

# How to achieve a *Safe Workplace*

A Guide for Supervisors and Managers



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## **From the author.**

How often have I walked into a business or factory and discussed safety with supervisors/managers that seemed at a loss of how to make their workplaces safer.

As adult humans we have an inbuilt capacity to identify hazards and things that could endanger our lives, young children and teenagers do not have this ability, hence to adults, teenagers often seem reckless in what they do, it really does not kick in until we reach maturity. As hunter gatherers, we had a danger response called fight or flight; we used this auto response to ascertain hazards and danger and how it might affect our chances of survival, this is still with us, only used but rarely.

As parents, we can automatically see and sense when our children are in danger, but rarely see these things in our surroundings for our own personal safety, or the safety of others.

This little booklet is written in an easy to understand way that allows any manager or supervisor to gain an insight into a way to achieve a safer place to work for themselves and their employees.

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**GradCert OHSE, Dip. OHS, HRM, Mgmt, Business, Mech. E, Ag, I.T.**

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## ***Foreword:***

To manage Occupational Health and Safety in today's workplaces can be a challenge to any Employer or Safety Manager.

Without safety leadership Health and Safety soon becomes a mill stone around an Employers neck quickly translating into poor worker morale and increased workplace injuries.

Whilst there is legislation and regulations designed to help safety management, there is a human face to Health and Safety. We all expect to go to work and come home in one piece and we rely on dedicated people to make this happen.

Peter Ribbe has put together here an Occupational Health and Safety Booklet that puts into simple words the obligations that are expected of all parties in the workplace. He uses his vast experience and practical knowledge to paint the picture of how a modern workplace can become a safe workplace simply by taking the time to think first before you undertake any work related activity.

He covers Safe Work Procedures, Risk Assessments plus Training and Supervision made easy for the average person to understand.

Peter Ribbe explains in such a way that highlights the point that no one need be afraid of safety in the workplace. Through team work and practical application of Standard Operating Procedures a Zero Harm policy can be implemented and maintained without incurring any capital expenditure.

I recommend this Safety booklet to anyone who has an interest in maintaining a safe workplace in Queensland.

Peter Ball  
Senior Advisor  
Injury Prevention and Management Unit  
Workplace Health and Safety Queensland  
Brisbane December 2012

## **Hazard Analysis:**

***Without people, there would be no hazards.***

The most important method of identifying and rectifying a hazard is using a hazard analysis, if it looks dangerous, it probably is!

So how do you define a hazard? A hazard is anything that may cause damage, injury or illness, to people, environment or plant and buildings.

There are five traditional ways to control hazards;

1. Elimination
2. Substitution
3. Engineering
4. Administration
5. Personal Protective Equipment

In controlling a hazard, we can use any number of these ways to formulate our risk control, so how come now we have **risk** involved here? **Risk** is the child born from the parent **hazard**, what this means is, that for every hazard you identify, there is an associated risk or risks.

Let us take an easy example, a pedestrian crossing, no hazard here you say, well there is!

**Hazards**; Cars, trucks, motor bikes, buses; the paint on the crossing can also become slippery when wet! **The Risk**; we can get struck by a motor vehicle or slip over if the lines are wet. Most people do a mental hazard analysis before crossing, our parents taught us to look left, right and left again before crossing, and we do this mental hazard analysis without even thinking about it, so why can we not do it at work?

Taking into account our example, what do we use to mitigate the risk associated in crossing the road? We can use **Elimination**, by eliminating the pedestrian crossing we remove the hazard, but not the risk, as people will still cross the road.

**Substitution**, we can install a traffic light controlled crossing, this would also take in engineering.

**Engineering**, we can build a raised pathway over the road.

**Administration**, we can train and educate people to use the crossing correctly.

But, for every control we put into place, there is always a residual risk, the secret is knowing, what the risk is and being able to control it.

## **Risk:**

***Risk is something people gamble with every day, even winners eventually become losers.***

Staying with our pedestrian crossing example, we will now look at the residual risks from all of our controls.

***Elimination;*** So we have removed the pedestrian crossing, but how often do you see pedestrians darting out in front of moving vehicles? Many times if you sit and watch, the pedestrians think they are taking a calculated risk, it certainly is a risk, but not calculated to be sure, if they thought about the possible consequences, they would wait until the traffic was clear. So we do have a risk remaining, even after the elimination of the crossing, the thing is, we have actually created a bigger risk by removing the crossing, than existed before, this needs to be avoided and much thought needs to be done before initializing the elimination strategy, to ensure that all residual risks are able to be controlled.

***Substitution;*** We can substitute the line marked pedestrian crossing with a traffic light controlled system, we control the motor vehicles and we control the pedestrians, the risk has diminished by control, there is one element of risk remaining that we have no control over, that is human irrationality and unpredictability, someone will cross with the light being red, pedestrian or motor vehicle, an accident will occur. We can only control risk to a certain extent.

***Engineering;*** Using engineering we remove the line marked pedestrian crossing, build a mesh topped walk way over the road, the mesh ensures no one climbs and jumps off the overpass, so has that removed all the risk? Well no! There are still some minor ones remaining, pedestrians could slip and graze a knee, or break a leg or arm, but we have diminished the most serious risk, that of pedestrian being struck by motor vehicles, the remainder is left as an uncontrollable minor residual risk, we know it exists, but are unable to control it.

***Administration;*** Administration is probably the weakest of the hazard controls, as it utilizes training and education, if we train and educate all the pedestrians and all the motor vehicle drivers, to do the right thing, and all used this, it would work well, except we are dealing with humans, and they are unpredictable. Lack of patience, hurry, or just rudeness from a few would negate all the training and bring back all the risk. That is not to say administration does not work, it does work well, if coupled to other hazard controls.

***Personal Protective Equipment; PPE*** is much underrated, good quality and correct PPE can and will prevent serious injury to a worker. It is wise to spend time researching the various types of PPE available for different types of jobs, a cheap pair of goggles is better than nothing, when a piece of metal is flying of a grinder heading towards an employees eye. The better the quality, the better is the protection for employees. Investigate and do a hazard analysis on every job that is carried out in your place of work, if unsure of identifying the correct PPE, get some safety catalogues and see what is available, for the hazards you have identified.

Try and be sensible when choosing PPE, think how you would feel wearing it whilst doing specific jobs, in other words, do not encase someone in a suit of armor.

## **Risk Assessments:**

*In formulating a Risk Assessment, one should always take into consideration the human element and the surrounding area, humans are unpredictable in their actions, factoring in this unpredictability will help to minimize or control the risk, and surveying the wider area will give an overview of what may be damaged or who else might be hurt if the risk control fails.*

In order to formulate a sound risk assessment, one needs to be able to look at the bigger picture around the identified hazard, let us say we have had installed a radio tower ten metres high, with four guide wires holding it up. There is also a lot of high risk plant moving close to the tower and guide wires, we could, to minimize the risk of the high risk plant hitting the tower or wires, by installing bollards or safety railing, that would fix the problem at ground level, but in doing a risk analysis, you would need to take into account the height of the tower, and a safety margin, should the cables break and the tower crashed to earth, what would it strike? And how far away? Take in the bigger picture!

In doing a risk assessment, make sure that you identify the current task, the identified hazards, the risk identified, the controls required and the level and severity of the risks before and after the controls have been put in place, you will also need a **Risk Register**, this identifies every job role and task carried out in your place of work, and these tasks show what the hazard is, the risk is, the level of grading of the risks, the controls required to mitigate the risks and the grading of the risks after the controls have been put in place, these form part of your SMS.

## OHS Risk Assessment and Control Form

**(OHS Document # & Title)**

**Company Name**

<b>Completed by:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	

<b>Hazard Analysis &amp; Control:</b>	<b>1. Elimination</b>	<b>4. Administration</b>	
<b>Check Types Used</b>	<b>2. Substitution</b>	<b>5. Personal Protective Equipment</b>	
	<b>3. Engineering</b>	<b>Mix of Controls</b>	

<b>Description of Activity</b>	
<b>Description of Location</b>	



**Identify Hazards, Risks and Risk Controls.**

**1. An activity may be divided into tasks. For each task identify the hazards and associated risks**

**2. List existing risk controls and determine a risk rating using the Risk Rating Procedure**

**3. Additional risk controls may be required to achieve an acceptable level of risk (Use hierarchy for risk controls). Re-rate the risk if additional risk controls used.**

**C: Consequence**

**L: Likelihood**

**R: Risk**

<b>Tasks</b>		
<b>Hazards</b>		
<b>Associated risks</b>		
<b>Existing risk controls</b>		
<b>Risk rating with existing controls</b>	<b>C</b>	
	<b>L</b>	
	<b>R</b>	
<b>Risk Rating with additional controls</b>	<b>C</b>	
	<b>L</b>	
	<b>R</b>	
<b>Additional risk controls required</b>		

**List Emergency controls for how to deal with spills or exposure to hazardous substances and/or emergency shutdown procedures if required.**


**List legislation, standards and codes of practice or internal SWP's / SOP's relevant or adjoining this risk assessment.**


**Authorisation of Risk Assessment:**

**Authorised by:**  
**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Acknowledgement of Understanding**

**All persons performing the tasks identified must sign that they have read and understood the risk assessment.**

**Risk assessment name and version number: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**I have read and understand this risk assessment**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>

## OHS Risk Rating Table

Step 1 – Consider the Consequences	Step 2 – Consider the Likelihood	Step 3 – Calculate the Risk																																											
What are the consequences of this event occurring? Consider what <u>could reasonably</u> happen with existing controls in place or if an incident has occurred consider what <u>could have reasonably</u> happened as well as what actually happened. Look at the descriptions and choose the most suitable Consequence.	What is the likelihood of the consequence identified in step 1 happening? Look at the descriptions and choose the most suitable Likelihood	1. Take the consequences rating (1-5) and select the correct column 2. Take the likelihood rating (A-E) and select the correct row 3. Select the risk rating where the two ratings cross on the matrix below. <b>VH = Very high, H = High, M = Medium, L = Low</b>																																											
<p><b>5. Severe</b> : death or permanent disability to one or more persons</p> <p><b>4. Major</b> : hospital admission required</p> <p><b>3. Moderate</b> : medical treatment required</p> <p><b>2. Minor</b> : first aid required</p> <p><b>1. Insignificant</b>: injuries not requiring first aid</p>	<p><b>A. Almost certain</b>: expected to occur in most circumstances</p> <p><b>B. Likely</b>: will probably occur in most circumstances</p> <p><b>C. Possible</b>: could occur at some time</p> <p><b>D. Unlikely</b>: is not likely to occur in normal circumstances</p> <p><b>E. Rare</b>: may occur only in exceptional circumstances</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="5" style="background-color: #4b0082; color: white;">CONSEQUENCES</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">1</th> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">2</th> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">3</th> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">4</th> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">5</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <th rowspan="5" style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white; writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">LIKELIHOOD</th> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">A</th> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #ffff00;">H</td> <td style="background-color: #ffff00;">H</td> <td style="background-color: #ff0000;">VH</td> <td style="background-color: #ff0000;">VH</td> </tr> <tr> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">B</th> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #ffff00;">H</td> <td style="background-color: #ffff00;">H</td> <td style="background-color: #ff0000;">VH</td> </tr> <tr> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">C</th> <td style="background-color: #add8e6;">L</td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #ffff00;">H</td> <td style="background-color: #ffff00;">H</td> <td style="background-color: #ff0000;">VH</td> </tr> <tr> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">D</th> <td style="background-color: #add8e6;">L</td> <td style="background-color: #add8e6;">L</td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #ffff00;">H</td> </tr> <tr> <th style="background-color: #0070c0; color: white;">E</th> <td style="background-color: #add8e6;">L</td> <td style="background-color: #add8e6;">L</td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> <td style="background-color: #92d050;">M</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			CONSEQUENCES					1	2	3	4	5	LIKELIHOOD	A	M	H	H	VH	VH	B	M	M	H	H	VH	C	L	M	H	H	VH	D	L	L	M	M	H	E	L	L	M	M	M
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	E	L	L	M	M	M																																							

Risk level	Required action
<b>Very high</b>	<b>Act immediately:</b> The proposed task or process activity must not proceed. Steps must be taken to lower the risk level to as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of risk controls.
<b>High</b>	<b>Act today:</b> The proposed activity can only proceed, provided that: (i) the risk level has been reduced to as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of risk controls; (ii) the risk controls must include those identified in legislation, Australian Standards, Codes of Practice etc. (iii) the risk assessment has been reviewed and approved by the Supervisor and (iv) a Safe Working Procedure or Safe Work Method has been prepared. (v) The supervisor must review and document the effectiveness of the implemented risk controls.
<b>Medium</b>	<b>Act this week:</b> The proposed task or process can proceed, provided that: (i) the risk level has been reduced to as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of risk controls; (ii) the risk assessment has been reviewed and approved by the Supervisor and (iii) a Safe Working Procedure or Safe Work Method has been prepared.
<b>Low</b>	<b>Act this month:</b> Managed by local documented routine procedures which must include application of the hierarchy of controls.



## **Leadership and Safety:**

***A good leader has the best interest of his followers in mind.***

I once took a business owner to task about work place safety at his engineering shop, he reminded me that he was a good leader because his men produced and the business made money. After talking with some employees during their lunch break, I found out this business owner was almost a tyrant, never listened to concerns about safety from the men, only purchased the most rudimentary PPE and equipment, just sufficient for the employees to do their work. Meeting again with the owner, I advised him that he was a good business man, but a bad leader, because he only achieved productivity through threats and intimidation, and that morale for the employees did not exist, I advised him to attend a leadership course, which he did, and sometime later rang me to apologize, I told him the apology needed to go to his employees. I returned some months later, and it was a different work shop, the employees seemed happier, and the owner said since he put changes into place for them, production increased, time off decreased and they had very few injuries. The moral to the story, do not assume you are a good leader because you think so, challenge yourself, get some leadership training, ***leaders are not born, they are made!*** And good leaders produce a more productive and safer work force and environment.

### ***What Type Of Supervisor/Manager Are You?***

Can You Use Your Supervisory/Management Position To Influence Employee Safe Work Behaviors, Attitude and Morale?

As A Supervisor/Manager Can You Make A Difference To Safety And Maintain Productivity?

### **Where does Safety Start?**

***Safety starts with you!***

As a Supervisor/Manager **YOU** are responsible for the safety of the employees under your care! (WHS Act 2011)

How will this ensure that production is maintained?

By providing a safe workplace you achieve many benefits.

### ***Benefits of a safe workplace.***

- 1 Employees feel safer doing their jobs
- 2 Employees morale is strengthened
- 3 1+2= A More productive and stable work force.

***Question: That's all fine, but how do I achieve this?***

***Answer: By being a good Supervisor/Manager!***

**Overview of S.T.A.R.S**  
The context of being a Supervisor/Manager.



## **S.T.A.R.S.**

Using the STARS methodology do you support or are you engaged in the following....

**S** = Supervision – Overseeing work activities to ensure employees are safe.

**T** = Training – Conducting safety education and training.

**A** = Accountability – Insisting everyone complies with company policies and rules.

**R** = Resources – Providing physical resources – Tools, Equipment, Materials so that employees can work safely.

**S** = Support – Creating a psychological environment – schedules, workloads, recognition so employees do not work under undue stress.

Supervisors/Managers can demonstrate leadership by directly providing employees the resources, motivation, priorities and accountability for ensuring their safety and health.

Enlightened Supervisors/Managers understand the value in creating and fostering a strong safety culture within their departments. Safety is elevated so that it is a value as opposed to something that must be done or accomplished in order to be compliant. Integrating safety and health concerns into the everyday supervision of employees, allows for a proactive approach to accident prevention, and demonstrates the importance of working safely.

### ***So what type of Supervisor/Manager are you?***

Supervisors/Managers are in the forefront of the business, the attitude and leadership capacity of a Supervisor/Manager can make or break a business, either financially

or through bad leadership where the morale of employees is low and the staff turn over is high, loosing valuable time and costs in retraining new staff, and a low level of productivity is present due to the cause.

### ***Supervisors/Managers are categorized into four areas.***

1. Controlling
2. Tough but Caring
3. Tough and Controlling
4. Warm fuzzy natured
- 5.

***So what category are you? Self perception is self delusion – No one sees who you really are better than your peers!***

These four categories can be further divided into two major groups,

1. Reactive
2. Pro Active

***So what type of Supervisor/Manager is best suited for safety, morale and achieving productivity?***

### ***The Tough but caring and pro active Supervisor /Manager,***

they achieve their goals in a manner that ensures discipline, safety, morale and productivity is maintained at a high level, seek always to improve safety, training and morale of their employees, in return the employees give the Supervisor/Manager, a happier, safer more motivated work force able to reach maximum productivity.

### **Symptoms of a bad system or leadership.**

#### ***Symptoms indicating personal weakness.***

- A unique hazardous condition or unsafe/inappropriate behavior performed by one person.
- May occur at any level of the organization.
- May indicate a “Special” problem that requires a unique solution.
- Attributing error to personal weakness should never be the initial assumption.

#### ***Symptoms indicating system weakness.***

- A number of similar conditions or behaviors common to a number of locations.
- May occur at any level of the organization.
- May contribute to, or produce a specific hazardous condition and unsafe behavior.
- Indicates a “Common” problem that requires a system solution.
- The scope of the condition or behavior, indicates the management level at which the cause exists.
- Attributing error to system weaknesses should usually be the initial assumption.

#### ***Symptoms indicating weakness in Organizational structure.***

- Formulated by upper management.
- Inadequate design of vision, mission, strategies and objectives.
- Inadequate design of policies, plans, processes, programs and procedures.
- May exist in any program and in any department.
- The natural result of a non-supportive leadership style.

#### ***Symptoms indicating weakness in leadership style.***

- Non-supporting corporate vision.
- Unreasonable expectations of senior management.
- External forces: stakeholders, materials, industry, community, society and government.
- The natural result of inappropriate values creating a fear based culture.

### **The fear based culture.**

#### ***No man can inspire more fear than a harsh master.***

- Where employees are afraid to raise issues concerning their safety, morale and personal productivity, because they are threatened with dismissal, loss of rights or self esteem by a Supervisor/Manager.

In this type of culture, employees are afraid to report safety issues and personal injuries because they may lose their jobs or raise the Incident/Accident rate of the business and lose bonuses or gifts as reward for low Lost Time Injury's



## **The progressive safety culture.**

### ***Working together for a common good.***

- Where Supervisors/Managers work together with the employees to create and foster a safe, high morale and highly productive environment.
- Where ideas and a continuous improvement to safety is encouraged and rewarded.
- Where employees are NOT afraid to point out safety issues or concerns.

## **Training Employees - Leading By Example.**

- Good Supervisors/Managers like any good leader, lead by example. It is pointless if the Supervisor/Manager works in an unsafe manner, to expect the employees to work safely. Therefore it is paramount that a good Supervisor/Manager presents themselves to the employees as someone that follows procedures and safety at all times. The Supervisor/Manager must ensure that they have the knowledge and training in the jobs performed by their employees, even if this only extends to theoretical knowledge of jobs performed, the understanding of the roles is paramount to identifying safe or unsafe work procedures.
- Supervisors/Managers must encourage and support safety training, the use of safety equipment and Personal Protective Equipment in the workplace. Supervisors/Managers must enforce and restrict the use of unsafe work practices in their departments, highlighting an unsafe practice to an employee will sharpen the employees awareness that they have done wrong, and if you are a good Supervisor/Manager, the employee will rectify the mistake for **YOU**, because they *respect* you, and generally will not repeat the mistake.

## **The Psychology Behind Getting Employees To Meet Work Schedules And Work Safely.**

- Yelling and screaming at employees to hurry up and get things finished, is a recipe for an accident, and only discourages the employees for further effort.
- A good line Supervisor/Manager uses psychology to achieve a high level of production. If the Supervisor/Manager is respected by their employees, they are able to **ASK** their employees for that bit extra in output, and generally the employees will comply. Therefore being a Tough and Caring Supervisor/Manager will pay off, and the employees are rewarded by the words “Thank You” from the Supervisor/Manager.

## Reflection.

- So, what have we learned? Will employees work safely and productively for a tyrant?
- **NO** of course not, it is up to ourselves to reflect on our own betterment with the advice of the people around us giving us constructive criticism, becoming a better leader is paramount to a healthy, safe and happy workplace.

## Remember, Great leaders are not born, they are made!

How do we make a great leader? By becoming a leader that people will follow, you then have the added advantage of psychological awareness, this is **POWER!**

Use it wisely!

## The Safety Management System:

*For he who builds a sturdy house, will reap the benefits for generations.*

What is a safety management system? An SMS is a set of procedures, documentation and policies that record and formulate everything to do with safety in your business, and how this should be applied and who should follow it. The bigger the business, the bigger and more comprehensive is the SMS, below are just some of the components that make up an SMS.

- Safety Policy
- Return To Work and Injury Management Policy
- Drug & Alcohol Policy
- Injury and Incident reporting and documenting policy
- Safety training policy and records
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Procedures for documenting injuries and treatments
- Documented training and safety training that has been done.
- Plant and equipment register, maintenance documentation etc.
- Procedures and plans to control traffic, pedestrians, contractors and sub contractors
- Procedures for inductions for new employees, visitors, contractors and sub contractors
- PPE register
- JSA, JHA, SWP and SOP's written, documented and trained on.
- Working at heights, confined spaces, in the heat. Work permits, issued and documented.
- Document library, with all documentation being reviewed
- Risk assessments
- House keeping inspections
- Audits
- OHS Notice Boards and their contents
- Hard and soft copies of all documentation

**Daunting?** Yes it certainly can be to set up a well functioning SMS, and not for the faint hearted, but a necessity in business, if you have a serious or fatal accident at work, the government body overseeing safety in your state will require access to your SMS to ascertain root cause and to determine what failed and why.

## **Injury Management:**

### *It is well to be well at work.*

Employees that suffer a serious injury that requires a workers compensation claim to be lodged should be looked after by a qualified and registered **Rehabilitation and Return to Work Coordinator**. RRTWC's are trained how to follow legislation specific to workers compensation, and the requirements of that legislation in documenting, lodging, dealing with associated health professionals and doctors, and are trained in follow up procedures with the injured worker, and to have the worker return to work under a suitable duties program. It is almost a full time job to be an RRTWC and takes dedication and skill to get the correct outcome for the employer and the employee.

## **Injury Prevention:**

### *Prevention is better than a cure.*

Injury prevention is more than just First Aid! Injury prevention is looking after employees to an extent that minor injuries never become workers compensation claims.

An in depth knowledge of first aid, sports medicine, injury treatment through; remedial massage etc, having knowledge of the human musculoskeletal system, circulatory system and how injuries affect areas of the body is required. All this knowledge is able to be gained through various courses. At first the courses seem expensive, but one can justify the outlay of several thousand dollars against an employee with ruptured disks in his back, and the many hundreds of thousands of dollars in a common law claim against the business? Of course! A few thousand dollars for gaining knowledge that could prevent serious injury in an employee, is well justified, and able to be used again and again.

The secret is using this knowledge to prevent any injury from being minor to becoming major; it takes skill experience and know-how, to do this.

Many government safety agencies run free courses to assist in injury management, some like ergonomics, manual handling, injured worker counseling etc.

Another important area is the psychology of workers, being a trained counselor will assist in helping injured workers sort out their mental state, and will inhibit claims of stress or psychological injury.

Injury prevention also goes further in depth, by being associated first and foremost with hazard analysis and risk control, being good at these three things will ensure a safe, injury free workplace. You are required to have a record of treatment book, for any first aid or injury treatment, it is recommended that you also have a spreadsheet where on a weekly basis you are able to enter the data from the treatment book, have data like, employee name, treatment date, the injury, what the treatment applied was, and a comments area, be aware that employees can and will bring injuries sustained at home into work, and if you allow them to work you not only accept liability, but also culpability for the injury. Have in place a system whereby all injuries must be reported before and during working hours, if an employee comes to work on a Monday morning complaining of a bad back, but you have no record of the report from the previous week, ask questions, and do not be afraid to send the employee home, and you can require a letter from a GP that states if the injury will affect the employees work, and if the employee is

able to carry on with their normal duties. The data in the spreadsheet and the injury treatment book form part of your SMS

## **The work place:**

### **Auditing, finding out what is missing.**

Organizing and running a safety audit on your work place is definitely recommended, a site audit is different from a Safety Management System Audit, the SMS audit looks at procedures and documentation etc. Whilst the site audit looks at the site or place of work for hazards, risks, work methodology of employees, training of employees in various safety training, the condition of environmental factors, ergonomics, morale and ethics of employees and the employee and supervisory understanding of safe work. If you have high risk machinery or high risk plant, how does this interrelate with workers on the floor, is the plant and machinery safe? Is it being operated in a safe manner? Are employees wearing the correct PPE? Is the PPE serviceable? You will need to audit everything in the work place to ascertain any deficiencies. You will also need to do ergonomic and environmental audits. Copies of the audits must be filed; these form part of your SMS.

### **Talk to the workers.**

No worker likes to work in an environment where they could get seriously hurt, talk to the workers, they will gripe about everything if they have someone to gripe too, you will need to weed out the good from the bad information, the workers will tell you what is wrong and what is unsafe, it is you that will need to come up with a solution.

### **Talk to the supervisors.**

Supervisors carry a wealth of information, most will gripe about the employees as being lazy and unproductive, but because supervisors move around, they are in a perfect position to answer questions about employee safe work ethics and what might be wrong, you will also get advise on how to fix everything that is wrong and unsafe, best to ignore that aspect and use your own training and intuition.

### **Support.**

You will also need to gauge the support from supervisors and managers in order to ascertain what sort of level of support you will receive when trying to bring in major safety changes, no one likes change and some people refute change altogether as useless.

### **Change management.**

Change management is a long slow process, to change the ethics and view point of others over an extended period of time is and can be daunting. Make a plan of what you want to change, grade your parts into easiest to hardest, bring in the easiest first, be reflective and always ask for the opinion from the supervisors and managers about the change you want to bring in, they will push back on the idea, but you need to persist, once acceptance of an easy change has been adopted, there will be less and less resistance to further change as you move down the list into the harder ones.

## **Safety Committees.**

Safety committees are made up from a cross section of management and employees; consist of a Chairman and a Secretary who takes and distributes the minutes.

The committee is designed to give both sides an input into safety at the workplace, highlighting areas of concerns or initializing improvements, they are a must have in any business focused on safety.

## **Environment.**

The work environment is one of the hardest to change, when doing your audit you need to ascertain the following;

**Quality of natural/incandescent light;** is there enough light for employees to safely carry out their duties?

**Quality of the air in the work place;** is the work environment dusty, wet or short on the supply of clean breathable air? What will it take to have clean breathable air? Extraction fans, drains to carry moisture away, open windows or air conditioning?

**Noise;** is the work place noisy, does it exceed the maximum of the allowable 85 db (A) for an eight hour period? Are employees subject to a noisy work environment wearing hearing protection? Is the noise level over the recommended pitch of between 20 & 20000 Hz (Normal Speech Range) An easy way to ascertain this is standing and watching, are the employees required to shout in order to communicate? If so, you have to ascertain the noise level and ensure that PPE is worn over or in the ears to diminish the risk.

**Work space;** is the work space clean and uncluttered? Are the floors kept in a clean state? Can employees move around their work area without tripping, slipping or having to climb over items on the floor, are storage shelves easily accessible?

**House keeping inspections;** regular house keeping inspections are a must in any work environment, have a standard check list, and do a walk around inspection checking, cleanliness and tidiness of the work areas, are emergency exits clear, do any light bulbs need replacing, are the amenities clean and serviceable, does anything need repairing or painting, what you check depends on the type of work area you have. A clean and organized work place instills pride and raises morale of the employees.

**Employee morale;** having a good level of employee morale is as important as having a safe work place, if the work environment is good and the employees feel safe, they tend to be more productive, consider some form of entertainment like radio music, not too loud but sufficient to give a slight distraction from what the employees are doing, especially if the work is mundane and repetitive (If practicable in the work place)

## **Ergonomics;**

Ergonomics is not just for desk bound office workers, work stations where employees are standing for extended periods of time require anti fatigue mats and the height of tables should be at a height where the employee is not required to bend whilst working. In a case where there are office workers, seating should be adjusted to ensure they sit straight with legs comfortably placed, the height of tables should be checked at each work station to ensure correct alignment of arms to table height, this will ensure that not only are employees comfortable but do not suffer

fatigue from poor posture when sitting, items like foot rests, lumbar support cushions and wrist supports will assist employees to work in comfort, and minimize RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) and fatigue.

### **Managing; High Risk Mobile Plant, Vehicles and Pedestrians.**

Formulating the means of separating moving vehicles and pedestrians is a huge challenge, and success brings not only safety, but a working plan that can be included into your Safety Management System.

Firstly you require a floor plan of the inside and outside of the property and workplace building. You need to identify where Vehicles, High Risk Mobile Plant and Pedestrians require access to areas, in and out of the work place, you need to define areas where there are to be inclusion and exclusion zones, this means areas that will be free from pedestrians and areas where there will be a mix of vehicles and pedestrians. You will need to have in place clearly marked and defined pathways for vehicles and pedestrians.(Painted Traffic and Pedestrian Lines) Design regulations and set speed restrictions, train all employees in the correct use of the plan and regulations, enforce rigorously any breaches, either by vehicle operators or pedestrians. In entry or exit points, ensure that concave safety mirrors are installed that can see in both directions, to ensure that vehicles and or pedestrians have an unobstructed view of what may be coming or going. The Traffic Management Plan forms a part of your SMS.

### **High Risk Mobile Plant and Plant Equipment.**

You will need a register of all mobile plant and any plant or machinery in the work place, plus a maintenance register showing all maintenance carried out and dated. These form part of your SMS.

### **Safety Signage.**

Signs are an every day occurrence in our lives, they advise or dictate our actions, the same is true in the work place, safety signage is an important facet in achieving a safe work place. You need to identify what signage you require, Speed restrictions, warnings, correct PPE, chemicals or restricted entry points. There are hundreds of safety signs available, you must also ensure that you do not overwhelm with visual overload. Take a common sense approach, and use the signage as it is intended.

You will then need to train employees and instill an awareness of the signs, create a regulation on the enforcement of following and abiding by the signage of the employees, contractors and visitors. You will need to make a safety signs register, stating the type of sign, where it is located. These form part of your SMS.

### **Inductions.**

Inducting new employees, contractors and visitors is as important as having a working SMS. Only on an induction can you educate people on the company, rules and regulations, safe work procedures and how they must conduct themselves whilst at work, thoroughly inducting employees, contractors and visitors, you not only instill the first stages of keeping them safe, but also give them a direction to follow.

It is embarrassing to stand up in court and admit you failed in providing a safe place of work! The induction is the first step in doing so.

## Chemicals and Chemical Storage.

Chemicals, are every where in our daily life's, in our homes we keep them all under the kitchen sink, never even contemplating the volatile mix we have, some house hold chemicals when mixed give of toxic gas that can kill in minutes. Industrial grade chemicals are stronger than household ones, and are more toxic by their nature.

So why would we just stick them all in an old broom closet? Separation and storage are key to the safe storage of chemicals, businesses that store large quantities must have a license to store on the premises, storage of large quantities of liquid chemicals such as in IBC's (International Bulk Containers) require that you store them in bunded storage areas, the bunded area must be large enough to contain a spill representing 30% of the stored volume. There are also available Spill Pallets for drums and IBC's available, if you do not have a bunded storage area. For small quantities of chemicals, paints and solvents, there are Haz Chem Storage Cabinets available, remember in any storage situation, you must have signage dictating the type of chemical stored, the PPE required to handle that chemical, whether the chemical is corrosive, flammable or explosive, and the Material Safety Data Sheet for that Chemical. You will also need to have training for employees in the use of the correct PPE, chemical handling and storage of the chemicals in use.

You will need to set up a chemical register, this records the chemicals you have onsite, the quantities, the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) for each chemical. These form part of your SMS

## Safe Work Procedures.

Safe Work Procedures (SWP), Job Safety Analysis (JSA) Job Health Analysis (JHA) Safe Operating Procedures (SOP) are all much the same in design and their intended use. These have in them all the information on the safe way to carry out a specific task, the PPE required, any reference to any adjoining documentation, these must be trained off on, and employees must prove they are able to fulfill the requirements in the documents, once employees can prove competence, they must sign and date the documents, and these are placed into their personnel files, you will also need a spreadsheet to keep track of who is trained in what and when, these form part of your SMS.

<b><i>SAFE WORK PROCEDURE</i></b>			
<b>Title:</b>	<b>REMOVAL OF SAFETY LOCKS / CUTTING OFF LOCKS</b>		
<b>Identified Risk:</b>	<b>Entrapment, Crush, Electrocutation</b>		
<b>Relevant Legislation, Standard:</b>	<b>Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011 Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2011 Codes of Practice (Various-Releases throughout 2012)</b>		
<b>Method of Communication:</b>	<b>Tool Box / Safety Meeting / Verbal Training Face to Face</b>		
<b>Procedure owner:</b>			
<b>Issue Date:</b>		<b>Review Date:</b>	

<b>Workplace Manager:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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**NOTE: *Locks can only be removed as follows***

1. Mechanical Locks – by the person who fixed the lock, Production Lock – by the relieving authorized person.
2. No other person is permitted to remove locks (other than in the Exceptional Circumstances listed below)
3. In the event that a lock has inadvertently been left on the equipment, the person who fixed the lock shall be contacted to verify that the plant is safe and return to the plant and remove the lock and Danger Tag.
4. If the person who fitted the Lock and or Danger Tag is off site e.g. during the night, than that person shall return to the site and remove their Lock and or danger Tag.
5. Instructions to remove the lock over the telephone **IS NOT ACCEPTABLE**
6. If the person is not available or contactable, the immediate line manager shall be contacted to verify that the Plant is safe also Maintenance Manager must be contacted.
7. When the Plant has been inspected and it is established beyond all doubt that the work has been completed and the Plant is safe to use, the personnel will contact the Maintenance Manager / General manger to issue authorization for the locks to be removed
8. In the event that the keys are unavailable or lost, the Maintenance Manager / General Manager may authorize the lock to be cut
9. In the event that the problem cannot be resolved via the above escalation route, it will be the General Manager who will make the final decision ( **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES IS THE PLANT TO BE OPERATED IF IT IS UNSAFE**)
10. In all instances if a lock is removed or cut off by any other, other than the person who fitted the lock or Danger Tag a full Incident Investigation will be conducted at the earliest opportunity.
11. Disciplinary action may be taken against any person not adhering to this procedure.



## **Training.**

Training is one of the most important aspects in reducing risk, incident and accident rates and promotes a safe work place. A highly trained employee works better, has a better understanding of safety, has fewer injuries and works in a safer manner, than someone not trained. An employee trained in working safely, will not hesitate to inform of unsafe practices or hazards. When training employees, ensure that the training material is consistent with safety and the subject of the training, whether it be JSA's, JHA's SOP's or SWP's, or evacuation procedures, all training must be meaningful, and give knowledge to the employees. Always include some aspect of safety in the training, irrespective of what the subject matter. You must keep a record of what you have trained, who you trained and when, copies go into the employees personal files and a record is kept either on paper or in a spreadsheet, the records form part of the SMS.

## **Policies.**

The formulation of policies by your business, giving guidance and legal credibility to your stand in the area of safety are a must have.

Policies such as;

Drug & Alcohol

Occupational Health & Safety

Injury Management and Rehabilitation

Training

Traffic and Parking

Contractors and Sub Contractors

Visitors

All these policies are part of your SMS, and constitute an important part of the way your business approaches safety, policies are like regulations, any breaches of these by employees or contractors or visitors, can be dealt with through a disciplinary process, and in the case of forthcoming industrial or legal action due to these acts, you can use these as evidence, just so long as you have made people aware of their existence, and have trained people off on their contents.

## **Drugs and Alcohol in the workplace.**

### ***Drugs and alcohol have no place in a workplace!***

The very consumption of these by employees at work automatically creates an environment of possible disaster.

D&A Screening of employees is a must, either internally done, or by outside contractors, you can have the best safety intentions for your workplace, but if you have employees under the influence, you can have some serious accidents, and it will be you that is blamed in court if you do nothing about it. How you approach this must be industrially sound and legal in its context, when disciplining or dismissing employees that have failed a screening test. This is where a policy is needed that you can fall back on, as long as the employees have been taught and signed off understanding of the policy. D&A can also take in smoking, smoking in the workplace must be controlled due to the possible legal implications from non smokers, assigned smoking areas are a must, to separate smokers from non smokers, this needs to be enforced, and a no smoking policy must be made for smoking indoors.

## **Incident and Accident Investigation.**

When you receive either an incident or accident report, these must be investigated and findings noted of root cause. You will also need to put into the report names of witnesses and their statements, photos are a good source of evidence, the photos must have date and time stamps to be admissible as evidence if needed. I cannot over stress how important good investigation is in the case of any incident or accident. In the case of a serious notify able injury or fatality in your work place, you need evidence when the WHS investigators come. The investigators will gather their own evidence and do their own interviews of witnesses, it is in your best interest to also have your own evidence, fully investigated and documented with photos and statements. You will also need to draw mud maps of the incident.

You can make your own investigation kit that is always ready to go.

Large Plastic Tool Box

Qty Pens & Pencils and Ruler

Digital Camera & spare batteries

Notepad & Drawing Pad

Chalk for marking evidence or body position.

Numbers for evidence marking from 0 – 9, big enough to see in a photo, stick on letterbox numbers are good for this.

Tape Measure at least 25 Metres

Torch & spare batteries

Voice Recorder & spare batteries

Qty Zip Ties

Caution Lock Out Tags

Hazard Tape

Cans of Fluorescent Marking Paint

## Incident / Accident Investigation Report Form

*Incident Report Number*.....

Last Name:	First Name	Job Title	Trained in Job Role?
Location		Date Reported	Time
<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous Situation <input type="checkbox"/> Incident <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid <input type="checkbox"/> MTI <input type="checkbox"/> LTI <input type="checkbox"/> Critical Injury			
Describe what happened and, if applicable, describe injury. Attach an accident/incident diagram, if appropriate below.			
Describe the nature, date and time of first aid treatment, if applicable.			
Part of Body Injured (Indicate "R", "L", "F" or "B", where applicable)			Signature of person reporting incident
<input type="checkbox"/> Head <input type="checkbox"/> Lower back <input type="checkbox"/> Hand/fingers <input type="checkbox"/> Ankle/foot <input type="checkbox"/> Eye <input type="checkbox"/> Upper Arm <input type="checkbox"/> Hip <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Neck <input type="checkbox"/> Elbow <input type="checkbox"/> Upper leg <input type="checkbox"/> Shoulder <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Arm <input type="checkbox"/> Knee <input type="checkbox"/> Upper back <input type="checkbox"/> Wrist <input type="checkbox"/> Lower leg			
<b>Type of Accident/Incident</b>			
Check off (✓) statements that best describe the accident/incident:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Repetitive Strain <input type="checkbox"/> Slip/fall <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to <input type="checkbox"/> Acute Strain (lifting, pulling, carrying) <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Other (explain) <input type="checkbox"/> Caught in/under/between <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor/Employee action <input type="checkbox"/> Struck, contacted by/with/against <input type="checkbox"/> Cut/bruise			
Witnesses			Signature
Name			
Name			
Name			
Name			
Name			
Name			

Remember to attach witness statement(s) on the Witness Statement form.

Causes: Check (✓) all that are applicable

**Conditions**

- Congestion or restricted work area
- Poor housekeeping; disorderly workplace
- Slip/trip hazards
- Lack of or inappropriate equipment
- Design or arrangement of furniture/equipment
- Defective tools, equipment or materials
- Inadequate or excessive illumination
- Inadequate ventilation
- Excessive noise
- Inadequate or improper protective equipment
- Fire and explosion hazards
- Inadequate warning systems
- Employee action
- Environmental Condition
- Other (explain):

**Practices**

- Improper body position/posture
- Tasks not rotated, breaks not taken
- Unnecessary rushing
- Improper lifting
- Unsafe loading/placement
- Using defective equipment
- Using equipment improperly
- Altering or modifying equipment
- Not using personal protective equipment or failing to use it properly
- Not following appropriate procedures
- Inappropriate conduct
- Hazardous personal attire
- Other (explain):

What are the reasons for the existence of these practices and/or conditions?

**Prevention/Corrective Action**

Actions to prevent accident/incident recurrence. Check (✓) those actions taken to prevent recurrence. Mark with (P) other corrective actions decided upon or planned but not yet carried out. More than one item may apply.

- Training/instruction of person involved
- Improve work procedures
- Inform staff/managers of safe work procedures
- Perform job safety analysis
- Inform staff/managers of hazard and how to protect themselves
- Notify Safety Committee
- Improve engineering/design
- Improve inspection procedures
- Tools, equipment, repair or replacement
- Request ergonomic assessment
- Request environmental assessment
- Correction of work area
- Recommend development/improvement to training/OHS program
- Reassess work standards
- Reassignment of person
- Improve housekeeping
- Other (describe):

<b>Remember that ALL corrective actions must be documented in the Corrective Action Section of this report.</b>		
<b>Investigated by:</b>		
<b>OHS Advisor Signature:</b>	<b>Name (print)</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Review by:</b>		
<b>Manager Signature:</b>	<b>Name (print)</b>	<b>Date:</b>

### Incident / Accident Investigation Report

<b>Investigator</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Injured Employee</b>		
<b>Last name:</b>	<b>First name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Employee trained to perform task?</b>		
<b>Age:</b>	<b>Experience at work involved:</b>	
<b>Nature of injury:</b>		

<b>Accident / Injury</b>	
<b>First Aid Provider:</b>	<b>Medical treatment:</b>
<b>Name and address of doctor:</b>	
<b>Hospital:</b>	
<b>Date and time of accident:</b>	
<b>Location of accident:</b>	
<b>Date and time accident reported to supervisor:</b>	

<b>Date and time accident reported</b>	
<b>Name OHS representative who took the report:</b>	
<b>First Aid treatment given:</b>	
<b>Witnesses:</b>	<b>Yes or No</b>

<b>Background</b>			
<b>Supervisor Name:</b>			
<b>Directions the employee received before starting work:</b>			
<b>Were any specific procedures involved?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Risk assessment required?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>

<b>Accident Description</b>
<b>Explain what happened (what, where, when, who, how).</b>
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

<b>Sketch / Diagram / Photos</b>

Immediate Cause	Underlying Causes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

How can the accident be prevented from happening again?
_____
_____
_____
_____

What steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence of the accident?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Action By:	Report Prepared By:
_____	_____

**Corrective Action**

<b>Date of injury/incident:</b>	_____	<b>Incident Number</b>	_____
<b>Date:</b>	_____		
<b>Corrective action taken (as indicated on the Accident/Investigation Form):</b>			
_____			

<b>Recommendations:</b>	
<b>Date assigned:</b>	
<b>Responsibility assigned to:</b>	
<b>Details of what is required to be done:</b>	
<b>Who has completed it?</b>	
<b>When was it completed?</b>	



## **Witness Statement Form**

**Date of injury/incident:**

**Incident number:**

**Name of witness:**

**Date:**

**Name of interviewer:**

**Details of interview:**

**Signature of witness:**

**Signature of interviewer:**



## **Conclusion;**

The information contained in these pages is not designed to solve any safety issues you may be experiencing in your work place, but is written to assist you and give you guidance and the ability to use this information as a frame work, so you are able to build a safe work place yourself, having got the information of what is required and how to formulate a system to achieve safety.

Safety takes in many facets, and I believe I have covered the most important ones in this booklet, it is impossible to put years of experience into a book that needs to be easy to understand by those not in the professional field of safety. I hope you are able to formulate your own strategy to make your work place safe using the information contained within these pages, it is a never ending job trying to maintain safety in a work place, in your endeavors I wish you luck and hope that you succeed.

Documents such as risk assessment templates etc. can be downloaded freely from the net, try and use only Australian templates, a lot of the documents you require are available from your state government safety authorities, in Queensland from Workplace Health and Safety, Q-Comp the Queensland workers compensation regulatory body, and in N.S.W. a lot of documents can be downloaded from Workcover NSW web sites.

If in Queensland, and you are having issues with dealing with a large amount of injuries and accidents, I whole heartedly recommend you get in touch with WHSQ, and get your business into the IPaM program, you will be assigned a mentor who will help you to identify root cause and formulate an action plan with you to control the injury / accident rates.

**Peter Ribbe**

**Credits:**

Credit for assisting and mentoring me, not only in my work life but also in the compilation of this booklet goes to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and one resolute individual, Peter Ball. Peter was for many years a senior inspector and investigator with WHSQ, he is now senior advisor with the IPaM (Injury Prevention and Management) program run by WHSQ. He not only is a good mentor, but a good friend, whose ideas and suggestions have always helped me to achieve success in formulating a strategy to achieve a safe work place, even in the harshest and most difficult of environments.

I would also like to thank my Manager Mark, and my Company Director David, in my place of work, who have always been supportive and never hindered me in my endeavors to formulate strategies and implementation of safe work practices, no matter how bizarre they may have seemed at first glance.