



Safe Work Procedures: Improving Implementation

You are probably well aware of the importance of having safe work procedures in your workplace. Our most recent article on this topic was [Who Needs Safe Work Procedures?](#)

Having a safe work procedure is the first step. Getting workers to understand and follow that procedure can sometimes be problematical, particularly when they are trying to meet the demands of a “rush job”. So how can we deal with that?

Safe Systems of Work: WHS Act section 19

Section 19 requires that a PCBU do everything reasonably practicable to:

- have safe systems of work
- inform, instruct, train and supervise workers to protect them from risks

Guidance from The Code of Practice: How to Manage Health & Safety Risks

The following points are from the Code of Practice:

Training, instruction and information

- Train your workers in the work procedure to ensure that they are able to perform the task safely
- Training, instruction and information must be provided in a form that can be understood by all workers
- It is insufficient to simply give a worker the procedure and ask them to acknowledge that they understand and are able to perform it
- Workers should be required to demonstrate that they are competent in performing the task according to the procedure
- Regularly review work procedures and consult with your workers and their representatives

Supervision

- Accountability should be clearly allocated to ensure procedures are followed and maintained
- Managers and supervisors should be provided with the authority and resources to implement and maintain control measures effectively
- The level of supervision required will depend on the level of risk and the experience of the workers involved
- High levels of supervision are necessary where inexperienced workers are expected to follow new procedures or carry out difficult and critical tasks

Verbal, Written, Images, or Video?

The WHS Act does not stipulate whether training, instruction or information should be provided using verbal, written, images, or video form. The WHS Act does say the PCBU must do everything reasonably practicable to protect workers from risks. The Code of Practice says it must be provided in a form that can be understood by all workers.

Obviously you will consult your workers about the safe work procedure and that is required under the WHS Act sections 47 to 49. But we recommend that you take consultation a little further. Consult and also involve them in the content, form and process of providing the training, information and instruction about that safe work procedure.

For example if it is decided that it would be optimum to create a video of the safe work procedure then consider getting your Health & Safety Committee members and/or HSRs involved in the content and even the production of the video. Perhaps even have them demonstrate the procedure in the video.

Involvement can be a very powerful tool. Marketing companies use it very effectively to increase sales. And it can be used to increase consumption of safe work procedures. See the cake mix story and the IKEA story in our article [Improving Worker Involvement in WHS Compliance](#)

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