national safe work month

Safety
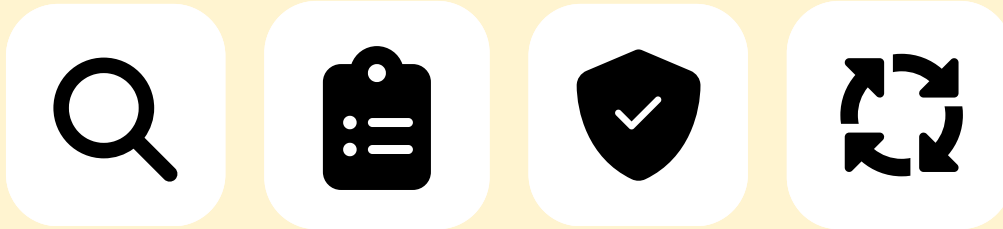*every job, every day*

Activity Kit

#safeworkmonth
safeworkmonth.swa.gov.au

Introduction

This National Safe Work Month, we're encouraging every workplace to practice safety: every job, every day.

This activity kit has been developed to provide practical guidance and ideas to implement the WHS risk management approach throughout October. Use the suggestions and activities in this kit to plan how your workplace will participate in National Safe Work Month and make safety: every job, every day a reality in October and beyond.

A safe and healthy workplace does not happen by chance or guesswork. You (or your employer if you're a worker) have to think about what could go wrong at your workplace and what the consequences could be. Then you must do whatever you can (in other words, whatever is 'reasonably practicable') to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks arising from your work.

This process is known as **risk management** and involves the 4 steps we'll go through in this activity kit:

1. **Identify hazards** – find out what could cause harm.
2. **Assess risks** – understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening.
3. **Control risks** – implement the most effective control measure that is possible in the circumstances and ensure it remains effective over time.
4. **Review control measures** to ensure they are working as planned.

This activity kit has been adapted from other Safe Work Australia resources, including:

- model Code of Practice: How to manage work health and safety risks
- model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work
- model Code of Practice: Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination

The content of this activity kit is designed to be used interactively for National Safe Work Month. It does not constitute legal advice.

Identify hazards

Identifying hazards in the workplace involves finding things and situations that could potentially cause harm to people. Harm can be physical, psychological or both.

This week at a glance

- [ ] **Activity:** Inspect the workplace for hazards
- [ ] **Activity:** Review Safe Work Australia's data for your industry
- [ ] **Activity:** Consult your workers to identify hazards
- [ ] Fill out your risk register
- [ ] Check out events hosted by your WHS regulator

Inspect the workplace for hazards

Regularly inspecting the workplace and observing how things are done can help you identify what could or might go wrong. This week, take the opportunity to walk around the workplace, or review the online working environment, and use the list on the right to consider what to look out for.

⚠️

Hazards are not always obvious. While some may be constantly present, others can arise sporadically (for example, high job demands and poor support during peak periods) or can affect health over a long period of time. Workers are likely to be exposed to a combination of hazards; some may cause serious harm by themselves but often it is a combination of hazards which cause harm.

Does the work environment enable workers to carry out work without risks to health and safety (for example, space for unobstructed movement, adequate ventilation, lighting)?

How is work performed, including the physical, mental and emotional demands of the tasks and activities?

How suitable are the tools and equipment for the task and how well are they maintained?

How do people interact with each other (e.g. are workers, customers, and clients respectful, or are harmful behaviours present)?

Have any changes occurred in the workplace which may affect health and safety (for example, relocating to a different worksite or staff moving to hybrid work such as working from home)?

What hazards may be brought into the workplace with new, used or hired goods (for example worn-down insulation on a hired welding set)?

Notes

Activity

What does the data tell you about your industry?

Safe Work Australia compiles data to analyse and research WHS and workers' compensation trends across Australia. **Our Data. Your Stories** has a range of interactive dashboards you can use to explore to learn what injuries and illnesses are occurring in your industry or location. This can be a helpful way of identifying potential hazards, and the harm they could cause, in your own workplace.

- Visit data.safeworkaustralia.gov.au
- Head to the interactive data page to see what data is available to explore through an online dashboard
- Check out the insights page to find reports and snapshots developed using our data
- See how you compare to other workplaces in our Key WHS Statistics Australia report, which includes the latest available national data to show insights and trends on WHS and workers' compensation.

Activity

Consult your workers

Consult your workers and their health and safety representatives about any health and safety concerns or problems they have encountered in doing their work, and any near misses or incidents that have not been reported. Here's some resources that can help you:

- Model Code of Practice: WHS consultation, cooperation and coordination
- Consultation checklist
- What psychosocial hazards sound like
- Information sheet: Communicating with migrant and multicultural workers about work health and safety

Why not host a SafeTea event as an engaging way to consult your workers on WHS? Our website has a range of resources to help you plan your event and to get the conversation started.

Notes

Date:

_____

Top issues discussed:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Host a
SafeTea
this National Safe Work Month!

Join hundreds of workplaces putting safety in the spotlight through a SafeTea event this October

National Safe Work Month is the perfect time to get the team together and talk about WHS over a morning or afternoon tea, lunch, breakfast, meeting or toolbox talk – whatever works best for your workplace.

Use our SafeTea event kit

to help plan and get the safety conversation started

Explainer

Mental health hazards

10 October is World Mental Health Day.

On average, work-related psychological injuries have longer recovery times, higher costs, and require more time away from work. Managing the risks associated with mental health hazards not only protects workers, it also decreases the disruption associated with staff turnover and absenteeism, and may improve broader organisational performance and productivity.

Common mental health hazards include:
- job demands
- low job control
- poor support
- lack of role clarity
- poor organisational change management
- inadequate reward and recognition
- poor organisational justice
- traumatic events or material
- remote or isolated work
- poor physical environment
- violence and aggression
- bullying
- harassment, including sexual and gender-based harassment, and
- conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions.

People
AT WORK

Workplaces can use the <u>People at Work online risk assessment tool</u> to identify mental health hazards.

This free online risk assessment tool is easy to use and includes supporting resources for businesses.

The <u>People at Work online assessment tool</u> can help your workplace identify, assess and action psychosocial risks and meet your duties under WHS laws.

Risk register

You may already have your own risk register – feel free to use that for these activities instead of this template.

Hazard	How frequently are workers exposed to this hazard?	How long does this exposure last?	How severe is their exposure?	Are other hazards present this may interact with?	How effective are the current controls?	What further controls are required?	Actioned by	Date due	Date complete	Maintenance and review
High work demand (end of financial year sales)	Once a year	1 month	Moderate, most staff are unable to complete essential tasks and report feeling stressed.	Yes, aggressive customers and low support from supervisors	Moderately, workers are encouraged to leave non-essential tasks but still struggle to keep up with demands.	Additional workers to be assigned to busy shifts.	J. Blogs	31/10/2025		To be reviewed after first week of this year's sales.

Activity sheets
WHS fun for all ages!

Looking for something to entertain the next generation of WHS enthusiasts, or an activity to get the workplace involved this National Safe Work Month? Check out our range of colouring sheets and our crossword puzzle!

Download from our resource hub!

Assess risks

A risk assessment involves considering what could happen if someone is exposed to a hazard and the likelihood of it happening. A risk assessment can help you to determine:

- how severe a risk is
- whether any existing control measures are effective
- what action you should take to control the risk, and
- how urgently the action needs to be taken.

This week at a glance

- [ ] **Activity:** Work out how severe the harm could be
- [ ] **Activity:** Work out the likelihood of harm occurring
- [ ] Update your risk register
- [ ] Check out events hosted by your WHS regulator

Activity

Work out how severe the harm could be

Use the template and questions to identify how severe the harm could be for a particular hazard.

A risk assessment can be undertaken with varying degrees of detail depending on the type of hazard and the information, data and resources that you have available. It can be as simple as a discussion with your workers or involve specific risk analysis tools and techniques developed for specific risks or recommended by safety professionals. For some complex situations, expert or specialist advice may be useful when conducting a risk assessment.

Hazard: _____

What type of harm could occur?

- [ ] Traumatic joint/ligament and muscle/tendon injury
- [ ] Fractures
- [ ] Head injuries
- [ ] Infectious diseases
- [ ] Injury to nerves and spinal cord
- [ ] Wounds, lacerations, amputations and internal organ damage
- [ ] Burns
- [ ] Mental health conditions
- [ ] Laceration
- [ ] Respiratory system diseases
- [ ] Digestive system diseases
- [ ] Skin and subcutaneous tissue diseases
- [ ] Circulatory system diseases
- [ ] Neoplasms (cancer)
- [ ] Other:

How severe is the harm?

_____

Could the hazard cause death, serious injuries, illness or minor injuries requiring first aid?

_____

What factors could influence the severity of harm that occurs?

_____

Activity

Work out how severe the harm could be

Continued from previous page.

Many hazards and their associated risks are well known and have well established and accepted control measures. In these situations, the second step to formally assess the risk is not required. If after identifying a hazard you already know the risk and how to control it effectively, you may simply implement the controls.

Hazard: _____

What is the duration, frequency and severity of exposure to the hazard?

Duration
_____
_____

Frequency
_____
_____

Severity
_____
_____

Do you need to use specific tools or processes to assess how severe the harm could be?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

_____
_____

How many people are exposed to the hazard and how many could be harmed in and outside your workplace?

_____
_____

How could hazards interact and combine to create new, changed or higher risks?

_____
_____

Could one failure lead to other failures?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

_____
_____

Could a small event escalate to a much larger event with more serious consequences?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

_____
_____

Activity

Work out the likelihood of harm occurring

Use the template and questions to identify likelihood of harm for a particular hazard.

Hazard: _____

How often are people exposed to the hazard?

_____

_____

How long might people be exposed to the hazard?

_____

_____

How effective are current controls in reducing risk?

_____

_____

_____

Could any changes in your organisation increase the likelihood of the hazard/harm occurring?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

_____

Are hazards more likely to cause harm because of the working environment?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

_____

Could the way people act and behave affect the likelihood of a hazard causing harm?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

Do the differences between individuals in the workplace make it more likely for harm to occur?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

Developing a return to work plan

A guide and template

Developing a return to work plan in collaboration with an injured or ill worker is one of the best ways to support their recovery. Research shows workers have poorer health outcomes if they are away from work for a long time. A plan helps them return to good work, or to stay at work, while they recover.

Safe Work Australia's guide and template is for anyone developing a return to work plan. It provides practical advice and a step-by-step template for developing a successful plan in collaboration with an injured or ill worker.

Download this resource
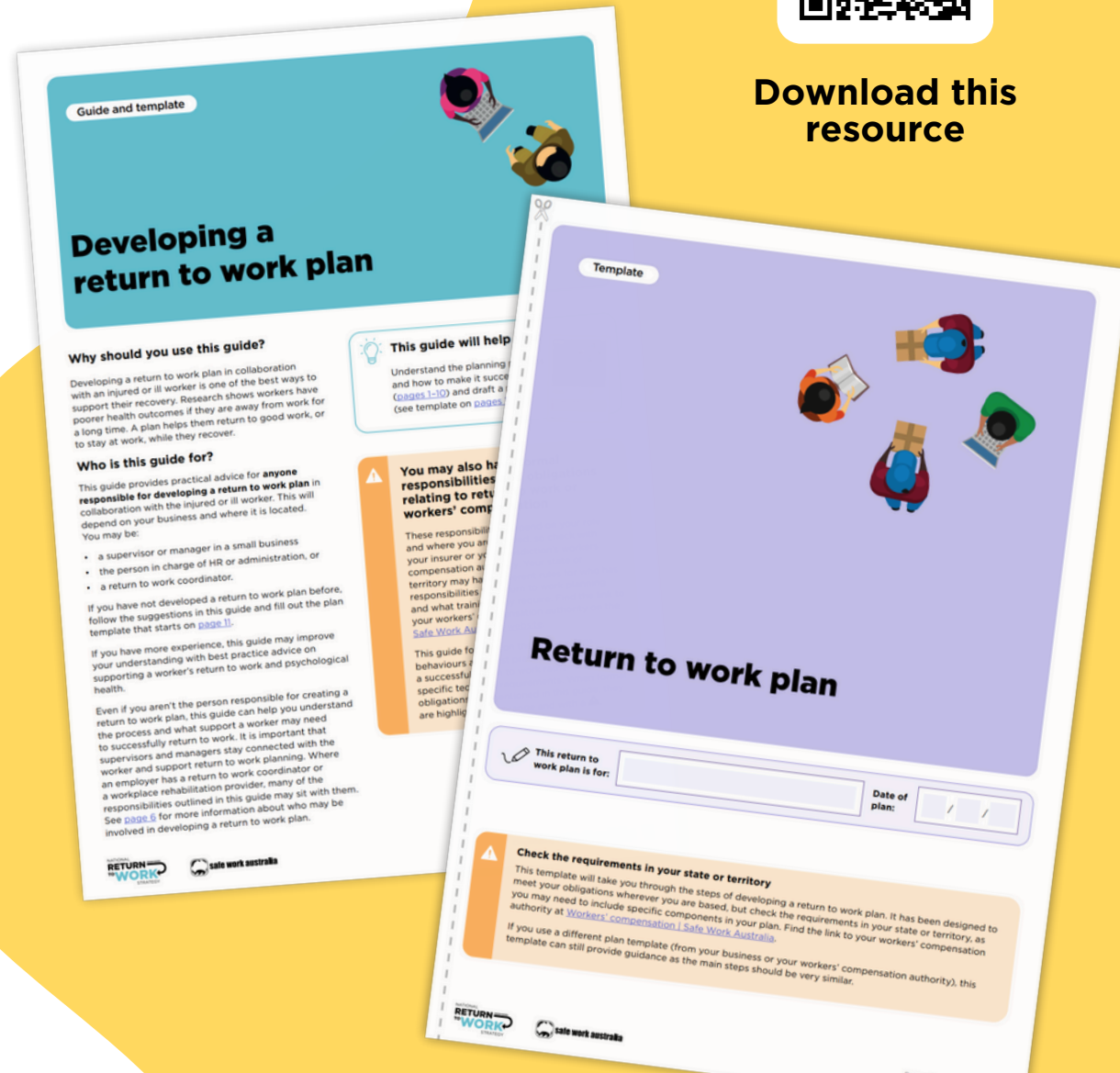
Control risks

The most important step in managing risks involves eliminating them as much as possible, or if that is not possible, minimising the risks as much as possible.

Every workplace is different. The best combination of control measures will be tailored to your organisation's size, type and work activities to manage risks during both everyday operations and emergencies.

This week at a glance

☐ **Activity:** Assessing how things can go wrong and how you can control risks

☐ Update your risk register

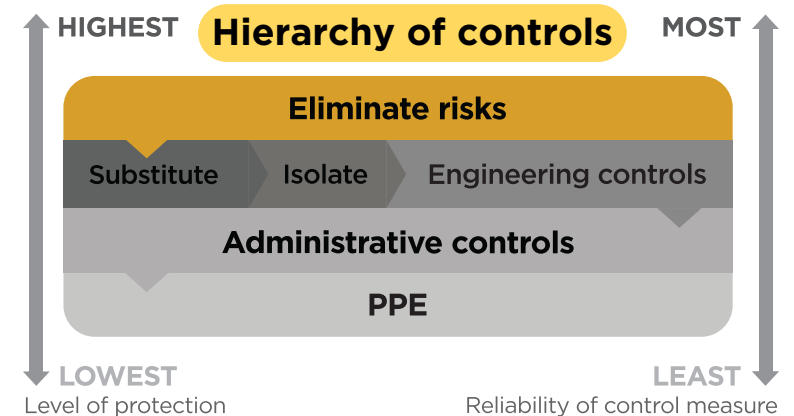☐ Check out events hosted by your WHS regulator

Explainer

Controlling physical risks

The **hierarchy of controls** helps rank controls from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest. It will help you to think about why a risk exists in the first place and consider whether you can redesign a given task to make work safer. It will also help you select the most appropriate control, or combination of controls for the risk.

Eliminating the risk is the most effective control, as it completely removes the hazard so it can no longer cause harm. You can consider the following questions to determine if a hazard can be eliminated:

☐ Can this hazard be completely removed from the workplace?

☐ It is possible to avoid the task entirely or perform it remotely or differently?

☐ Could redesigning the process eliminate the risk alltogether?

HIGHEST **Hierarchy of controls** **MOST**

Eliminate risks

Substitute | Isolate | Engineering controls

Administrative controls

PPE

LOWEST
Level of protection

LEAST
Reliability of control measure

In deciding how to control risks, you must consult your workers and their representatives who will be directly affected by this decision. Their experience will help you choose appropriate control measures and their involvement will increase the level of acceptance of any changes that may be needed to the way they do their job.
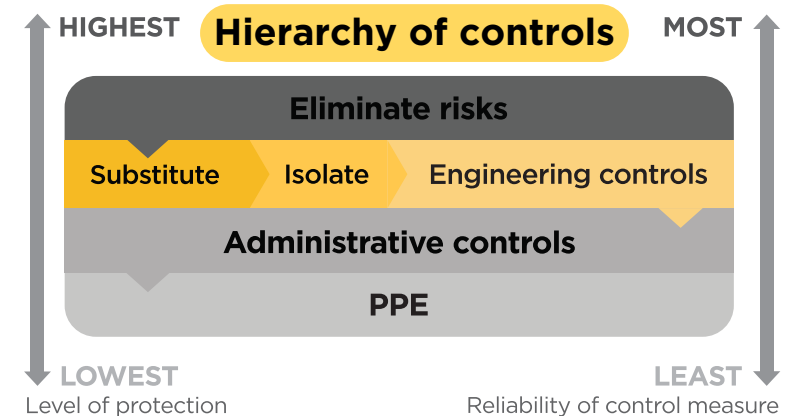
Controlling physical risks

If there is not a reasonable way to eliminate risks, you must minimise risks as much as you reasonably can by doing one or more of the following:

- **Substituting** the hazard with something safer by considering:

  ☐ Can the hazard be replaced with something less hazardous? For example, replacing toxic chemicals with non-toxic alternatives.

  ☐ Are there safer tools, materials or methods that achieve the same outcome?

- **Isolating** the hazard from people, by considering:

  ☐ Can barriers, enclosures or distance be used to separate the hazard from people? For example, fencing off a construction site.

  ☐ Is it possible to restrict access to hazardous areas through physical means or layout changes? For example, having swipe card access with certain permissions to restrict access to an area.

- **Using engineering controls**, by considering:

  ☐ Can the work environment or equipment be physically redesigned to reduce exposure?

  ☐ Are there ventilation systems, machine guards, ergonomic tools or automation options available?

Hierarchy of controls

HIGHEST / MOST

Eliminate risks

Substitute | Isolate | Engineering controls

Administrative controls

PPE

LOWEST
Level of protection

LEAST
Reliability of control measure
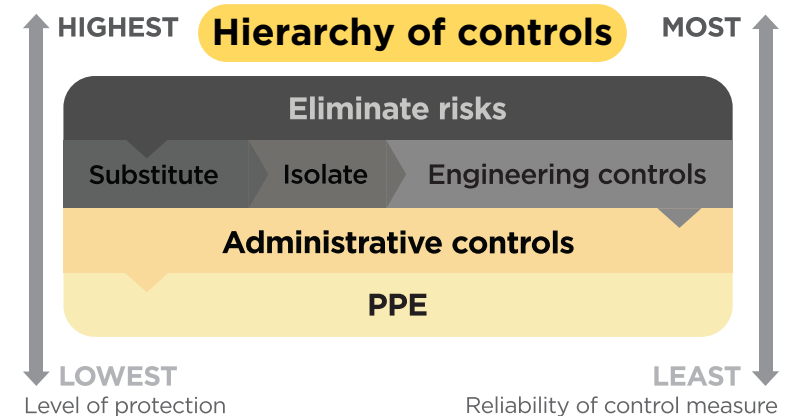
Explainer

Controlling physical risks

If risks still remain after applying these controls, use **administrative controls**, considering:

- [ ] What changes to procedures, staffing or scheduling can reduce exposure?

- [ ] Are there safe work procedures, training, supervision or signage we can implement?

- [ ] Can we rotate tasks or schedule high-risk work when fewer people are present?

If risks still remain after implementing administrative controls, you can use **personal protective equipment (PPE)**, considering:

- [ ] What appropriate PPE can be used?

- [ ] Is the PPE properly selected, correctly fitted, and adequately maintained?

- [ ] Have workers been trained in correct use and limitations of the equipment?

Administrative controls and PPE are the least effective controls as they rely on human behaviour or supervision to work - for example, policies and procedures to manage hazardous tasks only remain effective if workers consistently follow procedures and do not make mistakes. They can be used in combination with other more effective controls (as a back-up).

Hierarchy of controls

HIGHEST — MOST

Eliminate risks

Substitute | Isolate | Engineering controls

Administrative controls

PPE

LOWEST — Level of protection

LEAST — Reliability of control measure

'Reasonably practicable' – the legal terminology translated

What you must do to manage WHS risks depends on what is reasonably practicable. To decide if something is reasonably practicable you should think about all the relevant matters, for example:

- the likelihood of the hazard or risk
- the harm that could occur
- knowledge about the hazard or risk
- ways to minimise or eliminate the risk, and if these are available and suitable
- cost, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

Controlling mental health risks

Mental health hazards (also known as psychosocial hazards) must be managed the same way as physical hazards – by applying the risk management approach.

You must first aim to eliminate the risks, so identify any control measures which would achieve this. Then order the remaining controls, or combinations of controls, from most to least effective at minimising the risks. Controls that are reliable and offer the highest level of protection are the most effective.

Minimising the risks can be achieved by changing the:
- design of work, including job demands and tasks involved
- systems of work (e.g. allocating tasks to match skills, ensuring sufficient time to complete tasks, support from supervisors and other workers, etc.)
- work environment and conditions
- workplace interactions including ensuring respectful behaviours and relationships, or
- objects or tools used in the task, for example ensuring plant, substances and equipment are safe and fit for purpose.

Learn more
Our website has detailed information on common mental health hazards as well as advice on how to control them.

We also have case studies on managing the risk of mental health hazards in various industries, including how they can be controlled.

Click to view: Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards in retail

'Psychosocial hazards' – the legal terminology translated
WHS laws define anything that could cause psychological harm (e.g. harm someone's mental health) as 'psychosocial hazards'. Psychosocial hazards can create stress. This can cause psychological or physical harm. Stress itself is not an injury. But if workers are stressed often, over a long time, or the level of stress is high, it can cause harm.

Psychological harm may include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders,

Physical harm may include musculoskeletal injuries, chronic disease or fatigue related injuries.

Activity

Assessing how things can go wrong and how you can control risks

Use this template to think through work processes or situations to identify what could go wrong. Note any hazards, risks and control measures identified as you go. Once completed, you should consider the hazards and risks you identified and implement control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks as much as possible.

You can find an example of this template filled out in the model Code of Practice: How to manage work health and safety risks.

What can stop or change this?

What may happen next?

What can stop or change this?

What may happen next?

What can stop or change this?

What may happen next?

What can stop or change this?

Information for
migrant and multicultural workers

Everyone in Australia has an equal right to be healthy and safe at work. Our work health and safety (WHS) in Australia information sheet is available in 21 languages for you to share important WHS information with workers.

- Arabic
- Burmese
- Dari
- English
- French
- German
- Greek
- Hindi
- Indonesian
- Italian
- Japanese

- Khmer
- Korean
- Nepali
- Punjabi
- Simple Chinese
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Thai
- Traditional Chinese
- Vietnamese

Review controls

The control measures you put in place should be reviewed regularly to make sure they work as planned. Don't wait until something goes wrong. A review is required:

- when the control measure is not effective in controlling the risk
- before a change at the workplace that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control
- if a new hazard or risk is identified
- if the results of consultation indicate that a review is necessary, or
- if a health and safety representative requests a review.

This week at a glance

☐ **Activity:** Reviewing control measures

☐ Update your risk register with your planned review periods for controls

☐ Check out events hosted by your WHS regulator

☐ Commit to safety: every job, every day beyond October!

Activity

Reviewing control measures

Pick a hazard you've identified and managed through your risk assessment (refer to your risk register). Use the following questions as a guide to consider whether the controls are working effectively to control the risk.

Hazard: _____

Are the control measures working effectively in both their design and operation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Have all hazards been identified?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Are safety procedures being followed?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Have the control measures introduced new problems?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Have new work methods, new equipment or chemicals made the job safer?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Have the instruction and training provided to workers on how to work safely been successful?

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Activity

Reviewing control measures

Continued from previous page.

Hazard: _____

Are workers actively involved in identifying hazards and possible control measures?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Are they openly raising health and safety concerns and reporting problems promptly?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Is the frequency and severity of health and safety incidents reducing over time?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

If new legislation or new information becomes available, does it indicate current controls may no longer be the most effective?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

_____
_____
_____

Wrapping up

Well done! It's the end of National Safe Work Month – thank you for joining us as we stepped through the risk assessment process throughout October.

We hope this process helped you to make safety: every job, every day a reality in your workplace and that you can now carry this through beyond National Safe Work Month.

Share your feedback on National Safe Work Month

Let us know your thoughts on this year's campaign, including this activity kit, the theme and other resources, by taking a quick survey. Your insights will help us to improve the campaign in future years.

The survey will be available from 1 November.

national safe work month

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