

## Overview

This Information Sheet provides advice for small businesses and workers who design, manufacture, import or supply plant.

## What is plant?

Plant includes any machinery, equipment, appliance, container, implement and tool, and includes any component or anything fitted or connected to any of those things. For example, plant can be as diverse as lifts, cranes, computers, machinery, conveyors, forklifts, vehicles, power tools and amusement devices.



## What are the risks?

Plant is a major cause of death and injury in Australian workplaces. Risks to health and safety exist throughout the plants' lifecycle and include:

- limbs being amputated by unguarded moving parts
- being crushed by plant
- fractures from falls while accessing, using or maintaining plant
- electric shocks from energised plant
- musculoskeletal problems from manually handling or using poorly designed plant
- burns or scalds from exposure to hot surfaces, flames or liquids, and
- hearing loss.



## What do I need to do?

Plant designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers all have important roles in ensuring, so far as is reasonably practical, the plant they design, manufacture, import or supply is without risks to the health and safety of people who:

- assemble the plant
- use the plant
- store the plant
- decommission, dismantle or dispose the plant, or
- are exposed to the plant in a workplace or are affected by its use.

## Obtaining and providing information

Plant designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers all have responsibilities to obtain and/or provide information to help other people manage plant health and safety risks.

Information should flow from plant designers to manufacturers, manufacturers to importers and suppliers, and from importers and suppliers to end-users.

The information should cover the plant's intended purpose, installation, commissioning, use, handling, storage, decommissioning and dismantling and include the:

- results of any calculations, analysis, testing or examination, and
- hazards and risks with using the plant including any conditions necessary to ensure the plant is safe to use.

Further advice on the information that should be provided by designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers is in the [three guides](#) listed below.

## Plant designers

Plant designers influence the design of plant so it is safe to use in the workplace by designing-out hazards or incorporating risk control measures at the design stage.

Designers include design professionals like engineers, industrial designers and designers of plant systems, for example software and electrical systems.

However, anyone who modifies plant can be a designer if the modification hasn't been designed by someone else.

Designers should incorporate health and safety risk management in the design process that involves:

- establishing the plant's purpose, functions and limitations, and
- identifying hazards and assessing and controlling risks.

Designers must eliminate or minimise risks, so far as is reasonably practicable, for a number of specific plant hazards including confined spaces, manual tasks and noise. Designers also have duties relating to the design of operator controls, guarding and emergency stop controls.

Designers must provide information to the manufacturer so the plant can be safely manufactured.



Further information is in the *Guide for safe design of plant*.



### Plant manufacturers

To help manufacturers meet their duty to manufacture plant that is safe for use in the workplace they should:

- follow the designer's specifications, and
- arrange tests and examinations of the plant specified by the designer or other tests and examinations that may be necessary.

Manufacturers must eliminate or minimise risks, so far as is reasonably practicable, for a number of specific plant hazards including confined spaces, manual tasks and noise.

Manufacturers also have duties in relation to the manufacture and installation of guarding and marking registered items of plant.

Plant may be imported as a range of components and then assembled in Australia before it is sold. The assembly activity might require some risk control action to meet the manufacturer duties.

Manufacturers must provide information on the intended purpose and safe use of the plant to any person the plant is supplied to.

Further information is in the *Guide for manufacturing safe plant*.



### Plant importers and suppliers

To help importers and suppliers comply with their obligations they should confirm they are being provided with safe plant. For example, they could inspect and test the supplied plant and inspect or get third party verification of the manufacturing process.

Importers and suppliers must provide information on the intended purpose and safe use of plant. If the information required is not available from the manufacturer, the importer or supplier should carry out testing and examination of the plant to develop the information needed.

Importers and suppliers also have plant design registration responsibilities. They must not supply plant if it requires design registration and it is not registered.



Further information is in the *Guide for importing and supplying safe plant*.

### Second hand plant

Where second hand plant is being supplied, information must be given to the buyer about what the plant was designed or manufactured to do and its safe use. The supplier must also identify any faults in the plant.

Suppliers' duties apply to sellers' agents like auctioneers, unless the agent does not take control of the supply and has no authority to make decisions about the supply. For example, agents selling used agricultural plant at farm clearing sales do not take possession of the plant, have little or no control of the supply and are not considered to be suppliers. In these limited circumstances the suppliers' duties will only apply to the seller—not their agent.

Second hand plant sold for scrap or spare parts is not intended to be used at a workplace so does not need to be made safe or supplied with instructions for use.

However the supplier must tell prospective buyers in writing or by marking the plant that the plant is being supplied for scrap or spare parts only and that it cannot be used safely in its current form for any other purpose.

Second-hand plant is more likely to have out-dated or missing safety features, for example a missing emergency stop control. In these circumstances suppliers of second-hand plant for use at a workplace must do what is reasonably practicable to supply safe plant.

Further information is in the *Code of Practice: Managing the risks of plant in the workplace*.



For further information see the [Safe Work Australia](http://www.swa.gov.au) website ([www.swa.gov.au](http://www.swa.gov.au)).