



What you should know about... **OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH**

Overview: According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984, both employers and employees are responsible for occupational safety and health in the workplace.

It is the responsibility of **employers** to ensure that employees are not exposed to unnecessary hazards in the workplace. The employer must also provide adequate information, training and supervision to allow employees to work in a safe manner. This should include training for employees in emergency response procedures.

It is likely that supervisors or designated OSH representatives will be responsible for overseeing OSH matters in your workplace. Therefore it is important that these individuals know, understand and consistently apply their organisations OSH Policies and Procedures, as they are likely to have responsibility to instruct and monitor employees on a day-to-day basis to ensure safe work practices. In addition, they will promote safety awareness among all employees, ensure appropriate equipment is available and maintained, ensure employees report OSH hazards and concerns and that these matters are communicated to appropriate management staff for action to facilitate a safe working environment.

It is the responsibility of all **employees** to take steps to look after their own safety and health in their workplace. This will include actions such as wearing appropriate protective equipment, reporting hazards which may relate to equipment or issues with clients (e.g., challenging behaviour), attending and participating in training programs, following safe work practices including instructions from their employer about OSH matters.

Key Points:

- OSH is the responsibility of both employers and employees.
- Your organisation should have OSH Policies and Procedures that you are familiar with, and that are followed and regularly updated.
- Your employer must provide you with adequate information, training and supervision regarding OSH matters.
- Your employer must act to ensure you are not exposed to unnecessary hazards in the workplace. However, this requires you to identify and report hazards in the workplace such as faulty equipment, or clients who present with challenging behaviours that may pose an OSH risk.
- If you have any questions about safe work practices, such as steps to manage clients with challenging behaviours or appropriate use of equipment or manual handling protocols, you should raise such matters with your supervisor. Similarly, if you experience a workplace incident, you should report it to your supervisor immediately and complete an Incident Report.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. How often should I receive OSH training relating to my job?
2. Will I receive training in emergency procedures (e.g., evacuation drill in the case of fire, dealing with a physically abusive client) relating to my job?
3. Who should I speak to if I have questions about OSH in my workplace?
4. What OSH procedures am I expected to know about?

Responding to FAQs:

1. Staff should receive OSH information as part of their staff induction. Depending on the particular role an individual has within an organisation (e.g., a supervisor), regular revision and upgrading will be required to ensure all employees can in turn be instructed and effectively monitored for safe work practices. If there are any changes to an organisation's OSH Policies and Procedures following review, all staff must be appropriately updated.
2. Yes, your employer must provide you with training in emergency procedures relating to all aspects of your position. This training may be provided by your supervisor, human resource personnel or an external service provider who has been contracted by your employer to provide such training.
3. The first person to speak to is your supervisor. He/she should be able to provide you with information and/or advice on OSH matters, and can inform you if your organisation has an OSH representative.
4. You are expected to be aware of your organisation's OSH Policies and Procedures and any specific guidelines for your position relating to maintaining safe work practices.



Spot the hazard
Assess the risk
Make the changes

Useful Resources:

1. Your **supervisor and/or OSH representative** (if any) in your organisation should be able to provide you with information and advice about OSH matters in your workplace.
2. **Worksafe WA** Ph: 13 18 55 for general enquiries about workplace safety and WA laws and regulations. Alternatively, you can refer to the website: www.safetyline.wa.gov.au for access to an extensive collection of OSH information.
3. **WorkCover WA** provides an infoline Ph: 1300 794 744 for employers and employees on the workers' compensation system. In addition, a number of brochures, courses and seminars are available. Refer to the website: www.workcover.wa.gov.au.



Acknowledgement: This brochure was produced by the MS Society of WA (Inc) using a Disability Services Commission Training Grant

Disclaimer: "The information contained in this Fact Sheet is basic and general in nature. No reader should act only on the basis of anything contained in this Fact Sheet without seeking appropriate advice and/or assistance. No responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted by the MSS for any loss, damage or injury that may arise from any person acting on any statement or information contained in this Fact Sheet and all such liabilities are expressly disclaimed."