



## Psychosocial Risks – Inform, Train, Instruct or Supervise

Psychosocial hazards and risks were specifically incorporated into the WHS Regulation on 1 October 2022 and such hazards and risks have to be dealt with using the risk management principles covered in the WHS Act and WHS Regulation clause 55A-D. [ref 1]

### Reporting and Consulting about WHS Risks

When staff discover risks and hazards in their workplace these must be reported to their supervisors and managers who in turn report these up to senior management for directions and decisions if they cannot be dealt with immediately or there are wider potential consequences requiring investigation.

If more information is needed then representatives of the PCBU consult with all persons involved in the incident or report so that actions can be taken to eliminate or manage the risks. Consultation will need to involve Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) if the workplace has workgroups represented by HSRs, and the Health & Safety Committee if one has been established.

### Health and Safety Committee Meetings

When health and safety committees meet, they could have on their agenda the subject of psychosocial hazards and risks for discussion. As it is the committee's job to assist the business with developing WHS policies and procedures, the committee could take up reports and incidents noted in the months since they last met and offer suggestions for addressing psychosocial risks and hazards. [Ref 2 & 3]

### Risk Management Procedure

It is standard risk management procedure to identify, assess, control, monitor, and review all WHS hazards and risks in the workplace. This is the duty of the PCBU. Doing this well prevents hazards and risks from becoming incidents. [Ref 4]

Putting in controls, following those controls, monitoring and periodically reviewing them, is the basic concept of and the end goal of WHS risk management. The same approach applies to psychosocial hazards and risks.

### Information, Training, Instruction or Supervision

All workers (including supervisors and managers), must be informed, trained, and instructed or supervised regarding psychosocial hazards and risks so that they can recognise those hazards and risks and take appropriate actions to deal with them in accordance with the risk management system in their workplace. **It is essential that all persons in a workplace should be able to recognise a psychosocial hazard and its risks and take appropriate actions within the risk management system.**

SafeWork NSW's Code of Practice *Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work* at page 22 advises that;

*“The PCBU must provide adequate and suitable information, training, instruction or supervision to workers (including supervisors and managers) which has regard to and includes:*

- *the nature of the work and tasks to be carried out by workers*
- *the psychosocial hazards and risks associated with the work*
- *the required control measures including safe systems of work and how to comply with these*
- *how workers should report and respond if a problem or risk arises, and*
- *ensure information, training and instruction is readily understood by any person it is provided to.”* [Ref 5]

#### **Reference:**

Ref 1. WHS Regulation. Division 11 *Psychosocial Risks*

Ref 2. WHS Act, Section 78 - *Meetings of committee*

Ref 3. WHS Act Section 77 *Functions of committee*

Ref 4. WHS Regulation Clauses 32-38 *Management of risks*

Ref 5. SafeWork NSW Code of Practice *Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work*

If you are interested in learning more about psychosocial hazards and risks Courtenell offers a WHS risk management course on this topic. Feel free to contact one of our WHS consultants for more information.

24<sup>th</sup> November 2022