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Psychosocial Health and Safety Forum

Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice

Friday 07 March 2025

11.00am – 12.00pm AEDT





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Acknowledgement of Country

Acknowledgement of artist
Healing Hands – Cover artwork by Dion Devow of DDesigns





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Housekeeping



The forum is being recorded

Available on our website in the coming week - search for 'Comcare webinars'



Please complete the survey at the end of the Forum



Q&A function available

Use the threads for your discussion and view the pinned posts.



Interactive Mentimeter session

- Join at www.menti.com



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Agenda

Code of Practice: The differences between the Model Code vs Commonwealth Code and what you need to know

Psychosocial Inspection Program: Update and overview of the program methodology

Interactive session: Using Menti.com

Resources available and Comcare National WHS Awards

Wrap up and feedback survey: Help shape future events





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Psychosocial data

FY 2022/23 VS FY 2023/24



Incidents involving
psychosocial hazards
increased by +59%



Notifiable incidents involving
psychosocial hazards
increased by +79%

FY 2023/24



Of all WHS concerns reported
to Comcare, 44% were of a
psychosocial nature



Of the accepted
compensation claims,
12% were for psychosocial injury.



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Compliance and Enforcement Policy



providing
information
and advice



making
authorisation and
approval decisions



monitoring the extent
of compliance in the
jurisdiction



investigating
alleged or potential
contraventions



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Legal landscape

Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Sets out legal duties

Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011

Outlines requirements to comply
with the legal duties of the WHS
Act.

**Amendments to the
Regulations (April 2023)**



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Psychosocial hazards

Hazards relating to



Design of work

Work environment



Plant

Work Interactions and behaviours



These hazards can cause:





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Generally accepted definitions

Psychosocial safety

Psychological
and social
factors

Psychological safety

Feeling safe
to
speak up

Psychological health and safety

Overall mental
health and
wellbeing



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Code of Practice – What is it?

A Code of Practice is a practical guide, approved under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

Each Code covers an issue or situation, and:

- Offers a way to identify and manage risks
- Sets out how to achieve the standards required under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*.





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Commonwealth Code of Practice

Following an approved code of practice will assist the duty holder to achieve compliance with the health and safety duties in the *WHS Act and WHS Regulations*.



Work Health and Safety (Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work) Code of Practice 2024

I, Murray Watt, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, make the following Code of Practice.

Dated 27 October 2024

Murray Watt
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations



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Commonwealth Code vs Model Code

The Commonwealth Code includes:

1. Three **(3)** additional **psychosocial hazards**
2. The **requirement** that PCBU's follow the **hierarchy of controls**
3. 10 **principles for responding** to psychosocial incidents and concerns
4. Examples of **case studies** across different industries to highlight good practice



Work Health and Safety (Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work) Code of Practice 2024

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Intrusive surveillance

Excessive surveillance methods/tools to monitor and collect information about workers at work for performance monitoring

What it can look like

- unreasonable level of supervision
- tracking of when and how much a worker is working
- tracking calls made and movements made by the workers (using CCTV and trackable devices)
- use of keyboard activity trackers.

Examples of how to control it

- develop a clear policy on appropriate monitoring that is not excessive or punitive
- consult with employees when developing performance monitoring systems
- ensure supervisors understand their role in supervising workers.



Job insecurity

Employment where workers lack the assurance that their jobs will remain stable or where workers are engaged in insecure work arrangements

What it can look like

- No paid leave, leading to presenteeism
- Workers taking on more hazardous job tasks
- Workers performing extended hours of work when jobs are available
- Isolated work resulting in physical and social isolation
- Workers coming to work sick or injured.

Examples of how to control it

- Consult and provide advance notice of work arrangements
- Provide leadership and supervision that supports workers to provide input regarding work hours and arrangements
- Involve insecure workers in organisation decision-making processes and encourage questions about their employment.



Fatigue

A state of physical or mental exhaustion, or both, which reduces the ability to perform work safely and effectively.

What it can look like

- Physical exhaustion from high physical demands
- Physical exhaustion from poor environmental conditions
- Mental exhaustion from high mental or cognitive demands
- Emotional exhaustion from high emotional demands.

Examples of how to control it

- Incorporate fatigue management into rosters and work practices to allow for adequate rest and recovery
- Provide training to supervisors and workers on recognising signs and symptoms of fatigue
- Establish hours of work guidelines to manage the likelihood of fatigue
- Ensure journey management process to manage fatigue-related risks with work travel.



Hierarchy of controls

The Commonwealth Code of Practice states that the **hierarchy of controls must be followed**, if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate a psychosocial risk.



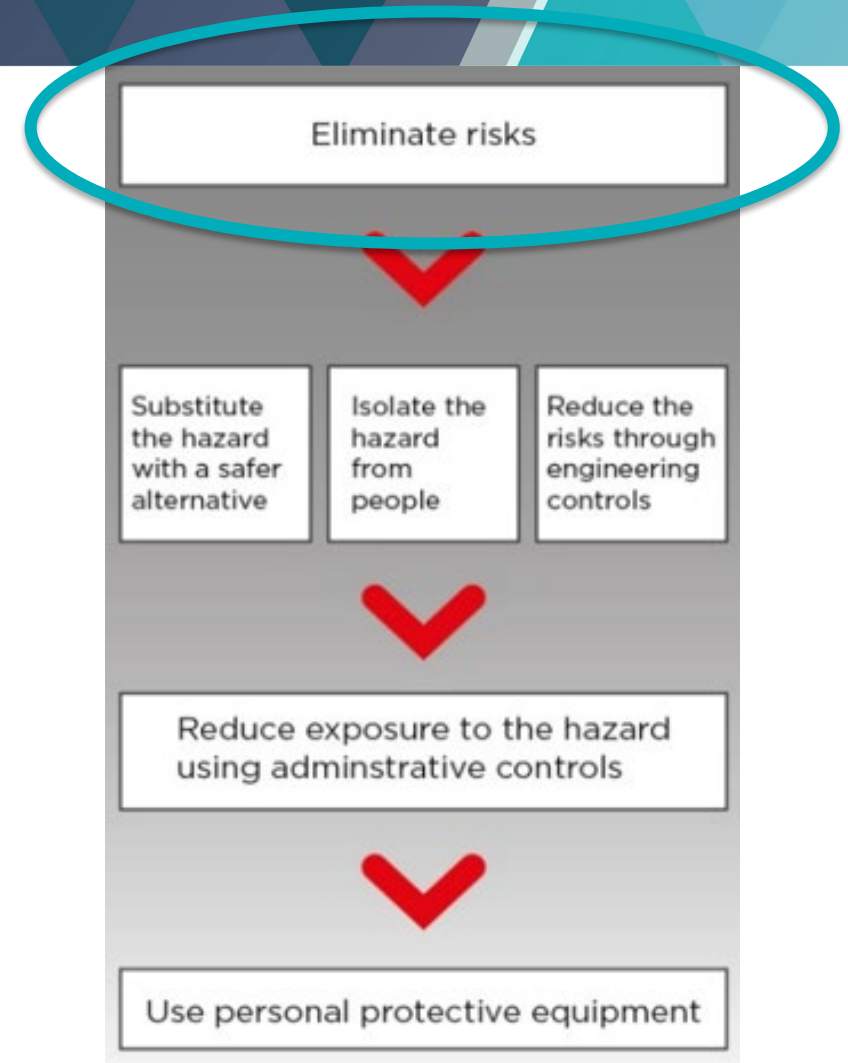


Hierarchy of controls

Example for job demands

Eliminate:

- Design job roles to have manageable responsibilities and realistic key performance indicators
- Design roles to ensure workers have an appropriate amount of work to match their skills and experience
- Plan shifts to allow adequate rest and recovery, particularly between periods of high demand
- Remove unnecessary tasks
- Ensure adequate staffing levels.





Hierarchy of controls

Example for job demands

Substitute with a safer alternative:

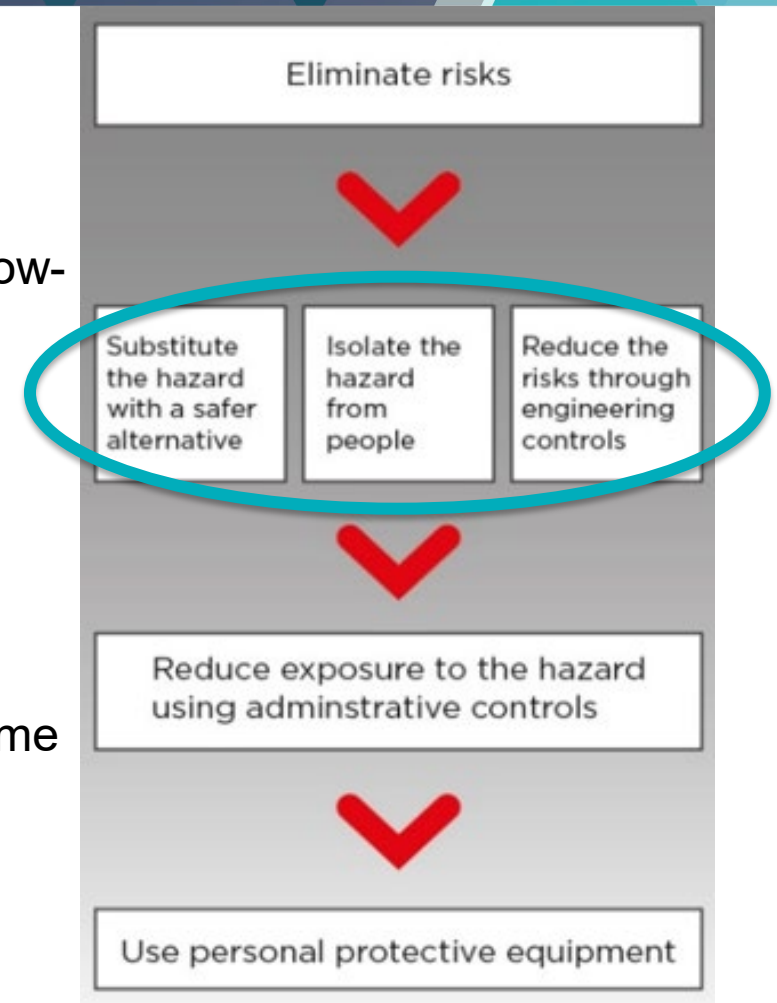
- distribute workload among team members - mix of high-stress / low-stress tasks.

Isolate the hazard:

- opportunities to work from quiet spaces – if regular environment is busy and loud.

Engineering controls:

- software tools to streamline workflows, prioritise work, improve time management or reduce administrative burden.



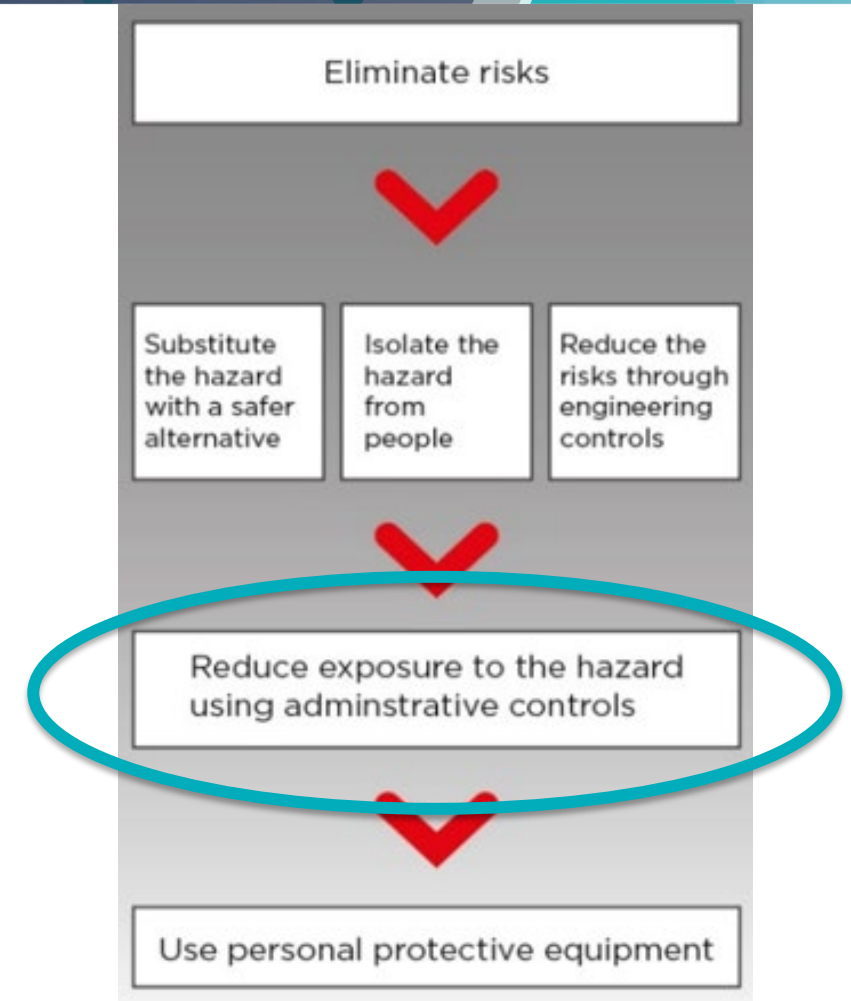


Hierarchy of controls

Example for job demands

Administrative:

- setting realistic deadlines
- ensuring access to resources and supervisory support to manage workload effectively.
- having regular conversations about work expectations, workloads, deadlines and instructions to ensure job demands are understood and can be managed.
- provide training if required to ensure workers have the skills to meet work demands.



Complaints, incidents or reports

10 principles to responding

Act promptly

Ensure immediate safety

Treat all matters seriously

Do not victimise

Use a trauma-informed approach

Maintain confidentiality

Be neutral

Support all parties

Communicate process and outcomes

Keep records



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Case studies

The Commonwealth Code of Practice for Managing Psychosocial Hazards details **five case studies** in managing different psychosocial hazards





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Psychosocial Inspection Program objectives



Assess employer compliance



Strengthen leadership commitment



Uplift capability through information and advice



Insights into current and emerging issues or trends



Sharing information and good practice examples



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Psychosocial Inspection Program: assessment

Psychosocial Health and Safety Management System

Organisational
environment

WHS duties

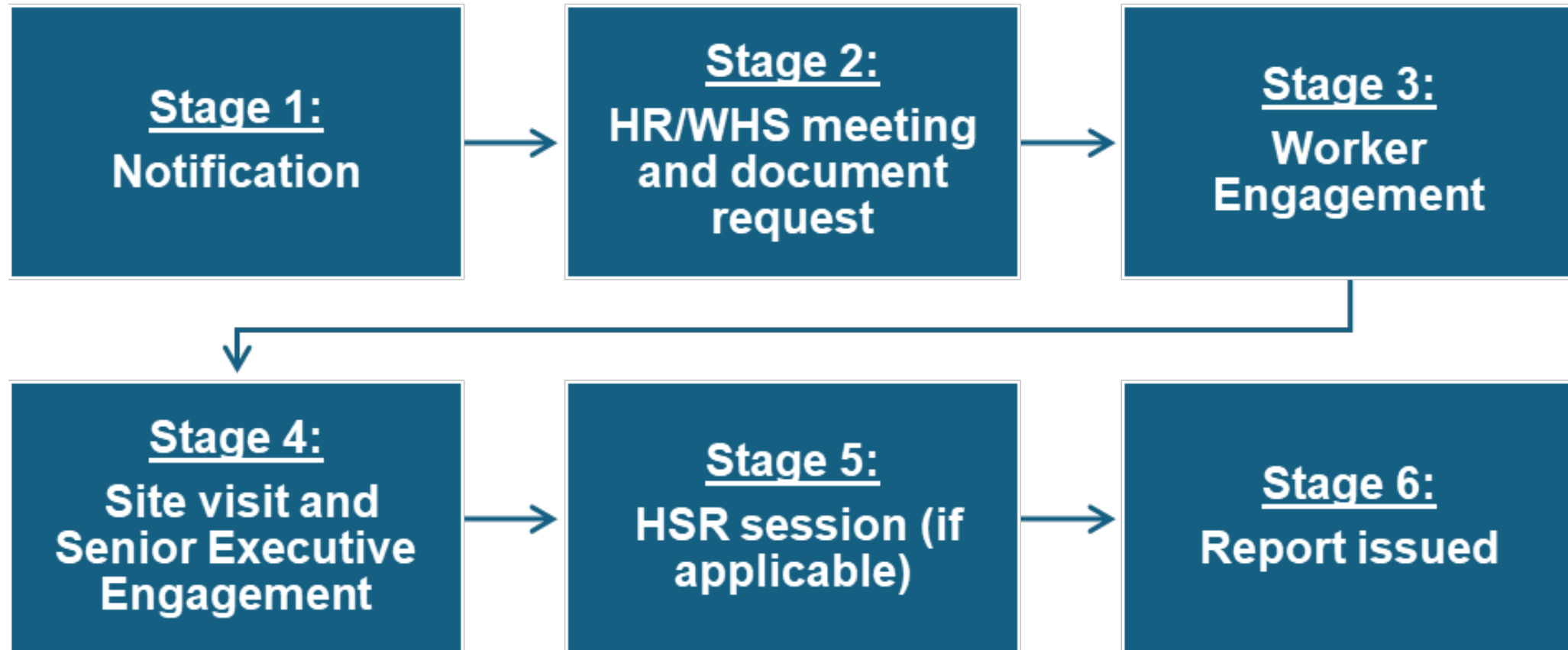
Psychosocial
risk
management
process

Consultation,
cooperation and
coordination

Responses to
psychosocial
hazard reports,
complaints, and
incidents



Psychosocial Inspection Program: inspection





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What we expect from duty holders

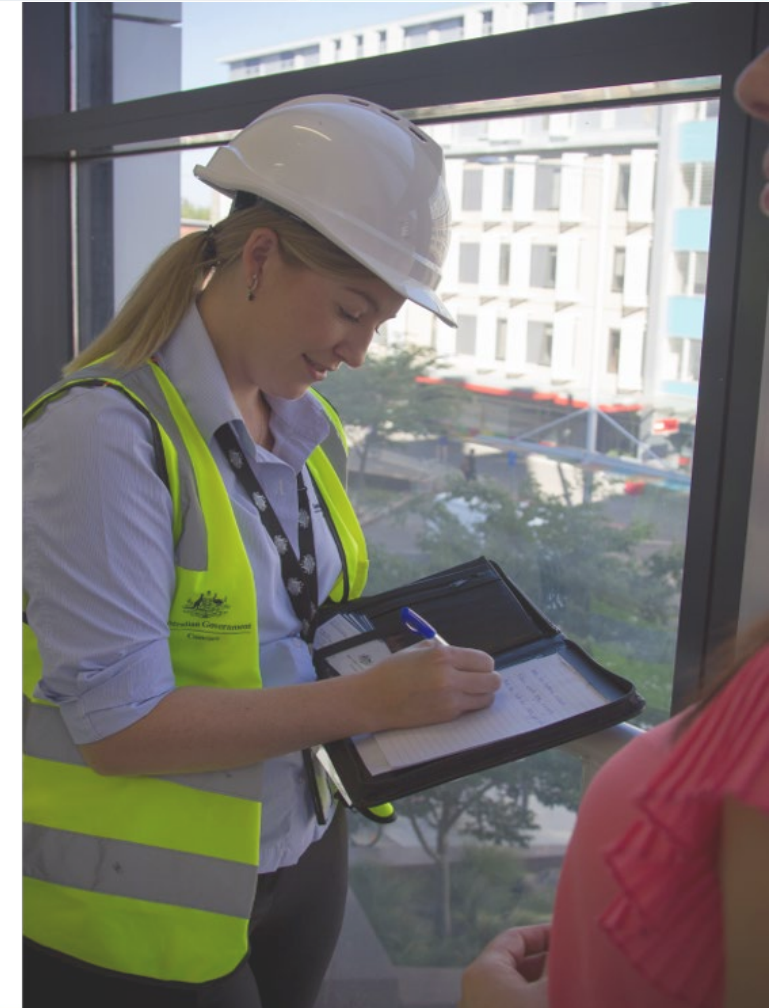
Actions you can take:

- Read the WHS Act and Regulations
- Read the Commonwealth Code of Practice
- Develop and continue to improve WHS systems
- Have ongoing and meaningful consultation
- Remain informed about current and emerging risks



Volunteer for the Psychosocial Inspection Program

Contact us: whs.help@comcare.gov.au





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Resources



Resources and helpful information

For more information on [Psychosocial hazards](#)

Access Comcare's [Training and learning](#)

Stay up to date by subscribing to [eNews](#)

Read the [Commonwealth Code of Practice:
Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work](#)



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National Work Health and
Safety Awards 2025

Comcare National Work Health and Safety Awards

- The awards recognise and reward excellence in workplace health and safety, recovery at and return to work.
- 20-year anniversary
- **Nominations open now!**
- comcare.gov.au/whs-awards



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Feedback survey

Thank you for attending

Please take a moment to complete our short evaluation survey



Contact us:

If you have further questions, you can reach out to Comcare's WHS Helpdesk on

1300 366 979

WHS.help@comcare.gov.au



[Health and safety representative network](#)



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Contact us: Forums@comcare.gov.au

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