



How to talk to your workers about

# OCCUPATIONAL LUNG DISEASES



**As a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), you must consult with your workers on matters that may directly affect their health and safety. This includes occupational lung diseases. You must identify, manage, and monitor dusts, gases, fumes, and vapours in and around your workplace to ensure your workers and others in the workplace are protected from developing occupational lung diseases.**

**A safe and healthy workplace is more easily achieved when everyone is involved in identifying and managing work health and safety (WHS).**

An important way to involve everyone is to openly communicate with each other to identify hazards and risks, talk about health and safety concerns and work together to find solutions.

Talking to your workers about occupational lung diseases can:

- improve your decision-making about health matters
- help raise awareness about the risks of occupational lung diseases in your workplace
- contribute to positive working relationships
- reduce the incidence of your workers developing an occupational lung disease.

## When do I need to consult with my workers?

You must consult with your workers when:

- Identifying hazards such as dusts, gases, fumes, and vapours and assessing the risks to health and safety.
- Deciding on how you will eliminate hazards or minimise WHS risks.
- Deciding on how you will make work practices and facilities as safe as you reasonably can.
- Proposing any changes at work that may affect the health and safety of workers including implementing different work processes and methods, new equipment, or new materials.
- Making decisions about the procedures for recording and resolving health and safety issues.
- Monitoring the health and safety of your workers or workplace conditions, and when providing information and training.

**Regular consultation is better than consulting only when issues arise because it allows you to identify and fix potential problems early.**

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## Who do I need to consult with?

You must consult with:

- Employees and anyone else who carries out work for your business who are likely to be directly affected by a health and safety matter.
- This may include contractors and subcontractors and their employees, on-hire workers, outworkers, apprentices, trainees, work experience students, and volunteers.
- If workers are represented by a Health and Safety Representative (HSR) you must also include them in the consultation process.

If you and your workers have agreed on a procedure for consultation, the consultation must be carried out as you have agreed.

## How should I consult?

Consultation can either be formal or informal. For example, you could:

- Talk with your workers about what hazards exist in your workplace – they are best placed to tell you about the work processes they do every day.
- Hold regular team meetings, with a placeholder for the team to discuss WHS issues, and give workers an opportunity to ask questions, identify risks and propose solutions.

**You must genuinely take the views of workers into account when making decisions and advise them of your decision.**

**For more information on work health and safety and occupational lung diseases, go to the Safe Work Australia website: [swa.gov.au/clearlungs](https://swa.gov.au/clearlungs).**

**For more information on how to effectively consult with workers who carry out work for the PCBU and who are (or are likely to be) directly affected by a health and safety matter, see the [Model Code of Practice](#) on the [Safe Work Australia website](#).**