

# **!HAZPAK**

**MAKING YOUR WORKPLACE SAFER**

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO BASIC RISK MANAGEMENT**



**Disclaimer**

This publication may contain occupational health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website ([www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)) or by contacting the free hotline service on 02 9321 3333.

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

# WHY HAZPAK?

## LEGISLATION REQUIRES RISK MANAGEMENT

One of the key principles of the NSW *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (the Act)* and *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 (the Regulation)* is risk management — the process of identification, assessment and elimination or control of hazards in the workplace.

*Hazpak* aims to help employers become fully informed about the risk management process. This process is a requirement of the Regulation which helps employers to comply with the requirements of the Act to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees, and to ensure that people other than employees, such as visitors and contractors, are not exposed to risks to their health or safety while they are at the employer's place of work. The risk management process is also relevant to the duty of a controller of premises used by people as a place of work to ensure that the premises are safe and without risks to health. The main provisions for employers are Clauses 9–13 of the Regulation, and the main provisions for controllers of premises are Clauses 34–38 of the Regulation. Copies of the Act and the Regulation, which set out the specific obligations placed on employers and others, can be obtained from the WorkCover website: [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au).

## HOW HAZPAK CAN HELP YOU

*Hazpak* is intended to help businesses manage risks to health and safety — to find any hazards they may have in their workplace, judge how dangerous they are and rank them in priority order so that something can be done to eliminate or control them, as required by the legislation. The method used in *Hazpak* is a general one which can be applied to all types of hazards.

## WHAT IS HAZPAK?

Hazpak is a practical guide to risk management designed for small and medium businesses.

It will help you to comply with the NSW occupational health and safety regulations which require you to:

- find the hazards in your workplace
- make your workplace safer
- judge how dangerous they are
- eliminate or control them.

## WHAT IS A HAZARD?

Clause 3 of the Regulation states that a hazard is anything (including work practices or procedures) that has the potential to harm the health or safety of a person.

## HOW DOES HAZPAK WORK?

Hazpak will take you step by step through the process of risk management. There are tools to help you and resources to direct you to more help if you need it.

Hazpak does not replace safety committees and other safety programs — it is designed to make them work even better.

## HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?

Working through Hazpak will probably take you and some of your staff a couple of hours, or maybe up to half a day, depending on your business. But remember, time and resources spent on improving safety make good sense.

## WHY USE HAZPAK?

You have no legal obligation to use Hazpak. But you are now required by law to do risk assessments and to eliminate or control risks. Hazpak is a tool which WorkCover has designed to help you.

To fully comply with the law you will need to do more than simply work through this book. It is particularly important that you do something to reduce the risks of people being made sick or injured in your workplace.

There are many specific requirements that apply to your business. You can contact the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50** or visit the WorkCover Website [www.workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au) to find out more. They can tell you what these laws are.

# WHY TRY TO MAKE YOUR WORKPLACE SAFER?

## What the law says

*All employers must identify, assess and eliminate or control hazards at work.*

You must involve your workforce in finding hazards. Those directly affected must be consulted.

## OUT OF CONCERN FOR PEOPLE

Everyone should have the right to leave work each day in no worse condition than when they left home. This won't happen if your workplace is full of hazards — things that might cause long term health problems or injure people.

## TO MEET YOUR LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

As an employer, you have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of your employees, and to ensure that people other than employees are not exposed to risks to their health or safety while they are at your workplace. This means their safety is your responsibility.

**If you have an unsafe workplace, or if you allow your employees to work unsafely, then you are breaking the law.**

### The law says that you must:

- consult with your employees about any matters that affect their health and safety
- know the hazards in your workplace and judge how dangerous they are
- find ways to get rid of any hazards, or at least find ways to keep people safe from them in consultation with your employees
- make sure that your machinery, equipment and tools are always in a safe condition and are always used safely
- warn employees about the hazards and train them in safe work practices
- make sure you have the Material Safety Data Sheet for every chemical you have in your workplace
- make sure all chemicals and other substances which could cause ill health or injury are labelled properly and listed on a register at your work.

## IT MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

People are your most valuable resource. Keeping them healthy protects this investment and preserves skills that are vital to your business. A safe and secure workplace can also help morale and improve productivity.

Illness or injury can cost your business a lot of money. Production is lost. You must find and train replacements. Workers compensation premiums rise. Many incidents don't hurt people — they damage property. It still costs.

Prevention is better than cure. It may cost you some time and money now to improve safety but in the long run it will be worth it.

# HOW TO USE HAZPAK

## FOUR EASY STEPS:

<b>IDENTIFY</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Discover</b> all the hazards you have	<b>p 5</b>
<b>ASSESS</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Decide</b> how important each one is	<b>p 7</b>
<b>ELIMINATE OR CONTROL</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>Do</b> something about the hazards	<b>p 10</b>
<b>MONITOR</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Don't</b> stop now — keep working on it	<b>p 14</b>

## USE THE KIT

Your Hazpak is a kit of materials for you to use.

As well as this booklet, there are:

- worksheets with 'thinking prompts' lists
- record sheets to fill in.

## INVOLVE YOUR WORKFORCE

When you use Hazpak you should consult and work with your employees or with their representatives, such as workplace OHS committees, OHS representatives or union representatives (if you have them).

This will:

- get the whole team involved in the process
- give you many different points of view
- encourage safe thinking right across the workforce
- help you comply with the OHS laws.

## IF YOU NEED MORE HELP

On page 16 of Hazpak there is a list of organisations that can help you.

# A. IDENTIFY — DISCOVER HAZARDS

## What the law says

*All employers must identify, assess and eliminate or control hazards at work.*

## WHY?

There are some you know of ...

You probably already know about many of the hazards in your workplace, and are doing something about them.

... And some you don't.

Many illnesses and injuries can be caused by hazards that you are not aware of, things you haven't thought might happen.

Deaths, permanent disabilities and serious injuries are rare, but they do happen. We need to do whatever we can to find the more unlikely sorts of hazards that might cause them. You need to ask yourself questions that begin with 'What if ...?'

When looking for hazards you should consider:

- how suitable the things you use are for the task, and how well they are located
- how people use equipment and materials
- how people might be affected by noise, fumes, lighting etc
- how people might be hurt by equipment, machinery or tools
- how people might be hurt by chemicals and other materials used in the workplace.

## HOW?

Check your existing records. You can often tell a great deal about unnoticed hazards by looking carefully at your existing records such as workers compensation records, first aid records, reports on accidents and near misses, and reports by employees or supervisors.

Get together and use Hazpak. You will need to get a group of up to six people from your workforce to help you. Choose a good mixture of people — people from different areas often notice new things.

Tell them what's going to happen:

- you will each be given one of the Hazpak worksheets — these explain the basic idea of Hazpak and provide all the important information you need
- you'll check your whole workplace, looking for anything that could hurt people
- you'll each be using one of the six possible 'thinking prompts' lists from the worksheet
- you'll each make a note of any hazards you notice and how dangerous you think they are
- later, you'll all get together again to make one complete list, to discuss and work out what to do about each of the hazards you've found.

## USING HAZPAK

### Example

A builder and his staff had to decide how to see everything in their workplace.

They decided to walk around and look at what each of the tradespeople did. For them, this made more sense than dividing up the area into different locations because the various tradespeople have no fixed workplace.

### Plan how to find everything

You will need to divide up your workplace to make sure you don't miss anything. You could look at:

- **different tasks** — working on the lathe, loading the truck, data processing etc
- **different locations** — offices, grounds, warehouse etc
- **different roles** — electricians, secretaries etc
- **different production processes** — receiving, forming, finishing etc.

Choose the way that suits your business best — or choose different ways for different people.

### Use the 'thinking prompts' lists

The worksheets have six different 'thinking prompts' lists which suggest fresh ways of looking at your workplace. You may have ideas for other 'thinking prompts' which you can use if you prefer.

The prompts lists are not full checklists, but ideas to get you thinking. Try to find other things as well.

The prompts lists are there to help you ask yourself the sorts of questions that begin with 'What if ...?', and so help you to find the more unlikely hazards.

### Get everyone involved

Before you start, let the rest of the workforce know what's happening and why. They will probably be able to point things out to you.

### Make lists of hazards

Each person should make a note on their worksheet of all the hazards they can think of, including the ones you're already doing something about.

Everyone should try to find as many as possible. Make a note of each hazard's location so that it can easily be identified later.

The worksheets have space for people to make a note of any ideas they have about:

- how severely they think people could be affected by the hazard
- how likely is it that people would be affected that badly
- what could be done to solve or reduce the problem.

### Mark any hazards you find

It's a good idea to use warning stickers, tags or tape to show everyone that someone has taken note of a hazard here, and that management will be told about it and a plan will be made about how and when to deal with it.



## B. ASSESS — DECIDE HOW IMPORTANT EACH HAZARD IS

### What the law says

*All employers must identify hazards, assess risks and eliminate or control risks to health and safety at work.*

If you have found a hazard you must judge how dangerous it is. Ask yourself how seriously someone could be affected and how likely this is to happen. This is called risk assessment.

### WHY?

You may have discovered many hazards. You can't fix them all at once — for reasons of cost if nothing else. You will need to plan and prioritise your actions so that over time you can gradually make your workplace safer. In other words, you need to assess the risks that the hazards present to people's health and safety and fix the greatest risks first.

#### Prioritising helps you to plan

Obviously, you must deal with the worst hazards first. Delay in dealing with these is a threat to people and your business. Of course, if you can cheaply and easily fix a low-priority hazard you might as well do it now! You don't have to wait until all the big complex problems are fixed before you deal with the simple ones.

#### About judging severity and likelihood

You may decide that the same hazard could lead to several different possible outcomes.

Assessing risks — that is, judging how likely it is that something will happen — is like predicting the future. You can only make your best guess.

This assessment requires you to judge how likely each possible outcome is and record the highest priority you come up with.

### HOW?

#### Get together and discuss

Get the group together to discuss all the hazards they discovered, including any you already knew about and already have a solution for.

#### Judging severity

For each hazard, think about whether it could:

- ☹ kill or cause permanent disability or ill health
- !!! cause long term illness or serious injury
- !! cause someone to need medical attention and be off work for several days
- ! cause someone to need first aid.

### **Judge likelihood**

How likely is it that someone would be that badly affected?

- ++ very likely — could happen any time
- + likely — could happen sometime
- unlikely — could happen, but very rarely
- very unlikely — could happen, but probably never will.

### **Use the priority table**

Now you can use the table to help you numerically prioritise each hazard based on its risk. (See the example below).

The numbers show how important it is to do something:

- 1** — it is extremely important to do something about this hazard as soon as possible
- 6** — this hazard may not need your immediate attention.

### **Use the 'hazards record' sheet**

Enter each hazard on the record sheet and record the group's decisions about priorities for dealing with each one.

The next step will be to discuss and record possible solutions to the problem. Turn to section C, Do Something.

#### **Example**

**Hazard:** plate glass door at foot of steps.

**Judge severity:** Someone falling down the steps could smash through the glass and be very seriously injured. So it is a !!! risk. (Look in the second row of numbers)

**Judge likelihood:** This could easily happen any time. So it is ++ likely. (Look at the first column of numbers)

Second row, first column is priority number 1. So it is extremely important to fix this problem soon.

**Find the highest priorities!**

For each hazard, think about:

1. How severely could it hurt someone or how ill could it make someone?
2. How likely is it to be that bad?

	<b>++ very likely</b> could happen any time	<b>+ likely</b> could happen sometime	<b>- unlikely</b> could happen but very rarely	<b>-- very unlikely</b> could happen but probably never will
☹ Kill or cause permanent disability or ill health	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
!!! Long term illness or serious injury	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
!! Medical attention and several days off work	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
! First aid needed	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

## C. ELIMINATE OR CONTROL — DO SOMETHING

### **What the law says**

*All employers must identify, assess and eliminate or control risks to health or safety.*

### **Keeping records**

You must decide what records are needed to keep the workplace safe.

You must keep a register of all the hazardous substances you use and the Material Safety Data Sheets.

You might want to keep records of:

- machines and equipment
- maintenance schedules
- personal protective equipment, with dates on when the items are due for replacement
- work procedures for doing things safely and efficiently
- injuries and near misses
- first aid provided.

Keep the record sheets from Hazpak which demonstrate that you have identified risks and are improving safety.

### **WHY?**

It's not enough just to find the hazards in your workplace. When you have found them, you must do something to fix them before they hurt people or make them ill. The law requires you to eliminate all reasonably foreseeable risks.

### **Is training enough?**

To make the workplace safe, people need thorough training in the work they have to do and the way they should be doing it.

But you can't train people not to have accidents, so it is important to get rid of risks and dangerous work practices.

### **HOW?**

#### **Discuss solutions**

The group now works together to think about ways to deal with the hazards you have found and listed. You may also think of better ways to deal with any you had already done something about in the past.

**Your first obligation: eliminate the risk**

The law requires you to eliminate any reasonably foreseeable risk.

Eliminating risks is the most effective way to make the workplace safer. Always try to eliminate the risk in the first instance. Consider:

- repairing or replacing faulty equipment
- eliminating dangerous work processes (eg by purchasing pre-cut materials or substances in quantities that do not require decanting).

You must do everything you can to eliminate risks to the health and safety of people in the workplace. However, sometimes this is just not possible.

**Use the Five Ways**

If you cannot eliminate a risk you must control it to the lowest possible level. NSW OHS legislation recognises five means of controlling risks, and these are set out on the next page. The Five Ways to Deal with Risks, as stated in Clause 5 of the Regulation, are listed in order of effectiveness. The first of these is to substitute the hazard giving rise to the risk for one that presents a lesser risk. If this approach is not possible, consider the next way, then the next, until you find a solution. You may need to use more than one way.

**If all else fails, use PPE**

Using personal protective equipment (PPE) is the least effective means of controlling risks. You should only consider this if all other methods are impractical.

**Complete the record sheet**

Note your proposed solution to each hazard on the record sheet, make it someone's responsibility to see to it that it gets done and decide when it should be done by.

**Can't think how to fix it?**

If you are unsure what to do to eliminate or control a risk, contact one of the organisations listed on page 16. Meanwhile, make sure everyone is warned of the hazard.

# FIVE WAYS TO DEAL WITH RISKS

## SUBSTITUTE FOR A LESSER RISK

As stated earlier, if you cannot eliminate the risk entirely, substitute the hazard giving rise to the risk with one that presents a lesser risk.

- use a different, less dangerous piece of equipment
- use safer materials or chemicals.

### Example

A man was killed in a smash repair shop. He was using electrically-powered tools (grinders etc) near water

This ☹️ hazard was eliminated by changing all the electric hand tools to air powered tools.

## ISOLATE THE HAZARD FROM THE PERSON AT RISK

If you can't substitute for a less risky approach consider isolating the hazard. This separates the person from the source of danger.

This approach can be effective where certain work processes produce excessive noise.

Likewise, the use of fume cupboards is a good way of isolating dangerous chemicals from workers using them.

### Example

A factory located a compressor in the main building in the center of the process, causing noise and pollution problems. The cure was to move the compressor out of the building into its own ventilated soundproof enclosure. This allowed work to continue without the need for personal protective equipment.

## MINIMISE (REMOVE OR REDUCE) THE RISK THROUGH ENGINEERING MEANS

There are many ways to implement engineering controls to address workplace risks.

In general, these are fixed or physical changes to equipment or the environment and could include such measures as adding machine guards or lock-out devices, changing lighting to reduce glare, installing exhaust fans, etc.

It might also include the purchase of specialised equipment.

### Example

In a warehouse repeated lifting and lowering of heavy boxes and other merchandise by hand was seen to present substantial manual handling risks to workers. The employer purchased spring-loaded scissor lifts that automatically lowered as boxes were added and raised as they were removed.

## IMPLEMENT CHANGE THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE MEANS

If you can't eliminate the risk or control it through isolation, substitution or engineering approaches, then think about ways the work could be done differently.

Changing your work methods can help to reduce injuries and incidents.

Consider working in a different way — think about things like:

- definite written work procedures
- changing daily routines, eg so that keyboard operators get breaks from keyboarding to do other duties.

### Example

One part of the factory is extremely hot even though cooling and exhaust fans have been installed. To minimise heat stress the next step was to work out how to change the work methods. More people were trained in more parts of the process and workers took it in turns to work in the hot area of the factory for a short time each day.

## USE PERSONAL PROTECTION

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the least effective way of dealing with hazards.

You may have to use PPE while you find better ways of dealing with the hazard.

PPE is only useful when it is in good condition and always worn correctly.

People need to know when to wear their PPE and how to fit and look after it.

Where an employer controls a risk to health and safety by means of the use of PPE, Clause 15 of the Regulation contains certain additional requirements which include, among other things, that the employer must provide each person at risk with the equipment and ensure that the equipment provided is appropriate for the person and controls the risk for the person.

### Example

A large manufacturer of glass bottles has trouble with noise of bottles rattling on conveyors and packing machines. No-one is allowed on the factory floor without eye and hearing protection. This work system is strictly enforced by the supervisors.

## **D. MONITOR — DON'T STOP NOW!**

### **KEEP WORKING ON YOUR HAZARDS AND ELIMINATING RISKS**

#### **Stay on the lookout**

It is very important to be on the lookout for hazards all the time. There may be something that you missed when you applied the Hazpak process. Remind workers that you need to be made aware of any hazards in your workplace, so they should always let you know immediately if they notice one.

#### **Anticipate hazards**

The Hazpak process can be used when you are planning new work, to help you foresee problems and hazards.

#### **When things change**

Whenever you make a change in the workplace you must check for new hazards. This means whenever you:

- start a new project
- change work systems
- add or change tools, equipment or machinery or their locations or the way they are used
- introduce new people with different skill levels
- consider using new premises
- consider introducing hazardous substances
- receive new or additional information from an authoritative source relevant to the health or safety of employees.

#### **Assess new hazards**

As soon as you notice a new hazard, Hazpak it! Discuss solutions with your employees and work out the priority number. Add the new hazard to the record sheet and do something to fix it!

#### **Do Hazpak regularly**

We advise you to do your Hazpak check at least once every year, or when changes to the workplace occur. Try to use a different group of people each time if possible.

### **KEEP CHECKING — ARE YOUR SOLUTIONS WORKING?**

#### **Check — is it fixed?**

Keep watching and checking to see that the solutions you have put in place are really working. Encourage employees to let you know if there is still anything dangerous about a matter you thought was resolved.

#### **Keep checking records**

Keep a computer database of your records — your workers compensation records, first aid records, and report of near misses will be a useful guide to your progress. They may show up patterns which help you to find hazards which have not yet been successfully dealt with.



### **Show you mean it**

You may like to display the record sheets where all employees can see them. This will show them what's being done about hazards you know about.

## **DEVELOP SAFE THINKING**

Finding and dealing with hazards is only a start! Developing a safe workplace is more than just getting all the hazards under control. Risks must be eliminated.

### **Health and safety always**

Your workers need to be conscious of health and safety all the time. By actively leading them, you can help them to think this way. Try to develop a caring workplace where people are committed to the safety of others.

### **Some useful ideas**

These ideas may help you to encourage safe thinking in your workplace:

- Have a system that lets employees tell you their safety concerns. This could be a regular meeting devoted to safety issues or perhaps a 'safety suggestions' box. You will need to act on any issues raised
- Where there are 20 or more employees, establish a workplace safety committee and make full use of its ideas
- Consult with union representatives, if you have them, on OHS matters
- Get your employees to help you develop a safety policy
- Recognise employee contributions to improved safety
- Make sure that safety is included when you train someone
- Take action if work is not being done safely
- Use warning stickers, tags or tape to alert everyone to known hazards until they can be fixed. (Some things, such as chemicals, may need permanent labels).

## **NEVER STOP IMPROVING**

### **Working safely saves!**

Continuous improvement is the best way to ensure the future success of your business. Safety and health must be part of this improvement. Safety, productivity and quality go together. In the long run, working safely is the only sensible and cost-effective way to run any business.

## WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

### More information about health and safety in your workplace

WorkCover NSW	13 10 50
National Occupational Health and Safety Commission	6279 1000
Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	6273 2311
Employers First	9264 2000
The Labor Council of NSW	9264 1691
The Workers Health Centre	9749 7666
The National Safety Council Australia	(03) 9832 1555
Standards Australia	1300 654 646

### More information about Hazpak

WorkCover NSW	13 10 50
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### Legislation

To find out about health and safety legislation that applies to your workplace, contact WorkCover NSW on 13 10 50, or the equivalent body in your State or Territory.

### Australian Standards

To find out about Australian Standards that apply to your workplace, contact Standards Australia on 1300 654 646.

## SAFE WORK PRINCIPLES

- make sure the things you purchase are safe
- maintain equipment to keep it safe
- don't use dangerous, damaged or malfunctioning equipment
- use things only for the purpose for which they were designed
- consult employees when purchasing equipment or substances
- make sure people are properly trained and supervised
- use safe systems of work (like lockout systems, danger tags and specified procedures for dangerous tasks) so that both work and maintenance are done safely
- maintain and use safety warning devices and protection
- make sure everyone understands the dangers of the tools and materials they use
- label things properly
- provide personal protective equipment where needed.



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