

Workplace amenities

In order to understand the workplace health and safety requirements for amenities, and your obligations under the law you must consider and understand relevant legislation and codes of practice.

What law applies

Legal obligations, legislation, amenities regulations, performance requirements

What are workplace amenities?

Workplace amenities are an important component of a safe and healthy workplace

General amenities requirements

Maintenance, first aid, access

Specific amenities

Amenities requirements for domestic premises, buildings, rural, building and construction, and outdoor or mobile workplaces

What law applies

In order to understand the workplace health and safety requirements for amenities, and your obligations under the law you must consider and understand relevant legislation and codes of practice.

General health and safety obligations

To understand your obligations and safety requirements you must be familiar with the:

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 which imposes obligations on people at workplaces to ensure workplace health and safety. The *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* also helps you to meet your workplace health and safety obligations through:

- The *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008* which describes what must be done to prevent or control certain hazards which cause injury, illness or death
- codes of practice, which are designed to give practical advice about ways to manage exposure to common risks. In particular, the *Risk Management Code of Practice 2007* should be read in conjunction with information on PPE.

Every Queensland employer must have **workers' compensation** insurance. Most employers insure with WorkCover Queensland, while a small number of large organisations have their own insurance. This insurance coverage ensures that employees injured at work receive financial support.

What you must do

It is a requirement of the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* that risks must be assessed and control measures then implemented and reviewed to prevent or minimise exposure to the risks.

If the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008* describes how to prevent or minimise a risk at your workplace you **must** do what the regulation says. If there is a code of practice that describes how to prevent or minimise a risk at your workplace you **must** do what the code says or adopt and follow another way that gives the same level of protection against the risk.

If there is no regulation or code of practice about a risk at your workplace you **must** choose an appropriate way to manage exposure to the risk. People must, where there is no regulation or code of practice about a risk, take reasonable precautions and exercise proper diligence against the risk.

See the *Risk Management Code of Practice 2007* for further information.

Specific regulations for amenities

On 1 January 2005, new requirements about workplace amenities were introduced into the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*.

The Regulation sets out the requirements for:

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

In order to comply with the Regulation amenities provided must comply with:

- the general amenities requirements, and
- the specific amenities requirements, or 'deemed-to-satisfy' provisions, for the type of workplace, or
- an alternative solution which is at least equivalent to the 'deemed-to-satisfy' provisions and approved by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations

Please note:

The Regulation aligns workplace amenity requirements with the Building Code of Australia. The Building Code of Australia (BCA) (non-Queensland Government link) and the Queensland Development Code (QDC) contain requirements concerning the design and construction of buildings and the requirements for the building such as lighting or ventilation. However the Regulation is self contained and reference need not be made to the BCA or QDC.

What are workplace amenities?

Workplace amenities are an important component of a safe and healthy workplace. Amenities include:

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

General amenities requirements

All employers must:

- **maintain** all amenities they provide in a hygienic, safe and serviceable condition, and ensure that there is a system for -
 - inspecting and cleaning the amenity
 - the adequate and hygienic disposal of the sanitary items for women
- ensure that **first aid equipment** is:
 - reasonably available
 - appropriate and adequate for the type of work and the people doing the work
 - hygienic, safe and serviceable
- ensure there is appropriate, safe and clear access to and from the workplace and that all other means of access are safe and clear

There are additional requirements for amenities depending on the type of workplace:

- rural
- construction
- a domestic premises
- in a building, for example a factory or office
- outdoor or mobile workplaces, for example buses, courier vehicles, by the road side

Specific amenities

In addition to the general amenities requirements, there are additional requirements for workplaces that are:

Domestic premises

Buildings

Outdoor or mobile workplaces

Domestic premises

Summary of amenities that must be provided for workplaces in a domestic premise or class 1B building.

Class 1B buildings include:

- boarding houses
- guest houses of certain sizes
- hostels

For full details of what amenities must be provided for a workplace in a domestic residence or a class 1B building see the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008*.

Buildings

Summary of amenities that must be provided for workplaces in a building.

A workplace that is a building includes:

- an office building
- a building that is a walled or partly walled shed and used as a workshop
- a building, at a workplace that includes an outside storage yard, provided at the workplace

This would not include a building that the worker is in temporarily to repair equipment.

For full details of what amenities must be provided for a workplace in a building see the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008*.

Outdoor or mobile workplaces

Summary of amenities that must be provided for outdoor or mobile workplaces

An outdoor workplace includes:

- buses
- courier vehicles
- road work

For full details of what amenities must be provided for outdoor workplaces see the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008*.