



Nursery and garden centres information and checklist

Introduction

In 2010 WorkSafe conducted an inspection campaign in the nursery and garden centre industry aimed at improving safety and health issues within the industry. The following newsletter was developed to identify safety issues in the industry and to assist you in meeting the requirements of the OSH legislation.

The checklists used by WorkSafe inspectors during this campaign are included in this newsletter. Please use the checklists to ensure your workplace meets the occupation safety and health legislation.

In addition, WorkSafe has a number of publications available on its website to assist you in meeting these requirements as well as a checklist on page 6 of this publication.

How are people in your industry getting hurt?

- Muscular stress while lifting
- Slips, trips and falls
- Muscular stress while handling
- Vehicle accidents

What is a RISK ASSESSMENT?

The occupational safety and health laws require risk assessments to be carried out.

A risk assessment is the process of determining whether there is a risk associated with an identified hazard, that is, whether there is any likelihood of injury or harm. The process should include consultation with people involved in the task, as well as consideration of the, experience and training of the operator, individual tasks to be performed and the length of time the operator is exposed to the identified hazards.

Information to help you meet the OSH laws?

The WorkSafe website contains a number of publications which may assist you in making your workplace a safer place. Go to the WorkSafe website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

- Occupational Safety and Health Act and regulations
- *Guidance note: General duty of care in Western Australian workplaces*
- *Code of practice: Preventing Legionnaires disease.*
- *Code of practice: Manual tasks*

How do I use these checklists?

1. Use the checklists in this newsletter to inspect your workplace. You may see other hazards as you are going through – add them to the checklist.
2. Anything that you have ticked 'No' or added to the list needs to be fixed. So, look at each hazard using the table below to prioritise identified hazards.

Risk rating table – for working out level of risk Use the vertical and horizontal columns to consider both the likelihood of injury or harm to health and the consequences to work out the level of risk

Likelihood of injury or harm to health	Consequences of any injuries or harm to health			
	Insignificant eg no injuries	Moderate eg first aid	Major eg extensive injuries	Catastrophic eg death
Very likely	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
Moderate	Low	High	Extreme	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Highly unlikely (rare)	Low	Moderate	High	High

Risk assessment is a 'best estimate' on the basis of available information. It is important the responsible person undertaking a risk assessment has the necessary information, knowledge and experience of the work environment and work process, or such a person is involved.

3. If the hazard falls into 'high' or 'extreme', based on your view of how likely it is someone will get hurt and what level of injury could happen, then you need to fix it straight away.

If it is lower down in the table – moderate or low – then plan when you will fix it.

Remember hazards have to be controlled – you can't ignore them.

Manual tasks and Slips trips and falls

What are manual tasks?

Manual tasks are activities requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain a person, animal or thing.

Some of the most common tasks causing injuries in nursery and garden centres are:

- Pushing and pulling heavy trolleys
- Lifting and carrying bags and plants
- Loading and unloading

These are only a few of the manual tasks that can cause injury. Any task that involves high force, bad postures, static postures such as standing for long periods, or repeated movements can cause injury. These tasks need to be identified and changed to reduce the likelihood of injury.

Manual tasks can cause injury immediately (eg. lifting something heavy and injuring you back) or over time through gradual wear and tear on your body (eg. damaging your back by lifting heavy pots).

What is the current legislation on manual tasks?

The *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* contains general duties and responsibilities placed upon employers and workers to ensure their own safety at work, and that of others who might be injured by the work. These duties extend to the prevention of manual handling injuries.

The Act also requires employers to investigate matters reported to them by workers, determine the action to be taken (if any), and notify the worker who made the report of the action to be taken.

The Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 require the employer to identify each hazard that is likely to arise from manual tasks and to assess the risk of injury or harm.

How do I reduce the risk of lifting injuries

- Eliminate or reduce the need to lift, lower, carry by:
 - know the nature of load;
 - using mechanical aids;
 - minimising the distance loads are carried;
 - arranging work tasks and physical layout to minimise the number of times the load is lifted or carried; and
- Keeping loads at hip height;
- Test the weight of the bag before it is lifted.

How can manual handling hazards be identified?

Manual handling hazards can be identified by:

- reviewing hazard/injury reports;
- consulting with employees and safety and health representatives; and
- by observing tasks being performed.

What is a safe weight to lift?

- **There is no safe weight. The risk of injury increases as the weight of the load increases. Evaluating the risk posed by the weight of the object needs to take into account:**
- how long the load is handled;
- how often the load is handled; and
- the physical characteristics of the individual.

Code of practice Manual tasks 2010

Keep up to date with the latest information regarding manual tasks.....it's in your best interest. Copies are available to download from the WorkSafe website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

Is using a trolley a good idea?

To avoid manual handling injuries the use of trolleys is recommended. However trolleys that are not maintained or overloaded can result in injury.

Strain injuries may occur when:

- trolleys are difficult to manoeuvre;
- trolley wheels are too small or poorly maintained;
- the trolleys and their loads are too heavy when other risk factors, such as the number of times a trolley is moved or the workplace layout, are taken into account;
- surfaces over which trolleys are pushed are uneven or mismatched;
- trolleys are moved over large distances or up steep slopes;
- trolleys are difficult to grip due to the absence or poor location of handles; and
- vision is impaired by an overloaded trolley.

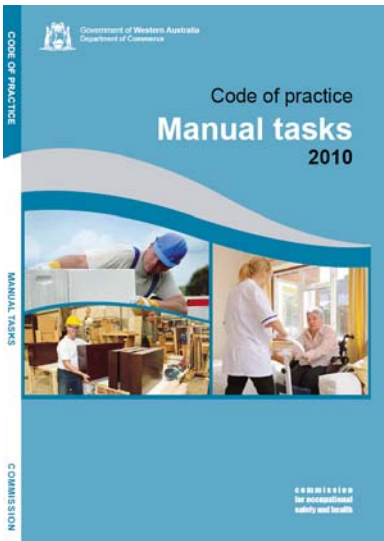
What risk factors contribute to slips and trips incidents?

Slips and trips account for 20% of all lost time injuries every year. They can result in serious injuries and lengthy periods of time off work.

Risk factors that contribute to slips and trips injuries will vary according to the type of workplace and work tasks being completed.

Common risk factor categories include:

- Floor surface & condition
- Floor contamination
- Objects on the floor
- Ability to see floor/ walkways/ hazards
- Cleaning/ spill containment
- Space & design
- Stairs & stepladders
- Work activities, pace & processes
- Footwear & clothing
- Individual factors



How can I reduce the risk of hazards in my workplace?

There are many controls that employers can use to prevent hazards in the workplace. Firstly though, it is important to complete hazard identification and a risk assessment in consultation with your staff. This will ensure that the right control is chosen for the hazards that are relevant in YOUR workplace.

Common controls used in workplaces can be categorised according to the hierarchy of controls:

- Eliminate the hazard - install more power points to avoid cords on floor, widen aisles
- Substitution - resurface floors with 'less hazardous materials'
- Isolation - restrict access to some work areas
- Engineering controls (minimising risk by redesign) - improve lighting, mark walkways install drainage, use ramps instead of steps
- Administrative controls - ensure good housekeeping - clean up spills immediately, use signs for slippery or wet floors
- Personal Protective Equipment proper footwear

Should gloves be worn?

The three steps in determining whether gloves should be worn for protection in the workplace are to identify each hazard, assess the risk of injury or harm and consider the means to reduce the risk from the hazard.

If it can be clearly shown that:

- there are situations at work where risks to safety and health by skin exposure are unavoidable; and
- methods of control other than protective gloves are not practical

then the employer has a legal responsibility to provide suitable protective gloves to each workers who may be exposed to risks.

All protective gloves provided must comply with Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 2161.1:2000 – *Occupational protective gloves – Selection, use and maintenance*, and be compatible with:

- the wearer;
- the work to be done; and
- any other personal protective equipment required to be worn.

Choose carefully

Before gloves are purchased, consider the following:

- the hazards the hands will be exposed to;
- the type of material(s) that will give appropriate protection;
- how much manual dexterity is needed;
- the style of glove that would be suitable;
- whether the gloves are a good fit (employees should be able to try on samples); and
- the range of glove sizes available;
- whether the gloves are acceptable to the wearer (eg cultural differences may rule out the use of materials such as pigskin);
- what cleaning and maintenance will be needed;
- how often the gloves need to be replaced.

For more information on selecting gloves refer to:

- the MSDS for any hazardous substances used;

Safety priorities for working with hazardous substances

Lost time at work, illness and sometimes death are all outcomes of failing to store, use or dispose of hazardous substances properly. Great care is essential and following the information in this leaflet will reduce the risk of such serious outcomes.

Hazardous substances are any chemicals or other materials that may put people at risk. They include chemical paint strippers, battery acid and fuel. Some substances may cause allergic reactions and other medical conditions of varying severity. Other substances may be corrosive, harmful or toxic.

Employers must identify any hazardous substances being used in their workplace and should question whether their use is essential. For example replace spotting agents containing hydrogen fluoride with a safer one.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be provided for each hazardous substance, identifying the ingredients, and giving health information and precautions for safe use and handling. Continual vigilance is essential.

During their inspection, inspectors will be looking for many of the common problems affecting the handling of hazardous substances that WorkSafe has found in workplaces.

The elements of the checklist do not cover all mandatory requirements under workplace safety and health laws. However, following the checklist will assist you to identify any shortcomings in your procedures or training and to correct or update them, thus helping you to meet your safety and health responsibilities.

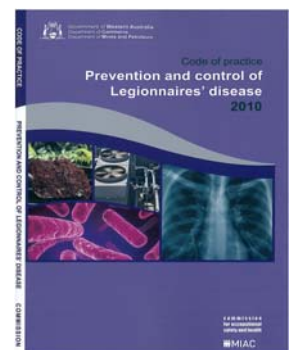
In looking at safety in relation to hazardous substances and all workplace safety matters, please remember the three ThinkSafe steps: spot the hazard; assess the risk; and make the changes.

Legionnaires' disease

Legionella longbeachae, which has been linked to most cases of Legionnaires' disease in WA, is commonly found in gardening soils, potting mix and mulches. The disease is usually caused by inhaling contaminated aerosols. To prevent exposure to *Legionella* bacteria when handling potting mix and other compost materials, people should take precautionary steps such as:

- avoiding potting plants in unventilated areas, such as enclosed greenhouses;
- wearing gloves;
- avoiding transferring potting mix from hand to mouth, eg rubbing face with a soiled hand;
- wearing a face mask;
- always washing hands after handling potting mix, even if gloves have been worn, as *Legionella* bacteria can remain on hands contaminated by potting mix for up to one hour;
- storing potting mix in a cool place, away from the sun;
- keeping soils and potting mix damp;
- avoiding raising soil near evaporative coolers;
- moistening contents of bags through a small opening;
- watering gardens and composts gently, using a low pressure hose; and
- when handling bulk quantities of potting mixes or other soil products, using procedures that minimize dust generation.

For more information go to the *Code of practice: Preventing Legionnaires' disease*.



What can you do to reduce exposure to UV radiation?

Health and safety legislation in each Australian state means your employer has a legal responsibility to provide a safe working environment.

If you work outdoors and your workplace doesn't offer any sun protection measures, raise the issue with your health and safety representative or manager.

This legislation also states that, you must cooperate with your workplace's sun protection program, so be sure to cover up against the sun.

If self-employed, it is in your best interest to look after yourself and use sun protection at work



Safe movement of vehicles at workplaces

Vehicles and mobile plant moving in and around workplaces cause far too many occupational injuries and deaths in WA.

Reversing, loading, unloading and pedestrian movements are the activities most frequently linked to accidents.

To avoid incidents, traffic and pedestrian movement needs to be designed, planned and controlled.

Here are some tips for safe movement of vehicles:

Design traffic routes so they are wide enough for the largest vehicle using them. They should be one-way (if possible) and have clearly signed traffic instructions.

- Separate pedestrian footpaths or walkways from traffic or make traffic routes wide enough for both vehicles and pedestrians. Use pedestrian barriers to prevent people walking in front of vehicles.
- Situate loading bays where vehicles can be manoeuvred easily and they are protected from adverse weather conditions. Raised loading platforms should be fitted with rails and raised wheel stop edges on the non-loading sides, to prevent people, forklifts or trolleys rolling over the edge.
- Mark reversing areas so drivers and pedestrians can see them easily. To reduce reversing accidents, place fixed mirrors at blind corners.
- Ensure that people directing traffic wear high-visibility clothing and that their signals can be seen clearly.

Public safety

The Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (OSH Act) requires that care be taken at work by employers, workers and self-employed people to ensure that no members of the public or workers are exposed to hazards as a result of their work.

Some of the areas to be highlighted regarding public safety would be:

- The use of mobile equipment—traffic management
- Emergency procedures in place to provide safe egress should an emergency situation arise
- Stock stored on shelving do not fall
- Ensure trip and slip hazards are removed such as hoses, tools, electrical cords and fallen plants
- First aid facility available

Do not work on makeshift work platforms



Source: www2.worksafebc.com/Publications

ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program

If you are a small business owner or manager (employing less than 20 full-time workers) and want to make your workplace safe, the ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program can help you. The ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program offers an occupational safety and health audit of your business which is:

- free (up to three hours assistance);
- easy to obtain;
- provided by an independent and qualified OSH consultant; and
- is a simple process with clear and immediate benefits to your business.

To apply download and complete the online form from www.worksafe.wa.gov.au or telephone 1800 429 273

New and young workers

'Young people' includes those leaving school and starting work for the first time (encompassing apprenticeships and traineeships); those employed on a casual basis or working part-time outside school hours; work experience, vocational and training students; and children who visit the workplace (but may not necessarily be 'workers').

When assessing risks to young people, special factors to consider are:

- the size of the person and their level of physical maturity;
- their work experience and training;
- their ability to make mature judgements about their own safety and the safety of others; and
- their ability to cope with unexpected, stressful situations.

With the high rates in lost time injury for new and young workers, one of the department's seven priority areas is to focus on their safety in the workplace.

When our inspectors visit your workplace they will pay particular attention as to whether you are meeting your 'duty of care' in respect of any new and young workers.

They will be looking for evidence that you have specifically assessed risk factors in respect of new and young workers, as well as fulfilling your legal responsibilities under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984*.

The aim is for employers to prevent accidents by identifying the hazards, assessing the risks, and dealing with them before new and young workers are exposed.

In respect to information, instruction and training, it is your responsibility to provide this before a new or young worker starts work. Similarly, your induction of new and young workers must ensure they understand emergency procedures and how to seek help in the event of an accident or injury. This instruction must be specific and relevant to your workplace and working conditions.

In their inspection, the department's inspectors will be looking for the six key elements presented in the following checklist. These deal with many of the common problems affecting new and young workers that WorkSafe Western Australia has found in workplaces. The elements of the checklist do not cover all mandatory requirements under workplace safety and health laws. However, following the same checklist yourself will assist you to identify any shortcomings in your procedures or training and to correct or update them, thus getting you started on meeting your safety and health responsibilities.

Why your business should take safety and health seriously

1. It's good to know that all your workers are returning home healthy and safely to their families. No one wants the job of informing relatives their loved ones have been seriously or fatally injured at work.
2. The law states that your workers need to be provided with instructions to protect their safety and health and ensure that what they do does not harm others. **Everyone** needs to be aware of their responsibilities regarding safety and health.
3. By reducing hazards, you can potentially reduce the amount of worker's compensation insurance premiums.

HOW can this be achieved?

- a. Ensuring OSH systems are in place.
- b. Involving your staff – talk to them about safety and health.
- c. Provide safe systems of work and ensuring your workers follow instructions, have access to training, wear personal protective clothing/equipment (PPE) and supervision specific to the required tasks.
- d. Instructions of the use, cleaning, maintenance, transportation and disposal of plant and equipment.
- e. Instructions of the use, handling, processing, storage, transportation and disposal of hazardous substances.

Electricity safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Electrical installations are installed, constructed, maintained, protected (cover) and tested to minimise the risk of electric shock or fire. Evidence of maintenance and testing in place. Components clearly marked and switchboard free from obstructions			
Hand held portable equipment is protected by RCD (not construction)			
Switchboard or fixed sockets marked whether RCD protected.			
Maintenance program in place			
Flexible cords and extension cords are used in a safe manner			
Connection moulded or transparent plug			
Plugs, sockets and extension leads in good condition and protected from damage			
Electrical installations are protected from damage that would increase the risk of electrical shock or fire			
The work is organised for the safety of workers and others at the workplace.			

Hazardous substances safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Register of hazardous substances is complete (contents list and MSDS)			
Register is readily available			
Hazardous substances are properly labelled: manufacturers labels on container			
Decanted containers labelled with name, risk & safety phrases			
Risk assessment has been completed for all substances and recorded in register			
Report is available where risk is significant			
Practical control measures have been implemented and maintained			
Hierarchy of control is taken into account			
People who may be exposed or work with hazardous substances have been provided with adequate information, instruction and training			
Record of training includes health effects, controls, safe work methods, PPE			
Health surveillance is undertaken where appropriate			

New and young workers safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Induction, information, instruction & training emergency/evacuation procedures			
Induction, information, instruction & training in hazard and accident reporting			
Induction, information, instruction & training in how to reduce the risk of injury or harm for hazards new/young workers may be exposed to in the course of their work			
Induction, information, instruction & training in use, maintenance & storage of PPE			
Supervision: ensure that new & young workers are working in accordance with safety instructions including instructions re. skylarking, initiation ceremonies, bullying			
Employers ensure the risk of injury or harm to (young) visitors is reduced by means appropriate for the workplace and the type of work activity			
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Manual tasks safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Training covers all the requirements of <i>the Code of Practice Manual Tasks</i> and is part of induction process			
Information, instruction, and training in safe lifting has been provided to everyone involved in organising and implementing manual tasks			
Workers are able to identify risks			
Workers able to assess the risk whether it relates to lifting, pulling, pushing, lowering, carrying, or moving, holding or straining when handling materials and equipment			
Workers are able to use practical control measures in order to eliminate or reduce the risks as far as possible			
Workers advise management when unsure of control measures			
Accidents are investigated in a timely manner			

Forklift safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Maintenance records are kept			
Evidence of operator's training/instruction and high risk work license			
Operator is 17 years or older			
Pre-start checks are conducted of:			
Roll – over protection			
Falling object protection			
Seat			
Seat belt			
Lights (if used at night)			
Steering			
Controls			
Horn			
Gas cylinder (Energy Safety Plate)			
Warning signs			
Brakes			
Mast			
Chains			
Tynes			
Hydraulics & Hoses – any oil leaks			
Counterweight			
Load chart legible with manufacturer's specifications and is amended for attachments			
Operators manual is legible, assessable for all workers, & applies to the forklift being used			
Traffic management in place to provide safety to visitors, workers, & contractors (Pedestrian control). Hi visibility vests are made available			
Site hazards are identified, assessed and controlled (ramps, slopes, rough ground, power lines, excavations, ground load limits, underground services)			

Slips trips and falls safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Floor or any stair or ramp has unbroken and slip resistant surface. Special provisions for slip resistance provided in wet areas			
Floor or any stair or ramp is free from any obstruction that may cause a person to fall (eg. electrical leads, hoses, floor mounted power boxes in walkways, etc.)			
Access to egress from workplace safe and at all times kept free from obstructions			
Safe systems of work (eg. clean as you go policy) in place			
Warning signs available and erected near spills			
Guard rails or other safeguards provided on ramps and stairs			
Appropriate PPE, such as slip resistant footwear, provided			
Ramps in areas where height of floor levels change and trolley access required or items are carried regularly			

Machine guarding safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Is every dangerous part of fixed, mobile or hand held powered plant (machinery) securely fenced or guarded in accordance with Regulations 4.37 and 4.29, except where the plant is so positioned or constructed that it is as safe as it would be if fenced or guarded?			
Are adequate safe work procedures provided and documented to set, test and use machinery during all cycles of production and maintenance? Look for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-operational checks? • Presence sensing system: safe system of work documented and a clearly identified warning provided when guard is muted? • Presence sensing system: inspection and maintenance records maintained? • Appropriate isolation and lock-out procedures provided for maintenance? • Where setting, testing and start-up of machinery is required with the final means of safeguarding removed, have interim safeguards been provided? • Where fixed physical guards are provided is adequate provision made for cleaning, maintenance, adjustment and repair? • Where it is not practical to guard machinery is a safe system of work in place for people operating or passing in close proximity? 			
Are operators and maintenance personnel properly trained, familiar with the operation and set up of the machinery and able to demonstrate safety features?			
Are manufacturers decals, manuals and operator instructions readily available and in the English language?			
Is the highest level of guarding that is practical being provided?			

Other issues safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Notifiable accidents are reported to WorkSafe			
LTI/LTD accidents and notified hazards are investigated			
Passages/walkways kept free of obstructions			
Access and egress (emergency exits) kept free of obstructions			
Emergency egress enable safe egress in event of emergency / exit signs provided			
Portable fire extinguishers provided and maintained			
Evacuation procedures & diagram available and displayed and practised and training in the use of fire extinguishers provided			
Warning signs provided			
Cleanliness and removal of debris			
Surface and floors are unbroken and slip resistant to prevent slips and falls			
Seating provided and maintained			
Workplace facilities provided including hand basins and suitable soap			
Portable ladders according to AS 1892.1 (metal) or AS 1892.2 (wooden)			
Gas cylinders secured			
Personal Protective Equipment provided where necessary			
Workers are given instruction on maintenance and storage of PPE.			
Noise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noise assessment conducted - Control measures in place / avoid noise above exposure standard - Provision of personal hearing protection (PHP) - Instruction fitting, use, selecting, testing, maintenance and storage PHP - Training on noise 			
Signage PPE according to AS 1319			
First aid box or facilities available and first aid trained person available			
No smoking in enclosed workplaces			
Location of any asbestos on site identified and the risk assessed			