

Information Workshop

Identify and manage psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Background: Psychosocial hazards can cause psychological and physical harm. On average, work-related psychological injuries have longer recovery times, higher costs, and require more time away from work. Managing the risks associated with psychosocial hazards not only protects workers, but it also decreases the disruption associated with staff turnover and absenteeism and may improve broader organisational performance and productivity.

Timing: 2.5-hour workshop

Price: \$280pp plus GST.

Who should attend:

The course is aimed at all members of organisations who want an overview of Workplace Health and Safety Legislation and their personal responsibilities regarding psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Workshop Overview:

This course provides information on key elements of the WHS Act to all persons engaged in or by the PCBU

Topics covered include:

Where to start, and what does it mean to you, Description of key definitions, duties of parties according to the WHS Act, responsibilities of the PCBU to control hazards in the workplace, how to Understanding hazards and risks, Consultation and Risk Management, developing a safety culture to protect our fellow workers, Questions and scenarios.

Provider: Paragon Work Health Safety
Member of Australian Institute of Health and Safety

Facilitator: Peter McWhinnie
Qualifications: Graduate Diploma Organisational Management (Uni SA), Diploma of WHS, Nationally accredited Workplace trainer and assessor, Diploma of Vocational Education and Training, Graduate Certificate of Retail Leadership, Diploma of Retail Management, Diploma Quality auditing, Diploma of Business, Diploma of management.

Experience: CEO and Managing Director Paragon WHS, HSR trainer, Vocational Education and Training Manager and Facilitator, WHS Trainer/ Manager.



What is a psychosocial hazard?

Psychosocial hazards are hazards that:

Arise from or in relation to:

- the design or management of work
 - the working environment
 - plant at a workplace, or
- workplace interactions or behaviours; and
- may cause psychological and physical harm.

Psychosocial hazards and the appropriate control measures may vary between workplaces and between groups of workers, depending on the work environment, organisational context and the nature of work.



What does a psychosocial hazard they look like?



Psychosocial hazards that may arise at work

- Job demands
- Low job control
- Poor support
- Lack of role clarity
- Poor organisational change management
- Inadequate reward and recognition
- Poor organisational justice
- Traumatic events or material
- Remote or isolated work
- Poor physical environment
- Violence and aggression
- Bullying
- Harassment including sexual harassment
- Conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions



How do psychosocial hazards cause harm?

Psychosocial hazards can create stress. **Stress is the body's reaction when a worker perceives the demands of their work exceed their ability or resources to cope.**

Stress creates a physiological and psychological response in the body by releasing adrenaline and cortisol, raising the heart rate and blood pressure, boosting glucose levels in the bloodstream and diverting energy from the immune system to other areas of the body.

Stress itself is not an injury but if it becomes frequent, prolonged or severe it can cause psychological and physical harm.

Some hazards cause stress when a worker is exposed to the risk of that hazard occurring as well as when they are directly exposed to the hazard itself. For example, workers exposed to workplace violence are likely to experience stress if they perceive that the risk has not been controlled, even if the violence does not occur again. In this situation, despite the hazard rarely occurring, the stress itself may be prolonged.



Work health and safety duties PCBU

WHS Act section 19

Primary duty of care

A PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, workers and other persons are not exposed to risks to their psychological or physical health and safety. A PCBU must eliminate psychosocial risks in the workplace, or if that is not reasonably practicable, minimise these risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/interpretive-guideline-model-work-health-and-safety-act-meaning-reasonably-practicable>



Work health and safety duties PCBU

The WHS Regulations include specific requirements for PCBUs to manage risks arising from psychosocial hazards.

Under the WHS Regulations, to manage psychosocial risks, a duty holder must:

- identify reasonably foreseeable hazards that could give rise to psychosocial risks
- eliminate risks, so far as is reasonably practicable
- if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks – minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable
- maintain implemented control measures so they remain effective, and
- review, and if necessary, revise, control measures so as to maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a work environment that is without risks to health and safety.

In determining control measures to be implemented, a PCBU must have regard to all relevant matters, including:



Work health and safety duties- PCBU

Managing psychosocial hazards at work

- the duration, frequency and severity of the exposure of workers and other persons to the psychosocial hazards
- how the psychosocial hazards may interact or combine
- the design of work, including job demands and tasks
 - the systems of work, including how work is managed, organised and supported
- the design and layout, and environmental conditions, of the workplace, including the provision of a safe means of entering and exiting the workplace



Work health and safety duties- PCBU

Facilities for the welfare of
workers

- the design and layout and environmental conditions of workers' accommodation
- the plant, substances and structures at the workplace
- workplace interactions or behaviours, and
- the information, training, instruction and supervision provided to workers.



Work health and safety duties- Officers

WHS Act section 27

Duty of officers

Officers, such as company directors, have a duty to exercise due diligence to ensure the PCBU complies with its duties under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations. For psychosocial risks this means the officer must take reasonable steps to:

- acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of psychosocial work health and safety matters
- gain an understanding of the nature of the operations of the business or undertaking of the PCBU and generally of the psychosocial hazards and risks associated with those operations
- ensure the PCBU has available for use, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks from work carried out by the business or undertaking



Work health and safety duties- Officers

WHS Act section 27 Duty of officers (cont.)

- ensure the PCBU has appropriate processes for receiving and considering information regarding incidents, psychosocial hazards and risks to health and safety and responding in a timely way to that information

- ensure the PCBU has, and implements, processes for complying with any duty or obligation they have under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations, and

- verify the provision and use of the resources and processes mentioned above and that they are performing effectively.

For information on officers and their duties see the Interpretive Guideline: *The health and safety duty of an officer under section 27.*

Video Duties of officers

https://youtu.be/vw4CF_WVVoQ



Work health and safety duties- Workers

WHS Act section 28

Duties of workers

Workers must take reasonable care for their own psychological and physical health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. Workers must comply with reasonable health and safety instructions, as far as they are reasonably able, and cooperate with reasonable health and safety policies or procedures that have been notified to workers

For example, workers must follow any notified workplace policies setting standards for appropriate behaviour aimed at preventing bullying and harassment.



Work health and safety duties- Other persons in the workplace

WHS Act section 29

Duties of other persons at the workplace

Other persons at the workplace, like visitors, must take reasonable care for their own psychological and physical health and safety and must take reasonable care not to adversely affect other people's health and safety. They must comply, so far as they are reasonably able, with reasonable instructions given by the PCBU to allow them to comply with the WHS Act and WHS Regulations.

For example, a customer in a retail store must not behave violently, nor abuse or harass staff.



Work health and safety duties- Other relevant duties

Other relevant duties under WHS laws are set out throughout this Code of Practice. See Consulting workers, Consulting, cooperating and coordinating activities with other duty holders, Information, training, instruction and supervision, and Remote or isolated work. WHS laws do not operate in isolation and other laws may also apply. For example, industrial relations, criminal, anti-discrimination, privacy and workers' compensation laws.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 47

Duty to consult workers

A PCBU must consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking and who are (or are likely to be) directly affected by a work health and safety matter.

If you and your workers have agreed procedures for consultation, it must be conducted in accordance with those procedures.

Effective consultation with workers improves decision-making about health and safety matters and assists in reducing work-related injuries and illness. Workers can identify tasks or aspects of their work that cause or expose them to psychosocial hazards and may have practical suggestions or potential solutions to address those hazards. For example, workers may have ideas to improve work design to minimise the risks of psychological harm.

The definition of 'worker' under the WHS Act is broad. In addition to employees, it includes anyone working for the business or undertaking, including contractors and their employees, labour-hire workers, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, work experience students and volunteers.

You must consult with workers when assessing risks or making decisions about the psychosocial risks to health and safety including what control measures are implemented.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

Workers from diverse backgrounds may be exposed to different psychosocial hazards. You must consult with all workers, in particular workers with vulnerabilities, who are likely to be directly affected by particular psychosocial hazards.

For example, women, young workers, those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ workers and workers with disability are more likely to experience workplace sexual harassment and should be provided with the opportunity to participate in these consultations (which may take different forms), along with all workers who are likely to be directly affected.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 48

Nature of consultation

All consultation must include any Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) representing your workers. References to consultation with workers in this Code includes consultation with any HSRs.

You must provide workers with a reasonable opportunity to raise psychosocial health and safety issues, express their views and contribute to decision-making. You must consider whether existing consultation arrangements are appropriate for psychosocial risks. You must consult with workers and their representatives on implementing new consultation arrangements if required.

When consulting with your workers you must:

- share relevant information
- give workers a reasonable opportunity to express their views, raise health and safety issues and contribute to the decision-making process
- take those views into account before making decisions on health and safety matters, and
- advise workers of the outcome of consultations in a timely manner.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 48

Nature of consultation

Management commitment and open communication between managers and workers is important in achieving effective consultation. Your workers are more likely to engage in consultation when their knowledge and ideas are actively sought and concerns about psychosocial health and safety are taken seriously. You should encourage workers to:

- share their knowledge and experience, and
- report psychosocial hazards so risks can be managed before an injury occurs.

Effective methods of consultation can vary according to the needs of your workers, workplace size, worker distribution across sites and shifts, the nature of the work and the type of hazards in a workplace. You and your workers should agree the form consultation will take.

For example, consultation could include:

- pre-job-start or toolbox discussions
- focus groups
- worker surveys
- WHS committee meetings
- team meetings, and
- individual discussions.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 48

Nature of consultation

Each consultation method has benefits and limitations. For example, some forms of consultation are better for workers who do not have regular access to computers, while others allow workers to raise sensitive issues anonymously, or to provide detail and context.

Workers may need, or benefit from, different forms of consultation. For example, providing materials and conducting consultation in workers' preferred language(s) and using culturally appropriate people and messages.

Workers may be hesitant to raise and discuss some psychosocial hazards due to privacy or other concerns, particularly in relation to hazards like bullying or sexual harassment. You should consider consultation processes that address such concerns like anonymous surveys or reporting, particularly where workers may be concerned raising safety issues could impact on their employment or career progression.

You may need to use multiple methods of consultation for psychosocial hazards. The form and methods of consultation must be decided in consultation with workers.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 49

As a PCBU you must consult with workers when:

- identifying hazards and assessing risks to health and safety arising from the work carried out or to be carried out
- - making decisions about ways to eliminate or minimise those risks
- making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of workers
- proposing changes that may affect the health or safety of your workers, and
- making decisions about procedures for consulting with workers; resolving health or safety issues at the workplace; monitoring health of your workers; monitoring the conditions at the workplace under your management or control and providing information and training for your workers.

However, it may be useful to also consult workers about matters not listed above.

Regular consultation is better than consulting only as issues arise on a case-by-case basis, or as a reaction to a particular event, because it allows you to identify and fix potential problems early. Further guidance is available in the Code of Practice: Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 16

More than 1 person can have a duty

More than one person can have the same WHS duty at the same time. The WHS Act requires that where more than one person has a duty for the same matter, each person retains responsibility to meet their duty in relation to the matter and must do so to the extent to which they can influence and control the matter.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 46

Duty to consult with other duty holders

Duty holders must consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with all other persons who have a WHS duty in relation to the same matter, so far as is reasonably practicable. Where you share a duty (**e.g. you share a workplace or are involved in the same activity**), each duty holder should:

- exchange information
- find out who is doing what about their respective WHS obligations, and work together in a cooperative and coordinated way so risks are eliminated or minimised.

Consulting, cooperating and coordinating with other duty holders can help you more easily and effectively control risks, and assist each of you to comply with your duty.



Work health and safety duties- Consultation

WHS Act section 46

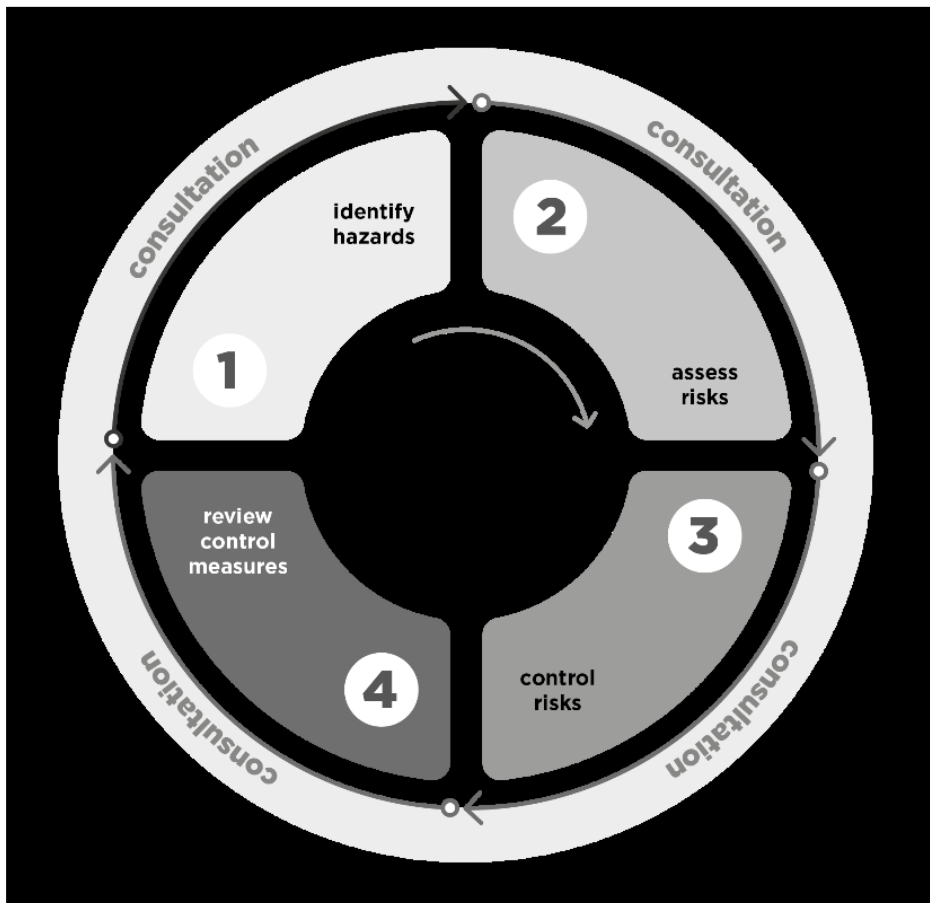
Duty to consult with other duty holders

For example, both a PCBU who engages workers through a labour-hire company and the labour-hire company who supplies the workers have WHS duties to ensure the health and safety of the workers. They may consult and cooperate as part of contract negotiations about how to minimise psychosocial hazards, such as high job demands, by agreeing realistic timeframes, and ensuring workers have the skills and support to perform the work. Further guidance is available in the Code of Practice: Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination.



Overview of the process to manage psychosocial risks

To meet your duties to ensure health and safety, you must eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks so far as is reasonably practicable. To achieve this, just as for any other hazard, you can apply the risk management process described in the Code of Practice: How to manage work health and safety risks.



Overview of the process to manage psychosocial risks

The risk management process involves four steps:

1. Identify hazards - find out what could cause harm
(Chapter 3).

2. Assess risks, if necessary - understand the nature of the harm the hazard could cause, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening. This step may not be necessary if the risks and controls are known (Chapter 4).

3. Control risks - implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstances and ensure they remain effective over time. **This means:**

- you must eliminate risks, if reasonably practicable to do so

- if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks, implement the most effective control measures to minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, and

- ensure those control measures remain effective over time (Chapter 5).

4. Review control measures to ensure they are working as planned and make changes as required



Overview of the process to manage psychosocial risks

All of these steps must be supported by consultation (see Section 1.3 of this Code).

Risk management requires planning and is an ongoing process. However, considering risks early prevents costly changes later and allows for more effective control measures to be used, resulting in less harm to workers. For example, you should consider psychosocial hazards at the design phase when planning an organisational restructure.

Managing psychosocial hazards at work
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The risk management process may be implemented in different ways depending on the size and nature of your business or undertaking. Larger businesses and those in sectors where workers are exposed to more or higher risks are likely to need more complex, sophisticated risk management and consultation processes.

Before you start the process:

- explain the process
- get commitment and engagement from senior leaders and managers
- identify who needs to be involved, for example managers, workers, HSRs and subject matter experts, and
- decide how the process and its outcomes will be recorded and communicated.



Matters to consider when controlling risks

How long (**duration**), how often (**frequency**) and how significantly (**severity**) your workers are exposed to psychosocial hazards impacts the level of risks. Hazards **interacting** or **combining** with each other may also change the risks.

As you work through the risk management process you must consider things that may give rise to hazards, influence the level of risks workers are exposed to, or could be changed to help control those risks, including:

the design of work, including job demands and tasks involved

Considering how the work is designed will support you to eliminate hazards at the source and at the organisational level.

Your workers should have an appropriate amount of work to match their skills and experience. For example, a job designed with too much work for a worker of that skill level to complete with the resources provided, or tasks that do not match that worker's skillset will create hazards. Matching tasks to workers' skills and scheduling non-urgent tasks for times of lower demand may assist to control risks.



Matters to consider when controlling risks

Systems of work, including how work is managed, organised and supported. Systems of work are organisational rules, policies, procedures and work practices used to organise, manage and carry out work. These systems can introduce psychosocial hazards, but if carefully considered can also help control them. For example, a system of work that does not allow workers to seek assistance from supervisors, or that allocates tasks without regard for other work demands may introduce hazards. A system of work which provides for support and manages job demands may assist to control risks.



Matters to consider when controlling risks

The design and layout and environmental conditions, of the workplace, including safe means of entering and exiting the workplace and welfare facilities

A poor physical working environment can be a psychosocial hazard, however the way a workplace is set up can also control other psychosocial hazards.

For example, ensuring workers can get away from aggressive customers or can observe when another worker may need assistance.



Matters to consider when controlling risks

The design and layout, and environmental conditions of workers' accommodation

Like the working environment, accommodation provided for workers can introduce or control psychosocial hazards.

For example, worker accommodation which does not provide adequate privacy or security can contribute to the risk of violence or harassment. Well-designed accommodation can help control these risks.



Matters to consider when controlling risks

Plant, substances and structures at the workplace

Plant (e.g. machinery, equipment, appliances and tools), structures and substances used at work can introduce psychosocial hazards where they create a physical hazard that is not adequately controlled. For example, plant can create loud noises, dust and vibrations which creates poor physical environments and contributes to psychosocial risks. Well-designed and maintained plant can prevent these hazards but can also be used to control other psychosocial hazards. For example, safe plant that allows work to be performed more efficiently can reduce high work demands.



Matters to consider when controlling risks

Workplace interactions or behaviours

The way workers interact with each other and other persons in the workplace, their behaviour and relationships can introduce psychosocial hazards. However, supportive leadership, positive relationships and professional and respectful interactions can help to minimise a range of psychosocial hazards.

Poor organisational culture can hamper efforts to improve work health and safety by preventing workers seeking and providing support and discouraging workers from reporting hazards and participating in consultation. Leaders demonstrating poor behaviour are likely to contribute to poor organisational culture.



Matters to consider when controlling risks

information, training, instruction and supervision provided to workers

Information, training, instruction and supervision may be necessary to implement control measures effectively (see Section 5.2 for further information and relevant duties). They may also assist in controlling some psychosocial risks, for example where low role clarity is creating a risk, information and training on the worker's role will assist in controlling the risks.



Leadership and management commitment

Genuine commitment by the PCBU, officers, and other organisational leaders is essential. These leaders, through their governance arrangements and resourcing decisions, actively shape the organisation and the way work is undertaken. These decisions will, directly and indirectly, impact how effectively you can control psychosocial risks.

This commitment can be built by ensuring leaders understand their duties under WHS laws, the risk management process these require, the business case for effectively managing psychosocial hazards, and the roles of various organisational leaders (**e.g. human resources and WHS managers**).



Consulting workers throughout the risk management process

At each step of the risk management process, you must consult workers who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a work health and safety matter and any HSR(s). For example, on proposed changes affecting work health and safety such as:

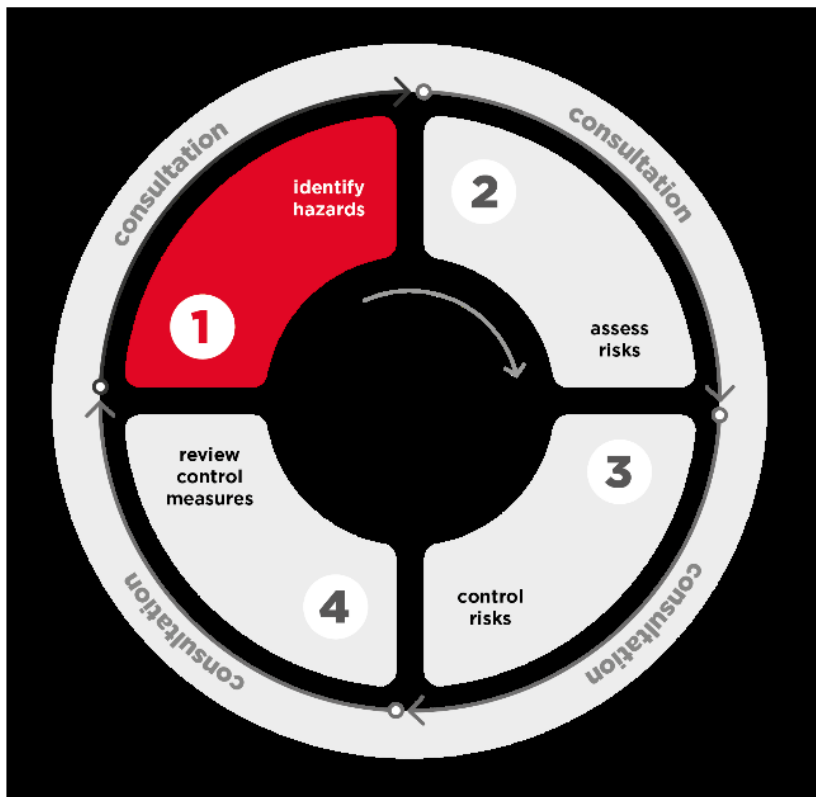
- new policies, procedures and systems of work
- organisational restructures, changes to staffing levels, new reporting arrangements and work locations
- changes to tasks, workload, duties and working arrangements, including rosters
- new technology, plant, equipment, substances, structures and production processes
- the redesign of existing workplaces, or
- changes to the way information, training, instruction and supervision are provided.

Consultation on changes that may affect work health and safety should occur as early as possible.



Identify psychosocial hazards

The first step in the risk management process is to identify psychosocial hazards. This involves identifying the aspects of work and situations that could potentially harm your workers or others at your workplace and why these may be occurring. This step should also assist PCBUs to identify where and when workers are exposed to psychosocial hazards, and if controls are not adequately eliminating or minimising risks from known hazards.



Common psychosocial hazards

Below is a list of some common examples of psychosocial hazards you should consider when identifying psychosocial hazards in your organisation. The list and the examples in the descriptions are not exhaustive.

Workers are likely to be exposed to a combination of psychosocial hazards; some risks may be constantly present, while others arise sporadically.

Some hazards by themselves may cause serious harm, such as experiencing workplace violence. In most circumstances, it will be a combination of psychosocial hazards which together may cause harm. Harm can be caused by a single instance or over time with repeated or prolonged exposure.

Hazards can be grouped or described in different ways. How they are categorised is less important than ensuring you and your workers have the same understanding of what is happening and how it may be causing harm.



Common psychosocial hazards

Job demands

Job demands

Intense or sustained high mental, physical or emotional effort required to do the job.

Unreasonable or excessive time pressures or role overload.

High individual reputational, legal, career, safety or financial risk if mistakes occur.

High vigilance required, limited margin of error and inadequate systems to prevent individual error.

Shifts/work hours that do not allow adequate time for sleep and recovery.

Sustained low levels of physical, mental or emotional effort is required to do the job.

Long idle periods while high workloads are present, for example where workers need to wait for equipment or other workers.



Common psychosocial hazards

Low job control

Low job control

Workers have little control over aspects of the work including how or when the job is done.

Workers have limited ability to adapt the way they work to changing or new situations.

Workers have limited ability to adopt efficiencies in their work.

Tightly scripted or machine/computer paced work.

Prescriptive processes which do not allow workers to apply their skills and judgement. Levels of autonomy not matched to workers' abilities.



Common psychosocial hazards

Poor support

Poor support

Tasks or jobs where workers have inadequate support including practical assistance and emotional support from managers and colleagues, or inadequate training, tools and resources for a task.



Common psychosocial hazards

Lack of role clarity

Lack of role clarity

Uncertainty, frequent changes, conflicting roles or ambiguous responsibilities and expectations.



Common psychosocial hazards

Poor organisational change management

Poor organisational change management

Insufficient consultation, consideration of new hazards or performance impacts when planning for, and implementing, change.

Insufficient support, information or training during change.

Not communicating key information to workers during periods of change.



Common psychosocial hazards

Inadequate reward and recognition

Inadequate reward and recognition

Jobs with low positive feedback or imbalances between effort and recognition.

High level of unconstructive negative feedback from managers or customers.

Low skills development opportunity or underused skills.



Common psychosocial hazards

Poor organisational justice

Poor organisational justice

Inconsistent, unfair,
discriminatory or
inequitable management
decisions and application of
policies, including poor
procedural justice



Common psychosocial hazards

Traumatic events or material

Traumatic events or material

Experiencing fear or extreme risks to the health or safety of themselves or others.

Exposure to natural disasters, or seriously injured or deceased persons.

Reading, hearing or seeing accounts of traumatic events, abuse or neglect.

Supporting victims or investigating traumatic events, abuse or neglect.



Common psychosocial hazards

Remote or isolated work

Remote or isolated work

Working in locations with long travel times, or where access to help, resources or communications is difficult or limited.



Common psychosocial hazards

Poor physical environment

Exposure to:

unpleasant or
hazardous working
environments.



Common psychosocial hazards

Violence and aggression

Violence, or threats of violence from other workers (including workers of other businesses), customers, patients or clients (including assault).

Aggressive behaviour such as yelling or physical intimidation.



Common psychosocial hazards

Bullying

Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety. This includes bullying by workers, clients, patients, visitors or others.



Common psychosocial hazards

Harassment including sexual harassment

Harassment due to personal characteristics such as age, disability, race, nationality, religion, political affiliation, sex, relationship status, family or carer responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Sexual harassment - any unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, in circumstances where a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would anticipate the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.³

Harmful behaviour that does not amount to bullying (such as single instances) but creates a risk to health or safety.



Common psychosocial hazards

Conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions

Poor workplace relationships or interpersonal conflict between colleagues or from other businesses, clients or customers.

Frequent disagreements, disparaging or rude comments, either from one person or multiple people, such as from clients or customers. A worker can be both the subject and the source of this behaviour.

Inappropriately excluding a worker from work-related activities.



Barriers that may put some workers at higher risk

Like for physical hazards, some workers may be at greater risk from psychosocial hazards due to barriers to understanding or participating in safety processes. This means there is a greater likelihood or severity of harm for these workers. For example, workers with:

- limited experience in the workplace (e.g. young workers)
 - barriers to understanding safety information (e.g. literacy or language)
- perceived barriers to raising safety issues (e.g. power imbalance or stigma), or
- previous exposure to a hazard.



Barriers that may put some workers at higher risk

For example, inexperienced workers may not identify harmful behaviours or have the confidence to report them. You could address this by providing more detailed induction training and greater support and supervision until they gain experience and understand these hazards.

Consulting your workers will assist you to identify any groups who are at greater risk, and whether there are additional reasonably practicable controls you must implement to eliminate or minimise the risks for these workers.



Addressing risks to individual workers

It may also be reasonably practicable to accommodate the needs of an individual worker to prevent harm where the worker has disclosed those needs or the PCBU is aware. For example, a worker with an injury or disability may need a quiet work area or different equipment to do their work. As well as making changes for individual workers you must still eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks for all workers so far as is reasonably practicable.

These changes may include, but are not limited to, changing workload and work hours, the nature of work, the work environment, or support and supervision.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

You must identify all reasonably foreseeable psychosocial hazards arising from the work carried out by your business or undertaking.

As well as identifying common hazards, ensure your process identifies hazards for less common but serious incidents, such as sexual or physical assault.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Consult your workers

You must consult with your workers (see [Section 1.3](#) of this Code) when identifying hazards to health and safety arising from the work they carry out or are going to carry out.

If your workers are represented by HSRs you must include them in this consultation. HSRs may have specific training in work health and safety, which can assist you to manage risks. HSRs can also provide workers some anonymity which may encourage better engagement on psychosocial hazards.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Consult your workers

Your workers may use different terms to describe exposure to psychosocial hazards. For example, they might say they feel:

- stressed, burnt-out or emotionally exhausted about their workload
- anxious or scared about talking to or dealing with an aggressive person
- humiliated, degraded or undermined by sexual harassment or discrimination
 - angry about policies being applied unfairly
 - confused about what their role involves, torn between competing priorities or 'feeling like a failure' for not being able to meet unrealistic expectations, or
- distressed, unable to sleep, or traumatised by exposure to traumatic situations or content.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Consult your workers

Good consultation should allow for differences in how workers may describe hazards and seek to identify the underlying cause. You should provide your workers with information to help them understand and recognise psychosocial hazards.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Use surveys and tools

You can use surveys to gather information from workers, HSRs, supervisors and managers. Surveys are particularly useful when:

- anonymity is important, this is because anonymous surveys or tools protect workers from stigma or other adverse outcomes when reporting hazards or concerns
- workers are physically dispersed. For example, they work across multiple sites or shifts
- you need to consult with a large number of workers
- workers need time to consider your questions and their response, or
- workers may struggle to understand or otherwise participate in other forms of consultation.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Use surveys and tools

Surveys must not replace agreed consultation procedures unless agreed with your workers, however they can be used as an additional tool for consultation.

You can seek advice on the tools available from the work health and safety regulator, industry associations, unions, technical specialists and safety consultants.

Medium to large businesses or organisations, particularly those with high psychosocial risks, should consider implementing a validated psychosocial risk assessment process.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Observe work and behaviours

Psychosocial hazards may be identified by observing:

- the workplace (e.g. are workers isolated or exposed to poor conditions)
- the work and how work is performed in practice (e.g. are workers rushed, is work delayed, do certain tasks result in confusion or frequent mistakes), and
- how people interact with each other (e.g. are workers, customers and clients respectful, or are harmful behaviours present).



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Observe work and behaviours

In some circumstances, poor workplace behaviours may be an inappropriate response to other psychosocial hazards, such as high job demands, lack of role clarity and inadequate support. Also consider whether the workplace culture supports or tolerates harmful behaviours, including lower level (but still harmful) behaviours like name-calling, teasing, sexual or gendered jokes, and crude language.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Review available information

Review relevant information and records which may include:

- records of injuries, incidents or workers' compensation
 - worker complaints and investigations
- reports from workplace inspections (e.g. HSR or safety officer walk arounds)
- staffing, resourcing, procurement and refurbishment decisions (**e.g. will outsourcing some work increase work demands for another area, like contract managers**)
- work systems, policies, governance arrangements and procedures
 - duty statements and performance agreements
 - records of hours worked (**e.g. regular extra hours indicating high work demand**)
 - absenteeism and turnover data and exit interviews
- Health and Safety Committee (HSC) meeting records, and
- previous psychosocial risk assessments and any material feeding into them.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Review available information

Not all psychosocial hazards will be associated with reported incidents, so it is important to gather additional information.

Information and advice about psychosocial hazards and risks relevant to particular industries and work activities are available from the work health and safety regulator, industry associations, unions, technical specialists, similar workplaces and safety consultants.

Advice is particularly helpful in complex or high-risk situations. For example, where workers are exposed to violence or aggression from a person they owe a duty of care to, such as nurses or teachers.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Look for trends

You may be able to identify trends from the information you collect. Trends may show certain tasks have more hazards associated with them, or some hazards are more common in certain roles. Trends may show workers in a particular location are exposed to more hazards than in other areas, which may indicate a problem with the design of that work area or the way work is carried out there. This can inform your risk assessment.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Have a reporting mechanism and encourage reporting

You should establish a mechanism for workers to report hazards. This should protect the privacy of workers who make reports and allow for anonymous reporting where possible. Your reporting mechanism should suit your business size and circumstances and be proportional to the risks in your business. For example, a small café could have a board in the kitchen for workers to write up hazards they identify, a locked box for making confidential reports and the duty manager taking reports of any hazards posing an immediate risk.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Have a reporting mechanism and encourage reporting

Workers might not report psychosocial hazards because they:

- see them as just 'part of the job' or the work culture
 - believe it's not serious enough to report
- feel they do not have time to report frequently occurring hazards
- think reports will be ignored, or not handled respectfully and confidentially
- fear they will be blamed or believe reporting may expose them to additional harm, discrimination or disadvantage,
 - do not know or understand how to report a hazard.

If a worker is being bullied, harassed or is exposed to other harmful behaviours they might not report it when the other person is in a position of authority **(e.g. a manager or supervisor) or a position of influence (e.g. a client).** **Workers may be worried about the consequences of reporting, such as the person finding out about the complaint and the behaviour escalating.)**



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Have a reporting mechanism and encourage reporting

It is important for hazards reported by workers be taken seriously. Workers can be encouraged to report hazards by:

- treating all reports of psychosocial hazards seriously and appropriately
- using agreed mechanisms, such as HSRs who can raise safety concerns for workers anonymously
 - regularly discussing psychosocial hazards at team meetings or toolbox talks
- providing workers with a range of accessible and user-friendly ways to make a report informally, formally, anonymously or confidentially
- making it clear that victimising those who make reports will not be tolerated
 - training key workers (**e.g. supervisors, managers, contact persons and HSRs**)
 - ensuring processes and systems for reporting and responding to complaints of bullying, harassment or other poor behaviours are appropriate, transparent and well understood, and
- acting decisively to control the risks your workers identify.



How to identify psychosocial hazards

Have a reporting mechanism and encourage reporting

Your hazards and risks reporting system should be appropriate and proportional for your organisation and the risks in your workplace. For example, a large organisation with previous instances of violent behaviour should consider a formal system with documented procedures. In contrast, a small business with no previous instances of violent or aggressive behaviour may not require a formal system and could instead encourage workers to discuss hazards with supervisors as required and have a method of reporting and recording details.



Assess the risks

When should a risk assessment be conducted?

Once you have identified psychosocial hazards in your workplace, the next step is to assess the risks they create. This will help you determine what is reasonably practicable in managing the risks.

You should carry out a risk assessment, in consultation with workers and their HSRs if they have them, for any hazards you have identified. However, if you already know what the risks are and how to control them effectively, you can implement the controls without undertaking a risk assessment and then check to confirm these have been effective.

A risk assessment can help you determine how severe risks are, and therefore what is reasonably practicable in managing the risks.



How to assess psychosocial risks

To assess the risk of harm, you need to identify the workers affected and consider the duration, frequency and severity of their exposure. Once you have identified all the hazards you should assess the risks. To do this, consider:

- **Duration** – how long is the worker exposed to the hazards or risks?
- **Frequency** – how often is the worker exposed to the hazards or risks?
- **Severity** – how severe are the hazards and the workers' exposures?



How to assess psychosocial risks

Consider psychosocial hazards collectively rather than in isolation. Workers and others may be exposed to more than one psychosocial hazard at any time and hazards can interact or combine. **For example, a worker exposed to aggressive customer behaviour is more likely to be harmed if at that time they do not have other workers present to support them and do not have the control to alter the way they work to de-escalate the situation.** Assessing risks collectively may also assist you to identify more effective control measures.

Psychosocial risks increase when exposure to hazards is more severe (e.g. exposure to a traumatic incident), more frequent (e.g. regularly performing tasks without adequate support), or is longer in duration (e.g. high job demands over weeks or months).



How to assess psychosocial risks

The risks also increase when workers are exposed to a combination of the above mechanisms. For example, short term but severe exposure to a psychosocial hazard (*e.g. a violent incident*) is more likely to harm workers if they are also exposed to chronic (long duration), but less severe hazards (*e.g. ongoing low support*).

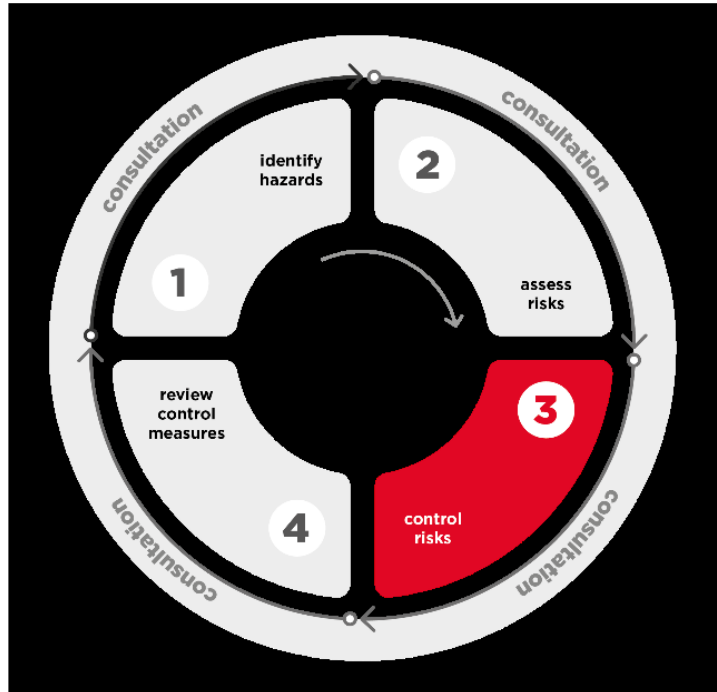
Psychosocial risks can cause both physical and psychological injuries. The severity of psychological injuries varies, but in comparison to physical injuries, on average, they require longer off work and are more costly.



Control the risks

Once you know which psychosocial hazards are present and you have assessed the risks they create, you are in a position to control them.

You must eliminate risks to health and safety if it is reasonably practicable to do so. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks, you must minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable.



Control the risks

Every workplace is different. The best combination of control measures will be tailored to your organisation's size, type and work activities to manage risks during both everyday operations and emergencies. Example control measures are provided in [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#).

To determine what is reasonably practicable to manage psychosocial risks:

1. identify as many possible control measures as you can
2. consider which of these control measures are most effective, and
3. consider which controls are reasonably practicable in the circumstances.



Control the risks

Identify and select control measures

To identify what can be done you should, in consultation with your workers, identify as many possible control measures as you can. This gives you the greatest scope to choose and apply the most effective control measures to eliminate or minimise risks. Consultation with workers will assist you to identify control measures you might not otherwise think of.



Control the risks

Consider which control measures are most effective

From the possible control measures you have identified, consider which control or combination of controls will be most effective.

You must first aim to eliminate the risks, so identify any control measures which would achieve this. Then order the remaining controls, or combinations of controls, from most to least effective at minimising the risks. Controls that are reliable and offer the highest level of protection are the most effective.



Control the risks

Consider which control measures are most effective

Minimising the risks can be achieved by changing the:

- design of work, including job demands and tasks involved
- systems of work, for example:
 - o allocating tasks to match skills
- ensuring sufficient time to complete tasks
- support from supervisors and other workers
 - work environment and conditions
 - workplace interactions including ensuring respectful behaviours and relationships, or
 - objects or tools used in the task, for example ensuring plant, substances and equipment are safe and fit for purpose.



Control the risks

Consider which control measures are most effective

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Physical risks contributing to psychosocial risks can be minimised through relevant substitution, isolation and engineering controls.

Administrative controls and personal protective equipment (PPE) are the least reliable controls and provide the lowest level of health and safety protection. You should consider these last and use them in combination with more effective controls.

For example, policies may be ignored, systems of work may not be understood and followed, and PPE may not always be worn. Further controls, such as supervision, may be needed to make a control more likely to be effective.



Control the risks

Select reasonably practicable control measures

For each of the controls you have identified, consider if it is reasonably practicable to implement in the circumstances. When determining what is reasonably practicable, you must consider all relevant matters, including:

- the likelihood of the psychosocial hazard or the risk occurring
 - the degree of harm that might result from the hazards or the risks
- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risks
 - what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know about the hazards or risks, and about the ways of eliminating or minimising the risks, and
- after assessing the extent of the psychosocial risks and the available ways of eliminating or minimising risks, the cost associated with eliminating or minimising the risks, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risks.



Control the risks

Select reasonably practicable control measures

The greater the risks, the more that is required to be done to eliminate or minimise it. This may mean using more than one, or a combination of control measures.

Where psychosocial hazards are only present for short periods, infrequently and are not severe, it may not be reasonable to implement expensive and time-consuming control measures. It may, however, be reasonable to apply less expensive controls. Multiple control measures may be required. The aim must be to keep trying to lower the likelihood and degree of harm until further steps are not reasonably practicable in the circumstances.



Control the risks

Select reasonably practicable control measures

Psychosocial hazards can interact or combine with other psychosocial hazards to increase the risks.

This means controlling the risks associated with one hazard can also minimise the risks from other psychosocial hazards.

When considering each control or combination of controls, a duty holder must take into account the likelihood of a particular control being effective.



Cost of control measures

Cost is a matter to be taken into account and weighed up with other relevant matters to identify what is reasonably practicable, but this must only be done after assessing the extent of the risk and the ways of eliminating or minimising it.

Where the cost of implementing control measures is grossly disproportionate to the risks, it may be that implementing them is not reasonably practicable and therefore not required.

This does not mean that you are excused from doing anything to minimise the risks. A less expensive way of minimising the risks must instead be used.

If two control measures provide the same level of protection and are equally reliable, you can implement the less expensive option.



Cost of control measures

The question of what is reasonably practicable is determined objectively, not by reference to your particular business or undertaking's capacity to pay, or other individual circumstances. You cannot provide workers with a lower level of protection simply because you are in a lesser financial position than another PCBU facing the same hazards or risks in similar circumstances.

Your goal to produce a product or provide a service at a particular price cannot override your duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of your workers and others.



Implementing control measures

It is important to ensure a particular control measure will work before relying on it. You may need to test control measures, provide information, training or instruction to workers and supervise work to ensure control measures are effective.



Test control measures

Testing control measures allows you to ensure they are suitable for your workplace, operate as intended and do not introduce new risks. You should allow enough time for your workers to adjust to changes (e.g. new work processes) before assessing the effectiveness of control measures. At this stage, you should frequently check with your workers on how they think the improvements are working and supervise workers to ensure controls are implemented effectively.



Information, training, instruction and supervision

WHS Act section 19

Primary duty of care

WHS Regulation 39

Provision of information,
training and instruction

As you are planning to implement control measures, you must consider what information, training, instruction or supervision is required to ensure the control measures are effective.

Training must be suitable and adequate, having regard to:

- the nature of the work to be carried out
- the associated psychosocial hazards and risks,
and
- the control measures to be implemented.

Training should require workers to demonstrate they are competent in performing the task. It is not sufficient to simply tell a worker about the procedure and ask them to acknowledge they understand and can perform it. Training may include formal training courses, in-house training or on the job training.



Information, training, instruction and supervision

For example, if supervisors and managers have a role in implementing workplace policies on addressing harmful behaviours, you must provide them with any training necessary to ensure safety. This may include training, so they know what to do if they witness, experience or have a worker approach them about violence and aggression, bullying or sexual harassment at work or know who to seek guidance from if they have questions.

Information, training and instruction must be provided in a form all workers can understand, for example training may need to be provided in other languages. Information and instruction may also need to be provided to others who enter the workplace, such as customers or visitors.

The level of supervision required will depend on the risks 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.



Maintenance

You must ensure that control measures are maintained so that they remain effective, including by ensuring they are fit for purpose, suitable for the nature and duration of the work; and set up and used correctly.

You should decide what maintenance a control measure will require when you implement the control and establish a schedule for routine checks and maintenance.

You may prepare a risk register identifying the hazards, what action needs to be taken, who will be responsible for taking the action and by when.



Workplace policies

Workplace policies can provide important information and help ensure everyone involved understands the business or undertaking's processes for managing psychosocial risks.

Policies alone should not be relied on to control psychosocial risks, but they can detail responsibilities and help set clear expectations, particularly about behaviours at the workplace and during work-related activities.

You may have separate policies or one policy that covers several work health and safety issues.

Where you have policies relating to psychosocial risks, these must be developed in consultation with your workers and any HSRs. All workers must be made aware of the policies and what is expected of them.



Controlling risks arising from management action

Management action, such as managing unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour is a necessary part of conducting a business or undertaking. Management action may also be necessary to prevent or control psychosocial hazards, for example:

- increased demands on other workers due to unsatisfactory performance, or
- behaving in a way that may harm others.

PCBUs may be concerned about balancing the need to undertake performance action with the duty to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks that may arise from the process, so far as is reasonably practicable. **This can be done by:**

- **addressing psychosocial hazards contributing to unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour, and**
- **designing the management process in a way that eliminates or minimises psychosocial risks.**



Addressing psychosocial hazards contributing to unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour

Unsatisfactory performance or poor behaviour may be the result of multiple factors, including psychosocial hazards affecting the worker. Confirming whether all psychosocial hazards have been eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable will help you to ensure you are meeting your duties. A range of psychosocial hazards can contribute to poor performance and harmful behaviour, such as:

- lack of support or training to perform the role
-
- lack of clarity on the role and requirements
- poor interpersonal relationships.



Eliminating or minimising psychosocial risks in the management process

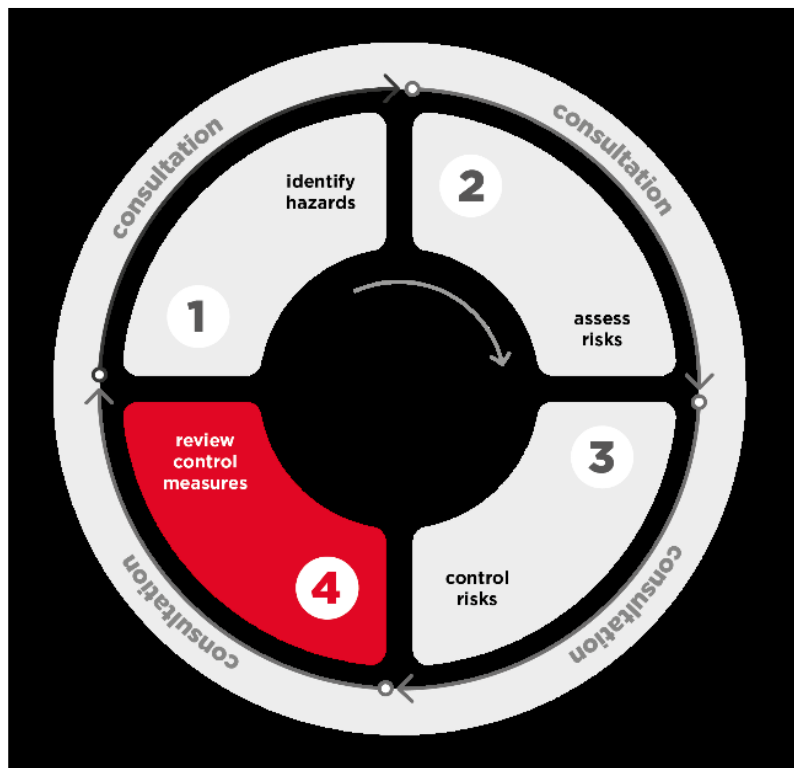
You must ensure you have eliminated or minimised any risks in your management process, so far as is reasonably practicable. For example, control risks associated with:

- poor organisational justice by ensuring you apply policies transparently and fairly, and
- poor interpersonal relationships by conducting the process in a respectful and constructive way.



Review control measures

The last step of the risk management process is to review the effectiveness of the implemented control measures to ensure they are working as planned. If a control measure is not working effectively, it must be reviewed and modified or replaced.



Review control measures

Reviewing control measures should be done regularly and is required:

- when the control measure is not eliminating or minimising the risks so far as is reasonably practicable
-
- before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control
 - if a new hazard or risk is identified
 - if the results of consultation indicate a review is necessary, or
- if an HSR requests a review because they reasonably believe one of the above has occurred and it has not been adequately reviewed already.

Reports, complaints (including informal complaints) or grievances from workers may identify new psychosocial hazards or risks that are not adequately controlled. This should trigger a review of whether your existing control measures are effective, if your response procedures worked the way they were supposed to and whether new risks have been identified that also need to be managed.



Common review **Methods control measures** the workplace, consultation, and analysing records and data. You can use the same methods as in the initial hazard identification step to check control measures. You must also consult your workers and their HSRs. **The person reviewing your control measures should have the authority and resources to conduct the review thoroughly and be empowered to recommend changes where necessary.**

Questions to consider may include:

- Are control measures working effectively, without creating new risks?
- Have workers reported feeling stressed or are they showing signs of harm?
 - Have all psychosocial hazards been identified?
- Have risks changed or are they different to what you previously assessed?
- Are workers actively involved in the risk management process?
 - Are workers openly raising health and safety concerns and reporting problems promptly?
- Has instruction and training been provided to all relevant workers?
- Are there any upcoming changes that are likely to result in a worker being exposed to psychosocial hazards?
- Are new control measures available that might better control the risks?
- Have risks been eliminated or minimised as far as is reasonably practicable?

If the effectiveness of the control measures is in doubt, go back through the risk management steps, review your information and make further decisions about control measures.



Recording the risk management process and outcomes

You should record your risk management process and the outcomes, including your consultation with workers. This allows you to demonstrate you have met your work health and safety duties and will assist you when you need to monitor or review the hazards you have identified and controls you have put in place.

Your records may include the outcomes of consultation, the hazards you identified, how you assessed the risks, the control measures implemented, and the training provided.

You should select a method of recording the risk management process and outcomes to suit your circumstances. For example, you can use a risk register such as the one in the Code of Practice: *How to manage work health and safety risks*

It is also useful to have a record of the processes used to investigate and resolve issues. You could choose to include only high-level information in the general risk register where you are concerned about the need to maintain confidentiality.

A work health and safety inspector may ask to see a copy of records relating to the risk management processes if they visit your workplace. If you do not have a written record, you will need to demonstrate by other means how you have met your duties.



Conducting work health and safety investigations

Any work health and safety investigations into reports of incidents involving psychosocial hazards should primarily aim to identify hazards or new or improved control measures.

Investigations must maintain appropriate privacy and confidentiality of all workers involved to the extent permitted by law. For example, do not discuss reports in public areas or with anyone not involved in the investigation.

Ensuring confidentiality should not prevent the parties involved from seeking support.



Conducting work health and safety investigations

Nature of investigation

The nature of your investigation should be proportional to the risks and suit the circumstances. **When deciding the nature of an investigation consider the:**

- level of risks involved
- complexity of the situation, and
- number of workers involved or affected.

A formal investigation may not always be the most effective option. For example, the best response to a single low-level incident may be immediate informal discussions with the workers involved and changes to the relevant control measures. The earlier problems can be identified and addressed, the less likely a formal and complex investigation will be required.

Small businesses may require assistance if a matter is complex or high risk. You can seek advice from the work health and safety regulator, your industry body or a work health and safety expert.



Conducting work health and safety investigations

Selecting an investigator

It is important to find an investigator who has the confidence of all parties involved where possible.

They should be impartial and have the skills and knowledge to identify psychosocial hazards, assess the risks and recommend appropriate controls.

An external investigator may be required if an impartial internal investigator is not available, for example where a matter involves a senior manager.



Conducting work health and safety investigations

Balancing a fair and transparent process

The investigation should be fair, transparent and timely to ensure due process for both those who raised the issue and any workers who have had allegations made about them. Throughout the investigation affected workers should be:

- informed of their rights and obligations during the process
- provided with the opportunity to respond to any allegations made against them
- provided with a copy of relevant policies and procedures
- kept informed about possible outcomes, timeframes, rights of appeal and reviews, and
- provided with adequate and fair support.



Conducting work health and safety investigations

Concurrent investigations

Harmful behaviours, such as bullying and harassment can be inappropriate responses from workers exposed to other hazards, for example high job demands and poor support.

Where these behaviours breach employment codes of conduct or professional standards you may require a separate investigation into these breaches as a disciplinary matter, as well as a systematic work health and safety investigation looking at any hazards present and ensuring they are controlled.

Where breaches of a code of conduct or professional standard are not proven there may still be an underlying work health and safety risk which needs be controlled.



Job characteristics, design and management

A single or irregular exposure to these hazards may not create psychosocial risks, or the risks may be very low. However, if workers' exposure to a hazard (or a combination of these hazards) is frequent, prolonged or severe it can cause psychological and physical harm.

- high or low job demands
 - low job control
 - poor support
- traumatic events or material
 - remote or isolated work
 - lack of role clarity
- poor organisational change management
 - inadequate recognition
- poor organisational justice, and
- poor environmental conditions.



Job demands

Sustained or intense high levels of physical, mental or emotional effort which are unreasonable or chronically exceed workers' skills, or sustained low levels of physical, mental or emotional effort. A job can include periods of high and low job demands.

A job can also involve a combination of low or high mental, emotional and physical demands.



Job demands

Note: *Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.*



Job demands

High physical demands may include:

- long, irregular or unpredictable work-hours (e.g. doing shift work or being on call)
- insufficient breaks (e.g. breaks are infrequent, too short, strictly scheduled or regularly interrupted)
- not being able to recover between periods of work (e.g. being expected to work afterhours, be on call, or return to work with insufficient rest and sleep)
- not having opportunities to use leave entitlements
- high workloads (e.g. having too much to do)
- physically demanding, challenging or tiring work (e.g. undertaking hazardous manual tasks or strenuous physical tasks), and
 - time pressures or fast paced work (e.g. unreasonable deadlines or computer/machine paced work).



Job demands

High emotional demands may include:

- responding to distressing or emotional situations (e.g. dealing with confrontation)
- managing other people's emotions (e.g. de-escalating an aggressive situation, undertaking disciplinary processes or assisting people who are distressed)
- providing support or empathy (e.g. conveying bad news, providing advocacy or counselling), and
- suppressing emotions or displaying false emotions (e.g. nursing staff hiding distress for patients or retail workers pretending friendliness with difficult customers).



Job demands

Low job demands may include:

- having too little to do (e.g. running out of work) or long idle periods where workers cannot perform other tasks (e.g. where a worker must monitor a process and cannot perform other tasks until it is complete)
- highly monotonous or repetitive tasks which require low levels of thought processing and little variety (e.g. packing products or monitoring production lines)
- work that is too easy (e.g. significantly below a worker's skills or abilities), and
- idle periods when high workloads are present (e.g. having urgent work but being unable to proceed until equipment, resources or support become available).



Controlling job demands

Job/work design

- Schedule tasks to avoid intense or sustained low or high job demands (e.g. schedule non-urgent work for quieter periods).
- Manage supply chains to avoid large fluctuations in demand (e.g. delays in supplies causing backlogs of orders).
- Plan shifts to allow adequate rest and recovery, particularly between periods of high demand.



Controlling job demands

Physical work environment

- Design the workplace to eliminate demanding tasks or jobs (e.g. locate the storeroom next to the loading dock so deliveries do not require double handling).
- Provide quiet spaces for workers doing mentally demanding work.
- Implement systems to reduce human error (e.g. use IT systems to capture important information and generate reminders).
- Provide appropriate break areas (e.g. air-conditioned or shady areas for physically demanding work or staff-only areas for workers dealing with difficult customers).



Controlling job demands

Modifying job demands

- Plan your workforce so you have an adequate number of appropriately skilled staff to do the work and so that tasks utilise your workers' skills.
 - Roster enough workers to ensure they can take required breaks over long or busy shifts.
- Rotate workers through demanding or repetitive tasks.
 - Reschedule non-urgent tasks if demand is unexpectedly high or low.
- Provide additional support during periods of high demand (e.g. provide more workers, better equipment or outsource tasks).
 - Schedule enough time for difficult tasks to be completed safely. Inexperienced workers may require additional time, supervision or support.
 - Outsource tasks to external companies with the capacity to deliver services safely (e.g. outsource tasks to companies that have appropriately skilled workers or specialised equipment).



Controlling job demands

Safe work systems and procedures

- Empower workers in situations where they face high emotional demands (e.g. allow discretion in providing refunds where appropriate to avoid customer aggression or distress).
 - Have regular conversations about work expectations, workloads, deadlines and instructions to ensure job demands are understood and can be managed.
- Regularly review and update work policies and procedures to avoid unnecessary work (e.g. ensure reporting lines are suitable for current workloads).
- Have systems for escalating problems and getting support from managers.



Controlling job demands

The worker

- Set achievable performance targets, with consideration for the worker's experience and skills.
-
- Provide training if required to ensure workers have the skills to meet work demands.
- If emotional demands are an unavoidable part of a worker's role, ensure these are captured in the position description and applicants are informed at the pre-selection stage (e.g. at interview) of the demanding nature of the role.



Controlling job demands

Having little control or say over the work or aspects of the work including how or when the job is done.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.



Low job control may include:

- requiring permission or sign-off before progressing routine or low risk tasks (e.g. before ordering standard monthly supplies or sending routine internal emails)
- workers' level of autonomy not matching their abilities (e.g. inexperienced and highly skilled workers are given the same level of autonomy)
- prescriptive processes and not allowing workers to apply their skills or judgment (e.g. work is tightly scripted and workers cannot adapt to the specific situation)
- lack of consultation about changes impacting their work (e.g. changing processes for interacting with clients)
- limited scope for workers to adapt the way they work to changing situations or adopt efficiencies in their work (e.g. not allowing workers to adapt processes which do not suit the situation)
- workers have little influence on how they do their work, when they change tasks or take breaks (e.g. work is machine or computer paced)
- workers are unable to avoid dealing with aggression or abuse (e.g. police or healthcare services), and
 - workers do not have control over their physical environment (e.g. working in uncomfortable temperatures).



Controlling low job control

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design

- Match workers' level of autonomy to their skills and experience.
- Implement consultation arrangements to regularly discuss the work, how it is done and any changes impacting workers.
- Develop governance arrangements and approval processes that balance risks and efficiency to streamline lower risk tasks.
- Design processes and systems to deal with new situations and provide autonomy workers to apply their judgement when processes are not fit for purpose.



Controlling low job control

Physical work environment

- Design processes and systems so workers control their workflow (e.g. use electronic systems to filter client queues and give workers control over when the next client is called).
- If work is machine or computer paced, design processes so workers can alter the pace of work, change tasks, or pause the workflow to take breaks.
- Provide workers with reasonable control over their physical environment (e.g. workers can adjust their workstation).



Controlling low job control

Improving job control

- Plan any regular additional work hours or changes to work in advance with workers (e.g. if additional hours are usually required during peak season, plan this in advance with workers).
- Involve workers in organisational decision-making processes and encourage suggestions for continuously improving work practices.
- Plan deadlines, performance targets, work allocations and work plans in consultation with workers.
- Hold regular team meetings and discuss any work challenges with workers and discuss how problems could be solved.
- Monitor staff in way that is not excessive or punitive.



Controlling low job control

Safe work systems and procedures

- Create an environment where workers feel empowered to raise safety concerns about work requirements.
- Encourage workers to suggest changes or adopt efficiencies in their work.
- Provide leadership and supervision that supports workers to take reasonable control over their work.



Controlling low job control

The worker

- Develop a performance management system that ensures workers have input into the way they do their work rather than focusing only on output.
- Hire workers with the right mix of skills and experience for the position including the level of autonomy the job will have.



Controlling low job control

Poor support

Inadequate support, including insufficient support from supervisors or other workers.

Not having the resources they need to do the job or support work performance.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe.

Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.



Controlling low job control

Poor support

Poor support may include:

- insufficient, unclear or contradictory information (e.g. necessary information is not passed on or is communicated poorly)
- not having the things to do their job properly or on time (e.g. not having the necessary tools, systems, equipment or resources)
- frequently needing to compete for the things needed to do the job (e.g. where multiple workers need to use equipment at the same time)
- poorly maintained or inadequate tools, systems and equipment (e.g. tools are broken or IT systems do not work as intended)
- inadequate training for the task (e.g. new workers are asked to do complex tasks or workers are expected to use new tools without training)
- jobs where supervisors are unavailable to make decisions or provide support (e.g. they work from a different location or are frequently in meetings)



Controlling low job control

Poor support

- inadequate guidance from supervisors or assistance from other workers (e.g. other workers are not available to help safely complete tasks)
- workers cannot ask for help when needed (e.g. workers are not able to pause work, leave their workstations or are working remotely without means to contact supervisors)
- workplace cultures that discourage supervisors or co-workers supporting each other (e.g. highly competitive, insecure, critical, uncooperative or uncollaborative workplaces)
- working environments that discourage discussion (e.g. lack of suitable spaces to discuss sensitive issues or where workers are physically separated)
- limited emotional support or unempathetic leadership (e.g. supervisors do not notice when workers are struggling, do not take issues seriously or provide a safe space to raise issues), and
- infrequent or poor performance feedback and discussions (e.g. feedback is unclear, unhelpful or not provided).



Controlling poor support

Note: These are examples only. You must identify and implement control measures that eliminate or minimise the risks in your workplace, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Job/work design

- Implement good information sharing systems so workers have quick access to the information they need to do their jobs (e.g. ensure databases are kept up to date and are user friendly).
- Design work so supervisors have manageable workloads, sufficient resources and their span of control allows effective supervision (e.g. supervisors have time to answer questions or assist with challenging tasks).
- Establish systems to ensure regular, fair, goal-focused and constructive feedback discussions occur between workers and supervisors to discuss work tasks, and any support or development needs (e.g. implement end of shift debriefs or require supervisors to do quarterly check ins).
- Provide clear management structures and reporting lines (e.g. provide organisational charts or ensure workers understand who to go to for help).



Controlling poor support

Physical work environment

- Provide workers with the things they need to do their jobs properly and safely (e.g. the right tools, equipment, systems and resources) and ensure workers have sufficient access to them (e.g. they are conveniently located and workers do not need to compete for access).
- Provide workers with access to supervisors (e.g. locate workers close to their supervisor or if working remotely provide tools like videoconferencing).
- Design the work environment to facilitate cooperation and ensure people can ask for help (e.g. workers can easily have discussions with others and there are suitable meeting spaces).



Controlling poor support

Increasing support

- Hold regular team meetings, and discuss any challenges, issues and support needs (e.g. ask workers about any new challenges or training they may need).
- Build a workplace culture that values collaboration and cooperation instead of competition (e.g. establish team rather than individual goals or praise cooperation).
- Maintain tools, systems and equipment, and review whether they are suitable for the work (e.g. ensure equipment works and consider whether other equipment might work better or more efficiently).
 - Schedule meetings to ensure
- supervisors have availability during workers' usual hours to meet with them so workers can raise issues or ask questions.
 - Increase the level of support during peak periods or challenging tasks (e.g. roster more workers on during peak season or check in more often for challenging tasks).
- Backfill roles or redistribute work when workers are out of the office or on leave.
- Design rosters so supervisors are available to help during difficult or busy times.
 - Set clear work goals and clearly explain tasks.



Controlling poor support

Safe work systems and procedures

- Train workers on how to do their jobs and use relevant tools, equipment, systems, policies, or processes.
- Establish open communication (e.g. have an open-door policy) and encourage workers to share concerns early (e.g. by taking their concerns seriously and ensure they have safe spaces to raise them).
- Encourage and reward workers supporting each other.
 - Encourage the development of positive working relationships (e.g. invest in team planning and building activities and encourage team discussions).



Controlling poor support

Safe work systems and procedures

- Build interpersonal capabilities across the team (e.g. emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, or communication and feedback skills).
- Encourage supervisors to be empathetic in their leadership, including taking workers' concerns seriously, sensitively managing problems and helping when workers are struggling.
- Ensure supervisors understand their role in supervising workers.
- Encourage supervisors to provide timely, task specific, constructive feedback.



Controlling poor support

The worker

- Hire supervisors with the skills, experience and training to perform their role and support their team.
- Provide development programs to improve supervisors' skills.
- Establish inductions, training and mentoring (e.g. buddy programs) for new workers.



Controlling poor support

Lack of role clarity

Unclear, inconsistent or frequently changing roles, responsibilities or expectations.
Lack of important job-related information.

Note: Some of these examples of hazards may not create psychosocial risks on their own but may do so if combined with other hazards. Some hazards may only create risks on their own when severe. Consider all hazards present and the circumstances to determine what is reasonably practicable to manage the risks.



Controlling poor support

Lack of role clarity

Lack of role clarity may include:

- unclear, inconsistent, or frequently changing jobs or role responsibilities
- overlap in responsibilities between workers (e.g. workers are given the same task and are not clear who is responsible for what)
- conflicting, uncertain, or frequently changing expectations and work standards (e.g. workers are given conflicting deadlines or instructions)
- conflicting, unclear or changing reporting lines
 - missing or incomplete task information, or
 - a lack of clarity about work priorities (e.g. which tasks or stakeholder relationships are most important).



Controlling poor support

Lack of role clarity

