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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 WHS Committees, WHS Representatives, Safety Officers, Supervisors, Managers and Directors. "Your Safety Matters" (formerly "Committee Member") is a free information letter which has been distributed since 1996.

IDENTIFYING HAZARDS

This is a vital first step towards eliminating or controlling WHS risks in your workplace.

A hazard is anything (including work practices or procedures) that has the potential to harm the health and safety of a person. They are best identified by using systematic methods (orderly and regular).



Identification methods include:

- Doing regular workplace inspections. These are planned, regular, physical inspections of the workplace by managers, supervisors, H&S Committee members or Health and Safety Representatives who observe, use check lists and discussion with employees to locate hazards.
- Training employees in spotting hazards and making it easy and rewarding for them to report any they observe.
- Monitoring the environment and the health of employees for evidence of any harmful effects from hazardous chemicals.
- Establishing consultation mechanisms such as a Health & Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representatives so that employees can raise WHS issues.
- Checking records of injuries, illness and incidents.
- Investigating all incidents and accidents.
- Getting a regular safety audit done. This is an orderly and periodic check to see whether the WHS management system is being followed and is effective.
- Reviewing the potential impact of new work practices, or new plant and equipment.
- Researching for information, developments and trends in WHS in your industry.

What methods are used in your workplace?

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

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