**WHSQ 245-Webinar Re-do (FINAL2)\_FHD\_transcript**

| **TIMECODE** | **SPEAKER** | **CONTENT** |
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| 00:00:01:00 | JULIE GALLAGHER | Good morning. Welcome to our presentation on work health and safety compliance in small business - what do I need to know? This webinar is brought to you by the Small Business Program, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. My name is Julie Gallagher. Our presenter is Anna Lewis, and we both work in the Small Business Program. We have a panellist today, Steve Johnston, from our Injury Prevention and Management Initiative. Steve is an expert in health and safety for small business, and he and Anna will be available to answer your questions at the end of the session. This presentation has been designed for small business owners and managers, or for those with minimal or no work health and safety management system in place. Over the next 20 minutes, Anna will run through the basics of establishing a health and safety management system in your workplace. You can submit questions during the session or at the end of the session, however we'll answer your questions following the presentation. So now I'll hand over to Anna. |
| 00:01:00:24 | ANNA LEWIS | Thanks very much, Julie. Welcome, everyone, to this session. As the title suggests, we've developed this webinar to help small business owners or operators to comply with the work health and safety legislation. As a small business owner, under the legislation, you have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of all of your workers or people affected by your work which includes your employees, contractors and subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices and trainees, as well as any volunteers or work experience students that might be working for your business. Of course workers have work health and safety obligations as well, but this webinar is going to focus on the role of the small business owner. You can show that you're compliant with the legislation by having an effective health and safety management system, which is a set of linked policies and procedures to manage work health and safety in your business. However, it's important that your health and safety management system fits your workplace. So this includes the size of your business, the type of work that you do and the workers that are working for you. I'm going to run through the essential elements of a work health and safety management system to help you to develop your own safety management system and make health and safety a day-to-day part of your business practice. But don't forget that we're here to help you, so what I'll do is chat about the Small Business Program and the services that we provide towards the end of this session. There are a number of benefits to having an effective work health and safety management system as a safe and healthy workplace is one of the keys to the success of your business. The benefits include lower absenteeism rates, such as sick days. Fewer business disruptions, by keeping your production going. More motivated and productive workers, because they feel safe and valued. And importantly, you'll improve your bottom line by lowering your compensation costs. And you'll help to make your business more successful by improving your reputation. So as I mentioned earlier, there's a number of essential elements that make up a work health and safety management system, and these elements are described in one of our resources, called the 'Serious About Safe Business?' pack. The front cover of the pack is shown on the slide here and it's available on our website, which I'll tell you about later on. So in this webinar, we're going to run through each of these essential elements to help you develop an effective health and safety management system in your own business. So the elements include management commitment, consultation, managing hazards and safe work procedures, training and supervision, reporting safety and workers compensation and return to work. It's also important that you establish a process for monitoring, reviewing and improving your health and safety management system to ensure your system remains effective. So we'll chat about this as well. Our 'Serious About Safe Business?' pack also includes a compliance checklist that you can use to assess how your business rates in health and safety. The checklist uses a traffic light system that identifies where you need to make improvements, which is highlighted in red. It shows you where there is still some work to do, which is highlighted in orange. And importantly, where you're compliant, which is shown in green. The checklist then links you to action you can take to improve health and safety in your own business. So if we look at the elements in a safety management system, the first one is management commitment. Because effective health and safety management in a workplace requires strong leadership and a commitment from managers to make safety a priority and to make the workplace as safe as it can be. And employers and workers need to understand their responsibilities and how they can meet them. So you can demonstrate your commitment by showing enthusiasm and interest for good health and safety outcomes and following the rules yourself, or what we could call walking the talk. It's good to get involved in safety initiatives and promote consultation with your workers. And you should also try to act on safety issues as soon as they're raised by your team. As you'd expect, part of your commitment is also budgeting for safety to make sure there's enough time and money to put systems into effect. So one way to demonstrate your commitment to a safe workplace is to develop a written health and safety policy, and it's best to develop this in consultation with your workers to make sure that they're involved too. But there's a few things to keep in mind when you're developing your policy. And we can actually provide a template for you, if you'd like to adapt it for your business. So, firstly, it should note the duties and responsibilities of all parties. It should state your commitment to improving health and safety. It should be dated and signed by the business owner. And you should make sure that it's accessible to all of your workers. And finally, you need to make sure you review it regularly to keep it current. The next element is consultation. As stated in the legislation, business owners must consult with workers about health and safety issues. So you should involve your workers in identifying and resolving health and safety issues by listening to their point of view. And it's important that you show them that their contribution really is valued. Effective consultation actually encourages greater awareness of issues and can lead to an improved safety culture and outcomes. However, there's a number of ways that you can choose to consult with your workers, so this might include meetings, you might choose to have toolbox talks, or you may develop health and safety committees or representatives. You can also deliver general health and safety information through noticeboards, you may have emails and newsletters, or more recently some businesses have started to use social media such as Facebook or Twitter. So we've looked at the importance of management commitment and consultation in establishing and maintaining a health and safety management system. Now let's look at some of the things you need to actually do to manage risks to health and safety in your business. First, we're going to look at hazard management, which is essentially a problem solving exercise to define problems or identify hazards, to gather information about them or assess the risks, to solve them or to control the risks, and to regularly review your controls. So, the first step, as you can see on the slide, is to identify any hazards. You can do this by looking around your workplace or your worksite and looking at your work processes. You should also talk to your workers and look at what has already happened such as looking at any previous incident reports. The second step is to assess the level of risk associated with each hazard. This includes considering the severity of any injury or illness that might have occurred and looking at the likelihood or chance that someone will suffer from an injury or illness. A risk assessment will help with deciding which control measure you'll use by identifying which workers are at risk of exposure to a hazard. Working out what is causing the risk, identifying any control measures and then checking the effectiveness of the controls. You then need to control any remaining or residual risks by developing safe work procedures. Safe work procedures simply include steps to perform a task safely, such as how do you turn on, use and turn off equipment safely? Safe work procedures are also useful tools for training and supervising your workers, and responding to incident reports and changes in the workplace. However, they are most effective if they are developed in consultation with your workers. So in your business, we suggest that you develop safe work procedures for tasks that present the greatest risk and pose the most serious consequences first, then you can gradually work through those that present less risk in your business. Finally, control measures should be regularly reviewed to make sure they remain effective. And common methods of review include workplace inspections, consultations, and testing and analysing records or data. The next element in a safety management system is training and supervision because it's your responsibility as a business owner to provide information, training and instruction to your workers to ensure their health and safety at work. So, firstly, you should provide training when a worker starts in the workplace to cover emergency procedures, workplace facilities, first aid, how to report a hazard or other safety issue, how work health and safety is managed in the workplace, and any health and safety procedures and policies that might be required for their work tasks. So this might include manuals, safety data sheets and personal protective equipment, or PPE. You should assess your workers' competence and provide task specific training. For example, there are specific training requirements for a range of things such as working in confined spaces or construction work. You may need to supervise your workers, especially when they undertake a new task, because supervising your workers when they perform tasks until they can do it safely and to make sure they keep doing it safely is going to help you to maintain a safer workplace. It's also good practice to keep training records while a worker is employed to keep track of training provided or if a worker has an injury or an accident. The next element is reporting safety as a simple reporting procedure will help you to obtain information about health and safety issues in the workplace. It'll help you to identify problems when they arise and to address them. You also need to plan and schedule regular inspections and maintenance of your equipment and tools, including the safe storage of chemicals and equipment. You need to provide easy to understand information and keep your workers informed of any changes, as providing training opportunities when anything new is introduced at work will help ensure the ongoing safety of everyone. All workplaces need to have an incident or injury notification system in place with everyone familiar with the procedures. So if a workplace injury does occur, the process can be followed. Workers are also required to ensure that any injuries or dangerous occurrences are recorded, including any near misses as well. And finally, it's important that you plan for emergencies, so everyone knows what to do if an emergency does happen to occur. The last element is workers' compensation and return to work following a work-related injury. It's important to note, though, that a work-related injury doesn't just have to happen at work. They can also happen travelling to or from work, or when your worker is on a break. Also, injuries can include a range of things such as physical injuries, psychiatric or psychological disorders, diseases, aggravation of a pre-existing condition, or death from an injury or disease. Getting back to work is an important step in your workers recovering from a work-related injury, and requires assistance in returning to their normal duties. This can mean working reduced hours or lighter duties, or what we often call 'suitable duties'. Early return to work will also reduce your claim costs and impact on your premium. It will help you to retain your workers and there'll be less disruption impacting on your productivity. So what do you actually need to do? Firstly, you need to have a current workers' compensation insurance policy with WorkCover, or some employers may be self-insured. You need to notify your insurer of any workplace injuries. You should assist your workers to return to work after a work-related injury or illness. And you might need to make suitable duties available to them. You need to develop an effective return to work program for your injured workers where you work with your insurer, the injured worker, their doctor and any other healthcare providers that might be involved in the case. And once your worker has returned to work, it's important to monitor and continually review their progress. Finally, maintaining a safe workplace is really important and managing health and safety in your business is going to be an ongoing task. Your safety procedures and operations will evolve with time as your workers may come and go, which then changes the risks and mitigations for everyone in your workplace. So you should regularly review and monitor how effective your workplace health and safety management system is. And you might need to make necessary adjustments to keep it up to date. So this may include a full review of the effectiveness of your workplace health and safety management system, which is something that you may do annually. It may include regular reviews following analysis of your objectives, targets and any performance indicators that you might have. And a review could also be conducted following hazard inspections or during internal audits. They could be conducted following a feedback mechanism from workers following training, or after an investigation into an incident or accident. So, in summary, under work health and safety legislation, employers have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of all workers. And you can show that you're compliant with the legislation by having an effective health and safety management system. The essential elements of a safety management system that we've covered in this webinar include management commitment, consultation, managing hazards and safe work procedures, training and supervision, reporting safety, and workers' compensation and return to work. Finally, it's important that you monitor, review and continually improve your safety management system to ensure that it does remain effective. But remember, when you're developing your safety management system, make sure that it does meet the needs of your workplace including the size of your business, the type of work that you're doing and the people who work for you. So I'd now like to talk about how our Small Business Program can help you to do this. So the Small Business Program within Workplace Health and Safety Queensland has staff located across Queensland who can offer free advice through workplace consultations, group coaching sessions, presentations, or we can simply provide a wide range of resources including tools and templates such as the Workplace Health and Safety Policy I referred to earlier. Overall, we can help you to understand your health and safety requirements, to identify actions to improve health and safety, and to develop an effective health and safety management system. So please do get in touch with us if you'd like our help. So if you'd like to get started, you should read through our 'Serious About Safe Business?' pack and complete the checklist for your workplace. Both of these resources are available on our website which is worksafe.qld.gov.au And here's our phone number and email address if you'd like to get in touch with us. safesmallbusiness@justice.qld.gov.au 1300 362 128 worksafe.qld.gov.au So thanks very much for listening, and I'll now hand over to Julie who's going to facilitate question time. |
| 00:16:09:18 | JULIE GALLAGHER | Thank you, Anna. As Anna mentioned, she and Steve are now going to answer some questions that have been coming in from you during the presentation. We do have a few here and I will put the first one to you, Anna. How frequently should I review my workplace health and safety management system? |
| 00:16:30:00 | ANNA LEWIS | I can't actually give you a timeframe, as there isn't one, because each workplace and situation is so different. Instead, your reviews can be triggered by changes that affect your work activities such as when you purchase new equipment, when there is new information about workplace risks such as a new safety alert about a product that you might be using, or you may conduct a review in response to safety concerns that have been raised by your workers. So your review is likely to be triggered by changes and the particular needs of your business, rather than by a particular timeframe. |
| 00:17:01:16 | JULIE GALLAGHER | Steve, where do I find safe work procedures? |
| 00:17:05:16 | STEVEN JOHNSTON | Yeah, well, the easiest way is to jump on the internet, do a search for the safe work procedure for whatever machine or task you're performing in your business. But the problem with that is, firstly, you don't know what the quality is of the documents that you find. And secondly, you're not sure if it'll actually suit the way that you use that machine or perform that task in your business. The process we recommend for developing safe work procedures for your business is, firstly, identify all the key tasks that you do in your business. Get started with one of those tasks and do an analysis on it. Whether that's a risk assessment or a task analysis or a job safety analysis, there's all sorts of assessment tools you can use. So find one that works for you and do you analysis of that task. When you're doing that, refer to the codes of practice that are relevant to the task, and make sure that you're considering what the law says you've got to do. Refer to any standards - so there's industry standards, Australian standards - that might be relevant to the task. And of course, one good source of information is the manual or any information that comes from suppliers about the equipment you're using. Once you've done that task analysis, then you can pull out information from that and use it in your safe work procedure. So that'll be your safe work procedure specific to your business and specific to the task that you perform. Then you can go back to the one you found on the internet and make sure you've covered off everything that they've put in their safe work procedure because there might be something you didn't identify. So you can still use information on the internet, but I'd go through that other process first. |
| 00:18:44:08 | JULIE GALLAGHER | Great, thanks for that, Steve. The next one I'll put to Anna. Do I really need to go through those steps for risk management every time? |
| 00:18:53:07 | ANNA LEWIS | So the four steps that you're referring to are to identify, assess, control and review the risks. And no, you don't need to go through them every time. If you know how to control a risk, and if it's well-known and accepted, then you don't need to assess the risk. You can go straight from identifying the hazard to controlling the risk. You need to do a risk assessment when there is uncertainty about the hazard. When there are lots of hazards, or whether there's lots of people involved, or when there are changes at your workplace. |
| 00:19:22:19 | JULIE GALLAGHER | Thanks, Anna. So, next one for you, Steve. What size businesses need to comply with all of this? 5, 10, 20 employees? Do I need to include temporary staff? |
| 00:19:37:15 | STEVEN JOHNSTON | The Work Health and Safety Act applies to all size of businesses, whether it's an owner-operator or they have thousands of employees. And it also includes volunteers and contractors as well, if you use those in your business. So every size of business and including every worker in that business. |
| 00:19:55:20 | JULIE GALLAGHER | OK, thank you, Steve. So, Anna... Is a safe work policy the same as a safety work plan? |
| 00:20:04:09 | ANNA LEWIS | People use a number of different terms, but I think you're referring to safe work procedures, JSAs or Safe Work Method Statements that are used in the construction industry. These are all plans, documents or procedures that set out how to do work safely. They identify hazards and controls and step through a task safely. |
| 00:20:25:22 | JULIE GALLAGHER | I am second in command at our work and I can't get the owner to take workplace health and safety as seriously as I would like. Do you have any tips? |
| 00:20:35:24 | ANNA LEWIS | This is difficult to answer without the context or an understanding of the people involved. However, it's good to start by showing the owner the business benefits from good workplace health and safety. So we had a slide at the beginning of the presentation that highlighted some of the benefits such as lower absenteeism and fewer business disruptions. And if you're looking at business stability, we know that keeping people safely at work is essential. And then, of course, to convince business owners of the benefits of good health and safety, you can look at some of the costs of doing business otherwise. For example, the estimated costs of sick leave or work injury are twice the employee's daily rate of pay. In other words, it costs twice as much to have someone off work than to have them there. You could also contact WorkCover or use their online services to forecast your premium and track how you perform compared to others in your industry. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland also has an injury cost calculator that you could use to highlight uninsured costs of an injury such as clean-up, downtime or time taken to attend the injured person to hospital. Finally, you could check our website to look for some evidence to demonstrate the benefits using some of our case studies. |
| 00:21:49:12 | JULIE GALLAGHER | I think we've got time for one more, so I'll put that to Anna. Is there anyone that can review and give guidance on our safety management system as part of your free assistance provided over Queensland? |
| 00:22:03:15 | ANNA LEWIS | Yes, I'm pleased to say that there is. The Small Business Program is made up of a network of advisors and inspectors throughout Queensland. We have people in most major centres, particularly up and down the coast, but we can do phone services for businesses in rural and remote areas. So we offer one-on-one site visits or workplace consultations at your workplace or somewhere that's convenient to you where we look at what you've got in place and we can help you to identify gaps or any issues that you'd like to cover. We can provide free advice, information and materials to either review or set up elements of a safety management system. And if you're part of a group of people, such as a franchise, or you have a business network in your particular region, we can do group coaching sessions or interactive presentations for you. We also have a lot of guidance material, including templates and checklists, that may be useful information for you. So to access any of our services, you can call us, you can go to the WorkSafe website and register your interest, or you can simply email us and one of our officers in your local region will then contact you to discuss what you need. And our contact details were shown on the last slide. |
| 00:23:18:23 | JULIE GALLAGHER | Thanks very much, Anna. That's about all we have time for today. So thank you to Anna and Steve for all of your answers. Remember that there is more information on all these topics on our website. And if you have particular questions or want to take advantage of some of our services, please get in touch with us. So thank you to Anna for her presentation, and thank you for listening in to our webinar today. |