



COMMUNICATIONS KIT
FOR SMALL BUSINESS

**MANAGING THE RISK OF
PSYCHOSOCIAL
HAZARDS AT WORK**

CODE OF PRACTICE

ABOUT THE CODE



The [Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022](#) (the Code) is a practical guide on how to prevent harm from psychosocial hazards at work, including psychological and physical harm.

The Code is an approved code of practice under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act).

It provides information for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) on how psychosocial hazards and risks can be controlled or managed and can be used to help decide what's reasonably practicable to reduce risk.

The Code is also a helpful resource for workers who may experience harm from psychosocial hazards, including psychological harm at work.

HOW TO USE THIS KIT

We've developed this communication kit to help you understand the new Code and access helpful resources in one easy location!

COMMIT TO ACTION FOR A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE

Five tips for small business

For a small business there are five key areas that will help to cultivate a mentally healthy workplace.

1

Identify and control psychosocial risks

The psychosocial hazards and factors that may be impacting those in the workplace can be identified and addressed at team meetings, workplace walk throughs and individual conversations. The psychosocial risk assessment template may assist in documenting identified hazards and control measures. As a business owner, take the time to educate yourself further on identifying worker concerns. There are a number of easy ways to enhance your knowledge:

[For small business](#)

[Headsup](#)

[Psychosocial risk assessment tool](#)

2

Promote and model self-care and balance

Business owners should promote and model psychological self-care. Workplaces where leaders model positive behaviours help others to look after themselves. This can be as simple as ensuring that everyone takes the time to have a lunch break and connect with others in the workplace, and encouraging workers to have good work-life balance.

3

Recognise the signs

If someone in the workplace needs support there are common signs that provide indications to prompt early intervention. Refer to the Intervene early information in the [toolkit](#).

4

Support workers when they need it

If there is someone you suspect is not coping well, have a conversation with them to see how the workplace can better support them. The earlier intervention occurs the better the outcome for the individual. The conversation guide and example workplace modifications in the Prevent section of the [toolkit](#) provides some guidance to help support workers.

Workplaces can consider engaging the services of a local psychologist for workers if they need it ([find a psychologist service](#)) or let workers know about the [better access to mental health care](#) which provides subsidised psychological services to Australians. [Mates in Construction](#) also provide suicide awareness training across numerous industries.

5

Stay in touch with anyone who is injured

If any workers need to take time off due to a psychological injury or work-related stress, make sure to check in with them regularly. Make a point to help them feel like they are still part of the team by providing regular updates. Also, consider what will be done to avoid an injury reoccurring in the workplace. You can also access more information on managing work-related violence, [bullying](#) and [fatigue](#) using the linked material. [NewAccess](#) is a program developed by [beyondblue](#) that provides free and confidential support to help tackle day-to-day pressures.



[Ahead for business](#)

[Psychological health for small business](#)

[Creating a mentally healthy workplace in small business](#)

[Safety fundamentals toolkit for small business](#)

KEY MESSAGES

The Code provides practical guidance and examples on how to comply with existing obligations to manage psychosocial risks at work.

This kit contains handy links and resources you can access to help you build and sustain a mentally healthy workplace.

1

Managing psychosocial hazards and risks at work is just as important as managing physical risks. The Code is a practical guide on how to prevent harm from psychosocial hazards at work, including psychological and physical harm.

2

The Code does not create a new work health and safety duty or expand existing duties; rather, it provides clarity and certainty through practical guidance for duty holders about their existing obligations to ensure risks to psychological health are eliminated or minimised under the WHS Act.

3

Psychosocial hazards and their effects are not always obvious. Some psychosocial hazards, when present at low levels over a long period of time, can accumulate to significantly affect psychological and physical health. While some psychosocial hazards may cause harm more immediately, such as a single stressful event. In many circumstances, psychosocial hazards combine to create or increase risk of harm.

4

Work-related psychosocial hazards can harm psychological health. The new code of practice helps employers to focus on the risks they are legally responsible for. The new Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice comes into effect 1 April 2023

5

You don't need to be a psychologist in order to create a workplace free from psychosocial risks and hazards. The Code of Practice outlines clear practical guidance for PCBUs to follow a structured process to achieve this (the Code includes relevant examples). This process needs to be done in consultation with all stakeholders in order to achieve a positive outcome.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH FOR SMALL BUSINESS WEBINAR

In this [recording](#) you'll hear how you can commit to action for a mentally healthy workplace in your small business. **Queensland Mental Health Ambassador Hayley Lewis** shares her inspiring story and experiences as a small business owner, and we take a look at the Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice that came into effect 1 April.

You'll hear more about how you can identify and control psychosocial risks in your workplace, the importance of promoting and modelling self-care and balance, recognising the signs if someone in the workplace needs early intervention and how to support workers when they need it or when injured.

We also discuss the Injury Prevention and Management (IPAM) program and the safety fundamentals toolkit – a handy tool for small businesses owners, including sole traders, that can help you understand your legal obligations and comply with the law to create a safer, healthier and more successful business. Watch the [Psychological health for small business recording](#) now.



DIGITAL RESOURCES

WATCH THE MANAGING THE RISK OF PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS AT WORK CODE OF PRACTICE PRESENTATION

In this session Workplace Health and Safety Queensland provides information for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) on how psychosocial hazards and risks can be controlled or managed and can be used to help decide what's reasonably practicable to reduce risk.

We talk about the hazards in the Code and explore how the harm created by psychosocial hazards and risks varies. It can be a single event involving one or more psychosocial risks, such as exposure to a traumatic event by an ambulance officer. It can be a combination of psychosocial risks that accumulate to create frequent, prolonged or severe stress responses, such as organisational change with poor supervisor support and low role clarity.



PRESENTATION RECORDINGS

- Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work code of practice - toolbox talk
- Creating psychologically healthy workplaces
- No time for health: New ways to support small business owners and their people around mental health and wellbeing
- Shifting the dial on the regulation of mental health at work
- Regulating mentally healthy workplaces
- Suicide prevention for at-risk industries
- Diversity and inclusion for mentally healthy workplaces
- Developing suitable duties to support a worker with psychological injury
- Imagining a workplace without burnout: new findings and a roadmap to prevention
- Achieving mentally healthy workplaces through early intervention
- Managing the mental health impacts of remote and isolated work



PRESENTATION RECORDINGS

- [Trauma informed care and vicarious trauma in healthcare](#)
- [Using cultural capability to create mentally healthy workplaces](#)
- [Managing mental health issues in the workplace; an introductory overview for employers](#)
- [Reasonable adjustments & mental health conditions](#)
- [Mentally healthy workplaces in the retail sector](#)
- [Beyond the spin on work-related psychological health and safety](#)
- [Psychological health and safety in the workplace: a national guide](#)
- [The changing legislative landscape of psychological health and safety with Hayley Lewis](#)
- [Safety fundamentals - Small and medium sized business workshop](#)



CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHT

THE OBE ORGANIC STORY

Small business operators often face significant psychological strain arising from high workload, compromised work-life balance and financial pressures.

While small business operators, and particularly sole traders, experience the benefits of high levels of control, with this can come the challenge of a sense of isolation.

To inspire their own workers and help others deal with these issues, agribusiness [OBE Organic](#) has featured in a new film highlighting its journey to better workplace mental health and a short clip with their [top five tips for mentally healthy workplaces](#).

The film, produced with support from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, reinforces the importance of eliminating or minimising psychosocial hazards and risks through good work design practices, fostering a culture of health and safety and designing healthy and safe work – with OBE providing a practical example of how to do it right.



EDITORIAL COPY

Managing psychosocial hazards and risks at work is just as important as managing physical risks.

Psychosocial hazards can exist in every workplace, in every industry, every day.

The release of the [Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022](#) (the Code) along with amendments to the Work Health and Safety Regulation, are important steps in keeping Queensland workplaces safe, healthy and productive.

The new code and regulations will raise awareness of existing duties and provide clarity and certainty for duty holders about their obligations under the Act to ensure psychological health risks are eliminated or minimised.

The harm created by psychosocial hazards and risks varies, and the effects are not always obvious. It can be a single event involving one or more psychosocial risks, such as exposure to a traumatic event by an ambulance officer. It can be a combination of psychosocial risks that accumulate to create frequent, prolonged or severe stress responses, such as organisational change with poor supervisor support and low role clarity.

Looking for practical resources to support your managers and leaders? Download the [Mentally healthy workplaces toolkit](#) for tools and resources that you can use to create and maintain a mentally healthy workplace.

The Code commenced 1 April 2023. Visit [WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) to learn more.

FAQS

If you have a question you can contact us at safe@oir.qld.gov.au or visit the website for the complete FAQ list. Below are the most commonly asked questions.

Q. What are psychosocial hazards?

Psychosocial hazards are anything at work that may cause psychological or physical harm.

These stem from:

- the way the tasks or job are designed, organised, managed and supervised
- tasks or jobs where there are inherent psychosocial hazards and risks
- the equipment, working environment or requirements to undertake duties in physically hazardous environments, and
- social factors at work, workplace relationships and social interactions.

Q. What are the psychosocial hazard regulations?

The Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (WHS Regulation) will be updated to include psychosocial hazard regulations.

The psychosocial hazard regulations (the Regulations) will give more specific detail about how duties under the WHS Act must be performed.

The Regulations define important terms, such as 'psychosocial hazard', 'psychosocial risk', and clarify what matters PCBUs should consider when implementing ways to manage psychosocial risks.

FAQS

Q. Who does the Code and Regulations apply to?

The Code and Regulations apply to all work and workplaces covered by the WHS Act.

The Code and Regulations cover employers, workers, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, the self-employed, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, and volunteers.

The Code and Regulations also cover other people in workplaces, such as customers and visitors.

Q. Who doesn't it apply to?

The Code and Regulations do not apply to some Queensland workplaces in the mining and resources industries, and Commonwealth government departments and Australian Public Service agencies.

Queensland mining and resources workplaces have separate health and safety laws that are managed by Resources Safety & Health Queensland (RSHQ).

Employers and workers in these industries may wish to contact RSHQ for information about the health and safety laws that apply to them.

Commonwealth government and Australian Public Service employers and workers should contact Comcare for information about health and safety laws.

FAQS

Q. How does a small business get started?

Download the [Psychological health for small business guide](#) and watch the [psychological health for small business recording](#).

Q. How should I respond if a worker has an issue or makes a complaint?

Part 4 of Code has helpful information about the process to follow if a worker has an issue or makes a complaint.

PCBUs should:

- act promptly
- ensure immediate safety
- treat all matters seriously
- maintain confidentiality
- be neutral
- support all parties
- not victimise
- communicate process and outcomes
- keep records, and
- use a trauma-informed approach (e.g., being mindful that workplace systems recognise that workplace responses about psychosocial hazards can escalate or de-escalate distress in those with a history of trauma).

Workers play an important role in ensuring safe and healthy workplaces. The Code is a helpful resource for workers who may experience harm from psychosocial hazards at work. For example, Part 5 of the Code outlines the process that a worker can follow if they have a complaint or issue about psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

The Code and Regulations cover workers, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, the self-employed, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, and volunteers.

FAQS

Q. What do PCBUs need to do to comply?

PCBUs must adopt a risk management process, including eliminating psychosocial risks, so far as is reasonably practicable, or if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate psychosocial risks, by minimising them.

PCBUs should follow a four-step risk management process to meet their health and safety obligations under the Code and Regulations:

- Identify psychosocial hazards
- Assess the risk
- Control the risks
- Review the controls

Part 3 of the Code provides detailed information about these steps for psychosocial hazards.

MORE HELPFUL FAQS

MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES TOOLKIT

This digital [toolkit](#) provides practical tools and resources that employers, managers and leaders can use to create and maintain mentally healthy workplaces.

It aims to help employers, managers and leaders eliminate and minimise risks to psychological health and create workplace environments that are mentally healthy. Use the guidance material and practical tools in the toolkit to facilitate positive steps towards a mentally healthy workplace.

Toolkit contents:

1. Mentally healthy workplaces
2. Promote positive practices
3. Prevent psychological harm
4. Intervene early
5. Support recovery from injury
6. Small business
7. Additional resources



Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Mentally healthy workplaces toolkit

About this toolkit

The *Mentally healthy workplaces toolkit* aims to help employers, managers and leaders eliminate and minimise risks to psychological health and create workplace environments that are mentally healthy.

Use the guidance material and practical resources in this toolkit to facilitate positive steps towards a mentally healthy workplace.

The tools, checklists, activities, videos and case studies can be accessed when you see one of these icons:

Tools Checklists Activities Video Case study

Mentally healthy workplaces

Promote Prevent

Intervene early Support recovery

For small business Additional resources

Queensland Government

SAFETY FUNDAMENTALS

A SMALL BUSINESS TOOLKIT

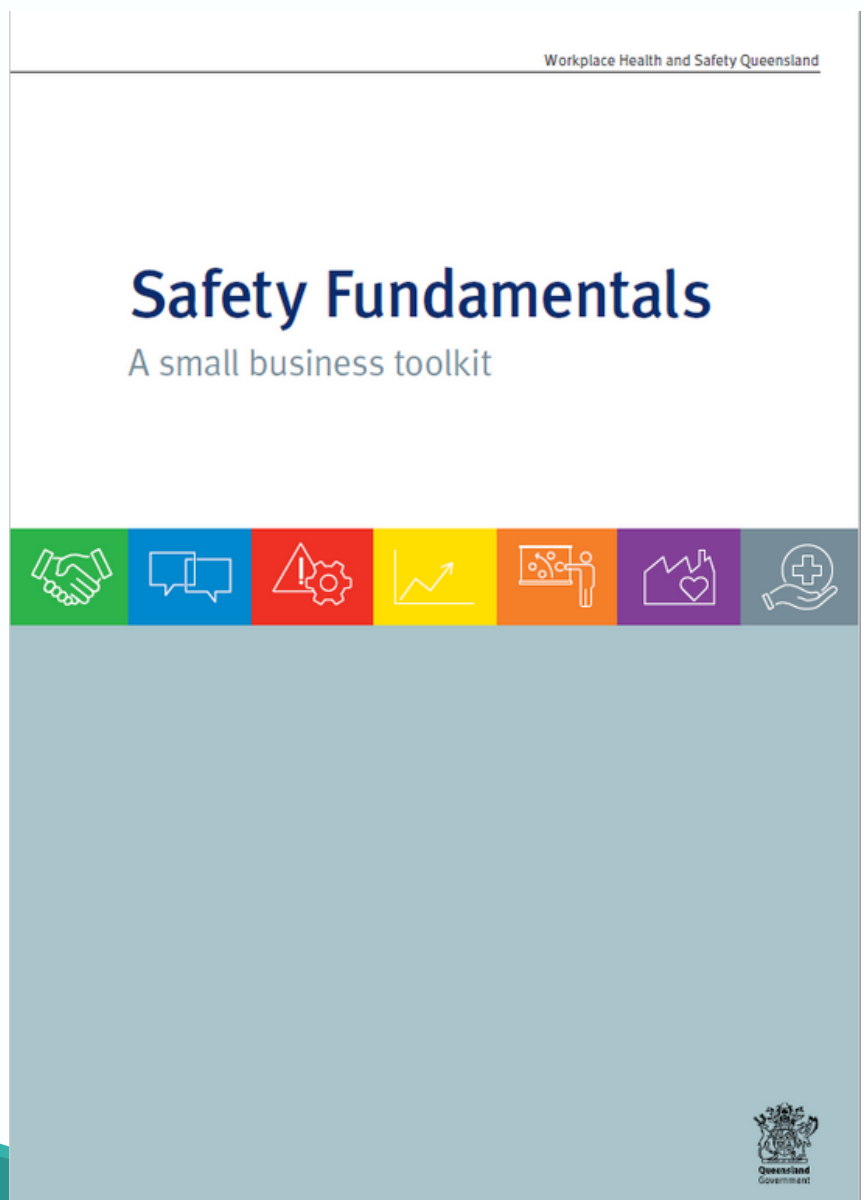
This [toolkit](#) is for small businesses, including sole traders, and will help you understand your legal obligations and comply with the law to create a safer, healthier and more successful business.

The kit is broken down to seven different modules that you can work through in sequence, or simply start on the topic of your choice. Each module has three options:

1. See how you rate
2. Get templates and tools
3. Learn more about this subject.

Toolkit contents:

1. Your commitment
2. Consultation
3. Managing risks
4. Reporting
5. Worker capability
6. Safe working environment
7. Workers' compensation and recovery at work
8. Action plan
9. Need more help?



PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL

The [Psychosocial risk assessment tool](#) is part of the risk management process and involves:

- identifying psychosocial hazards – find out what could cause harm
- assessing risks – understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by hazards, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of harm occurring
- controlling risks – implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstance
- reviewing control measures to ensure they remain effective.

All of these steps must be supported by consultation (see Section 2 of the Code).



Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Mentally healthy workplaces

Psychosocial risk assessment tool

The risk management process is set out in the *Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022* (the Code) and involves:

- identifying psychosocial hazards – find out what could cause harm
- assessing risks – understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by hazards, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of harm occurring
- controlling risks – implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstance, and
- reviewing control measures to ensure they remain effective.

All of these steps must be supported by consultation (see Section 2 of the Code).]

Completed by:	Position:	Date of risk assessment:	Review date:
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Queensland Government

TYPES OF HAZARDS

Psychosocial hazards are anything in the design or management of work that increases the risk of psychological or physical harm.

Poor organisational justice

Poor organisational justice refers to processes or decisions that are perceived as unfair. Examples include inconsistent application of policies and procedures, unfairness or bias in decisions about the allocation of resources and work, or poor management of underperformance.

Reward and recognition

Low reward and recognition refers to jobs where there is a lack of positive feedback, there is an imbalance between workers' efforts and formal and informal recognition and rewards, there is a lack of opportunity for skills development; or skills and experiences are underused.

Violence and aggression

Violence and aggression includes incidents where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in relation to their work. Examples include robbery, assault, being bitten, spat at, scratched or kicked or being threatened with a weapon.

Traumatic events

Workers may be exposed to this hazard at work through investigating, witnessing or being directly exposed to traumatic events or situations. This may include reading, hearing or seeing accounts of traumatic events.

Bullying

Repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed toward a worker or group of workers. Examples include insulting, offensive language, deliberately excluding someone from work activities, spreading misinformation or rumours.

TYPES OF HAZARDS

Psychosocial hazards are anything in the design or management of work that increases the risk of psychological or physical harm.

Harassment, including sexual harassment

Refers to behaviour that is unwelcome or unsolicited, offensive, humiliating or intimidating and relates to someone's sex, race, age or other personal attribute. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature.

Remote and isolated work

Refers to work at locations where access to resources and communications is difficult and travel times may be lengthy. Isolated work refers to work where there are no or few other people around. Examples include farmers, real estate agents, a community nurse conducting visits at night, night shift operators in petrol stations or convenience stores, or fly in, fly out (FIFO) workers.

Poor environmental conditions

Refers to exposure to poor quality or hazardous work environments. Examples include hazardous manual tasks, poor air quality, high noise levels, extreme temperatures or working near unsafe machinery.

Low job control

Refers to having little control over aspects of the work including how or when a job is done. Examples include tasks or jobs where work is machine or computer paced, work is tightly managed, workers have little say in the way they do their work and when they can take breaks, or workers are unable to refuse dealing with aggressive or clients.

Poor support

Refers to tasks or jobs where workers have inadequate emotional and practical support from supervisors and co-workers, inadequate training or information to support their work performance, or inadequate tools, equipment or resources to do the job.

TYPES OF HAZARDS

The [Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022](#) provides further information on each of the hazards and options for control measures.

Low role clarity

Refers to jobs where there is uncertainty about or frequent changes to tasks and work standards; where important task information is not available to workers; or where there are conflicting job roles, responsibilities or expectations (e.g. a worker being told one task is a priority but another manager disagrees).

High/low job demand

Refers to the physical, mental, emotional, social or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort or skills. Examples include high workloads, long periods of vigilance looking for infrequent events, emotional effort in responding to distressing situations or distressed or aggressive clients and shift work leading to higher risk of fatigue.

Low job demand refers to sustained low levels of physical, mental or emotional effort required to do the job or little task variety. For example, tasks or jobs where there is too little to do or highly repetitive or monotonous tasks.

Poor organisational change management

Refers to workplaces where there is insufficient consideration of the potential work health and safety and/or performance impacts during downsizing or relocations or associated with the introduction of new technology and production processes where there is inadequate consultation and communication with key stakeholders and workers about major changes, or not enough practical support for workers during transitions.

Poor workplace relationships including interpersonal conflict

Refers to poor workplace relationships or interpersonal conflict between managers, supervisors, co-workers or others with whom workers are required to interact. It can appear as frequent or excessive disagreements, or rude comments—either from one person to another or between multiple people.

CASE STUDY

Take a peek inside
the Code of practice

SMALL TRUCKING COMPANY

Scenario context and work content

Bob has been a truck driver for over 10 years, and he generally enjoys driving. He and two other drivers contract solely to a large manufacturing company.

The scheduling is done by the manufacturer's dispatch manager. The manufacturing company's customers are small retail businesses across northern NSW and Queensland.

Over the last two years the manufacturing company has grown and the demand for more frequent and faster deliveries has increased. The number of drivers in Bob's company has not changed. Bob worries about the delivery schedule, longer shifts and that he has skipped rest breaks to deliver goods on time.

On occasion he and other drivers have been delayed due to heavy traffic and abused by angry business owners who then complained to the dispatch manager. Bob has tried raising scheduling concerns without success and thinks if he raises them again, he might lose the contract. He would like to have a say in how deliveries are scheduled but these are arranged between the manufacturing company and their customers.

Psychosocial hazards and risks

Role overload and fatigue – delivery deadlines are unachievable and the truck driver is working long hours and skipping rest breaks to meet those deadlines.

Low job control – not being able to influence the delivery schedules despite being an experienced driver and understanding the regular reasons for delays.

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

Psychosocial controls

The manufacturing company, 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
- Consulting with the trucking company manager regarding scheduling.

The manufacturing company, 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 manufacturing 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
- Introduces systems for fatigue management and occupational.

Review and improve

The manufacturing company:

- 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.

[For more case studies view Appendix 2 of the code - download it here.](#)

OTHER LEGISLATION

A range of laws deal with mental health issues in Queensland workplaces.



Queensland
**Human Rights
Commission**

QUEENSLAND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Queensland Human Rights Commission provides information about Queensland's anti-discrimination and human rights laws, including sexual harassment at work.



Industrial Court of Queensland
Queensland Industrial Relations Commission

QUEENSLAND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION

The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission helps to resolve disputes about workplace bullying for Queensland public sector employees.



Fair Work Commission
Australia's national workplace relations tribunal

FAIR WORK COMMISSION

The Fair Work Commission helps to resolve disputes about workplace bullying and sexual harassment for most private sector employees.

The Fair Work Ombudsman helps employers and employees understand their workplace rights and responsibilities

WorkCover
QUEENSLAND

WORKCOVER QUEENSLAND

WorkCover Queensland provides workers' compensation insurance and information about how to make a workers' compensation claim.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



In an emergency call 000 or go to your local hospital emergency department.

Mental Health Commission

Lifeline Australia – 13 11 14

Mental Health access line – 1300 642 255

A confidential mental health telephone triage service that provides the first point of contact to public mental health services to Queenslanders. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and links callers to the nearest Queensland Public Mental Health service.

Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 46 36

13 YARN – 13 92 76 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Heads Up – information and resources on developing a healthy workplaces

Workers' Psychological Support Service – assists Queensland workers who have experienced a work-related psychological injury.

Injury Prevention and Management Program – IPaM is a joint initiative delivered by WHSQ and WorkCover Queensland. It is a free program designed to help Queensland businesses develop and implement sustainable health, safety and injury management systems.