



## Do PCBUs Have To Train Their Supervisors?

The answer to the question in the above heading lies in four sections of the WHS Act, sections 17, 18, 19 and 28. This article explains why the answer is yes, and how you can use these for sections of the Act to guide you in what training you give to your Supervisors.

### The Key Four Sections in the WHS Act

Section 19 of the WHS tells us that the primary duty of care of the PCBU is to do everything “reasonably practicable” to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the workplace.

Section 18 explains what “reasonably practicable” means and what a PCBU must take into consideration to achieve it.

Section 17 tells us that if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks, then the PCBU must minimise them so far as is reasonably practicable.

And section 28 tells us that Supervisors (Workers);

- must take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and other persons, and
- comply with any reasonable instruction from the PCBU, and
- co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the PCBU.

So Supervisors have their own duty of care (section 28) but in addition, are given other WHS responsibilities by the PCBU. The PCBU needs their Supervisors to take operational responsibility for health and safety in their area of the workplace so that the PCBU’s duty of “reasonably practicable” is satisfied.

The PCBU needs to ensure that their Supervisors are competent to do that. And that is achieved through training. If Supervisors do not know, understand, and implement required actions then the PCBU is in breach of their primary duty of care (section 19)

### What Training is Required

The training that should be provided to Supervisors could include understanding and implementing specifics such as:

- WHS legal requirements and duty of care for their workplace
- Their duty of care and what they must do to satisfy it
- The WHS responsibilities given to them by the PCBU and what they must do to satisfy those
- How their role fits with, and contributes to, the WHS Management System
- How to inspect their area of the workplace and identify hazards
- The risks and the risk control measures in their workplace
- How to conduct a risk assessment
- How to effectively consult with Workers, HSR’s and Health & Safety Committee members
- How to do an incident investigation