

Practical steps you can take to keep your workplaces safe

Some practical steps you can take to comply with WHS legislation are to:

- induct all new workers into your workplace, and make sure they understand your expectations, their role and their responsibilities as a Commonwealth employee
- attend WHS information sessions yourself and require your staff to complete regular WHS training
- make sure the WHS roles administered by Finance within your office are filled and the staff you have nominated are up to date with their training
- identify hazards that could arise in your particular workplace, and make sure that you and your staff have procedures in place (and are aware of procedures Finance has in place) to control any associated risks and report incidents
- consult routinely with your workers and the Department about any aspect of your work that could affect health and safety within your workplace.

Induction

Inducting each new worker into the workplace provides an opportunity to clarify the expectations you and your workers have about how work will be performed. Formal induction will ensure that new workers have been provided with information about their WHS duties and the services available to support safe work.

Finance has developed an induction checklist, available from:

http://maps.finance.gov.au/employee_pages/docs/Induction_Checklist.pdf

WHS Information and Training

Accessing current information and undertaking regular training assists you and your workers to keep knowledge about WHS issues up to date. Finance offers the following WHS information and training opportunities

- face-to-face WHS information sessions for parliamentarians, presented by Finance and Comcare, are offered in Parliament House
- Finance maintains an online library of [WHS Resources](#)
- Comcare's website at <https://www.comcare.gov.au/> contains advice on WHS and workers' compensation in the Commonwealth jurisdiction
- face-to-face training courses for MOP(S) Act employees are offered under the Professional Development Program, including:
 - *Your Entitlements and WHS Obligations;*
 - *WHS Legislation* (delivered by Comcare)
 - *Office Management*
 - *Recognising and Managing Inappropriate Workplace Behaviours* (delivered by Comcare)
- online WHS training is available from:

http://maps.finance.gov.au/employee_pages/ohs/WHS_Training.html

WHS roles for MOP(S) Act employees

- **WHS Site Officer:** trained by the contracted provider of WHS services (currently Konekt) to identify, report and address WHS risks and hazards;
- **First Aid Officer:** required to hold a current *Provide First Aid* certificate and undertake annual cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) refresher training; and
- **Emergency Officer:** Emergency Officers are trained by the contracted emergency management provider to co-ordinate activities, including evacuating your office safely, during emergencies.

You do not need to nominate a First Aid Officer or Emergency Officer for your Parliament House office, as the Department of Parliamentary Services coordinates first aid facilities and emergency management within Parliament House. A table showing [which WHS roles are required in your office](#) is published on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website.

Senators and Members can nominate MOP(S) Act employees to perform WHS roles by completing the [Work Health and Safety Roles Nomination Form](#) (Form 144), available on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website.

To help demonstrate that you have exercised due diligence as an officer under the WHS Act, it is very important you not only nominate staff members to perform these roles in your office(s), but also ensure that staff undertaking the WHS roles:

- complete their required training as soon as practicable; and
- carry out the duties of their role.

WHS Site Officers' reporting obligations are audited by Finance. Senators and Members may be notified if an employee undertaking a WHS role fails to perform a function of the role within a reasonable timeframe.

- **Health and Safety Representatives:** the workforce of all MOP(S) Act employees is divided into work groups, based on the political party their employing parliamentarian represents (staff of independent parliamentarians form one work group). Each work group elects Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs), who consult with Finance through the [WHS Committee](#) for MOP(S) Act employees. As the role of HSRs is recognised under the WHS Act, it is important that you support your employees to consult with their elected HSRs on matters that affect their health, safety and welfare at work.

Psychological health and safety

Your duty to ensure the safety of workers in your office extends beyond physical safety. The WHS Act defines the term *health* to mean physical and psychological health. You must provide a workplace that is safe psychologically.

Conditions and activities within the workplace may trigger or worsen mental health conditions, and mental health conditions can affect an individual's ability to function effectively in the workplace. Creating a mentally healthy workplace involves managing risks that affect individual and organisational health.

Amongst MOP(S) Act employees, risks to mental health that have been identified in workers' compensation claims include: stress, bullying and harassment and poor management practices within the office. To reduce the risk that performance management actions within your office could be understood as workplace bullying, you must ensure that all administrative action within your office be *reasonable administrative action taken in a reasonable manner*.

Your Entitlements Manager is able to provide you with information about the MOP(S) Act employment framework and arrange specialist psychological services to assist you to manage situations within your office that could present risks to psychological health.

Finance and Comcare have each assembled resources online that may assist you and your staff to create a mentally healthy workplace:

Comcare: [Creating mentally healthy workplaces](#)

Finance: [WHS Resources](#)

Ministers

A Minister is excluded from being an officer under the WHS Act, when acting in their capacity as a Minister — but this exclusion does not extend to work the Minister performs or directs in other capacities. While a Minister is not an officer of the Commonwealth Department that he or she administers, a Minister is an officer of their undertaking as a parliamentarian. A Minister has the officer duty under the WHS Act for work undertaken by the MOP(S) Act employees that they employ, including Ministerial Staff.

If there is any doubt as to whether the work performed by a MOP(S) Act employee (or other worker) relates to a Minister's capacity as a Minister, the prudent approach is for a Minister to assume that they owe officer duties in respect of those workers, and exercise due diligence to ensure that the Commonwealth complies with its obligations under the WHS Act.

Leading a safe workplace

By actively seeking to comply with your WHS duties, you will send a strong message to MOP(S) Act employees, and to other parliamentarians, that WHS is taken seriously in your workplace. If a culture of WHS becomes a part of the way things are done in your workplace, it will assist to ensure that your workplace is safe and everyone in the workplace meets their duties under the WHS Act.

Your Entitlements Manager is available to assist, should you have any queries on what you and your staff need to do to discharge your WHS duties.