



Inspection campaign

WorkSafe is currently conducting an inspection campaign in the pest control industry with a view to reducing injuries in the sector.

The campaign will involve inspectors visiting pest control businesses to identify any common safety risks and provide employers with information on how to comply with occupational safety and health requirements.

This newsletter has been developed to identify safety issues in your industry and to assist you in meeting the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and regulations.

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
- General housekeeping at client property and office
- Space & design of property to be treated
- Stairs, ladders and placement of equipment
- Work activities, pace & processes
- Footwear & clothing
- Individual factors

How can I reduce the risk of slips and trips in my workplace?

There are many controls that employers can use to prevent slips and trips 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

Manual tasks

Workplace injuries most commonly linked to manual tasks include sprains and strains, hernias and damage to the back.

Such injuries are a major cause of lost time at work and make up almost one-third of Western Australia's workers' compensation claims. In the five years to 1999-2000, almost seven million days were lost from work in WA as a result of manual handling injuries; and a total of 132,819 workers' compensation claims were made at an average cost of \$18,000 each.

'Manual handling' is more than just keeping your back straight and knees bent, or lifting properly – it includes carrying, pushing and pulling, and holding or restraining.

Just as manual tasks involve more than just lifting, so the things that affect the risk of injury involve more than just the weight of the objects handled. Factors such as awkward movements, fixed postures and how long and quickly a task is performed are also very important.

Injuries can be the result of gradual wear and tear (eg from frequent or prolonged activities), or sudden damage (eg from a single lift of something very heavy or awkward to handle or from tripping and falling while carrying an object).

Jobs involving physical stress or repetitive movements have the highest rates of manual task injuries – over half the lost time injuries involving nurses and health care workers, cleaners, packers and store persons, are manual task injuries.

Because of the high potential for manual tasks to cause lost time injuries, WorkSafe WA has identified this as one of seven areas to be given priority when our inspectors visit your workplace.

In their inspection, our inspectors will be looking for the key elements detailed overleaf. Following the same checklist yourself will help you identify any shortcomings in your procedures or training and correct or update them; thus getting you started on meeting your health and safety requirements.

In looking at safety in relation to manual tasks and all workplace safety matters, please remember the three ThinkSafe steps:

- spot the hazard;
- assess the risk; and
- make the changes.

A good start will be to obtain the latest version of the [Code of practice for manual tasks](#) from the WorkSafe website on www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

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 of injury or harm associated with an identified hazard. 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.

Hazard Identification

All hazards in the workplace must be identified (OSH Regulation 3.1). This includes all hazardous substances used, stored, transported and handled in any way. A chemical audit, where you walk through the workplace and list all chemicals, is the best way to identify all chemical hazards. A chemical audit form and other useful information is provided on the WorkSafe [website](#). If you are not sure if a substance is hazardous, look at the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for a statement, or ask the supplier.

Registers

All hazardous substances kept on the premises or used in the workplace must be named in a register (OSH Regulation 5.13).

A register contains:

- a list of all the hazardous substances used, stored, transported or handled;
- material safety data sheets for all the hazardous substances; and
- a record to indicate that assessments have been completed for each hazardous substance.

Material safety data sheets

Employers and self-employed people must obtain current MSDSs for all hazardous substances used or stored in the workplace (OSH Regulation 5.11).

MSDSs must be:

- readily available to workers who may be exposed to the substances;
- not more than 5 years old;
- used in training; and
- used for information about the substances for risk assessments.

Labels

All hazardous substances (such as pesticides, solvents, and bleaches) must be labeled correctly (OSH Regulation 5.12).

Pesticides have registered labels. If a label for a hazardous substance is not satisfactory the product should not be accepted or should be returned to the supplier.

Under OSH Regulation 5.12, if the substance is decanted from its original container to another container, the temporary container must be labelled with:

- the product name;
- the appropriate risk phrases; and
- the appropriate safety phrases.

Risk assessment

Employers and self-employed people must assess the risk from using each hazardous substance and record the assessment in the register (OSH Regulation 5.15).

All hazards must be assessed and recorded in the register (OSH Regulation 5.16). Assessment reports must be available for inspection, where a significant risk is identified (OSH Regulation 5.18).

How to assess risks is explained in The Guidance Note for the Assessment of Health Risks Arising from Hazardous Substances in the Workplace [NOHSC: 3017(1994)] available on the Safe Work Australia website www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au

Information and training

Employers must provide information and training to workers who are likely to be exposed to a hazardous substance at the workplace (OSH Regulation 5.21).

Information and training must be provided and include information on:

- potential health risks and toxic effects;
- control measures to minimise the risk to safety and health;
- correct use of control methods;
- correct care and use of personal protective equipment and clothing; and
- need for and details of health surveillance.

Note: Employers are required to keep training records for employees, for all relevant hazardous substances

Control

Employers or self-employed people must reduce exposure of workers or self-employed people to hazardous substances (OSH Regulation 5.20).

Firstly, prevent exposure by:

- elimination of the hazardous substance;
- replacement of the hazardous substance by a less hazardous one;
- isolation of the hazardous substance by means such as closed and remote systems; and
- reorganising work to reduce exposure time.

Secondly, reduce exposure by:

- engineering controls, such as blowers and extraction ventilation; and
- procedural or administrative controls, such as changing rosters.

As a last resort reduce exposure with personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing .

Combinations of the above controls may be used to reduce exposure as much as possible.

More information on personal protective equipment and clothing can be found in the Code of Practice for First Aid, Workplace Amenities and Personal Protective Equipment on the WorkSafe website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au.

Organophosphate pesticides

Organophosphate pesticides are widely used to control insect pests in the community and in agriculture in WA. Most organophosphate pesticides are moderately toxic and people failing to follow safe work practices are at risk of absorbing significant quantities of pesticides through the skin or by inhalation. They may be exposed during decanting, mixing of pesticides, spraying or contamination from spillage, spray drift or pesticide residues.

Organophosphate pesticides depress serum plasma and red blood cell cholinesterase levels. Prevent poisoning by monitoring workers at risk, so those with depressed cholinesterase activity can be removed from further exposure before serious health effects occur.

Guidelines and information on health surveillance is available by contacting the WorkSafe Occupational Health Physician, telephone (08) 9327 8777, fax (08) 9321 8973, email safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

Health surveillance

Health surveillance should be provided (OSH Regulation 5.23) when the following substances are used:

- organophosphates;
- arsenic;
- creosote; and
- pentachlorophenol.

Health surveillance may also be necessary for other hazardous substances where exposure causes a risk to health.

Health surveillance is monitoring a person to identify changes in the person's health status from exposure to a hazardous substance.

The Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 require employers to appoint a medical practitioner to supervise health surveillance of workers at the workplace. Medical practitioners providing health surveillance should meet at least four of the eight national health surveillance competencies. These competencies may be found at Safe Work Australia's website (www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au. Type 'Competencies for Health Surveillance' into the search engine). The duties of the Appointed Medical Practitioner (AMP) (prescribed in OSH Regulation 5.24) include:

- keeping records of health surveillance results for 30 years;
- notifying the person and explaining the results;
- advising the employer of the outcome of health surveillance, on the need for remedial action, and of any notification to the WorkSafe Commissioner;
- notifying the WorkSafe Commissioner of results consistent with exposure using the Health Surveillance Results (HSR) form shown in Appendix 6.

Planning and implementing health surveillance for any of the 16 hazardous substances listed in Schedule 5.3 of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 should refer to the National Guidelines for Health Surveillance [NOHSC: 7039] available at [Safe Work Australia's](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au) website. Obtain further information from the national standards and code of practice for hazardous substances.

Employers must provide health surveillance at workplaces where:

- the health of a person is at risk of exposure to substances listed in Schedule 5.3;
- the workplace risk assessment identifies likely exposure to a hazardous substance in situations where:
 - a person is at risk of suffering an identifiable disease or health effect from the exposure; it is likely that such a disease or health effect may occur under work conditions a scientifically recognised technique can be used for detecting the disease or the health effect;
 - the workplace risk assessment identifies a person as being exposed, or likely to have been exposed, to a hazardous substance in excess of its exposure standard.

Working alone

Factors that may increase risk for people who work alone

The length of time the person may be working alone

- How long would the person need to be alone to finish this job?
- What is a reasonable time for the person to be alone?
- Is it reasonable for the person to be alone at all?
- Is it lawful for the person to be alone while carrying out particular work activities? For example, there is a requirement for a person to stand by when work is undertaken in certain types of confined spaces.

The time of day when a person may be working alone

- Is there increased risk at certain times of day?

Communication

- What forms of communication does the person have access to?
- Is voice communication essential for the safety of the person?
- Will the emergency communication system work properly in all situations?
- If communication systems are vehicle-based, what arrangements are there to cover the person when he or she is away from the vehicle?

The location of the work

- Is the work in a remote location?
- What is the form of transport? The level of risk may vary with different types of vehicles, different bikes (two, three or four wheels) or other forms of transport.
- Is the vehicle fitted with emergency supplies, such as adequate drinking water?
- What is likely to happen if there is a vehicle breakdown?
- Will the person be required to leave his or her vehicle for long periods of time?
- What first aid equipment is available for immediate treatment? For example, a first aid kit in the vehicle.
- If first aid equipment is vehicle-based, what arrangements are there to cover the person when he or she is away from the vehicle?
- What level of first aid training is required for the person to be able to use the first aid equipment?

The nature of the work

- Is there adequate information and instruction for the person to be able to work alone safely?
- What machinery, tools and equipment may be used?
- Is equipment and machinery maintained so that it is safe to use?

Electrical safety in ceiling spaces

When entering ceiling spaces of buildings:

- Turn off the main switch to isolate the electrical supply, and lock or tag the main switch. More information can be found in The Guidance note Isolation of Plant available on the WorkSafe website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au.
- Remove fuses and place in a secure area well removed from the main switch.
- Take care not to disturb or touch any electrical wiring or equipment.

Confined space

Employers must identify whether employees are required to enter confined spaces as part of their work and must ensure that the provisions of Australian Standard AS/NZS 2865:2001 are complied with in relation to work done in a confined space.

A person working in a designated confined space may be at risk of exposure to:

- oxygen deficiency;
- toxic gases or fumes;
- engulfment/suffocation by solids;
- electrical shock or electrocution;
- fire and/or explosion;
- drowning in liquids;
- falls from height; and
- environmental factors such as noise, extremes of temperature, poor lighting, manual handling and radiation.

Pest control workers may be required to enter confined spaces as part of their work. It should be noted that ventilated roof spaces and sub-floor areas above ground level are generally not classified as confined spaces. The definition of confined spaces is covered under Regulation 3.82. Further information is available in Regulations 3.82 – 3.87 and in AS/NZS 2865:2001

ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program

If you are a small business owner or manager (employing less than 20 full-time employees) 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 outcomes.

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

Further information

Further guidance on the safe use of pesticides is available in the Guidelines for the safe use of pesticides in non-agricultural workplaces, which were developed by the Pest Management Industry and Government Sector Advisory Group (consisting of representatives from the pest management industry and state government licensing agencies).

Pesticides that are dangerous goods must be stored in accordance with the Dangerous Goods Safety (Storage and Handling of Non-explosives) Regulations 2007, administered by the Department of Mines and Petroleum. Further information on the storage requirements is available from the Resources Safety Division of the Department of Mines and Petroleum.

Pest control licensing is covered by the Health (Pesticides) Regulations 1956. Further information on pesticide management technician's licenses and training courses is available from Environmental Health Directorate of the Department of Health.

You may also wish to contact the relevant industry association for further information and assistance.

For further information on occupational safety and health, you can contact the WorkSafe Division of the Department of Commerce:

Contact details WorkSafe

Customer help centre: 1300 307 877

Westcentre, 1260 Hay Street, West Perth

Website: www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

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.

Electricity safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Electrical installations are installed, constructed, maintained, protected and tested to minimise the risk of electric shock or fire, for instance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of maintenance and testing in place • Components on the switchboard are clearly marked • Switchboard is kept free from obstructions • Switchboard is protected from damage by cover 			
Hand held portable equipment is protected by a residual current device			
Switchboard or fixed sockets are marked whether residual current device protected			
A testing program is in place for residual current devices (portable and non-portable)			
The electrical switchboard on site is isolated before entering roof space or sub-floor areas.			
Flexible cords and extension cords are used in a safe manner – for instance, not lying across walkways, no use of long extension cords or multiple extension cords			
Plugs, sockets and extension leads are in good condition and are protected from damage, for instance not damaged and not overloaded			
The work is organised for the safety workers and others at the workplace – special care is taken when work is conducted in the vicinity of power lines and plant			
Domestic type double adaptors are not used in a commercial environment			

Hazardous substances safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Register of hazardous substances is complete and current – the register contains a contents list and material safety data sheets (MSDS) and MSDS are < than 5 years old			
Register of hazardous substances is readily available for workers			
Hazardous substances are properly labelled: manufacturers labels on container			
Decanted containers are labelled with name, risk and safety phrases			
Risk assessments have been completed for all substances and the outcome of the assessment is recorded in the hazardous substances register			
Risk assessment report is available where the risk is significant			
Practical control measures have been implemented and maintained			
People who may be exposed or work with hazardous substances have been provided with adequate information, instruction and training and records are kept			
Training includes information about: potential health risk and toxic effects, control measures to minimise risk, correct use of measures, care and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the need for and details of health surveillance			
Adequate PPE (eg gloves, mask, respirator, goggles) is provided for substances used Workers use the adequate PPE on site PPE is provided at no cost to workers			
Health surveillance is undertaken where appropriate (eg organophosphates, arsenic, creosote and pentachlorophenol)			

Working alone safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
A communications strategy in place for workers who work alone, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • system for supervising and maintaining regular contact with workers - especially workers who work in isolation (treating client premises alone) • systems for communicating in case of emergencies (e.g. mobile phones, duress alarms) – workers have been provided with emergency telephone numbers 			

Manual tasks safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Hazard identification and risk assessment has been undertaken in consultation with workers - activities to be considered as part of the risk assessment include: loading, moving or operating heavy equipment, the use of ladders, moving chemical containers, getting in and out of small spaces such as roof space or under houses			
Practical control measures have been implemented and maintained to eliminate or reduce risk associated with manual tasks: for instance safe use of backpack chemical sprayers, including correct fitting procedures			
Everyone involved in organising and implementing manual tasks where manual handling hazards have been identified have been provided with adequate instruction and training (induction and ongoing training)			

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 is safe and at all times kept free from obstructions			
Safe systems of work (eg. clean as you go policy) are in place			
Warning signs are available and erected near spills			
Guard rails or other safeguards are provided on ramps and stairs			
Appropriate PPE, such as slip resistant footwear is provided			
Ramps in areas where height of floor levels change and trolley access required or items are carried regularly			

Falls from height safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Practical control measures have been implemented and maintained to eliminate or reduce the risk associated with work at heights, for instance ladders have been provided and are used correctly for inspecting or treating areas at height			
Portable ladders comply with Australian Standards (AS 1892.1 for metal or AS 1892.2 for wooden ladders.)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edge protection is provided where person could fall 2 or more metres from scaffold, fixed stairs, landing, suspended slab, formwork, false-work In any other case, where person could fall 3 or more metres, a fall injury prevention system (eg catch platform, scaffold, safety nets, safety mesh, fall arrest system) or edge protection is provided 			
There is safe means of access and egress to the work being performed at heights, for instance stairs, walkways, ladders, mechanical lifts			

Induction and new workers safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Induction and training is provided in relation to emergency and evacuation procedures			
Information and training is provided in relation to hazard and accident reporting			
Safety induction is provided to new and young workers in relation to hazards			
Information and training in the use, maintenance and storage of personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided			
Adequate supervision is in place to ensure that new and young workers are working in accordance with safety instructions			
The risk of injury or harm to (young) visitors/home owners is reduced by means appropriate for the workplace and the type of work activity			

Emergency procedures safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Evacuation procedure to be followed in the event of a fire/chemical spill or other emergency is provided to workers at the workplace and in work vehicles			
Evacuation procedure and diagram (showing the exits) are displayed in a prominent place			
Emergency egress enables safe egress in event of an emergency (doors not obstructed) Exit signs have been provided and are maintained			
Adequate portable fire extinguishers have been provided and maintained at the workplace and in work vehicles			
An adequately stocked first aid kit is provided at the workplace and in work vehicles – eye wash facilities are available			
An adequate number of people have been trained in first aid, having regard to the types of hazards and number of people in the workplace			
Procedures are in place for isolated workers (means of communication are available and procedures for regular contact are in place with isolated workers)			

Asbestos safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
The presence and location of asbestos at the workplace has been identified			
Where asbestos has been identified, an assessment of risks has been conducted in accordance with the <i>Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Asbestos in Workplaces [NOHSC:2018 (2005)]</i>			
Asbestos register is available and used at the workplace where asbestos has been identified			
Where an asbestos register is present at the workplace, relevant persons have received information and training on the contents and use of the asbestos register			

Other issues safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Workers are trained/given instructions to carry out a site risk assessment to identify potential hazards before commencing work (eg general electrical hazards, ease of access to roof spaces)			
If workers are required to enter confined spaces (eg underground pits etc), ensure that the provisions of AS/NZS 2865 are complied with Relevant workers been provided with training in relation to working with confined spaces. Note: naturally ventilated roof spaces & sub-floor areas (above ground level) may not be confined spaces. See Regulation 3.82 and Appendix C of AS/NZS 2865:2001			
Reportable injuries and diseases have been notified to WorkSafe			
Lost time injuries or diseases and hazards notified by workers have been investigated			
Workplace facilities (e.g. toilets, wash basins, other facilities) are in a clean condition			
Passageways are kept free of obstructions			
Warning signs have been provided, where applicable at the workplace and in work vehicles			
Gas cylinders are secured Gas cylinders are not stored near ignition sources Safe work procedures are in place for changing gas cylinders			
Smoking is not permitted at the workplace, including work vehicles			
Water is available for washing hands			