

## ADVICE SHEET 1

**Safe business is good business** 

# Management commitment

## Why is management commitment important?

### **Because responsibility for safety starts at the top.**

Everyone agrees that a safe workplace is important, but it won't happen if you don't do all you can to make your workplace as safe as it can be. The primary responsibility for a safe workplace rests with you, the employer.

Demonstrate your commitment to safety and ensure that everyone in your business is clear about their health and safety responsibilities.

Your workers are among your greatest assets at your workplace. It makes good business sense to establish an effective safety management plan that protects your valuable assets.

### **Management commitment**

Ways you can develop a successful safety culture and demonstrate your commitment include:

- implementing safe systems of work
- encouraging the reporting of incidents and opportunities for improvement
- valuing your staff contributions and involving them in decisions
- providing safe and effective tools and support (e.g. time and resources to perform the safety role/function) to achieve the desired work outcome.

These elements send the message that you are serious about safety. From this commitment, effective partnerships are formed with your workers to achieve a safer workplace. One of the easiest ways to start to show this management commitment to safety is to develop and implement a health and safety policy (see the example at the end of this sheet).

Everyone involved in work activities at your workplace needs to be considered when developing safety processes, including labour hire workers, apprentices/trainees not directly employed by you, contractors and others. With increased outsourcing and contract work, it is imperative that these people understand their responsibilities as far as safety is concerned at your workplace.

## Where you ticked in the red zone ...

**... shows you it is unlikely that safety responsibilities in your business have been made clear or that safety is seen as a priority.**

Ticks in the RED zone indicate that you need to take immediate action to develop a safety culture by clarifying people's roles in managing safety, defining your role, allocating resources to meet your safety responsibilities, and demonstrating your personal commitment to operating a safe business.

<p><b>Determine safety responsibilities and clearly communicate them</b></p>	<p>Outline safety responsibilities in your workers' position descriptions and be clear about what each person's safety responsibilities are.</p> <p>Speak with your workers about what is expected of them regarding safety in the workplace—and about what you need to do to help them achieve these expectations.</p> <p>If you expect them to report incidents, they need a safety reporting procedure—and they expect you to act upon the safety reports. Similarly, if you expect them to work safely, they need safe work procedures—and they should expect you to involve them in the development of those procedures.</p> <p>You should ensure you involve all workers (including contractors, sub-contractors and their employees, labour hire workers, apprentices, volunteers, students on work experience etc.) in the safety responsibilities discussion process, making your expectations of them explicitly clear.</p>
<p><b>Commit time, money and resources</b></p>	<p>Time and money spent on safety is an investment in good business practice—it often means reduced costs for workers' compensation, less time lost due to injuries, and better productivity. In hard economic times cutting time and investment in safety is often seen as an easy solution, however this will almost invariably lead to someone getting hurt, and your costs skyrocketing.</p> <p>When responsibilities have been identified, commit adequate time and money to ensure these responsibilities are met. Spend time to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop safe work procedures</li> <li>• train and supervise your workers</li> <li>• act on safety reports (or at least provide feedback to staff as to what is happening with the issue).</li> </ul> <p>Spend money to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fix safety problems</li> <li>• maintain and repair equipment</li> <li>• provide personal protective equipment such as safety glasses, ear muffs etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Make safety a priority</b></p>	<p>When you have identified safety responsibilities and have committed resources to make your business safe, take the initiative to make safety a top priority.</p> <p>Good communication between your workers, supervisors and you ensures that your workplace systems will be effective. Discuss safety issues at your regular workplace meetings, implement an incident reporting procedure for accidents, incidents and near misses, and follow-up workers' safety issues as a priority.</p> <p>When approaching safety management at your workplace you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop and implement safe work procedures for all tasks that expose your workers to risk</li> <li>• ensure safe work procedures are followed at all times</li> <li>• involve your workers in decisions about their health and safety</li> <li>• train your workers to do their jobs safely</li> <li>• ensure safety problems are reported quickly—and acted on</li> <li>• review procedures when there are changes in the workplace or after an incident</li> <li>• provide resources to address your safety responsibilities</li> <li>• ensure your workers' compensation insurance policy is accurate and up-to-date</li> <li>• ensure that any required workplace rehabilitation policies and procedures are prominently displayed in the workplace (small workplaces do not require these formal structures—see <i>Advice Sheet 6</i> for more information).</li> </ul>

## Where you ticked in the orange zone...

**... shows that you're on the right track, but you need to do more to address the risks in your workplace.**

Ticks in the ORANGE zone indicate that you need to be more consistent with your commitment to workplace safety. Are safety responsibilities effectively communicated? Are there adequate resources to meet safety responsibilities? Are you appropriately involved in safety issues?

<p><b>Clearly define safety responsibilities</b></p>	<p>Your workers will contribute to safety if they understand their responsibilities—and have the skills to meet those responsibilities.</p> <p>Are your new workers given induction training that includes safety information and outlines their safety responsibilities? Do they have clear instructions on how to deal with safety issues? Do supervisors understand their role in ensuring safety in the workplace? Are processes regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still current?</p>
<p><b>Provide adequate resources to support safety initiatives</b></p>	<p>Demonstrate your commitment by providing enough time and money to deal with safety problems—and fix problems when they arise. When problems cannot be fixed immediately, provide an alternative short term solution.</p> <p>Provide feedback to workers who report issues even if the decision has been made to not take any action. Seeing no action being taken and/or having no information about the issue's progress almost guarantees that workers will be reluctant to report future issues or concerns.</p> <p>If there is a health and safety issue in the workplace, relevant parties must make reasonable efforts to achieve a timely, final and effective resolution to the issue. Agreed workplace procedures for issue resolution should be followed, or where necessary refer to the default issue resolution procedure outlined in the <i>Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011</i>. If the work health and safety issue is not solved through the issue resolution process, it can be referred to the regulator for resolution by an inspector.</p>
<p><b>Demonstrate commitment to safety from the highest level in the organisation</b></p>	<p>Get actively involved with safety issues when they arise. Attend workplace meetings regularly. Speak with your workers and act upon their feedback regarding safety issues. Ensure solutions to safety problems are implemented promptly by those responsible, and monitor the effectiveness of the solution.</p> <p>Seek comments and ideas from workers about any proposed changes (i.e. new technology, work practices or equipment) before the decision has been made. They may have genuine safety concerns about which you are unaware. Ask them how to best use the resources set aside for safety. Ask them what training they require to perform their job safely.</p>

## Where you ticked in the green zone...

**...shows your workers understand their role—and yours—in getting their work done safely.**

Ticks in the GREEN zone indicate that safety roles, responsibilities and procedures have been defined and clearly communicated. Some safety management systems would also have been implemented.

<p><b>Maintain commitment to safety</b></p>	<p>Maintain your commitment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring and reviewing your safety performance</li> <li>• building safety into your future business plans</li> <li>• promoting safety to your workers as a core business value</li> <li>• ensuring production demands don't override safety</li> <li>• providing feedback to your workers regarding their successful contribution to safety</li> <li>• providing ongoing training so that everyone can enhance their skills</li> <li>• making up-to-date information available to your workers so they improve their knowledge of safety issues and solutions.</li> </ul>
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## Typical workplace responsibilities

Owner/manager responsibilities	Worker responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consult your workers in all safety related activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow procedures.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify issues in your workplace and control all risks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in developing safe work procedures when asked by your employer.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop, implement and follow safe work procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in training.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Train your workers in safe work procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report incidents and injuries.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure safe equipment is purchased and maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use equipment safely and properly.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an incident and injury reporting procedure (for accidents, incidents and near misses) and act upon any reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use safety gear.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supply safety gear (e.g. safety glasses, ear muffs, respirators etc).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in your return to work plan.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a workers' compensation insurance policy and a return to work program.</li> </ul>	

## Sample health and safety policy

The (insert company name) is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for its workers, and others who are affected by our workplace activities, by eliminating or minimising the risk of injury to people and the risk of damage to plant and equipment.

Management is responsible for:

- ensuring the company complies with all legislation relating to work health and safety
- eliminating or minimising all workplace hazards as far as reasonably practicable
- providing adequate information, procedures and training to enable all workers and contractors to do their job safely
- consulting, encouraging and respecting all workers' involvement in the improvement of work health and safety
- providing appropriate safety equipment and personal protective equipment whenever required
- (insert additional responsibilities).

All workers are responsible for:

- following all safe work procedures, instructions and rules
- participating in the management of work health and safety
- encouraging other workers, contractors and members of the public to act in a healthy and safe way
- participating in safety training
- reporting health and safety issues
- using the safety equipment and personal protective equipment provided
- (insert additional responsibilities).

The Company promotes the participation of workers in the safety program. Workers have obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and are expected to follow the Company's safety directions to create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Designation/position: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

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