Work Health and Safety (Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work) Code of Practice 2024

I, Murray Watt, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, make the following Code of Practice.

Dated 27 October 2024

Murray Watt
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations

Contents

1 Name

This instrument is the *Work Health and Safety (Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work) Code of Practice 2024*.

2 Commencement

This instrument commences on the day after registration on the Federal Register of Legislation.

3 Authority

This instrument is made under section 274 (Approved Codes of Practice) of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011.*

4 Definitions

In this instrument:

WHS Act means the *Work Health Safety Act 2011*.

WHS Regulations means the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*.

5 Code of Practice Approval

(1) I approve the Work Health and Safety (Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work) Code of Practice 2024. I am satisfied that the code of practice was developed by a process described in section 274(2) of the WHS Act.

Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work

Code of Practice 2024

Contents

Foreword

This Code of Practice on managing psychosocial hazards at work is an approved code of practice under section 274 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) (the WHS Act). An approved code of practice provides practical guidance on how to achieve the standards of work health and safety required under the WHS Act and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011* (Cth) (the WHS Regulations), and effective ways to identify and manage risks.

A code of practice can assist anyone who has a duty of care in the circumstances described in the code of practice. Following an approved code of practice will assist the duty holder to achieve compliance with the health and safety duties in the WHS Act and WHS Regulations, in relation to the subject matter of the code of practice. Like regulations, codes of practice deal with particular issues and may not cover all relevant hazards or risks. The health and safety duties require duty holders to consider all risks associated with work, not only those for which regulations and codes of practice exist.

Codes of practice are admissible in court proceedings under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations. Courts may regard a code of practice as evidence of what is known about a hazard, risk, risk assessment or risk control and may rely on the code in determining what is reasonably practicable in the circumstances to which the code of practice relates. For further information see the Safe Work Australia Interpretive Guideline: *The meaning of 'reasonably practicable'.*

Compliance with the WHS Act and WHS Regulations may be achieved by following another method if it provides an equivalent or higher standard of work health and safety than the code.

An inspector may refer to an approved code of practice when issuing an improvement or prohibition notice.

Scope and application

This Code is intended to be read by a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU). It provides practical guidance to PCBUs on how to manage psychosocial health and safety risks at work.

This Code may be a useful reference for other persons interested in the duties under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations.

This Code applies to the performance of work and to all workplaces covered by the WHS Act.

How to use this Code of Practice

This Code includes references to the legal requirements under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations. These are included for convenience only and should not be relied on in place of the full text of the WHS Act or WHS Regulations. The words 'must', 'requires' or 'mandatory' indicate a legal requirement exists and must be complied with.

The word 'should' is used in this Code to indicate a recommended course of action, while 'may' is used to indicate an optional course of action.

1 Introduction

Psychosocial hazards can cause psychological and physical harm. On average, work-related psychological injuries have longer recovery times, higher costs, and require more time away from work. Managing the risks associated with psychosocial hazards not only protects workers, it also decreases the disruption associated with staff turnover and absenteeism, and may improve broader organisational performance and productivity.

1.1 Psychosocial hazards at work

The WHS Act defines 'health' as both physical and psychological health. This means that where the WHS Act imposes a duty in relation to 'health', PCBUs must manage risks to both physical and psychological health, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Psychosocial hazards are hazards that:

a) arise from or relate to:
   I. the design or management of work
   II. the working environment
   III. plant[1] at a workplace, or
   IV. workplace interactions or behaviours; and

b) may cause psychological and physical harm (whether or not it may also cause physical harm)[2].

Psychosocial hazards and the appropriate control measures may vary between workplaces and between groups of workers, depending on the work environment, organisational context and the nature of work.

Workers are likely to be exposed to a combination of psychosocial hazards, some hazards may always be present, while others only occasionally. Common psychological hazards that

[1] WHS laws use the term plant to describe machinery, equipment, appliances, containers, implements and tools, any part of those things or anything fitted or connected to those things

[2] See Regulation 55A of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011.

arise from, or are related to, work may include:

Psychosocial hazards that arise at work

- Job demands
- Job insecurity
- Low job control
- Fatigue
- Poor support
- Lack of role clarity
- Poor organisational change management
- Inadequate award recognition
- Poor organisational justice
- Traumatic events or material
- Remote or isolated work
- Intrusive surveillance
- Poor physical environment
- Violence and aggression
- Bullying
- Harassment including sexual harassment
- Conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions

Appendix A *Job characteristics, design and management* and Appendix B *Harmful behaviours* provide further guidance and examples for each hazard.

Workers from diverse backgrounds may be exposed to different psychosocial hazards. For example, women, young workers, those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, LGBTQI workers and workers with disability are more likely to experience workplace sexual harassment and should be provided with the opportunity to participate in these consultations (which may take different forms), along with all workers who are likely to be directly affected.

Psychological harm or injuries from psychosocial hazards include conditions such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and sleep disorders.

Physical injuries from psychosocial hazards include musculoskeletal injury, chronic disease, and physical injury following fatigue related workplace incidents.

How do psychosocial hazards cause harm?

Psychosocial hazards can create stress. Stress is the body's reaction when a worker perceives the demands of their work exceed their ability or resources to cope.

Stress creates a physiological and psychological response in the body by releasing adrenaline and cortisol, raising the heart rate and blood pressure, boosting glucose levels in the bloodstream and diverting energy from the immune system to other areas of the body.

Stress itself is not an injury but if it becomes frequent, prolonged or severe it can cause psychological and physical harm.

Some hazards cause stress when a worker is exposed to the risk of that hazard occurring as well as when they are directly exposed to the hazard itself. For example, workers exposed to workplace violence are likely to experience stress if they perceive that the risk has not been controlled, even if the violence does not occur again. In this situation, despite the hazard rarely occurring, the stress itself may be prolonged.

1.2 Work health and safety duties

Person conducting a business or undertaking

WHS Act section 19

Primary duty of care

WHS Regulations Division 11

Psychosocial risks

WHS Regulations Part 3.1

Managing risks to health and safety

A PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, workers and other persons are not exposed to risks to their psychological or physical health and safety. A PCBU must eliminate psychosocial risks in the workplace, or if that is not reasonably practicable, minimise these risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

A PCBU must manage psychosocial risks in accordance with Part 3.1 of the WHS Regulations.

Under the WHS Regulations, to manage psychosocial risks, a duty holder must:

- identify reasonably foreseeable hazards that could give rise to psychosocial risks
- eliminate risks, so far as is reasonably practicable
- if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks – minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable
- maintain implemented control measures so they remain effective, and
- review, and if necessary, revise, control measures so as to maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a work environment that is without risks to health and safety.

In determining control measures to be implemented, a PCBU must have regard to all relevant matters, including:

- the duration, frequency and severity of the exposure of workers and other persons to the psychosocial hazards
- how the psychosocial hazards may interact or combine
- the design of work, including job demands and tasks
- the systems of work, including how work is managed, organised and supported
- the design and layout, and environmental conditions, of the workplace, including the provision of:
    - safe means of entering and exiting the workplace
    - facilities for the welfare of workers
- the design and layout and environmental conditions of workers' accommodation
- the plant, substances and structures at the workplace
- workplace interactions or behaviours, and
- the information, training, instruction and supervision provided to workers.

Examples of where a PCBU will have a duty to manage psychosocial risks include when:

- the PCBU engages workers to carry out work
- the PCBU directs or influences workers in carrying out work
- other people may be put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of business or undertaking such as visitors, delivery people, clients, patients and their families, and
- the PCBU manages or controls a workplace.

PCBU duties – what is reasonably practicable?

WHS Act section 18

What is reasonably practicable in ensuring health and safety

The standard of 'reasonably practicable' in health and safety duties applies to a PCBU. Other duty holders are required to meet different standards, for example officers must exercise 'due diligence' and workers and others at a workplace must take 'reasonable care'.

'Reasonably practicable', in relation to a duty to ensure health and safety, means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:

- the likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring; and
- the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk; and
- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk; and
- what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk, and about the ways of eliminating or minimising the risk; and
- after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

The greater the risks, the more that is required to be done to eliminate or minimise it. This may mean using more than one, or a combination of control measures.

Where psychosocial hazards are only present for short periods, infrequently and are not severe, it may not be reasonable to implement expensive and time-consuming control measures. It may, however, be reasonable to apply less expensive controls.

Multiple control measures may be required. The aim must be to keep trying to lower the likelihood and degree of harm until further steps are not reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Psychosocial hazards can interact or combine with other psychosocial hazards to increase the risks. This means controlling the risks associated with one hazard can also minimise the risks from other psychosocial hazards.

When considering each control or combination of controls, a duty holder must take into account the likelihood of a particular control being effective.

Cost of control measures

Cost is a matter to be taken into account and weighed up with other relevant matters to identify what is reasonably practicable, but this must only be done after assessing the extent of the risk and the ways of eliminating or minimising it.

Where the cost of implementing control measures is grossly disproportionate to the risks, it may be that implementing them is not reasonably practicable and therefore not required. This does not mean that you are excused from doing anything to minimise the risks. A less expensive way of minimising the risks must instead be used. If two control measures provide the same level of protection and are equally reliable, you can implement the less expensive option.

The question of what is reasonably practicable is determined objectively, not by reference to your particular business or undertaking's capacity to pay, or other individual circumstances. You cannot provide workers with a lower level of protection simply because you are in a lesser financial position than another PCBU facing the same hazards or risks in similar circumstances.

Your goal to produce a product or provide a service at a particular price cannot override your duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of your workers and others.

For further information see the Safe Work Australia Interpretive Guideline: *The meaning of 'reasonably practicable'.*

Designers, manufacturers, importers, installers and suppliers of plant, substances, and structures

WHS Act Part 2 Division 3

Further duties of PCBUs

Designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers of plant, structures or substances can influence the safety of these products before they are used in the workplace.

These duty holders must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, these products are without risks to the health (including psychological health) and safety of workers or others who are at or near the workplace.

For example: taking reasonable steps to design workspaces that reduce the risk of work-related violence and aggression or designing plant to ensure that cognitive demand for operating it do not create psychosocial risk. See section 5.1 for more detailed examples.

Officers

WHS Act section 27

Duty of officers

Officers, such as departmental secretaries or company directors, have a duty to exercise due diligence to ensure the PCBU complies with its duties under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations. For psychosocial risks this means the officer must take reasonable steps to:

- acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of psychosocial work health and safety matters
- gain an understanding of the nature of the operations of the business or undertaking of the PCBU and generally of the psychosocial hazards and risks associated with those operations
- ensure the PCBU has available for use, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks from work carried out by the business or undertaking
- ensure the PCBU has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding incidents, psychosocial hazards and risks to health and safety and responding in a timely way to that information
- ensure the PCBU has, and implements, processes for complying with any duty or obligation they have under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations, and
- verify the provision and use of the resources and processes mentioned above and that they are performing effectively.

For example: an officer must check the PCBU's approach to systematic WHS management to ensure:

- there are appropriate processes to manage known and emerging psychosocial hazards, the PCBU is allocating enough resources to manage these and has effective consultation, coordination, and cooperation processes (e.g. periodic site visits to talk with workers and supervisors about hazards).

key performance indicators are appropriate. An officer should also seek out own information on the organisations WHS performance and insists that reports are provided to them promptly and their feedback actioned.

For information on officers and their duties see the Safe Work Australia Interpretive Guideline: *The health and safety duty of an officer*.

Workers

WHS Act section 28

Duties of workers

Workers must take reasonable care for their own psychological and physical health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. Workers must comply with reasonable health and safety instructions, as far as they are reasonably able, and co-operate with reasonable health and safety policies or procedures that have been notified to workers.

For example: workers must follow any notified workplace policies setting standards for appropriate behaviour aimed at preventing bullying and harassment.

A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for a PCBU including

work as an employee, a contractor or sub-contractor or their employees, a labour hire worker, an outworker, an apprentice or trainee, a work experience student, or a volunteer.

Other persons in the workplace

WHS Act section 29

Duties of other persons at the workplace

Other persons at the workplace, like visitors, must take reasonable care for their own psychological and physical health and safety and must take reasonable care not to adversely affect other people's health and safety. They must comply, so far as they are reasonably able, with reasonable instructions given by the PCBU to allow them to comply with the WHS Act and WHS Regulations.

For example, a customer in a customer service centre must not behave violently, nor abuse or harass staff. Other persons may be persons such as visitors, delivery people, customers, clients, patients and their families.

For example: visitors and others at a workplace must comply with any reasonable behavioural standards instructed by a PCBU, and adhere, so far as reasonably able, to site rules and procedures. This includes standards from the PCBU regarding prohibitions on violence and aggression, bullying and sexual harassment.

Other relevant duties

Other relevant duties under WHS laws are set out throughout this Code of Practice. See 'Consulting workers', 'Consulting, cooperating and coordinating activities with other duty holders', Information, training, instruction and supervision', and 'Remote or isolated work'.

WHS laws do not operate in isolation and other laws may also apply. For example, industrial relations, criminal, anti-discrimination, privacy and workers' compensation laws.

1.3 Consultation

Consulting workers

WHS Act section 47

Duty to consult workers

A PCBU must consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking and who are (or are likely to be) directly affected by a WHS matter.

If you and your workers have agreed procedures for consultation, it must be conducted in accordance with those procedures.

Effective consultation with workers improves decision-making about health and safety matters and assists in reducing work-related injuries and illness. Workers can identify tasks or aspects of their work that cause or expose them to psychosocial hazards and may have practical suggestions or potential solutions to address those hazards. For example, workers may have ideas to improve work design to minimise the risks of psychological harm.

The definition of ‘worker’ under the WHS Act is broad. In addition to employees, it includes anyone working for the business or undertaking, including contractors and their employees, labour-hire workers, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, work experience students and volunteers.

Some examples of common scenarios where workers may be affected by psychosocial hazards include:

- workers affected by an organisational change (e.g. a merger or acquisition) where workers may experience poor change management or a lack of role clarity
- call centre workers during, or following, a natural disaster
- shift workers, or workers who work in remote or isolated circumstances, who may be exposed to social isolation, violent behaviour or sexual harassment

You must consult with workers when assessing risks or making decisions about the psychosocial risks to health and safety including what control measures are implemented.

Workers from diverse backgrounds may be exposed to different psychosocial hazards. You must consult with all workers, in particular workers with vulnerabilities, who are likely to be directly affected by particular psychosocial hazards. For example, women, young workers, those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, LGBTQI workers and workers with disability are more likely to experience workplace sexual harassment and should be provided with the opportunity to participate in these consultations (which may take different forms), along with all workers who are likely to be directly affected.

WHS Act section 48

Nature of consultation

All consultation must include any Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) representing your workers. A HSR is a worker who has been elected by a work group under the WHS Act to represent them on health and safety issues. References to consultation with workers in this Code includes consultation with any HSRs.

You must provide workers with a reasonable opportunity to raise psychosocial health and safety issues, express their views and contribute to decision-making. You must consider whether existing consultation arrangements are appropriate for psychosocial risks. You must consult with workers and their representatives on implementing new consultation arrangements if required.

When consulting with your workers you must:

- share relevant information
- give workers a reasonable opportunity to express their views, raise health and safety issues and contribute to the decision-making process
- take those views into account before making decisions on health and safety matters, and
- advise workers of the outcome of consultations in a timely manner.

Management commitment and open communication between managers and workers is important in achieving effective consultation. Your workers are more likely to engage in consultation when their knowledge and ideas are actively sought and concerns about

psychosocial health and safety are taken seriously. You should encourage workers to:

- share their knowledge and experience, and
- report psychosocial hazards so risks can be managed before an injury occurs.

Effective methods of consultation can vary according to the needs of your workers, workplace size, worker distribution across sites and shifts, the nature of the work and the type of hazards in a workplace.

You and your workers should agree the form consultation will take. If your workplace has an agreed procedure for consultation which was decided in consultation with workers, this procedure must be followed.

For example, consultation could include:

- pre-job-start or toolbox discussions
- focus groups
- worker surveys
- WHS committee meetings
- team meetings, and
- individual discussions.

Each consultation method has benefits and limitations. For example, some forms of consultation are better for workers who do not have regular access to computers, while others allow workers to raise sensitive issues anonymously, or to provide detail and context.

CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers may need, or benefit from, different forms of consultation. For example, providing materials and conducting consultation in workers' preferred language(s) and using culturally appropriate people and messages.

Workers may be hesitant to raise and discuss some psychosocial hazards due to privacy or other concerns, particularly in relation to hazards like bullying or sexual harassment. You should consider consultation processes that address such concerns like anonymous surveys or reporting, particularly where workers may be concerned raising safety issues could impact on their employment or career progression.

You may need to use multiple methods of consultation for psychosocial hazards. The form and methods of consultation must be decided in consultation with workers.

If workers are represented by a HSR, consultation must involve that HSR. HSRs have a specific role to:

- represent members of their work group in matters relating to work health and safety
- monitor the measures taken by the PCBU or their representative to comply with the WHS Act in relation to workers in their work group
- investigate complaints from members of the work group relating to work health and safety
- inquire into anything that appears to be a risk to the health or safety of workers in their work group, arising from the conduct of the business or undertaking. HSRs have a critical role not only in raising and helping to resolve issues on behalf of their work group, but also in reviewing processes following an incident.

WHS Act section 49

When consultation is required

As a PCBU you must consult with workers when:

- identifying hazards and assessing risks to health and safety arising from the work carried out or to be carried out
- making decisions about ways to eliminate or minimise those risks
- making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of workers
- proposing changes that may affect the health or safety of your workers, and
- making decisions about procedures for consulting with workers; resolving health or safety issues at the workplace; monitoring health of your workers; monitoring the conditions at the workplace under your management or control and providing information and training for your workers.

However, it may be useful to also consult workers about matters not listed above. Regular consultation is better than consulting only as issues arise on a case-by-case basis, or as a reaction to a particular event, because it allows you to identify and fix potential problems early. Further guidance is available in the Code of Practice: *Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination*.

Consulting, cooperating and coordinating activities with other duty holders

WHS Act section 14

Duties are not transferable

WHS Act section 16

More than 1 person can have a duty

WHS Act section 272

No contracting out

More than one person can have the same WHS duty at the same time. The WHS Act requires that where more than one person has a duty for the same matter, each person retains responsibility to meet their duty in relation to the matter and must do so to the extent to which they can influence and control the matter.

Duty holders cannot transfer their duty to another person or contract out their health and safety duties. Duty holders can make arrangements or agreements with other duty holders to assist with meeting their duties.

WHS Act section 46

Duty to consult with other duty holders

Duty holders must consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with all other persons who have a WHS duty in relation to the same matter, so far as is reasonably practicable. Where you share a duty (e.g. you share a workplace or are involved in the same activity), each duty holder should:

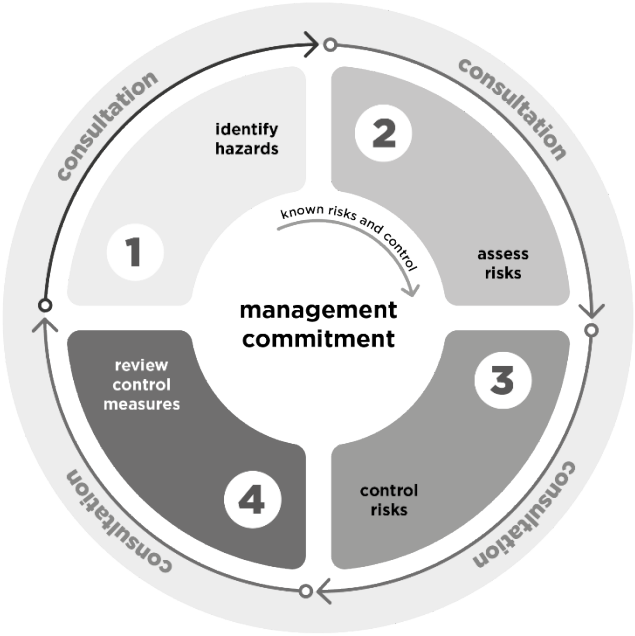
- exchange information
- find out who is doing what about their respective WHS obligations, and
- work together in a cooperative and coordinated way so risks are eliminated or minimised.

Consulting, cooperating and coordinating with other duty holders can help you more easily and effectively control risks, and assist each of you to comply with your duty.

For example: both a PCBU who engages workers through a labour-hire company and the labour-hire company who supplies the workers have WHS duties to ensure the health and safety of the workers. They may consult and cooperate as part of contract negotiations about how to minimise psychosocial hazards, such as high job demands, by agreeing realistic timeframes, and ensuring workers have the skills and support to perform the work. Further guidance is available in the Code of Practice: *Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination.*

2 Overview of the process to manage psychosocial risks

To meet your duties to ensure health and safety, you must eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks so far as is reasonably practicable. To achieve this, just as for any other hazard, you can apply the risk management process described in the Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks*.



The risk management process involves four steps:

1. **Identify hazards** - find out what could cause harm (Chapter 3).
2. **Assess risks**, if necessary - understand the nature of the harm the hazard could cause, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening. This step may not be necessary if the risks and controls are known (Chapter 4).
3. **Control risks** - implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstances and ensure they remain effective over time. This means:
   - you must eliminate risks, if reasonably practicable to do so
   - if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks, implement the most effective control measures to minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, and
   - ensure those control measures remain effective over time (Chapter 5).
4. **Review control measures** to ensure they are working as planned and make changes as required (Chapter 6).

All of these steps must be supported by consultation (see Section 1.3 of this Code).

Risk management requires planning and is an ongoing process. However, considering risks early prevents costly changes later and allows for more effective control measures to be used, resulting in less harm to workers. For example, you should consider psychosocial hazards at the design phase when planning an organisational restructure.

The risk management process may be implemented in different ways depending on the size

and nature of your business or undertaking. Larger businesses and those in sectors where workers are exposed to more or higher risks are likely to need more complex, sophisticated risk management and consultation processes.

Before you start the process:

- explain the process
- get commitment and engagement from senior leaders and managers
- identify who needs to be involved, for example managers, workers, HSRs and subject matter experts, and
- decide how the process and its outcomes will be recorded and communicated.

Leadership and management commitment

Genuine commitment by the PCBU, officers, and other organisational leaders is essential. These leaders, through their governance arrangements and resourcing decisions, actively shape the organisation and the way work is undertaken. These decisions will, directly and indirectly, impact how effectively you can control psychosocial risks.

This commitment can be built by ensuring leaders understand their duties under WHS laws, the risk management process these require, the business case for effectively managing psychosocial hazards, and the roles of various organisational leaders (e.g. human resources and WHS managers).

Consulting workers through the risk management process

At each step of the risk management process you must consult workers who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a WHS matter and any HSR(s). For example, on proposed changes affecting work health and safety such as:

- new policies, procedures and systems of work
- organisational restructures, changes to staffing levels, new reporting arrangements and work locations
- changes to tasks, workload, duties and working arrangements, including rosters
- new technology, plant, equipment, substances, structures and production processes
- the redesign of existing workplaces, or
- changes to the way information, training, instruction and supervision is provided.

Consultation on changes that may affect work health and safety should occur as early as possible.

See Section 1.3 for more information on consultation.

Further guidance on the risk management process is available in the Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks*.

3 Identify psychosocial hazards

The first step in the risk management process is to identify psychosocial hazards. This involves identifying the aspects of work and situations that could potentially harm your workers or others at your workplace and why these may be occurring. This step should also assist PCBUs to identify where and when workers are exposed to psychosocial hazards, and if controls are not adequately eliminating or minimising risks from known hazards.

3.1 Common psychosocial hazards

Below is a list of some common examples of psychosocial hazards you should consider when identifying psychosocial hazards in your organisation. The list and the examples in the descriptions are not exhaustive. Workers are likely to be exposed to a combination of psychosocial hazards; some risks may be constantly present, while others arise sporadically.

Some hazards by themselves may cause serious harm, such as experiencing workplace violence. In most circumstances, it will be a combination of psychosocial hazards which together may cause harm. Harm can be caused by a single instance or over time with repeated or prolonged exposure.

Hazards can be grouped or described in different ways. How they are categorised is less important than ensuring you and your workers have the same understanding of what is happening and how it may be causing harm.

Hazard	Descriptions
Job demands	Intense or sustained high mental, physical or emotional effort required to do the job. Unreasonable or excessive time pressures or role overload. High individual reputational, legal, career, safety or financial risk if mistakes occur. High vigilance required, limited margin of error and inadequate systems to prevent individual error. Shifts/work hours that do not allow adequate time for sleep and recovery, causing fatigue. Performing emotional labour or providing emotional support causing fatigue. Sustained low levels of physical, mental or emotional effort is required to do the job. Long idle periods while high workloads are present, for example where workers need to wait for equipment or other workers. Examples: time pressure, role overload, unachievable deadlines, high

Hazard	Descriptions
	vigilance, challenging work hours or shift work, unrealistic expectations to be responsive outside work hours.
Fatigue	A state of physical or mental exhaustion, or both, which reduces a person's ability to perform work safely and effectively. Examples: jobs where there are high cognitive demands (such as sustained concentration or extended work hours); lack of recovery periods between shifts; roster cycle or shift length (e.g. long shifts and not enough time to recover between shifts); environmental stressors at work (e.g. light, noise, climate, vibration); and design, quality, and management practices for accommodation facilities that compromise the amount and quality of sleep and rest.
Low job control	Workers have little control over aspects of the work including how or when the job is done. Workers have limited ability to adapt the way they work to changing or new situations. Workers have limited ability to adopt efficiencies in their work. Tightly scripted or machine/computer paced work. Prescriptive processes which do not allow workers to apply their skills and judgement. Levels of autonomy not matched to workers' abilities. Examples: requiring permission before progressing routine tasks; excessive monitoring of work tasks and/or breaks; unpredictable working hours; little or no involvement or input into decisions that affect workers, insecure or precarious work, or work that involves uncertainty over the length of the job such as casual, labour hire or rolling fixed-term contract work.
Job Insecurity	Employment where workers lack the assurance that their jobs will remain stable from day to day, week to week, or year to year. Workers are engaged in insecure, precarious, and contingent work arrangements such as fixed-term contracts, seasonal, casual, freelance and gig work. Examples: jobs where there is little or no job security, little or no entitlements or benefits (e.g. sick leave, pay rates), low levels of control or need to work multiple jobs.
Poor support	Tasks or jobs where workers have inadequate support including practical assistance and emotional support from managers and colleagues, or inadequate training, tools and resources for a task. Examples: poorly maintained or inadequate access to equipment/tools or supervisory support, lack of functional or adequate IT systems, limited opportunities to engage with co-workers during the work shift, no constructive feedback, inadequate response to issues raised
Lack of role clarity	Uncertainty, frequent changes, conflicting roles or ambiguous responsibilities and expectations. Examples: nil or poor job description, a worker being told one task is a priority, but another manager disagrees, a worker being given multiple priority tasks from different managers, a worker being given conflicting

Hazard	Descriptions
	information about work standards and performance expectations.
Poor organisational change management	Insufficient consultation, consideration of new hazards or performance impacts when planning for, and implementing, change. Insufficient support, information or training during change. Not communicating key information to workers during periods of change. Examples: not consulting workers on changes in the workplace that affect them (e.g., not communicating with workers about the change or genuinely considering their views), lack of practical support for workers during implementation of workplace changes.
Inadequate reward and recognition	Jobs with low positive feedback or imbalances between effort and recognition. High level of unconstructive negative feedback from managers or customers. Low skills development opportunity or underused skills. Examples: not being recognised for extra effort or commitment, no reasonable opportunities for career development.
Poor organisational justice	Inconsistent, unfair, discriminatory or inequitable management decisions and application of policies, including poor procedural justice. Example: inconsistent, unfair, discriminatory or inequitable decisions and application of policies or procedures.
Traumatic events or material	Experiencing fear or extreme risks to the health or safety of themselves or others. Exposure to natural disasters, or seriously injured or deceased persons. Reading, hearing or seeing accounts of traumatic events, abuse or neglect. Supporting victims or investigating traumatic events, abuse or neglect. Examples: witnessing or investigating fatalities, serious injuries, abuse, neglect or serious incidents (e.g. investigating child protection cases); being exposed to extreme effects of natural disasters or seriously injured people.
Remote or isolated work	Working in locations with long travel times, or where access to help, resources or communications is difficult or limited. Examples: night shift operators, workers who spend a lot of time travelling (e.g. driving), work with limited opportunities for socialisation or problem sharing, workers working alone from home or socially isolated away from home over protracted periods of time.
Intrusive surveillance	Excessive surveillance methods/tools to monitor and collect information about workers at work. Examples: unreasonable level of supervision, tracking of when and how much a worker is working, tracking calls made and movements made by the workers (using CCTV and trackable devices), the use of keyboard activity trackers, technology that allows the PCBU to remote access and take screenshots of a workers' computer, 'GPS monitoring of workers' movement in company vehicles for the purpose of work performance monitoring, as opposed to other reasons such as safety considerations.

Hazard	Descriptions
Poor physical environment	Exposure to unpleasant or hazardous working environments. Examples: work environments that involve poor air quality, high or nuisance noise levels, extreme temperatures, or uncontrolled biological hazards (e.g., blood or bodily fluids or infectious pathogens).
Violence and aggression	Violence, or threats of violence from other workers (including workers of other businesses), customers, patients or clients (including assault). Aggressive behaviour such as yelling or physical intimidation. Examples: biting, spitting, kicking, throwing objects, using or threatening to use a weapon, verbal abuse and threats, aggressive behaviour such as yelling, or physical intimidation.
Bullying	Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.[3] This includes bullying by workers, clients, patients, visitors, or others. Examples: repeated incidents of practical jokes or initiation, spreading misinformation or malicious rumours, belittling or humiliating comments, being verbally denigrated or threatened.
Harassment including sexual harassment	Harassment due to personal characteristics such as age, disability, race, nationality, religion, political affiliation, sex, relationship status, family or carer responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Sexual harassment - any unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, in circumstances where a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would anticipate the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.[4] Harmful behaviour that does not amount to bullying (such as single instances) but creates a risk to health or safety. Workplace technology-facilitated sexual harassment can happen by phone, email, camera or online (such as through social media platforms), or by misusing shared workplace technology (such as shared calendars). Examples: telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups; making derogatory comments or taunts about someone's disability; asking intrusive questions about a person's body; staring, leering or unwelcome touching; sexual or suggestive comments, jokes or innuendo; unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person.
Conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions	Poor workplace relationships or interpersonal conflict between colleagues or from other businesses, clients, or customers. Frequent disagreements, disparaging or rude comments, either from one person or multiple people, such as from clients or customers. A worker can be both the subject and the source of this behaviour. Discrimination or other unreasonable behaviours by co-workers, supervisors or clients. Inappropriately excluding a worker from work-related activities.

[3] Bullying is defined in Safe Work Australia Guidance and the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).
[4] Legal definitions of 'sexual harassment' may vary in each state and territory.

Hazard	Descriptions
	Examples: Unresolved and excessive conflict regarding work tasks, processes, customers, interpersonal issues, treating some workers less favourably than others because of their background or personal characteristics.

Appendix A and Appendix B provide further examples of these hazards

Factors that may put some workers at higher risk

Like for physical hazards, some workers may be at greater risk from psychosocial hazards due to their lived experience or their confidence or experience participating in health and safety or other organisational processes. This means there is a greater likelihood or severity of harm for these workers. For example, workers with:

- limited experience in the workplace (e.g. young workers)
- barriers to understanding safety information (e.g. literacy or language)
- perceived barriers to raising safety issues (e.g. power imbalance or stigma)
- previous exposure to a hazard
- culturally and linguistically diverse workers, or
  insecure or precarious forms of employment.

For example, inexperienced workers may not identify harmful behaviours or have the confidence to report them. You could address this by providing more detailed induction training and greater support and supervision until they gain experience and understand these hazards.

Consulting your workers will assist you to identify any groups who are at greater risk, and whether there are additional reasonably practicable controls you must implement to eliminate or minimise the risks for these workers.

Addressing risks to individual workers

It may also be reasonably practicable to accommodate the needs of an individual worker to prevent harm where the worker has disclosed those needs or the PCBU is aware. For example, a worker with an injury or disability may need a quiet work area or different equipment to do their work or a worker experiencing family or domestic violence may benefit from adjustments or modifications.

As well as making changes for individual workers you must still eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks for all workers so far as is reasonably practicable.

These changes may include, but are not limited to, changing workload and work hours, the nature of work, the work environment, or support and supervision.

3.2 How to identify psychosocial hazards

You must identify all reasonably foreseeable psychosocial hazards arising from the work carried out by your business or undertaking.

As well as identifying common hazards, ensure your process identifies hazards for less common but serious incidents, such as sexual or physical assault.

Examples of psychosocial hazards are included in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Psychosocial hazards can arise from organisation-wide systems, work practices, work environments and workplace behaviours, or they can be specific to a task or job.

Consult your workers

You must consult with your workers (see Section 1.3 of this Code) when identifying hazards to health and safety arising from the work they carry out or are going to carry out.

If your workers are represented by HSRs you must include them in this consultation. HSRs may have specific training in work health and safety which can assist you to manage risks. HSRs can also provide workers some anonymity which may encourage better engagement on psychosocial hazards.

Your workers may use different terms to describe exposure to psychosocial hazards. For example, they might say they feel:

- stressed, burnt-out or emotionally exhausted about their workload
- anxious or scared about talking to or dealing with an aggressive person
- humiliated, degraded or undermined by sexual harassment or discrimination
- angry about policies being applied unfairly
- confused about what their role involves, torn between competing priorities or ‘feeling like a failure’ for not being able to meet unrealistic expectations, or
- distressed, unable to sleep, or traumatised by exposure to traumatic situations or content.

Good consultation should allow for differences in how workers may describe hazards and seek to identify the underlying cause. You should provide your workers with information to help them understand and recognise psychosocial hazards.

Use surveys and tools

You can use surveys to gather information from workers, HSRs, supervisors and managers. Surveys are particularly useful when:

- anonymity is important, this is because anonymous surveys or tools protect workers from stigma or other adverse outcomes when reporting hazards or concerns
- workers are physically dispersed. For example, they work across multiples sites or shifts
- you need to consult with a large number of workers
- workers need time to consider your questions and their response, or
- workers may struggle to understand or otherwise participate in other forms of consultation.

Surveys must not replace agreed consultation procedures unless agreed with your workers, however they can be used as an additional tool for consultation.

You can seek advice on the tools available, including evidence-based psychosocial risk assessment processes, from the WHS regulator, industry associations, unions, technical specialists and safety consultants.

Observe work and behaviours

Psychosocial hazards may be identified by observing:

- the workplace (e.g. are workers isolated or exposed to poor conditions)
- the work and how work is performed in practice (e.g. are workers rushed, is work delayed, do certain tasks result in confusion or frequent mistakes), and

- how people interact with each other (e.g. are workers, customers and clients respectful, or are harmful behaviours present).

In some circumstances, poor workplace behaviours may be caused or contributed to by an inappropriate response to other psychosocial hazards, such as high job demands, lack of role clarity and inadequate support. Also consider whether the workplace culture supports or tolerates harmful behaviours, including lower level (but still harmful) behaviours like name-calling, teasing, sexual or gendered jokes, dark humour and crude language.

Review available information

Review relevant information and records which may include:

- records of injuries, incidents or workers' compensation
- worker complaints and investigations
- reports from workplace inspections (e.g. HSR or safety officer walk arounds)
- staffing, resourcing, procurement and refurbishment decisions (e.g. will outsourcing some work increase work demands for another area, like contract managers)
- work systems, policies, governance arrangements and procedures
- duty statements and performance agreements
- records of hours worked (e.g. regular extra hours indicating high work demand)
- absenteeism and turnover data
- exit interviews
- Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meeting records, and
- previous psychosocial risk assessments and any material feeding into them.

Not all psychosocial hazards will be associated with reported incidents, so it is important to gather additional information.

Information and advice about psychosocial hazards and risks relevant to particular industries and work activities are available from the WHS regulator, industry associations, unions, technical specialists, similar workplaces and safety consultants. Advice is particularly helpful in complex or high-risk situations. For example, where workers are exposed to violence or aggression from a person they owe a duty of care to, such as law enforcement officers.

Look for trends

You may be able to identify trends from the information you collect. Trends may show certain tasks have more hazards associated with them, or some hazards are more common in certain roles. Trends may show workers in a particular location are exposed to more hazards than in other areas, which may indicate a problem with the design of that work area or the way work is carried out there. This can inform your risk assessment.

Have a reporting mechanism and encourage reporting

You should establish a mechanism for workers to report hazards. This should protect the privacy of workers who make reports and allow for anonymous reporting where possible. Your reporting mechanism should suit your business size and circumstances and be proportional to the risks in your business. For example, an agency/organisation could have a board in the communal area for workers to write up hazards they identify, a locked box for making confidential reports, an email address to raise issues and the duty manager taking reports of any hazards posing an immediate risk.

When hazards aren't being reported

Workers might not report psychosocial hazards because they:

- see them as just 'part of the job' or the work culture
- believe it's not serious enough to report
- feel they do not have time to report frequently occurring hazards
- think reports will be ignored, or not handled respectfully and confidentially
- fear they will be blamed or believe reporting may expose them to additional harm, discrimination or disadvantage, or
- do not know or understand how to report a hazard.

If a worker is being bullied, harassed or is exposed to other harmful behaviours they might not report it when the other person is in a position of authority (e.g. a manager or supervisor) or a position of influence (e.g. a client). Workers may be worried about the consequences of reporting, such as the person finding out about the complaint and the behaviour escalating.

It is important for hazards reported by workers be taken seriously. Workers can be encouraged to report hazards by:

- making it clear that workers can use work time to report psychosocial hazards treating all reports of psychosocial hazards seriously, appropriately and confidentially
- using agreed mechanisms, such as HSRs who can raise safety concerns for workers anonymously
- regularly discussing psychosocial hazards at team meetings or toolbox talks
- providing workers with support and a range of accessible and user-friendly ways to make a report informally, formally, anonymously or confidentially
- making it clear that victimising those who make reports will not be tolerated
- training key workers (e.g. supervisors, managers, contact persons and HSRs)
- ensuring processes and systems for reporting and responding to complaints of bullying, harassment or other poor behaviours are appropriate, transparent and well understood, and
- acting decisively to control the risks your workers identify.

Your hazards and risks reporting system should be appropriate and proportional for your organisation and the risks in your workplace. For example, a large organisation with previous instances of violent behaviour should consider a formal system with documented procedures. In contrast, a small business with no previous instances of violent or aggressive behaviour may not require a formal system and could instead encourage workers to discuss hazards with supervisors as required and have a method of reporting and recording details.

4 Assess the risks

4.1 When should a risk assessment be conducted?

Once you have identified psychosocial hazards in your workplace, the next step is to assess the risks they create. This will help you determine what is reasonably practicable in managing the risks.

You should carry out a risk assessment, in consultation with workers and their HSRs if they have them, for any hazards you have identified. However, if you already know what the risks are and how to control them effectively, you can implement the controls without undertaking a risk assessment and then check to confirm these have been effective.

A risk assessment can help you determine how severe risks are, and therefore what is reasonably practicable in managing the risks.

Further information on risk assessments is available in the Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks*.

4.2 How to assess psychosocial risks

To assess the risk of harm, you need to identify the workers affected and consider the duration, frequency and severity of their exposure. Appendix C may assist you to capture this information.

Once you have identified all the hazards you should assess the risks. To do this, consider:

- **Duration** – how long is the worker exposed to the hazards or risks?
- **Frequency** – how often is the worker exposed to the hazards or risks?
- **Severity** – how severe are the hazards and the workers' exposures?

Consider psychosocial hazards collectively rather than in isolation. Workers and others may be exposed to more than one psychosocial hazard at any time and hazards can interact or combine. For example, a worker exposed to aggressive customer behaviour is more likely to be harmed if at that time they do not have other workers present to support them and do not have the control to alter the way they work to de-escalate the situation. Assessing risks collectively may also assist you to identify more effective control measures.

Example 1: Infrequent exposure to low levels of work-related conflict may be unpleasant without causing a risk to health and safety, while frequent exposure to high levels of conflict can increase the likelihood of a prolonged stress response which may result in harm.

Example 2: A worker exposed to a short term but severe hazard (e.g. a violent incident) is more likely to experience harm if they are also exposed to chronic (long duration) psychosocial hazards (e.g. ongoing high demand and low support).

Example 3: Keeping cash on premises provides the potential for a robbery to occur (a hazard) and this may cause harm (e.g. being assaulted or post-traumatic stress disorder). However, while the work environment, including physical barriers, may mean the likelihood of death or serious injury from being assaulted is low, the likelihood of psychological injury may be higher.

Example 4: A worker exposed to aggressive customer behaviour is likely to be at higher risk if at that time they do not have other workers present to support them and are unable to control or alter the way they work to de-escalate the situation.

Psychosocial risks increase when exposure to hazards is more severe (e.g. exposure to a traumatic incident), more frequent (e.g. regularly performing tasks without adequate support) or is longer in duration (e.g. high job demands over weeks or months).

The risks also increase when workers are exposed to a combination of the above mechanisms. For example, short term but severe exposure to a psychosocial hazard (e.g. a violent incident) is more likely to harm workers if they are also exposed to chronic (long duration), but less severe hazards (e.g. ongoing low support).

Psychosocial risks can cause both physical and psychological injuries. The severity of psychological injuries varies, but in comparison to physical injuries, on average, they require longer off work and are more costly.

5 Control the risks

Once you know which psychosocial hazards are present and you have assessed the risks they create, you are in a position to control them.

You must eliminate risks to health and safety if it is reasonably practicable to do so.
If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks, you must minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

To identify what can be done you should, in consultation with your workers, identify as many possible control measures as you can. This gives you the greatest scope to choose and apply the most effective control measures to eliminate or minimise risks. Consultation with workers will assist you to identify control measures you might not otherwise think of.

When deciding what control measures to use, a PCBU must have regard to all relevant matters and utilise the **hierarchy of controls** (see sections 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 of this code).

5.1 Matters to consider when controlling risks

WHS Regulation 55D

Control Measures

How long (**duration**), how often (**frequency**) and how significantly (**severity**) your workers are exposed to psychosocial hazards impacts the level of risks. Hazards **interacting** or **combining** with each other may also change the risks.

As you work through the risk management process you must consider things that may give rise to hazards, influence the level of risks workers are exposed to, or could be changed to help control those risks, including:

- **the design of work, including job demands and tasks involved**

  Considering how the work is designed will support you to eliminate hazards at the source and at the organisational level.

  Control measures for psychosocial hazards should predominantly be considered at an organisational, work and system design level (e.g. organisational resilience) rather than at an individual level (e.g. individual resilience and stress management), although some circumstances may require responses at both levels.

  Focusing on higher level control measures that address work design will ensure the risk of harm is addressed at the source, rather than inferior measures that only reduce the impact of harm after it has occurred.

  Effective work design considers:
  - the work: how work is performed, including the physical, mental and emotional demands of the tasks and activities, the task duration, frequency, and complexity, and the context and systems of work
  - the physical working environment: the plant, equipment, materials and substances used, and the vehicles, buildings, structures that are workplaces
  - the workers: physical, emotional and mental capacities and needs.

  Your workers should have an appropriate amount of work to match their skills and experience. For example, a job designed with too much work for a worker of that skill level to complete with the resources provided, or tasks that do not match that worker's skillset will create hazards. Matching tasks to workers' skills and scheduling non-urgent tasks for times of lower demand may assist to control risks.

  See the Safe Work Australia Handbook: Principles of Good Work Design for more information about how to achieve good work design and work processes.

- **systems of work, including how work is managed, organised and supported**

  Systems of work are organisational rules, policies, procedures and work practices used to organise, manage and carry out work. These systems can introduce psychosocial hazards, but if carefully considered can also help control them.

  For example, a system of work that does not allow workers to seek assistance from supervisors, sets unrealistic targets or timeframes or that allocates tasks without regard for other work demands may introduce hazards. A system of work which provides for support and manages job demands may assist to control risks.

- **the design and layout and environmental conditions, of the workplace, including safe means of entering and exiting the workplace and welfare facilities**

A poor physical working environment can be a psychosocial hazard, however the way a workplace is set up can also control other psychosocial hazards.

For example, ensuring workers can get away from aggressive customers or can observe when another worker may need assistance.

- **the design and layout, and environmental conditions of workers' accommodation**

Like the working environment, accommodation provided for workers can introduce or control psychosocial hazards.

For example, worker accommodation which does not provide adequate privacy or security can contribute to the risk of violence or harassment. Well-designed accommodation can help control these risks

- **plant, substances and structures at the workplace**

Plant (e.g. machinery, equipment, appliances and tools), structures and substances used at work can introduce psychosocial hazards where they create a physical hazard that is not adequately controlled. For example, plant can create loud noises, dust and vibrations which creates poor physical environments and contributes to psychosocial risks.

Well designed and maintained plant can prevent these hazards but can also be used to control other psychosocial hazards. For example, safe plant that allows work to be performed more efficiently can reduce high work demands.

- **workplace interactions or behaviours**

The way workers interact with each other and other persons in the workplace, their behaviour and relationships can introduce psychosocial hazards. However, supportive leadership, positive relationships and professional and respectful interactions can help to minimise a range of psychosocial hazards.

Poor organisational culture can hamper efforts to improve work health and safety by preventing workers seeking and providing support and discouraging workers from reporting hazards and participation in consultation. Leaders demonstrating poor behaviour are likely to contribute to poor organisational culture.

- **information, training, instruction and supervision provided to workers**

Information, training, instruction and supervision may be necessary to implement control measures effectively. They may also assist in controlling some psychosocial risks, for example where low role clarity is creating a risk, information and training on the worker's role will assist in controlling the risks.

5.2 Eliminating risks

Eliminating risks is the most effective control measure and PCBUs must always consider elimination before anything else. For psychosocial risks, elimination means completely removing the psychosocial hazard and associated risks through good work design and systems of work design.

Examples of eliminating psychosocial hazards include:

- the introduction of rosters that provide advance notice of work hours schedules to eliminate the hazard of unpredictable work hours
- refusal of service to customers with higher risk of violence or abuse
- setting achievable performance standards and workloads for the number of workers, work hours and their skill sets.

It may not be reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, for example, if doing so means a product cannot be made or a service cannot be delivered. Where a risk cannot be eliminated, PCBUs must minimise the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

5.3 Minimising risks

WHS Regulation 36

Hierarchy of controls

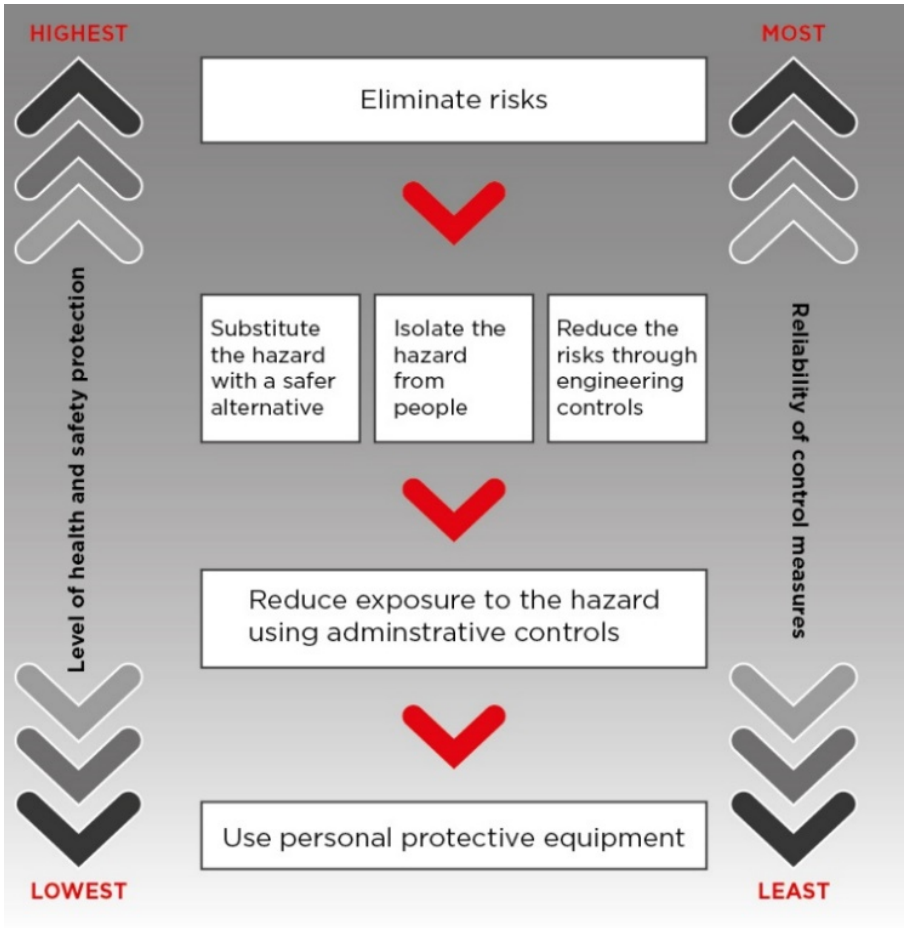
The hierarchy of controls **must** be followed if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate psychosocial risk.

The hierarchy of controls (**see below**) ranks control measures from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest and **requires** duty holders to minimise risks by one or more of the following methods:

- **Substitution**—minimise the risk by substituting (wholly or partly) or replacing a hazard or hazardous work practice with something that gives rise to a lesser risk.
- **Isolation**—minimise the risk by isolating or separating the hazard or hazardous work practice from any person exposed to it.
- **Engineering controls**—minimise the risk by implementing engineering controls as a physical control measure.

If the risk remains, it must be minimised by implementing administrative controls, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Any further remaining risk must then be minimised with suitable personal protective equipment (PPE), so far as is reasonably practicable. This could include personal distress alarms or hearing protection or headphones used to reduce stress caused by high background noise.



Administrative control measures and PPE do not control the hazard at the source. They rely on human behaviour and supervision and, used on their own, tend to be the least effective in minimising risks.

Step 1 – Substitution, isolation and engineering controls

PCBUs **must** minimise the risk of psychosocial hazards by either substituting or isolating the hazard from the person or implementing engineering controls, so far as is reasonably practicable.

- Substituting a hazard means substituting (wholly or partly) hazardous ways of working with less hazardous alternatives.
- Isolation of a hazard involves physically separating the source of harm from people by distance or using barriers, and
- Engineering controls include physical controls such as a mechanical device or process..

Substitution, isolation and engineering controls for psychosocial hazards can be achieved through changing the design of work (see section 5.2 - Eliminating Risks) or system of work (e.g. rostering, working hours, task rotation and breaks to allow opportunities for rest and recovery).

Examples of high order minimisation controls for managing the risk of psychosocial hazards include:

- providing workers with time and physical locations where they can retreat safely and recover from dealing with aggressive clients
- improving the work environment to reduce stressors (e.g. installing sound dampening technology or enclosing machinery to isolate workers from unpleasant or hazardous noise, increasing the lighting in darker areas, or placing barriers between workers and customers to minimise the risk of physical assault)
- allowing more time for difficult tasks to be completed safely, especially by inexperienced workers
- matching work allocation with appropriate resourcing including adequate numbers of workers, worker competencies, and levels of exposure to psychosocial hazards (e.g. considering the severity, complexity, and number of cases allocated to each worker when allocating child protection caseloads)
- providing sufficient cover for workers who are on leave
- designing work systems to minimise confusion by clearly defining workers' roles, reporting structures, tasks and performance standards
- designing work rosters to facilitate better work/life balance for workers required to work away from home
- providing workers with control over their work pace and allowing them to take breaks to manage their workload and fatigue instead of using machine pacing or automated work allocation
- increasing the level of practical support during peak workloads
- using a trauma-informed approach when responding to complaints of work-related violence and aggression, work-related bullying and sexual harassment and ensuring investigations are fair, independent and handled in a sensitive way
- using a trauma-informed approach to ensure the health and safety of 'others' in the workplace is not affected by the PCBU's undertaking, so far as is reasonably practicable (e.g. police using this approach when interviewing victims of sexual assault)
- using a trauma-informed approach to minimise the risk of work-related violence and aggression, so far as is reasonably practicable (e.g. youth workers supporting children in care or corrections officers when working in prisons)
- changing venue of care from a home environment to a clinic environment for clients that have a history of aggressive behaviour.

Step 2 – Administrative controls

If risk remains after applying substitution, isolation or engineering control measures, PCBUs **must** minimise the remaining risk by implementing administrative controls, so far as is reasonably practicable. Administrative controls are less reliable at minimising risk because they rely on human behaviour and should be used in conjunction with higher order controls, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Administrative controls commonly include organisational policies and standard operating procedures that are designed to minimise exposure to a hazard, as well as the information, training and instruction needed to ensure workers can work safely.

Examples of administrative controls include:

- having clear expectations about acceptable behaviours at work, including policies for work-related bullying, sexual harassment and other forms of harassment
- ensuring workers have the right information, training, and supervision to perform their job safely
- consulting and training workers to prepare for the introduction of new equipment, software or production techniques
- providing supervisors with appropriate training in people and work management, and on the job support
- training workers and supervisors to recognise early warning signs of psychosocial harm.

If your workplace has agreed policies, those policies relating to psychosocial hazards **must** be developed in consultation with workers and their HSRs (if elected), and all workers **must** be made aware of the policies and what is expected of them.

Step 3 - Personal protective equipment

If risk remains after applying substitution, isolation, engineering and administrative control measures, PCBUs **must** minimise the remaining risk by ensuring the provision and use of suitable PPE, so far as is reasonably practicable. For psychosocial hazards, PPE can assist by controlling physical hazards that give rise to psychosocial risks, such as when using plant, substances etc or working in certain environments.

Protecting workers with PPE is a last resort and should only be used where there are risks that cannot be minimised using higher order controls. If PPE is selected as last resort, it should be used in conjunction with administrative controls (e.g. the provision of information, instruction and training to workers and/or the implementation of safe work procedures).

Examples of using PPE as a control measure include providing:

- personal distress alarms, mobile phones or other communication devices
- police body armour and face protection
- readily accessible gloves, gowns, and face shields for workers who may have the potential for exposure to high-risk biological hazards, and
- high quality hearing protection or headphones to reduce stress from noise.

5.4 Combining risk controls

A combination of control measures may be used to minimise risk if a single control is not sufficient to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risk. In most cases, a combination of control measures will be the most effective approach.

Examples of combining administrative controls with higher order controls include:

- designing out work processes that may escalate client aggression, and considering what appropriate physical or other barriers (i.e. distance) should be used in conjunction with a client aggression policy and worker training and supervision
- where work involves inherent risk (i.e. front-line responders), training should be provided to ensure workers have the skills to manage and respond to these situations, in conjunction with higher-order controls.

Scenario: In service delivery roles there may be work pressure, aggressive customers and supervisors who are not readily available to provide support. In this circumstance, a combination of control measures could include:

- redesigning the mode of service (e.g. automating parts of the service)
- reviewing and adjusting numbers of workers to meet client needs and demands
- designing the work environment to introduce physical barriers between workers and clients
- job rotation to reduce exposure to distressed clients
- providing adequate supervision of workers to ensure their health and safety
- administrative procedures to identify clients showing signs of aggression, and training supervisors and workers to improve team communication and support
- implementing procedures to restrict or terminate service in the event of aggression
- providing training for workers in de-escalating aggressive behaviour by clients
- providing personal distress alarms, and
- access to an Employee Assistance Program service.

5.5 Implementing control measures

It is important to ensure a particular control measure will work before relying on it. You may need to test control measures, provide information, training or instruction to workers and supervise work to ensure control measures are effective.

Test control measures

Testing control measures allows you to ensure they are suitable for your workplace, operate as intended and do not introduce new risks.

You should allow enough time for your workers to adjust to changes (e.g. new work processes) before assessing the effectiveness of control measures. At this stage, you should frequently check with your workers on how they think the improvements are working and supervise workers to ensure controls are implemented effectively.

Information, training, instruction and supervision

WHS Act section 19

Primary duty of care

WHS Regulation 39

Provision of information, training and instruction

As you are planning to implement control measures, you must consider what information, training, instruction or supervision is required to ensure the control measures are effective.

Training must be suitable and adequate, having regard to:

- the nature of the work to be carried out
- the associated psychosocial hazards and risks and
- the control measures to be implemented.

Training should require workers to demonstrate they are competent in performing the task. It is not sufficient to simply tell a worker about the procedure and ask them to acknowledge they understand and can perform it. Training may include formal training courses, in-house

training or on the job training.

For example, if supervisors and managers have a role in implementing workplace policies on addressing harmful behaviours, you must provide them with any training necessary to ensure safety. This may include training so they know what to do if they witness, experience or have a worker approach them about violence and aggression, bullying or sexual harassment at work or know who to seek guidance from if they have questions.

Information, training and instruction must be provided in a form all workers can understand, for example training may need to be provided in other languages. Information and instruction may also need to be provided to others who enter the workplace, such as customers or visitors.

The level of supervision required will depend on the risks and the experience of the workers involved. High levels of supervision are necessary where inexperienced workers are expected to follow new procedures or carry out difficult and critical tasks.

Maintenance

WHS Regulation 37

Maintenance of control measures

You must ensure that control measures are maintained so that they remain effective, including by ensuring they are fit for purpose, suitable for the nature and duration of the work; and set up and used correctly. You should decide what maintenance a control measure will require when you implement the control and establish a schedule for routine checks and maintenance. You may prepare a risk register identifying the hazards, what action needs to be taken, who will be responsible for taking the action and by when.

Workplace policies

Workplace policies can provide important information and help ensure everyone involved understands the business or undertaking’s processes for managing psychosocial risks. Policies alone should not be relied on to control psychosocial risks, but they can detail responsibilities and help set clear expectations, particularly about behaviours at the workplace and during work-related activities.

You may have separate policies or one policy which covers several work health and safety issues.

Where you have policies relating to psychosocial risks these must be developed in consultation with your workers and any HSRs. All workers must be made aware of the policies and what is expected of them.

Controlling risks arising from management action

Management action, such as managing unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour is a necessary part of conducting a business or undertaking. Management action may also be necessary to prevent or control psychosocial hazards, for example:

- increased demands on other workers due to unsatisfactory performance, or
- behaving in a way that may harm others.

PCBUs may be concerned about balancing the need to undertake performance action with the duty to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks that may arise from the process, so far as is reasonably practicable. This can be done by:

- addressing psychosocial hazards contributing to unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour, and
- designing the management process in a way that eliminates or minimises psychosocial risks.

Addressing psychosocial hazards contributing to unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour

Unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour may be the result of multiple factors, including psychosocial hazards affecting the worker. Confirming whether all psychosocial hazards have been eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable will help you to ensure you are meeting your duties. A range of psychosocial hazards can contribute to poor performance and harmful behaviour, such as:

- lack of support or training to perform the role
- lack of clarity on the role and requirements
- poor interpersonal relationships.

Eliminating or minimising psychosocial risks in the management process

You must ensure you have eliminated or minimised any risks in your management process, so far as is reasonably practicable. For example, control risks associated with:

- poor organisational justice by ensuring you apply policies transparently and fairly, and
- poor interpersonal relationships by conducting the process in a respectful and constructive way

6 Review control measures

The last step of the risk management process is to review the effectiveness of the implemented control measures to ensure they are working as planned. If a control measure is not working effectively it must be reviewed and modified or replaced.

WHS Regulation 38

Review of control measures

Reviewing control measures should be done regularly and is required:

- when the control measure is not eliminating or minimising the risks so far as is reasonably practicable
- before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control
- if a new hazard or risk is identified
- if the results of consultation indicate a review is necessary, or
- if an HSR requests a review because they reasonably believe one of the above has occurred and it has not been adequately reviewed already.

Reports, complaints (including informal complaints) or grievances from workers may identify new psychosocial hazards or risks that are not adequately controlled. This should trigger a review of whether your existing control measures are effective, if your response procedures worked the way they were supposed to and whether new risks have been identified that also need to be managed.

Common review methods include inspecting the workplace, consultation, and analysing records and data. You can use the same methods as in the initial hazard identification step to check control measures. You must also consult your workers and their HSRs.

The person reviewing your control measures should have the authority and resources to conduct the review thoroughly and be empowered to recommend changes where necessary. Questions to consider may include:

- Are control measures working effectively, without creating new risks?
- Have workers reported feeling stressed or are they showing signs of harm?
- Have all psychosocial hazards been identified?
- Have risks changed or are they different to what you previously assessed?
- Are workers actively involved in the risk management process?
- Are workers openly raising health and safety concerns and reporting problems promptly?
- Has instruction and training been provided to all relevant workers?
- Are there any upcoming changes that are likely to result in a worker being exposed to psychosocial hazards?
- Are new control measures available that might better control the risks?
- Have risks been eliminated or minimised as far as is reasonably practicable?

If the effectiveness of the control measures is in doubt, go back through the risk management steps, review your information and make further decisions about control measures.

7 Recording the risk management process and outcomes

You should record your risk management process and the outcomes, including your

consultation with workers. This allows you to demonstrate you have met your WHS duties and will assist you when you need to monitor or review the hazards you have identified and controls you have put in place.

Your records may include the outcomes of consultation, the hazards you identified, how you assessed the risks, the control measures implemented, and the training provided.

You should select a method of recording the risk management process and outcomes to suit your circumstances. For example, you can use a risk register such as the one in the Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks* or in Appendix C.

It is also useful to have a record of the processes used to investigate and resolve issues. You could choose to include only high-level information in the general risk register where you are concerned about the need to maintain confidentiality.

A WHS inspector may ask to see a copy of records relating to the risk management processes if they visit your workplace. If you do not have a written record, you will need to demonstrate by other means how you have met your duties.

8 Responding to reports, complaints, or incidents

Encouraging workers to raise concerns regarding psychosocial hazards, and in turn effectively responding to those concerns, can assist PCBUs to not only identify hazards, but also review whether control measures are working. To facilitate this, PCBUs can investigate reports, complaints or incidents involving psychosocial hazards to determine what happened, why, and what can be done to improve controls to eliminate or minimise recurrence. The formality and comprehensiveness of any investigation and response can be proportional to the level of risk, the seriousness of actual or potential harm, the number of workers affected, and the size of the business.

Example 1: A response may involve enquiries/conversations by a supervisor about the report, complaint or incident with affected workers, or a more formal independent investigation with assistance from competent external professionals or relevant internal representatives, such as in-house human resources or WHS professionals.

Example 2: A response to a complaint about sexual harassment may involve discussions with the parties and/or witnesses, providing or facilitating access to support to all parties, facilitating an impartial investigation, and maintaining confidentiality and privacy of the parties.

The process for investigating or responding to reports, complaints or incidents involving psychosocial hazards should be proactive, fair, objective, conducted in a timely and impartial manner, applied consistently to all workers, and ensure procedural fairness for all parties involved. This is particularly important where there is an allegation about work-related bullying, work-related violence or aggression, or work-related sexual harassment.

Where a HSR has been advised of a complaint or incident involving a worker in their workgroup, they are entitled to investigate the complaint. This can include:

- inspecting the workplace, or any part of the workplace, the worker works at any time after giving reasonable notice to the PCBU, or without notice if the incident or situation involves a serious risk to health and safety emanating from an immediate or

imminent exposure to a hazard
- accompanying an inspector during an inspection of the workplace or part of a workplace where the worker works
- with the consent of a worker, or one or more workers, the HSR representing and being present at an interview between the worker(s) and an inspector or PCBU (or the PCBUs representative)
- receiving information concerning the work health and safety of workers in the workgroup
- wherever necessary, requesting the assistance of any person.

It will not always be appropriate to consult work groups or their representative HSR(s) if the initiating report or subsequent investigation includes sensitive and confidential information about other workers. In this case, it is still useful to provide HSRs with general information about the process and outcomes including:

- how the psychosocial hazard will be managed
- updates on the progress actions in response to the report, complaint or incident and likely timeframes, and
- WHS actions and improvements which have or will be introduced in response to the issue (within the limits of confidentiality).

Principles that can be applied, so far as is reasonably practicable, when responding to complaints, incidents or reports involving psychosocial hazards are set out in the below table.

Principles	Response
Act promptly	Respond to reports, complaints, or incidents quickly, reasonably and within established timelines. Advise relevant parties how long it will likely take to respond. Keep them informed of progress to provide reassurance the report has not been forgotten or ignored.
Ensure immediate safety	Take steps to eliminate or minimise ongoing exposure to hazards and to provide immediate support so far as reasonably practicable.
Treat all matters seriously	Take reports, complaints and incidents seriously and assess them on their merits and facts.
Use a trauma-informed approach	The concept of a trauma-informed approach means that workplace systems recognise and acknowledge that workplace responses or investigations of reports about psychosocial hazards can escalate or de-escalate distress in those with a lived or living experience of trauma. In practical terms this means PCBUs who provide services to client groups who may foreseeably have a history of trauma can integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices, especially complaint handling procedures and practices. This can include principles of: • safety, both physical and emotional (e.g. is the environment and are the processes welcoming? do workplace processes consider the emotional safety and wellbeing of affected individuals? or is the environment/ process likely to distress someone with a lived or living experience of trauma?) • trust (e.g. are the processes sensitive to people's needs, empowering to affected individuals, offering some flexibility and/or opportunity for choice where reasonably practicable?

Principles	Response
	are workers supported to make informed choices, given timely information about the process/their rights?) • equity and respect (e.g. do the processes ensure interpersonal respect, acknowledge diversity in all its forms, are they inclusive?) • hope (e.g. do processes assume optimism and the possibility of recovery/resolution?).
Maintain confidentiality	Maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved or be very clear if there are any limits to confidentiality (e.g. if there are concerns about the safety of others). As a general rule, details of the matter should only be known by those directly concerned in the complaint or in resolving it and sensitive and personal information should be protected.
Be neutral	Impartiality towards everyone involved is critical. This includes the way people are treated throughout the process and ensuring all parties are able to provide their side of the story. The person responding to the report, complaint or incident should not have been directly involved with either party. Personal or professional bias is to be avoided. If this is not possible, consider engaging an external party to ensure impartiality.
Support all parties	Once a report or complaint has been made, or an incident has occurred, advise parties involved what support is available, for example employee assistance programs, and allow a support person to be present throughout the process including at interviews or meetings (e.g. an HSR, union representative or work colleague). Ensure adequate and fair support is available to all parties, including those who may be away from work during investigations or during disciplinary processes. This includes both the complainant and the person who the complaint has been made about. Support should also continue following completion of the incident investigation process.
Do not victimise	It is important to ensure anyone who reports a psychosocial hazard, or is a party to a report, complaint or incident is protected from victimisation.
Communicate process and outcomes	Inform all parties of the process, any rights and obligations that may apply, how long it is estimated to take and what they can expect will happen during and at the end of the process, including rights of appeal and review. Should the process be delayed for any reason, advise parties of the delay and when the process is expected to resume. Reasons for actions that have been taken or not taken should be explained to the parties wherever possible so that the processes and outcomes are transparent. Wherever possible, an educative approach should be used. Where persons are away from the workplace (e.g. they are unwell or have been stood down from their roles during investigation processes), ensure an appropriate mechanism for communication is still available
Keep records	Keeping a record of the following information will be useful: • the person who made the report • when the report was made • who the report was made to • the details of the issue reported

Principles	Response
	• action taken to respond to the issue • any further action required – what, when and by whom.

If it is likely that responding to the complaint, incident or report will be sensitive or complex, input from organisational psychologists, human resources, WHS or other experts, such as security professionals, may assist.

Where the incident relates to work-related bullying or sexual harassment, a response procedure can be used to ensure reports, complaints or incidents of these hazards are dealt with consistently. The procedures can be used each time a report or complaint is made. The response procedure can:

- outline how issues will be dealt with when a report or complaint is made, including broad principles to ensure the process is objective, fair and transparent
- clearly state the roles of individuals such as managers and supervisors
- outline the process for how vexatious complaints or reports will be handled
- identify avenues of psychological support for persons involved, and
- identify external avenues available to workers where reports of work-related bullying, sexual harassment or racial and other forms of harassment have been unable to be resolved internally noting the procedures for external complaint mechanisms may differ from the procedures for an internal investigation.

Where response procedures are developed, this must be done in consultation with workers and HSRs (if elected).

9 Conducting WHS investigations

Any WHS investigations into reports of incidents involving psychosocial hazards should primarily aim to identify hazards or new or improved control measures.

Investigations must maintain appropriate privacy and confidentiality of all workers involved to the extent permitted by law. For example, do not discuss reports in public areas or with anyone not involved in the investigation. Ensuring confidentiality should not prevent the parties involved from seeking support.

Nature of investigation

The nature of your investigation should be proportional to the risks and suit the circumstances. When deciding the nature of an investigation consider the:

- level of risks involved
- complexity of the situation, and
- number of workers involved or affected.

A formal investigation may not always be the most effective option. For example, the best response to a single low-level incident may be immediate informal discussions with the workers involved and changes to the relevant control measures. The earlier problems can be identified and addressed, the less likely a formal and complex investigation will be required.

Small businesses may require assistance if a matter is complex or high risk. You can seek advice from the WHS regulator, your industry body or a WHS expert.

Selecting an investigator

It is important to find an investigator who has the confidence of all parties involved where possible. They should be impartial and have the skills and knowledge to identify psychosocial hazards, assess the risks and recommend appropriate controls.

An external investigator may be required if an impartial internal investigator is not available, for example where a matter involves a senior manager.

Balancing a fair and transparent process

The investigation should be fair, transparent and timely to ensure due process for both those who raised the issue and any workers who have had allegations made about them.

Throughout the investigation affected workers should be:

- informed of their rights and obligations during the process
- provided with the opportunity to respond to any allegations made against them
- provided with a copy of relevant policies and procedures
- kept informed about possible outcomes, timeframes, rights of appeal and reviews, and
- provided with adequate and fair support.

Concurrent investigations

Harmful behaviours, such as bullying and harassment can be inappropriate responses from workers exposed to other hazards, for example high job demands and poor support. Where these behaviours breach employment codes of conduct or professional standards you may require a separate investigation into these breaches as a disciplinary matter, as well as a systematic WHS investigation looking at any hazards present and ensuring they are controlled.

Where breaches of a code of conduct or professional standard are not proven there may still be an underlying WHS risk which needs be controlled.

Appendix A – Job characteristics, design and management

This appendix provides examples of control measures for psychosocial hazards related to job characteristics, design and management, and the working environment and equipment including:

- high or low job demands
- fatigue
- low job control
- job insecurity
- poor support
- traumatic events or material
- remote or isolated work
- intrusive surveillance
- lack of role clarity
- poor organisational change management
- inadequate recognition
- poor organisational justice, and
- poor environmental conditions.

However, it is not an exhaustive list and you should use the process outlined in this Code to ensure you identify all hazards in your workplace and assess and control the associated risks.

A single or irregular exposure to these hazards may not create psychosocial risks, or the risks may be very low. However, if workers' exposure to a hazard (or a combination of these hazards) is frequent, prolonged or severe it can cause psychological and physical harm.

The controls provided are examples. You must consider what is reasonably practicable to eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace.

Job demands

Sustained or intense high levels of physical, mental or emotional effort which are unreasonable or chronically exceed workers' skills, or sustained low levels of physical, mental or emotional effort. A job can include periods of high and low job demands. A job can also involve a combination of low or high mental, emotional and physical demands.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

High physical demands	- long, irregular or unpredictable work-hours (e.g. doing shift work or being on call) - insufficient breaks (e.g. breaks are infrequent, too short, strictly scheduled or regularly interrupted)

	- not being able to recover between periods of work (e.g. being expected to work afterhours, be on call, or return to work with insufficient rest and sleep) - not having opportunities to use leave entitlements - high workloads (e.g. having too much to do) - physically demanding, challenging or tiring work (e.g. undertaking hazardous manual tasks or strenuous physical tasks), and - time pressures or fast paced work (e.g. unreasonable deadlines or computer/machine paced work). - Note: work that involves challenging work hours or shift work is associated with a greater risk of fatigue.
High mental or cognitive demands	- complex tasks frequently or severely exceeding a worker's capacity or competency (e.g., workers lack the training, resources, skills, authority or experience to reasonably or successfully do tasks) - sustained levels of concentration or vigilance particularly when accuracy is required, or workers are looking for infrequent events (e.g. long-distance driving or security monitoring) - work where errors may have high reputational, legal, career, safety or financial risks (e.g. air traffic control, medical care or decisions affecting a large number of people) - absence of systems to prevent individual errors (e.g. relying on workers to memorise information or perform manual calculations without checks), - repeatedly or rapidly switching tasks so it is difficult to concentrate and complete tasks (e.g. being frequently interrupted or having to do numerous things at once), and - Note: work that involves complex tasks and high concentration is associated with a greater risk of fatigue
High emotional demands	- responding to distressing or emotional situations (e.g. dealing with confrontation) - managing other people's emotions (e.g. de-escalating an aggressive situation, undertaking disciplinary processes or assisting people who are distressed) - providing support or empathy (e.g. conveying bad news, providing advocacy or counselling) - suppressing emotions or displaying false emotions (e.g. nursing staff hiding distress for patients or retail workers pretending friendliness with difficult customers), and - Note: work that involves emotional labour or providing emotional support is associated with a greater risk of fatigue.
Low job demands	- having too little to do (e.g. running out of work) or long idle periods where workers cannot perform other tasks (e.g. where a worker must monitor a process and cannot perform other tasks until it is complete) - highly monotonous or repetitive tasks which require low levels of thought processing and little variety (e.g. packing products or monitoring production lines) - work that is too easy (e.g. significantly below a worker's skills or abilities), and - idle periods when high workloads are present (e.g. having urgent work but being unable to proceed until equipment, resources or support become available).

Controlling job demands

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Schedule tasks to avoid intense or sustained low or high job demands (e.g. schedule non-urgent work for quieter periods). - Manage supply chains to avoid large fluctuations in demand (e.g. delays in supplies causing backlogs of orders). - Plan shifts to allow adequate rest and recovery, particularly between periods of high demand.
Physical work environment	- Design the workplace to eliminate demanding tasks or jobs (e.g. locate the storeroom next to the loading dock so deliveries do not require double handling). - Provide quiet spaces for workers doing mentally demanding work. - Implement systems to reduce human error (e.g. use IT systems to capture important information and generate reminders). - Provide appropriate break areas (e.g. air-conditioned or shady areas for physically demanding work or staff-only areas for workers dealing with difficult customers).
Modifying job demands	- Plan your workforce so you have an adequate number of appropriately skilled staff to do the work and so that tasks utilise your workers' skills. - Roster enough workers to ensure they can take required breaks over long or busy shifts. - Rotate workers through demanding or repetitive tasks. - Reschedule non-urgent tasks if demand is unexpectedly high or low. - Provide additional support during periods of high demand (e.g. provide more workers, better equipment or outsource tasks). - Schedule enough time for difficult tasks to be completed safely. Inexperienced workers may require additional time, supervision or support. - Outsource tasks to external companies with the capacity to deliver services safely (e.g. outsource tasks to companies that have appropriately skilled workers or specialised equipment).
Safe work systems and procedures	- Empower workers in situations where they face high emotional demands (e.g. allow discretion in providing refunds where appropriate to avoid customer aggression or distress). - Have regular conversations about work expectations, workloads, deadlines and instructions to ensure job demands are understood and can be managed. - Regularly review and update work policies and procedures to avoid unnecessary work (e.g. ensure reporting lines are suitable for current workloads). - Have systems for escalating problems and getting support from managers.
The worker	- Set achievable performance targets, with consideration for the worker's experience and skills. - Provide training if required to ensure workers have the skills to meet work demands. - If emotional demands are an unavoidable part of a worker's role, ensure these are captured in the position description and

	applicants are informed at the pre-selection stage (e.g. at interview) of the demanding nature of the role.
For information on safe physical work environments see the Code of Practice: *Managing the work environment and facilities.* For information on designing structures which will, or could reasonably be, used as a workplace see the Code of Practice: *Safe design of structures.*	

Fatigue

A state of physical or mental exhaustion, or both, which reduces the ability to perform work safely and effectively.

Fatigue can eventuate in situations where workers work long hours, often with high physical, mental or emotional demands. If fatigue results from psychosocial hazards eventuating, it can cause further physical or psychosocial harm.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Fatigue may include:

- Physical exhaustion due to work that involves high physical demands (see Job demands listed above in this Code for examples of high physical demand)
- Physical exhaustion due to working in poor environmental conditions (see poor physical environments listed below in this Code for examples).
- Mental exhaustion due to work that involves high mental or cognitive demands (see Job demands listed above in this Code for examples of high mental or cognitive demands), and
- Emotional exhaustion due to work that work involves high emotional demands (see Job demands listed above in this Code for examples of high emotional demands).

Controlling Fatigue

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Incorporate fatigue management into rosters and work practices to allow for adequate rest and recovery, particularly between periods of high demand. - Establish hours of work guidelines to manage the likelihood of fatigue (e.g. maximum shift length, maximum number of consecutive shifts, minimum break/rest periods, maximum night shifts, maximum overtime). - Ensure journey management process to manage fatigue-related risks when travelling for work purposes.
Reducing	- Provide additional support during periods of high demand (e.g. provide more workers, better equipment or outsource tasks).

fatigue	- Providing workers with control over their work pace and allowing them to take breaks to manage their workload and fatigue. - Rotate workers through demanding or repetitive tasks. - Reschedule non-urgent tasks if demand is unexpectedly high. - Outsource tasks to external companies with the capacity to deliver services safely (e.g. outsource tasks to companies that have appropriately skilled workers or specialised equipment).
Physical work environment	- Reduce exposure to conditions that influence worker comfort. - Provide suitable accommodation arrangements that allow workers to get good quality of rest and sleep. - Provide quiet spaces for workers doing mentally demanding work. - Provide appropriate break areas (e.g. air-conditioned or shady areas for physically demanding work or staff-only areas for workers dealing with difficult customers).
Safe work systems and procedures	- Provide training to supervisors and workers on recognising signs and symptoms of fatigue. - Empower workers in situations where they face high emotional demands (e.g. allow discretion in providing refunds where appropriate to avoid customer aggression or distress). - Increasing the level of practical support during peak workloads. - Provide access to an employee assistance program.
The worker	- Provide training if required to ensure workers have the skills to meet work demands. - Provide training to supervisors and workers about early warning signs and symptoms of work-related fatigue and how to respond when they recognise them in themselves or others. - If emotional demands are an unavoidable part of a worker's role, ensure these are captured in the position description and applicants are informed at the pre-selection stage (e.g. at interview) of the demanding nature of the role.

Low job control

Having little control or say over the work or aspects of the work including how or when the job is done.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Low job control may include:

- requiring permission or sign-off before progressing routine or low risk tasks (e.g. before ordering standard monthly supplies or sending routine internal emails)
- workers' level of autonomy not matching their abilities (e.g. inexperienced and highly skilled workers are given the same level of autonomy)
- prescriptive processes and not allowing workers to apply their skills or judgment (e.g. work is tightly scripted and workers cannot adapt to the specific situation)
- lack of consultation about changes impacting their work (e.g. changing processes for interacting with clients)

- limited scope for workers to adapt the way they work to changing situations or adopt efficiencies in their work (e.g. not allowing workers to adapt processes which do not suit the situation)
- workers have little influence on how they do their work, when they change tasks or take breaks (e.g. work is machine or computer paced)
- workers are unable to avoid dealing with aggression or abuse (e.g. police or healthcare services)
- workers do not have control over their physical environment (e.g. working in uncomfortable temperatures), and
- Where workers are engaged insecure, precarious and contingent work arrangements (e.g. casual work, labour hire, fixed-term contracts, gig economy workers).

Controlling low job control

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Match workers' level of autonomy to their skills and experience. - Implement consultation arrangements to regularly discuss the work, how it is done and any changes impacting workers. - Develop governance arrangements and approval processes that balance risks and efficiency to streamline lower risk tasks. - Design processes and systems to deal with new situations and provide autonomy for workers to apply their judgement when processes are not fit for purpose.
Physical work environment	- Design processes and systems so workers control their workflow (e.g. use electronic systems to filter client queues and give workers control over when the next client is called). - If work is machine or computer paced, design processes so workers can alter the pace of work, change tasks, or pause the workflow to take breaks. - Provide workers with reasonable control over their physical environment (e.g. workers can adjust their workstation). - Ensure equipment is maintained and appropriate to the task
Improving job control	- Plan any regular additional work hours or changes to work in advance with workers (e.g. if additional hours are usually required during peak season, plan this in advance with workers). - Involve workers in organisational decision-making processes and encourage suggestions for continuously improving work practices. - Plan deadlines, performance targets, work allocations and work plans in consultation with workers. - Hold regular team meetings and discuss any work challenges with workers and discuss how problems could be solved. - Monitor staff in way that is not excessive or punitive.
Safe work systems and procedures	- Create an environment where workers feel empowered to raise safety concerns about work requirements. Encourage workers to suggest changes or adopt efficiencies in their work. - Provide leadership and supervision that supports workers to take reasonable control over their work.
The worker	- Develop a performance management system that ensures workers have input into the way they do their work rather than focusing only on output. - Hire workers with the right mix of skills and experience for the position including the level of autonomy the job will have.

Job insecurity

A state of uncertainty about continued employment due to precarious and contingent work arrangements.

Subjectively perceived threat of job loss.

Lack of assurance that their jobs will remain stable in the future.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Job insecurity may include:

- Work that involves uncertainty over the extent and length of their employment, such as casual, labour hire or rolling fixed-term contract work.
- Workers coming to work sick or injured (presenteeism) to maintain a positive impression with the employer so as to secure future shifts and employment contracts
- No paid leave, leading to presenteeism
- Workers taking on more hazardous job tasks
- Workers do not have control over their pay and work process
- Workers performing extended hours of work when jobs are available
- Ongoing fatigue when long hours of labour are on offer or required, and
- Isolated work resulting in physical and social isolation

Controlling Job insecurity

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Consult and provide advance notice of work arrangements. - Implement consultation arrangements to regularly discuss the work and any changes impacting workers usual work hours or arrangements.
Reducing job insecurity	- Where reasonably practicable, avoid insecure, precarious and contingent work arrangements (e.g. move long-term casual or fixed-term workers to permanent, ongoing employment contracts). - Review and adjust employment agreements and entitlements to enable more stable and secure employment opportunities. - Plan any regular additional work hours or changes to work in advance with workers (e.g. if additional hours are usually required during peak season, plan this in advance with workers). - Involve insecure workers in organisation decision-making processes and encourage questions about their employment

	status.
Safe work systems and procedures	- Create an environment where workers feel they do not need to always maintain a positive impression with the employer to secure shifts or employment contract. - Provide mechanisms for workers to report issues, raise concerns or appeal workplace decisions. This may include anonymous surveys or reporting. - Ensure you attribute work correctly and ensure the right workers receive recognition for achievements. - Provide systems to protect workers who raise safety concerns from discrimination (Sections 104-109 of the WHS Act prohibit discriminatory, coercive or misleading conduct). - Provide leadership and supervision that supports workers to provide input regarding work hours and arrangements.
The worker	- Encourage workers to use available processes to raise concerns, issues or complaints early, and use appeal processes when necessary. - Encourage workers to not attend work if they are sick or injured. - Hire and promote workers based on merit using transparent selection methods.

Poor support

Inadequate support, including insufficient support from supervisors or other workers.

Not having the resources they need to do the job or support work performance.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Poor support may include:

- insufficient, unclear or contradictory information (e.g. necessary information is not passed on or is communicated poorly)
- not having the things to do their job properly or on time (e.g. not having the necessary tools, systems, equipment or resources)
- frequently needing to compete for the things needed to do the job (e.g. where multiple workers need to use equipment at the same time)
- poorly maintained or inadequate tools, systems and equipment (e.g. tools are broken or IT systems do not work as intended)
- inadequate training for the task (e.g. new workers are asked to do complex tasks or workers are expected to use new tools without training)
- jobs where supervisors are unavailable to make decisions or provide support (e.g. they work from a different location or are frequently in meetings)
- inadequate guidance from supervisors or assistance from other workers (e.g. other workers are not available to help safely complete tasks)
- workers cannot ask for help when needed (e.g. workers are not able to pause work, leave their workstations or are working remotely without means to contact supervisors)
- workplace cultures that discourage supervisors or co-workers supporting each other

(e.g. highly competitive, insecure, critical, uncooperative or uncollaborative workplaces)
- working environments that discourage discussion (e.g. lack of suitable spaces to discuss sensitive issues or where workers are physically separated)
- limited emotional support or unempathetic leadership (e.g. supervisors do not notice when workers are struggling, do not take issues seriously or provide a safe space to raise issues), and
- infrequent or poor performance feedback and discussions (e.g. feedback is unclear, unhelpful or not provided).

Controlling poor support

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Implement good information sharing systems so workers have quick access to the information they need to do their jobs (e.g. ensure databases are kept up to date and are user friendly). - Design work so supervisors have manageable workloads, sufficient resources and their span of control allows effective supervision (e.g. supervisors have time to answer questions or assist with challenging tasks). - Establish systems to ensure regular, fair, goal-focused and constructive feedback discussions occur between workers and supervisors to discuss work tasks, and any support or development needs (e.g. implement end of shift debriefs or require supervisors to do quarterly check ins). - Provide clear management structures and reporting lines (e.g. provide organisational charts or ensure workers understand who to go to for help).
Physical work environment	- Provide workers with the things they need to do their jobs properly and safely (e.g. the right tools, equipment, systems and resources) and ensure workers have sufficient access to them (e.g. they are conveniently located and workers do not need to compete for access). - Provide workers with access to supervisors (e.g. locate workers close to their supervisor or if working remotely provide tools like videoconferencing). - Design the work environment to facilitate cooperation and ensure people can ask for help (e.g. workers can easily have discussions with others and there are suitable meeting spaces).
Increasing support	- Hold regular team meetings, and discuss any challenges, issues and support needs (e.g. ask workers about any new challenges or training they may need). - Build a workplace culture that values collaboration and cooperation instead of competition (e.g. establish team rather than individual goals or praise cooperation). - Maintain tools, systems and equipment, and review whether they are suitable for the work (e.g. ensure equipment works and consider whether other equipment might work better or more efficiently). - Schedule meetings to ensure supervisors have availability during workers' usual hours to meet with them so workers can raise issues or ask questions. - Increase the level of support during peak periods or challenging tasks (e.g. roster more workers on during peak season or check in

	more often for challenging tasks). - Backfill roles or redistribute work when workers are out of the office or on leave. - Design rosters so supervisors are available to help during difficult or busy times. - Set clear work goals and clearly explain tasks.
Safe work systems and procedures	- Train workers on how to do their jobs and use relevant tools, equipment, systems, policies, or processes. - Establish open communication (e.g. have an open-door policy) and encourage workers to share concerns early (e.g. by taking their concerns seriously and ensure they have safe spaces to raise them). - Encourage and reward workers supporting each other. - Encourage the development of positive working relationships (e.g. invest in team planning and building activities and encourage team discussions). - Build interpersonal capabilities across the team (e.g. emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, or communication and feedback skills). - Encourage supervisors to be empathetic in their leadership, including taking workers concerns seriously, sensitively managing problems and helping when workers are struggling. - Ensure supervisors understand their role in supervising workers. - Encourage supervisors to provide timely, task specific, constructive feedback.
The worker	- Hire supervisors with the skills, experience and training to perform their role and support their team. - Provide development programs to improve supervisors' skills. - Establish inductions, training and mentoring (e.g. buddy programs) for new workers.

Lack of role clarity

Unclear, inconsistent or frequently changing roles, responsibilities or expectations.

Lack of important job-related information.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Lack of role clarity may include:

- unclear, inconsistent, or frequently changing jobs or role responsibilities
- overlap in responsibilities between workers (e.g. workers are given the same task and are not clear who is responsible for what)
- conflicting, uncertain, or frequently changing expectations and work standards (e.g. workers are given conflicting deadlines or instructions)
- conflicting, unclear or changing reporting lines
- missing or incomplete task information
- a lack of clarity about work priorities (e.g. which tasks or stakeholder relationships are most important).

Controlling lack of role clarity

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Provide position descriptions that clearly outline all key tasks, responsibilities and role expectations. - Design management structures with clear reporting lines. - Provide workers with a single immediate supervisor. - Detail reporting lines in an organisational chart.
Physical work environment	- Provide a workplace which is compatible with workers responsibilities (e.g. seat workers with their teams). - Provide systems, tools and equipment which is compatible with workers' responsibilities (e.g. IT systems with profiles set up for different users and access to programs they need for their role).
Providing role clarity	- Provide clear work instructions and expectations, explain why roles, responsibilities and tasks have been allocated, and ensure workers understand. - Ensure workers assigned to the same task understand who is doing what. - Change tasks or processes that frequently create conflict, confusion, or result in frequent mistakes (e.g. provide clearer explanations or redesign the tasks). - Update job descriptions and any role expectations following changes. - Implement regular check-ins and encourage open discussion among team members to ensure they are clear about who is doing what. - Provide all workers with an induction and ensure they understand their role. - Provide clear guidelines for what to do when expectations do not align (e.g. between workers, workers and supervisors, or workers and clients). - Implement systems to help workers identify issues or conflicts and resolve them.
Safe work systems and procedures	- Talk to workers to ensure they understand their role, your expectations, who they report to and the organisations work more broadly. - Encourage feedback on changes that affect workers' job tasks - Design a performance feedback system where employees receive regular feedback and provides them an opportunity to raise concerns about role clarity. - Check with employees to ensure they understand any additional or different responsibilities or duties following an organisational change or restructure.
The worker	- Encourage workers to talk to their supervisor or manager early if they are unclear about the scope or responsibilities of their role. - Provide a realistic job summary and overview during recruitment and selection processes so applicants are aware of the role, expectations and responsibilities.

Poor organisational change management

Organisational change management that is poorly planned, communicated, supported or managed.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Poor organisational change management may include:

- not consulting workers on changes in the workplace (e.g. not talking to workers or genuinely considering their views)
- poor consideration of WHS risks or performance impacts of a change (e.g. not considering health and safety risks when downsizing, relocating or introducing new technology or not allowing for drops in productivity while workers learn new processes)
- poorly planned changes (e.g. changes are disorganised, do not have a clear goal or do not account for workers' needs; inadequate communication with stakeholders causing disruption)
- poor communication about planned changes (e.g. allowing rumours to spread without providing timely, authoritative information)
- insufficient information is provided regarding changes (e.g. information is unclear or does not provide enough guidance for workers to understand and engage with the change)
- inadequate support for workers through the change process (e.g. not allowing time for workers to learn new tasks), or
- providing insufficient training to support changes (e.g. how to perform a new role or use a new process).

Controlling poor organisational change management

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- You must consult workers who are, or are likely to be, affected by a WHS matter. You must agree consultation arrangements with your workers and should design them to suit your workplace. You must use agreed consultation arrangements when planning changes that raise WHS concerns. - Modify work plans to allow for a period of change (e.g. adjusting performance targets while workers learn new roles). - Plan any changes to duties, tasks, objectives and reporting arrangements to ensure they are reasonable and fair (e.g. ensure workers will not have too much to do).
Physical work environment	- Provide practical support for changes in duties, tasks or objectives (e.g. ensure workers have access to the tools and resources they need to perform a new task). - Provide mechanisms to guide workers and managers through the change process (e.g. provide information or feedback sessions to address any concerns).
Managing and communicating organisational	- Provide authoritative information about upcoming changes and options being considered as soon as possible, keep workers up to date, and ensure workers understand the changes (e.g. provide

change	updates at team meetings or on notice boards). - Inform customers and suppliers about changes and any impacts this will have. - Provide workers with the reasons for changes. - Provide emotional support to help workers deal with challenges or frustrations resulting from change and uncertainty.
Safe work systems and procedures	- Encourage workers to engage with the development of new position descriptions and work processes. - Encourage workers to engage with consultation and raise any issues, concerns or suggestions. - Respect individual differences and recognise workers will respond to change in a range of ways and will have different needs in consultation and engagement.
The worker	- You must provide workers any information, training, instruction and supervision necessary to safely complete their work (e.g. train them on safely using new equipment). - Ensure the person communicating changes has the skills and authority to do so, and supervisors have the skills to support workers through periods of change.

Inadequate recognition and reward

Jobs where there is an imbalance between workers' effort and recognition or rewards, both formal and informal.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Inadequate recognition and reward may include:

- receiving unfair negative feedback (e.g. criticism on things workers cannot control or on things for which they have received insufficient training and support)
- receiving insufficient feedback or recognition (e.g. workers do not receive feedback on their work or are not given information to help them improve; workers are not acknowledged or rewarded for high effort or supporting colleagues)
- unfair, biased, opaque, or inequitable distribution of recognition and rewards (e.g. workers being rewarded for the efforts of others)
- limited opportunities for development (e.g. a lack of job training or development), or
- not recognising workers' skills (e.g. closely supervising or directing an experienced staff member on simple tasks).

Controlling inadequate recognition and reward

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Use fair, transparent and meaningful ways of providing recognition and rewards to reflect workers efforts (e.g. avoid only recognising the workers doing high profile work; recognise teamwork and corporate contributions). - Design fair and transparent performance management processes (e.g. ensure performance measures relate to aspects

	of work within a worker's control and consult workers on performance expectations).
Providing appropriate recognition and reward	- Provide recognition or feedback promptly and ensure it is specific, practical, fair and clearly relates to workers' performance. - Consult workers when designing reward and recognition systems.
Safe work systems and procedures	- Develop leaders' abilities to provide constructive feedback and recognise good performance. - Ensure performance management systems focus on aspects of work that are within the worker's control. - Ensure you attribute work correctly and ensure the right workers receive recognition for achievements. - Train supervisors on how to have difficult conversations and manage underperformance in a way that prioritises improvement over blame.
The worker	- Implement systems to support performance (e.g. training and mentoring) and provide opportunities for development (e.g. allow workers to take ownership of particular tasks). - Recruit or train supervisors with the skills to provide constructive feedback and recognise the contributions of workers.

Poor organisational justice

Poor organisational justice involves a lack of procedural justice (fair processes to reach decisions), informational fairness (keeping people informed), or interpersonal fairness (treating people with dignity and respect).

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Poor organisational justice may include:

- failing to treat workers' information sensitively or maintain their privacy (e.g. having performance discussions in front of others or using information for a purpose it was not disclosed for)
- policies or procedures that are unfair, biased or applied inconsistently (e.g. promotion based on favouritism, or applying disciplinary policies inconsistently or discriminatorily)
- penalising workers for things outside their control (e.g. for not producing a sufficient number of products when they did not have access to the required materials)
- failing to recognise or accommodate the reasonable needs of workers (e.g. failing to provide an accessible workplace)
- discriminating against particular groups or not applying policies fairly to some groups
- failing to appropriately address (actual or alleged) underperformance, inappropriate or harmful behaviour, or misconduct (e.g. not investigating allegations of sexual harassment or not providing procedural justice for workers accused of bullying)
- allocating work, shifts and opportunities in a discriminatory or unfair way (e.g. giving 'good' shifts based on friendships with supervisor), or
- no or inadequate processes for making decisions affecting workers (e.g. policies and

processes do not set out the key considerations for disciplinary decisions).

Controlling poor organisational justice

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Design unbiased and transparent workplace processes, policies and procedures in consultation with workers (e.g. decision making, recruitment, promotion, performance management, task allocation, WHS or workplace entitlement policies). - Consult workers when setting work standards or performance expectations. Ensure they are achievable and workers will not be penalised for things outside their control.
Physical work environment	- Design a workplace environment where private conversations can be held and ensure confidential information is kept secure. - Ensure the workplace accommodates reasonable needs of workers (e.g. provide accessible ramps, doors or IT equipment).
Safe work systems and procedures	- Provide mechanisms for workers to report issues, raise concerns or appeal workplace decisions. - Regularly review policies, processes, procedures, performance expectations and decisions to ensure they are appropriate, fair and reflect the needs of the workplace. - Communicate processes and information to workers in a timely and appropriate way (e.g. notify unsuccessful applicants privately before you publicly announce promotion decisions). - Provide systems to protect workers who raise safety concerns from discrimination (Sections 104-109 of the WHS Act prohibit discriminatory, coercive or misleading conduct).
The worker	- Encourage workers to use available processes to raise concerns, issues or complaints early, and use appeal processes when necessary. - Ensure workers understand expectations and performance targets. - Hire and promote workers based on merit using transparent selection methods.

Traumatic events or material

Witnessing, investigating or being exposed to traumatic events or material. A person is more likely to experience an event as traumatic when it is unexpected, is perceived as uncontrollable or is the result of intentional cruelty. This includes vicarious exposure and cumulative trauma.

Traumatic events involving work-related violence are covered in Appendix B.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Traumatic events or material may include:

- witnessing or investigating a fatality, serious injury, abuse, neglect or serious incident (e.g. working in child protection)

- exposure to seriously injured or deceased persons (e.g. working in an emergency department or as a forensic scientist)
- experiencing fear or extreme risks (e.g. being in a motor vehicle accident, workplace incident or near miss)
- exposure to natural disasters (e.g. emergency services workers responding to floods or bushfires)
- witnessing or investigating terrorism or war (e.g. police officers responding to terrorist attacks or journalists reporting on wars)
- supporting victims of painful and traumatic events (e.g. providing counselling services)
- listening to or reading descriptions of painful and traumatic events experienced by others (e.g. lawyers reviewing evidence or advocates helping with victim testimonies)
- finding evidence of crimes or traumatic events (e.g. customs workers or online moderators), and
- exposure to events that bring up traumatic memories.

Controlling exposure to traumatic events or material

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Design work to minimise the number of workers exposed to traumatic events (e.g. design roles so tasks that can be carried out away from an accident or disaster scene are performed from another location). - Coordinate and schedule tasks at traumatic scenes so workers are not exposed to unnecessary trauma (e.g. arrange for less urgent tasks to be performed after a body has been removed).
Physical work environment	- Eliminate physical risks to health and safety in the workplace to prevent trauma from a workplace incident or near miss. - Remove or secure potentially lethal means of self-harm (e.g. medications or hazardous chemicals) from the workplace or secure them (e.g. require two workers to enter codes to access storage units or require higher level authorisation processes). - Provide physical barriers to discourage suicide attempts (e.g. install fences to prevent access to train tracks or railings on bridges, locking windows and limiting roof access). - Implement file flagging processes or password requirements on potentially distressing files to eliminate inadvertent exposure to distressing content.
Minimising exposure to traumatic events or material	- Reduce exposure to traumatic materials, particularly if there is no operational need for workers to view or listen to all the materials or consider them in detail (e.g. allow online moderators to remove users based on a single serious breach or encourage officers discovering suspected child abuse material to pass that material to identified investigations without reviewing it). - Use screening software to remove explicit material. - Minimise the number of workers exposed to traumatic materials or events (e.g. do not bring unnecessary workers into an investigation or natural disaster area). - Minimise the amount of traumatic materials or events each worker is exposed to (e.g. rotate police officers through different roles to provide periods of respite). - Reduce workloads so workers can investigate thoroughly and provide adequate support to victims (e.g. prevent workers from feeling they 'failed someone').

	- Increase breaks and recovery time after exposure to a traumatic event (e.g. provide time to disconnect from work).
Safe work systems and procedures	- Provide guidelines and procedures for dealing with incidents, train workers in these procedures and ensure they understand them (e.g. reduce the number of decisions workers make during a traumatic event). - Implement reporting systems for exposure to traumatic or distressing events. Implement systems that prompt supervisors to support workers, trigger a review of the incident and a review of whether control measures are working as planned. - Create a safe space for workers to report traumatic or distressing events and deal with these disclosures sensitively and seriously. - Implement peer support programs. - Implement procedures for providing support after traumatic events (e.g. provide counselling and professional support). - Train supervisors on responding to trauma and where they can get assistance.
The worker	- Ensure recruitment and selection practices incorporate a realistic job preview so applicants are aware the role has the potential to expose them to trauma. - Monitor the health of your workers following traumatic events, or when dealing with traumatic materials, using processes developed in consultation with workers. - Provide training to workers so they understand their role, know how to respond effectively, and know where to access advice and assistance during a traumatic event. - Provide training to workers who may be exposed to traumatic events or have a role in supporting workers who are exposed, so they can recognise signs and symptoms of stress and ensure they know where and how to access support. - Monitor and support workers following traumatic events (e.g. are there any changes to their behaviours or increased absenteeism). - Provide employee assistance programs and encourage workers to use them.

Remote or isolated work

Work that is isolated from the assistance of other persons because of the location, time or nature of the work.

Working in environments where there are long travel times, poor access to resources, or communications are limited and difficult.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Remote or isolated work may include:

- working in locations requiring long commutes to work sites
- significant delays to entering or exiting the worksite (e.g. prisons, tower cranes or confined spaces)

- limited access to resources (e.g. supplies are delivered infrequently or there are significant delays in getting additional equipment if needed)
- limited access to recreation or opportunities to escape work issues (e.g. living in workers' accommodation in remote areas)
- reduced access to support networks and lower capacity to meet family commitments (e.g. fly-in fly-out or offshore work)
- working alone (e.g. lone workers on night shift)
- working away from the usual workplace (e.g. working in clients' homes, offsite or from home)
- where there is limited access to reliable communication and technology (e.g. no phone reception or IT systems are frequently offline), and
- difficulties or long delays accessing help in an emergency (e.g. community nurses in remote areas, working in underground mines).

Controlling remote or isolated work

WHS Regulation 48

Remote or isolated work

You must manage the risks associated with remote or isolated work, including providing effective communication with the worker carrying out remote or isolated work.

The Code of Practice: *Managing the workplace environment and facilities* provides information on how the risks associated with remote or isolated work can be controlled including information on:

- workplace layout and design
- communication systems
- buddy systems
- movement records, and
- training information and instruction.

Intrusive surveillance

Excessive surveillance methods/tools used to monitor and collect information about workers at work for the purpose of work performance monitoring.

Intrusive surveillance methods/tools can be analogue (e.g supervisor engaging in micromanagement) or technological (e.g trackable devices).

Note: surveillance of workers while at work is appropriate for the purposes of:

- monitoring workers' geographical location or movement to control risks associated with remote or isolated work, and
- managing physical and/or IT security risks in a workplace.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Intrusive surveillance may include:

- unreasonable levels of supervision.
- excessive monitoring of work tasks or breaks.
- tracking calls made and movements made by workers (using CCTV and trackable devices) for the purpose of work performance monitoring (as opposed to safety or other purposes).
- GPS monitoring of workers' geographical location or movement in company vehicles for the purpose of work performance monitoring (as opposed to safety or other purposes).

Controlling intrusive surveillance

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design	- Consult with employees when developing performance-monitoring systems and procedures for reviewing and monitoring employees - Develop a clear policy on appropriate monitoring that is not excessive or punitive. - Consult with employees about the use of satellite tracking systems or devices and the purpose of the tracking and limits for privacy purposes. - Develop team-based targets which help build effective teams and allow the measurement of team performance against organisational goals.
Physical environment	- Design a workplace environment where private conversations can be held and ensure confidential information is kept secure.
Safe work systems and procedures	- Ensure supervisors understand their role in supervising workers. - Ensure managers are competent supervisors, including providing support and training. - Encourage the development of positive working relationships (e.g. invest in team planning and building activities and encourage team discussions).
The worker	- Encourage workers to talk to their supervisor or manager early if they have concerns, issues or complaints early about the surveillance methods/tools used to monitor their work performance. - Ensure workers understand expectations and performance targets.

Poor physical environment

Exposure to unpleasant, poor quality or hazardous working environments or conditions.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.

Poor physical environments may include:

- performing hazardous tasks
- working in hazardous conditions (e.g. near unsafe machinery or hazardous chemicals)
- performing demanding work while wearing uncomfortable PPE or other equipment (e.g. equipment that is poorly fitted, heavy, or reduces visibility or mobility)
- workplace conditions that affect concentration or ability to complete tasks (e.g. high noise levels, uncomfortable temperatures or poor lighting)
- unpleasant workplace conditions such as poorly maintained amenities, unpleasant smells or loud music
- working with poorly maintained equipment (e.g. equipment that has become unsafe, noisy or started vibrating), and
- work-related accommodation, facilities and amenities that cause or contribute to worker fatigue (e.g. conditions are noisy, uncomfortable or stop workers getting enough sleep).

You can find more information on physical hazards and the working environment on the Safe Work Australia website.

Controlling a poor physical environment

Like psychosocial hazards, you must eliminate or minimise physical hazards in the workplace as far as is reasonably practicable. Specific duties may also apply under WHS laws, for information on how to manage a poor physical environment please see the Safe Work Australia website.

Appendix B – Harmful behaviours

This appendix provides information on psychosocial hazards related to harmful behaviours. Harmful behaviours include:

- violence and aggression
- bullying
- harassment including sexual harassment or gender-based harassment, and
- conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions.
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These can cause physical and psychological harm to the person they are directed at and anyone witnessing the behaviour.

A single or irregular exposure to these hazards may not create psychosocial risks or the risks may be very low. However, if workers are exposed to a hazard (or a combination of these hazards) over a prolonged period or in a severe way they can cause psychological and physical harm.

The controls provided are examples, you must consider what is reasonably practicable to eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace.

Identifying harmful behaviours

Overt or extreme forms of these behaviours (such as physical violence) may be easier to identify and are not tolerated in most workplaces. However, more subtle forms like crude language, sexist remarks and an overall workplace culture that is degrading or intimidating may not be taken as seriously and can be more difficult to identify.

Some of the things that may increase the likelihood of workers being exposed to harmful behaviours are set out below. This can help you identify when, where and why these behaviours may happen at work. For example, workplaces with low worker diversity (e.g. the workforce is dominated by one gender, age group, race or culture), some workforce characteristics (e.g. new and young workers, casual workers, workers in minority groups) and a workplace culture which tolerates or ignores harmful workplace behaviours are more likely to experience harmful behaviours.

Workers may be more likely to experience harmful behaviours or be more severely affected by it, because of their sex, gender, sexuality, age, migration status, disability and literacy. The risk of experiencing harm rises when a person faces multiple forms of discrimination. Attributes that make a person more vulnerable to these behaviours can also make workers less likely to report concerns or incidents.

Harmful behaviours can come from a range of sources including:

- **External** behaviours from customers, clients, patients, members of the public or from other businesses (e.g. between a plumbing and an electrical sub-contractor at the same work site, or a delivery person and a retail worker).
- **Internal** behaviours from other workers, supervisors or managers.

Harmful behaviours may be an inappropriate response to other psychosocial hazards (e.g. high job demands or inadequate support). To effectively control risks, you must control the underlying causes as well as directly addressing harmful behaviours.

Violence and aggression

Things that increase the likelihood of violent or aggressive behaviour include:

- providing care or services to people who are distressed, confused, afraid, ill, affected by drugs or alcohol or receiving unwelcome or involuntary treatment
- enforcement activities (e.g. the activities of police, prison officers or parking inspectors)
- working in high crime areas
- handling valuable or restricted items (e.g. cash or medicines)
- poor visibility in the workplace (e.g. poor lighting or barriers)
- restricted movement in the workplace (e.g. limited exit points)
- working alone, in isolation or in a remote area with the inability to call for assistance
- working offsite or in the community
- working in unpredictable environments (e.g. where other people may pose a risk to workers' safety such as at a client's home)
- interacting with customers, either face-to-face, on the phone or online, or
- service methods or policies that cause or escalate frustration, anger, misunderstanding or conflict (e.g. low staffing levels, customer service policies, setting unreasonable expectations of the services an organisation or workers can provide).

Bullying

Things that increase the likelihood of bullying include:

- presence of other psychosocial hazards:
    - high job demands
    - low job control
    - low support
    - organisational change, such as restructuring or significant technological change
    - lack of role clarity, or
    - poor organisational justice
- leadership or management styles:
    - autocratic behaviour that is strict and directive and does not allow workers to be involved in decision making
    - behaviour where little or no guidance is provided to workers or responsibilities are inappropriately and informally delegated to subordinates, and
    - abusive and demeaning behaviour that may include inappropriate or derogatory language, or malicious criticism and feedback, and tolerance of this behaviour
- systems of work
    - lack of resources or training
    - inappropriate work scheduling, shift work and poorly designed rostering
    - unreasonable performance measures or timeframes
    - poor workplace relationships
    - poor communication
    - isolation
    - low levels of support, or
    - work group hostility.

Harassment including sexual harassment

Things that increase the likelihood of harassment include:

- particular cohorts of workers who are more vulnerable such as young workers, workers with a disability, workers from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds , workers in insecure or precarious forms of employment, and workers on working visas
- acceptance of inappropriate behaviour (e.g. racially or sexually crude conversations, innuendo or offensive jokes are part of the accepted culture)

- power imbalances along gendered lines (e.g. workplaces where one gender holds the majority of management and decision-making positions)
- workplaces organised according to a strict hierarchical structure (e.g. police and enforcement organisations, medical and legal professions)
- use of alcohol at work activities and attendance at conferences and social events as part of work duties, including overnight travel
- workers are isolated, in restrictive spaces like cars or working from remote locations with limited supervision or restricted access to help and support
- working from home which may provide an opportunity for covert sexual harassment to occur online or through phone communication
- interacting with customers, either face-to-face, on the phone or online, and
- poor understanding among workplace leaders of the nature, drivers and impacts of sexual harassment
- workplaces where racial prejudice and unconscious bias directed towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island workers are present.

While anyone can experience harassment there are certain groups who are more likely to experience it. Some workers may be at greater risk because of their age, gender, race, sexuality, migration status, disability and literacy.

Conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions

Things that increase the likelihood of conflict or poor workplace relationships include:

- culture of tolerating swearing, name calling, spreading rumours or rudeness within the workplace
- lack of policies or processes to handle reports of unacceptable behaviour, and
- the presence of other psychosocial hazards (workers are more likely to be uncivil when they are stressed).

Controlling risks from harmful behaviours

Behaviours such as those listed above are known to cause harm. You must put control measures in place to eliminate or minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable. This section provides examples of control measures for managing the risks of violence, aggression, sexual harassment and bullying at the workplace.

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Physical work environment and security

The physical work environment can affect the likelihood of violence, aggression, harassment and bullying occurring and the ability to respond if it does happen. Consider the following control measures which may provide the highest protection for workers.

Security

- Security personnel or night-time security patrol.
- Video surveillance.
- Fixed and portable alarm systems.
- Communication systems like phones, intercoms and alarm systems are in place, regularly maintained and tested.
- Ensuring vehicles are fit for purpose (e.g. have central locking devices, tracking devices such as GPS systems to allow drivers in distress to be located, lighting inside the vehicle to allow the driver to be aware of passenger behaviour, vehicles are well maintained so they do not break down in unsafe locations or times).

Access

- Controlling access to the premises (e.g. electronically controlled doors with viewing panels that allow surveillance of public areas before the doors are opened from the inside).
- Preventing public access to the area when people are working alone or at night (e.g. via a security card or code, asking guests to leave the room while workers clean).
- Providing facilities and amenities which give privacy and security (e.g. private and secure change rooms or facilities for workers to use which are separate from customers).
- Separating workers from the public with fixed or removable barriers (e.g. high counters, furniture, screens on counters or screens between a driver and passenger).
- Installing a service window for night transactions and systems like pay-at-the-pump.
- Where practicable, providing a workspace for workers who are not able to work from home.

Visibility

- Ensuring internal and external lighting provides good visibility, including in car parks.
- Arranging furniture and partitions within the workplace to ensure good visibility of service areas, improve natural surveillance and avoid restrictive movement.
- Improving natural surveillance in areas such as offices, storerooms and other segregated areas (e.g. using semi opaque glass or screens).

Environment

- Ensuring there are no areas where workers could become trapped, such as rooms with keyed locks.
- Implementing appropriate temperature and noise controls, such as in waiting areas to reduce customer frustration.
- Securing any objects that could be thrown or used to injure someone.
- Providing workers and others with a safe place to retreat. In other situations, it may be possible to move the person behaving inappropriately (e.g. an aggressive student could be removed from the classroom while the behaviour continues).
- Ensuring a safe working environment for workers during travel (e.g. workers being in a vehicle together), at conferences, off site, at client or customer premises, and any other location where work is performed.

Safe work systems and procedures

Some safe work systems and procedures can be administrative controls that should be part of your approach to managing risks at your workplace.

Communication

- Communicate with workers when they are working in the community or away from the workplace (e.g. a supervisor regularly checking in with the worker throughout their shift).
- Clearly define jobs and seek regular feedback from workers about their role and responsibilities.
- Clearly communicate to clients and customers that any form of violence, aggression harassment or bullying is not tolerated (e.g. in service agreements, contracts or on signs).
- Clearly communicate to workers that using shared calendars to track a colleague's movement or daily activities and engage in stalking or other unwanted behaviours is not tolerated.

- Clearly communicate to workers, clients and customers that using work video communication platforms to take photos without permission or knowledge is not tolerated.
- Manage expectations of clients and customers by clearly communicating the nature of the products or services you are providing (e.g. online and using signage).
- Put up signs at the workplace (e.g. zero tolerance of aggression and violence; limits on products or services; security cameras are in use; or limited cash held on the premises).

Procedures

- Ban or refuse service to persons with a history of poor behaviour (e.g. patrons at pubs or clients at gyms). If service is necessary, such as for medical care, put in place additional measures to protect workers and others.
- Provide alternative methods of customer service to eliminate face-to-face interactions (e.g. online or click-and-collect services, or no contact delivery drops).
- Establish procedures for dealing with harmful behaviour from customers or clients and how workers and managers can respond.
- Limit the amount of cash, valuables and medicines held on the premises and handle them securely (e.g. only accept cashless payments) see the Safe Work Australia *Guide for Transporting and Handling Cash* for more information.
- Use face shields where spitting or intentionally coughing is a risk.
- Avoid the need for workers to work alone where possible (e.g. working in pairs, closing the business with security personnel present, or providing a safe escort to a worker's transport).
- Provide supervision of work and support for workers, especially new, young and inexperienced workers.
- Procedures for working in isolation and uncontrolled environments (e.g. carrying out situational risk assessments to determine at each visit the safety of a client's home before commencing duties).
- Provide a sufficient number of workers (e.g. during peak periods of customer attendance and for the level of care needed for clients).
- Alternate tasks in the workplace - particularly tasks requiring high levels of customer interaction - with other work tasks and ensure workers have regular breaks if aggression or incivility is likely.
- Encourage workers to keep records and screen shots if harmful behaviour occurs online or through phone communication and report the behaviour to their supervisor.
- Assess risks of client aggression and violence and whether additional control measures are required for dealings with some clients.
- Implement management plans where a client is known to have a history of aggression or violence. Develop the plan in consultation with appropriately qualified people and communicate it to all relevant workers.
- Reduce waiting times and missed calls (e.g. by training 'relief' workers to take calls or transferring calls to other areas).
- Encourage workers to escalate problem calls to senior workers.
- Encourage workers to report incidents and behaviours of concern.
- Provide a range of accessible and user-friendly ways to make a report informally, formally, anonymously and confidentially.

Information and training

- Improve role clarity by ensuring workers have well-defined roles and clear expectations.
- Provide adequate resources and training to workers so they are able to perform their role confidently and competently.
- Provide information on the standards of behaviour expected in the workplace, including the use of social media or other technologies.

- Train workers in how to deal with difficult customers, conflict resolution and
- de-escalation techniques, when and how to escalate issues to managers or supervisors, and procedures to report incidents.
- Train managers and supervisors on how to deal with difficult customers and conflict resolution when issues are escalated.
- Plan for regular handover and information exchange with workers, other agencies, carers and service providers.
- Understand client condition/disability/triggers/care and behaviour management plans.
- Ensure workers understand how to make a report, their right to representation and the support, protection and advice available.
- Make it clear that victimisation of those who make reports will not be tolerated
- Train key workers (contact persons) to receive reports and give support and advice.

Policies

- Implement appropriate workplace policies as part of managing WHS risks.
- Set, model and enforce acceptable behaviour standards for all people in the workplace. Foster a positive and respectful work culture where violence, aggression, harassment and bullying are not tolerated.
- As power imbalances and inequality increase the risk of gendered and sexual harassment, consider implementing policies and strategies to address gender inequality, lack of diversity and power imbalances at the workplace.
- For work-related events, reinforce workplace policies and behaviours expected of workers, ensure responsible service of alcohol policies are followed and that workers know who to turn to if they experience or witness inappropriate behaviour at the event.
- Avoid sexualised uniforms and ensure clothing is practical for the work undertaken.
- Act in a consistent manner when dealing with reports of violence, aggression, harassment and bullying, including providing sufficient and appropriate feedback to workers who have raised concerns.
- Allow workers to refuse or suspend service if people fail to comply with the expected standard of behaviour.
- Ensure processes and systems for reporting and responding to incidents are widely communicated and regularly reviewed.
- Provide supportive, consistent and confidential responses to reports.

Review

- Regularly evaluate work practices, in consultation with workers and their representatives, to see if they contribute to poor behaviours.
- Review control measures after incidents or changes in behaviour.
- Review and monitor workloads, staffing levels and time pressures.
- Collect de-identified details of all reports, including those that are not pursued formally by the complainant, to help you identify systemic issues at the workplace.

Appendix C - Risk register

Location: Click here to enter text.
Date: Click here to enter a date.

Hazard	How frequently are workers exposed to this hazard?	How long does this exposure last?	How severe is their exposure?	Are other hazards present this may interact with?	How effective are the current controls?	What further controls are required?	Actioned by	Date Due	Date Complete	Maintenance and review
E.g. High work demand (end of financial year sales)	*Once a year*	*1 month*	*Moderate, most staff are unable to complete essential tasks and report feeling stressed.*	*Yes, aggressive customers and low support from supervisors.*	*Moderately, workers are encouraged to leave non-essential tasks but still struggle to keep up with demands.*	*Additional workers to be assigned to busy shifts.*	*J. Blogs*	*31/05/2022*	Click here to enter a date.	*To be reviewed after first week of this year's sales.*
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter text.
Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter a date.	Click here to enter text.
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Appendix D: Case studies

The control measures PCBUs choose must suit the organisational and worker needs, and effectively control the risks to the highest level that is reasonably practicable. The tables below outline five scenarios with common psychosocial hazards and risks, example controls and approaches to maintain, monitor, review and achieve continual improvement of the risk management approach.

Scenario One: Construction Company			
Scenario context and work context	**Psychosocial hazards and risks**	**Psychosocial controls**	**Review and improve**
A construction company is currently managing several projects; some are not on schedule, and there is a backlog of work. Site supervisors are responsible for the workers, contractors, subcontractors and apprentices at each work site. The site supervisor is also responsible for ensuring supplies and equipment are delivered to each site. An electrical contractor is engaged to provide subcontractors at each of the sites. At one particular site that is running behind schedule, the site supervisor becomes aware that one of the contractor's electricians has been verbally aggressive with a first-year apprentice. Upon discussion with the apprentice, the site supervisor learns that this behaviour has been occurring on a regular basis for the past two months. The site supervisor tells the apprentice that this is how the industry is, that he does not have time to deal with this and that he needs to toughen up and get on with his work. The apprentice just wants to learn but makes regular mistakes and is afraid to ask for help. He wants the verbal	**Poor support** – both emotional and practical – from the supervisor: • The site supervisor does not acknowledge the apprentice's concerns or make the time to manage the training of apprentices. **Work-related violence and aggression, bullying** and **poor workplace relationships:** • Verbal aggression and bullying by the electrician, could escalate to physical aggression if not stopped. This behaviour is having a negative impact on the apprentice's ability to focus on his work. This is also stopping him from asking for help when he needs it. **High work demands** (role overload): • Due to the project running behind schedule, the site supervisor, contractor, subcontractors and workers experience a high workload with competing deadlines. • The work is physically demanding, challenging and tiring.	The construction company owner (PCBU) has a duty to managing psychosocial hazards at the workplace. After consulting the site supervisor, contractors, subcontractors and workers, the PCBU takes the following steps to **address poor support, work-related violence and aggression, bullying**, **poor workplace relationships** and **role overload**: • Meets with the electrical contractor, site supervisor and others to develop behaviour standards for all their workers when undertaking work at the same sites and processes for addressing safety concerns, including violence and aggression and bullying. • Informs workers that aggressive and bullying behaviour can be reported to him directly. • Speaks with the apprentice to check on his wellbeing and provide information about psychological support services. • Reviews the supervision and support of apprentices. • Decides to reduce the demands on the site supervisor by providing assistance with managing contracts and tenders. • Engages additional subcontractors and workers to assist in getting the works back on schedule and reducing excessive workloads. The site supervisor, to improve **support** and **job control**: • Starts daily toolbox talks with all workers, including subcontractors and apprentices, to provide relevant information and instructions. • Sets time aside each week to understand the first-year apprentice's learning requirements, assess his progress, develop learning goals, tasks the apprentice with responsibility for some tasks he should be competent to do, and allocates a third-year apprentice to buddy the first-year apprentice to support him on various tasks.	After consulting with the site supervisor, the PCBU: • Requires staff to periodically complete the People at Work psychosocial risk assessment survey to identify and assess risks and adequacy of controls. • Implements 'look and listen safety walks' multiple times each build. • Integrates support and mentoring of apprentices into their systems. • Checks in with the apprentice to verify that the verbally aggressive and bullying behaviour has stopped. • Arranges training for supervisors of apprentices, particularly on managing young and inexperienced workers. • Arranges regular reviews of work-related behaviour grievances and training to be included in the organisation's WHS systems. • Creates (with workers) a safety culture charter displayed prominently in project offices, around the site etc. • Sets up a confidential complaint reporting system to enable workers to raise issues confidentially and/or anonymously.

aggression and bullying to stop but is afraid to speak up in case this impacts his apprenticeship.		• Sets some time once a week to meet with all apprentices to discuss any issues or concerns and check in with their progress.	

Scenario Two: Large Government Call Centre			
Scenario context and work context	**Psychosocial hazards and risks**	**Psychosocial controls**	**Review and improve**
A Government agency has a central office in Canberra, small state offices in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, and also a team that works from home. Their role deals with customers' telephone inquiries and complaints. There is no management located at the state offices, just a small number of call centre staff. There is no structured communication process with the state offices or with those working from home (WFH) and information is not communicated consistently. There are tightly scripted responses, protocols and service standards to deal with the calls, and limited time allocated to spend with each person. Long call queues with automatic call drop-ins means workers feel constant time pressure. Workers always do the same tasks and their break times are regimented. Customers can become abusive due to long wait times. A recent restructure occurred, and workers are unsure about their roles and future workloads. A new IT system with performance monitoring software is making workers anxious as they have not yet had training on it and they are concerned it will be used as a means to increase workload, reduce their autonomy or even to sack them.	**High work demands** through role overload from the constant time pressures and required response times, which are not adequate for complex matters. Staff are also at risk of verbal abuse from distressed clients. **Low job control** and lack of task variety as work is tightly scripted and roles narrow, generally with poor support. **Lack of role clarity** and **poor organisational change management** around new IT systems and the restructure. Management does not provide consistent communication regarding changes within the organisation and workers outside of Canberra are often left out of training regarding changes to organisational systems. **Remote and isolated work** environment for workers who are in the work from home team where there is limited support and potential limited access to reliable communication and technology. **Low reward and recognition** of effort in general plus career opportunities are often not communicated to the state workers or those who WFH and they are subsequently over-looked within the organisation.	The organisation (PCBU), after consulting supervisors, workgroups and HSRs takes the following steps to reduce **role overload** and **role conflict**: • Is renegotiating service level agreements and response times so they are manageable with existing worker numbers. • Has addressed some of the reasons for the role overload and customer abuse: improved scripts, provided a process to triage, and offer customers alternatives if wait times are lengthy. The supervisor, to reduce **role overload**, **client verbal abuse**, **low job control**, **lack of task variety**, **poor support** and risks from **isolated work** and **poor change management**, is: • Provide training on managing aggressive and distressed customers. • Triaging complex issues – sending these to more experienced workers first or where this is not possible junior workers can flag if they need help. • Providing task rotation so workers can build new skills and get a break from stressful calls/interactions. • Developing customer behaviour standards and restricting services if workers are exposed to these behaviours. These standards are recorded and consequences played to customers upon first contact prior to speaking with workers. • Allowing workers to terminate a call in accordance with behaviour standards and consequences. • Flagging customers with history of breach of standards and ensure restrictions are followed. • Ensuring workers take frequent short breaks, away from their workstation. • Providing emotional support during and following abusive interactions (e.g. ability to escalate the issue to a supervisor, debrief time and to recover away from the general work area if required). • Developing call monitoring policies in consultation with workers and using these for coaching. • Ensuring consultation and training on the new IT system is provided before it is introduced and relaxes the performance targets until workers are familiar with the new systems. • Ensuring scheduled meetings with the WFH and state teams and ensure communication protocols are set up to capture	The PCBU: • To identify risks and adequacy of controls, gets workers to complete the People at Work psychosocial risk assessment survey and monitors and reviews other WHS data. • Ensures the leadership team have all completed training on their WHS duties and good work design and are applying these to future restructures and planned IT upgrades. Opportunities for automated web-based services (e.g. online applications) are also investigated. • Supports workers who want temporary secondments to other parts of the business for two-way learning and a break from the regimented work. • Reviews systems in place to ensure workers located in WFH team and state offices feel connected and supported and obtains feedback from workers. • Review systems in place to manage behaviour standards of customers and restrictive services. • Create systems to monitor number of abusive calls and exposure to these behaviours within the work environment. The supervisor: • Supports workers who want to develop technical or specialist skills and provides technical and specialist workers with the opportunity to mentor new workers.

		information sharing with the state offices in addition to the other workers. • Creating opportunities for WFH and state teams to be virtually included with the Canberra team or attend the Canberra office or work with the Canberra team remotely.	• Becomes a member of an industry Mental Health Community of Practice to get ideas and support on managing psychosocial hazards and risks from other peers in the industry.

Scenario Three: Trucking Company

Scenario context and work context	Psychosocial hazards and risks	Psychosocial controls	Review and improve
Maria has been a truck driver for over 10 years, and she generally enjoys driving. She and two other drivers contract solely to a large logistics company. The scheduling is done by the logistics company's dispatch manager. The company's customers are businesses across northern NSW and Queensland. Over the last two years the company has grown and the demand for more frequent and faster deliveries has increased. The number of drivers in Maria's company has not changed. Maria worries about delivery schedules, longer shifts and that she skips mandated rest breaks to deliver goods on time. On occasion she and other drivers have been delayed due to heavy traffic which results in abuse from angry business owners who then complain to the dispatch manager. Maria has tried raising scheduling concerns with the dispatch manager without success and thinks if she raises them again, she might lose the contract. She would like to have a say in how deliveries are scheduled but these are arranged	**Role overload** and **fatigue** – delivery deadlines are unachievable and the truck driver is working long hours and skipping rest breaks to meet deadlines. **Low job control** – not being able to influence the delivery schedules despite being an experienced driver and understanding the reasons for delays such as traffic, roadworks and closures, and breakdowns. **Poor support** from managers – raising concerns with management has seen no change in the increasing demands of the work. **Work-related violence** – drivers experiencing verbal aggression as customer expectations for supply of goods have not been managed.	The company (PCBU), after consulting with the drivers, takes the following steps to address **role overload**, **fatigue**, **low job control, poor support** from managers and **work-related violence**: • Managing customer expectations by incorporating revised delivery timeframes into their customer online and phone ordering processes. • Contracting additional drivers and distributing interstate deliveries across all drivers to manage risk of fatigue. • Providing drivers with training in de-escalation techniques for dealing with aggressive customers. • Providing fatigue management information to all workers. • Providing co-drivers where rescheduling is not possible to ensure that the driver can take mandated rest breaks as required. • Consulting with the trucking company manager regarding scheduling. The PCBU, after consulting customers, to address **role overload** and **work-related violence** will be communicating to customers: • Company policy on delivery timeframes • Notifying them in writing that verbal aggression is not acceptable, and goods may not be delivered if truck drivers are exposed to such behaviours • Requesting that delivery concerns should be directed to the company directly. The trucking company manager: • Checks in with drivers before agreeing to delivery schedules to ensure these are realistic and encourages early feedback on delivery issues • Introduces a system to alert the dispatch manager and retail business if delivery delays are likely	The PCBU: • Includes a truck driver representative in the relevant WHS committee discussions • Trains all dispatch managers in consolidating orders so that unnecessary trips are eliminated or minimised. The trucking company manager completes training on fatigue management and the effects of psychosocial hazards and subsequently introduces a system to monitor driver fatigue and wellbeing.

between the company and their customers.		• Introduces systems for fatigue management and occupational aggression including training and support systems.	

Scenario Four: Public Sector Department			
Scenario context and work context	**Psychosocial hazards and risks**	**Psychosocial controls**	**Review and improve**
A busy Public Sector Department is based in Canberra. To meet expectations, staff regularly need to work long work hours and sometimes work alone at night to meet the demanding turnaround timeframes. However, workers report they are exhausted, and do not have time to adequately prepare briefing and advice for Government. The culture discourages asking for help and encourages being 'seen to be at the office'. In the past two years, staff turnover has increased, and workers are increasingly becoming visibly distressed, reporting feeling burnout and experiencing 'stress headaches'. Several workers have made complaints about unreasonable 'bullying' pressure from their supervisor to keep their projects on track. Four have young children and are finding it hard to balance high work demands with their home life demands.	**Role overload:** high workloads, demanding expectations from management, and long working hours with inadequate opportunities for recovery. **High cognitive and emotional demands:** complex technical work with substantial pressure to meet the priorities and commitments of Government. **Low job control:** expectations to be 'present at the office'. **Poor practical and emotional support** from the senior executive and allegations the behaviour borders on 'bullying'. **Inadequate reward and recognition:** a culture where long hours and high workload is just accepted as the norm. **Bullying:** high job demands, unreasonable performance measures or timeframes, low levels of support, increase the likelihood of bullying.	The organisation (PCBU), after consulting with staff, to manage **role overload**, **cognitive and emotional demands**, **low control**, **poor support and recognition, and bullying**, now: • checks with teams about their workloads before allocating new projects to ensure they have spare capacity and that these discussions are courteous and reasonable. • reviews staffing levels and increases staffing levels to ensure workloads are reasonable considering timeframes and work demands. • revaluates team structures and resourcing to better manage role overload and ensure there is extra support where required from senior executive. • allows staff more job control to work from home, at times, to better manage their work-life balance. • asks about tricky or distressing experiences and provides support, recognition and feedback. • creates opportunities for workers to work on more varied subject matter and provides opportunities for professional development. • provides routine mentoring. • after talking with the staff about the alleged bullying, instructed supervisors to ensure that performance targets discussions are conducted in a reasonable manner and the supervisors were provided with additional support to cope with their own workload. • Set up a confidential complaint reporting system to enable workers to raise issues or complaints (including anonymously).	As part of the process to improve the controls that can be quickly implemented, the Secretary and senior management: • regularly consults workers, reviews the project management systems to identify psychosocial hazards and risks, ensures controls are working, and looks for opportunities to improve these. • completes training on workload and mental health first aid. • Provides EAP services for workers and encourages workers to use the services.

Scenario Five: First Responder – Firefighters and Police Officers			
Scenario context and work context	**Psychosocial hazards and risks**	**Psychosocial controls**	**Review and improve**
Work performed by firefighters and police officers can involve frequent exposure to trauma, violence and death. Due to a recent surge in emergencies, and shortage of trained officers, staff have been required to work longer hours than usual, with fewer breaks and less time between shifts to recuperate. Staff have reported emotional and physical fatigue. Staff are regularly exposed to physical and biological hazards within their work, and supply shortages have impacted the availability of PPE. High workloads and/or new policies requiring increased documentation frustrate and confuse workers and increase their physical and cognitive demands. These shortages have also increased the level of exposure to work-related violence and aggression, due to increased wait times and delays in response.	**High work demands**: • Staff experience role overload and fatigue due to the increased hours of work, combined with the emotional and physical demands of their roles. Staff shortages and increased workload impact the ability for workers to take breaks, access leave or seek support where required. • Increased demands arising from new systems of work and associated controls, compete with existing workloads. Exposure to **violence** and **traumatic events**: • Workers experience ongoing exposure to trauma and death which can have a cumulative effect on them. Workers responding to incidents are also at high risk of injury themselves. • Workers have regular exposure to both threats and actual violence from the public. **Low control**: • Due to recent increase in service demands, there are not enough workers. Staff feel unable to decline shifts due to the lack of available back-fill. **Poor support**: • Appropriate support may not occur due to role overload,	After consulting with staff, the organisation (PCBU) managed **high work demands, low control**, and **poor support** by: • Increasing the level of practical support available during peak workloads (increased recruitment and upskilling of personnel to provide appropriate coverage). • Time was allocated to review new processes/systems of work in discussion with staff to improve their competence and confidence in applying these changes to their work. • Additional opportunities were introduced for consultation with staff regarding support, rostering, training and other practical requirements. • Adjusting work processes where possible and providing alternative PPE. **Exposure to traumatic events** and **work-related violence and aggression** was managed by: • Rostering adequate worker numbers to take into account new systems of work, staff skills mix, and to ensure there are adequately trained workers on all shifts to respond effectively to violent and/or traumatic incidents. • Implementing regular supervision and consultation opportunities for staff (e.g. safety debriefing, early referral to support services), as well as a peer support program for workers. Processes were established to monitor exposure to trauma and violence, and to offer support and services to those exposed and/or showing early warning signs of distress. • Workers received training in managing aggressive or violent behaviour and hazard/incident reporting.	• A more comprehensive risk assessment process is introduced and updated annually or following any major organisational changes to ensure new hazards and risks are identified and addressed. • Improvements are made to consultation and monitoring of staff welfare (including psychological welfare and fatigue) – whereby regular meetings are held with supervisors. An EAP service is introduced and actively promoted. Staff rosters are closely monitored to ensure appropriate distribution of workload, and access to leave is available where needed. In addition, the PCBU: • Ensures reported incidents are investigated and feedback on investigations and response to incidents is provided to workers. • Undertakes work to improve the incident reporting system and encourage reporting of all incidents and near misses. • Addresses supply chain issues and delays to ensure staff have access to appropriate resources.

	supply issues with PPE, lack of education/training around new processes and limited resources for professional supervision.		