

Workplace Assessment Criteria

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995

The *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* now requires that workplace health and safety officers (WHSOs) conduct an assessment of the workplace using criteria approved by the Chief Executive of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland or criteria agreed to by the Workplace Health and Safety Committee at the workplace.

This document presents Workplace Health and Safety Queensland's approved criteria. It also presents an associated reporting format that may be used by WHSOs.

Criteria approved by the Workplace Health and Safety Committee at the workplace must identify any hazards and unsafe or unsatisfactory workplace health and safety conditions practices relevant to that workplace.

The WHSO is required to record the results of the assessment and submit them to the employer or principal contractor (and safety committee if one is established) along with any recommendations to rectify any unsafe workplace health and safety conditions and practices within 30 days of completion of the assessment. A workplace health and safety inspector may request to see the results of the workplace assessments.

Assessments must be conducted at least once every twelve months, or at intervals agreed between the Workplace Health and Safety Officer and the Health and Safety Committee.

Employers and principal contractors must:

1. allow the Workplace Health and Safety Officer to conduct the assessment during normal working hours
2. provide resources to allow the Officer to properly exercise his or her functions
3. take appropriate action to rectify any unsafe workplace health and safety conditions and practices
4. take all reasonable steps to ensure the Workplace Health and Safety Officer performs the functions specified in the *Act*
5. keep assessments and recommendations and other matters recorded and given to the employer or principal contractor by the Workplace Health and Safety Officer for five years.

In accordance with the *Act* the workplace health and safety criteria approved by the Chief Executive of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland are:

1. Hazard identification, risk assessment and control	<i>That the organization ensures that hazards are identified, risks assessed, control measures implemented then monitored and reviewed for effectiveness.</i>
2. Work environment	<i>That a safe and healthy work environment is provided and maintained.</i>
3. Noise	<i>That exposure to "excessive noise" is prevented.</i>
4. Plant	<i>That safe plant is provided and maintained.</i>
5. Electrical	<i>That the electrical risks are controlled.</i>
6. Hazardous substances	<i>That risks arising from the use, handling and storage of substances are controlled.</i>
7. Manual tasks	<i>That controls are in place to prevent or minimise musculoskeletal disorders caused by manual tasks.</i>
8. Information, instruction, training and supervision	<i>That information, instruction, training and supervision are provided to ensure health and safety.</i>

1. Hazard identification, risk assessment and control	That the organization ensures that hazards are identified, risks assessed, control measures implemented then monitored and reviewed for effectiveness.	Please look for evidence that the organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for this element e.g. inspection schedules and records; • Allocates responsibility and accountability for identification, assessment and control; • Has an assessment methodology; • Assigns control priorities, controls have been implemented, has records of effectiveness of controls; • Has effective incident reporting, investigation, corrective and preventative action procedures; • Satisfies legal requirements to undertake specific activities, perform work or operate equipment including any license, certificate of competency, notification, registration and/or approval; • Controls risks related to the contracting and subcontracting of plant, equipment, services and labour; • Identifies hazards, assesses and controls risks during the product or process design or change stages; • Identifies potential health and safety hazards, assess the potential risks and determine appropriate risk control strategies before it accepts a contract to supply its goods or services to others; • Controls risks related to purchasing of goods and services; • Identifies potential emergency situations and develops emergency procedures for preventing and mitigating the associated illness and injury.
2. Work environment	That a safe and healthy work environment is provided and maintained.	Please consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks related to design of the workplace, work processes, materials, plant and equipment; • Specific risks such as confined spaces, excavations, fall risks, falling objects; exposure to ultra-violet radiation from sunlight, fatigue, and occupational violence ; • Work-related psychosocial issues such as harassment and stress and • Eating areas, drinking water, toilets, washing facilities, first aid, cleanliness, freedom from obstruction or protrusions, ventilation and lighting.
3. Noise	That exposure to “excessive noise” is prevented.	Please consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work locations where a raised voice is needed to talk to someone one metre away; • Work locations where workers notice a reduction in hearing during or after work; • Work locations associated with ringing in the ears, blurred hearing or the same sound having a different tone in each ear; • Exposure of long term employees who are hard of hearing; • Signs indicating hearing protection areas; • Noisy equipment; • Selection, maintenance and replacement of hearing protectors; • Elimination, engineering and administrative controls; • Noise assessment; and • Audiometry.
4. Plant	That safe plant is provided and maintained.	Primary consideration is the actual condition of the plant. Further evidence that indicates that inspection, maintenance, testing, repair and replacement of plant ensures its safety should be sought e.g. inspection records, daily pre-start checks, maintenance records, test reports, records of repair and evidence that plant is fit for purpose. Consideration should include control devices such as start/stop switches and lock out devices, guarding, alarm systems, release of substances, noise, lighting and hot or cold plant.

5. Electrical	That the electrical risks are controlled.	Please consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risks involving a person coming into direct contact with an electrical part; • Testing and tagging; • Residual current devices - provision and testing; • Documentation of electrical and electronic components within machinery and plant; • Prohibition of unsafe electrical practices at the workplace such as repairs being carried out by unlicensed persons or in an unsafe manner (such as unnecessary live work).
6. Hazardous substances	That risks arising from the use, handling and storage of substances are controlled.	Please consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe use, handling, storage and transport of substances; • Assessment of the risk to health and safety from hazardous substances; • Control or prevention of exposure to hazardous substances; • Work instructions for the safe handling, transfer and transport of hazardous substances and dangerous goods; • Accessibility of health and safety information on all hazardous substances and dangerous goods at the point of use; • Identification of contents of containers and transfer systems; and • Specific legislated requirements for the health monitoring of employees exposed to hazardous substances.
7. Manual tasks	That controls are in place to prevent or minimise musculoskeletal disorders caused by manual tasks.	Please consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual lifting, heavy objects, repetitive movements, awkward postures, young workers, uneven surfaces, work flow etc; • Problem tasks and work processes; • Design, purchase and maintenance of plant, tools, containers, workbenches, furniture, mechanical devices and vehicles.
8. Information, instruction, training and supervision	That information, instruction, training and supervision are provided to ensure health and safety.	Please consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training needs of the organization, • Competence of workers to perform assigned tasks taking into account hazards associated with work activities, • Knowledge, skills and experience of trainers, • Management training in relation to OHS responsibilities, • Training of employee representatives, • Training in hazard identification, risk assessment and control, • Specific training such as manual tasks, hazardous substances and electrical, • Training in emergency procedures, and • Induction of workers, contractors and visitors. • That workers are supervised according to their capabilities and the degree of risk of the task.

Note: Employers and principal contractors must keep this form for 5 years after it is given.

