
Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Compliance audit report – Summary

Local government authorities – Queensland’s South West Region

Dangerous goods/combustible liquids and hazardous substances

Local government authorities – dangerous goods/combustible liquids and hazardous substances compliance audit report

This summary report outlines the results of the *2004 – 2007 Target Compliance Project of Local Government Authorities within the South West Region* of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. The compliance campaign was undertaken following the investigation of a complaint that indicated compliance issues may be present in other local government authorities within the South West Region.

The compliance audit identified that many substances used by local government authorities were classified as both dangerous goods/combustible liquids under the *Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001* and hazardous substances under the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008*. In these instances, the legislative requirements of both pieces of legislation needed to be complied with.

Findings

The major focus of the compliance audit was on the risks associated with the storage and handling of dangerous goods/combustible liquids; consequently, the vast majority of directives issued related to these issues.

A total of 752 non-compliance notices were issued during the compliance audit:

- 513 dangerous goods related directives
- 212 improvement notices
- 10 prohibition notices
- 10 verbal directions, and
- 7 electrical safety protection notices.

A significant number of these non-compliance issues can be divided into two main categories for safety management:

1. Storage and spill management
2. Administrative processes.

Some of the non-compliance issues relating to storage and spill management included:

- lack of adequate bunding or spill control
- inadequate warning placards
- inadequate impact protection
- incompatibility of stored substances
- non-compliance to requirements of Australian Standards (especially standard AS 1940)
- inadequate infrastructure associated with piping, dosing or supply
- inadequate control of ignition sources (both internal and external), and
- inadequate worker protection and safety equipment.

Some of the non-compliance issues relating to administrative processes included inadequate:

- provision of information
- risk management
- safety management systems
- emergency management.

Overall

The compliance audit campaign identified that most of the obligation holders were unsure about their obligations under the relevant legislation relating to the storage and handling of dangerous goods/combustible liquids or hazardous substances, particularly risk management processes, emergency management and spill containment.

Other areas of non-compliance revealed in the audit related to:

- safe work practices
- electrical safety
- hazardous substances
- entrapment risks.

Way forward

The vast majority of the local government personnel agreed there was a need for this type of compliance audit, as no prior assessment of the storage and handling of dangerous goods had been undertaken. At the conclusion of the audit, clarification and education was provided by WHSQ to the local government workplace health and safety officers (WHSO) on what was required of them to comply with the notices issued. This action helped to illustrate to WHSOs what the self regulatory requirements were that they needed to undertake to manage their workplace health and safety risks now and in the future.

Local government authorities in the South West Region need to instigate appropriate training, education and awareness for the following:

- Section 28, 35 and 96A of the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*,
- Part 16 of the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008*,
- Sections 16, 23 and Part 5 of the *Dangerous Goods Safety Management Act 2001*
- Part 3 of the *Dangerous Goods Safety Management Regulation 2001*.

Additionally, safety management systems need to be reviewed to ensure all their safety obligations are being met with regard to the safe storage and handling of dangerous goods, combustible liquids and hazardous substances.

As with any research, these findings represent only what was found at the time the workplace visits took place and are only relevant to the industries visited.

For further information visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au or call the WHSQ Infoline on Ph:1300 369 915.

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