

# Manual handling plasterboard

Campaign report  
August 2013

# **1. Campaign Overview**

## **1.1 Executive summary**

The Manual Handling of Plasterboard Campaign was undertaken by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) between 2011 and 2013. The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness about hazardous manual tasks and subsequently improve control of manual task risks and reduce manual tasks related injuries across the residential and commercial construction sectors. This campaign was an initiative under the WHSQ Musculoskeletal Framework.

A total of 277 audits took place between October 2012 and April 2013. Results indicate that the campaign objectives were met. These results are outlined below.

## **1.2 Outcomes**

The manual handling of plasterboard campaign resulted in a number of positive outcomes including:

- excellent industry engagement during the campaign
- increased industry awareness about hazardous manual tasks
- generation of industry interest in manual task risk management
- the fostering of industry networks
- interest from industry bodies
- facilitation of a good working relationship between the inspectorate and construction businesses
- provision of specific information and guidance material
- gathering of information specific to the construction industry.

WHSQ received very positive feedback from the construction industry about the campaign.

## **1.3 Areas for improvement**

The campaign has also highlighted areas for improvement in relation to manual tasks risk management in the construction industry:

- insufficient consultation with workers throughout the risk management process
- insufficient builder consultation with relevant stakeholders about hazardous manual tasks during the planning and design stage and during construction of the project

- poor planning and programming of work
- a focus on the implementation of administrative controls only, with these controls being more prevalent in the residential (lowset) sector
- the control of risk by methods other than administrative controls was outside the scope of the subcontractor in some circumstances
- tasks have become specialised within the plasterboard trade resulting in less task variety and increased exposure to risks
- manual tasks training was based solely on safe lifting techniques. This type of training is not effective training in reducing hazardous manual tasks.

## **1.4 Recommendations**

### **1.4.1 Industry**

It is recommended that industry stakeholders including designers, builders, manufacturers, suppliers, contractors and relevant others work together and consider:

- placing greater emphasis on using a risk management approach to managing hazardous manual tasks
- increasing the consultation with workers and between stakeholders
- ensuring information on the safe work procedure is specific about the task
- reducing the sheet size required from six metre to smaller, easier to handle sheets
- increasing multi-skilling within the plasterboard trade to increase task variety
- ensuring that workers have specific training for the handling of plasterboard sheets
- ensuring training is in line with the requirements of the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* r. 39 and the Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011
- changing the method of meterage quoting and payment for plasterboard work.

### **1.4.2 Suppliers**

It is recommended that suppliers consider:

- identifying the weight and size and the safe handling procedures on packs and individual plasterboard sheets as well as other sheet materials and ensuring this information is readily available to workers
- suppliers/delivery drivers/transport companies conduct a pre delivery inspection.

### **1.4.3 Builders/principal contractors**

It is recommended that builders/principal contractors consider:

- identifying the hazardous manual tasks associated with the handling of plasterboard during the planning and design stage
- consulting with the relevant stakeholders about the risks to workers when handling plasterboard and ways of controlling the risks
- facilitating cooperation and coordination between stakeholders from the outset of the planning stage

- residential builders improving the access and space at the delivery site to ensure the use of mechanical aids during delivery and unloading.

## **2. Introduction and background**

Reducing work related musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and building industry capacity to manage these risks are a priority for WHSQ. These were also a priority under the *National OHS Strategy 2002–2012* and the current *Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022*. This campaign was an initiative under the WHSQ Musculoskeletal Framework.

A review of workers compensation data in 2009 highlighted that MSDs dominated serious non-fatal injuries in the construction industry, being 57 per cent of serious claims. More than a third (38 per cent) of serious MSD claims were due to the performance of hazardous manual tasks such as lifting, carrying or putting down objects.

The Manual Handling of Plasterboard Campaign was undertaken by WHSQ between 2011 and 2013. This campaign targeted hazardous manual tasks and slips, trips and falls in the residential and commercial sectors. The hazardous manual tasks associated with handling plasterboard and other sheet materials were the particular focus.

The purpose of the campaign was to raise awareness about hazardous manual tasks and subsequently improve the control of risks and reduce injuries across the residential and commercial construction sectors.

### ***Why focus on the handling of plasterboard?***

Plasterboard is used on nearly every construction site across residential and commercial projects. It is large, awkward and bulky in nature, and is frequently manually handled in tight spaces with poor access. The combination of these factors creates a high risk for many workers. There are known and available controls to reduce these risks. It was therefore identified as a suitable and typical load to be used as the campaign focus.

### **2.1 Campaign objectives**

The campaign's objectives were to:

- increase awareness about hazardous manual tasks risk management
- enhance and develop stakeholder relationships
- increase capacity of construction workplaces to recognise and manage hazardous manual task risks in accordance with the harmonised legislation
- increase capacity of construction inspectors to deal with hazardous manual task risks at construction workplaces in accordance with the harmonised legislation; and
- gather information such as:
  - how hazardous manual tasks are currently managed including the:

- presence of a risk assessment and identification of the manual tasks risks
- the consultative processes used
- types of controls implemented; and
- types of training provided
- the barriers to implementing suitable control measures.

### **3. Method**

The campaign was conducted over a two year period from 2011 to 2013. The campaign involved significant consultation with industry and WHSQ stakeholders during the development of the campaign. It focused on capacity building and the provision of advice as well as assessing industry compliance in regards to hazardous manual tasks risk management.

Tasks were assessed during the delivery, storage and movement of plasterboard on construction sites.

#### **3.1 Consultation**

- A WHSQ internal reference group was convened and included ergonomics and construction inspectors from each region.
- An industry reference group was convened with representation from peak industry bodies including the Association of Wall and Ceiling Industries, the Gypsum Board Manufacturers Australasia, the Housing Industry Association, and the Queensland Master Builders Association. WorkCover Queensland, plasterboard suppliers and builders were also represented.

#### **3.2 Communication strategy**

Communications included:

- consulting with key industry stakeholders throughout the development of the campaign
- development and distribution of the brochure '*Preventing injuries while handling plasterboard*' to industry
- issuing a website media release and promotion of the campaign
- provision of information including the audit tool and other guidance on the WHSQ web site. This information was available prior to commencement of the compliance audits.

#### **3.3 Audit tool**

The audit tool was:

- developed in consultation with both the industry and WHSQ reference groups

- based on the *Work Health and Safety Regulation r. 60* and the Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011
- trialled prior to the start of the audits.

The audit resources included the audit tool and a guide to the tool (Appendix 1).

Construction and ergonomics inspectors participated in training in the use of the tools.

### **3.4 Audits**

The campaign goal was to audit 300 businesses. A total of 277 assessments were conducted and completed during this campaign. There was a shortfall in the planned 300 assessments, likely due to a number of factors including:

- difficulties with timing of site visits to coincide with plasterboard handling activities
- the downturn in the economic climate within the construction industry.

Data from 70 assessments were not included due to flaws in administrative processes and errors in data entry. However valuable qualitative information from these assessments was gathered.

Businesses were selected randomly from metropolitan and regional locations where manual handling of plasterboard tasks were planned.

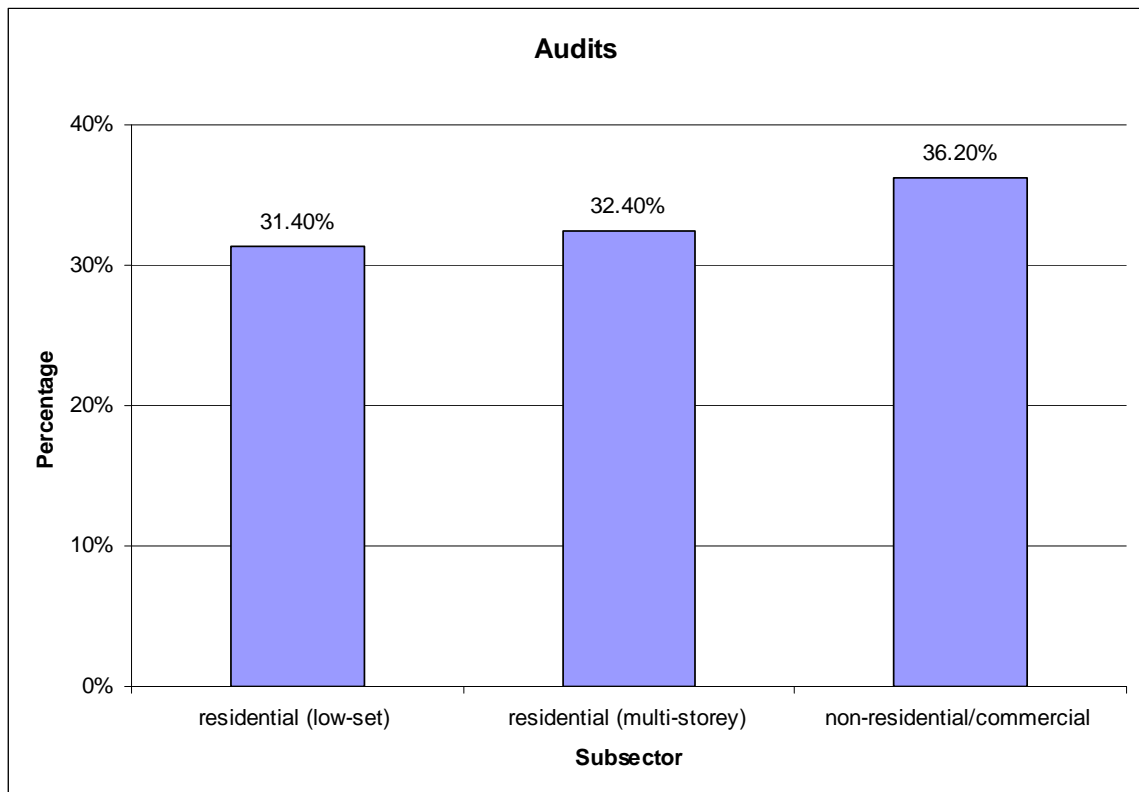
### **3.5 Audit elements**

Inspectors were required to obtain demographic information and assess a minimum of one hazardous manual task which involved the handling of plasterboard or other sheet material. Inspectors audited those tasks for compliance with manual task risk control measures as outlined in the *Work Health and Safety Regulation r. 60*. Inspectors also identified risk factors and sources of risk when manually handling plasterboard and obtained information about how hazardous manual tasks were being managed.

## **4. Results – Audit campaign**

### **4.1 Types of construction workplaces audited**

The audits were spread fairly evenly across the three subsectors (residential (lowset) 31.4 per cent, residential (multi-storey) 32.4 per cent and non-residential/commercial 36.2 per cent) as seen below in Graph 1.



Graph 1: Types of construction worksites visited

## **4.2 Profile of workers interviewed during visits**

The majority of workers interviewed were tradesmen (69 per cent). Labourers accounted for another 18.5 per cent. The balance included apprentices and ‘others’.

Over one third of workers interviewed were 25 years of age or younger. From 2000-2001 to 2009-2010, the claim rate in construction for younger workers to 34 years of age increased quite markedly. It is therefore important to ensure that young workers have information about hazardous manual tasks.

## **4.3 Manual task risk management audit findings**

### **4.3.1 Risk assessment**

- Eighty-seven (87) per cent of businesses had done a procedure and/or risk assessment that included the hazardous manual task of handling plasterboard sheets.
- In 85.5 per cent of businesses the manual tasks risks had been identified in the procedure or risk assessment.

### **4.3.2 Induction, training and supervision**

- Across the three sectors 57 per cent of workers received manual tasks training based on the Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011. Less than half (46 per cent) of those in the residential sector receiving this type of training.
- Thirty four per cent of workers received manual tasks training based solely on safe lifting techniques (residential 34 per cent, residential [multi] 37 per cent, non residential/commercial 32 per cent).
- Eighty nine (89) per cent of workers are supervised to ensure safe work practices are followed.

### **4.3.3 Incentive payments**

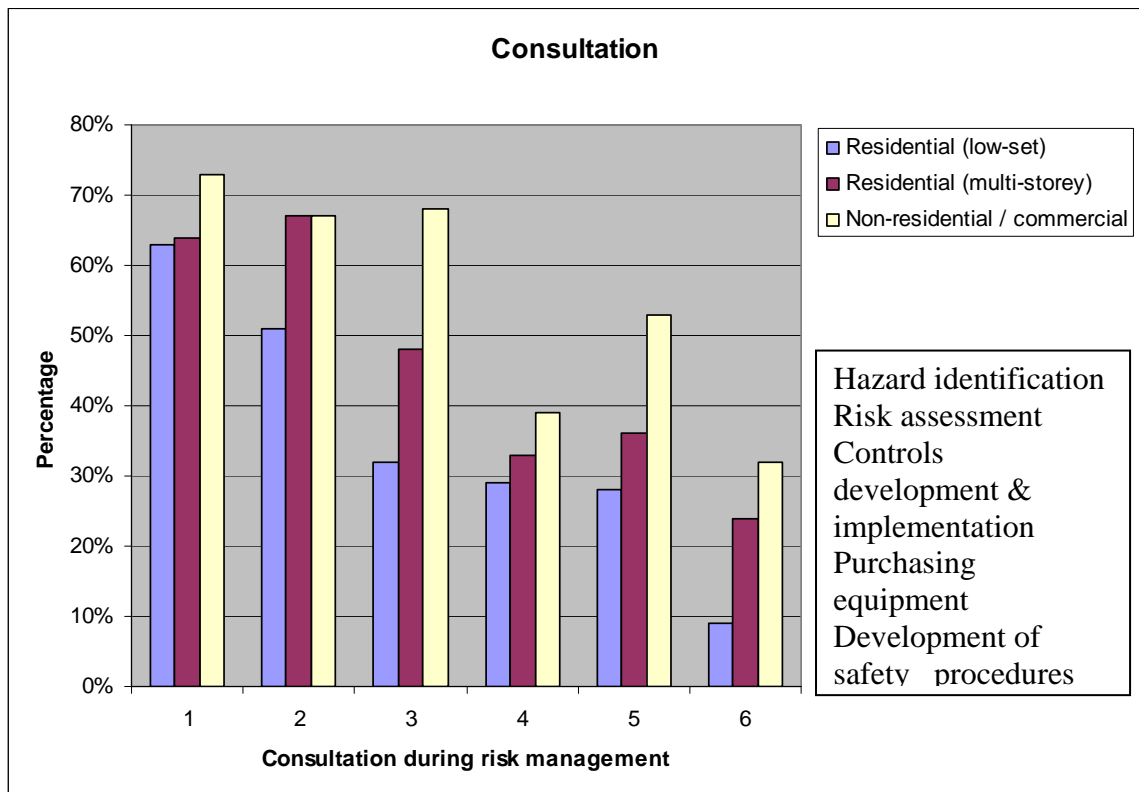
Payments made based on the amount of plasterboard installed may encourage a faster pace of work and taking short cuts to complete the job quickly. Importantly, forty three per cent of businesses reported that how workers are paid negatively affects the tasks and safety elements. This was reported significantly more in low set residential (62 per cent) than residential (multi) or non residential/commercial (31 per cent).

### **4.3.4 Consultation**

The majority (79 per cent) of workers stated that they were aware of the consultation mechanisms in place at their workplace. However, the level of worker consultation was not uniform throughout the entire risk management process. Whilst about two thirds (66 per cent) were consulted during hazard identification, the amount of consultation dropped during risk assessment (61 per cent) and continued to progressively decline during the other risk management steps as well as during the development of safety procedures.

The consultation reported is illustrated in Graph 2 below.





Graph 2: Consultation reported in each of the three sectors

#### 4.3.5 Risk factors and control measures

- ninety-four (94) per cent of tasks observed had appropriate manual tasks controls
- approximately 55 per cent of the observed controls included higher order design controls including the use of mechanical aids such as telehandlers, sheet lifters, cranes, scissor lifts, trolleys and pallet jacks
- a number of organisations had implemented administrative controls only and these controls were more prevalent in the residential (lowset) sector. Administrative control measures, when used on their own, tend to be least effective in minimising risks because they rely on human behaviour and supervision. The administrative controls reported included job and task rotation, training in safe work procedures and lifting technique training
- there were 16 tasks identified where there was a risk of musculoskeletal disorder. Half of these tasks were associated with the handling of plasterboard from the delivery truck to the storage area
- eight of the 16 tasks assessed as having a risk of a musculoskeletal disorder were in the non-residential/commercial sector, with three in the residential (lowset) and five in the residential (multi storey) sectors.

#### 4.3.6 Sources of risk

The common sources of risk included:

- problem with the nature, size, weight or number of plasterboard or other sheet material handled when performing the manual task
- problem with the design or layout of the work area particularly regarding lack of space and poor access thus reducing the ability to use mechanical aids and more frequent manual handling of sheets
- problem with the environment in which the manual task was performed for example:
  - poor lighting
  - unloading during windy weather
  - poor housekeeping
- problem with the systems of work for example:
  - poor communication and coordination of workflow on site resulting in congestion of trades and materials
  - tight timeframes
  - workers not consulted about hazardous manual tasks or given an opportunity to participate in the risk management process for hazardous manual tasks.

## **4.4 Supply chain and upstream obligations**

### **4.4.1 Builders**

Over half (57 per cent) of builders with project management responsibilities reported having one or more hazardous manual tasks injury prevention initiatives. These initiatives included:

- pre start meetings
- inclusion of hazardous manual tasks elements in safety plans
- use of higher order design controls e.g. loading bays on every floor, use of cranes, materials elevators, telehandlers and trolleys
- contractor tendering criteria and contracts that included requirements other than administrative controls for risk management of hazardous manual tasks. This type of initiative was noted less frequently.

Over a third of builders reported that they had consulted with the designer, manufacturer, or supplier about the risks to workers due to the plasterboard specifications e.g. its shape, size, weight.

Just over a third of builders reported that they had consulted the designer or client about the risks to workers as a result of the design of the building/work area when handling plasterboard.

### **4.4.2 Suppliers**

Over half (53 per cent) of suppliers reported that a pre-delivery screening and/or site risk assessment was conducted.

## **4.5 Compliance action**

The majority of compliance action involved an advisory approach. Inspectors assisted businesses by providing information and guidance material about managing the risks associated with the manual handling of plasterboard.

Four statutory notices were issued during this campaign. Three of the notices were served under section 60(1) of the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* (managing risks to health and safety relating to a musculoskeletal disorder associated with a hazardous manual task) and included one prohibition notice and two improvement notices. The fourth notice was a prohibition notice served under section 19 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (the Act) for a plant related issue. In addition to these four notices, one non-statutory Verbal Direction was issued during this campaign.

## **4.6 Inspector focus group findings**

Two inspector focus groups were held in June 2013 after the audits were completed. The focus groups aimed to gather anecdotal information about the inspectors' experiences during the Manual Handling of Plasterboard audits. The focus groups highlighted that the most significant barriers to implementing control measures were:

- poor planning and programming of work by builders; and
- the builders' lack of consultation about hazardous manual tasks during the planning and design stage and during construction of the project with relevant stakeholders.

A detailed summary of the focus group findings is located in Appendix 2.

# **5. Discussion**

## **5.1 Outcomes**

Overall, WHSQ received positive feedback from the construction industry about the campaign. The Manual Handling of Plasterboard campaign resulted in a number of positive outcomes including:

- excellent level of industry engagement: the industry reference group contributed valuable input and feedback during the development of the guidance material and the audit tool. They also promoted the campaign and shared information with their members and workforce
- facilitation of a good working relationship between the inspectorate and construction businesses: the advisory approach used by inspectors was reportedly appreciated by industry. Inspectors gave a lot of advice on site including specific information and guidance about manual tasks risk management. This advisory approach was reflected in the increased time that inspectors spent on site compared to other audit campaigns and the low number of compliance actions taken
- increased industry awareness regarding hazardous manual tasks and compliance with the harmonised legislation

- generation of industry interest in manual task risk management for example the Association of Wall and Ceilings Industries reported that they have received many more enquiries about hazardous manual tasks since the campaign and they have requested that WHSQ present an overview of the report and key findings to its members. A large supplier has also requested that WHSQ present an overview of the report and key findings to its sub contractors
- fostering of stakeholder engagement and networks for example a number of suppliers have collaborated independently of WHSQ to develop a pre-delivery checklist
- provided specific information and guidance material about preventing injuries when handling plasterboard for the construction industry and the inspectors
- gathered information specific to the construction industry including:
  - how manual tasks are currently managed
  - the risk factors and sources of risk when manually handling plasterboard
  - the barriers to implementing suitable control measures.

## **5.2 Areas for improvement**

The campaign also highlighted the following areas for improvement regarding manual tasks risk management:

- although the majority of organisations were found to be conducting manual tasks risk assessments, a number of businesses had implemented administrative controls only
- the ability to implement higher order design controls was outside the control of the subcontractor in some circumstances. For example a driver and his assistant were required to manually unload over 80 six-metre sheets of plasterboard at a residential site as the site did not allow access for the use of a mechanical aid
- there is insufficient consultation with workers throughout the risk management process. Consultation is necessary at each step of the risk management process and involves sharing of information, giving workers a reasonable opportunity to express views and taking those views into account before making decisions on health and safety matters under s. 47 and s. 48 of the Act. A lack of consultation with workers during development and implementation of controls may have a detrimental impact on achieving the most appropriate controls
- builders have insufficient consultation with relevant stakeholders about hazardous manual tasks when handling plasterboard. Under the Work Health and Safety laws, business operators have a duty to consult with any other business operator who has the same duty in the same matter under s. 46 of the Act
- one third of workers received manual tasks training based solely on safe lifting techniques. Research has demonstrated that teaching lifting techniques is not an effective intervention. The risk isn't controlled and it relies on worker behaviour. The Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice 2011 outlines details of effective training for hazardous manual tasks
- tasks have become specialised within the plasterboard trade resulting in decreased task variety and an increased exposure to the hazardous manual tasks specific to that job, e.g. there are now dedicated framers, hangers and setters

- focus groups with auditing inspectors highlighted that the most significant barriers to implementing control measures were:
  - poor planning and programming of work by builders; and
  - the builders’ lack of consultation about hazardous manual tasks during the planning and design stage and during construction of the project with relevant stakeholders.

## 6. Recommendations

### 6.1 Industry

It is recommended that industry stakeholders including designers, builders, manufacturers, suppliers, contractors and relevant others work together and consider:

- placing greater emphasis on using a risk management approach to managing hazardous manual tasks including:
  - promoting higher order controls such as elimination and design/redesign control measures for managing hazardous manual tasks in preference to using administrative control measures e.g.:
    - increase the use of mechanical aids and assistive devices across all three sectors, particularly in the residential sector (refer to Appendix 3 for some examples).
  - ensuring workers are consulted and participate in all stages of the manual tasks risk management process including:
    - hazard identification
    - risk assessment
    - controls development and implementation
    - purchasing equipment
    - trialling and reviewing manual tasks controls before a final decision or purchase
    - development of safety procedures
- investigating alternative storage methods to reduce the manual handling of sheets below knee height
- increasing multi-skilling within the plasterboard trade to increase task variety
- ensuring that workers have specific training for the handling of plasterboard sheets including:
  - manual task risk management, including the characteristics of hazardous manual tasks
  - specific manual task risks and the measures in place to control them
  - how to perform manual tasks safely, including the use of mechanical aids, tools, equipment and safe work procedures
  - how to report a problem or maintenance issues
- ensuring information in the safe work procedure is specific about the task and includes information from the risk assessment
- discouraging the use of safe lifting techniques training particularly as a standalone control
- changing the method of quoting and payment for plasterboard work to eliminate incentive meterage rate payments.

## **6.2 Suppliers**

It is recommended that suppliers consider:

- including clear identification of weight, size and safe handling procedures on packs and individual sheets of plasterboard and other sheet materials and that this information is readily available to workers; and
- suppliers/delivery drivers/transport companies develop a pre-delivery phone call and/ or inspection checklist which is supported by a 'refusal to deliver' policy and procedure.

## **6.3 Builders/principal contractors**

Builders have an important role to play in eliminating or minimising the manual tasks risks associated with handling plasterboard. It is recommended that builders/principal contractors consider:

- developing work-related musculoskeletal disorder prevention initiatives specifically for hazardous manual tasks
- identifying the hazardous manual tasks associated with the handling of plasterboard during the planning and design stage and consider the work area design, work processes and the choice of materials. These factors can have a significant impact of the number of hazardous manual tasks that workers are exposed to from the point of delivery through to the final installation
- consulting with relevant stakeholders including the client, designers, manufacturers, suppliers, builders, subcontractors and workers about the risks to workers when handling plasterboard and ways of controlling the risks
- facilitating cooperation and coordination between stakeholders. The most effective way to manage hazardous manual tasks is for the client, designers, manufacturers, suppliers, builders, subcontractors and workers to work together. By drawing on the knowledge and experience of all involved, more informed decisions can be made to eliminate or minimise hazardous manual task risks. These decisions need to be made at the design stage
- reducing the sheet size required from six metre to smaller, easier to handle sheets that are compatible with the sheet lifters on the market (the sheet lifters available are capable of lifting sheets up to 4.8 m) or design mechanical aids and suitable work area for handling six metre sheets
- residential builders: improving the access and space at the delivery site and ensuring the use of mechanical aids during unloading and delivery.

## **6.4 Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ)**

It is recommended that WHSQ:

- continue to engage with builders to raise awareness regarding:
  - legislative obligations
  - planning considerations for hazardous manual tasks
  - consultation with all the relevant stakeholders including sub contractors, designer, delivery companies, supplier and client

- develop a short checklist to assist builders and other duty holders with general hazardous manual tasks risk management
- provide an example of a risk assessment and safe work procedure of a manual handling of plasterboard task.

# Appendix

## *Appendix 1*

### [Audit tool and guide](#)

## *Appendix 2*

### **1. Inspector focus groups**

#### **1.1 Aim**

The aim of the inspector focus groups was to gather anecdotal information about the inspector's experiences during the manual handling of plasterboard audits.

Two focus groups were held in June 2013 once the audits were completed. The focus groups included construction and ergonomics inspectors who were members of the WHSQ internal reference group and who participated in the audits.

The focus group process and findings are outlined below.

#### **1.2 Process**

Inspectors were asked to:

- identify and rate the common and high risk manual tasks
- identify what is making it difficult for industry to manage the risks; and
- make recommendations about how the risks can be better managed.

#### **1.3 Findings**

##### **1.3.1 Common hazardous manual tasks identified**

Inspectors identified the most significant manual task issues to be:

- residential sector - manual handling a range of sheet sizes from the truck to the storage area due to obstructions, uneven ground, poor access and poor site readiness for delivery (housekeeping); and
- commercial sector - manual handling of the variety and nature of the loads (shape, size and weight).

Other problem manual tasks included:



- plasterboard installation, particularly ceiling work and with large, bulky or awkward sheets
- handling six metre boards, particularly the practice of team handling two sheets at once
- moving sheets from point of storage to point of use where the design of the structure makes the use of mechanical aids or assistive devices difficult
- manual pass ups of boards (residential sector)
- movement of sheets through stairwells in multi storey residential houses

### **1.3.2 Barriers to implementing control measures**

Inspectors identified a number of barriers to managing the risks. The most significant and highly rated problem in both the residential and commercial sectors was poor planning including:

- lack of consultation with other stakeholders during the planning and design stage of the project with other relevant stakeholders resulting in:
  - hazardous manual tasks not being identified and managed
  - poor design of the structure/work area and materials used resulting in:
    - lack of space for use of mechanical aids or assistive devices
    - poor access
    - absence/poor storage area
- lack of consultation with the supplier/delivery company, plastering subcontractor
- poor programming of work and coordination of trades.

Other barriers included:

- the control of risk being outside the control of the subcontractor or delivery truck driver)
- builder unaware of legislative obligations for example more than one person can have a duty (s 16 the Act)
- weight, shape and size of the sheet
- no information about the weight, shape, size and safe handling procedures of the sheet readily available
- design of structure e.g. tight spaces, poor layout, small block sizes (residential)
- poor housekeeping
- over ordering of six metre packs of plasterboard, rather than measuring rooms and ordering sheets to suit. This results in increased manual handling and cutting, and more wastage
- storage - sheets stored and accessed from ground height
- use of generic risk assessments and work method statements which were not specific to the task and which focus on low level controls such as lifting technique and administrative controls.

## **1.4 Recommendations**

Inspectors made the following recommendations about how the risks can be better managed.

- WHSQ
  - ongoing engagement with builders to raise awareness regarding:
    - legislative obligations
    - planning considerations for hazardous manual tasks
    - the need for consultation with all the relevant stakeholders including sub contractors, designers, delivery companies, suppliers and clients
  - develop a short checklist to assist builders and other duty holders with general manual tasks risk management
  - provide an example of a risk assessment and safe work procedure
- industry
  - increase use of mechanical aids and assistive devices across all three sectors, particularly in the residential sector
  - identification of weight, size and safe handling procedure on packs and individual sheets
  - store sheets off the ground
  - suppliers and delivery drivers conduct a pre delivery inspection supported by a 'refusal to deliver' policy and procedure.

### Appendix 3: Some examples of mechanical aids for handling plasterboard sheets

Electric pallet jack



Sheet lifter



Ceiling prop



## Appendix 4: Revisit summary report

### Introduction and background

During 2012-13, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) targeted the manual tasks risks associated with handling plasterboard at construction workplaces. The aim was to assist duty holders to reduce the incidence of musculoskeletal injuries.

Follow-up audits were then conducted during 2013-14 at 25 of the original workplaces to determine if any improvements were made after the original intervention.

### Results

Overall, the re-audit data was very similar to that in the first round of audits.

### Compliance action

WHSQ inspectors primarily used an advisory approach during this campaign. For example, inspectors assisted businesses by providing information and guidance material about managing the risks associated with the manual handling of plasterboard.

There were three compliance notices issued which included one improvement notice and one prohibition notice directly relating to hazardous manual tasks. The third notice was an improvement notice relating to plant.

### Inspector observations

Inspectors reported a significant increase in industry awareness about hazardous manual tasks. At a number of sites subcontractors and principal contractors used the WHSQ guidance material and worked together to identify the hazardous manual tasks associated with handling plasterboard and then to implement suitable controls. For example inspectors reported:

- more duty holders were using mechanical aids like a telehandler to eliminate manual pass ups
- some workplaces had reduced the plasterboard sheet size to minimise awkward postures and reduce the weight handled
- tool box talks were more frequent and included managing hazardous manual tasks
- an increased focus on training on how to use mechanical aids
- more duty holders were doing pre-visit site inspections to ensure safe and clear access was available
- increased builder planning about the timing and access for the delivery.

At some sites however, the barriers to implementing control measures identified in the original round remained. In particular poor planning and lack of consultation about the timing and access of deliveries and the storage and handling of the plasterboard on site by some principal contractors was noted.

## Outcomes

Positive outcomes from the campaign continue. Industry stakeholders including the Association of Wall and Ceiling Industries (AWCI), Housing Industry Association (HIA) and Queensland Master Builders Association (QMBA) recently collaborated with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland to develop a range of new resources including:

- Safe work procedures and risk management examples for hazardous manual tasks
- Principal contractor planning checklist and guide for hazardous manual tasks risk management for both residential and commercial builders.

WHSQ conducted an information session for AWCI members about these resources. This subsequently lead to a number of industry stakeholders attending WHSQ Participative Ergonomics for Manual Tasks (PERforM) workshops.

WHSQ will continue to engage and work with industry stakeholders to facilitate further improvements in this hazard area.

A copy of the manual handling of plasterboard campaign report is available at [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au).