



Preventing eye and hand injuries

Campaign report

The manufacturing industry has a high rate of eye and hand injuries resulting from foreign bodies, cuts and lacerations.

The goal of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland's (WHSQ) Preventing eye and hand injury campaign is to reduce injuries to eyes, hands and fingers in metal manufacturing workplaces in Queensland.

This report details the outcomes of the campaign and provides practical guidance to help businesses manage risks related to eye and hand injuries.

Key issues

Workers' compensation scheme data shows:

- 9,509 workers' compensation claims were made in Queensland manufacturing workplaces for the period 2011-13
- 5,589 of these claims were in machinery, fabricated and transport manufacturing workplaces
- foreign objects in the eyes accounted for 10 per cent of claims
- cuts and lacerations to hands and fingers accounted for 17 per cent of claims
- one in three injuries in the manufacturing industry is a wound or laceration mostly to the upper limb
- \$10.3 million was paid in compensation to injured manufacturing workers during 2014-15
- the average time away from work for a wound or laceration was 15 days.

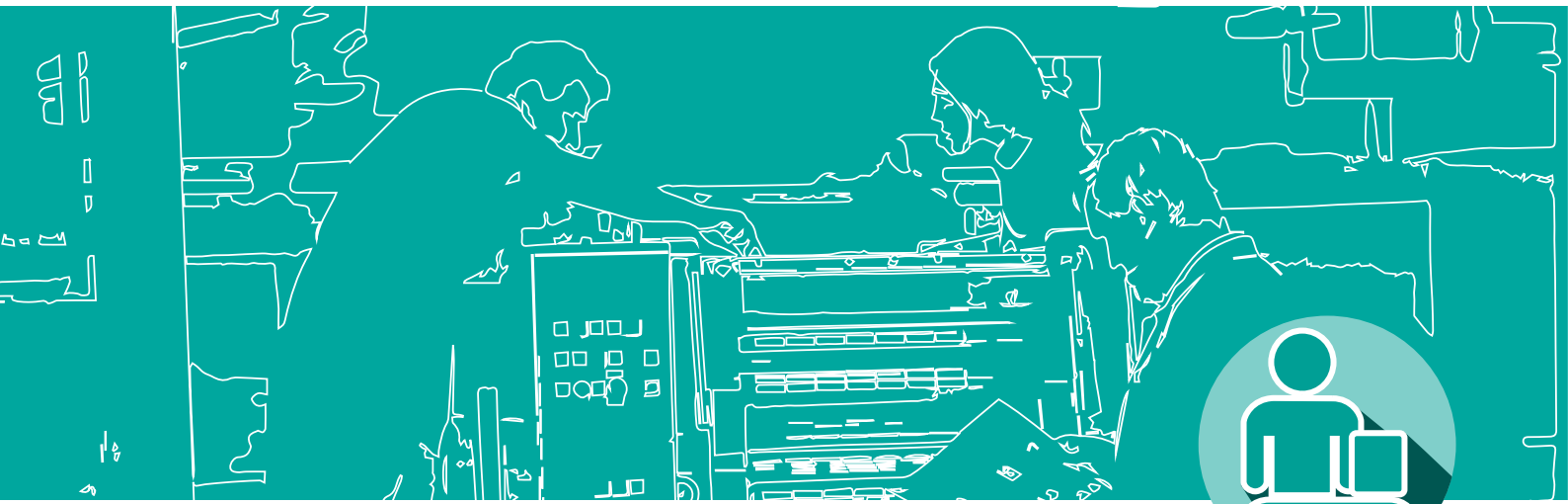
The campaign

The campaign's objectives were:

- to work with industry to identify common gaps in managing eye and hand injury risks
- to build industry capability to control risks relating to eyes and hands.

200 workplace assessments were conducted across Queensland

An assessment tool helped workplaces identify risk management practices associated with the management of risks to eyes and hands. This involved reviewing workplace procedures in risk identification, issue resolution, communication, consultation and supervision.



The assessments:

- encouraged workplaces to consider more effective engineering and design controls
- identified ways the workplace could improve safety management systems and risk management practices to minimise eye and hand injuries
- provided advice to assist workplaces with managing eye and hand injury risks.



Assessment results

Workplace assessment findings included:

34% of workplaces had ad-hoc processes or gaps in risk assessments which included:

- no documented risk assessments
- ad-hoc training and supervision
- improvements to hand tools and plant equipment only made after an incident occurred rather than managed proactively
- personal protective equipment (PPE) provided was not fit for purpose
- the hierarchy of control was not followed and only PPE used to manage risks
- poor consultation practices with workers to communicate hazards and controls.



Campaign resources

The Eye and hand injury workplace evaluation tool was used to help businesses rate their own safety management systems on the following elements:

- management commitment
- risk management and control
- consultation and issue resolution
- training and supervision.



66% of workplaces showed good practice which included:

- workers and management followed safe work procedures
- emphasis was placed on the hierarchy of control to control risks
- senior management actively participated in safety through safety observations and attending safety meetings
- availability of training and induction records
- regular consultation and communication with workers
- safety on the agenda at all management meetings
- machine guards on fixed plant and hand tools regularly reviewed
- workers had suitable PPE that was fit for purpose.



Industry actions

Workplaces who participated in the assessment identified the following most common workplace changes implemented as a result:



updating policies, procedures and manuals



creating risk registers



conducting additional audits



maintaining hand tools and bandsaws



maintaining and replacing defective guards



maintaining and replacing defective PPE



changing internal consultation processes to manage risk.

Other changes included:

- securing and segregating chemicals
- securing and adding signage to electrical cabinets
- testing and tagging of electrical equipment
- adding additional signage at the workplaces
- conducting additional 'housekeeping' duties
- reviewing training to incorporate competency assessments
- issuing personalised PPE to workers
- documenting current induction processes.



Future actions

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland will:

- distribute this report and evaluation tool to the manufacturing industry directly and through industry publications
- develop guidance materials and other resources and make them available to support workplaces manage risks to eyes and hands.

More information

For more information on workplace health and safety, visit worksafe.qld.gov.au or call us on 1300 362 128.

Find us on



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