



What Managers and Supervisors Need to do about WHS Risk Management

What is Work Health and Safety Risk Management?

WHS Risk Management is the systematic process of;

- identifying hazards
- assessing the risks associated with those hazards
- instituting control measures that will minimise or eliminate the risks
- reviewing the control measures to confirm they are effective.

These steps are shown below:



Duty to Manage Risks

Work Health and Safety Legislation requires that PCBUs (persons operating businesses or undertakings) identify reasonably foreseeable hazards that may present a risk to health and safety and implement appropriate control measures. (WHS Act Section 17 and WHS Regulations 32 to 38)

Essentially this means that:

1. all hazards in the workplace must be identified and their risks assessed
2. all risks in the workplace need to be eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable
3. risk control measures must be reviewed to confirm they are effective

So what do Managers and Supervisors Need to do about WHS Risk Management?

Managers and Supervisors are inevitably involved in whole or in part with the risk management process outlined above. And all of them must be involved otherwise the risk management process breaks down with consequences that include;

- Injury or ill health to employees
- WorkCover Fines or prosecution
- Workers compensation costs
- Lost production

What each Manager and Supervisor must do is determined by:

- the nature of the risks in their work environment and activities
- the WHS legal requirements that apply to their work environment and activities
- the WHS policies and procedures that must be implemented
- the authority and responsibilities of their position in their workplace
- their legal duty of care under the WHS Act

Therefore it is very important that Managers and Supervisors have the knowledge and skills to know what they must do in their workplace and be able to do that effectively. And that statement is supported by section WHS Regulation 39 which requires that information, training, and instruction, be given to workers (Managers, Supervisors and general workers) having regard to:

1. the nature of the work that they do
2. the nature of the risks associated with the work they do, and
3. the control measures

Onsite training of Managers and Supervisors in a group at their workplace is a very effective way of satisfying WHS Regulation 39 (and also section 19 of the WHS Act), by building the knowledge, skills, and group agreement that Managers and Supervisors need to be able to take appropriate WHS actions in their workplace.