



Inspection campaign

WorkSafe is currently conducting an inspection campaign in the fish wholesaling Industry with a view to reducing injuries in the sector.

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

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

What issues are we looking at?

A checklist has been developed which may assist you assess your workplace prior to being visited by an inspector. The checklist is included in this publication (from page four onwards).

Issues covered by the checklists include:

- Manual tasks
- Electrical
- Slips trips and falls
- Mobile plant
- Emergency procedures
- New and young workers
- Machine guarding
- First aid and amenities
- Fire and emergency safety
- Housekeeping

Further information can be obtained by contacting WorkSafe on 9327 8777 or by visiting the website at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

What is a risk assessment?

The occupational safety and health laws require risk assessments to be carried out.

A risk assessment is the process of determining whether there is a risk associated with an identified hazard, that is, whether there is any likelihood of injury or harm. The process should include consultation with people involved in the task, as well as consideration of the, experience and training of the operator, individual tasks to be performed and the length of time the operator is exposed to the identified hazards.

Details on how to conduct a risk assessment are on page 3

How are workers getting hurt

The major safety issues in the fish warehousing are:

- manual handling;
- slips trips and falls;
- hazardous substances;
- falls from heights; and
- mobile plant

Manual tasks -

Problems and solutions

Manual tasks hazards are covered by the general duty provisions in the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Specific requirements for hazard identification, risk assessment and control are established by Regulation 3.4 of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996.

The Code of practice for manual handling provides practical guidance on the identification, assessment and control of risks associated with manual handling at work.

It is important to consult with workers performing the tasks as they are likely to be aware of the risk of manual handling injuries which may be associated with their jobs.

Manual handling tasks likely to be a risk to workers' safety and health should be identified and assessed in detail to determine the nature and the extent of the problems.

Risk control means finding solutions to the problems.

The following general problems and suggested solutions are examples of how manual handling injuries may be reduced.

Problems

Strain injuries may occur when:

- the load is lifted from the floor, or from below mid-thigh height;
- reaching above shoulder height when stacking cartons on pallets;
- there is too much twisting and bending when placing cartons on a pallet;
- excessive forward reaching is required when placing cartons on the far side of a pallet;
- the cartons are too heavy when other risk factors, such as the number of cartons to be moved or the distance moved, are taken into account;
- the cartons are awkward to grasp due to their size and shape.

Solutions

Here are some ideas that may be used to avoid strain injuries. The examples provided may need to be used in combination with each other. Other risk control strategies, for example training, form part of any well thought out solution.

- eliminate manual handling by using automatic carton stacking, vacuum suction, or hydraulic carton stacking;
- raise the work height, eg. use a platform with automatic height adjustment;
- use scissor platforms or tables;
- use swivel or tilt platforms;
- talk to your customers or suppliers about the size, shape and weight of cartons and their contents;
- reduce the weight of the carton;
- limit the height of the stack of cartons; and
- where team lifting is necessary, ensure a safe procedure is agreed and followed.

Is using a trolley a good idea?

To avoid manual handling injuries the use of trolleys is recommended. However trolleys that are not maintained or overloaded can result in injury. Strain injuries may occur when:

- trolleys are difficult to manoeuvre;
- trolley wheels are too small or poorly maintained;
- the trolleys and their loads are too heavy when other risk factors, such as the number of times a trolley is moved or the workplace layout, are taken into account;
- surfaces over which trolleys are pushed are uneven or mismatched;
- trolleys are moved over large distances or up steep slopes;
- trolleys are difficult to grip due to the absence or poor location of handles; and
- vision is impaired by an overloaded trolley.

Slips trips and falls

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

There are many controls that employers can use to prevent slips and trips in the workplace. Firstly though, it is important to complete hazard identification and a risk assessment in consultation with your staff. This will ensure that the right control is chosen for the hazards that are relevant in YOUR workplace.

Common controls used in workplaces can be categorised according to the hierarchy of controls:

- **Eliminate the hazard** - install more power points to avoid cords on floor, widen aisles
- **Substitution** - resurface floors with 'less hazardous materials'
- **Isolation** - restrict access to some work areas
- **Engineering controls (minimising risk by redesign)** - improve lighting, mark walkways install drainage, use ramps instead of steps
- **Administrative Controls** - ensure good housekeeping - clean up spills immediately, use signs for slippery or wet floors
- **Personal Protective Equipment** proper footwear

What risk factors contribute to slips and trips incidents?

Slips and trips account for 20% of all lost time injuries every year. They can result in serious injuries and lengthy periods of time off work.

Risk factors that contribute to slips and trips injuries will vary according to the type of workplace and work tasks being completed.

Common risk factor categories include:

- Floor surface & condition
- Floor contamination
- Objects on the floor
- Ability to see floor/ walkways/ hazards
- Cleaning/ spill containment
- Space & design
- Stairs & stepladders
- Work activities, pace & processes
- Footwear & clothing
- Individual factors

Can slips and trips in the workplace be prevented?

Yes, slips and trips can be prevented in workplaces. Awareness of the common risk factors for slips and trips, coupled with a strong management commitment, can result in reduction and prevention of slips and trips incidents.

Like any other hazard in the workplace, prevention begins with a risk management approach – ie spot the hazard, assess the risk and make the changes. This should be done in full consultation with your staff at each stage.

Hazards can be identified by reviewing hazard reports and incident reports, talking with your staff and completing walk-throughs or workplace inspections to identify potential hazards.

Assessing the risk involves identifying all of the risk factors that are present that may contribute to the risk of a slip or trip, and determining the potential likelihood and consequences of a slip or trip occurring.

Finally, making changes is about implementing controls that eliminate or reduce the identified risk factors. Don't forget that all-important step of reviewing the solutions after they have been put in place to make sure that they are effective, and have not introduced any new hazards to the workplace.

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.

Working safely with forklifts 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 (type 'Working safely with forklifts' into the 'search' box).

Safe movement of vehicles at workplaces

Vehicles and mobile plant moving in and around workplaces cause far too many occupational injuries and deaths in WA.

Reversing, loading, unloading and pedestrian movements are the activities most frequently linked to accidents.

To avoid incidents, traffic and pedestrian movement needs to be designed, planned and controlled.

Here are some tips for safe movement of vehicles:

Design traffic routes so they are wide enough for the largest vehicle using them. They should be one-way (if possible) and have clearly signed traffic instructions.

- Separate pedestrian footpaths or walkways from traffic or make traffic routes wide enough for both vehicles and pedestrians. Use pedestrian barriers to prevent people walking in front of vehicles.
- Situate loading bays where vehicles can be manoeuvred easily and they are protected from adverse weather conditions. Raised loading platforms should be fitted with rails and raised wheel stop edges on the non-loading sides, to prevent people, forklifts or trolleys rolling over the edge.
- Mark reversing areas so drivers and pedestrians can see them easily. To reduce reversing accidents, place fixed mirrors at blind corners.
- Ensure that people directing traffic wear high-visibility clothing and that their signals can be seen clearly.

How do I use these checklists?

1. Use the checklists in this newsletter to inspect your workplace. You may see other hazards as you are going through – add them to the checklist.
2. Anything that you have ticked 'No' or added to the list needs to be fixed. So, look at each hazard using the table below to prioritise identified hazards.

Risk rating table – for working out level of risk Use the vertical and horizontal columns to consider both the likelihood of injury or harm to health and the consequences to work out the level of risk

Likelihood of injury or harm to health	Consequences of any injuries or harm to health			
	Insignificant eg no injuries	Moderate eg first aid	Major eg extensive injuries	Catastrophic eg death
Very likely	High	Extreme	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
Moderate	Low	High	Extreme	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
Highly unlikely (rare)	Low	Moderate	High	High

Risk assessment is a 'best estimate' on the basis of available information. It is important the responsible person undertaking a risk assessment has the necessary information, knowledge and experience of the work environment and work process, or such a person is involved.

3. If the hazard falls into 'high' or 'extreme', based on your view of how likely it is someone will get hurt and what level of injury could happen, then you need to fix it straight away.

If it is lower down in the table – moderate or low – then plan when you will fix it.

Remember hazards have to be controlled – you can't ignore them.

Checklists

chemicals and harmful substances safety checklist			
check	yes	no	n/a
Correct use of chemicals and harmful substances is part of induction			
All people who may be exposed to chemicals and harmful substances have been given information, instruction and training			
Records of training include: health effects, controls, safe work methods and personal protective equipment/clothing			
There is a complete easy to find and read list/register of all chemicals used			
There is an MSDS for each hazardous substance in the workplace			
MSDS are available for workers' reference and included in the hazardous substances register			
Original containers have the manufacturer's label			
Decanted containers are labelled with name, risk and safety instructions			
A risk assessment has been completed for all chemicals and harmful substances stored and used at the workplace			
The risk assessment is recorded in the list/register			
Assessment reports are available to monitor significant risks			
Actions have been taken to control risks. For example, an investigation has been done to find out whether an alternative safer chemical is available			
The hierarchy of controls has been considered when reducing risk			
There are appropriate first aid and emergency facilities and workers' are aware of them			
Where there is a risk eg. From lead, isocyanates and organophosphorous insecticides, a medical practitioner has been appointed to monitor the health status of workers.			

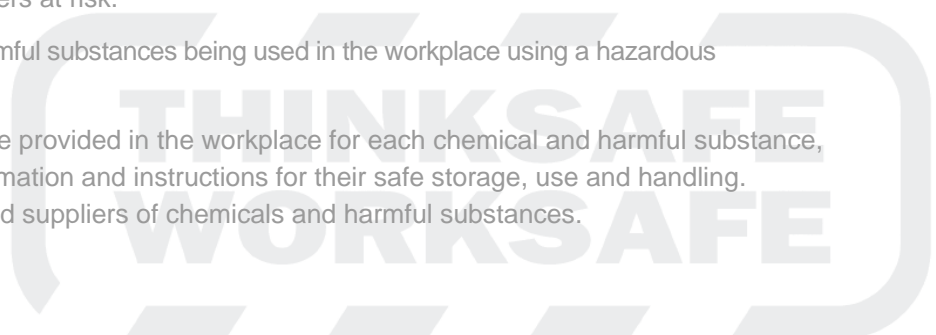
Chemicals and harmful substances

Lost time at work, illness and sometimes death are all outcomes of failing to store, use or dispose of hazardous substances properly.

Pesticides, acids, solvents, cleaners, paint, asbestos, wood dust and welding fumes are some of the chemicals and harmful substances that can place workers at risk.

Employers must identify all chemicals and harmful substances being used in the workplace using a hazardous substances register.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be provided in the workplace for each chemical and harmful substance, listing the ingredients and giving health information and instructions for their safe storage, use and handling. MSDSs are available from manufacturers and suppliers of chemicals and harmful substances.



electricity safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Electrical safety is part of induction			
People working with electricity have been given information, instruction and training			
There is a maintenance program in place for electrical installations			
Electrical equipment has been tested			
Residual current devices (RCD) are installed at switchboards or into fixed sockets			
Portable electrical equipment is protected by RCDs			
The RCD device is labelled and has been tested			
Flexible cord connections have either moulded or transparent type plugs			
Plugs, sockets and extension leads are in good condition			
Flexible cords are protected from water, being damaged or cut			
Switchboards are labelled correctly and protected from damage			
Light fittings are suitable for the location and protected from breakage			
Power points are suitable for the location and are positioned safely			
Safety procedures are in place for workers working near overhead power lines			
Machinery has been identified that may expose workers to electrical risk			
Site power been connected when construction site work has reached plate height			
Cords are of suitable length for the intended use			
There are no double adaptors or three-pin plug adaptors in use			
Electrical installations are protected from damage that would increase the risk of electrical shock or fire			
Portable cable stands are used when required			

Electricity

Electrical hazards exist in almost every workplace. It is not only high voltage that causes electrocution – the smallest mistake can be fatal.

People can be electrocuted by coming into contact with overhead wires, carrying out maintenance work on live electrical circuits, working with damaged electrical equipment, extension cords, plugs or sockets. Familiar appliances like toasters and microwave ovens also cause a significant number of electrical burns.

A WorkSafe study found that, with the exception of deaths caused by overhead power-lines, many electrocutions could have been prevented with the use of residual current devices (RCD).

Safety regulations require employers to fit RCDs to minimise the risk of electric shock. All electrical installations must meet Australian Standards.

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manual handling-lifting safety checklist			
check	yes	no	n/a
Training in manual handling covers all the requirements of the <i>Code of Practice for Manual Handling</i> and is part of induction			
Information, instruction and training in safe lifting has been provided to everyone involved in organising and implementing manual handling processes; investigating accidents; or performing tasks where manual handling hazards have been identified			
Workers understand manual handling risk factors and are aware of risk management procedures			
The weight of the object or person to be lifted is assessed before lifting is done to assess the lifter's capability			
Alternative ways of lifting and carrying have been considered, Eg. using a mechanical hoist or trolley			
Workers have been asked for suggestions on safer ways to do the job			
All hazards have been identified and the risks assessed			
Practical control measures have been put in place and maintained to eliminate or reduce the risks as far as possible			
Control measures are reviewed after accidents have occurred			
All manual handling-related incidents have been adequately investigated			

Manual handling-lifting

Lifting is the single most common cause of manual handling related injury in Western Australia. On average, workers with injuries from manual handling take the longest time to recover and return to work.

The weight of an object is only one of many factors to consider in avoiding injuries. Other things to take into account include: how often and how quickly a task is performed; the age and physical strength of the person; and the size and shape of the object.

Workplace injuries most commonly linked to manual handling include sprains and strains, hernias and damage to the back. Injuries can be the result of gradual wear and tear from frequent or prolonged lifting or sudden damage from a single lift of something very heavy or awkward. **For more information on manual handling issues with stacking cartons see page 1**



slips and trips safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Training in slips and trips is part of induction			
Information, instruction and training on slip, trip and fall hazards has been provided			
Floor surfaces are slip resistant			
Walkways are free of hazards, such as electrical leads and hoses			
There is a "clean as you go" policy to ensure spills are attended to immediately			
There are special provisions for slip resistance in wet areas such as bath tubs, showers, sinks, hotel/pub bars			
Floor surfaces are maintained and in good condition			
Warning signs are erected near spills			
Pathway accesses to and from work areas are kept free of obstacles			
Guard rails or other safety guards are provided on ramps and stairs			
There is adequate lighting			
Appropriate personal protective clothing, such as slip resistant footwear, is provided			
There are ramps in areas where the height of floor levels change and trolley access is required or where items are carried regularly			
Significant hazards have been identified and assessed			
The assessments have evaluated all the factors that affect the risk			
All practicable control measures been implemented and maintained to eliminate or reduce risk			
All slips, trips and falls-related incidents been adequately investigated and all controls reviewed after accidents occur			

Slips, trips and falls

Slips, trips and falls are a significant problem affecting every workplace, from factory floor to office. People who work near wet floors or concrete surfaces face the greatest risk of suffering an injury from slipping or tripping.

Factors that contribute to the risk of slips and trips include:

- unstable, loose, or uneven floor surfaces;
- obstacles blocking walkways;
- slippery floor surfaces from spilt substances, eg. fluid, mud or oil;
- types of flooring or surface texture, such as wood, concrete or vinyl;
- inadequate lighting; and/or
- inadequate footwear. **For more information on reducing slips trips and falls go to page 2**

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working at heights safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Where relevant, working at heights is part of induction			
People working at heights have been given information, instruction and training			
Workers are supervised to ensure that safe work practices are in place			
Work areas are clear of protruding objects, water, vehicles and people			
Hand rails on stairs are secure and steps are well maintained			
All work areas are free from obstructions			
Walkways, corridors and stairs are free from obstructions			
Ladders are in good condition and are secure and fixed firmly in place			
High ladders have fall-back protection			
Mechanical lifts are safe			
Mezzanine floors have safe access and fall protection, such as handrails			
Fall arrest systems, such as harnesses, are in place			
Safer, alternative ways to do the work have been considered			
Potential existing hazards have been identified			
The risks of anyone falling from heights have been assessed			
Practical steps have been taken to prevent falls			
Alternative ways of carrying out the work have been considered			

Working from heights

In Western Australia, an average of two workers die each year after falling. Most of these falls occur from relatively low heights ie. less than 5 metres. A further 5 people are killed by falling objects. Many more suffered serious injuries.

Employees falling from ladders, stairs or scaffolding are typical accidents and the most common types of injuries are sprains and strains, fractures and bruising.

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forklifts safety checklist

check	yes	no	n/a
Maintenance record is complete			
Records are kept of alterations, regular inspections and maintenance, particularly brakes, steering, hydraulics, tyres.			
Operator is 17 years or older			
Operator is trained in accordance with national standards for high risk work			
Forklift is in good working order, with fittings as required by law			
Pre-operational checks are conducted of:			
Roll – over protection			
Falling object protection			
Seat			
Seat belt			
Lights (if used at night)			
Steering			
Controls			
Horn			
Gas cylinder			
Warning signs (decals)			
Brakes			
Mast			
Chains			
Tynes			
Hoses			
Counterweight			
Capacity chart is legible, applies to forklift, is amended for attachments and has detail as per manufacturer's specifications			
Operator's manual is legible, accessible, applies to forklift and has detail as per manufacturer's specifications			
Work is organised for the safety of the operator and others			
Checks are made of:			
Work surface			
Ramps			
Loading docks			
Signs			
Hazardous areas			
Control of traffic			
Control of pedestrians			
Unless otherwise instructed, keys are not left in unattended forklift to prevent unauthorised use			

Forklifts

On average there are around 200 injuries and one death involving forklifts each year in Western Australia. A high risk work licence is now required to operate a forklift.

A forklift inspection and maintenance program is required to ensure forklifts comply with manufacturers recommendations.

Further guidance on working with forklifts is available on the WorkSafe website.

This checklist should be used in conjunction with the Commission for Occupational Safety and Health Guidance Note – Working safely with forklifts.



Induction and new workers safety checklist

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

Other issues safety checklist

Check	yes	no	n/a
Reportable accidents have been notified to WorkSafe			
Lost time injuries or diseases, accidents and notified hazards have been investigated			
Personal protective equipment is provided without any cost to employees			

New and young workers

All workers who are new to the job are at risk of injury, with young people aged 15 to 19 the most likely to be hurt.

When assessing risks to young people, special factors to consider are:

- the size of the person and their level of physical maturity;
- their general behaviour and psychological maturity;
- their work experience and training;
- their ability to make mature judgements about their own safety and the safety of others; and
- their ability to cope with unexpected, stressful situations.

Use the safety induction checklist to ensure your new and young workers are familiar with safety procedures. The access movement and safety of visitors must also be considered.



Information to help you meet the OSH laws

The WorkSafe website contains a number of publications which may assist you in making your workplace a safer place. Go to the WorkSafe website www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

Act and regulations

- Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984
- Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996

Code of practice

- Fatigue management for commercial vehicle drivers
- First aid, workplace amenities and personal protective clothing
- Manual handling
- Prevention of falls at workplaces
- Working hours and risk management guidelines

Guidance note

- Alcohol and other drugs at the workplaces
- Formal consultative processes
- General duty of care in Western Australian workplaces
- Plant in the workplace
- Preparing for emergency evacuations at the workplace
- Prevention of carbon monoxide poisoning
- Provision of information on hazardous substances (MSDS)
- Safe movement of vehicles at workplaces
- Working alone
- Working safely with forklifts

Bulletin

- Gloves-selection use and maintenance
- Machine guarding
- New licence for high risk work
- Tips for investigating accidents and incidents

Guides

- Application guide for a national certificate of competency
- Armed hold-ups and cash handling
- Priority area checklists
- The first step
- The next step

Fact sheets

- Safety and health tips for laundry staff

Regular OSH updates

Do you want receive regular emails from WorkSafe to keep you up to date with changes to occupational safety and health in Western Australia, then go to www.worksafe.wa.gov.au →services→mailing lists

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ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program

If you are a small business owner or manager (employing less than 20 full-time employees) and want to make your workplace safe, the ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program can help you.

The good news is that the help you get is:

- free (up to three hours assistance);
- easy to obtain;
- provided by an independent and qualified osh consultant; and
- is a simple process with clear and immediate outcomes.

WorkSafe provides up to **three hours of free safety and health advice** to eligible small businesses (less than 20 full time employees) in the following high-risk industry areas: **Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; Construction; Health and Community Services; Manufacturing; Retail and Wholesale; and Transport and Storage.**

WorkSafe will arrange for an independent occupational safety and health consultant to visit your workplace and prepare a simple safety action plan. This is a **confidential** service and the consultant will not report back to WorkSafe on any aspect of your business.

For more information, call WorkSafe on (08) 9327 8850 and 1800 429 273 or visit our website at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

To access this service, please complete the details below and fax or mail the form to:

WorkSafe Fax: (08) 9321 2148
 PO Box 294
 West Perth WA 6872

Application form

Please answer ALL questions. Please PRINT clearly.

Australian Business Number (ABN):	
Business / Company Name:	
Trading Name (if different to above):	
Location Address:	Post code:
Postal Address (if different to above):	Post code:
Business Owner:	Contact Person:
Telephone: ()	Mobile:
E-mail:	Fax: ()
Industry and nature of business (please provide details so we can match you with an appropriate consultant):	
Is your business independently owned? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
Is your business a franchise or part of a larger parent organisation? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes; please state the company name.....	
Number of employees:	
As the owner of this small business, I declare that the information provided is both accurate and correct:	
Signature: Date:	

PLEASE NOTE:

1. The OSH consultant will provide you with up to three hours of free advice and meet all travel costs. However, any costs for consultation beyond the three-hour limit will need to be met by your business.
2. WorkSafe does have a legal requirement to respond to complaints and incidents. Employers who are part of the ThinkSafe Small Business Assistance Program will not be exempt from this procedure.