




Compliance code Psychological health

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How to use this compliance code

Part 1 will help you understand:		Part 2 will help you understand:		Part 3 will help you understand:		Part 4 will help you understand:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the term 'psychosocial hazard'• who has duties under occupational health and safety (OHS) laws• the risk management process		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how psychosocial hazards can affect the health and safety of employees• why workplace safety culture is important		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• each step of the risk management process• how to keep appropriate records		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• psychosocial hazards and incidents, and the importance of reporting• what to do if an employee makes a report
Appendix A will help you understand:		Appendix B will help you understand:		Appendix C will help you understand:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the different types of OHS laws in Victoria• how to access information to help you comply with those laws		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ways to identify psychosocial hazards in your workplace• practical tools you can use to do this		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• what common psychosocial hazards can look like• practical ways to manage the risks, using sample risk controls for each hazard		

Important terminology

must	Indicates a legal requirement that has to be complied with
need to or needs to	Indicates a recommended course of action in accordance with duties and obligations under Victoria's health and safety legislation
should	Indicates a recommended optional course of action

Useful features

Throughout this compliance code, you will see the following icons. Use these to help you understand and comply with OHS duties:

 Key terms and important concepts	 Practical examples	 Cross-references and links to further information
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This compliance code (**Code**) provides practical guidance for those who have duties or obligations in relation to:

- psychological health under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (**OHS Act**)
- psychosocial hazards under the Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025 (**OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations**).

The OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations and this Code are in effect from 1 December 2025.

The Code was developed by WorkSafe Victoria (**WorkSafe**). Representatives of employers and employees were consulted during its preparation. It was made under the OHS Act and approved by The Hon. Ben Carroll MP, Minister for WorkSafe and the TAC.

Duty holders under the OHS Act and OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations should use this Code to help them comply with their duties under the OHS legislation.

While the guidance provided in the Code is not mandatory, a duty holder who complies with the Code will – to the extent it deals with their duties or obligations under the OHS Act or OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations – be taken to have complied with those duties or obligations.

If conditions at the workplace or the way work is done raise different or additional risks not covered by the Code, compliance must be achieved by other means. WorkSafe publishes guidance to help with this at [worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au).

Failure to observe the Code may be used as evidence in proceedings for an offence under the OHS Act or OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations. However, a duty holder will not fail to meet their legal duty simply because they have not followed the Code. A WorkSafe inspector may cite the Code in a direction or condition in an improvement notice or prohibition notice as a means of achieving compliance.

A health and safety representative (**HSR**) may cite the Code in a provisional improvement notice when providing directions on how to remedy an alleged contravention of the OHS Act or OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations.

Approval for the Code may be varied or revoked by the Minister. To confirm the Code is current and in force, go to [worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au).



Part 1 – Introduction

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Code is to provide practical guidance to duty holders on how to comply with their duties in relation to psychosocial hazards under the:
 - OHS Act
 - OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations.

Scope

2. This Code provides information for duty holders about meeting their obligations under the OHS Act and OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations. This includes how to identify psychosocial hazards and control risks associated with them.
3. It is not possible for this Code to deal with every psychosocial hazard and risk that a duty holder may encounter in their working environment. Duty holders need to consider the guidance in this Code in terms of the work, work-related activities, and characteristics and circumstances of their workplace.

Application

4. This Code applies to employers. Employees, including independent contractors and HSRs, may also find this Code useful.



Employer

If you have one or more employees, you are an employer. **OHS Act s5** An employer can be:

- an individual
- a company
- a partnership, an unincorporated association, a franchising operation or a not-for-profit organisation.

Employee

An employee is a person who has a contract of employment or a contract of training. **OHS Act s5** This can be a verbal or written contract.

A person is also an employee if they are a labour hire worker at the workplace.

OHS Act s5A

An employee may also include:

- an independent contractor engaged by an employer
- any employees of the independent contractor.

Volunteers are not employees, even if they receive out-of-pocket expenses.

What are psychosocial hazards?

5. Psychosocial hazard means any factor or factors in any of the following:

- **work design**
- **systems of work**
- **management of work**
- **carrying out of the work**
- **personal or work-related interactions**

that may:

- arise in the working environment, and
- cause an employee to experience one or more negative **psychological responses** that create a risk to their health or safety.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r4

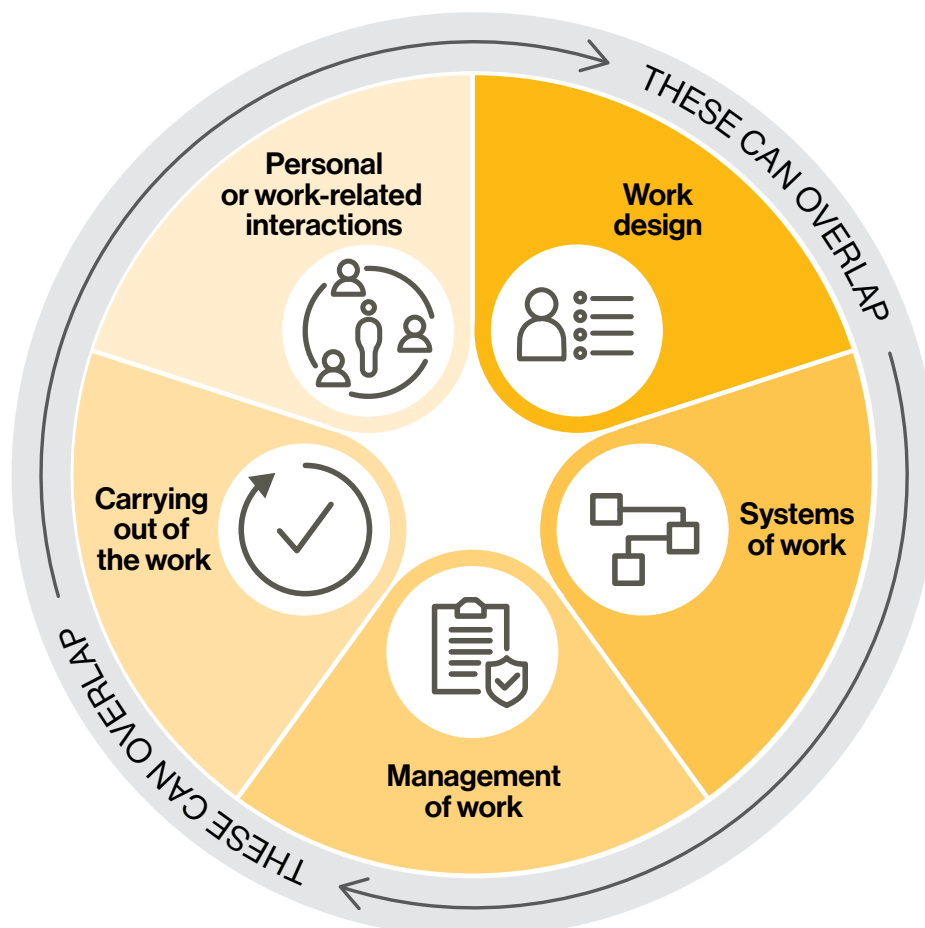
6. **Psychological responses** include both:

- cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses
- the physiological processes associated with them. OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r4



For more information about negative psychological responses, including examples of each type of response, see **Part 2** of this Code.

Diagram 1: Understanding the definition of psychosocial hazard



Part 1 – Introduction



Work design

The equipment, content and organisation of an employee's:

- work tasks
- activities
- relationships
- responsibilities.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations
r4



Systems of work

The way work is planned, organised and done. It may include:

- related sets of policies, procedures and practices
- equipment, materials and the environment.

Policies and procedures on their own are not systems of work.



Management of work

Responsibility for, and control of, operational decisions. This may include:

- structure and governance
- procurement
- resourcing decisions affecting work demands
- contract requirements, such as labour hire or delivery schedules
- significant changes, such as downsizing or organisational restructuring
- new work arrangements, such as flexible work or new technologies.



Carrying out of the work

How, when and where a task is done. This may include:

- the requirements of the work; for example, if it:
 - requires extended periods of focus and care
 - occurs during some or all the natural time for sleep
 - requires sustained physical, mental or emotional effort
- the location of work; for example:
 - work is done in remote or isolated locations
- the working environment; for example:
 - if employees are inherently exposed to hazardous tasks like working in extreme heat or with dangerous chemicals
- work that:
 - directly exposes a person to traumatic events or content; for example, first responder or emergency services work
 - vicariously exposes a person to traumatic events or content; for example, hearing, viewing or reading details about the traumatic experiences of others in the course of their work.



Personal or work-related interactions

Interactions and behaviours that happen:

- between employees
- between employees and people other than employees.

7. Examples of psychosocial hazards include:

- aggression or violence
- bullying
- exposure to traumatic events or content
- gendered violence
- high job demands
- low job control
- low job demands
- low recognition and reward
- low role clarity
- poor environmental conditions
- poor organisational change management
- poor organisational justice
- poor support
- poor workplace relationships
- remote or isolated work
- sexual harassment.



For more information about these examples of psychosocial hazards, see **Part 3** and **Appendix C**.

Who has duties?

Employers

8. Employers must provide and maintain a working environment for their employees that is safe and without risks to health. Employers must do this so far as is reasonably practicable. **OHS Act s21**
The definition of 'health' under the OHS Act includes 'psychological health'. **OHS Act s5**
Any reference to OHS obligations in relation to the health of employees extends to their psychological health.
9. To provide a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, employers must:
 - eliminate risks to health and safety so far as is reasonably practicable, and
 - if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks to health and safety, reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. **OHS Act s20**
10. In labour hire situations, more than one person – the labour hire provider and the host employer – has duties in relation to the same worker. Labour hire providers and host employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, co-operate and co-ordinate with each other where they share duties to the same worker. **OHS Act s35A**
11. An employer's duties under section 21 of the OHS Act and some of the duties under the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations extend to independent contractors engaged by the employer and any employees of the independent contractor. **OHS Act s 21(3)** and **OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r14, r15 and r16(1)**
However, these extended duties are limited to matters over which the employer has control or would have control if there was not an agreement in place purporting to limit or remove that control.

Part 1 – Introduction

12. Employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that persons other than employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety arising from the conduct of the business activities undertaken by the employer. **OHS Act s23**



For information about what ‘reasonably practicable’ means when complying with duties under Part 3 of the OHS Act or the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations, see the WorkSafe Position *How WorkSafe applies the law in relation to Reasonably Practicable* at **worksafe.vic.gov.au**.

13. Employers also have specific duties under the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations to manage psychosocial hazards in the working environment, so far as is reasonably practicable. These include:
- identifying psychosocial hazards
 - controlling any risk associated with a psychosocial hazard as set out in the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations
 - reviewing and, if necessary, revising risk control measures in specific circumstances.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r14, r15 and r16



For more information, see **Part 3**.

People with management or control

14. A person with the management or control of a workplace must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace and the ways of entering and leaving it are safe and without health risks. These duties only apply to matters over which the person has management or control. **OHS Act s26(1), s26(2)**

Employees

15. Employees, while at work, must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at a workplace. Employees must also co-operate with their employer’s actions to comply with OHS requirements (for example, by following any information, instruction or training provided). **OHS Act s25(1)**



For more information on employee duties, see **paragraph 145**.

The risk management process

16. This Code outlines a risk management process (see diagram 2) to help employers comply with their duties under the OHS Act and OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations relating to psychosocial hazards. The risk management process involves the following steps:

- identifying psychosocial hazards
- assessing, where necessary, any associated risks to health or safety
- controlling risks to a person's health or safety associated with psychosocial hazards
- monitoring, reviewing and, where necessary, revising risk controls.

There are certain circumstances where each step of the risk management process must occur.

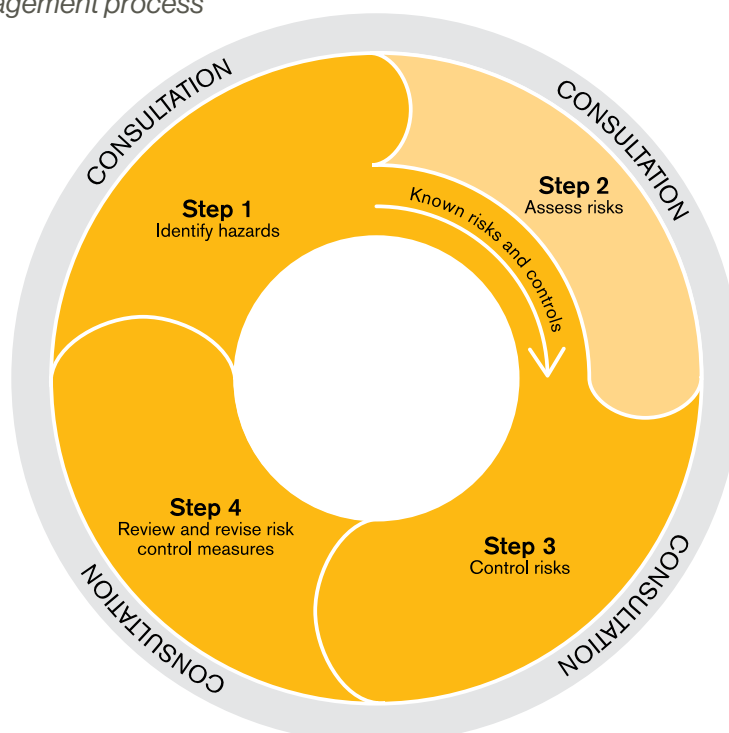


For more information, see **Part 3**.

Consultation

17. Employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult with employees on matters related to health or safety that directly affect or are likely to directly affect them. OHS Act s35
18. If employees are represented by an HSR, the consultation must involve that HSR, with or without the involvement of the employees directly. OHS Act s35(4) and OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r9
19. The duty to consult also extends to independent contractors (including any employees of the independent contractor) engaged by the employer in relation to matters over which the employer has control. OHS Act s35

Diagram 2: The risk management process



Part 1 – Introduction



The characteristics of the workplace will affect how consultation is undertaken. For example, consider:

- the size and structure of the organisation
- the nature of the work
- work arrangements, such as shift work or flexible work arrangements
- the working environment, such as work location and available technologies
- characteristics of employees, such as disability, gender, language or literacy
- any agreed procedures between the employer and employees for undertaking consultation
- the presence and number of HSRs
- the health and safety committee.

Go to **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)** for more information on consultation.

20. The duty to consult with employees and independent contractors includes where an employer is:
- identifying or assessing hazards or risks to health or safety at the workplace
 - making decisions about how to control such risks
 - making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of employees and the employer
 - proposing changes to the workplace, plant or substances used at the workplace that may affect the health or safety of employees. **OHS Act s35**

21. It is important to consult with employees as early as possible when planning to make changes that could affect health and safety, such as:
- introducing new work or changing existing work, tasks, duties, policies or procedures
 - selecting new plant, substances or personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - refurbishing, renovating or redesigning existing workplaces
 - carrying out work in a new environment
 - making any other changes to the workplace or the way work is done.
22. Employers who are required to consult with employees must share information about the matter with employees, including independent contractors and any HSRs. Employees must be given a reasonable opportunity to express their views and those views must be taken into account before a decision is made. If the employer and the employees have agreed to procedures for undertaking consultation, the consultation must be undertaken in accordance with those procedures. **OHS Act s35(5)**



Regulation 9 of the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations details how employers must involve HSRs in consultation where it is required under these Regulations or the OHS Act. This includes:

- providing the HSR with all the information about the matter that the employer provides, or intends to provide, to the employees
- providing that information to the HSR a reasonable time before giving it to the employees, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so
- inviting the HSR to meet, and meeting to consult on matters
- giving the HSR a reasonable opportunity to express views about the matter
- taking into account the HSR's views about the matter.

Go to **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)** for more information on consultation with HSRs.

How to consult with employees about psychosocial hazards

23. Consulting with employees at each stage of the risk management process leads to better health and safety outcomes. Employees are in constant close contact with the day-to-day working environment and have first-hand knowledge of:
 - psychosocial hazards that may exist in the working environment
 - factors that increase or decrease risks associated with psychosocial hazards
 - potential risk controls and practical suggestions of how to apply them.
24. Engaging in consultation can also help control risks from psychosocial hazards. Strong consultation processes can reduce the risk of negative psychological responses by:
 - encouraging employees to have some control over their work and their working environment
 - helping employees feel supported in their workplace.
25. Employers can support employee participation in, and ownership of, the risk management process by:
 - communicating with employees, including in languages other than English where appropriate
 - seeking employee engagement and input at all stages of the risk management process
 - considering the characteristics of employees and how they can be supported to engage in consultation; for example, cultural backgrounds or known disabilities
 - encouraging employees to report any hazards or risks they identify in the workplace.

Part 1 – Introduction

26. When employees are involved in consultation, they are more likely to feel safe to report hazards to the employer. This can lead to a safer and healthier workplace.
27. Some employees may not feel comfortable discussing psychosocial hazards. This could be because they:
- have had negative experiences when raising concerns about health and safety in the past
 - are worried that raising concerns about health and safety could have negative consequences and affect their working relationships, employment or career progression
 - consider exposure to psychosocial hazards to be 'part of the job' or workplace culture
 - don't trust that their concerns will be taken seriously or acted on
 - have experiences of trauma that make speaking up feel overwhelming or unsafe
 - don't feel psychologically safe to speak up.
28. Consultation processes should take this into account, and support employees to engage in consultation in a way that feels safe.
29. Where possible and appropriate, consultation processes should allow employees to provide feedback on psychosocial hazards and risks privately. This could include:
- providing anonymous surveys or suggestion boxes
 - making multiple people available to discuss the matter being consulted on. For example, an HSR and 2 supervisors who can then report back any issues raised privately with them.
30. Employers should choose methods and systems for consultation that are appropriate to the:
- size and needs of the organisation
 - reasonable needs of affected employees.
- The methods should be decided in consultation with employees and any HSRs.



Examples of consultation

Small organisation

- Regular team meetings are held where employees are encouraged to raise any health and safety issues.
- The manager has regular one-on-one discussions with team members and provides the opportunity to raise any health and safety issues.
- There is a locked suggestion box in the staff room. Management reviews the suggestions once a month.

Large organisation

- A working group of employees, HSRs, supervisors and senior management meets regularly to address health and safety concerns.
- A validated employee survey tool is used to help identify psychosocial hazards. Facilitated employee focus groups are then held to gain additional information about risks and suggestions for risk controls.
- Regular team meetings are held to share information and so employees can give feedback or raise health and safety concerns.

Information, instruction, training and supervision

31. Under the OHS Act, employers must provide employees with any necessary information, instruction, training or supervision to enable them to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health. This duty also extends to independent contractors (including any employees of the independent contractor) engaged by the employer in relation to matters over which the employer has control. OHS Act s21(2)(e), s21(3)
32. The mix of information, instruction, training or supervision required will depend on:
 - the working environment
 - employee requirements
 - frequency and type of hazards in the working environment
 - how much employees already know about the risks and necessary risk control measures.
33. Employers must also provide information in such other languages as appropriate. OHS Act s22(1)(c) Information should also be provided in a variety of formats to help employees understand.
34. In addition to these duties under the OHS Act, there are specific requirements under the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations for using information, instruction or training to control risks associated with a psychosocial hazard.

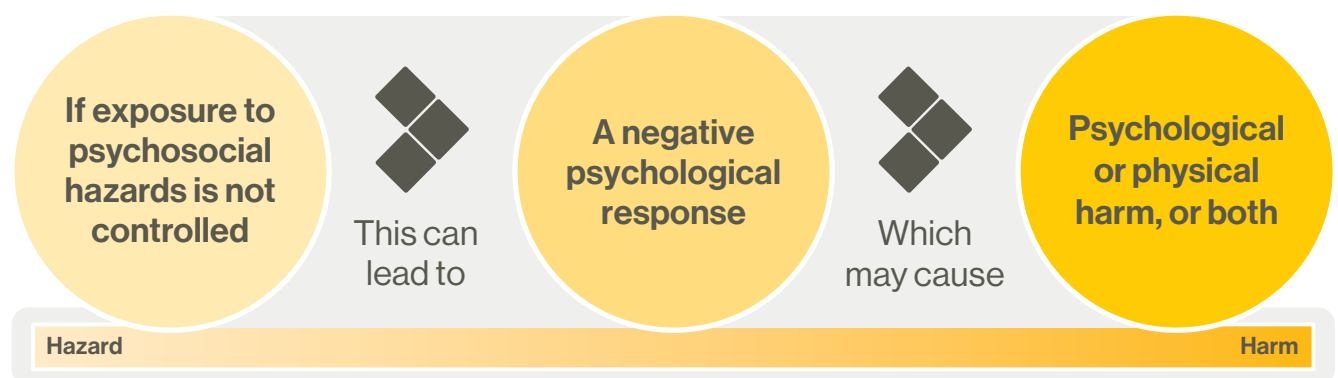


For limitations on how information, instruction or training is to be used, see **paragraphs 113–125**.

Part 2 – Understanding psychosocial hazards

How psychosocial hazards affect health and safety

Diagram 3: How psychosocial hazards can lead to harm



35. If an employee is exposed to one or more psychosocial hazards in the working environment, they may experience a negative psychological response that creates a risk to their health or safety. This may lead to a risk of psychological or physical harm, or both. Harm includes injury, illness and death.
36. Some people might describe a negative psychological response as:
 - stress
 - distress
 - feeling stressed
 - feeling burnt out.
37. Stress itself is not a psychological injury. For some people, a dynamic or busy working environment can be motivating, enhance focus and lead to better performance, if exposure to any psychosocial hazards is managed. But experiencing frequent, prolonged or severe periods of stress can lead to psychological or physical harm, or both.
38. All individuals respond to psychosocial hazards differently. Employers should be aware of the warning signs showing that an employee may be at risk of harm. Table 1 on pages 14–15 lists some examples.

Part 2 – Understanding psychosocial hazards

Table 1: Examples of negative psychological responses and associated physiological processes

Type of response	Warning signs of harm
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• difficulty making decisions• forgetfulness• attention and concentration difficulties• memory lapses• decreased confidence• excessive worrying• change in perceptions• negative thinking patterns• difficulties with multi-tasking or processing information• thoughts of worthlessness• thoughts of self-harm or suicide• inability to fall or stay asleep due to overactive thoughts• preoccupation with an event that has recently taken place
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• irritability• feeling anxious• defensiveness• feeling useless, insignificant or hopeless• anger• mood swings• feelings of dread• crying• diminished emotional expression

Part 2 – Understanding psychosocial hazards

Table 1: Examples of negative psychological responses and associated physiological processes

Type of response	Warning signs of harm
Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• changes in performance• angry outbursts• changes in physical presentation or appearance• absenteeism/presenteeism• avoiding work tasks or other employees• withdrawal and disengagement• interpersonal relationship changes• impulsive or erratic behaviour• increased substance use, including legal substances such as nicotine, alcohol and prescription medications• self-harm• difficulties with performing everyday functions, such as eating or getting out of bed
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• headaches• indigestion• tiredness• slowed reactions• aches and pains• high blood pressure• increased sickness• stomach upsets

Part 2 – Understanding psychosocial hazards



Fatigue

Fatigue is an acute and/or ongoing state that leads to physical, mental or emotional exhaustion and prevents people from functioning safely.

Fatigue is a common response to, or outcome of exposure to, many psychosocial hazards. These include:

- high job demands
- low job demands
- low role clarity
- poor organisational change management
- poor environmental conditions
- remote or isolated work.

For example, high job demands can cause fatigue if an employee works long hours:

- with intense mental, emotional or physical effort
- during some or all the natural time for sleep.



For more information on fatigue go to **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)**.

39. A negative psychological response may indicate or lead to a psychological or physical injury or illness, or both.
40. Psychological injuries or illnesses from exposure to psychosocial hazards can include:
 - depressive disorders
 - anxiety disorders
 - trauma- and stressor-related disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, acute stress disorder and adjustment disorder
 - somatic symptom and related disorders, such as chronic pain and chronic fatigue
 - substance-related and addictive disorders
 - sleep disorders.
41. Physical injuries or illnesses from exposure to psychosocial hazards can include:
 - cardiovascular disease, heart attack, stroke
 - musculoskeletal disorders, such as sprains, strains, soft tissue injuries and chronic pain
 - immune deficiency or disorder
 - gastrointestinal disorders
 - physical injuries resulting from lapses in concentration or work-related violence.
42. Psychological or physical injuries may result in temporary or permanent disability and affect an employee's capacity to work. In some cases, they may also result in death.
43. In some cases, an employee may develop both a psychological and physical injury at the same time.
44. On average, work-related psychological injuries have longer recovery times, incur higher costs and require more time away from work than physical injuries. Eliminating or reducing the risk of psychosocial hazards in the working environment benefits the organisation by:
 - protecting employees from the risk of psychological and physical injuries
 - decreasing the disruption and cost of absenteeism and employee turnover
 - improving organisational performance and productivity.

Part 2 – Understanding psychosocial hazards



Examples of how exposure to a psychosocial hazard can lead to harm

Exposure to a traumatic event

An employee is exposed to a traumatic event while carrying out their work. It may cause them to experience negative psychological responses, including:

- attention and concentration difficulties (cognitive response)
- irritability (emotional response)
- angry outbursts (behavioural response)
- increased substance use (behavioural response)
- strain on the musculoskeletal and cardiovascular system (physical response).

The employee may develop:

- a psychological injury, such as post-traumatic stress disorder
- a physical injury, such as chronic pain or heart disease
- both a psychological and physical injury.

High job demands

An employee is experiencing high job demands because of the sustained mental, emotional and physical effort required when their workload regularly exceeds the time allocated to do the work. They may experience negative psychological responses, including:

- inability to fall asleep because of overactive thoughts (cognitive response)
- feeling anxious (emotional response)
- presenteeism (behavioural response)
- stomach upsets (physical response).

The employee may develop:

- a psychological injury, such as an anxiety disorder
- a physical injury, such as a gastrointestinal disorder
- both a psychological and physical injury.

Low job control

An employee is experiencing low job control. Their work is repetitive, they have little control over how it is done and there is excessive monitoring of tasks. They may experience negative psychological responses, including:

- difficulties with motivation during and outside of work (cognitive response)
- feeling aimless (emotional response)
- taking shortcuts and not following procedures (behavioural response)
- migraines and muscular pain (physical response).

The employee may develop:

- a psychological injury, such as a depression disorder
- a physical injury, such as sciatica or other musculoskeletal disorder
- both a psychological and physical injury.

Part 2 – Understanding psychosocial hazards

Frequency and duration of exposure

45. Whether exposure to a psychosocial hazard causes harm depends on many factors. This includes how often and for how long the employee is exposed.
46. Acute exposure to a psychosocial hazard can result in harm. For example, a single violent or traumatic workplace incident could cause a psychological injury such as:
 - adjustment disorder
 - acute stress disorder
 - post-traumatic stress disorder.
47. The effects of exposure to psychosocial hazards can also accumulate over time.
48. Some psychosocial hazards might always be present at work. For example, exposure to aggression or violence where the nature of the work involves interaction with customers, clients or members of the public. Others may occur only occasionally. For example, high job demands for 2 weeks per year during an organisation's peak period.
49. In working environments where the nature of the work involves ongoing exposure to psychosocial hazards (for example, emergency services), it may not be possible to eliminate risks associated with those hazards. Employers must reduce risks associated with the hazards, so far as is reasonably practicable. The most effective risk control measure or combination of risk control measures will vary for each workplace.
50. Short-term or infrequent exposure to a psychosocial hazard may not cause harm if an employer manages the risks. For example, an employee is exposed to high job demands from a temporary increase in workload. An employer controls the risk with extra support and resources. This means the employee is unlikely to experience long-term health effects.
51. Employers also need to consider how psychosocial hazards combine and interact. Employees may often be exposed to a combination of psychosocial hazards, which can increase the risk of harm.



For information about selecting the most effective risk controls, see **paragraphs 129–140**.

Part 2 – Understanding psychosocial hazards

How workplace safety culture affects health and safety

52. Effective management of OHS hazards and risks requires leadership commitment to prioritise a workplace safety culture.
53. Workplace safety culture refers to the shared practices, behaviours, norms and values that people within an organisation or workplace have towards health and safety.
54. A strong workplace safety culture is particularly important when managing psychosocial hazards and risks. It can also set the tone for workplace relationships, and build employee confidence and trust that safety is being taken seriously.
55. Employers need to put systems in place to support a workplace safety culture.
56. A strong workplace safety culture may include:
 - Leaders demonstrating their commitment to managing both psychosocial and physical hazards through support and involvement. For example, actively reviewing risk registers and assessing the effectiveness of risk controls.
 - Clear accountabilities for leaders in identifying and managing psychosocial hazards and risks.
 - Responding to safety concerns in a timely manner.
 - Consulting with employees at all levels of the organisation when identifying psychosocial hazards and making decisions about managing risks.
 - Leaders role-modelling positive working relationships and actively responding to potentially harmful behaviours and reports of psychosocial hazards.
 - Providing an environment where employees feel safe to raise concerns and are confident those concerns will be addressed in a fair and timely way.
 - Ensuring all employees receive information, instruction and training about workplace safety that is relevant to their role.



For more information about training and support for supervisors and managers, see **paragraphs 126–128**.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Step 1: Identify hazards

57. Employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, identify psychosocial hazards.
OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r14

58. Psychosocial hazard means any factor or factors in any of the following:

- work design
- systems of work
- management of work
- carrying out of the work
- personal or work-related interactions that may:
- arise in the working environment, and
- cause an employee to experience one or more negative psychological responses that create a risk to their health or safety.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r4



Examples of psychosocial hazards



Aggression or violence:

Incidents in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.



Bullying:

Repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person or group that creates a risk to health and safety.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- between employees
- directed at employees from people who have relationships with the workplace, such as:
 - clients
 - customers
 - contractors
 - patients
 - volunteers
 - members of the public.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

i

Examples of psychosocial hazards (continued)



Exposure to traumatic events or content:

Exposure to traumatic **events** may involve:

- actual or perceived threats to life
- experiencing a serious injury
- witnessing serious injuries or fatalities.

Exposure to traumatic **content** may include:

- hearing other people's traumatic stories
- reading detailed reports or documents about traumatic events
- reviewing images or video footage of traumatic events.

Exposure to traumatic content can result in indirect or vicarious exposure to trauma.

Being exposed to traumatic events or content may cause:

- fear and distress
- a trauma response.

Exposure to traumatic events or content can arise from:

- a single experience
- the cumulative effects of several or repeated exposures over time.

A person is more likely to experience an event or content as traumatic when they consider it to be:

- unexpected
- something they were unprepared for
- unpreventable
- uncontrollable
- the result of intentional cruelty.



Gendered violence:

Any behaviour directed at, or affecting, a person because:

- of their sex, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity
- they do not adhere to socially prescribed gender roles.



High job demands:

Work involving sustained or repeated high physical, mental or emotional effort, or a combination of any of these.

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Examples of psychosocial hazards (continued)

**Low job control:**

When a person has little control over aspects of their work, including how or when a job is done.

**Low job demands:**

Work involving sustained low physical, mental or emotional effort.

**Low recognition and reward:**

When there is a low level or lack of acknowledgement, reward or recognition for an employee's:

- contributions
- achievements
- efforts.

**Low role clarity:**

Jobs where:

- there is uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, tasks and work standards
- important task information is not available
- there are conflicting roles, responsibilities or expectations.

**Poor environmental conditions:**

When employees are exposed to poor-quality or hazardous working environments, including in work-provided accommodation.

**Poor organisational change management:**

When change related to an employee's work conditions is poorly managed, supported or communicated. This may include:

- a lack of consideration of the potential effects on health, safety and performance
- inadequate consultation with employees.

**Poor organisational justice:**

Situations where:

- people in positions of authority do not apply processes fairly when making decisions (procedural fairness)
- relevant employees are not given necessary information (informational fairness)
- employees are not treated with dignity and respect (interpersonal fairness).

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards



Examples of psychosocial hazards (continued)



Poor support:

When employees do not have adequate:

- practical or emotional support from supervisors and co-workers
- information or training to support their work performance
- tools, equipment and resources to do their job.



Poor workplace relationships:

Interactions in the workplace that may be harmful. These can start with low-intensity incivility. If unaddressed, they can escalate into more harmful interactions.



Remote or isolated work:

Remote work is work at locations where:

- access to resources and communication is difficult
- travel times might be lengthy.

Isolated work can be where:

- there are no or few other people around
- access to help from others, especially in an emergency, might be difficult.

An employee can be working alone or in isolation even if other people are close by. For example, an employee working at a temporary location who is the sole representative from their team or organisation.



Sexual harassment:

Has the meaning given by section 92(1) of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (**EO Act**).

The EO Act states that a person sexually harasses another person if he or she:

- a) makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person, or
- b) engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

This definition is correct at the time of publication. See legislation.vic.gov.au for current version of the EO Act.



For more information on these examples of psychosocial hazards, see **Appendix C**.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

59. This list of examples is not exhaustive. If an employer identifies another psychosocial hazard that may arise in the working environment, they have a duty to control the risks associated with that hazard, so far as is reasonably practicable.
60. A psychosocial hazard identified in the working environment may also constitute discrimination or other unlawful workplace conduct. Employers need to consider other relevant state and federal laws that may also apply to the identified psychosocial hazard, such as:
- workplace relations laws
 - criminal laws
 - anti-discrimination laws
 - equal opportunity laws
 - child safety laws.

Factors to consider when identifying hazards

61. Psychosocial hazards will vary for every organisation and sometimes between groups of employees. When identifying hazards, employers need to consider:
- organisational context; for example:
 - type, size and location of the organisation
 - organisational structure and culture
 - environmental conditions
 - technology available
 - organisational activities, products and services
 - supply chains and contractual arrangements
 - employees' skills and attributes
 - workplace relationships
 - economic conditions
 - type of work; for example:
 - workload
 - employees' roles and responsibilities
 - activities required to deliver the product or service.

For example, employees who deal with customers or clients may be at a greater risk of aggression or violence than employees from the same organisation who don't deal with customers or clients.

62. Some hazards may exist for all employees, workgroups or workplaces, regardless of their role or where they work. Examples include bullying and sexual harassment.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

63. When identifying hazards, employers should also consider the effect of external factors on their working environment. For example:
- operating environment
 - economic conditions
 - changes in legislation
 - market changes
 - community demographics and trends.
64. In most circumstances, psychosocial hazards will not occur in isolation. Employees are likely to be exposed to a combination of hazards that may be present in the workplace some or all the time. These may not always be immediately obvious.
65. There is a greater risk of harm when multiple hazards are present. Employers need to consider how psychosocial hazards combine and interact.



Example of an underlying psychosocial hazard

An employer has identified that poor workplace relationships is a hazard at their workplace. The employer does further consultation and reviews of organisational information, including:

- recent employee surveys
- role vacancies
- unplanned leave reports.

These show that some teams are experiencing peaks in their workload and there are staffing shortages at the supervisory level. These factors are contributing to the strain on workplace relationships. High job demands and poor support are also identified as psychosocial hazards present in the workplace.

Collect and review information

66. Employers need to collect and review relevant information to help identify psychosocial hazards. This could include:
- organisational or operational information
 - human resources (HR) information
 - OHS information
 - external research, guidance and advice.
67. This information should be reviewed for likely indicators or sources of psychosocial hazards in the working environment. For example, employers should look for patterns that indicate possible hazards, such as:
- patterns of absenteeism
 - changes in employee engagement or work productivity
 - the number of reported incidents and near misses.
68. An absence of reported incidents does not mean psychosocial hazards are not present but may instead indicate a reluctance to report.
69. Psychosocial hazards can also be identified by:
- observing how employees work and interact with each other
 - assessing job-specific requirements.



For more information, including examples, see **Appendix B**.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Step 2: Assess risks

70. A psychosocial risk assessment involves examining psychosocial hazards to assess how, and to what extent, they create a risk to the health or safety of employees. This will help employers to determine the seriousness of the risk, by considering both the:
- likelihood of harm occurring
 - consequences for affected employees and others.
71. Employers should also consider:
- how multiple psychosocial hazards might interact
 - which employees are most at risk
 - how the hazards are likely to affect these employees
 - if risks are organisation-wide or apply to specific:
 - employees or groups of employees
 - work tasks
 - workplaces.
72. Current knowledge and understanding about the risk and how to control it may already exist. However, employers should carry out a risk assessment when:
- it is not clear if the psychosocial hazard may result in harm
 - it is not clear how hazards may interact to produce new, different or more significant harm
 - the existing risk controls are not effective
 - there are changes planned that may affect existing risk controls.
73. The state of knowledge for psychosocial hazards is continuing to evolve. Employers need to take reasonable steps to ensure their knowledge about the psychosocial hazards identified is current. The matters to consider when determining what is reasonably practicable includes what an employer knows, or ought reasonably to know, about hazards, risks and ways to eliminate or reduce them.
74. It is important that those doing the risk assessment have:
- information about the working environment and work processes
 - knowledge and understanding of potential psychosocial hazards and risk factors
 - knowledge and understanding about how to analyse evidence to consider risks and appropriate controls.
75. If those doing the risk assessment do not have this knowledge and understanding, employers should source appropriate training or assistance from a subject matter expert. Any training or subject matter expertise must be provided, so far as is reasonably practicable, by people who are suitably qualified in OHS. OHS Act s22(2)(b)
76. Risk assessments must involve consultation with employees and any HSRs, so far as is reasonably practicable. Risk assessments should:
- include data collection; for example, using workplace data and information from:
 - focus groups
 - interviews
 - de-identified validated surveys
 - cite the evidence used.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Doing a risk assessment

77. When assessing risks associated with psychosocial hazards, consider the following questions:
- What is the **likelihood** of exposure to the psychosocial hazard?
 - Could the exposure happen as a single episode (for example, a client hitting an employee)? Or could the exposure accumulate over time (for example, repeated exposure to high job demands, physical assaults or abusive comments)?
 - What is the **duration and frequency** of exposure to the psychosocial hazard?
 - How often are employees exposed to the hazard (for example, daily, at peak times or when a certain task is done)?
 - For how long are employees exposed at any one time (for example, 2 weeks of overtime at the annual peak demand or an hour during each shift)? Exposure for a short duration may still be harmful (for example, being exposed to a traumatic incident).
 - How **severe** are the consequences if employees are exposed? What degree of harm could employees experience? For example, this could range from short-term fatigue to a permanent injury.
 - Are some employees **more likely** to:
 - be exposed (for example, employees in customer-facing roles)?
 - experience **more severe** consequences (for example, employees who are regularly exposed to traumatic incidents or are more vulnerable to harm, such as young employees)?
78. The size and nature of an organisation is relevant when assessing risk. Employers should consider whether:
- a single risk assessment is sufficient to assess hazards that are common to all areas of an organisation
 - multiple risk assessments are needed. These may be appropriate where psychosocial hazards are specific to work areas (for example, teams, locations or designated work groups).
79. Assessing risks is not a one-off action but should be part of a continuous improvement process.
80. A prevention plan template is available at **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)** to help guide the risk assessment process.

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Factors that increase risk

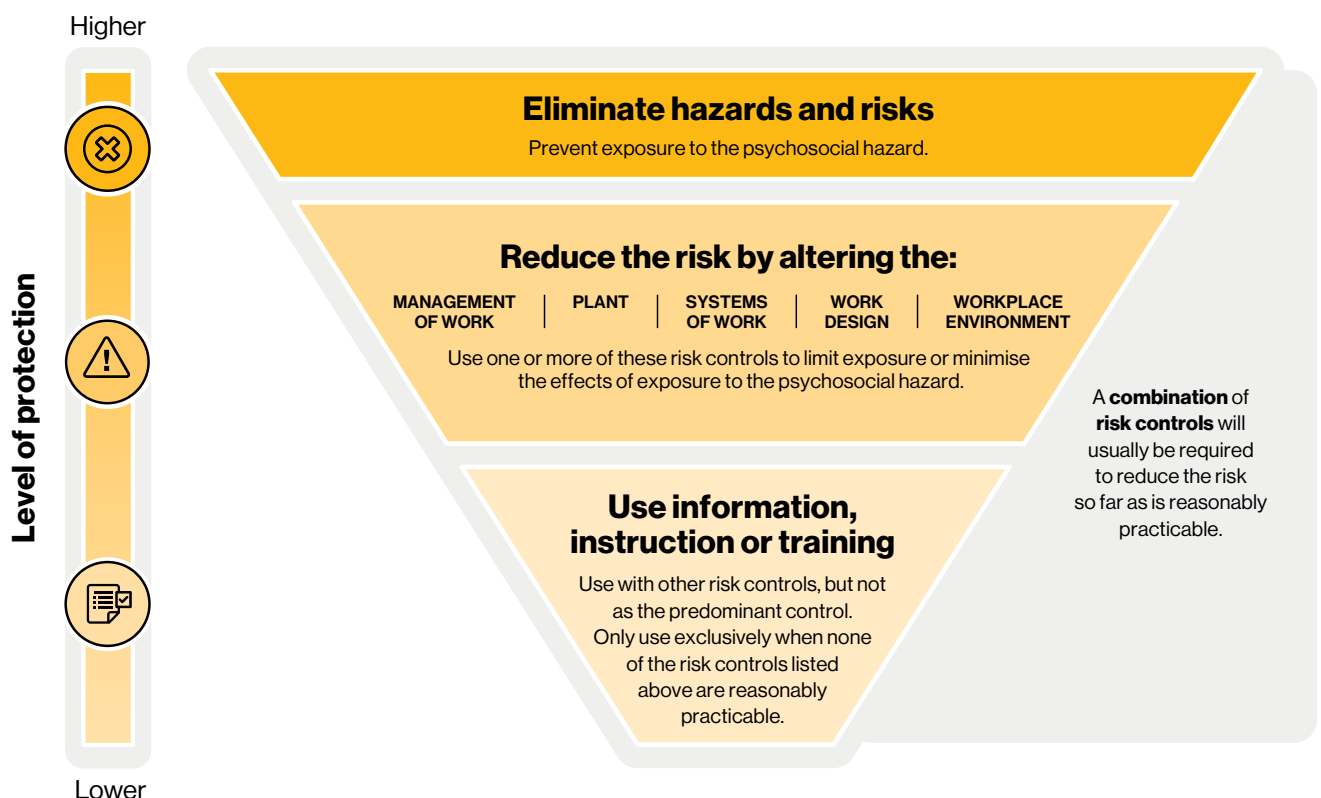
81. When assessing risk, it is crucial to focus the most effort on psychosocial hazards that are likely to cause the most harm to employees. These could include:
- Where employees are exposed to the hazard for extended or prolonged periods.
 - Where employees experience intense exposure to the hazard.
 - Where employees are frequently exposed to the hazard.
 - Where the risk is less likely to eventuate, but if it did the consequences would be very serious or catastrophic.
82. Risk assessments need to consider interacting psychosocial hazards together rather than in isolation. Employees may be exposed to multiple psychosocial hazards at the same time, and it is likely that these hazards will interact. The more psychosocial hazards that are present, the more likely it is that harm will occur.
- For example, the combined effect of high job demands, low job control and poor support increases the likelihood and severity of harm.
83. Employers need to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that their risk management process also considers any additional risk factors. These are factors that could put certain employees, or groups of employees, at greater risk of harm. Factors to consider might include:
- new employees
 - young employees
 - migrant workers
 - if known, employees who have a pre-existing disability, injury or illness
 - employees who have known previous exposure to a traumatic event
 - employees in insecure work; for example, casual and seasonal employees or those on fixed-term contracts
 - employees who may be exposed to multiple forms of discrimination that can combine or intersect to increase their risk of harm; for example, race or ethnicity, gender, sexuality, literacy
 - barriers to understanding safety information, such as language or literacy challenges
 - employees who are exposed to multiple or repeated psychosocial hazards
 - external factors that influence and contribute to the working environment.
84. As part of the risk management process, employers must consult with employees and any HSRs to identify and assess risks that do, or are likely to, affect particular groups, so far as is reasonably practicable. **OHS Act s35** Employers must take employee views into account when deciding on risk controls. **OHS Act s35(3)(c)**

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Step 3: Control risks

85. An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate any risk associated with a psychosocial hazard. OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(1)
86. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate a risk associated with a psychosocial hazard, the employer must reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable, by:
- a) altering the –
 - i. management of work, or
 - ii. plant, or
 - iii. systems of work, or
 - iv. work design, or
 - v. workplace environment, or
 - b) using information, instruction or training, or
 - c) using a combination of any of the controls listed in (a) and (b).
- OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(2)
87. Information, instruction or training may only exclusively be used as a risk control measure where none of the risk control measures listed under paragraph 86(a) are reasonably practicable. OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(3)
88. Where a combination of risk control measures is used, information, instruction or training must not be the predominant control measure. OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(4)

Diagram 4: Controlling exposure to psychosocial hazards and risks



Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards



What is reasonably practicable?

What is reasonably practicable can be decided objectively and is based on the standard of behaviour expected from a reasonable person. A reasonable person is taken to be:

- committed to providing the highest level of protection for people against risks to their health and safety
- proactively taking action to protect people's health and safety.

Employers must do what a reasonable person who is committed to the highest level of protection against risks to health and safety would do in the circumstance. To do this, they must put in place reasonably practicable measures.

In working out what is reasonably practicable, they must have regard to:

- the likelihood of a hazard or risk occurring (the chance of a person being exposed to harm)
- the degree of harm that could be caused if the hazard or risk occurred (the possible seriousness of injury or harm)
- what the person knows, or reasonably should know, about the hazard or risk, and ways to eliminate or reduce that hazard or risk
- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or reduce the hazard or risk, and
- the cost of eliminating or reducing the hazard or risk. **OHS Act s20(2)**



For more information about what reasonably practicable means when complying with duties under Part 3 of the OHS Act or the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations, see the WorkSafe Position *How WorkSafe applies the law in relation to Reasonably Practicable* at **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)**.

Eliminating the risk

89. Employers must first consider if it is reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk associated with a psychosocial hazard. This means employers must consider whether it is reasonably practicable to organise work or the working environment in a way that does not expose employees to the risk.
90. The best way to do this is to consider:
- which psychosocial hazards may arise in the working environment
 - how factors such as work design, systems of work, plant, management of work and workplace environment can be designed or altered to avoid introducing hazards in the first place.

For example, removing solo shifts can eliminate the risk of working alone.

91. It may not always be reasonably practicable to eliminate a hazard. This may be the case where, for example:
- eliminating would mean the product cannot be produced or the service cannot be delivered
 - a job has inherent exposure to psychosocial hazards; for example, work that requires exposure to traumatic scenes or supporting individuals in distress.

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Reducing the risk

92. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate a risk associated with a psychosocial hazard, an employer must reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable by:

- a) altering the –
 - i. management of work, or
 - ii. plant, or
 - iii. systems of work, or
 - iv. work design, or
 - v. workplace environment, or
- b) using information, instruction or training, or
- c) using a combination of any of the controls listed in (a) and (b).

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(2)

93. Information, instruction or training may only be exclusively used as a risk control measure where none of the risk control measures listed under paragraph 92(a) are reasonably practicable. OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(3)

94. Where a combination of risk control measures is used, information, instruction or training must not be the predominant control measure. OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(4)



For limitations on how information, instruction or training is to be used, see **paragraphs 113–125**.

95. To determine how to reduce the risk associated with psychosocial hazards so far as is reasonably practicable, employers need to:

- review any risk controls currently in place and assess their effectiveness at controlling the risk
- identify as many risk control measures as possible that may reduce the risk
- consider which of these risk control measures are most effective in reducing the risk
- consider which risk control measures are reasonably practicable in the circumstances
- determine which reasonably practicable risk control measure, or combination of risk control measures, reduces the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

96. Reducing the risk might involve a:

- single risk control measure
- combination of different risk control measures that work together to provide the highest level of reasonably practicable protection.

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Example of using a combination of risk controls

An employer identifies high job demands, aggression or violence and poor support as psychosocial hazards that pose a risk to the health or safety of their customer-facing employees.

To control the risks associated with these hazards, they use a combination of the following risk control measures:

- reviewing and redesigning roles to remove unnecessary job demands; for example, streamlining administrative tasks
- altering the workplace environment to physically separate employees and customers
- reviewing staffing numbers so there are enough employees available to meet demand, which can reduce the risk of customers becoming aggressive
- using technology to automate tasks to improve efficiency and reduce customer-facing interactions
- rotating jobs to reduce exposure to aggressive customers
- rostering employees to avoid anyone working alone
- training employees on de-escalation strategies to manage aggressive customers
- providing employees with personal duress alarms and establishing appropriate response systems
- providing employees with adequate supervision and support, with clear escalation procedures to a supervisor or manager
- managing customer expectations by clearly communicating processes such as wait times
- communicating with customers on standards of behaviour and what will not be tolerated
- adding appropriate security measures, including security officers, CCTV, alarm systems
- implementing procedures for responding to aggression from customers
- providing employees with appropriate post-incident support, including access to peer support and Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services.



For more examples of risk controls, see **Appendix C**.



Employers may also have duties under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 to control certain physical hazards in accordance with specific hierarchies of control for:

- noise
- plant
- hazardous substances
- hazardous manual handling.

For more information on managing specific risks, see the relevant compliance code or guidance at **[worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)**.

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Management of work

97. Management of work includes things such as:
- governance, leadership, and decision-making and escalation structures
 - workforce planning
 - resource allocation and rostering.
98. Risk control measures related to management of work could include:
- Reviewing current work processes to:
 - eliminate unnecessary administrative processes
 - arrange work rosters or processes so employees can vary tasks that require high concentration or are physically demanding
 - provide a clear management reporting structure
 - ensure employees have the necessary qualifications and experience for their roles, and are appropriately inducted and trained as part of recruitment and onboarding
 - support flexible working arrangements.
 - Upskilling leaders in:
 - health and safety, including how to identify hazards and engage employees in consultation processes
 - how to effectively manage complex staffing matters; for example, workload, poor workplace behaviours, bullying and sexual harassment.
 - Demonstrating leadership commitment to managing psychosocial hazards; for example:
 - responding appropriately to all reports of harmful behaviours such as bullying
 - modelling good work/life balance

- creating a positive workplace culture where employees feel valued and feedback is welcome
- building employee confidence and trust that safety is taken seriously.

Plant

99. Plant includes:
- any machinery, equipment, appliance, implement and tool; and
 - any component of any of those things; and
 - anything fitted, connected or related to any of those things. **OHS Act s5(1)**
100. Well-designed and properly maintained plant can help prevent exposure to psychosocial hazards by:
- reducing noise, vibration or dust
 - controlling temperature.
101. Risk control measures related to plant may include:
- replacing plant with new plant that presents less risk
 - separating employees from the plant
 - making changes to existing plant.
- For example:
- repairing any plant that is regularly malfunctioning and causing frustration or increased work pressure for employees
 - replacing equipment with new models that create less noise or vibration
 - regularly servicing and maintaining all plant
 - upgrading frequently used appliances so that buttons, screens and software are easy to use and straightforward, reducing the need for prolonged concentration
 - choosing plant with adjustable light emission to reduce the risk of fatigue; for example, night mode lighting settings or increased brightness

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- optimising equipment with more automated functions to reduce workload and save time; for example, using automated visual inspection software rather than manual quality inspections to detect defects in real-time during production
- applying a privacy screen filter on a computer screen if an employee needs to view traumatic or graphic material
- using image recognition and classification software when reviewing distressing images or videos.

Systems of work

102. A system of work encompasses the way that work is planned, organised and done. This may include the interacting set of policies, procedures, practices, equipment, materials and environment. Policies and procedures on their own are not systems of work.

103. Employers should consider how altering systems of work can reduce the risks of exposure to specific psychosocial hazards; for example:

- Reviewing systems in place to manage high job demands and the risk of fatigue to look for improvements. Areas to consider include:
 - staffing requirements
 - rostering practices
 - working hours
 - shift work arrangements
 - task rotation
 - breaks, including during and between shifts.

- Developing a tailored system to reduce the risks of aggression or violence by customers towards employees. This could include:

- designing the working environment to reduce unnecessary interactions between customers and employees
- rostering employees so no one works alone
- providing adequate resources to deliver the service
- introducing an incident reporting and investigation system
- providing appropriate training and supervision for employees
- implementing response procedures, which may include the use of duress alarms and onsite security
- providing appropriate post-incident support.

- Putting in place systems to reduce risks of working in isolation or in unpredictable environments like a client's home. This could include:

- developing a communications plan
- ensuring suitable communications equipment is available
- reviewing supervision levels to ensure they are appropriate
- determining the minimum number of employees that should be rostered to shifts in high-risk environments or during high-risk periods.

- Implementing policies and procedures to reduce risks associated with the organisational response to psychosocial hazards. For example:

- procedures that clearly explain what will happen when a report of a psychosocial hazard is made

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- a policy that outlines what information will remain confidential following a report of a psychosocial hazard and what needs to be shared
 - training for all employees on how to report a hazard
 - training and support for leaders who are expected to receive and respond to reports.
104. PPE can form part of the systems of work at an organisation. PPE refers to anything employees use or wear to minimise risks to their health and safety; for example:
- gloves and gowns for jobs involving exposure to contagious diseases, or hazardous chemicals or substances
 - hearing protection for noisy environments
 - personal alarm devices.
105. Providing appropriate PPE can help reduce:
- exposure to some physical hazards that contribute to psychosocial risks
 - risks associated with psychosocial hazards where exposure to the hazard causes concern or distress.
106. Policies and procedures can also form part of a system of work, but are not a system of work on their own. Policies and procedures should clearly set out the expectations and processes for managing psychosocial hazards in the working environment. These must be:
- developed in consultation with employees and any HSRs
 - reviewed regularly
 - updated when necessary.
107. There may be separate policies and procedures for particular hazards, or a single policy or procedure that covers several hazards. These could cover things like:
- working alone, remotely or in isolation
 - harmful workplace behaviours such as bullying, sexual harassment, or aggression or violence
 - reporting and resolving complaints or grievances
 - post-incident support
 - fatigue risk management
 - workload management
 - flexible work arrangements
 - critical incident management
 - how to manage exposure to trauma, including cumulative and vicarious trauma.
108. Employers must provide information, instruction and training about:
- the systems of work for managing psychosocial hazards
 - expectations for employees and leaders to support and participate in the process. **OHS Act s21(2)(e)**

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Work design

109. Work design means the equipment, content and organisation of an employee's work tasks, activities, relationships and responsibilities within a job or role. **OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r4**
110. Employers should consider how altering work design can reduce the risk of exposure to psychosocial hazards. For example, consider if:
- Employees have an appropriate amount of responsibility for their skills and experience.
 - Employees have the right resources and equipment to do their work.
 - Tasks can be scheduled at more suitable times. For example, schedule high-risk tasks when employees are likely to be more alert or when more support is available. Alertness is usually lowest in the early morning (between 1am and 6am) and mid-afternoon (around 2pm).
 - Tools or equipment can be adjusted to reduce hazardous manual handling risks that may create a psychosocial hazard. For example, anti-fatigue matting or sit-stand desks.
 - Risks arising from personal interactions can be reduced by processes like:
 - using an automated ordering system to reduce the number of interactions with customers
 - refining complaints processes so complex or difficult complaints can be escalated to more senior employees empowered to resolve them
 - streamlining tasks to eliminate double-handling or unnecessary administrative tasks
 - using automated technology for reviewing traumatic content.

Workplace environment

111. The workplace environment includes environmental conditions that contribute to psychosocial risks, such as lighting, temperature, noise or vibration.
112. Making alterations to the workplace environment could include:
- Considering the layout of the office when employees need to view graphic or potentially traumatic material. The layout should minimise unnecessary exposure to other employees; for example, facing computer screens away from the centre of the office.
 - Providing a secure lockable space for employees, good lighting and visibility in the workspace where there is a risk of harm from aggression or violence.
 - Installing physical access barriers, surveillance cameras or duress and alarm systems to reduce the risk of harm from aggression or violence.
 - Providing access to private spaces in the workplace to ensure the confidentiality of sensitive conversations.
 - Providing a sectioned-off part of the office away from customers for employees to have a break; for example, a staff room.

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When considering the use of surveillance devices, employers must consult with employees and any HSRs before installation. **OHS Act s35**

To reduce the risk of these devices causing harm, employers also need to:

- consider other laws, such as those relating to privacy and surveillance
- place devices in appropriate locations
- develop clear process for accessing, storing and using the information gathered
- engage in ongoing communication with employees.

Using information, instruction or training

113. Employers must provide employees with any necessary information, instruction, training or supervision to enable them to perform their work in a way that is safe and without risks to health. This duty also extends to independent contractors (including any employees of the independent contractor) engaged by the employer in relation to matters over which the employer has control.

OHS Act s21(2)(e), s21(3)

114. In addition to these duties under the OHS Act, there are specific requirements under the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations for using information, instruction or training. This is because using information, instruction or training on its own is often a less effective way to reduce risks associated with psychosocial hazards.

115. Often it will be necessary to use a combination of risk control measures to effectively control the risks associated with psychosocial hazards. Where a combination of risk control measures is used, information, instruction or training must not be the predominant control measure. **OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(4)**



Example of using information, instruction or training

An employer has identified aggression or violence as a hazard in their workplace.

Following a risk assessment, they identify gaps in their control measures. To reduce the risk, they install security features as the predominant, or main, control. The security features include duress alarms and protective screens.

They also provide employees with information, instruction and training about:

- how and when to use the duress alarms
- the response procedure for when the alarm is activated
- de-escalation techniques.

116. Employers may only exclusively use information, instruction or training if it is not reasonably practicable to reduce the risk by altering any of the following:

- management of work
- plant
- systems of work
- work design
- workplace environment.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(3)

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117. Information, instruction or training for employees might include:
 - what psychosocial hazards are and how to identify them in the working environment
 - the psychosocial hazards and risks that have been identified in the workplace and current risk control measures in place
 - the causes and drivers of psychosocial hazards
 - how to identify early signs of harm or potential injury from exposure to psychosocial hazards
 - how to report psychosocial hazards and incidents, and what will be done following a report
 - fatigue identification, prevention and mitigation
 - appropriate workplace behaviours, and related policies and procedures
 - responsibilities under the OHS Act and OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations in relation to psychosocial hazards.
118. To encourage a wider understanding of their working environment, employees should be provided with necessary training on:
 - health and safety
 - performance management
 - conflict resolution
 - interpersonal skills
 - emotional intelligence
 - effective communication.
119. Employers need to provide information, instruction or training to employees in a variety of appropriate and accessible formats, such as:
 - presentations
 - procedure manuals
 - demonstrations of work processes.
120. Employers must also, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide information about health and safety to employees in appropriate languages. **OHS Act s22(1)(c)**
121. Information, instruction or training needs to be provided by a suitably qualified person. Their knowledge or skills may have been acquired through training, qualifications or experience.
122. Training programs should be practical and engaging. The structure, content and delivery of the training needs to consider any special requirements of the employees being trained, such as their specific skills or experience, disability, literacy and age.
123. Employers need to provide information, instruction and training to employees:
 - during their initial induction
 - on an ongoing basis during their employment.
124. Ongoing training needs to be provided as appropriate for the workplace and relevant to the psychosocial hazards identified for the working environment. The frequency of training should be determined according to:
 - the type of hazard
 - content of the training
 - recent advances in knowledge
 - the size of the workplace
 - changes in the way work is structured or performed
 - how often employees are exposed to psychosocial hazards and how severe the risk of exposure is.
125. Employers should keep records of induction and training provided to, and completed by, employees and independent contractors. Employers also need to regularly review the effectiveness and frequency of the training in consultation with employees and any HSRs.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Training and support for supervisors and managers

126. Effective leadership is associated with better health outcomes and improved work performance. Employers should provide supervisors and managers with appropriate training and support so they are equipped to:
- recognise and proactively address psychosocial hazards and associated risks
 - respond appropriately to reports of psychosocial hazards, in accordance with relevant policies and procedures
 - support employees and intervene when they identify employees showing signs of a negative psychological response.



For examples of what a negative psychological response might look like, see **Table 1 on pages 14–15**.

127. Training for supervisors and managers should be determined by a training needs analysis and may focus on:
- leadership skills such as:
 - communication skills and active listening
 - interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence
 - performance reviews and performance management
 - difficult conversations and conflict resolution
 - psychological health and safety at work, including:
 - understanding and identifying psychosocial hazards in the workplace and associated risks
 - effective risk control measures and how to implement them
 - how to support employees during implementation of risk controls
 - how to identify negative psychological responses and provide employees with assistance
 - appropriate workplace behaviours and related policies and procedures
 - how to encourage employees to raise health and safety issues and the procedure for responding to these.
128. Practical and ongoing leadership support for supervisors and managers can be provided through:
- formal training
 - mentoring programs
 - peer support
 - supervision
 - professional services such as suitably qualified consultants, or manager assist services through EAP.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Choosing the most effective risk controls

129. Which risk control measures will be most effective in any given working environment will depend on:

- the combination of psychosocial hazards identified and the associated risks
- the circumstances of that working environment; for example:
 - type, size and location
 - organisational structure and culture
 - environmental conditions
 - technology available
 - organisational activities, products and services
 - supply chains and contractual arrangements
 - employee skills and attributes
 - workplace relationships
 - economic conditions
 - employee roles, responsibilities and workload
 - availability and suitability of controls.

130. Employers should consider which type of risk controls will be most effective at reducing the risk of harm from psychosocial hazards in their workplace. The most effective risk controls should be used first. This means that the order in which controls that alter the management of work, plant, systems of work, work design or workplace environment are used may vary in different circumstances.

131. Often it will be necessary to use a combination of risk control measures to effectively control the risks associated with psychosocial hazards. The best combination of risk control measures will depend on what is reasonably practicable. This may be influenced by an organisation's size, type and work activities.



For more information on reasonably practicable, see **page 30**.

132. Used on its own, information, instruction or training is often a less effective way to reduce risks associated with psychosocial hazards. It may only be used:

- in combination with other risk controls, but not as the predominant control
- exclusively, when it is not reasonably practicable to reduce the risk using other controls.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15(3) and (4)

133. When determining risk control measures, employers should consider the hazards and the associated risks they have identified collectively, rather than in isolation. For example, in some circumstances, poor workplace relationships may develop as an inappropriate response to high job demands or poor support. Considering hazards and risks collectively will help to determine:

- the most effective risk control measures
- how a risk control measure implemented for one risk may introduce additional hazards and risks.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

134. A risk associated with a psychosocial hazard may affect an employee or a group of employees. For example, an employee tells their employer that the job demands associated with their role are negatively affecting their health. The employer should:

- make adjustments to the employee's job or role in the short term
- consider if other employees do the same, or similar, roles
- review the existing risk controls as required and consider if a broader review of the design of work may be needed to determine how to reduce the risk across the organisation.



For more information on reviewing risk controls, see **paragraphs 149–161**.

135. Where an employer has multiple workplaces, there may be common hazards and risks. If hazards and risks are similar across workplaces, the employer may be able to use common risk controls.

136. If hazards and risks differ across multiple workplaces, the employer may need to use tailored risk controls for some or all the workplaces. This should be based on risk assessments that are specific to teams, locations or designated work groups.

137. When considering risk control options, employers must also consider whether a risk control will introduce additional risks. For example:

- An employer introduces a workload management system to control the high job demands of one group of employees without effective consultation or communication. This inadvertently increases the job demands of another group of employees.

- An employer reallocates a manager who is accused of bullying to a different part of the organisation without formally investigating the allegation or controlling any associated risks.

138. Where the implementation of a risk control measure is going to take time, employers should consider any interim measures available to reduce the risk. For example, if addressing high job demands will require a recruitment process, it may be weeks or months before new employees can reduce the workload for existing employees. Short-term measures that may help to quickly reduce the risk include:

- using contracted temporary employees or internal employee secondments to take on work
- reprioritising work
- renegotiating scheduled commitments.

139. Employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult with their employees and any HSRs when making decisions about how to control risks. **OHS Act s35** Consulting with employees is likely to result in better risk control measures being implemented because it:

- gives employees the opportunity to contribute ideas and participate in trials for new risk control measures
- is likely to improve the uptake of risk control measures when they are implemented.

140. Employees will be able to recommend ways to control risks as they are the ones doing the work and will understand the implications. In some instances, discussions with relevant stakeholders may also help; for example, suppliers, customers, industry bodies and associations.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Implementing risk controls

141. Employers may need to trial or test risk control measures before relying on them.
142. Any decision-making about implementing proposed risk controls must be done, so far as is reasonably practicable, in consultation with employees and any HSRs. **OHS Act s35(1)(b)**
143. Risk controls should be supported by necessary information, instruction or training to ensure they are implemented effectively. For example, information about procedures and training on how to use risk controls.
144. Employers should allow enough time for employees to adjust to changes before assessing the effectiveness of risk control measures. Employers should frequently check with employees if they think the improvements are effective.
145. Employees must co-operate with their employer's actions to implement risk controls to eliminate or control the risk of psychosocial hazards. **OHS Act s25(1)(c)**
For example, it is important for employees to:
 - Follow the information, instruction or training provided.
 - Follow the organisation's policies, procedures and processes.
 - Behave fairly and reasonably when working with others. For example, being respectful and following the organisation's policies and procedures, including those to manage the risk of bullying and sexual harassment.
 - Ask supervisors or experienced employees for help if they are unsure about something or don't know how to do the work safely.
 - Promptly report to their supervisor or HSR if psychosocial hazards are present or existing control measures seem inadequate. This will enable the employer to review and, if necessary, revise risk control measures.

Monitoring and maintaining risk controls

146. Employers must ensure risk control measures are properly maintained. **OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r8**
A procedure should be put in place to monitor and maintain risk controls to ensure they:
 - perform as originally intended
 - continue to eliminate or adequately reduce the risk of harm from psychosocial hazards.
147. How this is done needs to be determined when the risk control measure is being decided on, in consultation with employees and any HSRs.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

148. Maintaining risk control measures includes:

- ongoing consultation with HSRs and employees on the effectiveness of the measures
- allowing adequate time for HSRs to carry out regular workplace inspections
- conversations with employees about psychosocial hazards
- verifying that wellbeing checks, supervision and regular discussions with employees are occurring
- annual or biennial surveys for measuring psychosocial hazards and risks
- reviewing hazard reports
- reviewing complaints related to psychosocial hazards
- frequent inspections of the workplace
- visual checks to ensure risk controls are being properly applied by employees and contractors
- regular checks to ensure documented systems of work are implemented fully and appropriately
- preventative testing and maintenance of plant and physical risk controls, such as duress alarms
- any necessary remedial work to ensure physical risk controls continue to work effectively.

Step 4: Review risk controls

149. Reviewing risk controls involves examining whether the control measures are effectively controlling risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

150. Where a review finds that the control measures in place are not adequately controlling the risk, they must be revised so that they are controlling the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r16

When risk controls must be reviewed

151. Employers have a duty to review and, if necessary, revise the control measures in place when certain circumstances occur.

OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r16

Table 2 on page 44 lists when an employer must review their risk controls.

152. An HSR may request that an employer review and, if necessary, revise risk control measures if they believe on reasonable grounds that:

- any of the circumstances listed in Table 2 exist, or
- the employer has failed to properly review the risk control measures, or
- the employer has failed to take account of any of the circumstances listed in Table 2 in reviewing or revising the risk control measures. OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r16(2)

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Table 2: When to review and revise risk controls

Review	Revise
a) before any alteration is made to any thing, process or system of work that is likely to result in changes to risks associated with psychosocial hazards	If the review finds that the controls are not adequately controlling the risk so far as is reasonably practicable, risk controls must be revised.
b) if there is new or additional information about a psychosocial hazard available to the employer	
c) if an employee, or a person on their behalf, reports a psychological injury or psychosocial hazard to the employer	
d) after any incident occurs to which Part 5 of the OHS Act applies that involves a psychosocial hazard or hazards (notifiable incident)	
e) if, for any other reason, the risk control measures do not adequately control the risks associated with a psychosocial hazard	
f) after receiving a request from an HSR	



Notifiable incidents

Part 5 of the OHS Act provides that an employer or self-employed person must not, without reasonable excuse, fail to notify WorkSafe immediately after becoming aware that certain incidents have occurred at a workplace under their management and control.

This duty does not apply if the employer or self-employed person is the only person harmed, injured or exposed to the risk.

OHS Act s38(1) and s38(2)

Notifiable incidents are those that result in:

- the death of a person
- a person requiring medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance
- a person requiring immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital
- a person requiring immediate medical treatment for certain serious injuries
- a person being exposed to a serious risk to their health or safety emanating from the immediate or imminent exposure to specified circumstances and events. OHS Act s37



For more information about an employer's duties in relation to notifiable incidents, visit [worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au).

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

How to review risk controls

153. The people reviewing risk control measures need to:
 - have the authority and resources to conduct the review thoroughly
 - be empowered to recommend changes where necessary.
154. When reviewing the effectiveness of risk control measures, employers should determine if they are reducing the risk of harm, so far as is reasonably practicable. Consider things like:
 - Are employees reporting that risk control measures are not controlling the risk?
 - Has the risk changed or is it different to what was previously assessed?
 - Have employees reported or shown signs of any negative psychological responses?
 - Have all psychosocial hazards been identified?
 - Are employees and any HSRs actively involved in the risk management process?
 - Are employees raising health and safety concerns and reporting problems promptly?
 - Are employees encouraged to report hazards and risks?
 - Has information, instruction or training been provided to all relevant employees?
 - Are there any upcoming changes that are likely to result in an employee being exposed to a psychosocial hazard?
 - Are new risk control measures available that might better control the risk?
 - Has the risk been eliminated or reduced so far as is reasonably practicable?
 - Are risk controls in place to the full extent that is reasonably practicable?
155. Employers should also assess if risk controls have unintentionally introduced new risks or increased other risks. For example, surveillance technology used to monitor customer behaviour and reduce the risk of aggression or violence may also be used to monitor employee productivity, without proper communication or consultation. This increases the risk of harm from exposure to low job control and poor organisational justice.
156. Employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult employees and any HSRs when reviewing any risk controls. **OHS Act s35** To help establish whether risk controls are working, consider using:
 - team meetings and one-on-one discussions with employees
 - project evaluations
 - employee feedback or surveys.
157. How a review is conducted will vary depending on the situation. For example, in some cases a brief analysis may be sufficient. At other times, a documented, in-depth review may be required.
158. In some organisations, psychosocial hazards may be reported frequently, due to the nature of the work. The employer should put processes in place to consider all reports and assess if risk controls are working effectively. This may include reviewing similar hazards together. This may:
 - reduce the administrative load for an organisation
 - help employers to assess if there is new information about risks in the working environment
 - highlight if risk controls need to be revised.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

159. Frequent reports of psychosocial hazards indicate that employees may be exposed to harm. The employer should regularly review their risk controls to ensure they are controlling the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable.



Example of reviewing risk controls when psychosocial hazards are frequently reported

Employees working with members of the public are frequently exposed to aggression or violence. The hazard is well understood by the employer, who has implemented controls to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable. The employer has operational procedures in place that require employees to record if they have been subject to physical or verbal aggression or violence from a member of the public.

The employer schedules regular meetings to review the frequency and severity of reports of aggression or violence. HSRs for the relevant employee groups are invited. Before the meeting, a summary report is prepared highlighting the total number of reports since the last meeting and any circumstances that are new, unusual or severe. In the meeting, the report is discussed to identify whether any additional information about a psychosocial hazard is available.

Risk controls are then reviewed and revised as necessary, taking into consideration any changes to the risk profile.

When to revise risk controls

160. If the review finds that risk control measures are not reducing the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risk controls must be revised.
OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r16
Employers need to go back through the risk management process, review information and make further decisions about risk controls.
161. Risk management for psychosocial hazards is not a one-off exercise – it needs to be ongoing. The dynamic, complex and changing nature of working environments can have significant, unexpected or unplanned negative effects on employees' psychological and physical health. Employers must control any new or potential associated risks so far as is reasonably practicable.
OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations r15

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards



Example of revising risk controls after a review, due to changed risk

An employee is injured due to violence from a member of the public. They receive medical treatment for their injuries. The employer reports the incident to WorkSafe under Part 5 of the OHS Act. The employer must now review the relevant risk control measures to see if they control the risk, so far as reasonably practicable.

The employer finds that aggression or violence towards employees is increasing due to frustration at long waiting times. These are the result of staff shortages caused by difficulties recruiting appropriately skilled staff. Existing employees are also being exposed to high job demands.

The employer reviews:

- recruitment processes
- internal processes for managing unplanned absences.

As a result, the employer:

- Develops a new recruitment strategy to help fill existing vacancies.
- Adjusts the process for managing unplanned absences to use existing employees with appropriate skillsets in the first instance. Where vacancies cannot be filled by existing staff, labour hire staff are used.
- Refines the induction process for new and labour hire employees. This includes training on how systems of work are used to control the risks associated with exposure to aggression and violence.

Example of no change to risk controls after a review

An employee reports bullying allegations through their employer's grievance procedure. The employer must now review the relevant control measures to see if they control the risk, so far as reasonably practicable. The review shows:

- A bullying policy and procedure is in place and has recently been reviewed and updated. The allegations of bullying were investigated in line with the policy and procedure.
- Counselling support was offered to all parties involved.
- A psychosocial hazard identification process was conducted with the relevant team.
- It was identified that the team was exposed to high job demands. The associated risks had been adequately controlled at the time of investigation. A workload management process had recently been implemented and vacancies in the team filled.
- All supervisors and managers completed training on expected leadership behaviours and proactive risk management.
- All employees were aware of available confidential reporting, mediation and conflict resolution services.
- All employees were provided with training on bullying and being an active bystander.
- Ongoing feedback and consultation with employees is occurring.

Based on this review, the employer concludes that their risk control measures are reducing the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable. No further revision is needed.

Part 3 – Managing risks associated with psychosocial hazards

Record-keeping

162. Employers should keep records of the risk management processes and consultation for all psychosocial hazards. This will help with:

- monitoring hazards, risks, trends and themes
- assessing the effectiveness of risk controls
- reviewing and revising risk controls.

It will also help to demonstrate risk management processes if a WorkSafe inspector asks for evidence of them.

163. Employers should choose a method of recording the risk management process and outcomes to suit their circumstances. For example, employers could:

- use the prevention plan template available at [worksafe.vic.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

- keep an organisational risk register
- develop risk assessment and action plan templates for their organisation
- use meeting minutes for OHS committee, leadership, governance group or team meetings.

164. The risk management process and outcomes should be recorded in a way that is clear and accessible. This will enable the employer to easily provide information about the risk management process to employees and HSRs.

165. Employers should consider employee privacy when recording this information. For example, not using employee names when recording details of how a hazard or risk was identified.



When recording the risk management process and outcomes, employers may consider recording information about the key elements of the process, such as:

- Details of the identified psychosocial hazard
 - When was the hazard first identified?
 - How does it manifest in the working environment?
 - How was it identified? If the hazard was identified because of an incident or complaint, make sure individual employees are not identified.
- An assessment of the risks that could occur
 - Who would be affected?
 - What are the possible consequences of the risk eventuating (severity)?
 - How likely is it that the harm will eventuate (likelihood)?
 - How often and for how long are employees exposed to the hazard (frequency and duration)?

- The risk controls that have been put in place to eliminate or reduce the hazard
 - Which risk controls are most effective at controlling the hazard so far as is reasonably practicable?
 - Are there any additional risk controls that are or may be required?
 - Who will implement the identified risk controls and by when?
- Review and revision of risk controls
 - When will the risk control measures be reviewed?
 - Who will manage the review?
 - What is the outcome of the review?
 - Who will implement any changes to risk controls and by when?
- Details of consultation with employees and any HSRs
 - Who was consulted?
 - How and when were they consulted?



Part 4 – Managing reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents

Reporting of psychosocial hazards and incidents

166. Reports of psychosocial **hazards** are things like an employee reporting that:
- their team is experiencing high job demands
 - employees working in remote locations are at risk of becoming disconnected from the broader work team
 - a noisy work environment is making it hard for employees to concentrate and is affecting their mental wellbeing.
167. Reports of psychosocial **incidents** are things like an employee reporting that:
- a customer has verbally abused them
 - a colleague has sexually harassed them
 - a supervisor is bullying them.
168. When an employee reports a psychosocial hazard or incident this can:
- help employers identify new or undetected risks in the working environment
 - show that existing controls need to be reviewed and potentially revised.
169. Employees may report psychosocial hazards and incidents in various ways; for example:
- submitting a report via the organisation's existing hazard or incident reporting system. If the system has been set up for physical hazards, some adjustments may be needed for reports of psychosocial hazards. This may include adjustments for protected or confidential reports
 - talking with or writing to a supervisor, the OHS department or HR department
 - raising the issue with the HSR of their designated work group
 - responding to employee surveys or feedback
 - submitting a complaint or grievance in accordance with internal procedures
 - submitting a workers compensation claim for a psychological injury
 - submitting a report via external reporting options.
170. Employers should provide options for reporting that:
- suit the organisation's size and circumstances
 - are proportional to the risks in the organisation; for example, where the nature of the work means employees are more likely to be exposed to psychosocial hazards, a formal reporting system may be required.

Part 4 – Managing reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents

171. In a small organisation, options for reporting may include:
- raising hazards and incidents in a team meeting or directly with a supervisor or any HSRs
 - an alternative reporting option where it is not appropriate to report directly to a supervisor, such as a locked box for making confidential reports
 - external reporting options where required.
172. A large organisation should have a formal system for reporting psychosocial hazards and incidents. All employees should be able to access and understand how to use the system.
173. Employees may not report psychosocial hazards and incidents because they:
- see them as just 'part of the job' or work culture
 - believe they are not serious enough to report
 - think reports will be ignored or not handled appropriately, respectfully and confidentially
 - are worried about the consequences; for example, they:
 - fear they will be blamed
 - believe reporting may cause the behaviour to escalate and expose them to additional harm, discrimination or disadvantage
 - do not know or understand the process for reporting hazards and incidents or how their report will be responded to
 - feel uncomfortable reporting hazards and incidents through a formal process
 - are unable to make a confidential report
 - do not have the time to report hazards, particularly where the system is complex or cumbersome.
174. Employees who identify psychosocial hazards or witness incidents should be:
- encouraged to report
 - provided with guidance, information and support.
175. Employers can encourage employees to report hazards and incidents by:
- regularly discussing and communicating with employees about psychosocial hazards
 - giving employees a range of accessible and user-friendly reporting methods that suit the working environment
 - making the system and process for reporting and responding transparent, and including information about who will be notified of the report
 - responding to all reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents in a timely manner and taking appropriate actions to control any associated risks
 - making it clear that victimising those who make reports will not be accepted
 - training employees on all the ways a report can be made
 - providing training to supervisors and managers on how to respond appropriately to informal and formal reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents
 - providing options for confidential reporting, where privacy or other concerns are raised; for example, where it is not appropriate for the employee's manager to be involved
 - documenting in policies and procedures the system of work for reporting and responding to psychosocial hazards and incidents.

Part 4 – Managing reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents

Responding to reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents

176. Responding to a reported psychosocial hazard or incident is an important step in the risk management process. Depending on the circumstances of the report, you may need to:
- review risk control measures
 - investigate further.
177. When deciding on the type of response required, consider:
- the nature of the hazard or incident
 - the level of risk involved
 - the complexity of the situation
 - any repeated exposure to incidents of a similar nature
 - the number of employees involved or affected
 - other people involved, such as clients, customers, patients or students
 - for larger employers, whether an organisational response is required to manage the risk in a systematic way across multiple work sites or locations.
178. A response to a report of a psychosocial hazard or incident should include the following:
- identifying whether any other psychosocial hazards are present
 - identifying if there is any new or additional information available about the psychosocial hazard that has been reported
 - assessing associated risks, including:
 - if new or additional information changes the risk
 - if so, how the risk has changed
- reviewing existing risk control measures, including their effectiveness
 - revising risk control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk where necessary
 - monitoring the implemented risk control measures following the review or investigation
 - monitoring trends in reporting data for hazards and incidents, including across multiple sites where relevant.
179. An investigation of an incident should:
- be done in a fair, timely and transparent way
 - engage and support all parties throughout the process
 - use an impartial investigator with the appropriate expertise and skills
 - outline how sensitive information will be handled, including issues of privacy and confidentiality
 - identify and manage any ongoing physical and psychosocial risks in the working environment
 - provide appropriate information about expected reasonable timeframes and the outcomes of the investigation to all relevant parties
 - communicate to all relevant parties how investigation outcomes will be carried out and incorporated into risk management processes.
180. In some cases, an HR team may do a separate investigation into an incident. The HR and OHS teams should work closely together to:
- share information
 - identify all psychosocial hazards
 - control any associated risks.

Part 4 – Managing reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents

181. Some reports of psychosocial hazards or incidents may involve harmful workplace behaviours such as bullying, sexual harassment and aggression or violence. These may also be reported as a:
- complaint
 - grievance
 - potential breach of a code of conduct.
182. It is important to have clear and documented response procedures to effectively address reports of harmful workplace behaviours. Procedures should outline:
- how reports of harmful behaviour will be responded to in an objective, fair, transparent and timely way
 - the responsibilities of management
 - options for psychological support for everyone involved
 - additional external reporting options available to all parties, including options to escalate if a party is dissatisfied with the internal investigation process.
183. In some cases, employers may need to use impartial external investigators with relevant skills and expertise. For example, investigators who:
- are trained in trauma-informed interviewing techniques
 - have expertise and experience in psychosocial risk management.



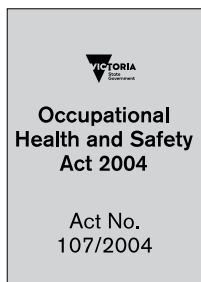
What is a trauma-informed approach?

A trauma-informed approach focuses on wellbeing and safety to help prevent any further harm. It recognises that:

- Employees may have experienced trauma or been exposed to traumatic events or content.
- Trauma can affect people in many ways. For example, how an employee recalls and describes events.
- Any investigation needs to be done in a way that prevents further psychological harm. For example, there is a risk of further harm if employees must explain what happened multiple times.

184. When hazards and incidents are not appropriately responded to:
- contributing psychosocial hazards may not be identified
 - associated risks may not be controlled
 - existing risk control measures may not be effectively reviewed and revised
 - the risk of harm may increase.

Appendix A – The compliance framework



The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (OHS Act)* sets out the key principles, duties and rights in relation to occupational health and safety.



OHS Regulations specify the way in which a duty imposed by the OHS Act must be performed, or prescribe procedural or administrative matters to support the OHS Act. For example, requiring licences for specific activities, the keeping of records or giving notice.



Compliance codes provide practical guidance to duty holders. If a person complies with a provision of a compliance code, they are deemed to comply with the OHS legislative duty covered by the code provision. However, compliance codes are not mandatory, and a duty holder may choose to use some other way to achieve compliance.



WorkSafe positions are guidelines made under section 12 of the OHS Act that state how WorkSafe will apply the OHS Act or OHS Regulations, or exercise discretion under a provision of the OHS Act or OHS Regulations. WorkSafe positions are intended to provide certainty to duty holders and other affected parties.



Non-statutory guidance includes information published by WorkSafe aimed at building people's knowledge and awareness of OHS issues, risks to health and safety, and the disciplines and techniques that can be applied to manage and control risks. Non-statutory guidance is not mandatory, nor does it provide any deemed to comply outcomes for duty holders. This guidance does, however, form part of the state of knowledge about OHS.

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards

How to use this appendix

Appendix B is a tool to help you work through **Step 1: Identify hazards**. You can use this tool to help identify possible indicators or sources of psychosocial hazards in the workplace. It lists:

- information you can review
- questions you can ask.

Review internal information

Reviewing information and records that you already have in your organisation can help identify patterns. These patterns could indicate possible psychosocial hazards.

For example, leave reports may show that unplanned leave has been increasing. This could indicate a psychosocial hazard like high job demands or poor support that needs to be controlled.



Organisational/operational records

Examples of records to review	Examples of questions to ask
Organisational structures, including reporting lines and supervisory responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are organisational structures, reporting lines, roles and responsibilities clearly defined?• Is the organisational structure causing inefficiency, such as slower communication or increased administrative processes?• Are all roles in the structure adequately supported?
Work systems, policies, governance arrangements and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there documented work systems, policies, governance arrangements and procedures?• Are employees aware of, and trained in, relevant policies and procedures?• Are work systems, policies, governance arrangements and procedures implemented and effective?
Position descriptions, duty statements and performance agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are roles and responsibilities clearly defined?• Are induction and performance development processes clearly defined?• Are performance agreements reasonable, clear and achievable?• Are these documents up to date and reflective of current work practices?

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards



Organisational/operational records

Examples of records to review	Examples of questions to ask
Staffing, resourcing and procurement decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are all positions filled?• Is there a workforce planning system or employee replacement process in place?• Are staffing and resources reviewed in line with workload and available skills?• Is there a plan in place to manage workload during peak or seasonal demands?• How many employees are in insecure positions; for example, contractors and labour hire workers?• Has outsourcing work increased work demands for other areas; for example, contract managers?• Is workload shared fairly between employees?
Customer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have customers provided feedback about issues such as wait times or service levels?• Have customers provided feedback after experiencing unprofessional behaviour?• Is there a pattern of feedback, such as repeated information showing multiple instances of the same behaviour?
Employee feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are documented processes in place for employees to provide feedback and report psychosocial hazards and incidents?• Are there any themes emerging from employee feedback or concerns that indicate psychosocial hazards are present?• Is employee feedback encouraged and considered?• Do employees feel comfortable to provide feedback in one-on-one meetings, team meetings or surveys?
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has there been a change in productivity?• Have any significant events occurred recently that may have affected productivity?

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards



Organisational/operational records

Examples of records to review	Examples of questions to ask
Leadership capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do leaders have the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to provide supportive and effective leadership?• Are leaders given the knowledge and skills they need to identify psychosocial hazards and control associated risks?• Are leaders trained how to recognise and respond to early signs of psychological harm in the workplace?• Are leaders supported by senior executives to identify psychosocial hazards and control associated risks?
Employee surveys and focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there workforce survey results that measure employee engagement/morale?• Do workforce survey results, including any free-text responses, indicate exposure to psychosocial hazards in certain teams, roles or the organisation as a whole? What areas of concern have been raised by employees?• Has there been a recent change in employee engagement/morale?
Analysis of work tasks, schedules and locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have work tasks, content and scheduling been clearly defined and communicated to all employees, including contractors and labour hire workers?• Are employees given reasonable time, resources and support to complete tasks?• Does a review of workflows, tasks and schedules show any inefficiencies that may increase workload?• Is the physical working environment appropriate?• Are employees regularly working in remote or isolated locations, or working alone?

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards



Human resources information

Examples of records to review	Examples of questions to ask
Records of hours worked	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are any employees working excessive or unusual hours?• Are employees regularly working extra hours?• Are shifts longer than 12 hours?• Are hours of work more than 48 hours per week?• Are employees taking sufficient and regular annual leave?• Are employees working late or night shifts?
Sick leave and absenteeism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are rates of sick leave and unplanned leave higher than usual or higher than average?• Do rates of sick leave or other unplanned leave show any trends; for example, higher levels of absenteeism in some work areas compared to others, or more leave being taken at certain times?
Employee turnover and exit interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has employee turnover increased?• Is employee turnover higher than average?• Is employee turnover higher in some working areas than others?• What reasons do employees give in exit interviews for leaving the organisation? Are there themes emerging from exit interviews?• Are there any issues identified that indicate exposure to psychosocial hazards?



OHS information

Examples of records to review	Examples of questions to ask
Reports from workplace inspections and walkarounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What hazards have been identified in these reports?• Were inspections done by appropriately skilled people and any employee representatives, such as HSRs?
Validated psychosocial hazard identification survey tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What areas of concern have employees raised?• Are procedures in place to consider, consult on and address concerns identified through surveys?
Health and safety committee meeting records	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have potential psychosocial hazards and controls been identified in these meetings?• Has any action been taken to control risks associated with the potential psychosocial hazards identified?

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards



OHS information

Examples of records to review	Examples of questions to ask
Hazard and incident reports (physical and psychological)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the organisation have an incident reporting system or risk register for reporting incidents that affect employee health and safety? • Are employees aware of, and using, the incident reporting system? • Does the incident reporting system or risk register include psychosocial risks? • Do any reports of physical hazards or incidents suggest psychosocial hazards may have contributed? • Are there any trends or patterns in the data that show psychosocial hazards are present? • Is there a clearly defined process for how the organisation and supervisors and managers will respond to reports of psychosocial hazards and incidents? • Is hazard and incident reporting data being used to inform proactive employee intervention? • What is the source of the hazards and incidents being reported? • How often are hazards and incidents being reported?
Employee complaints and investigation reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there complaints of harmful behaviour, such as bullying, sexual harassment, or aggression or violence? • Are there any patterns or themes to complaints or findings from investigation reports?
De-identified medical and EAP data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any trends or patterns in the data that show potential exposure to psychosocial hazards? • Have any steps been taken to address previously identified psychosocial hazards or risks?
Previous psychosocial risk assessments and any information feeding into them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What psychosocial hazards or risks have previously been identified? • Are risk controls adequately controlling the identified risks?
Workers compensation claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has claims data (including rejected claims) been analysed to identify trends or patterns of psychosocial hazards? • Has the information from these claims been used to review current risk control measures and revise them if necessary? • Is data analysed by areas like work location and role? • What is being done to support employees who have lodged claims?

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards

Review external information

Reviewing information from outside your organisation can help you understand the current state of knowledge. This includes what psychosocial hazards are common in organisations like yours and what risk controls are being used. Look for information from:

- WorkSafe Victoria, including compliance codes and other guidance and information
- similar organisations to yours; for example, news updates or articles in trade publications
- employer organisations and unions
- OHS professionals.

Observe the workplace and assess job-specific requirements

Psychosocial hazards can also be identified by:

- observing how employees work and interact with each other
- assessing job-specific requirements.

Where possible, more than one person should do these observations. Any HSRs should also be invited to participate.



Workplace observation

Questions to ask	Possible hazard indicators
Are employees working in remote or isolated conditions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees working in geographically isolated locations• Employees travelling long distances or for long periods• Employees working alone• Employees working out of scheduled hours• Employees working unsupervised• Employees working from home• Employees working from locations other than their usual place of work• Employees living in employer-provided accommodation• Employer-provided accommodation has inadequate facilities

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards



Workplace observation

Questions to ask	Possible hazard indicators
Are employees appropriately supported?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New employees• Young employees• Migrant workers• Casual, seasonal or fixed-term employees• Employees living away from family and friends; for example, fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workers or ship and flight crew• The workplace is culturally and linguistically diverse• If known, employees who have:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– a pre-existing disability, injury or illness– previously been exposed to a traumatic event
Are employees exposed to poor-quality environments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace is too loud or quiet• Uncomfortable temperature• Workplace lighting is too bright or dark• Workspace is uncomfortable or not appropriate for the work being done• Insufficient space to perform work• Equipment or plant is not in a condition needed to complete work
Are employees respectful to each other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees using inappropriate language• Employees talking over each other
Are customers and clients respectful towards employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customers/clients observed to be verbally or physically aggressive towards employees• Employees working with customers/clients who are upset or unhappy
Are potentially harmful behaviours tolerated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No incident reporting systems in place• Incident reports not being taken seriously• Employees unwilling to use incident reporting systems because of possible retribution• Supervisors and managers not addressing inappropriate behaviours• Bystanders not calling out harmful behaviours

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards



Assessment of job-specific requirements

Questions to ask	Possible hazard indicators
Are employees rushed? Are tasks timed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees have inadequate time to complete their work/tasks• Performance measures are based on workload or how fast tasks are completed• Employees have low levels of autonomy and flexibility• Employees take shortcuts to complete a task rather than using standard procedures
Is work delayed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inefficiencies in work systems; for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– technology issues– slow decision-making– burdensome administrative processes– lack of leadership
Do certain tasks result in confusion or frequent mistakes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflicting job roles, responsibilities or expectations• Poor explanation about performance objectives or accountabilities• Poor understanding of scope of role from other employees, supervisors, clients or customers
Are employees working with machinery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any potential exposure to poor-quality or hazardous environments; for example, working near loud or high-risk machinery• Employees reporting that machinery is difficult or frustrating to use• Employees taking shortcuts to complete a task rather than using standard procedures
Are employees at risk of physical and/or verbal aggression?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees are working with customers or clients• Employees are delivering difficult or unwelcome information• Employees do not get along with one another at personal, professional or team levels
Do tasks need sustained attention or high levels of mental effort?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long periods of heightened attention looking for infrequent events; for example, watching CCTV cameras for any suspicious activity• Employees do cognitively demanding tasks for long periods• Tasks that involve large volumes of information or data analysis

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards



Assessment of job-specific requirements

Questions to ask	Possible hazard indicators
Do tasks carry a heavy emotional load?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding to distressing situations or aggressive clients• Having difficult conversations• Hearing, observing or reading distressing stories• Helping people who are upset or unhappy• Exposure to traumatic incidents, material or content in the work environment or context
Do certain tasks have high-risk or severe consequences if errors are made? For example, driving a large vehicle in peak-hour traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased rates of error• Reports of near misses• Tasks that could result in severe injury or fatalities if an error is made• Tasks that will result in extensive property, financial or reputational damage if an error is made• Tasks that involve vulnerable clients• Tasks being performed in the early hours of the morning or at peak periods

Appendix B – Identifying psychosocial hazards

Use validated psychosocial hazard identification tools

Employers can use validated tools, such as surveys, to help gather information from employees, HSRs, supervisors and managers about psychosocial hazards and risks. These tools are particularly useful when:

- the employer is a medium to large organisation (50+ employees)
- anonymity is important – validated tools are anonymous and protect employees from stigma or other adverse outcomes when reporting hazards or concerns
- employees are physically dispersed; for example, they work across multiple sites or shifts
- employees are given time to consider the survey questions and their response
- employees may struggle to understand or otherwise participate in other forms of consultation.

There is a range of validated tools online. It is important to choose a tool that is appropriate for your workplace. Some tools may not cover all hazards that might exist in the workplace.

When choosing a tool, think about:

- What was it designed for?
- What does it measure?
- What timeframe does it consider (for example, 6 months, 12 months)?
- What knowledge, skills and capacity are needed to apply the tool?
- How long will it take people to complete?
- Are the results anonymous?
- Where is the data stored?
- What level of support does the tool provider offer?
- What is your budget? Some tools are free, but others have licence fees
- What is the size of your workplace? Can the tool be applied based on the number of employees?

Surveys and tools must not replace agreed consultation procedures, but they can be used as an additional tool for consultation.

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

How to use this appendix

Appendix C is a tool to help you work through **Step 3: Control risks**. It:

- Lists examples of psychosocial hazards and how they may look in your working environment. This list is not exhaustive.
- Provides some practical suggestions for controlling psychosocial hazards and risks. The risk controls listed are examples only. There may be other ways you can control the risk in your workplace.



When determining which risk controls to use for a particular hazard, you should also consider if there are related or underlying hazards that might increase the risk. If you identify any related hazards, you must also control the associated risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

Examples of other hazards that might increase risk are included for each entry in Appendix C.

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Aggression or violence

Incidents in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.

Examples of aggression or violence

- Verbal or physical assault
- Being bitten, spat at, scratched or kicked
- Banging, kicking, throwing or hitting objects
- Being threatened with or without a weapon
- Verbal abuse through phone or online client interactions
- Online abuse or threats, including on social media

Examples of risk controls for aggression or violence

- Where possible, eliminate tasks with known aggression and violence risks by using technology; for example, online complaint lodgment
- Design or modify the workplace environment to separate employees from the public; for example, protective barriers or screens, secure employee areas and facilities, safe rooms
- Ensure buildings are secure and well maintained, and have secure entry and exit points
- Design work so that employees don't work alone, where possible, particularly for higher risk shifts or times
- Alter environmental factors, such as noise, to reduce emotional arousal or known behavioural triggers
- Clearly communicate to clients and customers that any form of aggression or violence will not be accepted
- Refuse entry to clients and customers with a higher risk of aggression or violence
- Ensure visibility of supervisors and employees in leadership roles
- Install, and regularly maintain and test, communication and duress alarm systems
- Provide employees with appropriate PPE
- Provide uniforms with removable identifiable material, such as Velcro logos, to reduce the chances of employees being exposed to aggression or violence while entering or exiting the workplace
- Install CCTV cameras or other surveillance features. If using surveillance devices, develop policies and procedures before installation that make clear:
 - the purpose of the surveillance, including how and when it is being used
 - how employees and any HSRs will be consulted
 - what data will be captured
 - how long data will be stored
 - who will have access to data

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Aggression or violence continued

- Do a risk assessment and develop management or support plans for clients or customers with a known history of aggression or violence, or complex or challenging behaviours. This should be done in consultation with relevant professionals. Make employees aware of these plans and train them to respond appropriately. Regularly review these plans and communicate any changes
- Do a risk assessment before any work is done remotely. Monitor employees working in the community or away from the workplace
- Develop and maintain a system to report and manage incidents of aggression or violence
- Encourage employees to report incidents of aggression or violence, and not to accept them as a normal part of their work
- Monitor cumulative exposure to aggression or violence to identify employees who may need additional support
- Develop and implement procedures for:
 - working in isolation or unpredictable environments, including for emergency communications
 - opening and closing the workplace
- Provide professional clinical supervision and/or reflective practice for employees who may be regularly exposed to aggression or violence
- Provide appropriate post-incident support; for example, psychological first aid and professional psychological support, such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles where possible

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide information, instruction and training to all employees, including supervisors and managers, on aggression and violence. This should cover:
 - the organisation's policy and procedure, including definitions of aggressive and violent behaviours and reporting options
 - how the organisation will respond to a report
 - support available to all parties
- Provide skills-based training to employees where relevant. For example:
 - violence prevention measures
 - situational risk assessments
 - behavioural observations
 - positive behaviour strategies
 - de-escalation techniques
 - emotional regulation strategies

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Aggression or violence continued



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of aggression or violence

- High job demands
- Low job control
- Poor workplace relationships
- Bullying
- Gendered violence

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Bullying

Repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed at a person or group that creates a risk to health and safety.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- between employees
- directed at employees from people who have relationships with the workplace, such as:
 - clients
 - customers
 - contractors
 - patients
 - volunteers
 - members of the public.

Examples of bullying

- Verbal abuse, including:
 - being sworn at, threatened or insulted
 - continued inappropriate and/or invalid criticism
 - name-calling
 - practical jokes
 - unjustified punishment
 - belittling and humiliation
 - gossip and malicious rumours
 - inappropriate language
 - yelling
- Hostile or isolating behaviour; for example, exclusion from conversations, activities or access to training
- Abusive or offensive emails or other correspondence
- Threatening or intimidating body language
- Unreasonable demands, unnecessary pressure and impossible deadlines targeted at an employee or group of employees
- Unfair allocation of tasks and/or working hours
- Undermining a person's work performance, recognition or position
- Deliberately withholding necessary work-related information or resources, or supplying incorrect information
- Setting tasks that are above or beyond a person's skill level without access to training or support
- Inappropriate surveillance or monitoring

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Bullying continued

- Inappropriate interference with personal belongings or work equipment
- Unreasonably isolating an employee from others

Examples of risk controls for bullying

- Leaders commit to creating a culture of respect and inclusion
- Supervisors and managers role-model appropriate workplace behaviours
- Develop and communicate the organisation's plan to prevent bullying, including strategies to address any power imbalances
- In workplaces where employees work remotely, managers use regular meetings to create an inclusive team culture and build social cohesion across groups of employees
- Use a buddy system to match appropriate experienced employees with young and new employees
- Adopt recruitment processes that help to identify candidates with a history of harmful behaviour. For example, referee checks or psychological pre-employment screening
- Encourage the reporting of any bullying behaviour experienced or witnessed
- Provide various formal and informal options for protected or confidential reporting, including circumstances where the report involves a direct manager or member of the senior management team
- Develop and communicate an accessible bullying policy and procedure that:
 - defines what bullying is and isn't
 - sets expectations about behaviour
 - explains reporting options and how the organisation will respond to reports
- Support all parties throughout the process when a report of bullying is made
- Independently investigate reports of bullying and action outcomes in a fair, timely and transparent way
- Enable OHS and Human Resources (HR) teams to work together when investigating reports of bullying. This will help to identify all psychosocial hazards contributing to bullying behaviour and control any associated risks
- Install CCTV cameras or other surveillance features. If using surveillance devices, develop policies and procedures before installation that make clear:
 - the purpose of the surveillance, including how and when it is being used
 - how employees and any HSRs will be consulted
 - what data will be captured
 - how long data will be stored
 - who will have access to data

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Bullying continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide information, instruction and training to all employees on:
 - appropriate, potentially harmful and harmful workplace behaviours
 - the organisation's policy and procedure for bullying, including defining what is and is not bullying
 - being an active bystander and what to do if you witness bullying (including cyberbullying)
 - how to make a report of bullying, how the organisation will respond and what supports are available to all parties through the process
 - how to identify and respond to other psychosocial hazards and risks that may increase the risk of bullying
- Provide targeted training for supervisors and managers on:
 - how to conduct performance management discussions effectively and fairly
 - how to respond to informal and formal reports of bullying



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of bullying

- High job demands
- Low role clarity
- Poor workplace relationships
- Poor organisational justice
- Gendered violence

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Exposure to traumatic events or content

Exposure to traumatic **events** may involve:

- actual or perceived threats to life
- experiencing a serious injury
- witnessing serious injuries or fatalities.

Exposure to traumatic **content** may include:

- hearing other people's traumatic stories
- reading detailed reports or documents about traumatic events
- reviewing images or video footage of traumatic events.

Exposure to traumatic content can result in indirect or vicarious exposure to trauma.

Being exposed to traumatic events or content may cause:

- fear and distress
- a trauma response.

Exposure to traumatic events or content can arise from:

- a single experience
- the cumulative effects of several or repeated exposures over time.

A person is more likely to experience an event or content as traumatic when they consider it to be:

- unexpected
- something they were unprepared for
- unpreventable
- uncontrollable
- the result of intentional cruelty.

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Exposure to traumatic events or content continued

Examples of exposure to traumatic events or content

- Being involved in, or witnessing, serious motor vehicle or transport accidents
- Being verbally, physically or sexually assaulted, or witnessing an assault
- Acts of violence such as armed robbery, war or terrorism
- Being threatened with or without a weapon
- Attending potentially distressing events such as death, suicide, accident or injury
- Ongoing bullying
- Natural disasters such as bushfires, earthquakes or floods
- Severe or life-threatening weather events
- Needlestick injuries
- Workplace incidents, injuries or deaths
- Repeated exposure to potentially traumatic content in reports
- Repeated exposure to information about potentially traumatic incidents that have happened to other people
- Viewing graphic images; for example, those involving death or distressing images involving children
- Reading graphic details about cases involving death or life-threatening incidents

Repeated exposure to traumatic events and content is common in groups such as:

- first responders
- healthcare workers
- veterinarians
- disaster and emergency services
- psychologists and social workers
- human services workers
- allied health practitioners
- law enforcement, investigators and defence personnel

However, exposure can also occur in a range of workplaces and professions, including:

- tradespeople
- park rangers
- journalists
- lawyers
- teachers
- translators
- public transport drivers
- workplaces located in places where potentially traumatic incidents frequently occur (for example, near freeways)

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Exposure to traumatic events or content continued

Examples of risk controls for exposure to traumatic events or content

- Develop recruitment and selection practices to appoint appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced candidates into roles involving inherent exposure to potentially traumatic events or content
- Give a realistic job preview during the recruitment process so applicants know if the role may expose them to trauma
- Use software to replace manual identification, categorisation and/or analysis of potentially traumatic content. For example, automated filter or flagging systems
- Face office computer screens away from the centre of the office or put a privacy screen filter on computer screens. This will stop passing employees from unnecessarily seeing potentially traumatic content
- Do a job/task analysis to identify where potential exposure can be eliminated or reduced. Where exposure cannot be eliminated, design tasks to minimise exposure. For example:
 - employees viewing images of potentially traumatic content in black and white or thumbnail
 - employees viewing footage without sound or skipping past graphic content where possible
 - making the focus of the task clear and organising work beforehand to reduce the need to re-review potentially traumatic content and limit exposure time
 - scheduling tasks involving exposure to potentially traumatic events or content in the earlier part of a shift. This gives employees time to access social support and wind down if needed before leaving work
- Use file flagging on potentially traumatic files or cases to avoid inadvertent exposure to traumatic content
- Restrict access to security camera footage involving potentially traumatic content to authorised personnel only to limit exposure
- Rotate high-risk roles or tasks to manage the risk of cumulative exposure
- Where exposure is more unpredictable, give attending employees as much information as possible about the task beforehand, so they can plan and manage expectations
- Implement and maintain a system of work for reporting and managing incidents of exposure to potentially traumatic events or content
- Monitor employees who have repeated exposure to potentially traumatic events or content to understand the effect of that exposure
- Do regular preventative wellbeing checks for employees in high-risk roles
- Ensure manager support is regularly available and accessible
- Establish appropriate post-incident support procedures; for example, psychological first aid and/or professional psychological support, such as an EAP
- Provide professional clinical supervision and/or reflective practice for employees who may be regularly exposed to potentially traumatic events or content
- Implement peer support programs, including appropriate training and support (such as clinical supervision)

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Exposure to traumatic events or content continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide information, instruction and training to all employees who may be exposed to potentially traumatic events or content, including supervisors and managers. This should include:
 - what the trauma exposure may involve
 - how they may be exposed in their role (direct or indirect exposure)
 - risk factors (individual, workplace and community-related)
 - potential effects (including cumulative effects of trauma exposure)
 - examples of individual and organisational risk control measures
- Provide specific training for managers and supervisors that covers:
 - how to identify early signs of cumulative trauma exposure
 - when this is likely to affect employees or is affecting employees
 - how to respond to cumulative trauma exposure, including implementing effective risk control measures that are reasonably practicable



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of exposure to traumatic events or content

- Aggression or violence
- High job demands
- Low role clarity
- Low job control
- Poor environmental conditions
- Poor support

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Gendered violence

Any behaviour directed at, or affecting, a person because:

- of their sex, sexual orientation, gender or gender identity
- they do not adhere to socially prescribed gender roles.

Examples of gendered violence

Gendered violence can range from comments and gestures to physical assault. It can occur via digital platforms and may not be connected to work. Examples include:

- sexual harassment and assault
- physical assault
- offensive language and imagery such as displaying pornographic or sexist posters
- verbal abuse
- innuendo, insinuations and put-downs such as questioning or criticising a person's sexual orientation or appearance
- stalking, intimidation or threats
- sexually explicit gestures
- 'deadnaming' someone by deliberately:
 - misgendering them
 - using incorrect pronouns
 - not using their preferred name
- ostracism, exclusion, discrimination or victimisation based on sex, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, such as:
 - direct or indirect exclusion from training or promotion opportunities
 - policies or procedures being inconsistently applied
 - complaints about transgender staff using gendered toilets

Examples of risk controls for gendered violence

- Appoint a diverse group of leaders who are committed to creating a culture of equality, respect and inclusion
- Develop formal workplace standards that state how all people in the workplace are expected to act, including appropriate behaviours and language
- Encourage supervisors and managers to role-model appropriate workplace behaviours
- Develop and communicate the organisation's plan to prevent gendered violence
- Design uniforms so they are not gendered and suit the needs of all employees
- Structure and schedule meetings and forums to be inclusive
- Monitor work environments, including online spaces, for harmful behaviour

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Gendered violence continued

- Enforce a responsible service of alcohol policy to promote appropriate behaviour at licensed venues and workplace functions
- Provide ways for employees to limit or end high-risk contact, or to escalate a situation to management
- Respond to any sexist, homophobic or transphobic material or comments in an appropriate and timely way. For example, immediate refusal of service to a client or customer
- Provide facilities and equipment that give privacy and security for all employees. For example:
 - all-gender toilets with separate cubicles
 - facilities that meet employees' menstrual needs, especially in remote or off-site locations
 - private change rooms and accommodation
- Where possible, design work so that employees don't work alone, particularly for higher risk times, shifts or tasks
- Through workplace design, enable employees to see who is entering the premises and restrict access when necessary
- Keep the workplace secure, maintained, adequately lit and fit for purpose, including car parks
- Install, and regularly maintain and test, communication and duress alarm systems
- Install CCTV cameras or other surveillance features. If using surveillance devices, develop policies and procedures before installation that make clear:
 - the purpose of the surveillance, including how and when it is being used
 - how employees and any HSRs will be consulted
 - what data will be captured
 - how long data will be stored
 - who will have access to data
- Encourage employees to report any gendered violence they experience or witness
- Provide options for protected or confidential reporting. This includes circumstances where the report involves a direct manager or member of the senior management team
- Provide and communicate an accessible policy and procedure that:
 - defines gendered violence
 - sets expectations about behaviours
 - explains reporting options and how the organisation will respond to reports
- Support all parties throughout the process when a report of gendered violence is made
- Independently investigate reports of gendered violence. Action any outcomes in a fair, timely and transparent way

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Gendered violence continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide information, instruction and training to all employees on the organisation's gendered violence policy and procedure. This includes:
 - defining what behaviours constitute gendered violence
 - explaining reporting options and how the organisation will respond to the report
 - outlining what supports are available to all parties
- Provide skills training on being an active bystander and what to do if gendered violence is witnessed
- Provide training on how to identify and respond to other psychosocial hazards and risks that may increase the risk of gendered violence
- Provide targeted training to supervisors and managers on how to respond to informal and formal reports of gendered violence



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of gendered violence

- Sexual harassment
- Bullying
- Aggression or violence
- Poor support
- Remote or isolated work
- Poor workplace relationships
- Poor organisational justice

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



High job demands

Work involving sustained or repeated high physical, mental or emotional effort, or a combination of any of these.

Examples of high job demands

Tasks or jobs with:

- long work hours
- unpredictable shift patterns or work hours
- frequent night shifts
- working hours that do not allow adequate time for employees to recover between shifts
- high or unrealistic workloads; for example:
 - too much to do
 - too many clients
 - fast work pace
 - significant time pressure
- frequent exposure to or a caseload involving potentially traumatic events or content
- work that is beyond the employee's capabilities or training
- long periods of heightened attention looking for infrequent events, prolonged surveillance or watchfulness
- emotionally demanding work, including high emotional involvement or regular suppression of emotions

Examples of risk controls for high job demands

- Design or re-design roles and tasks to identify risks and/or underlying sources of high job demands
- Do regular workforce planning and reviews to identify workforce needs. Look at:
 - job or task requirements
 - anticipated business growth or future needs
 - roles and skill mix

Develop and implement action plans to address identified gaps

- Provide appropriate resources to meet demands
- Design the recruitment process to find employees with appropriate experience and qualifications
- Develop an internal process for managing peak demand, planned leave and unplanned absences. This should:
 - forecast needs and gaps
 - provide sufficient coverage and an appropriate skill mix
 - consider the risk of fatigue
- Do a work design analysis. Use results to inform the development and implementation of an action plan to address high job demands where required

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ High job demands continued

- When designing roles, set achievable performance targets
- Give employees adequate time to complete their tasks within their allocated work hours. Consult with them when deciding the timing and pace of work
- Choose equipment or appliances with automated or streamlined functions to save time and preserve energy
- Design rosters so employees have a lower risk of fatigue. Include adequate breaks during and between shifts
- Monitor actual hours worked and breaks taken. Intervene to prevent issues or restore capacity until employees have an opportunity to recover
- Avoid the need for overtime whenever possible and monitor overtime hours worked. Consider doing a fatigue risk assessment where appropriate
- For work involving high levels of concentration or exposure to emotionally demanding work for sustained periods:
 - support and encourage regular breaks
 - provide adequate support
- Reduce unnecessary demands and avoid scheduling safety-critical work during night shifts
- Distribute tasks and responsibilities equitably among team members. This avoids certain employees being repeatedly given tasks with high physical, cognitive or emotional demands
- Give a realistic job preview during the recruitment process so applicants know if the role may involve high emotional demands (such as managing disclosures). Do appropriate pre-selection screening
- Consider employees' skills, abilities and capacity when allocating tasks
- Support employees when:
 - they must make difficult decisions
 - challenging situations arise from decisions they have made
- Provide plant, machinery and equipment to reduce physical demands and prevent fatigue
- Provide professional clinical supervision and/or reflective practice for employees who may be regularly exposed to work involving high emotional demands

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ High job demands continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Make employees aware of and adequately train them on the organisation's:
 - workload management system
 - fatigue risk management system
- Provide additional training for supervisors or managers on how to prevent and manage high job demands in their work groups, in accordance with the organisation's systems. For example:
 - workload management system
 - fatigue risk management system



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of high job demands

- Low job control
- Low role clarity
- Poor organisational change management
- Aggression or violence
- Exposure to traumatic events or content
- Poor support
- Low recognition and reward

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Low job control

When a person has little control over aspects of their work, including how or when a job is done.

Examples of low job control

Tasks or jobs where:

- work is 'micromanaged' (every part of work is controlled or scrutinised)
- there is excessive monitoring of work tasks
- work is machine- or computer-paced
- employees have little say in:
 - how they do their work
 - when they can take breaks or change tasks
 - when they do their work
- employees are not involved in decisions that affect them, or their customers or clients
- employees have limited control over rosters or work hours
- employees have limited control over working with clients who present with high levels of distress or unpredictable behaviour
- there is intrusive or excessive surveillance of employees

Examples of risk controls for low job control

- Analyse how tasks are structured and managed to identify risks of low job control. Use the results to design or re-design roles and tasks where required
- Where the pace of work is determined by machine or computer processes, allow employees to:
 - alter the pace
 - pause to take adequate breaks or rotate tasks
- Consult with employees on:
 - how to allocate tasks within teams
 - work objectives and anticipated outputs
 - how work is structured
 - roles, timeframes and resourcing
- Develop performance measures based on criteria that are within employees' control. For example, performance measures that:
 - are achievable
 - do not rely on factors outside the employees' or employer's control

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Low job control continued

- If using surveillance devices, develop policies and procedures before installation that make clear:
 - the purpose of the surveillance, including how and when it is being used
 - how employees and any HSRs will be consulted
 - what data will be captured
 - how long data will be stored
 - who will have access to data
- Provide opportunities for role rotation to enable skill development and job variation

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide training and guidance to managers and supervisors on how to encourage participation in decision-making
- Give employees with insecure work arrangements (such as casual and labour hire employees) equal access to information, instruction and training to allow them to perform their role safely



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of low job control

- Low job demands
- High job demands
- Poor organisational justice
- Poor support
- Poor workplace relationships

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Low job demands

Work involving sustained low physical, mental or emotional effort.

Examples of low job demands

Tasks or jobs where there is:

- insufficient tasks, affecting an employee's motivation
- highly repetitive or monotonous tasks that require low levels of thought-processing and have little variety
- regularly doing tasks that are well below an employee's capabilities
- work that is not comparable to an employee's qualifications, skills and experience

Examples of risk controls for low job demands

- Design recruitment processes to align a candidate's skills, experience and abilities to the demands of the job
- Analyse how tasks are structured and managed to identify risks of low job demands. Use the results to design or re-design roles and tasks where required
- Consider employees' skills, experience and abilities when allocating tasks and setting performance targets
- Consult with employees about the opportunity to broaden the scope of their job. This could include expanding the range of tasks and responsibilities assigned to them
- Rotate tasks and schedules so employees are not always assigned tasks:
 - that need minimal decision-making or thought-processing
 - have little variety
- Provide opportunities for skill development through internal job rotation
- Help managers to be competent supervisors, including by providing support and training where required
- Have regular supervisor/manager check-ins with employees to identify and manage low job demands
- Provide sufficient lighting during night shifts to increase alertness for jobs with low demands. This will reduce the risk of fatigue

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Low job demands continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide training and guidance to supervisors and managers on how to identify:
 - employees who may be experiencing low job demands
 - ways to challenge employees; for example, opportunities for task rotation, skill and career development
- Properly induct and train employees on workload management



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of low job demands

- Poor environmental conditions
- Poor support
- Poor organisational change management

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Low recognition and reward

Where there is a low level or lack of acknowledgment, reward or recognition for an employee's:

- contributions
- achievements
- efforts.

Examples of low recognition and reward

Tasks or jobs where:

- there is a lack of positive feedback or inadequate feedback about performance
- there is a lack of appropriate reward that is proportionate to performance
- there is a lack of recognition of an employee's qualifications, skills and expertise, and the value this brings to an organisation
- there is an imbalance between an employee's efforts and formal or informal recognition and rewards
- there are inadequate employee reward and recognition processes that do not reflect an employee's contributions to the organisation

Examples of risk controls for low recognition and reward

- Hold regular review meetings between employees and their supervisor or manager. These can be a good way to recognise completed work
- Introduce a recognition or rewards system to promptly:
 - express appreciation
 - acknowledge contributions, achievements and efforts
 - celebrate success
- Promote the organisation's reward and recognition program to employees, including its purpose and how to access it
- Make the level of recognition or value of a reward comparable to the level of acknowledgement or achievement, where possible
- Make the recognition and reward system fair and equitable for all employees. It should not require unrealistic efforts
- Formally or informally congratulate employees on a job well done by:
 - holding events such as team lunches or morning teas
 - recognising individuals in team meetings
 - running employee awards programs
 - writing articles in internal publications
 - advising management if an individual or team goes above and beyond
- Consider past contributions and achievements when choosing appropriate employees for internal promotion or other career opportunities

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Low recognition and reward continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide training to supervisors and managers on:
 - providing fair, constructive and valid feedback
 - recognising and rewarding good performance
 - identifying skills, capabilities and attributes in employees and matching these to the organisation's structure, to provide rewarding career development opportunities



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of low recognition and reward

- High job demands
- Low role clarity
- Poor support

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Low role clarity

Jobs where:

- there is uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, tasks and work standards
- important task information is not available
- there are conflicting roles, responsibilities or expectations.

Examples of low role clarity

Tasks and jobs where there is:

- no formal position description
- uncertainty about inherent requirements of the role
- uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, tasks, priorities and work standards
- important task information not available to the employee
- conflicting role responsibilities or expectations; for example, when an employee is told one job is a priority but another manager disagrees or priorities are changed
- overlapping roles and responsibilities
- a manager or supervisor allocating the same tasks to multiple team members, without communicating and clarifying the involvement of other team members
- poor explanation about an employee's performance objectives and accountabilities, and others' expectations of their performance

Examples of risk controls for low role clarity

- Do a job analysis before recruitment. This can help to refine a position description so it clearly explains the:
 - required qualifications, skills and experience
 - role objectives, requirements and responsibilities

A job analysis can also clarify skills, abilities, aptitudes and training requirements before recruitment starts

- Clarify management structures and reporting lines so employees:
 - know who they are directly accountable to
 - are only accountable to one immediate supervisor
- Give employees an up-to-date role or position description that includes the purpose, objectives, requirements, responsibilities, duties and reporting lines
- Clearly communicate expected performance measures that are achievable and reasonable
- Encourage employees to talk to their supervisor or manager early if they are unclear about the scope or responsibilities of their role
- Provide an organisational chart that gives a clear view of structure and communication channels
- Use the organisational structure to reduce duplication and confusion over different work areas who may do similar tasks

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Low role clarity continued

- Implement a system for onboarding and induction to help employees understand their role in the context of the organisation. This could include a structured process designed to address training needs of a new employee, and a supportive buddy system to help with on-the-job learning
- Where there are multiple roles or teams involved in a project, clarify and communicate the following before the project starts:
 - how tasks are structured and managed
 - roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of each party in each task and/or phase of the project
- Consult with employees on any changes that may affect their work
- Develop and maintain a system of work for the reporting and management of low role clarity
- If some role overlap cannot be eliminated, clearly communicate with the employees or teams doing those roles

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Train managers to communicate effectively with their team; for example, clearly explaining task allocation to team members
- Where there are multiple roles or teams involved in a project, provide information and instruction to everyone on:
 - how tasks are structured and managed
 - roles, responsibilities and accountabilities in each task and/or phase of the project
- Give employees role-specific training through onboarding and induction processes



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of low role clarity

- Poor organisational change management
- High job demands
- Poor workplace relationships
- Remote or isolated work
- Poor support

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Poor environmental conditions

When employees are exposed to poor-quality or hazardous working environments, including in work-provided accommodation.

Examples of poor environmental conditions

Workplace environments with:

- poor air quality
- high or disturbing noise levels
- poor lighting
- inadequate workspace
- poor ergonomics
- extreme temperatures
- employees working near unsafe machinery
- poor workplace hygiene facilities
- vibration
- hazardous manual handling

Poor environmental conditions in work-provided accommodation can include:

- noisy or uncomfortable conditions that disrupt employees' sleep
- crowded conditions
- poor hygiene facilities
- being isolated from support or amenities
- accommodation that cannot be secured
- being unable to freely enter or leave accommodation

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Poor environmental conditions continued

Examples of risk controls for poor environmental conditions

- When choosing work-provided accommodation:
 - minimise any risks associated with other psychosocial hazards; for example, aggression or violence, or sexual harassment
 - provide appropriate facilities that are regularly cleaned and maintained
 - provide appropriate space to avoid overcrowding
 - provide secure accommodation
- Where poor environmental conditions cannot be eliminated, provide appropriate equipment or modifications to minimise the risks. For example:
 - appropriate lighting for the work being done
 - noise-reducing barriers or equipment
 - a temperature that is comfortable for employees and appropriate for the work being done
 - PPE such as hearing protection and appropriate workwear for extreme temperatures
- For desk-based work, provide ergonomic workstation assessments and suitable ergonomic equipment

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide information, instruction or training to help employees understand:
 - the potential risks from poor environmental conditions
 - risk controls in place
- Provide adequate information, instruction and training in using any equipment needed for the role



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of poor environmental conditions

- Remote or isolated work
- Aggression or violence
- Exposure to traumatic events or content
- High job demands

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Poor organisational change management

When change related to an employee's work conditions is poorly managed, supported or communicated. This may include:

- a lack of consideration of the potential effects on health, safety and performance
- inadequate consultation with employees.

Examples of poor organisational change management

Workplaces where:

- employees are not given sufficient information about organisational change
- there is a lack of meaningful consultation before major changes
- new technology is introduced and implementation difficulties are poorly managed
- broad organisational change, such as mergers, acquisitions, restructures or downsizing, is poorly managed or communicated
- employees are not given sufficient time to adjust to changes
- employees are not given adequate support for changes that may affect their ongoing employment

Examples of risk controls for poor organisational change management

- Engage and consult with employees so that updates and planned changes are communicated and actioned:
 - clearly
 - consistently
 - transparently
 - at the right time
- Do a change impact assessment to identify and analyse potential risks and effects from the proposed change. Develop a risk management plan
- Communicate the change management and implementation plan to relevant employees
- Communicate updates or changes to the change management and implementation plan in a timely and transparent way
- Tell employees about:
 - any potential effect on their roles as early as possible
 - decisions affecting the security of their employment, including reasons for those decisions. This should be done both verbally and in writing within a reasonable timeframe
- Provide adequate support for employees during meetings where significant changes are being discussed. This includes psychological support, such as EAP, where required
- Before asking any employees affected by change for a decision, give them enough time and support to consider the information and their options

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Poor organisational change management continued

- Where possible, give employees opportunities to take part in the change process. Encourage feedback from employees
- Use a role-mapping process to identify suitable internal redeployment opportunities for affected employees
- Update or provide new position descriptions to reflect any changes in roles. Include employee feedback where possible
- Consider how new psychosocial hazards may arise and create a risk following a period of change

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide regular and transparent updates to employees affected by change through various communication methods
- Provide employees with adequate training and supervision to help them adjust to any changes
- Provide supervisors and managers with training on how to adequately support employees through periods of change



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of poor organisational change management

- Poor support
- High job demands
- Low job control
- Low role clarity

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Poor organisational justice

Situations where:

- people in positions of authority do not apply processes fairly when making decisions (procedural fairness)
- relevant employees are not given necessary information (informational fairness)
- employees are not treated with dignity and respect (interpersonal fairness).

Examples of poor organisational justice

- Inconsistent application of policies and procedures
- Unfairness or bias in decisions about allocation of resources and work
- Unwillingness to listen to other points of view or consider all available information
- A lack of transparency in sharing relevant information or withholding information
- Poor management of underperformance or harmful behaviours, including failing to take action in a reasonable timeframe
- Favouritism, nepotism, bias and lack of impartiality in decision-making
- Hiring or promoting people for reasons that are not related to performance and experience, or not using valid selection and consistent recruitment methods
- A lack of transparency or structure around decision-making and work outcomes
- A lack of respect or dignity in the treatment or management of staff
- Intrusive or excessive surveillance of employees
- Employees or managers believing that rules do not apply to them and failing to follow policies, guidelines and procedures, without accountability

Examples of risk controls for poor organisational justice

- Foster a leadership culture of transparency, openness, respect, fairness and equity
- Set clear expectations for supervisors and managers to treat all employees with respect, dignity and civility
- Develop performance measures based on criteria that are within employees' control. For example, performance measures that:
 - are achievable
 - do not rely on factors outside the employees' or employer's control
- Ensure supervisors or managers regularly provide constructive, fair and valid feedback to employees so:
 - they know how well they are performing
 - role expectations are aligned

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Poor organisational justice continued

- Appoint or promote employees based on performance, using standardised, valid and reliable selection and recruitment methods
- Use interview panels, rather than a sole interviewer, in recruitment processes. This includes for internal promotions
- Tell employees about decisions affecting them, including reasons. This should be done both verbally and in writing within a reasonable timeframe
- Provide employees with a mechanism to appeal the result of a completed process or procedure
- Tell employees about the processes used to manage poor performance; for example:
 - expectations of all parties
 - stages and timeframes of the process
 - involved parties
 - supports provided
- Consult with employees on the performance feedback process; for example, encourage employees to respond to issues raised about their work performance
- Keep discussions focused on improving work tasks or behaviours that are within the employee's control
- If using surveillance devices, develop policies and procedures before installation that make clear:
 - the purpose of the surveillance, including how and when it is being used
 - how employees and any HSRs will be consulted
 - what data will be captured
 - how long data will be stored
 - who will have access to data
- Communicate organisational policies and procedures to all employees, both at induction and when they are updated. Make these accessible to all employees
- Apply policies and procedures consistently and fairly
- Communicate about organisational direction, strategy, objectives and planning to all employees

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Poor organisational justice continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide supervisors and managers with instruction and training on how to:
 - communicate information fairly and transparently
 - apply policies and procedures fairly
- Provide adequate information, instruction and training to employees to enable them to perform in their role, particularly when there have been changes to their role or work
- Provide clear information, instruction or training to employees when changes are made to the systems of work



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of poor organisational justice

- Poor support
- Low role clarity
- Low job control
- Poor organisational change management

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Poor support

When employees do not have adequate:

- practical or emotional support from supervisors and co-workers
- information or training to support their work performance
- tools, equipment and resources to do their job.

Examples of poor support

- Supervisors or managers who are not available, practically or emotionally, to help or provide guidance
- Supervisors or managers who lack empathy and self-awareness
- Inconsistent or insufficient communication from supervisors or managers
- A lack of proactive and meaningful contribution and collaboration from co-workers
- Co-workers are too busy to help each other
- Inadequate information, instruction or training to support employees to do their job
- Inadequate training provided on how to use tools and equipment needed to complete the job
- Insufficient resources provided to complete tasks needed for a role, such as appropriate staffing and time

Examples of risk controls for poor support

- Give employees the necessary tools, equipment and resources to do their jobs properly and safely
- Provide additional assistance when employees do challenging tasks, such as:
 - new duties
 - roles and tasks involving high physical, cognitive or emotional demands
- Backfill roles in a timely manner
- Design work to emphasise team collaboration rather than independent working. Allow opportunities for incidental peer discussion and team collaboration
- Foster a supportive culture in the workplace by coaching leaders to engage in behaviours such as:
 - active listening
 - being self-aware and culturally aware
 - providing emotional and practical support
 - encouraging team cohesion
- Identify and support opportunities for team members to engage in professional development
- Provide management with appropriate resourcing so they can support employees adequately; for example, sufficient and appropriate staff resourcing
- Consider the number of employees who report to each supervisor or manager, and if managers have enough time to provide adequate support to each employee
- Hold regular performance reviews with fair, valid and constructive feedback, with a focus on development goals

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Poor support continued

- Provide new employees with:
 - a thorough induction to the organisation and work unit
 - a structured process designed to address training needs of a new employee, and a supportive buddy system to help with on-the-job learning
- Provide and promote flexible work practices that best suit individual and business needs
- Implement a system for regular and reliable communication. For example, one-on-one meetings, team meetings, all-staff meetings, internal newsletters, emails, intranets or noticeboards
- Make regular check-ins and timely support available for employees who need to escalate operational issues, or work remotely or in isolation

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide suitable training for employees to be competent in their roles. Training should be both task-specific and more general. For example, code of conduct training in ethics and behavioural expectations, psychological health and cultural awareness training
- Provide management training, which could include:
 - effective communication, including active listening
 - interpersonal skills
 - emotional intelligence, including empathy and expressing and managing own emotions
 - self-awareness and management styles
 - cultural awareness
 - understanding and managing team dynamics
 - providing emotional and practical support to team members
 - workload and resource management
 - health and safety
 - performance management, including the provision of fair, valid and constructive feedback
 - conflict resolution
- Make relevant training available to all employees, including part-time, contract, casual and shift-work employees, and those in remote locations



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of poor support

- High job demands
- Remote or isolated work
- Low role clarity
- Poor organisational justice
- Low recognition or reward

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Poor workplace relationships

Interactions in the workplace that may be harmful. These can start with low-intensity incivility. If unaddressed, they can escalate into more harmful interactions.

Examples of poor workplace relationships

Jobs or workplaces with:

- poor relationships between employees and:
 - their supervisors or managers
 - other employees
 - clients or others the employee interacts with
- low-level incivility; for example, sarcasm or mocking
- conflict between employees and their supervisors, managers or other employees. This becomes worse if managers are reluctant or refuse to deal with harmful behaviours and the conflict remains unresolved
- harmful behaviours between employees resulting from:
 - a lack of fairness and equity in dealing with organisational issues
 - poorly managed performance issues
- a hostile or isolating working environment due to:
 - acts targeted at an employee or group of employees
 - exclusion of an employee or group of employees
- supervisors or managers not modelling appropriate workplace behaviours

Proactive steps need to be taken as early as possible to prevent or reduce interactions that may become harmful. Unresolved conflict may be a precursor to other hazards like bullying, or aggression or violence

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Poor workplace relationships continued

Examples of risk controls for poor workplace relationships

- Use thorough recruitment processes, including:
 - psychometric testing
 - structured and consistent interview questions based on your organisation and team values and needs
 - choosing appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced candidates

This may help to make recruitment and promotion decisions that complement the culture and values of the team and organisation
- Set and manage behaviour expectations, which could include:
 - a code of conduct
 - consulting with employees to develop team rules or a charter that defines the team's purpose and outlines factors for success
 - encouraging employees to communicate effectively with each other to resolve issues in the first instance, where appropriate
 - clear accountabilities for supervisors and managers to appropriately respond to reports of potentially harmful behaviours
 - formal and informal confidential complaint-handling processes to enable the reporting of potentially harmful behaviour
 - conflict resolution processes such as conflict coaching, facilitated discussions or mediation
 - independent investigations into serious allegations of misconduct or other harmful behaviours, and acting on the findings in a timely manner
 - clearly allocating all tasks so there are no conflicts over role uncertainty
- Create and promote a team culture where employees:
 - help each other
 - provide support when required
 - trust and encourage each other to perform at their best
- Recognise that differences in employees' ideas and opinions lead to positive and creative outcomes and opportunities for respectful discussion
- Manage people issues and their resolution in a fair, consistent and timely manner. This includes coaching individual employees who are demonstrating harmful behaviours

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Poor workplace relationships continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Providing conflict management training to all employees, including managers, to teach them how to diffuse difficult or confronting situations
- Training managers how to:
 - respond to complaints in a sensitive way
 - support employees who have experienced poor workplace relationships
- Providing training for all employees on workplace harassment, discrimination or other unreasonable behaviour. This should include how to identify and report these behaviours



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of poor workplace relationships

- Bullying
- Aggression or violence
- Sexual harassment
- High job demands
- Low role clarity
- Low job control
- Poor support

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Remote or isolated work

Remote work is work at locations where:

- access to resources and communications is difficult
- travel times might be lengthy.

Isolated work can be where:

- there are no or few other people around
- access to help from others, especially in an emergency, might be difficult.

An employee can be working alone or in isolation even if other people are close by. For example, an employee working at a temporary location who is the sole representative from their team or organisation.

Examples of remote or isolated work

Employees who:

- work in geographically isolated or remote locations; for example, a farm or mine
- work or travel alone
- travel long distances or for long periods for work
- fly-in fly-out (FIFO) or drive-in drive-out (DIDO)
- work offshore
- work in isolation from other employees; for example:
 - a contractor at a location of another employer
 - a community nurse conducting home visits
 - an employee working interstate away from their team members and/or their supervisor or manager
- work from home
- are recent migrants and may feel socially isolated because of language and cultural differences

Examples of risk controls for remote or isolated work

- Do thorough risk assessments for work identified as being remote or isolated, including when workplace locations change daily
- Where possible, design work so employees do not work alone, particularly:
 - during higher risk shifts or times
 - for certain tasks where additional risks may be present; for example, caring responsibilities for clients with a high risk of aggression or violence
- Implement a buddy system
- Consider the layout and design of the workplace to minimise risk; for example, client consultation rooms

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Remote or isolated work continued

- Control access to the workplace by installing effective barriers
- Consider visibility and coverage of monitored CCTV
- Develop and implement emergency management and response plans
- Develop and implement clear communication procedures so employees can access immediate support from co-workers, management, others or emergency services when required
- Provide employees with appropriate equipment to facilitate communications in their location; for example, satellite phones
- Provide satellite tracking systems or devices. Consult with employees about the purpose of the tracking and limits for privacy purposes
- Develop and implement check-in procedures before and after travelling or meeting customers and clients off site. For example, texts, phone calls or messages to a team chat
- Provide security guards or patrols
- Provide escorts for employees to their vehicles or work-provided accommodation if working alone after hours
- Provide access to safe and suitable work-provided accommodation:
 - for FIFO or DIDO employees
 - if extended travel and stopovers are required
- Provide personal duress alarms. These should include an automatic warning feature that:
 - raises the alarm in an emergency
 - is activated by a lack of employee activity
- Provide adequate time for employees to connect with their social support networks, both onsite and away from the workplace
- Connect employees with support from local cultural groups and networks
- Provide interpreter support, where possible or required
- Regularly check in and monitor to make sure employees feel supported and are coping with working from their remote or isolated location. For example, set up regular meetings
- Create opportunities for team communications; for example, by using online tools or apps to establish team-wide chat groups
- Provide a 24/7 point of contact if employees need to contact the office

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Remote or isolated work continued

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Require all employees, including contractors, to:
 - do a site-specific induction
 - be made aware of the unique risks of the site and management plans
- Provide training on procedures for remote and isolated work, including emergency management plans and communication protocols
- Provide skills training in situational awareness, dynamic risk assessment and de-escalation techniques
- Provide first aid training, including for emergencies



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of remote or isolated work

- Poor support
- Poor environmental conditions
- High job demands
- Low job control
- Aggression or violence

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls



Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment has the same meaning given by section 92(1) of the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (EO Act).

The EO Act states that a person sexually harasses another person if he or she:

- a) makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person; or
- b) engages in any other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person

in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

This definition is correct at the time of publication. See legislation.vic.gov.au for current version of the EO Act.

Examples of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment can be:

- physical, including gestures
- verbal, including through online spaces
- written (text or images), including through online spaces and messaging or social media platforms – these don't have to be connected to work

Sexual harassment can come in many forms. Some examples can include:

- actual or attempted sexual assault
- sexual acts, such as masturbating directed at or in front of an individual
- intrusive questions or sexualised comments about things like:
 - appearance
 - relationship status
 - sexuality
 - bodily functions
- sexually suggestive behaviour, such as leering or staring
- brushing up against someone, touching, fondling or hugging
- sexually suggestive comments, questions or jokes
- displaying offensive sexual images or objects
- repeated requests to go out
- requests for sex
- sexually explicit emails, text messages, images or posts on social media, messaging or online platforms
- contact that has been welcomed in the past, but is not anymore

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

◆ Sexual harassment continued

Examples of risk controls for sexual harassment

- Leaders commit to creating a culture of respect and inclusion
- Supervisors and managers role-model appropriate workplace behaviours
- Develop and communicate the organisation's plan to prevent sexual harassment, including strategies to address:
 - gender inequality
 - lack of diversity
 - power imbalances at the workplace
- Where possible, design work so that employees don't work alone, particularly for higher risk times, shifts or tasks
- Clearly communicate behaviour expectations to clients, customers and the public
- Through workplace design, enable employees to see who is entering the premises and restrict access when necessary
- Control access to the workplace by installing effective barriers. Ensure they are used at high-risk times and for high-risk tasks
- Keep the workplace secure, maintained, adequately lit and fit for purpose, including car parks
- Install, and regularly maintain and test, communication and duress alarm systems
- Install CCTV cameras or other surveillance features. If using surveillance devices, develop policies and procedures before installation that make clear:
 - the purpose of the surveillance, including how and when it is being used
 - how employees and any HSRs will be consulted
 - what data will be captured
 - how long data will be stored
 - who will have access to data
- Enable access to private and secure work-provided accommodation and facilities
- Design work uniforms or clothing requirements to be practical for the work undertaken
- Enforce responsible service of alcohol requirements in workplaces where alcohol is served
- Do a risk assessment and develop a management or support plan for students, clients, patients or residents who engage in sexually inappropriate behaviours. This should be done in consultation with relevant professionals. Make employees aware of these plans and train them to respond appropriately. Regularly review these plans and communicate any changes
- Encourage employees to report any sexual harassment they experience or witness
- Provide various formal and informal options for protected or confidential reporting. This includes circumstances where the report involves a direct manager or member of the senior management team

Appendix C – Examples of psychosocial hazards and risk controls

➤ Sexual harassment continued

- Provide and communicate an accessible policy and procedure that:
 - defines sexual harassment
 - sets expectations about behaviours
 - explains reporting options and how the organisation will respond to reports
- Support all parties throughout the process when a report of sexual harassment is made
- Independently investigate reports of sexual harassment. Action any outcomes in a fair, timely and transparent way

Examples of information, instruction or training that can support risk controls

- Provide information, instruction and training to all employees on the organisation's sexual harassment policy and procedure. This includes:
 - defining what behaviours constitute sexual harassment
 - explaining reporting options and how the organisation will respond to the report
 - outlining what supports are available to all parties
- Provide skills training on being an active bystander and what to do if sexual harassment is witnessed
- Educate employees about the organisation's risk management plan and behavioural expectations before work events or travel. For example, responsible consumption of alcohol
- Provide training on how to identify and respond to other psychosocial hazards and risks that may increase the risk of sexual harassment
- Provide targeted training to supervisors and managers on how to respond to informal and formal reports of sexual harassment



Examples of other psychosocial hazards that may increase the risk of sexual harassment

- Remote or isolated work
- Aggression or violence
- Poor support
- Low job control
- Gendered violence



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