



WorkSafe NEWSLETTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS

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ISSUE 06

Managing risks from alcohol and other drugs at the workplace

Use of alcohol and other drugs becomes a workplace safety and health issue if a worker's ability to exercise judgement, coordination, motor control, concentration and alertness is impaired.

Co-workers may be placed in difficult situations, expected to cover unsafe work practices or faced with reporting a fellow worker. For employers, a range of problems may arise with, in some cases, loss of life, injury and damage to plant and equipment.

Developing an alcohol and other drugs policy and supporting procedures for the workplace, which set out clearly how to respond to people impaired, can help reduce the risks to all. The emphasis in the policy should be on safety and health management and

preventing and responding to workers with an impaired ability to work safely, rather than concerns about personal health.

A key part of the policy is providing education and information to all about the workplace's expectations in relation to usage. It is important all understand the effects alcohol and other drugs can have on safety.

For workplaces with safety and health committees, development of a policy could be listed as an issue for discussion. Alternatively, safety and health representatives or employees could raise the matter with their employer as a general safety and health issue to be addressed.

To get started developing an alcohol and other drugs policy and procedures, see the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health's revised *Guidance note: Alcohol and other drugs at the workplace*. This is available from WorkSafe's web site.

Come home safe campaign successful

WorkSafe's *Come home safe* campaign conducted in 2007 aimed to raise awareness of the importance of workplace safety and health through state-wide media advertisements. Overall, the response has been very positive.

The campaign evaluation showed that employers and employees increased their trust in WorkSafe and the organisation's value to workplaces.

As a result of the campaign more employers are acting on safety in their workplace, with increased numbers of people indicating they would recommend contacting WorkSafe for safety advice.

Findings also showed a belief that WorkSafe has made a difference in overall awareness of OHS, although individuals responded that the message has not changed how they personally go about working safely.



Come home safe



The new look ThinkSafe team

Dr Joyce Inma has recently taken up the position of ThinkSafe Small Business Manager with WorkSafe. She has gained extensive experience in small businesses from her past training and employment as a Postdoctoral Fellow and a lecturer for Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University. She also worked several years with small businesses in retailing and franchising in Singapore. Joyce has overall responsibilities for the successful delivery of the ThinkSafe Small Business Program. If you have any suggestions on how we can improve the ThinkSafe program please contact Joyce on 9327 8769 or at joyce.inma@docep.wa.gov.au

Matt Harskamp has worked throughout Australia in various roles in Federal and State government and the private sector. He has experience in assisting small businesses in fields as diverse as superannuation, hospitality, entertainment and the arts, physical fitness and home improvements. Matt has recently joined WorkSafe as the ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program Liaison Officer which gives him an opportunity to use his skills and experience to assist and encourage small businesses to use the program and other WorkSafe resources. Matt is the person small business operators who contact WorkSafe will speak to in relation to the program. Matt can be contacted on 9327 8850 or matt.harskamp@docep.wa.gov.au

Changes in 2008/09

There will be some changes to the ThinkSafe Small Business Program in 08/09. The tender, calling for expressions of interest for consultant to conduct the safety audits have been advertised in June 08. The tender also calls for regional consultants in order to service these areas on a more immediate basis. More information regarding possible changes to the program in the next issue.

Forklifts

In 2007 important changes were made to the requirements to operate forklifts in Western Australia.

From 1 October 2007, the National Standard for Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work (the National Licensing Standard) required operators of forklifts to hold a National Licence. Previously forklift operators in WA were issued with National Certificates of Competency on a non-compulsory basis.

Some workers will need to have the new licence by September 30 this year. Everyone performing high risk work will require a licence by 30 June 2012.

The date by which individuals need to have the licence depends upon when their Certificates of Competency were issued.

Workers holding a WA Certificate of Competency or OHS Certification Australia Card issued before 31 December 1995 will need to convert to the new licences before 30 September 2008.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne urges people involved with high risk work to check the issue date of their Certificates of Competency and act to replace them with the new licences as soon as possible.

'In agreeing to adopt the national licensing standard, we have acknowledged the important role high-quality training plays in helping provide workers with the skills to perform high risk work safely and competently,' Ms Lyhne said.

'The new licensing applies to anyone engaged in work considered to be 'high risk', including scaffolding, dogging and rigging work and the operation of cranes, hoists and pressure equipment.

'Since the regulations were implemented on 1 October 2007 WorkSafe has issued almost 12,000 new licences.

'The licensing system offers the twin benefits of national consistency and portability while also addressing concerns that existed in some sectors with the previous system of certification.

New guidance note

The Commission for Occupational Safety and Health has updated its *Guidance note: Working safely with forklifts* to be consistent with the new laws covering high risk work. This guidance note is available from WorkSafe's publications officer on 9327 8775 or free of charge on the website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au – Publications-Guidance notes.

Would you like to know about safety and health?

Consider attending one of WorkSafe's free lunchtime information sessions. Sessions will include:

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|--|------------------|
| • Talking about safety in your workplace/grievance resolution | 29 July 2008 |
| • Violence, aggression and bullying | 15 August 2008 |
| • Alcohol and other drugs at the workplace | 25 August 2008 |
| • Ergonomics-Designing work to suit people and office ergonomics | 8 September 2008 |

The forums run from noon to 1.15pm. Bring your lunch and participate in a session which we hope will get you thinking about safety issues at your workplace.

For venue details, bookings and enquires please contact Community Education Officers on 9327 8777 or email worksafersvp@docep.wa.gov.au Bookings are essential.

ThinkSafe Follow-up Visit program

The ThinkSafe Follow-up Visit program is a pilot trial recently introduced by WorkSafe as a result of the 2006 evaluation of the ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance program which showed that the program could be improved by providing small businesses with follow up advice.

Since 2004 the ThinkSafe program has reached over 1,600 small businesses across high risk industries in both metropolitan and regional areas. The program has been well received by small business owner/managers and reported a growth of 18 per cent from 2005 to 2006 and 26 per cent in 2007 and 2008.

After one year from the date of the first visit, small businesses are eligible to apply for the ThinkSafe Follow-up Visits. Specifically the objectives of the ThinkSafe Follow-up Visit program are:

- to assist the small business client with implementation of the Safety Action Plan after the first visit (if available from the first visit).
- to provide focus on the key occupational safety and health (OSH) and/or injury management issues and assist with making changes;
- to discuss barriers and challenges with implementation and provide alternative practical and affordable solutions; and
- to gather information on small business needs and feedback in order to continually update the ThinkSafe program.

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De Jonge Mechanical Repairs

Paul De Jonge started De Jonge Mechanical Repairs in Albany 13 years ago. Traditionally, mechanical workshops have lots of hidden dangers, which is not always evident to the untrained eye. Paul has the responsibility of duty of care to his staff and all the young apprentices. He also feels that having a safer workplace would hopefully eliminate workplace accidents and is a key factor in running his business smoothly.

Through contact with the Motor Trade Association (MTA), Paul was recommended to access the ThinkSafe program eighteen months ago. The safety audit he received from a ThinkSafe independent consultant has enhanced his understanding of what constitutes danger in the workplace. The safety audit helped Paul to clarify how far he should go with his workplace safety. Paul has put in place all the recommendations from the safety action plan he received from the consultant on the first visit.

Paul received the ThinkSafe follow-up visit last month. De Jonge Mechanical Repairs has come a long way in eighteen months in terms of workplace health and safety implementation. Paul uses his initiative and knowledge of workplace safety in implementing his own workplace safety systems. His workshop is now having regular tool box meetings on safety issues. His staff are all aware of risks, good health and safety practices in the workplace and all apprentices in his workshop receive workplace induction. In addition, staff are closely mentored on workplace safety. Yellow markings indicate entry and exit between the workshop and the major traffic outside. The safety audit Paul received from the Follow-up Visit confirmed that De Jonge Mechanical Repairs is on the right track and that his workshop is much more organised and efficient. Paul now has peace of mind in running his business and would advise small businesses to take advantage of the free and independent safety audit provided by ThinkSafe.



“Small business should have an audit done to see where they need to improve. Do not be afraid of asking questions {to the consultant}.”

(Paul De Jonge)

Business focus

Beach Hut

Daryl and Angela Roberson bought the Beach Hut business in 2003 and employ two other people. Prior to purchasing the Beach Hut, Daryl had managed the Beach Hut for 7 years and took great pride in helping build a great idea into a very safe, efficient, and professional business.

Beach Hut hires out beach equipment such as umbrellas, sun lounges, deck chairs and surf boards, and is situated on beautiful Cable Beach, Broome.

Health and Safety requirements are an important part of the Broome Shire license application process and are necessary in retaining Beach Hut's licence. However, Daryl and Angela believe that safety and efficiency are an essential part of running a fast paced, high demand customer service business.

Four years ago Daryl and Angela applied for the ThinkSafe program. They wanted to put a workplace health and safety plan together but were not sure how to start. The independent consultant conducted an audit on the workplace and left them with recommendations for improvements and all the documentation to help write up a plan. Daryl and Angela took the recommendations on board and were able to use all the information as a template for structuring their management of workplace safety and health.

Daryl and Angela take their responsibility as business owners very seriously and are constantly reviewing and upgrading their policies and plans for improvements in workplace safety and health, as they believe it benefits their business, their employees and their customers. Last year, Daryl and Angela contacted ThinkSafe requesting a follow-up visit for an opportunity to revise their safety plan and update with current regulations and legislation.

Beach Hut has a large operational area and in order to cope with the high demand, in peak season, Daryl and Angela need to find safe and efficient practices to run their business. With the duty of care to their staff, customers and the public in mind Daryl has designed a few tools for the beach hire trade.

An **auger bit** which attaches to a battery operated drill is an easier way of setting up a large amount of umbrellas in a safe manner. The hole is drilled in a matter of seconds for the placement of each umbrella. The auger and drill make a lot of hard work become simple and prevents potential injury to the person setting up 50 plus umbrellas.

A **guy rope and sand peg system** which anchors each umbrella to the ground is crucially important on days with strong winds or willie-willies.

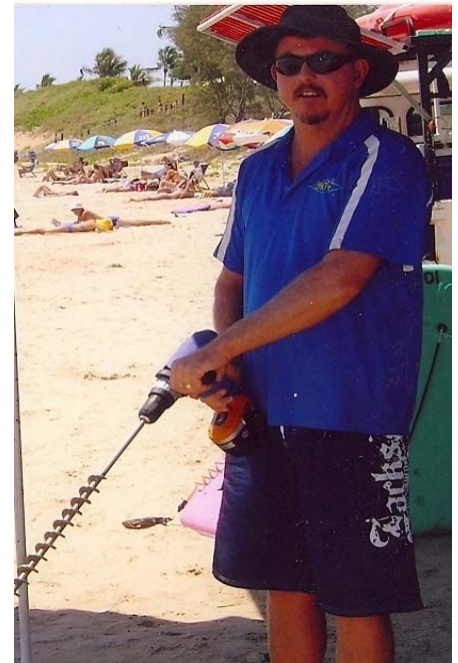
An **aluminum push trolley** is an effective manual handling tool for carting gear in a safer more efficient way

A **two way radio system** makes for an efficient way of communication in such a large operational area.

A **custom made trailer** (designed by Daryl) is a functional work place and storage for equipment.

Supplying free 30+ spf sunscreen & cold drinking water to all customers. This helps to reduce customers from becoming sun burnt or dehydrated.

The Beach Hut owners are very proud of what the business has achieved in the last 5 years. They have put a lot of hard work and commitment into the Beach Hut's workplace health and safety practices and are very enthusiastic and focused on continuing to maintain and improve all areas of health and safety.



“We are proud of our workplace. The advice and recommendation from the ThinkSafe consultant is valuable and is highly recommended”
(Angela Roberson)

ThinkSafe Follow-up Visit program (continued from page 3)

Where are we at?

To date 12 per cent of eligible small businesses having the first visit from independent ThinkSafe consultants took advantage of the Follow-up Visit program. The program covered small business clients proportionately in both metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia (see: Figures 1 and 2)

Figure 1:

Percentage of Metro and Regional Allocations

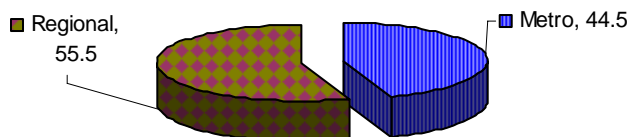
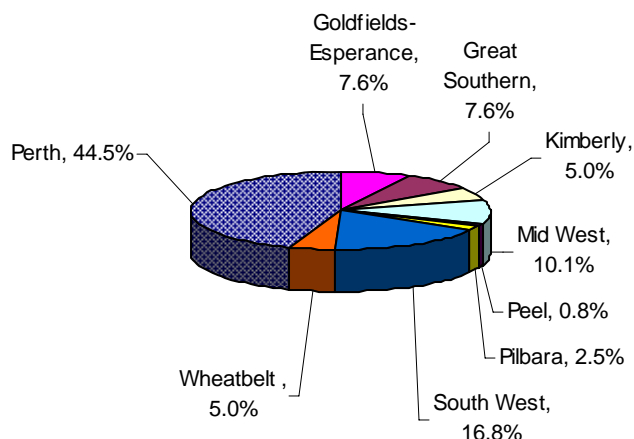


Figure 2:

Percentage of Allocations by Regions



The majority of the small business clients (83 per cent) found the safety advice from the consultants useful and have implemented at least 50 per cent of the action plan provided by the consultants from the first visit. Approximately two-thirds of the small business clients implemented a complete workplace safety and health action plan (> 75 per cent) (see: Figure 3).

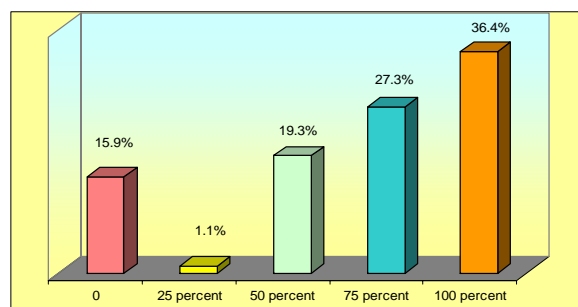


Figure 3

Percentage of action plan completed by clients

For those who had less than 25 per cent implementation of the action plan provided by the independent ThinkSafe consultants from the first visit, indicated a lack of time as the main reason (see: Figure 4).

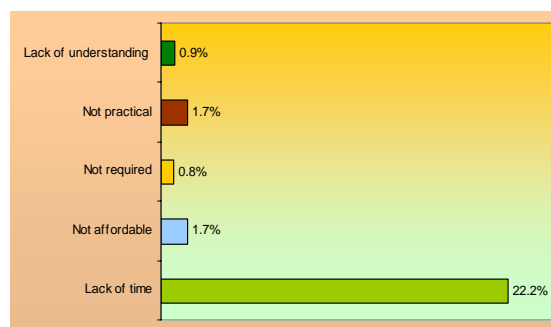


Figure 4

Reasons for not implementing the action plan by clients

If you accessed our ThinkSafe Program more than one year ago, you may qualify for the Follow-up Visit. The experience of small businesses accessing the Follow-up Visit program is very positive.

MSDS to comply with 2003 national code

Under changes to the Occupational Safety and Health regulations, manufacturers and importers preparing Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) in Western Australia will have until 24 April 2008 to develop and provide a MSDS which meets the content requirements of the 2003 National Code: National Code of Practice for the Preparation of Material Safety Data Sheets (NOHSC: 2011 (2003)).

Many materials used in the workplace are classified as hazardous substances because they are a safety risk. The law requires suppliers and manufacturers of hazardous substances to provide employers, self-employed people, workers and other safety and health representatives with the necessary information, in the form of MSDS and labels, on how to safely manage risk and avoid harm when using hazardous substances.

It is important that all MSDSs are kept up to date and everyone in the workplace knows how to read and understand the safety and health information.

The Western Australia Commission for Occupational Safety and Health has now revised its guidance note Provision of information on hazardous substances at workplaces Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to reflect this change. The guidance note explains in detail what manufacturers and suppliers need to do to ensure compliance with the requirements of the 2003 version of the national code.

Safe design of buildings and structures

During June the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health invited Dr John Culvenor PhD, a specialist in industrial ergonomics, human factors, engineering and occupational safety and health to launch the *Code of practice for Safe design of buildings and structures*. This Code aims to assist people involved in designing buildings or other structures to meet the requirements of Western Australia's workplace safety and health laws.

Under safety and health law, people who design and construct a building or structure, including a temporary structure, must ensure that the design and construction is safe so workers who construct, maintain, repair or service it and end users are not exposed to hazards.

Dr Culvenor said that safe design applied to every activity and every industry, and that risks should be controlled at the design stage wherever possible.

'This includes considering how design can affect workers during construction and how it later affects maintenance workers,' Dr Culvenor said. 'The potential hazards to the eventual users of the structure may be eliminated via upstream thinking.'

To find out about the *Code of practice: Safe design of buildings and structures*, see the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health website at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au.

The focus of safe design is not aimed at achieving the impossible and saying the buck stops at the initial design stage. It is more about encouraging consultation between the various stakeholders who have influence over a design, as decisions made early in a project can impact on workers and end users later.

Update on OSH regulation changes to testing and tagging procedures on construction demolition sites.

Amendments to the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations to allow the testing and tagging of portable electrical equipment and RCDs on construction sites to be carried out by a competent person are nearly complete and will come into effect shortly.

A competent person within the regulations will be a person who has acquired the knowledge and skills required to test electrical equipment and residual current devices through training, qualification, experience or a combination of these things. They must know what to look at, what to look for and what to do. This may be a licensed electrician or a person who is trained in the use of a portable appliance tester. Irrespective of who does the work, the worker must be authorised by the employer, who in turn must be satisfied that the inspection and testing program is appropriate for the needs of the workplace and the workers carrying out the work are competent.

Guidance material is available on line at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au – safety topics – electricity