

UNDERSTANDING HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

Whatever sort of business you are in, there is always the possibility of an accident or damage to someone's health. Waste is no exception. The underlying aim of good health and safety management is to ensure that people's safety is not put at risk and that their health is not damaged.

In New Zealand there are a regulatory requirements that govern how to manage the health and safety of people involved in the workplace. This document will give a brief description of some of the more important pieces of legislation and some of the things you should consider in the development of your health and safety documentation.

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY IN EMPLOYMENT ACT 2002

The main focus of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 2002 was to manage the health and safety of people in the workplace. The 2002 Act placed responsibility for safety on everyone involved in the workplace, whether employer, employee or self-employed. An essential part of the 2002 Act was the identification of workplace hazards and the requirement to keep a register of accidents. Hazard identification and the elimination, isolation and minimising of these were the top priority.

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

Hazard identification and assessment of hazards are made by:

- **Physical inspection** – looking at the work area
- **Task analysis** – looking at the tasks being carried out
- **Process analysis** – following the production processes
- **Accident analysis** – looking at the details of accidents that have occurred.

ELIMINATION, ISOLATION OR MINIMISATION OF HAZARDS

The Act required that hazards in the workplace are identified and that all practicable steps were taken to control them using the hierarchy of control. These included:

- **Elimination** - all practicable steps had to be taken to eliminate the hazard hazards that had the potential to cause serious harm or death
- **Isolation** - where hazards cannot be eliminated then all practicable steps had to be taken to isolate the hazard
- **Minimisation** - if there are no practicable means to eliminate or isolate the hazard, then the hazard had to be minimised to protect employees from harm.



DEVELOPING YOUR HEALTH & SAFETY MANUAL

You will need to develop your own Health and Safety Policy and Manual for your workplace. If you are a new organisation or business, it is essential you have your own health and safety policy and procedures.

A good place to start is the WorkSafe New Zealand website: www.worksafe.govt.nz

The website has a section where you can find a range of forms and templates to assist in the development of your health and safety manual so you can manage safe practices in your workplace. There are sample forms from hazard identification to accident investigation. You can also get ideas on how to put together your own manual by talking with other organisations about what they do at their workplace.

There are fact sheets on the website to assist with developing good workplace health and safety standards to meet responsibilities and duties under the Act:

1. DEVELOPING HEALTH & SAFETY SYSTEMS

- Employers' general duties
- Employers must involve staff in health and safety
- Employees have to help ensure a safe and healthy worksite
- Health and safety representatives

2. DEALING WITH ACCIDENTS AT WORK

- Recording and notifying worksite accidents
- No interference with serious accident scenes
- Serious harm definition

3. MANAGING HAZARDS

- Employers' duty to manage hazards
- Safety around loud noise
- Safety around hazardous containers and loose particle mounds
- Safety around machinery
- Safety: Overcrowding, raised objects, falls and scaffolding
- Safety features for self-propelled mobile work equipment
- Safety around excavations

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANUAL

A health and safety manual at the workplace could be set up with the following headings:

1. Health and Safety Policy Statement

2. Hazard Identification and Control Procedures Hazard Register

- Hazardous Substances Register

3. Information and Training for Employees

- Employee / Induction Training Record

4. Accident and Incident Recording, Reporting and Investigation Procedures

- Accident / Incident Register
- Notice or Record of Accident / Serious Harm
- Accident Investigation
- WorkSafe Branch Addresses

5. Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

6. Other Persons in the Workplace

7. Contractors and Sub-Contractors

- Contractor's Agreement

8. Employee's Acknowledgement

9. Master Copy Forms

For more information check out:

<http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe>

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz>

If you're a member of CRN there are some examples policies and procedures available in the members only section of our website <http://communityrecyclers.org.nz>.

Contact admin@communityrecyclers.org.nz for more info

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN WORK ACT 2015

In 2013, government announced its Working Safer reform package, aimed at bringing down New Zealand's workplace injury and death toll by 25 per cent by 2020. The Health and Safety Reform Bill has been passed by Parliament. It will come into effect on 4 April 2016. The most important part of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 is to make every workplace responsible for the health and safety of all workers.

Under the new law, a 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU – which could be an individual or a company) must ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees, contractors, subcontractors and other workers they engage.

The law also has a new duty of consultation. This means that all those with a duty under the law – the organisation,

subcontractors and others – must consult, cooperate and coordinate as far as reasonably practicable to ensure compliance with the duty.

Workers or officers, including directors, are not the PCBU but have separate personal liability. Directors can be prosecuted if they don't exercise due diligence to ensure the PCBU complies with its duties and obligations, so they need to know about how health and safety is being taken care of on the job. The new law puts safety ahead of cost unless the cost is 'grossly disproportionate' to the risk.

For more information check out:

<http://www.level.org.nz/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-in-employment-act>

<http://www.dol.govt.nz/hs/law/quickguide/about.shtml>

