Hairdressing

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

What law applies
Legal obligations, legislation, code of practice

Guide for the hairdressing, nail and beauty industry
Practical advice on ways to manage risks that arise from conducting work in connection with the hairdressing industry

What law applies

In order to understand the workplace health and safety requirements for hairdressing, 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.

Hairdressing, nail and beauty industry hazards

What is this guide about?

There are many workplace hazards in the hairdressing, nail and beauty industry that can create workplace health and safety risks for you, your workers and your clients.

You can prevent or minimise exposure to these hazards by taking a few simple precautions. This guide will provide practical information on:

- the hazards typically found in the hairdressing, nail and beauty industry
- ways to manage exposure to the risk arising from these hazards
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While there may be other hazards at your workplace that have not been specifically addressed in this guide, you are still required to identify these hazards, assess the risk to health and safety, and ensure action is taken to prevent or minimise exposure to the risk.

How can this guide help me?

If you provide services in:

- hairdressing
- cosmetology
- beauty therapy
- nail technician work

you must ensure the workplace health and safety of yourself, your workers and your clients.

Although guides are not part of the legislative framework, they can assist you to meet your workplace health and safety obligation.

The guide explains the risk management process that can be used to prevent or minimise risks arising from hazards at your workplace. The control measures in the guide are presented according to the control priorities below.

Control Priorities

Priority	Control Type	Description of Control Type
1	Elimination	**The ideal solution.** Completely remove the hazard and the risk of exposure to the hazard, e.g. remove dangerous equipment or stop an unsafe work practice.
2	Substitution	Reduce a risk by substituting a less hazardous

		process, substance or item of plant for the one currently used.
3	Redesign	Change the design of the workplace, equipment or work process, e.g. rearrange aspects of the workplace, modify equipment.
4	Isolation	Prevent or minimise the risk by isolating the worker from the hazard, or the hazard from the worker.
5	Administrative Controls	Use procedures or instruction to prevent or minimise risk, e.g. job rotation, standard working procedures, warning signs, purchasing policies, work practices to reduce frequency of exposure, supervision, instruction and training, maintenance and housekeeping.
6	Personal Protective Equipment	**The least desirable option.** Personal protective equipment (PPE) should only be used where other measures have not been able to protect the worker against the risk of exposure. To be effective, PPE requires correct selection, fitting and use, regular maintenance, and workers should be instructed in its use.

What is risk management?

Workplace health and safety can generally be managed by following a problem solving strategy known as risk management.

Although you are probably already carrying out the steps of risk management without realising it, following this guide will make it more effective for you.

The five steps of risk management are:

1. **Step 1:** Identify hazards
2. **Step 2:** Assess risks that may result because of the hazards
3. **Step 3:** Decide on control measures
4. **Step 4:** Implement control measures
5. **Step 5:** Monitor and review the effectiveness of control measures

For more information on the risk management process, refer to the **risk management overview** in appendix 1 of this guide. The **risk management form** in appendix 2 is a practical tool in conducting your risk management activities.

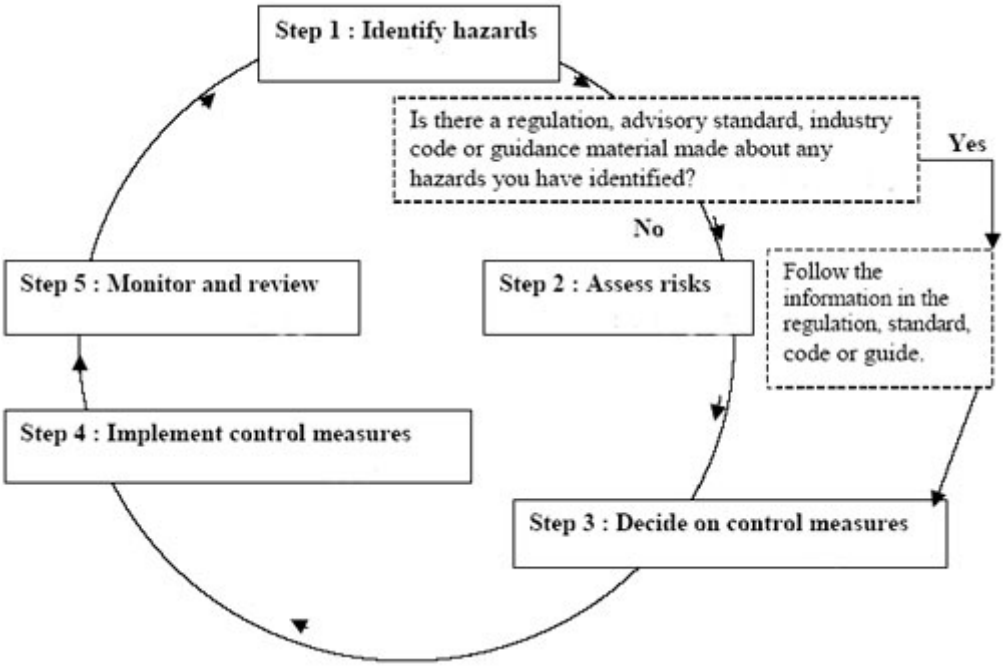
Appendix 1 – Risk management overview

Section 22 of the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* states that health and safety can generally be managed by following the steps of a risk management process. The Workplace Health and Safety *Risk Management Advisory Standard 2000* (now known as a Code of Practice) supports this statement and describes a five step process for managing exposure to health and safety risks that can arise from workplace hazards.

The five steps are:

1. **Identify** hazards
2. **Assess** risks that may result because of the hazards
3. **Decide** on control measure to prevent or minimise the level of the risks
4. **Implement** control measures
5. **Monitor** and **review** the effectiveness of the measures

This process is illustrated below.



Risk management is an ongoing process. It should be undertaken at various times, including:

- now, if you have not done it before
- when a change occurs
- after an incident (and/or near miss)
- at regularly scheduled times appropriate to your workplace

Risk management should be done in consultation with workers to ensure better health and safety outcomes.

A risk management form can be found in appendix 2.

STEP 1 – Identify hazards

Identifying workplace hazards means looking for those things at your workplace that have the potential to cause harm.

There are a number of general types of workplace hazards, including:

- work environment (such as heat, lighting, workplace violence)
- energy (such as electricity)
- manual tasks
- noise
- substances (such as chemical, biological)
- plant (such as tools and appliances)

All workplace hazards can be classified under one of the above.
You may wish to begin looking for hazards by dividing your workplace into logical groupings, such as work processes, tasks, job roles or workplace areas. The most appropriate way depends on your workplace.

Activities that can help identify hazards include:

- inspecting the workplace
- worker consultation
- worker surveys
- testing plant, equipment and noise levels
- environmental or medical monitoring
- scientific or technical evaluation
- analysing records of incidents and near misses, worker complaints, sick leave and staff turnover
- information from designers, manufacturers, suppliers and other organizations such as unions, employers bodies and health and safety consultancies

STEP 2 – Assess risk

You now need to assess the level of risk associated with each of the hazards. Risk is the likelihood that death, injury or illness might result because of the hazard. To assess risk, you need to consider both the likelihood and consequence of an incident occurring at your workplace.

Various methods can be used to undertake a risk assessment. The risk priority provides a rough means of ranking risks. The risk scores derived from this method should be interpreted with caution, as the process by which they are obtained is subjective and judgemental.

The level of risk, or "risk score", is determined by plotting consequence and likelihood estimates on the risk priority chart below.

Risk Priority Chart

LIKELIHOOD How likely could it happen?	CONSEQUENCES: How severely could it hurt someone?			
	EXTREME Death, permanent disablement	MAJOR Serious bodily injury	MODERATE Casualty treatment	MINOR First aid only, no lost time
VERY LIKELY Could happen frequently	1	2	3	4
LIKELY Could happen occasionally	2	3	4	5
UNLIKELY Could happen, but rare	3	4	5	6
VERY UNLIKELY Could happen, probably never will	4	5	6	7

It is important to note that the risk scores obtained have no absolute value. This chart provides a means of ranking the risks only.

The scores (1-7) in the risk priority chart indicate how important it is to do something about each risk, as follows:

Score	Action
1,2 or 3	Do something about these risks immediately
4 or 5	Do something about these risks as soon as possible
6 or 7	These risks may not need immediate attention

STEP 3 – Decide on control measures

Control measures should now be selected according to the list of control priorities.

Firstly, try to **eliminate the hazard**.

If this is not possible, **prevent or minimise exposure to the risk** by one or a combination of:

- **substituting** a less hazardous material, process or equipment
- **redesigning** equipment or work processes
- **isolating** the hazard

(Note: These measures may include engineering methods.)

As a last resort, **when exposure to the risk is not (or can not be) minimised by other means**:

- introduce administrative controls
- use appropriate personal protective equipment

In many cases, it will be necessary to use more than one control measure to satisfactorily manage exposure to a risk. Some control measures that are lower control priorities may need to be put in place until a permanent measure can be achieved.

The control measures selected should:

- adequately control exposure to the risk;
- not create another hazard; and
- allow you to do your work without undue discomfort or distress

STEP 4 – Implement control measures

This step involves putting selected control measures in place at your workplace. This could involve:

- **Developing work procedures** to ensure the new control measures are effective, e.g. defining responsibilities of management, supervisors and workers.
- **Clearly communicating information about the new control measures** and the reasons for the changes to workers and other persons at the workplace.
- **Providing training and instruction** for workers, supervisors and other persons in relation to the new control measures.
- **Providing adequate supervision** to verify that the new control measures are being used correctly.
- Including provisions in work procedures about the **maintenance of the control measures** to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of the new control measures.

STEP 5 – Monitor and review

The final step in the risk management process is to monitor and review the effectiveness of the control measures. In doing so you should determine whether:

- the chosen control measures have been implemented as planned
- the chosen control measures are working
- the new control measures have created new problems or worsened existing problems

You should also set a date to review the entire risk management process.

Appendix 2 – Risk management form

Form 1: Risk management

Fill in one form for each hazard identified at the workplace.

- Form 1: Risk management (hairdressing)

Appendix 3 – How to do a risk assessment

Part 13 (Hazardous Substances) of the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997* requires employers and self-employed persons to assess the risk arising from the use of a hazardous substance at a workplace. If you identify a risk to the health of yourself or your workers from the use of a hazardous substance, you must implement controls to:

- Prevent exposure to the hazardous substance; or
- Reduce the exposure to as low a level as possible without exceeding the relevant national exposure standard for that substance.

There are several ways to conduct a risk assessment. One method is outlined below.

Step 1 – Decide on who will do the risk assessment

This person could be the salon manager, owner, senior hairdresser, nail technician or beauty therapist. This person will coordinate the assessment, delegate tasks and be responsible for taking notes and writing up information for the register.

Step 2 – Divide your work into tasks

Look at each work process used at your workplace and divide into separate tasks. Include all work processes in your assessment such as cleaning the salon or your equipment.

For example:

- Hairdressing tasks could be shampooing hair, cutting hair, colouring hair.
- Nail technician tasks could be removing nail polish, filing nails, applying nail polish.

Step 3 – Identify all substances used in your work processes

Look at all substances you use. This will include products used for cleaning, hair products and nail products. You can identify all substances by:

- Referring to stock lists, inventories and registers.
- Checking all locations where substances are used or stored.

Step 4 – Identify which substances are hazardous

Carefully read the label and MSDS for each product to find out whether the product contains a hazardous substance or not. If you are unsure whether a substance is a hazardous substance, contact your supplier.

Step 5 – Find information about hazardous substances

The label and MSDS for each substance will provide you with information on how to use the substance safely.

Step 6 – Inspect and evaluate exposure

The work process should be examined to find out how the substance is being used and if there is a possibility of a worker being exposed to it. An analysis of a work process might include looking at:

- Are workers being exposed?
    - How long are they exposed for?
    - How often are they exposed?
    - How much are they exposed to?
- Is the exposure in the form of vapours, dusts or mists?
- How is the worker exposed? (e.g. skin, eyes, inhaling, swallowing)
- Are there safe operating procedures in place? If so, are they being followed?
- Are control measures in place? How effective are they?

The checklist in appendix 4 may help you to analyse the work process.

Step 7 – Evaluate the risk

The previous step will provide you with sufficient information to establish:

- The nature and severity of the hazard for each hazardous substance.
- The degree of exposure of persons in the workplace.
- Whether existing control measures adequately control exposure.

In doing so, you should be able to establish one of four conclusions.

1. There is no significant risk to health.
2. There is a significant risk to health but it is well controlled.
3. There is a significant risk to health that needs to be controlled.
4. Uncertain about the risk – need to get more information on the substance, work or the exposure.

Step 8 –Decide what to do to control the risk

Control or prevention of exposure is achieved by implementing appropriate control measures according to the list of control priorities. It may be enough to follow the information on the MSDS. You will have to decide if the training for workers on the safe use of a chemical is effective. You will also have to set up a date for monitoring the work processes to see that exposure remains at an acceptable level and that workers are monitored for adverse health effects.

Step 9 – Record the assessment

Make notes of what you have done. Your assessment records should reflect the detail of the assessment and provide sufficient information to show how decisions about risk and control measures were made.

Step 10 – Review of control measures

All measures for the control of exposure should be thoroughly examined and tested at regular intervals to ensure effective performance. Controls should be reviewed if work-related ill health is reported.

Appendix 4 – Risk assessment checklist

The following checklist has been developed to assist in conducting a risk assessment for hazardous substances in the hairdressing, nail and beauty industry.

The aim is to ensure that as many ticks as possible lie outside the shaded boxes.

Wherever there is a tick in a shaded box, it indicates that there is a need to gather more information, there are no control measures in place, or the existing control measures are not adequate. Action should be taken to introduce control measures that result in as few ticks in shaded boxes as possible.

Hazardous Substance Risk Assessment Checklist Hairdressing, Nail and Beauty Industry

Work location: _____

Task: _____

Substance(s) used: _____

Assessment team: _____

Date: _____

If you are unsure of an answer or there is disagreement between members of the assessment team, then the tick should go in the shaded box.

Have you read the MSDS and label for this substance(s)? YES NO

1 The substance(S)

1.1 Can you do without using this substance?	YES	NO	If it is not necessary to use the substance, then don't.
1.2 Is there a safer alternative available?	YES	NO	If a non-hazardous, or less hazardous alternative exists, then use it.

If you answered "yes" to either of these first two questions, then make the changes before going any further.

1.3	Is this hazardous substance in a form that can become airborne? (e.g. fine powder, aerosol, vapours)	YES	NO
1.4	Can this hazardous substance be breathed in?	YES	NO
1.5	What action has been taken to reduce exposure to this substance?		

1.6	Are the actions effective?	YES	NO
1.7	Is there ready access to the relevant MSDS?	YES	NO
1.8	Are all substances correctly labelled?	YES	NO
1.9	Are mixtures or diluted substances appropriately stored and labelled?	YES	NO
1.10	Is partially used substance returned to a designated location after use?	YES	NO
1.11	Is there risk of inadvertent mixing or contamination of substances?	YES	NO

2 The process

2.1	Can you identify particular actions or circumstances where it is likely that the substance can be breathed in?	YES	NO
2.2	Is there at any time visible dust or mist in the air or a strong overpowering smell?	YES	NO
2.3	Is there a possibility of skin contact with the hazardous substance?	YES	NO
2.4	Can you identify particular actions or conditions where skin contact is probable?	YES	NO
2.5	Is the substance ever transferred to another container?	YES	NO
2.6	Are these secondary containers immediately cleaned after use or appropriately labelled if the substance remains in the container?	YES	NO
2.7	Are containers of an appropriate size?	YES	NO
2.8	Is the design of the container appropriate for its intended use?	YES	NO
2.9	Is the method of dispensing the substance appropriate?	YES	NO

2.10	Is there proper disposal of empty containers?	YES	NO

3 Management

3.1 What action has been taken to reduce exposure to hazardous substances?

3.2	Are these actions effective?	YES	NO
3.3	Is the salon fitted with a local ventilation or air conditioning system?	YES	NO
3.4	Do work pressures and time constraints get in the way of safe work practices?	YES	NO
3.5	Is the workplace generally clean and is constant clean-up part of the task?	YES	NO
3.6	Are there safe operating procedures designed to eliminate or reduce exposure?	YES	NO
3.7	Are procedures determined through consultation and periodically reviewed?	YES	NO
3.8	Are substances frequently stored in temporary locations?	YES	NO
3.9	Is storage in accordance with the requirements of the label and MSDS?	YES	NO
3.10	Is there a rehabilitation procedure for dealing with operators who experience adverse health effects?	YES	NO
3.11	Are there administrative controls in place to prevent general access to this hazardous substance?	YES	NO
3.12	Are emergency facilities for first aid adequate?	YES	NO
3.13	Are procedures for dealing with emergencies, spills, or disposal of waste discussed or practised regularly?	YES	NO
3.14	Are gloves appropriate, available and being used?	YES	NO
3.15	Has PPE other than gloves been considered?	YES	NO
3.16	Is PPE stored in an appropriate manner?	YES	NO
3.17	Is waterproof barrier cream available and being used?	YES	NO

4 Work environment

4.1	Is there natural ventilation?	YES	NO
4.2	Is there any air conditioning?	YES	NO
4.3	Does the ventilation system appear to deal adequately with vapours and dusts?	YES	NO
4.4	Is there any local exhaust ventilation?	YES	NO
4.5	Is soap and hot water available for washing hands?	YES	NO

4.6	Are storage areas generally appropriate?	YES	NO
4.7	Is there adequate labelling and placarding of storage areas?	YES	NO
4.8	Are fire extinguishers readily available?	YES	NO
4.9	Are fire extinguishers of the correct type?	YES	NO
4.10	Are fire extinguishers regularly maintained?	YES	NO
4.11	Are emergency exits accessible and well signed?	YES	NO
4.12	Are workers free from risk associated with hazardous substances residues left on work surfaces?	YES	NO
4.13	Is the work area designed efficiently for the task?	YES	NO

5 Worker considerations

5.1	Do workers complain of health effects such as headaches, sore eyes, skin problems or breathing problems?	YES	NO
5.2	Do workers know the potential health risks involved in using this substance?	YES	NO
5.3	Have all workers been instructed in safe operating procedures?	YES	NO
5.4	Do workers always follow these procedures?	YES	NO
5.5	Have workers been instructed in the causes of **irritant** contact dermatitis and trigger **allergic** contact dermatitis?	YES	NO
5.6	Have workers been advised of the symptoms of acute exposure to this substance and the recommended first aid response (as per the MSDS, remove to fresh air)?	YES	NO
5.7	Have workers been advised of the particular risks, e.g. gases, vapours or heat generated, by mixing this substance with others?	YES	NO

Responses in a shaded box suggest that further action is required.

Appendix 5 – Example risk assessments

How to do a risk assessment for manual tasks

1. Identify the problem task

Not all manual tasks are harmful. First you should identify the problem tasks in your workplace.

Problem tasks are likely to be identified at these times:

- when making a change, e.g. new processes or tools
- when there are indications that something may be wrong, e.g. workers report discomfort or you observe awkward postures
- after an incident

A risk assessment is then conducted on the problem tasks.

2. Assess the risks

When assessing the problem task make sure that you look at all of the task elements as different risks may occur e.g. the task of applying colour has different risks for the elements of combing hair, applying paper/foil, brushing colour.

Make a note of the risks you have identified for this task.

3. Control the risks

Consider the individual and combination of risk factors, and determine which ones need controlling. Decide on controls for these risk factors relevant to the task. Further advice can be found in the *Manual Tasks Advisory Standard 2000* (now known as a Code of Practice).

Design controls (changes made to the work area, tools or the way work is done) are better at controlling risks than administrative controls (training, work organisation and maintenance).

4. Implement the controls

Determine a control plan. A combination of long term design and short term administrative controls may be required. Make note of this plan.

5. Review the controls

Regularly check the solutions to determine if they are working, being used / applied correctly and not causing any other risks.

Combined risk assessments – manual tasks (hairdressing)

- Combined risk assessments – manual tasks (hairdressing)

Appendix 6 – Workplace health and safety legislation

The *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* (PDF, 766 KB) covers laws concerning workplace health and safety in Queensland. The objective of the Act is to prevent anyone being killed, injured, or contracting an illness because of a workplace, workplace activities, or specified high-risk plant.

This is achieved by preventing or minimising exposure to risk.

What are my obligations for workplace health and safety?

The Act places an obligation on every person associated with a workplace in any way to ensure his or her own workplace health and safety and the workplace health and safety of others. Under the Act, a person can have more than one set of obligations.

If you are an **employer**, you must:

- ensure the health and safety of each of your workers at work
- ensure that your health and safety and the health and safety of other people is not affected by the way you carry out your business and work activity.

If you are a **self-employed person**, you must:

- ensure that your health and safety, and the health and safety of other people is not affected by the way you carry out your business and work activity

If you are a **worker**, you must:

- comply with the instructions of your employer regarding your health and safety and the health and safety of others
- use personal protective equipment if your employer provides it and you have been trained to use it
- not deliberately interfere with or misuse anything provided for health and safety at your workplace
- not deliberately endanger the health and safety of any person
- not deliberately injure yourself

How can I meet my obligations for workplace health and safety?

Under the Act, there are 3 types of statutory instruments to help you meet your workplace health and safety obligations.

If there is a regulation or ministerial notice about a risk, you must do what the regulation or ministerial notice says.

If there is an advisory standard or industry code of practice about a risk, you must either:

- do what the standard or code says; or
- adopt and follow another way that gives the same level of protection against the risk.

If there is no regulation, advisory standard or industry code of practice about a risk, you must choose an appropriate way to manage the risk, and take reasonable precautions and exercise proper diligence to ensure you meet your workplace health and safety obligations.

What are the consultative arrangements for workplace health and safety?

The Act provides for employers and workers to deal with workplace health and safety issues together.

Workplace health and safety representatives are elected by workers to convey health and safety issues to their employer. No special qualifications or experience are required to be a representative. Workplace health and safety representatives are entitled to:

- carry out regular workplace health and safety inspections
- be told by the employer of any work caused injury or illness at the workplace
- be present when an employer interviews another worker about a workplace incident (if invited by the worker)
- review the circumstances of work caused injuries and illness, to advise the employer of the findings and to make resulting recommendations
- be consulted by the employer regarding proposed changes to the workplace that may affect workplace health and safety in the area they represent
- help resolve workplace health and safety issues
- be told by the employer when a workplace health and safety inspector is at the workplace
- to report any issue affecting workplace health and safety to the workplace health and safety officer employer
- expect the employer to cooperate, remedying the issue and if this does not happen, to report the matter to an inspector
- ask the employer to establish a workplace health and safety committee, and to be a member of the committee

Workplace health and safety committees help in the cooperation between employers and workers in developing and carrying out measures to ensure workplace health and safety. A committee must consist of at least two persons and include any workplace health and safety officer and the workplace health and safety representative for that workplace. Further membership of the

committee should be decided through negotiations between the employer and workers.

Workplace health and safety officers (WHSOs) are appointed by employers to provide advice about workplace health and safety. A WHSO must be appointed if 30 or more workers are normally employed at the workplace. WHSOs carry out inspections, set up educational programs about workplace health and safety, and help investigate all work injuries, work-caused illness and dangerous events. A WHSO requires special qualifications.

Do I have to register my workplace?

Owners of workplaces no longer need to register their workplaces with Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.

What records and reports do I have to make?

Employers and self-employed people must make a record of every work injury, work caused illness and dangerous event that happens at their workplace. The record must be made on the approved form (incident notification form) and kept for a period of one year.

When there is a serious bodily injury, work caused illness or dangerous event, an employer or self-employed person must advise the Division of Workplace Health and Safety in the approved form (incident notification form). If a death occurs, the division must be informed as soon as possible.