

South Australian Codes of Practice

Managing Psychosocial Hazards and Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment at work

The codes of practice on psychosocial hazards and sexual and gender-based harassment provide practical guidance on how to meet work health and safety obligations. Both codes are designed to be used together.

Employers have a duty under the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 to eliminate psychosocial risks, and if not reasonably practicable to do so, minimise them. The codes clarify – but do not change – your obligations as an employer.

The Code of Practice for Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work covers all regulated psychosocial hazards. The Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment code covers these specific types of workplace harassment.

They are based on the national Model Code of Practice, but are the result of significant further consultation with South Australian unions and employer representatives.

What are psychosocial hazards?

Psychosocial hazards are sources of stress in a workplace that contribute to physical and psychological injuries and illnesses when exposure is frequent, severe or prolonged. Put simply, they are aspects of work that can cause psychological and physical harm.

Psychosocial hazards can arise from the way work is designed and managed, features of the work environment, equipment and tools, and interpersonal relationships and behaviours. The Code of Practice for Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work defines and describes seventeen types of psychosocial hazards. This includes and four types of harmful workplace behaviours: bullying, sexual harassment, and violence and aggression.

What is sexual and gender-based harassment?

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature which makes a person feel offended, humiliated or intimidated, where a reasonable person would anticipate that reaction in the circumstances.

Sexual harassment can be a form of gender-based harassment. The term gender-based harassment refers to unwelcome conduct based on a person's gender, sex or sexuality.

Types of psychosocial hazards at work

Job demands

Low job control

Poor support

Poor role clarity

Poor organisational change management

Inadequate reward and recognition

Poor organisational justice

Traumatic events or material

Remote or isolated work

Conflict or poor workplace relationships

Poor physical environment

Fatigue

Bullying

Sexual harassment

Harassment

Violence and aggression

Job insecurity

Intrusive surveillance

What guidance is included in both Codes of Practice?

The codes both give guidance on consulting with workers to:

- identify psychosocial hazards
- understand and assess the factors that contribute to psychosocial risk
- identify ways of controlling psychosocial risk
- maintain and review control measures
- ensure they have the information, training and instruction they need to ensure the risk management approach is effective
- respond effectively to reports, complaints or incidents

How are the Codes of Practice different?

The Code of Practice for Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work:

- is focused on general psychosocial hazard and risk management
- applies to all aspects of work design, working environments and work management
- provides a risk register and systemic risk management plan
- is driven by the WHS Act and Regulations 2012.

The Code of Practice for Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment:

- provides specific prevention and response plans
- is driven by the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and WHS Act and Regulations 2012.

Sexual and gender-based harassment rarely occurs in isolation and often occurs alongside other psychosocial hazards, such as poor organisational justice and low support.

As such, the application of both codes together ensures that psychosocial hazards are managed in a holistic way.

The Codes of Practice for Managing Psychosocial Hazards and Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment at work came into effect in South Australia on 19 February 2026. They follow the adoption of the Work Health and Safety (Psychosocial Risks) Amendment Regulations 2023, which came into effect in South Australia on 25 December 2023.



Protect your workers from psychosocial risks

Find more information about psychosocial risk management:

- Scan the QR code
- Visit safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/psychosocial-hazards
- Call 1300 365 255



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