

Your Safety Matters

This information letter is distributed to those people who are ensuring that their workplace is safe and healthy. This includes members of OHS Committees, OHS Representatives, Safety Officers, Supervisors, Managers and Directors. "Your Safety Matters" (formerly "Committee Member") is free information letter which has been distributed since 1996.

Control of Risks

As you know the OHS Act 2000 placed a duty on all employers to consult with their employees on matters that affect their health and safety in the workplace.

In particular, the OHS Committee or OHS Representative should be consulted and given the opportunity to make their recommendation in eliminating and controlling risks to occupational health & safety in your workplace.

But what does "control" mean and how much control is enough? "Control" of risks is set out in clause 5 of the OHS Regulation 2001.



Clause 5 says that the obligation to control a risk means that if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate a risk then an employer must minimise the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable by taking the following steps (in the order specified);

1. Substitute the hazard (eg. materials, equipment or substance) that poses the risk by replacing it with materials, equipment or substances that are less risky.
2. Isolate employees from the hazard which poses the risk eg. remote handling, installing guards, barriers, increasing the distance.
3. Minimise the risk by engineering means eg. alter the tools, equipment and use automatic controls, provide effective ventilation.
4. Minimise the risk by administrative means eg. adopting safe work practices, job rotation, providing appropriate training, instruction, information.
5. Use personal protective equipment.

A combination of the above measures must be used if one measure is not sufficient.

This publication provides general information about ohs. It is not a legal opinion and does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law to be applied to a particular problem.