

ADVICE SHEET 4

Safe business is good business 

Training and supervision

Why is training and supervision important?

Because workers need to know how to do their jobs safely and they need to be aware of issues that affect their health and safety.

Having skilled workers makes better business sense, as they are generally capable of producing more output and often require less stringent supervision. Train your workers in your work procedures to ensure they are able to perform the tasks safely. Training should require workers to demonstrate they are competent in performing the tasks according to the procedures. It is insufficient to simply give a worker the procedure and ask them to acknowledge that they understand and are able to perform it. The level of supervision required will depend on the level of risk 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.

The law requires employers to provide their workers with any information, instruction, training and supervision necessary to ensure their health and safety at work.

Training will ensure that your workers know about issues that will affect their health and safety. It will provide your workers with information about potential risks associated with their work, the safety policies and procedures you have in place, how to work safely, and how to deal with emergencies.

Supervision will provide a direct link from the employer to worker, will help ensure your policies and procedures are being followed, and will allow non-compliance to be addressed and rectified. Good supervisors are essential for improving productivity and maintaining safe practices.

Where you ticked in the red zone ...

... shows that your workers are unlikely to have received the necessary training and supervision to ensure that they are safe at work.

Ticks in the RED zone indicate that you need to take immediate action. Work health and safety legislation requires the business to provide any information, training, instruction and supervision that is necessary to protect everyone from risks to their health and safety.

Establish a safety induction process	When you employ a new worker, train them in the policies and procedures that you have established to manage safety in your business prior to them commencing work. Your induction training should not be limited to just health and safety issues—it should include anything that you need to tell the person prior to them starting the job. The bottom line is that if there is anything that you want your workers to know about your workplace or your systems of work, then you need to tell them. Do not assume that they will automatically know, and do not rely on 'common sense'!
Establish a safety induction process	<p>From a health and safety point of view, an induction should at least include information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health and safety responsibilities—theirs, yours and supervisors' • reporting safety issues, such as dangers and incidents • consulting with workers about safety issues • reporting injuries and incidents/near misses • your return to work or rehabilitation program • general safety rules, such as using and properly maintaining equipment, not removing or altering any safety devices, maintaining and using personal protective equipment • training requirements for specific tasks • emergency procedures • the location of safety data sheets (SDS) (for chemicals) and operators manuals (for equipment), which should be further discussed during task-specific job training. <p>Induction training establishes the desired 'culture' or requirements at the workplace from the start of employment. Simply giving information to workers to read is not sufficient. You need to ensure that they understand it.</p>
Review training periodically	Review your training information periodically to ensure that it is up-to-date and effective. An induction checklist or training manual are ways of documenting your induction process to ensure consistency.
Provide task-specific training	<p>Where work tasks pose a significant risk to the health and safety of your workers, you should ensure that safe work procedures are developed (in consultation with your workers). These procedures need to be thoroughly understood by anyone undertaking the tasks. Documented safe work procedures are also an excellent training tool. <i>Advice Sheet 3</i> tells you how to develop these procedures.</p> <p>Inform your workers about the potential safety issues when performing the task, then explain how to control them. Demonstrate the safe work procedure, step-by-step. Observe each worker carrying out the procedure and assess their performance until they are competent to undertake the task without direct supervision.</p>
Provide adequate supervision	<p>Adequate supervision of workers is required to ensure health and safety. When determining adequacy, you should consider the level of risk in the job, the age/experience and/or competence of the worker, and the existing controls in place to reduce the risk. Newer workers will need closer and more regular supervision than experienced workers. Also, consider the requirements of those with disabilities, cultural differences or language problems.</p> <p>Maintaining records of supervision such as diary notes or team meeting minutes can help to promote consistent work practices.</p>
Assess worker competence	A worker's signature on a safe work procedure is not a confirmation of their competence. Their competence can only be measured by direct observation and assessment by an experienced supervisor.
Enforce procedures	When a worker fails to follow the safe work procedures, such as disabling a safety device, treat it like any other breach of policy. In the first instance, this may require counselling and further training, or for further occurrences, disciplinary procedures may be needed.
Keep training records	Training records enable you to keep track of who has been trained, how they performed and what further training is required. The law requires that you keep training records for certain tasks, such as working in confined spaces and working with certain types of hazardous chemicals (the SDS will tell you if it is considered hazardous). However, it is good practice to maintain records of all training including induction, task specific training (such as going through the safe work procedures with the team) etc.

Where you ticked in the orange zone...

... shows that your workers are being trained and supervised, but you need to ensure this is done more consistently and effectively.

Ticks in the ORANGE zone generally indicate that there are areas in your training and supervision that you may not be addressing.

<p>Identify gaps in your training and supervision</p>	<p>Are your casual and part-time workers adequately trained and supervised? Are contractors and subcontractors given a site specific induction? Are maintenance workers and installers of new equipment provided training in your safe work procedures. Have your labour hire workers (and their agency) been informed of the potential safety issues associated with their work tasks? Inconsistent performance by your workers may indicate that your training and supervision need improving. Was training completed successfully before the work task was undertaken? Do your supervisors understand their responsibilities regarding training and supervision? Are they appropriately skilled to undertake training and supervision? Are your workers following the safe work procedures? A highly competent worker does not necessarily make an effective trainer—to train effectively they need to have good communication skills combined with sound technical knowledge. Regular checks of your workers' performance (either formally or by casual observation) will identify where further training may be required. Ensure that training records are signed-off by both the worker and management to indicate that training was completed. Whenever there is a change to the workplace or to the way work tasks are undertaken, any existing safe work procedures need to be reviewed—and further training may be required if the procedure changes. To ensure that your workers follow the policies and procedures, and perform consistently, be clear about your expectations and your commitment to a safe workplace.</p>
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Where you ticked in the green zone...

... shows that you are ensuring that your workers are trained, assessed and supervised to be safe at work.

Ticks in the GREEN zone indicate that you have the correct processes in place. To ensure they remain effective, review them, and don't stop there.

<p>Continually improve training</p>	<p>Consider how you can improve your training methods, and how you can enhance the consultative arrangements between your workers and supervisors. Consider broader training in workplace health and safety issues, and other relevant training such as first aid training. The value of periodic refresher training is that it brings the appropriate issues back to the forefront of workers' minds.</p>
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Example record of training

DATE	SUBJECT / DESCRIPTION / TOPICS COVERED	TRAINER	DURATION	TRAINEES	SIGNATURE	MANAGER/ SUPERVISOR SIGN-OFF
10/07/14	Safe work procedure for using grinder	Bill Yates	30 minutes	Chris Jones	C. Jones	
17/07/14	Safe work procedure for decreasing metal pipes—topics covered were content of the SDS and the risk assessment	Bill Yates	30 minutes	Chris Jones	C. Jones	

Sample induction checklist

Induction should cover at least these basic items:

- Job description – what is the role, who to report to, tasks to be done, hours of work, pay rates, etc.
- Workplace layout/tour – location of facilities, first aid, emergency equipment, evacuation assembly area, etc.
- Health and safety provisions – including any safety representatives, consultation process, requirement to report incidents/injuries/damaged equipment, etc.
- Specific task based training for individual jobs/tasks, including use of plant and equipment and following safe systems of work.
- Policies – any specific policies such as reporting requirements, workplace harassment, discrimination, safety related issues, etc.
- Any specific safety ‘rules’ for the workplace e.g. hazardous substances not to be used without reading material safety data sheet and risk assessment, PPE requirements, etc.
- Workers’ compensation – insurance cover for workers, return to work rehabilitation and return to work policies and procedures, etc.

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