

# Workplace amenities: what you need to know



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## Introduction

Workplace amenities are an important part of a safe and healthy workplace. On 1 January 2005, new requirements about workplace amenities were introduced into the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997* (the Regulation). The Regulation sets out requirements for the following:

- toilets
- hand washing facilities
- drinking water
- dining facilities
- dressing rooms
- showers
- first aid
- lighting
- ventilation
- work areas and airspace.

This brochure provides a summary about the legal requirements to provide workplace amenities.

For the first time, on-the-spot fines are attached to the Regulation. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland may issue an infringement for non-compliance with the amenities provisions. On-the-spot fines range from \$225 (three penalty units for individuals) to \$375 (five penalty units for a corporation).

## Workplaces affected by the Regulation

The workplace amenities provisions affect workplaces where the employer:

- provides a building for the worker to occupy e.g. an office or factory
- does not provide a building for a worker to occupy e.g. a bus driver, courier or road worker
- has workers working at a domestic premises or class 1b building (a premises usually occupied as a private dwelling. See page nine for a detailed definition).

This brochure does not cover in detail amenities requirements for construction or rural workplaces.

For information about amenity requirements for construction workplaces refer to Section 220, Part 21C and Schedule 8A of the Regulation.

For information about amenity requirements for workplaces in the rural industry refer to Section 220, Part 21C and Schedule 8B of the Regulation.

## Obligations for all employers

All employers regardless of industry have obligations under the workplace amenities regulations. These obligations are:

### 1 Maintenance

An amenity must be maintained in a hygienic, safe and serviceable condition. This includes ensuring there is a system for:

- (a) inspecting and cleaning the amenity
- (b) the adequate and hygienic disposal of female sanitary items.<sup>1</sup>

### 2 First aid

An employer must ensure first aid equipment is reasonably accessible to each of the employer's workers and themselves. The employer must ensure:

- (a) first aid equipment is appropriate and adequate for the worker and their work as well as the employer and their work
- (b) first aid equipment is hygienic, safe and serviceable.<sup>2</sup>

The *First Aid Advisory Standard 2004* outlines in detail the general requirements for first aid.

### 3 Access

An employer must ensure there is appropriate, safe and clear access to and from the workplace and within the workplace for each of their workers.<sup>3</sup>

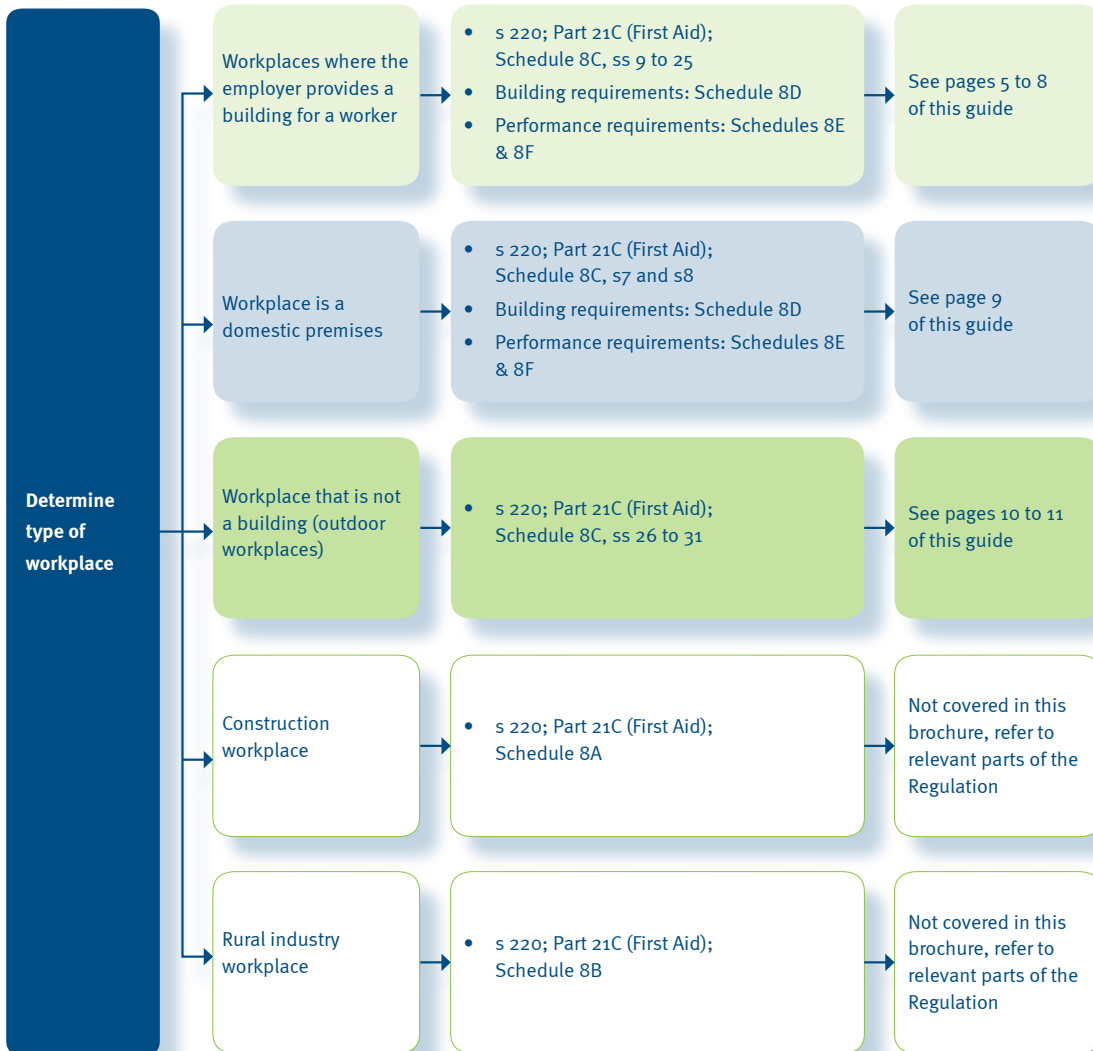
<sup>1</sup> Section 220  
Maintenance of  
amenities

<sup>2</sup> Section 223 First Aid

<sup>3</sup> Section 54A Access

## Different categories of workplace

The type of workplace dictates the nature of the amenities required. The flow chart below sets out the parts of the Regulation relevant to the workplace.



## Compliance with the Regulation

The Regulation aligns workplace amenity requirements with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and the Queensland Development Code (QDC). Therefore reference does not need to be made to the BCA or QDC in relation to workplace amenities.

To comply with the Regulation you can either:

- 1 satisfy the regulatory and performance requirements for your specific workplace as listed in this guide or
- 2 obtain written permission from the Chief Executive of the Department of Industrial Relations to use an alternative solution, which is at least equivalent to the performance requirements.

# Workplaces where the employer provides a building for a worker

The obligation to provide amenities is on the employer.

**For workplaces where the employer provides a building for a worker, the employer must ensure that:**

- 1 toilets, hand washing facilities, drinking water, dining facilities, dressing rooms and showers (in certain circumstances) are reasonably available  
An amenity is reasonably available if:
  - (a) it is at location reasonably convenient to the person
  - (b) the person's use of the amenity is not unreasonably restricted<sup>4</sup>
- 2 such amenities are maintained<sup>5</sup>
- 3 the amenities comply with the regulation relevant to the amenity and meet the performance requirements outlined on the following pages
- 4 the building which is the workplace complies with the stated building requirements<sup>6</sup>.

## Performance requirements for workplaces where the employer provides a building for a worker



### Toilets

Schedule 8C, Part 3, Division 2, Subdivision 2 (Not domestic premises)

	Number of workers	Closet pans required	Urinals required
Male	1-9	1	0
	10-25	2	1
	26-40	2	2
	41-50	3	2
	51-60	3	3
	61-80	4	3
	81-100	5	3
	101-120	6	3
	121-140	7	3
	Female	1-15	1
16-30		2	-
31-45		3	-
46-61		4	-
Unisex	10 or fewer	1	-

#### NOTES

- for males a closet pan may be substituted for a urinal
- for males at a school three urinals are required when there are 45 workers, then an additional urinal is required for each 30 additional workers. Closet pans however remain the same
- for females at a school one closet pan is required for five workers, two closet pans for 20 workers and then one additional closet pan for each additional 15 workers
- female sanitary facilities must include hygienic means to dispose of sanitary items
- the door to a sanitary compartment must open outwards, slide or be readily removable from the outside
- an adequate supply of toilet paper must be provided for each toilet
- 'workers' also includes the employer if present at the workplace
- number of workers is determined by the number of workers present at any one time at the workplace.

<sup>4</sup> s 216 Meaning of reasonably available

<sup>5</sup> s 220 Maintenance of amenities

<sup>6</sup> Schedule 8D



## Hand washing facilities

Schedule 8C, Part 3, Division 2, Subdivision 2 (Not domestic premises)

Building class	Number of workers	Wash basins required
<b>*Class 3, 5, 6 &amp; 9 buildings</b> (e.g. office buildings, retail shops or health care buildings)	1-30	1
	31-60	2 and then 1 wash basin for each additional 30 workers or part thereof
<b>*Class 7 &amp; 8 buildings</b> (e.g. car parks, factories)	1-20	1
	21-40	2
	41-60	3 and then 1 wash basin for each additional 20 workers or part thereof

*\*For the definition of building classes see Schedule 8E, Part 3 of the Regulation*

### NOTES

- adequate clean water and soap or other suitable cleansing agent for washing hands as well as facilities to dry hands must be made available.



## Dining facilities

Schedule 8C, Part 3, Division 3

Where the nature of work performed does not allow an employee to eat in their work area, dining facilities must be provided in safe and hygienic conditions.

If there are five or fewer workers, a dining area can be provided; otherwise a separate dining room is required.

In a shopping complex one dining room can be used for all workers.

Size of dining room required	Equipment required
6-12 workers = 11m <sup>2</sup> .	*Sink with draining board and hot and cold reticulated water with cupboards for the storage of food. The cupboards must be dust and vermin proof.
For additional workers up to 25 an additional 0.92m <sup>2</sup> is required and for each additional worker thereafter an additional 0.75m <sup>2</sup> .	Tables providing 600mm length per worker and chairs or stools with back support.  (A table and seating need not be provided if workers can eat in the work area i.e. at desk in an office. However all other equipment must still be made reasonably available.)

A refrigerator on or after 1 July 2005.

*\* This equipment must be provided at all workplaces regardless if there is a requirement for a separate dining facility or not.*



## Dressing rooms

Schedule 8C, Part 3, Division 4 (not domestic premises)

Where the nature of work requires employees to change in and out of apparel, dressing rooms must be provided with adequate privacy and be conveniently situated. Dressing rooms must be an adequate area and contain sufficient facilities.

### Requirements for dressing rooms

A dressing room must be provided for each sex, set apart from workrooms with sanitary compartments and washing facilities reasonably available.

Minimum floor area - 1.8m<sup>2</sup> per worker.

Additional area is required if the occupation is:

- sedentary (work requiring a sitting position) or semi-sedentary (work requiring sitting or standing) – 0.37m<sup>2</sup>
- light to medium and clean (work in offices, retail stores and the like) – 0.46m<sup>2</sup>
- heavy, hot or dirty (work in foundries, steel, fabrication, sand blasting, spray painting and the like) – 0.65m<sup>2</sup>.

Lockers at least 300mm wide, 450mm deep and 900mm in height.

Passage widths between facing lockers:

- (i) at least 1500mm  
or
- (ii) with lockers on one side only - at least 900mm.

If there are 15 or fewer workers all of the same sex, a dining room may be used as a dressing room.



## Drinking water

Schedule 8C, Part 3, Division 5

An adequate supply of clean potable water must be reasonably available at every work place. The water must be cool and must not be located in toilets. Where there are more than 10 employees, drinking fountains must be provided in the following numbers:

- 11 to 40 employees – one drinking fountain
- for each additional 40 employees (or part thereof) – one additional drinking fountain.

Cool water means pleasantly cold.



## Showers

Schedule 8C, Part 3, Division 6

The employer must ensure a shower is reasonably available if the work the worker is doing is likely to expose them to a health or safety risk if they are unable to shower at work.

The shower may be unisex only if there 10 or fewer workers. The shower must be lockable from the inside and give privacy.

## Lighting

Schedule 8D, Part 3

Adequate lighting from natural and/or artificial sources must be provided to ensure healthy working conditions appropriate to the nature of the work, the location of the work and the times at which the work is performed. Lighting must comply with AS 1680 (Interior Lighting).



## Ventilation

Schedule 8E, Part 2, Division 1

A space in the building used by a worker must be provided with means of ventilation.

A habitable room, office, shop, factory, workroom, sanitary compartment, bathroom, shower room, laundry and any other room occupied by a person for any purpose must have: a mechanical ventilation or air-conditioning system complying with AS 1668.2 and AS/NZS 3666.1 or natural ventilation in accordance with Schedule 8E Part 2.



## Work areas and air space

Schedule 8F, Part 1, Division 5

Adequate work areas and air space must be made reasonably available to allow suitable standards of health and safety for the worker. A workplace must have a minimum unencumbered floor area of 2.3m<sup>2</sup> for each worker. Unencumbered means clear circulation space with no fixtures or fittings intruding within the space.



## Workplace is a domestic premises

If you operate a business from home you have to comply with the new amenities regulations.

A workplace that is a domestic premises or class 1b building must comply with the same workplace amenities requirements for a workplace that is a building (see pages 5 to 8) except for toilets and washing facilities.

**Definition of a class 1b building** — a boarding house, guest house, hostel or the like with a total floor area not exceeding 300m<sup>2</sup> and in which not more than 12 persons would ordinarily be resident; which is not located above or below another dwelling or another class of building other than a private garage.<sup>7</sup>

The different requirements are outlined below.



### Toilets

If the building is a domestic premises or class 1b building the employer must ensure toilets are reasonably available and that each toilet is adequate in all the circumstances, including the size and location of the workplace and the number of workers to whom a toilet must be made available. Each toilet should be a cubicle or room that ensures privacy. Each toilet must have an adequate supply of toilet paper. If there are female workers there must be facilities to dispose of sanitary items.



### Hand and face washing facilities

The employer must ensure that adequate clean water, soap or another suitable cleansing agent and facilities to dry hands are reasonably available to the worker.

<sup>7</sup> Schedule 8E Applied  
BCA Provisions

# Workplace that is not a building (outdoor workplaces)

These provisions apply to a workplace where the employer does not provide a building for a worker to occupy (other than construction or rural industry workplaces) e.g. a bus driver, courier or road worker.

**For workplaces where the employer does not provide a building the employer must ensure:**

- 1 to the greatest practicable extent that a toilet is reasonably available
- 2 that the following are reasonably available to the worker:
  - an adequate supply of clean water and soap or another cleansing agent suitable for washing the workers' hands
  - facilities to dry the workers' hands
  - a sheltered area to eat meals and take breaks
  - a shower (under certain circumstances).

## Performance requirements for workplaces that are not buildings

### Toilets

Schedule 8C, Part 4, Section 27

Employers must ensure, to the greatest practical extent, that a toilet is reasonably available.



### Hand washing facilities

Schedule 8C, Part 4, Section 30

The employer must ensure the following are reasonably available to the worker:

- an adequate supply of clean water and soap or another cleansing agent suitable for washing the workers' hands
- facilities to dry the workers' hands.

(The one supply of water may be made available for both drinking and washing).



### Dining facilities

Schedule 8C, Part 4, Section 28

The employer must ensure a sheltered area to eat meals and take breaks is reasonably available e.g. a caravan or tent. A sheltered area which is located within a reasonable distance using appropriate transport is reasonably convenient.



### Dressing rooms

While there is no specific obligation there may still be a requirement to supply a dressing room pursuant to general workplace health and safety obligations.





## Drinking water

Schedule 8C, Part 4, Section 29

An adequate supply of potable cool drinking water must be readily available.

If the water is made available in a container, the worker must be able to drink the water without having to drink from the same container as someone else.

The water must not be located in a room used as a toilet.



## Showers

Schedule 8C, Part 4, Section 31

The employer must ensure a shower is reasonably available if the work the worker is doing is likely to expose them to a health or safety risk if they are unable to shower at work.

The shower may be unisex only if there are 10 or fewer workers. The shower must be lockable from the inside and give privacy.

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**Further information**

For further information on amenities please contact  
Workplace Health and Safety Queensland:

Telephone: **1300 369 915**

Website: **[www.dir.qld.gov.au](http://www.dir.qld.gov.au)**

Telephone interpreter service: **13 14 50**



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