



Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Fact sheet series: *Building the Education Revolution*

Building the Education Revolution (BER)

Workplace health and safety information for the construction industry and schools

BER is a \$14.7 billion national investment from the Australian Government to improve the quality of facilities in Australian schools to meet the needs of 21st century students and teachers.

The three key elements of BER are:

- *Primary schools for 21st century* — \$12.4 billion to build or refurbish large scale infrastructure in primary schools, K-12s and special schools, including libraries and multipurpose halls.
- *Science and language centres for 21st century secondary schools* — \$1 billion to build up to 500 science laboratories or language learning centres in secondary schools. There will be a competitive process for proposals. Funding will be allocated to schools that demonstrate need, readiness and capacity to complete construction by 30 June 2010.
- *National school pride program* (renewing Australia's schools) — \$1.3 billion to refurbish and renew existing infrastructure and build minor infrastructure in all schools.

In Queensland

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) is working with Education Queensland, Department of Public Works, Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland to ensure contractors involved in BER comply with the highest standards of occupational health and safety during construction activities in schools.

WHSQ and the WHS Board have adopted a Zero Harm at Work philosophy which simply means no harm to anyone, anytime while at work. For Queensland to become the healthiest and safest working state in Australia we ask education administrators, school faculty and the construction industry working on BER to accept nothing less than zero harm at work.

BER information package

WHSQ has developed a specific information package to help builders, tradespeople, contractors and schools to understand their workplace health and safety requirements and obligations as part of BER. The information package available at www.worksafe.qld.gov.au includes construction site check lists for site security, fencing, site inspection and construction safety plans which may be used as part of the process of ensuring safety on school sites.

Both before and during construction WHSQ encourages Queensland schools to establish and maintain effective safety consultation with principal contractors, sub-contractors and workers in a collaborative approach to ensure safety expectations are maintained on site.

Points to consider while construction work is undertaken at schools:

- **Fencing** – Access through, under or over; type and height of fencing, security (locks); holes or gaps; regular inspection process; after hours (A/H) site access; warning signage attached to fences and access.

- **OHS management system** – Use your OHS system documentation; risk assessment process; monitor and review control measures and hazards; reporting and rectification process.
- **Communication** – Keep the entire school community informed of construction activities; nominate a liaison person (builder and school); meet regularly; keep records; enquire about other groups or organisations which may use the school's facilities during and A/H; emergency/evacuation procedures communicated. School children are inquisitive, adventurous and unpredictable. Building near or in school grounds will present construction industry workers and schools with the need for a new perspective regarding hazards and risks while undertaking construction activities.
- **Safe storage** – Lock up fuels, plant and site keys, ladders, tools and equipment.
- **Falls** - Prevent access to heights, open excavations, earthworks, stored materials and reinforcing starter bars.
- **Electrical safety** – Temporary distribution system condition; prevent A/H access to cabinets; consider de-energising A/H; extension lead placement; secure electrical powered tools.
- **Plant and machinery** – Lock up; prevent movement A/H; lock fuel tanks; ignition keys stored; plant parking.
- **Site deliveries and logistics** – Designated delivery times and unloading areas, advise schools of changes; traffic control; parking for construction workers vehicles; secure waste bins from vandals/fire; regular waste disposal.
- **School hours** – Activities which produce for example Noise, dust, welding (flash &

fume) can be rescheduled out of school hours. Members of the public using the school ground A/H exposed to construction work i.e. cleaners, sporting activities and community groups.

- **Reality** – Members of the public may not be aware of the hazards on a construction site. Children are inquisitive, adventurous, unpredictable and inventive.
- **Dispute resolution at the local level** – Set up a process of reporting and dispute resolution with the construction contractor; reporting of unacceptable behaviour by workers or children, have designated contact people. Keep records.

NOTE: This list is not exhaustive and does not replace or reduce the obligation of the principal contractor, sub- contractors, workers or schools to undertake their own detailed risk and hazard identification and develop their own risk management plan.

For more information:

Visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au or call the WHS Info Line on 1300 369 915.

Visit the website to download:

- Construction site inspection and safety plan assessment checklist
- Safety and security fencing for construction sites at schools risk assessment
- Establishing and maintaining effective safety consultation in construction
- Building and construction industry workplace health and safety guide.

For information on Queensland's [Zero Harm at Work Leadership Forum Program](#) also visit the website.

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