

SAFETY LINE



M A G A Z I N E

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Manual handling
More than just lifting

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Wine industry safety

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Comments and contributions from readers are welcome, but the editorial committee reserves the right to publish only those items that are considered to be constructive towards occupational safety and health.

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Editorial

New standards to be implemented

Western Australia is currently working to implement the first of two new national standards that have been declared over recent months. These are the national standard for construction work and the national standard for the licensing of high risk work.

Under the new standard for construction work, industry workers have until 1 January next year to complete an accredited safety awareness training program. Workers with an induction card, such as a green card, will still need to undergo the new compulsory program, but will have an additional 12 months to update their training.

The new national licensing standards for high risk workers will come into effect on 1 July 2007. They will require employees such as crane, hoist and forklift operators, scaffolders, riggers and doggers to be licensed.

The licence will replace the present certificate and be issued following training and assessment undertaken through registered training organisations under the Australian Quality Training Framework. It will be renewed every five years and will ensure nationally uniform standards that enable skilled workers to move freely from state to state to perform high risk work safely.

The new spirit of cooperation in setting standards and licensing is mirrored in the highly successful national approach to education, inspection and enforcement campaigns, which are part of the 10-year National Occupational Safety and Health Strategy.

Together, the national standards and campaigns provide a level playing field and a set of benchmarks across the country that I believe will have a major beneficial impact in reducing deaths, injuries and ill-health in Australian workplaces.

A new spirit of cooperation in setting standards and licensing is reflected in the national approach to campaigns.

Council to improve consistency

A spirit of cooperation between the states and territories has seen the formation of a new Council for the Australian Federation.

The Council will meet two or three times a year and become a clearing house for ideas and policy formulation.

I believe it recognises and reflects the need for greater national consistency in approaches to major issues that cross state and territory borders, such as occupational safety and health and workplace reform.

The new Council for the Australian Federation will make meetings of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) work more constructively and effectively and improve discussion, information-sharing and strategic negotiation.

COAG has identified occupational safety and health as one of the jurisdictional 'hot spots' that will benefit from greater consistency.

Western Australia supports a national approach wholeheartedly, providing there is sufficient flexibility to deal with issues at the local level.

Together with my ministerial colleagues from other states and territories, I have agreed to progress COAG recommendations on occupational safety and health on the understanding that four key principles underpin developments.

These are: maintaining a tri-partite approach; giving consideration to compliance implications; giving consideration to the resource implications; and ensuring existing protections are not reduced.

Hon John Bowler JP MLA
Minister for Employment Protection



Manual handling: More than just lifting

Manual handling is the largest single cause of lost time injuries in Western Australia and a big part of the problem is that many workers and employers think it is just about lifting safely.

Manual handling injuries caused by pushing, pulling, holding, restraining and carrying account for over one-third of all lost time injuries.

Just training employees to “lift safely” is not an adequate way to control risk in the workplace. In fact, it does not meet the legal requirements of the *Occupational Safety and Health Act* (the Act).

Consultation the key

A key objective of the Act is to encourage and promote information exchange and consultation between employees and employees so that they are better able to identify and assess problems and discuss risk controls.

WorkSafe's ergonomists believe this is not working as well as it could in relation to manual handling because of the type of training being provided.

Often the only manual handling training workers get is how to lift properly. This severely limits their understanding of the risks and how these may be reduced.

The risk of injury is affected by more than just the weight of the loads; it includes actions and postures, the load, the work environment and individual factors.

For example, actions such as holding the load away from the trunk, twisting and handling loads

below knuckle height or above shoulder height increase the risk of injury.

One study has shown that bending the trunk forwards by 30 degrees while holding nothing can put more strain on the lower back than standing upright with 10kg in each hand.

Similarly, how often and how quickly the loads must be handled also plays a role.

The first step in getting it right is for workplaces to follow the *Code of Practice for Manual Handling*. Employees must be trained in the ‘risk management’ approach to reducing manual handling hazards.

Information on what training should be provided to employees can be found in the Risk Control





section of the Code, which can be purchased from WorkSafe or printed from the website.

Simple improvements

As well as getting the training right, there are some simple improvements that can be made including:

- reduce carrying by having goods delivered closer to where they are used;
- using trolleys or putting wheels on things to eliminate carrying;

- using lifting hooks or fitting handles to loads to reduce reaching when lifting and carrying;
- storing loads on middle shelves to reduce lifting and lowering;
- improving access so as to reduce bending and reaching; and
- rearranging work schedules so that manual handling activities are spread out across the day.

For more information telephone WorkSafe on 9327 8777 or visit the website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

Forum on manual handling in the health care industry

WorkSafe recently conducted a successful forum titled 'Evidence Based Solutions for the Management of Manual Handling Hazards in the Health Care Industry'.

One of the primary aims of the National Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Strategy is to improve Australia's occupational safety and health performance by targeting industries where the incidence of injury or illness is particularly high. Health and community services industries and body stressing have been identified as a priority for national attention.

A Design 4 Health Campaign was conducted in all States during 2004 and the forum was one of the strategies used to reinforce the message to industry.

Scientific officers from WorkSafe's Human Factors and Ergonomics team presented evidence based research, statistics on manual handling, hazards in the healthcare industry and findings from the Design 4 Health Campaign.

The highlight of the forum for many participants was hearing from disciplines that don't often voice their role, yet are key contributors to managing these hazards. Guest speakers from these disciplines included Warren Kerr (Specialist Architect in Healthcare Facilities Design) and Maxine Drake (Advocate from the Health Consumers' Council).

Other speakers presented strategies and systems that have been implemented to tackle this hazard. Topics included safety culture of an organisation, systematic risk assessments, multidimensional interventions, the 'no lift' policy and emerging issues.

WorkSafe received positive feedback on the forum. Respondents said their awareness about evidence-based practice was increased and that they welcomed the opportunity to network with their peers and industry stakeholders.

For further information on manual handling hazards and ergonomics, please contact a Scientific Officer from the Human Factor and Ergonomics team at WorkSafe by telephone on 9327 8777 or email safety@docep.wa.gov.au



Focus on wine industry safety

Safety levels at Western Australian wineries are on the increase.

The health and well being of workers in Western Australian wineries has been boosted through a major national occupational health and safety initiative.

Problems such as falls from heights, electricity, training and induction and guarding have seen the Australian wine industry under the spotlight since the beginning of 2005.

WorkSafe has checked the state's wine industry for occupational safety and health compliance under the National Targeted Auditing Strategy For Wine Producers.

This strategy adheres to the National (OHS) Strategy 2002-2012, and involved WorkSafe inspectors from the Regional and Primary Industries Team and Manufacturing Team conducting safety inspections of wineries. Other states involved were Queensland, Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

The lack of systematic occupational safety and health management in the wine industry around Australia saw the regulatory agencies increase cooperation and work towards national consistency, with each inspectorate working together on the national projects.

"We used a common checklist that every state agreed to use before inspections commenced. Our inspections were able to pinpoint common areas of concern," WorkSafe Senior Inspector Tony Robertson said.



Example of an unsafe unguarded crusher de-stemmer at a Margaret River winery.

"In Western Australia, we inspected 30 wineries and issued 287 notices for breaches of the Act and Regulations, which covered 20 per cent of wineries in WA."

Cooperation from the wine industry was excellent. Both the Wine Industry Association of WA and the Margaret River Wine Industry Association were extremely helpful in ensuring that their members were well informed about the project.

The inspections found inappropriate systems of work for confined spaces, and a lack of edge protection or fall arrest systems for the tops of wine tanks, which can be up to nine metres high.

However, the degree of safety at wineries inspected has improved, as evidenced by the high level of compliance with notices issued, and the positive flow on to other wineries from the information provided to the industry.



Presentations have been organised by WorkSafe to inform the industry of the outcomes of the project.

“While the strategy ran from February to August 2005 in Western Australia, we want wineries that have not been visited to contact their association or WorkSafe to obtain a copy of the checklist used in the strategy and use it to do a safety audit of their workplace. This is critical to ensure the safety of workers throughout the industry,” Mr Robertson said.

Wineries that employ fewer than 20 staff are eligible to apply for free advice on workplace safety through the ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program.

For more information telephone WorkSafe on 9327 8777 or visit the website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au



Safety signage at the chemical store of a WA vineyard.

Second annual national workplace safety week

Safe Work Australia Week 2006 is being held nationally from 22 to 28 October 2006.

Highlight safety in your workplace during the week and register your WA workplace activity with WorkSafe to receive your free Safe Work Australia Week Workplace Activity Kit. The kit includes suggested workplace activities, steps to organise your activities, a list of other events being held during the week and posters and stickers.

To register your activity call 9327 8781 or email safety@docep.wa.gov.au by 14 October 2006 to be in the draw to win one of five tickets for the WorkSafe 2006 Forum in Perth valued at \$99 each.

More information is available at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au



National safety campaigns

The National Occupational and Health Strategy is a 10-year plan that covers the years 2002 to 2012. Ministers from all Australian states and territories are committed to the plan, with New Zealand an active participant.

The vision of the national strategy is to see Australian workplaces free from death, injury and disease.

The strategy concentrates on five target industries that have been chosen because they have demonstrated the highest level of risk. These industries are construction, transport, health and community services, agriculture, forestry and fishing and manufacturing.

The national strategy provides the direction for occupational safety and health jurisdictions across Australia and New Zealand to work together actively to improve occupational safety and health.

Target areas

In 2004-05 the target areas for the national intervention campaigns were manual handling in the aged care industry, and falls in the transport sector and building and construction industry.

The focus for 2005-06 has been on hazardous substances in manufacturing, specifically the boat-building sector, farm machinery safety and demolition work.

The campaigns for 2006-07 will include manual handling in manufacturing, large mobile plant in civil construction and labour hire in food processing.

The projects are run as partnerships between jurisdictions, and all decisions are made as the result of consultation and cooperation. Industry associations and trade unions are key partners in the campaigns.

WorkSafe Commissioner, Nina Lyhne, says the national approach has been proving successful.

“The national approach that has been actively pursued over the past three years is a major step forward for occupational health and safety in Australia and New Zealand,” Ms Lyhne said.

“An important spin-off effect of the nationally consistent approach is that jurisdictions are now working together more closely in other areas.”

There has been a significant increase in the sharing of information, cooperation on enforcement action and the development of common guidance material across jurisdictions. This is important in Australia, where many industries and workers operate across state borders.

“The national projects create better and more productive partnerships between stakeholders, across both industry and government,” Ms Lyhne said.

“The consultation and cooperation between the government and its inspectorates, trade unions, industry associations and employers and employees is an invaluable tool in the continuing effort to reduce work related injury, illness and death.”

Further information on the national approach and upcoming campaigns is available from the WorkSafe website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au under “Safety at work – Role of inspectors”.



First aid for a diabetes emergency



People with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes may sometimes experience complications that require first aid in the workplace.

Diabetes Australia WA Advocacy Officer Sandy Havlin, says that most of the time, first aid for people with diabetes simply means allowing them time to deal with any complication themselves.

“But if people with diabetes miss the early warning signs and their blood glucose levels get too low they can become unwell and it may eventually cause them to experience fits or fall into coma,” Ms Havlin said.

“This is generally known as a ‘hypo’ attack.”

Common signs and symptoms of a ‘hypo’ include hunger, sweating, shaking, blurred vision, headache, palpitations, tingling in the lips and/or fingers and irritability or mood swings.

“In terms of first aid, if a person with diabetes shows ‘hypo’ symptoms you could suggest they treat themselves or offer some quick acting sugar.”

Examples include:

- six to eight jelly beans;
- small can of non-diet cool drink;
- glass of non-diet cordial, made fairly strong; or
- tepid cup of tea or coffee with three teaspoons of sugar.

If needed, follow-up with another sugar intake after 10 minutes, then something more substantial such as a glass of milk, snack bar, cracker biscuits, sandwich, cereal, pasta, or a meal.

“If you have any doubts or the situation is more serious and the person cannot respond to your

requests, is having difficulty swallowing or loses consciousness, then seek medical help and follow basic first aid steps.”

For more information, please contact the Diabetes Information and Advice Line (DIAL) on 1300 136 588.

Article provided by Diabetes Australia WA.



First aid – new national competencies

Following considerable national consultation, the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council is finalising the outcomes of a project to rationalise first aid training throughout Australia to improve the quality and portability of first aid skills.

The training will consist of six nationally endorsed units. For more information on the new units, visit the Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council website at www.cshisc.com.au and look under “Projects”.

For information on first aid facilities and services that must be provided in the workplace, refer to the WorkSafe publication *Code of practice: first aid, workplace amenities and personal protective equipment*. Please note that this code is currently being reviewed.



ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program – Farmers’ Centre

Grant Wells, owner and manager of Farmers’ Centre in Albany, has a thriving agricultural machinery dealership and workshop facility. He employs 12 permanent staff and like many small businesses is working at capacity.

He is aware of the need to meet industry standards for occupational safety and health.

“I saw an advertisement for the ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program, and completed the application for up to three hours of free safety and health advice,” Grant said. “The whole process has been extremely positive.

“Our WorkSafe Consultant was a good fit for our business. He visited our premises and during discussions and his inspection he took notes about what we were doing well and what needed some attention. I thought it was going to be a much more difficult process, more like pulling teeth, but it was quite easy,” Grant said.

“Staff within the dealership and workshop were already conscious of occupational safety and health and had some of the processes already integrated into the day-to-day operations. But having someone from outside come in with fresh eyes to tell us what was missing and what we could do better, was highly constructive.

“One of my concerns was the amount of time this assessment was going to take and the ongoing

monitoring, but I was pleasantly surprised that the initial visit was quick, efficient and comprehensive.”

Practical advice

“Our consultant wrote a report and designed a tailored safety action plan to meet our specific needs, then visited again to go through his findings and suggestions. He was practical and we were able to implement any changes without interrupting our busy work schedules.”

The plan embraced basic workplace safety and health practices of a simple risk management system comprising the three-step approach of identifying hazards, assessing the risk and controlling the risk.

Grant said: “I believe some small businesses can become complacent and if they have not had any serious occupational safety and health problems they may think it will not happen to them. They may also see the time factor involved with implementing safety strategies and their ongoing application as too labour intensive and in many cases unnecessary. This program has certainly proved particularly beneficial for us.”

Continuing the association with the WorkSafe Consultant has been a positive outcome. “I felt very comfortable with our consultant and approached him with a business arrangement to take an active involvement in the ongoing management of our occupational safety and health strategies. He will inspect our premises twice a year to ensure we haven’t let anything slip. It’s great to have someone looking over our



Grant Wells of the
Farmer's Centre Albany

shoulder and building on what we have already implemented.

“Our staff has fully embraced the occupational safety and health program and were supportive of the necessity to tighten up. The ongoing assessments will identify any changes in the workplace and make sure we don't slacken off.”

Grant joins 89 per cent of the program's participants who have invested funds and/or time to improve the occupational safety and health within their businesses.

Program statistics

Since the program began in February 2005, it has been popular with businesses in regional locations. Some 57 per cent or 380 out of 711 applications have come from regional Western Australia.

Feedback from the consultants confirmed regional small businesses really appreciate the free one-to-one assistance provided by the program. In a recent independent survey, 25 per cent of regional small businesses applied for the program because they “wanted to learn more

about occupational safety and health”. This is a much higher figure than the 13 per cent for those in the metro area.

Small businesses or not-for-profit organisations working in one of the six high-risk industry areas of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Construction, Health and Community Services, Manufacturing, Retail and Wholesale and Transport and Storage, can be considered for a free consultation.

Visit www.worksafe.wa.gov.au and download an application form or call the Hazard hot line on 1800 439 273.

Completed forms can be faxed to WorkSafe on (08) 9321 2148.

For more information call Gemma Brown, ThinkSafe Small Business Manager on (08) 9327 8777 or email gbrown@docep.wa.gov.au





Compulsory safety awareness training for construction industry

WorkSafe is reminding construction industry workers they need to have completed an approved safety awareness training course by 31 December 2006. Workers who have not completed this training will not be able to work in the industry when the new laws take effect on 1 January 2007.

The new laws require all construction workers to complete an approved safety awareness training course and obtain a safety awareness training card. The new training is not intended to take the place of worksite-specific or task-specific training. This will still need to be provided by the employer in order to fulfill their duty of care to provide a safe workplace.

Transitional arrangements have been put in place for workers who have previously done induction training for the construction industry, such as the 'green card'. Under these arrangements, anyone who holds a card showing that they completed an induction course in safety awareness for the construction industry prior to 31 December 2005 will have until December 2007 to complete the new compulsory safety awareness training course.

Anyone who does not fall into this category, or who has not previously done any induction training for the construction industry, must have completed the new compulsory safety awareness training course by 1 January 2007 if they wish to continue to work in the industry after that date.

The new safety awareness training cards will generally be valid for three years from date of issue. However, cards obtained between now and

31 December 2006 will be valid until December 2009 irrespective of when the card was issued. This means that the sooner a worker completes the new training course, the longer their card will be valid.

Further information on the new construction industry safety awareness training can be obtained by telephoning WorkSafe on 9327 8777 or on the website at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

WorkSafe would like to acknowledge the Civil Contractors Federation and the Building and Construction Industry Training Fund for their assistance in development of the construction safety awareness course training materials.

As industry stakeholders, both organisations are keen to support initiatives that actively promote industry training and increase the profile of safety and health issues to encourage cultural change in workplaces.

The Civil Contractors Federation had volunteers working for many hours on the materials that were used by WorkSafe to form the basis for the new course. The Department of Education and Training also assisted with the development of the training materials.

The Building and Construction Industry Training Fund (BCITF) provides subsidies for industry based training, with occupational safety and health one of their priorities. Over the past 12 months the fund has subsidised 18,000 people to undertake safety and health training at a cost of \$1.4 million.

For further information on training subsidies contact the BCITF on 9381 3900.



Launch of code of practice for working hours

Following the State Government's review of extended working hours, Employment Protection Minister John Bowler launched the new *Code of practice – working hours* in July this year.

The code was developed by the Commission for Occupational Health and Safety, and applies to all Western Australian workplaces covered by the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* or the *Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994*.

The code addresses safety and health risks arising from some working hours arrangements such as fatigue and impaired performance and exposure to hazardous substances. It emphasises conducting risk management processes and developing industry and workplace-specific control measures.

Information forums have already been held in Perth, Bunbury and Albany. Dates planned for other sessions are:

Kalgoorlie - Monday 9 October 2006

Karratha - Tuesday 17 October 2006

Tom Price - Wednesday 18 October 2006

Newman - Thursday 19 October 2006

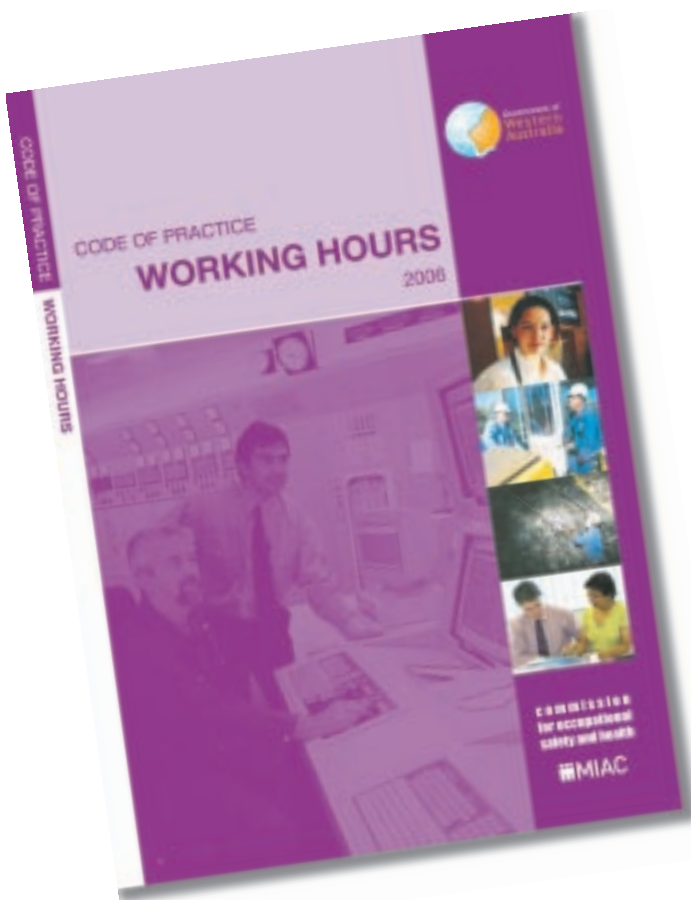
Perth - Thursday 26 October 2006

If you would like to attend one of the information sessions, contact

Janelle Walker, Promotions Coordinator,
Department of Consumer and Employment
Protection on 9327 8697 or email
jwalker@docep.wa.gov.au

For information on the code

contact Kathryn Lee, Senior Policy Officer
WorkSafe on 9327 8606 or
klee@docep.wa.gov.au





Sorry, I can't hear

Despite greater awareness in the music industry of the need for hearing protection for musicians, exposure to loud noise in clubs, pubs and other venues is still a major workplace health hazard in Western Australia.

WorkSafe noise inspectors and inspectors from the Department of Racing, Liquor and Gaming visited 17 music entertainment venues and looked at the output of live bands, disc jockeys and recorded music.

They found that noise levels have increased since a previous survey in 2000.

Occupational safety and health regulations state that excessive noise is any exposure level higher than 85 decibels.

The inspections of nightclubs, pubs and taverns were conducted between 9pm and midnight on Fridays. Nine venues had live band music, six had DJs playing amplified music and two had recorded background music.

The inspectors measured noise levels and calculated the daily noise exposure levels of employees.





you ...

They checked each venue's policies and procedures on music noise, noise education and provision of hearing protectors. Employees were given a questionnaire about their length of employment in the industry and work shift patterns, the availability and use of hearing protection, and any hearing problems.

The results

The daily noise exposure levels in different venues varied significantly, ranging between 85 and 103 decibels.

The level in venues with recorded background music was only just above the noise standard. However, the other venues all exceeded 90 decibels, far above the required standard.

Thirteen venues had not done a proper noise assessment, 14 had not provided noise and hearing loss information and hearing protection training to staff, and eight had not supplied appropriate hearing protectors.

Consequently, 35 improvement notices were issued to 16 workplaces. The necessary improvements were all achieved within the specified time.

Most employees did not understand the risk of hearing loss from excessive noise. Only about one-quarter used hearing protectors when working with high music levels.

Twelve per cent said their ears rang either during or after work and about nine per cent said they sometimes had trouble hearing conversations after their shifts.

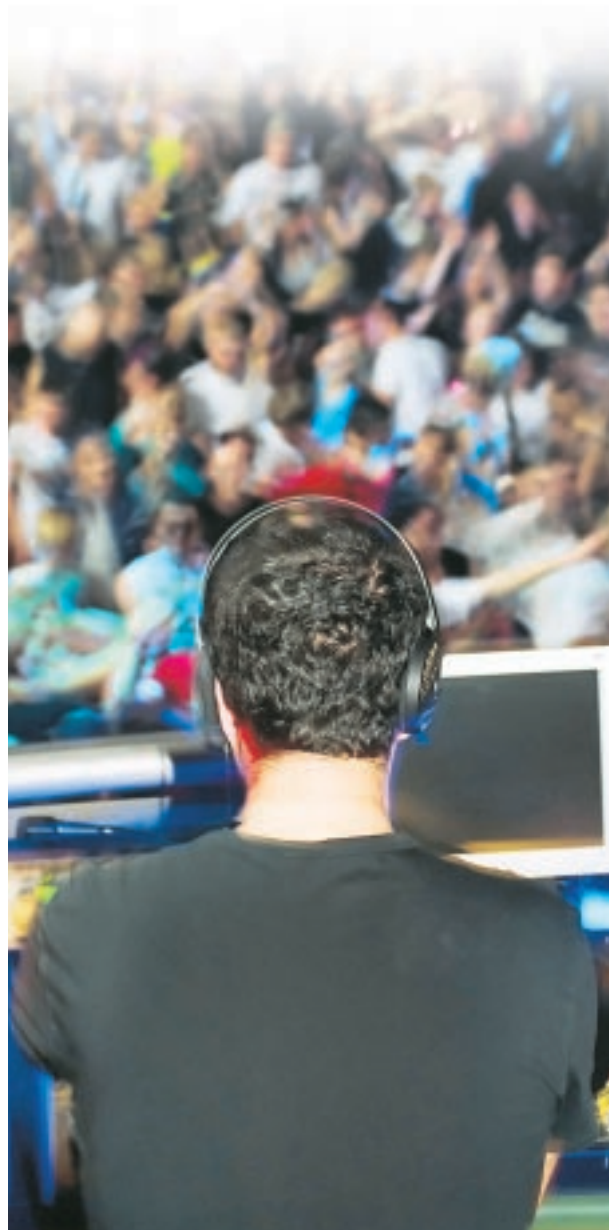
Venue operators and owners are in a difficult situation. Their business has to offer the music their customers want and they have a legal obligation to provide a safe working environment.

In three venues visited in 2000, there were much better noise management systems, indicating that

employers are willing to take preventative action once they are aware of their legal obligations.

The study says there is a clear need for continuing education for employers and employees and for greater public awareness of the risks of exposure to loud noise.

For further information telephone WorkSafe on 9327 8777 or visit the website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au





Beware of inferior personal protective equipment

An employer was caught out recently when purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) from a hardware store. The goods were labelled as 'safety goggles', but did not conform to the Australian Standard, and did not provide adequate protection to the user.



The goggles were designed for domestic use and were not suitable for use in the workplace.

Employers need to be aware that use of the term 'safety' on the packaging of products does not necessarily mean the product can be used in the workplace. To avoid the possibility of purchasing cheap imitations, employers should make sure that any PPE they purchase meets the required Australian Standard, which will be marked on the product.

WorkSafe inspectors will be checking that all PPE meets the relevant Australian Standard, as required by Occupational Safety & Health Regulation 3.33.

When personal protective equipment is required in a workplace, the employer must provide it at no cost to the employee, along with adequate information, instruction and training.

Employees have the responsibility to use any provided PPE in the manner in which they are properly instructed.

Employers are advised to make sure all future purchases, as well as PPE currently in use, comply with the relevant Australian Standard.

For more information on PPE telephone WorkSafe on 9327 8777 or visit the website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au



New National Licensing Standards for high risk workers

Workers undertaking high risk work such as operating cranes or forklifts will need a licence under new standards introduced across Australia.

The current certificate of competency will be replaced by the licence, which will include a photograph of the holder. Licences will be issued only after the applicant has undergone training and assessment.

The Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC), formerly the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, has finalised the *National Standard for Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work* (National Licensing Standard). This standard will replace the existing *National Occupational Health and Safety Certification Standard for Users and Operators of Industrial Equipment [NOHSC: 1006 (2001)]*.

The high-risk classes of work covered by the new standard include crane and hoist, forklift (including industrial lift trucks), pressure equipment operation, scaffolding, rigging and dogging work.

The National Licensing Standard is planned to take effect in Western Australia on 1 July 2007. The final draft of the standard can be downloaded in PDF form from the ASCC's website: www.ascc.gov.au/OHSLegalObligations/NationalStandards/CertificationStd/Licensing.asp

The objectives of the National Licensing Standard are to:

- ensure that people have the skills and knowledge to perform high risk work in a safe manner; and
- facilitate the operation of a nationally uniform and efficient licensing system for people engaged in high risk work.

Licences issued in accordance with the National Licensing Standard will be recognised in all Australian states and territories to promote the portability of skills and the free movement of labour.

Changes from the current National Certification Standard

Other key features of the National Licensing Standard are:

- Training and assessment for licences will need to be undertaken through registered training organisations under the Australian Quality Training Framework.
- Licences will be renewed every five years upon application and evidence of current competency in the form of a Statutory Declaration.
- Licences will be issued with a photograph of the licence holder.
- Operators of industrial lift trucks (fork-lifts) and self-erecting tower cranes will be licensed under the National Licensing Standard.

For further information on implementation of the licence can be obtained from the WorkSafe website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au



Cleaning industry program

WorkSafe inspectors visited 54 small businesses in the contract cleaning industry in Western Australia during February and March, resulting in 164 improvement notices being issued.

The visits were prompted by the relatively high number of workplace injuries in the industry and were aimed at raising safety standards and compliance and creating greater awareness of cleaning industry hazards.

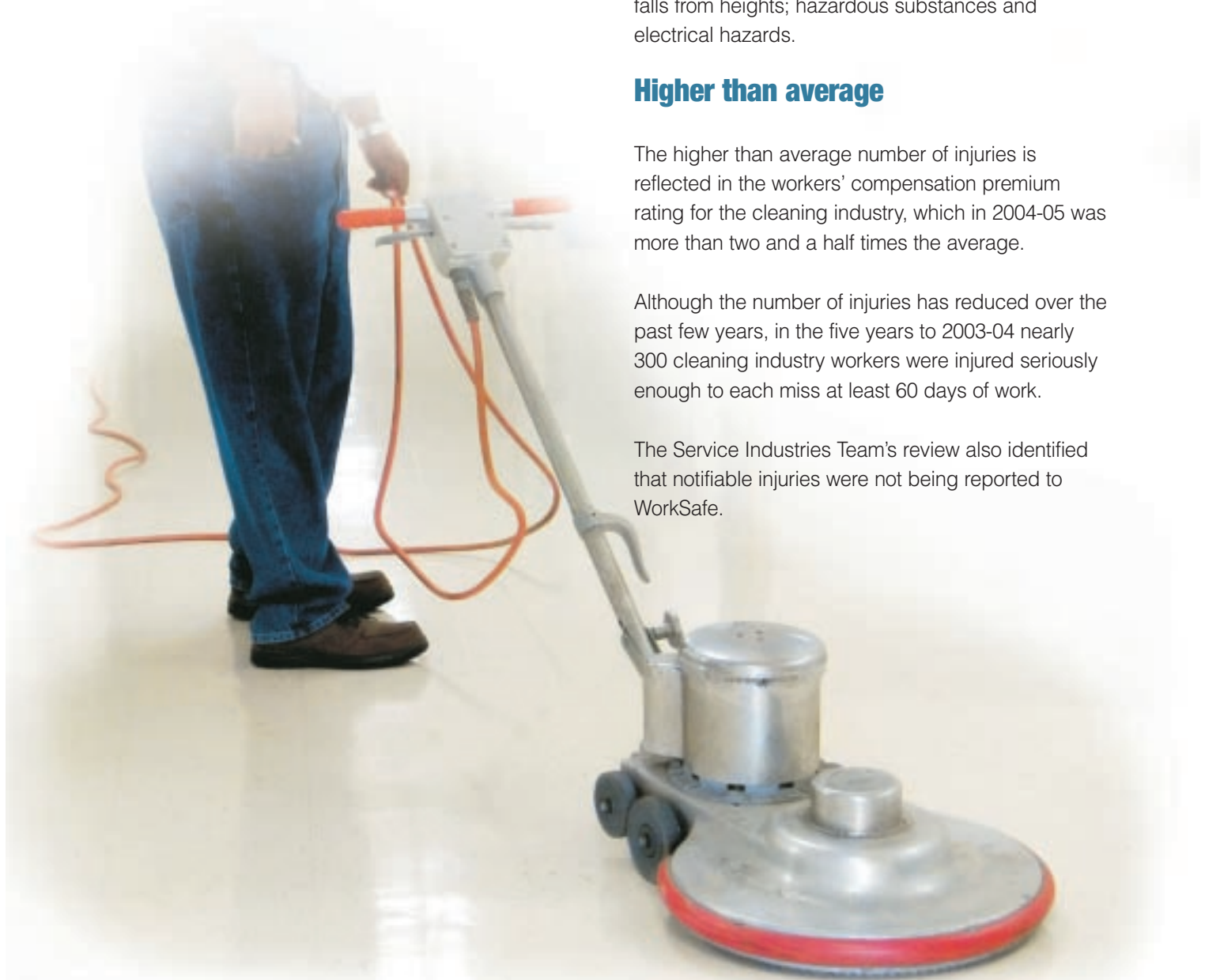
WorkSafe's Service Industries Team analysed the industry's injury statistics, which showed the major causes were manual handling; slips, trips and falls; falls from heights; hazardous substances and electrical hazards.

Higher than average

The higher than average number of injuries is reflected in the workers' compensation premium rating for the cleaning industry, which in 2004-05 was more than two and a half times the average.

Although the number of injuries has reduced over the past few years, in the five years to 2003-04 nearly 300 cleaning industry workers were injured seriously enough to each miss at least 60 days of work.

The Service Industries Team's review also identified that notifiable injuries were not being reported to WorkSafe.





Preparation of Material Safety Data Sheets

Making contact

Before the project got under way, the team briefed the Building Services Contractors Association Australia (BSCAA) and the industry's union – the Australian Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union (LHMU).

About 300 contract cleaning businesses were also advised of the project by post.

The BSCAA has launched various work safety initiatives, including a structured program to guide members through the WorkSafe plan, which aims to improve occupational safety and management systems. The LHMU has also launched its Clean Start program, which aims to improve standards in the industry.

Successful

The investigation program was considered highly successful. Among the problems identified were electrical hazards, use of hazardous substances, inadequate induction for new and young workers and a lack of first aid facilities and fire extinguishers.

In addition to 164 improvement notices, 32 verbal instructions were given and one prohibition notice was issued.

Industry specific information on manual handling, slips, trips and falls, and on the requirement to report notifiable injuries incidents to the WorkSafe Commissioner was provided to each company visited.

For more information telephone WorkSafe on 9327 8777 or visit the website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) provides information about a hazardous substance, how it should be used and how to avoid harm when using it at the workplace. A National Code of Practice for preparation of the MSDS is currently referred to in Western Australian legislation.

The Commission for Occupational Safety and Health has endorsed a proposal to phase in the Second Edition of the *National Code of Practice for the Preparation of Material Safety Data Sheets [NOHSC: 2011 (2003)]* in Western Australia. Once finalised, businesses in Western Australia will have until 26 April 2008 to ensure that they comply. Until this time the First Edition will continue to apply.

Both editions of the National Code can be found on the website of the Office of the Australian Safety and Compensation Council at www.nohsc.gov.au/ohslegalobligations/nationalstandards/COP_MSDS.htm

A Guidance Note on MSDS is located on the WorkSafe website (and will be updated in due course) at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/newsite/worksafe/pages/guidhazs0004.html

For further information on the implementation of the Second Edition of the National Code in Western Australia, please contact Kathryn Bond, Policy Officer, WorkSafe at kbond@docep.wa.gov.au or telephone 9327 8793.



Ageing assets

With an ageing population and decreasing birth rates, Australian businesses are facing potential significant staff shortages in the not too distant future.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, by around 2020 the number of people retiring will outnumber people entering the workforce.

The Government's Mature Age Employment Strategy encourages the increase in the workforce participation of people aged between 45 – 65 years of age in the public and private sectors to help offset the impact of a retiring workforce.

Benefits

Older workers are a cost effective resource. They can bring a vast range of skills and experience such as safety awareness, stress coping strategies such as forward planning, lower levels of sick leave and, in general, strong work ethics.

Health and safety for all

Age should never be used as judgement of an employee's capabilities.

"It is hard to generalise about a mature age worker. For example a risk assessment for a physically fit 60 year old may differ from that for an overweight and inactive 50 year old", says WorkSafe Senior Policy Officer Kathryn Lee.

"In considering safety and health issues for mature age workers, risk assessments should consider factors such as vision, hearing, the work environment and physical workload, as well as the individual capabilities.

"The statistics show that the frequency of lost time injuries and diseases decrease with age; however, the pattern is reversed for severe injuries and diseases, where both the number and frequency increase with age."

Strategies to assist an older workforce

Improve the job design

- Reduce physical loads and ensure tasks are ergonomically correct.
- Where possible, minimise highly repetitive work and allow flexibility in taking breaks.
- Where possible, allow individuals to exercise decision-making and control over work practices.

Improve the work environment

- Eliminate hazards that may cause slips, trips and falls or other accidents.
- Maintain adequate lighting and minimise glare.
- Minimise noisy environments.
- Ensure the environment enables ease of movement.

Provide support

- Promote healthy activities and life/work balance.
- Offer flexible employment options.
- Allow people adjustment time for new tasks.
- Support initiatives such as mentoring and skills transfer.

For more information and publications on mature age employment go to www.worklife.wa.gov.au



Fit and well

St John of God Hospital, Subiaco, Western Australia's largest private hospital, employs around 1700 caregivers.

Keeping all caregivers fit, regardless of whether they have direct or indirect contact with patients, is an integral role of the hospital's Occupational Safety and Health Department and an important part of caregivers' employment package.

Three years ago the hospital launched its occupational safety, health and environment logo "Fit for the Future" and a wellness program offering a range of optional holistic health activities including yoga classes, 'Kanga' cricket and 'Walk for Wellness Wednesdays'. Activities are organised wherever possible throughout the 24-hour shifts. Each department manager is also allocated a massage allowance in the budget to pay for 10-15 minute upper body massages.

The hospital also encourages participation in annual health awareness and fundraising events such as those in the Department of Health's "What's on in Health Calendar" including the City to Surf and Relay for Life.

Manager of Occupational Safety and Health, Ms Melody Stanton, believes that the holistic health programs are important for keeping the workforce healthy, particularly in relation to an aging workforce.

"A large number of our caregivers are over 40, which is reflective of our industry," Ms Stanton said.

"The hospital believes in looking after all caregivers now and into the future so that heading towards retirement age they have more employment choices and enjoyment of life."

The programs have provided positive results. "Both fitness and morale have increased amongst our caregivers, which in turn leads to a more enjoyable work day," Ms Stanton says.

"An added benefit is our lost time injury rates have been maintained in the lower ranges for the last three years with no serious lost time injuries since September 2004. We believe that the Wellness Program has played a big part in this result."

To increase acceptance and participation in a wellness plan, Ms Stanton has a few recommendations for employers.

"Ask what people are interested in and then determine whether to provide it in-house and tailor the programs to meet the needs of the people, then promote them widely and get them enthused.

"As much as possible, integrate activities into the workplace or workday so that it is seen as a natural inclusion to their work," Ms Stanton said.



WorkSafe Plan winners

Platinum Gold Silver

WorkSafe is pleased to announce the latest WorkSafe Plan winners in the Platinum, Gold and Silver categories.

Employers and employees from each of the winning organisations demonstrated a dedication to making occupational safety and health a priority in their workplaces.

Congratulations to Platinum winners

JM & ED Moore
Numans Group Pty Ltd
Pindan Constructions

Congratulations to Gold winners

Geraldton Fuel Company
The Cerebral Palsy Association of WA Ltd

Congratulations to Silver winners

Chandler MacLeod Group
Monadelphous Group Ltd – Engineering
Construction Division
Monadelphous Group Ltd – Maintenance &
Industrial Services, Western Region
RAC (WA) Pty Ltd

For more information on the WorkSafe Plan assessment process, contact 1300 307 877 or visit www.worksafe.wa.gov.au under "Initiatives".



Work Safe annual forums 2006

WorkSafe, the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health and WorkCover Western Australia have held joint forums on an annual basis in Perth and the regions since 2002.

The target audience for the forums is elected safety and health representatives, employees, managers and supervisors in all industries.

A regional forum was held in the Albany on 23 August 2006. The Perth Work Safe 2006 Forum is being held on 25 October 2006 from

8am to 4.30pm at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre. The cost to attend is \$99, including GST.

A highlight of the forums will be a presentation on Workplace safety – then and now, showing some of the significant advances in workplace safety and health.

The Perth forum offers delegates a choice of two of six different concurrent sessions and includes a Work Safety Inventors session, presented by WA professional speaker, presenter and comedian Andrew Horabin.

Further information and the registration form can be found at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/forums



Lost time injury statistics 2004-05

Lost time injury and diseases statistics for 2004-05 are now available on WorkSafe’s website.

WorkSafe’s aim is to continuously reduce lost time injury and disease rates, supporting the national occupational and health strategy to reduce the number of people killed and injured at work. Since the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* came into effect in 1988-89, the frequency rate of lost time injuries and diseases per million hours worked has reduced from 35.3 to 14.1.

Despite the gains, the latest statistics highlight the need for continued vigilance in preventing work related lost time injuries and diseases.

In 2004-05 there were 19,817 reported lost time injuries and diseases. This is an average of 54 every day of the year, or two every hour.

WorkSafe monitors workers’ compensation data for lost time injuries and diseases, and uses it to assist in determining priority industries and issues.

The percentage of lost time injuries and diseases for all industry sectors in 2004-05 are indicated on the graph below.

WorkSafe’s website contains additional information for industries and sub industries, that can be used to compare an organisation’s performance with industry benchmarks.

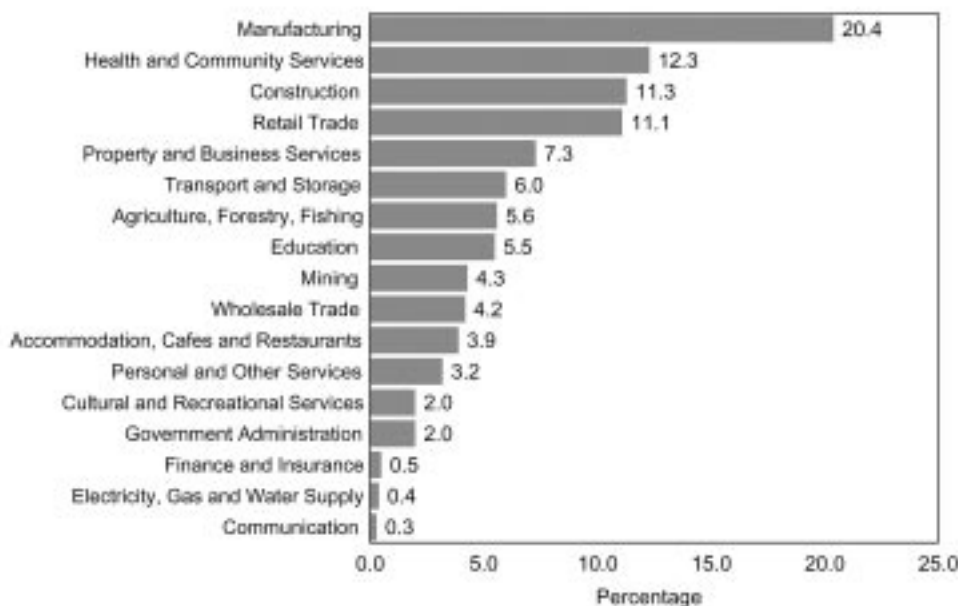
The statistics for work related injuries and diseases reveal that:

- overall, males have higher rates of work-related injuries than women;
- the most common types of work-related injury are sprains and strains (50 per cent of the total);
- the most common causes of injury and disease are muscular stress, being hit, falls, slips and trips;
- tradesmen, labourers and related workers are more likely to have work-related injury or disease; and
- 45 per cent of all lost time injuries and diseases require more than 20 days off work.

For more information contact Selina Mahony, Acting Information Analyst, WorkSafe on 9327 8832 or smahony@docep.wa.gov.au

Work Related Injuries/Diseases WA 2004-05

PERCENTAGE OF LOST TIME INJURIES AND DISEASES BY INDUSTRY



2004-2005 Statistics

SAFETYLINE

ONLINE

www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

