

Psychosocial risk management

What do persons conducting a business or undertaking need to do?

What does the law* say?

Essentially, as shown below, psychosocial risk management is a continuous four step process.

It's a process of consulting with workers to identify sources of stress and working in partnership with them to either eliminate or minimise those sources of stress.

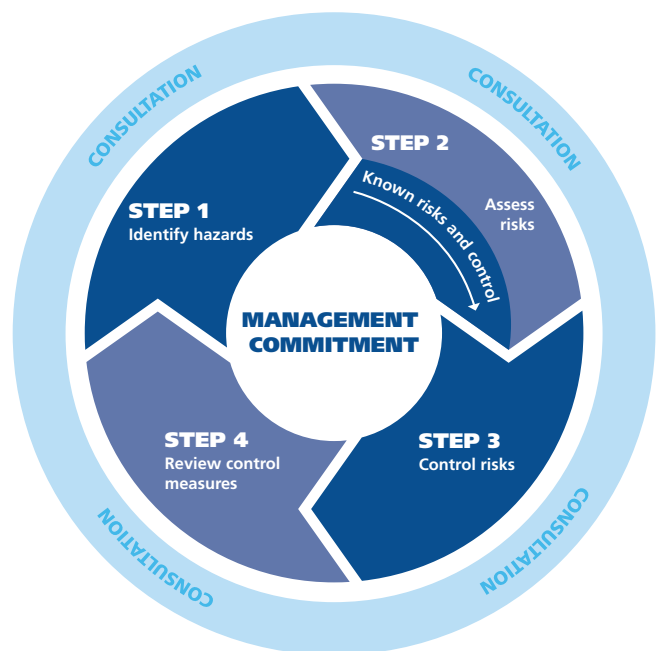
**Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) and the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)*

What do company directors, owners or executives need to do?

Officers, such as company directors and business owners must exercise due diligence to ensure their organisation or business complies with its duties under the WHS Act and WHS Regulations.

Identifying hazards

In short, this is about finding out what workers' sources of stress are by asking them, and, by analysing other sources of information about your workers, such as records about workplace incident records, complaints, employee survey data and worker's compensation claims.



Officer duties

acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge as to how to manage psychosocial health and safety hazards and risks

gain an understanding of the nature of the operations of their business or undertaking and associated hazards and risks

ensure that their business or undertaking has, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise psychosocial hazards and risks

ensure appropriate processes for receiving and considering information about incidents, hazards and risks and responding in a timely manner

ensure that their business or undertaking has, and implements, processes for complying with legal duties relating to psychosocial health and safety

verify the provision and use of the above resources and processes

be curious and ask questions! [not expressly stated in the WHS Act]

Assessing risk

There is no prescribed legislated requirement to conduct a formal psychosocial risk assessment. However, the law does require that persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) consider a range of factors when deciding what controls to implement.

Regardless of whether you conduct a formal risk assessment or not, what is important is that the range of control measures you have in place reflect a reasonable understanding of the factors displayed below. A risk assessment is one means of documenting how you have considered these factors, but you may choose to another way to document your reasoning behind the control measures you have in place.

Assessing and managing the risk of exposure to psychosocial hazards

What are the sources of work-related stress for your workers?

What is the frequency and duration of workers' exposure to work-related stressors?

Are workers exposed to multiple work-related stressors at the same time?

Have you considered other potential risk factors?

Such as the physical risks of the work and the work environment, whether your workers have any vulnerabilities and how they are supervised ?

Have you considered protective factors?

Such as good supervisory support and good quality consultation over WHS matters?

What is the actual or potential impact on workers' psychological and physical health and their physical safety?

What existing controls do you have in place?

How much focus is there on addressing the sources of stress rather than relying on workers to cope?

Controlling risk

This is about taking reasonably practicable steps to either eliminate or minimise risk associated with exposure to psychosocial hazards. Avoid relying exclusively on policies, procedures, training and education and reactive measures such as EAP or other 'mental health supports'. Questions to consider are:

- what measures do you have in place that are designed to eliminate or minimise sources of stress?
- does exclusive reliance on policies, procedures, training and education and reactive measures such as EAP or other 'mental health supports' adequately protect your workers?
- what kinds of policies or processes do you have relating to managing performance and conduct, complaints management, change management, fatigue management, isolated/remote work?

- what types of reactive measures do you have (like EAP, early intervention/return to work program)?
- did you consult with workers about any of these and ask if they consider them to be sufficient?
- do workers and Health and Safety Representatives know they have a right to ask that control measures be reviewed and updated?
- do you review your existing control measures when there is an incident or a complaint?

Ensuring your measures are effective through information, training and instruction

PCBUs must ensure that all persons in their workplaces are informed, trained and instructed about their rights and responsibilities in relation to psychosocial risk management.

Information Training Instruction

Workers are aware of what psychosocial hazards are and how to report them

Persons with management and control of a workplace understand that they have a *primary duty of care* to protect workers from psychosocial risks

Persons with management and control of a workplace ensure workers have a right to be consulted about psychosocial risk management
Such as suggesting how to re-design tasks and processes to reduce sources of stress

Workers and other people in workplaces must take *reasonable care* for their own health and safety, not expose others to potential harm through their behaviours, and comply with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person with management and control of the workplace

Parties to a complaint about psychosocial hazards (such as bullying) are kept informed about the process and outcomes of the complaint

Workers are aware of all options for raising concerns about psychosocial risks, including where they can take a complaint
Such as to SafeWork SA if they are dissatisfied with how their employer has managed it



See the [SafeWork SA website](#) for more information about psychosocial risk management



Government of South Australia
SafeWork SA