WORKSAFE

HSWA · HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ACT ·

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How to manage work risks

This fact sheet provides brief guidance for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) on how to manage health and safety risks.

PCBUs must, so far as is reasonably practicable, keep workers and others affected by their work healthy and safe.

How to manage work risks

Risks to health and safety arise from people being exposed to hazards (anything that can cause harm). Risks must be eliminated so far as is reasonably practicable. If a risk can't be eliminated, it must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

Risk has two components – the likelihood that it will occur and the consequences (degree of harm) if it happens. To manage risk, you can reduce how serious the harm is if it does occur and/or reduce the chances of it occurring, or ideally both.

You are encouraged to use the PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT approach described in Figure 1 to manage work risks.

You must involve your workers

You must, so far as is reasonably practicable, engage with your workers and their representatives on the health and safety matters that affect them. This includes assessing work risks and making decisions about how to manage those risks.

Use effective control measures

Choose the control measures that effectively eliminate or minimise the risk.

Check if there are widely used control measures (eg industry standards) for that risk. However, just because something is a common practice doesn't mean that it's the most reasonably practicable option. You should focus on the most effective control measures for your circumstances.

Check the WorkSafe website: www.worksafe.govt.nz for good practice advice on dealing with certain work risks.

Review for continuous improvement

On a regular basis review the effectiveness of the control measures in place.

It's not about creating loads of paperwork

It is good practice to keep written records. For low risk work, records can be simple such as making notes in a notebook. You could note the main points about the risks you identified and what you decided to do. More risky work would require more complex records.

Further help

For more guidance and examples about managing risk, see WorkSafe's website: www.worksafe.govt.nz or read WorkSafe's quick guide *Identifying, Assessing and Managing Work Risks* and the *Reasonably Practicable* fact sheet.

④ ACT
Take action on lessons learnt

- Regularly review the effectiveness of control measures at scheduled periods.
- Review incidents or near misses, and talk to your workers to check the control measures are effectively eliminating/minimising work risks.
- Use the investigations into incidents and near misses, audits, and the results of monitoring to make sure the control measures in place are continually improved.

① PLAN
Assess risk and identify control measures

- Identify hazards that could give rise to work-related health and safety risks. Look at your work activities to identify what could harm the health or endanger the safety of workers and others (eg visitors, bystanders). Also think about your workplace and wider work environment.
- Assess work risks to decide which risks to deal with, and in what order.
  - Think about which risks could cause injury, illness or death to workers or others.
- You must eliminate or minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable.
  - First consider whether the risk can be eliminated (eg can you remove the source of the harm?).
  - If the risk can't be eliminated, then it must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable using control measures.
  - Choose the control measures that effectively eliminate or minimise your risk.
- Engage with your workers and their representatives when identifying and assessing risk, and when making decisions about the ways to eliminate or minimise the risks.
- Seek help from suitably qualified professionals where necessary.

③ CHECK
Monitor performance of control measures

- Implement appropriate means for workers to report incidents, near misses, or health and safety concerns.
- Encourage appropriate reporting. Avoid processes that may encourage under-reporting.
- Monitor workplace conditions and worker health so far as is reasonably practicable.
  - Exposure monitoring can be used to find out if workers are potentially being exposed to a hazard at harmful levels.
  - Health monitoring is a way to check if the health of workers is being harmed from exposure to hazards while carrying out work, and aims to detect early signs of ill-health or disease.
  - Monitoring can show you if your control measures are working effectively.
- Engage with your workers and their representatives when making decisions about procedures for monitoring.

② DO
Implement control measures

- Implement effective control measures that eliminate or minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Give preference to control measures that protect multiple at-risk workers at the same time.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) should not be the first or only control measure considered.

FIGURE 1: The PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT approach to manage risks