of disruption, and the changing consumer needs that come with it. When your business is disrupted outside of your control, it is wise to look at the elements you can control and employ them in your favour.

For many Tasmanian businesses, that has meant developing an online presence. As the saying goes: you need to be where your customer is.

No matter what your level of participation in the online economy has been to date, we have rounded up a few opportunities we consider to be useful for you and your business.

Get digital ready

Digital Ready is a Tasmanian State Government service that aims to help you do business online. There are a number of options of support you can access, all available via digitalready.tas.gov.au:

- digital experts provide up to four hours of one on one advice to your Tasmanian business. They can help with an online marketing strategy, help start or revive an online presence, anything digital
- there are online presentations by those digital experts that you can pick and choose from, to learn at your own pace (and maybe these will bring up some questions you can ask in a one on one appointment)
- there is a treasure trove of beginner, intermediate, and advanced written guides on most online topics.

Use the Facebook blueprint

Whether you use it yet or not, there's always the opportunity to learn something new about how you can use social media platforms. One of the best ways to do that is straight from the source, through facebook.com/business/learn.

Here you can learn how Facebook works and how to make it work for you. Since Facebook really wants you to use their product to meet your business goals, they do a great job of providing straightforward mini courses to efficiently teach basic skills and how to build on them. Remember, Facebook owns Instagram as well, so you can learn about both here.

Check out the Google digital garage

A lot of customers will search for information and services on Google, so you want to be easily found. We also know Google collects certain information that can give you valuable insights on your customer, a lot of the time for free. So, it would make sense to tap into what Google can offer.

Again, you can go directly to the creators for answers, through Google Digital Garage at learndigital.withgoogle.com/digitalgarage-au.

Online or in-person events

You can find events across Tasmania using our Event Calendar. With a great many businesses now offering online opportunities to connect and to learn, we would definitely recommend visiting eventcalendar.business.tas.gov.au.

Business Tasmania

1800 440 026 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri)

business.tas.gov.au

ask@business.tas.gov.au

facebook.com/BusinessTasmania

twitter.com/businesstas

Everybody's Talking...

Questions and answers from our Helpline

Can I have fireworks on cracker night this year?

Yes. Our fireworks permit application and additional COVID-19 provisions are on our website. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'fireworks displays'.

Applications must be processed through Service Tasmania a minimum of 21 days before the night.

I've heard that I need to 'preserve' an incident site. What does this mean?

If an incident happens in your workplace and you have notified WorkSafe about it, you must ensure as much as possible/is practical that the site is not disturbed until a WorkSafe inspector arrives or gives you permission to do so.

However there are obvious exceptions to this requirement:

- if you need to help an injured person
- if you need to remove a deceased person
- when it is essential to make the site safe or reduce the risk of a further notifiable incident happening.

Find out more about what a notifiable incident is (and what isn't) and how to notify WorkSafe by going to worksafe.tas.gov.au and choosing the red Notify WorkSafe button.

What are the time frames for making a workers compensation claim?

There are lots of different milestones in the initial steps of making a workers compensation claim.

- You must tell your employer about your injury/illness as soon as possible. You can do this in person, in writing or by email.
- When you do this, your employer must give you a give you a Notice of Right to Make a Workers Compensation Claim form within 14 days of you telling them about your injury.
- Your employer must tell their insurer within 3 working days about your injury.
- If you proceed with making a claim, you should do so within 6 months of the date of your injury. If you decide to leave your employment, you must do this before you leave.

However, it is recognised that it may be difficult to determine a date for industrial deafness and some gradual onset diseases. In these cases, the timeframes for making a claim are:

- for industrial deafness: the worker must make their claim while still in the employment of the responsible employer or within 6 months of leaving
- for a disease: the worker must make their claim within 6 months of the day that the worker first becomes incapacitated by the disease. If that date can't be determined, then the worker must lodge their claim within 6 months of the day a medical practitioner certifies that the worker was first incapacitated.

Failing to make a claim within these timeframes will not make a worker's claim invalid if the failure was due to mistake, the worker's absence from Tasmania, or other reasonable cause.

For more information about making a workers compensation claim, read our Workers Compensation Handbook: The Basics. Go to worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'GB010'.

My employer always wants to go into my doctor's appointments with me. I have a worker's compensation injury, but I feel uncomfortable with him coming in. Is he allowed to?

No, your boss should not be going in.

It is great that your employer wants to be involved with your claim, but he should not be going in with you when you see your doctor. It is most important that you are able to discuss in detail with your doctor how you are feeling, and there may also be other private issues you also need to mention. It can be very difficult talking this way in front of your boss!

We advise that your employer be called in after your appointment has finished. Your doctor can then give him a summary of how your injury is progressing, any treatments your doctor is suggesting, possible return to work arrangements and so on.

This will give your employer the information they need to assist with managing your injury and return to work, while at the same time ensuring your essential privacy is maintained.



Image of Daniel Teague representing St. Vincent Industries Incorporated, Winner of the 2018 Leadership Award

WorkSafe Tasmania Awards 2021

Celebrating excellence at work

ENTRIES NOW OPEN

The Awards recognise achievements in workplace health and wellbeing, injury management systems and innovative work health and safety solutions across nine award categories.

**To enter go to worksafe.tas.gov.au/awards
Entries close 31 May 2021**

The WorkSafe Tasmania Awards are an initiative funded by the WorkCover Tasmania Board.

