

BUILDING A SAFE WORKPLACE TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

In this edition of *'Building a Safe Workplace Together'* we take a look at the "sit-stand" workstation proposition which has received a significant amount of publicity over the last 3-4 months. Along with reviewing the health and safety legislation, this edition looks into workplace fatalities and the strong association with machine design, and provides an overview of what work a High Risk Work (HRW) Licence is required for. With the start of the calendar year just passing, there is a summary on "leading" indicators – we hope you will find this useful when setting and/or reviewing your OHS targets for 2015 or FY2015/16.

We trust that this edition provides you with additional knowledge that will support your business to – improve, establish or maintain positive health and safety behaviours.

The next issue of *'Building a Safe Workplace Together'* will be released in June 2015. As always, if you require any health and safety support – we trust you think of us.

OVERVIEW

- What have we been up to lately?
- Victorian Health and Safety Regulator changes its name back to WorkSafe.
- Status of WHS Transitional Arrangements.
- The "noise" surrounding the sit-stand workstation myth.
- 188 workplace fatalities possibly associated with poorly designed machines.
- Lead indicators in the workplace – are you proactively managing your risk?
- High Risk Work (HRW) Licences: An overview.
- Harmonised Legislation Update.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO LATELY?

Action OHS Consulting continues to work closely with our clients to build a safer workplace together. Some exciting projects undertaken since our last newsletter include:

- Supporting a client to develop a "Working from Home Procedure" that managed the risk, but removed the requirement for the workplace to engage a consultant or direct internal resource to undertaking the assessment. This work provided a significant financial saving to the client.
- Undertaking audits against both the National Audit Tool [Commonwealth] Application Pack (September 2014 Version 3), and Retro-Paid Loss Premium Arrangements Application Pack (2014 Version).
- Consolidating a number of "onsite OHS consulting support roles". These roles vary between strategic OHS management, and operational support.

VICTORIAN HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATOR CHANGES ITS NAME BACK TO WORKSAFE

In our last edition of *'Building a Safe Workplace Together'* we advised that WorkSafe Victoria as of 1 July 2014 had reverted to being known by their legal name of Victorian WorkCover Authority (VWA). Following the change in government as a result of the November Victorian state election, Minister for Finance, Robin Scott, on 23 January 2015, announced that Victorian WorkCover Authority will immediately return to the WorkSafe banner.



STATUS OF WHS TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

The status of transitional WHS arrangements as at 1 January 2015 in the states and territories that have adopted the model WHS laws is outlined below.

New South Wales

- New notification requirements for storage of hazardous chemicals.
- The three class of boiler operation HRW licences have been consolidated into just two: BS and BA.
- An exemption that took effect means that audiometric testing is not required for workers who frequently have to use PPE to protect themselves from noise over the exposure limit (valid to 31 December 2015).

Northern Territory

- Arrangements with respect to certain plan expired, this includes: (i) protective structures on tractors and earthmoving equipment, (ii) major inspections for cranes, and (iii) annual inspection of amusement devices.
- Asbestos register and management plan must now be in place.
- Transitional arrangements for diving expired meaning all workers require VET certificate.

Queensland

- Asbestos notifications and clearance inspections, and asbestos removal licences [Class B].

South Australia

- Recognition of asbestos removal licences in other jurisdictions.
- Mine operator must give regulator quarterly WHS report.

Tasmania

- Protective structures on earth moving machinery (Reg. 217) and requirement for prefabricated framework to be design registered (from Schedule 5) was removed.

THE “NOISE” SURROUNDING THE SIT-STAND WORKSTATION

Since the 60-Minutes story aired during September 2014 “Stand Up Australia - is sitting down killing us?” we have received many enquiries from clients and friends regarding their duty to provide “sit-stand” workstations to their employees.

The current controversy regarding the “sit-stand” phenomena is another example where the word “safety” and “OHS” has been used irresponsibly. The emotional blackmail that has been used to make workplaces believe that to provide a safe workplace, they must provide “sit-stand” workstations is NOT TRUE. Yes, you absolutely, do have a duty to provide a safe workplace, but NO, THIS DOES NOT MEAN that you need to purchase a bunch of “sit-stand” workstations.

Think back 10 years, can you recall the saddle seat? Do you recall fit-balls replacing office chairs? If you can't, consider taking a look in your store room, you may find them there.

This article is not saying that there are not benefits to standing across the work day. It would be crazy to. The well reported health hazards associated with prolonged sitting include (but are not limited to):

- X** increased pressure on the spine;
- X** increased strain on muscles and ligaments;
- X** evidence that suggests that high levels of sitting are now considered risk factors for some cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes;
- X** calorie-burning rate drops to just 1 cal/min; or
- X** enzymes that help break down fat drop 90%.

This article is designed to challenge organisations to adopt the risk management approach and consult with their workplace when making ergonomic changes that impact worker health and safety.

Before we go further, let's consider how long a typical worker sits at work. During a 38-hour working week, a worker will only sit at work for 32% of a working day, or only 23% of a working week. This being the case, why is our seated posture at work, the only time there is a focus on changing between sitting and standing?

Have employees in your workplace considered times outside of your workplace where they could stand? For example:

- ☐ Standing whilst travelling to and from work?
- ☐ Reviewing leisure time activities – are these focused around TV, computers, dining, etc?

If “sit-stand” workstations have been under consideration in your workplace – have you investigated other methods that

may be used to manage the hazard – prolonged sitting?

Many of the aforementioned risks can be minimised by simply moving out of a seated posture for two (2) minutes every hour. No workplace that we have worked with has advised us that workers “must” remain seated at their desk, across their full work day. Why is this important? Because it means that sit-stand workstations are NOT your only reasonable method of control.




To manage the reported risks associated with prolonged sitting, in consultation with your HSRs and Health and Safety Committee [as applicable], has your workplace considered ALL options to support workers moving out of a seated posture? For example, has your workplace considered:

- ☐ Standing meetings?
 - Y / N: Can you remove chairs from some meeting rooms?
 - Y / N: Can you provide benches at a raised height, that workers can stand around?
- ☐ Walking meetings. Provide a clipboard then:
 - Y / N: Map out a 1.5 to 2 km circuit a for a 30 minute meeting?
 - Y / N: Map out a 3 to 4 km circuit for a 60 minute meeting?
- ☐ Running a campaign to encourage a standing and moving culture? Can workers:
 - Y / N: Stand when answering phone calls?
 - Y / N: Stand when reviewing / reading documents – could you be standing now?
 - Y / N: Stand when a colleague comes to your desk or office?
 - Y / N: Walk to a kitchen, printer or amenity that is not the closest?
 - Y / N: Use telephones and/or calendars to set a “change” posture reminder?
 - Y / N: Use the stairs instead of the lift?

All of the above considerations will support workers to stand intermittently across the working day, and to move out of a seated posture – supporting proactive management of the hazard.

This all being said, following consultation, if your workplace has decided to move down the path of introducing sit-stand workstations, are you aware of the options that are available? Below provides an overview of the options and some points that you should consider prior to purchase.

BUILDING A SAFE WORKPLACE **TOGETHER**

Sit-Stand Workstation Option		Points to consider	Approx. Cost
Sit-Stand Adjustable Desk – Electric		The weight load that the desk can hold and speed that the desk will move varies from 30-120 kg and 2-5 mm/sec respectively. Variation in functionality is the main reason for the differences in price.	\$1,250.00
Sit-Stand Adjustable Desk – Manual Crank		Are you confident that your workers will make the effort to manually wind-up and/or wind down the desk? If not, you may find that the desk height remains unchanged. Additionally, there have been multiple reports that if the objects on the desk are arranged in a way where one side is heavier than the other, then the crank may have a very hard time of handling the weight discrepancy and keep the desktop horizontal.	\$900.00
Retrofitted Height Adjustment		Ensure that metal plate that the keyboard sits on perfectly aligns to the desk when lowered into the seated posture. Clients have reported that this does not always occur. Issue: the keyboard moves/bounces when keying, frustrating the worker. Additionally, the worker has limited room to work from when standing. If the worker has to regularly review documents, or use a phone, will this option make things all too hard?	\$500.00
Moveable (Customised) Box		The most cost effective option. However, the worker will not be able to “easily” move between a seated and standing posture when compared to the other options. In addition, as the box dimensions are fixed – this set-up will be specific to the worker. Safe workstation posture when standing whilst typing requires the worker’s elbows to be at, or slightly above, the height of the keyboard.	\$200.00

Discomfort, tiredness, and sore feet can result from standing for long periods of time. This may lead to an underutilisation of a sit-stand workstation. Heeled and leather shoes typically do not provide thick insulating soles or shock-absorbing insoles like sport shoes. Providing options with footwear may support the management of foot fatigue. The cushioning provided by anti-fatigue matting is another option that may support the management of foot fatigue. It must be advised that the use of anti-fatigue matting requires caution, as these mats prohibit office chair utilisation and can also lead to tripping hazards. Therefore, when introducing sit-stand workstations into the workplace, your workplace may also want to review footwear (for example the clothing policy) and/or anti-fatigue matting – to support ongoing utilisation.

It is important to remember that being seated at work is not only limited to office workers, but also extends to drivers – such as taxi and truck drivers. The cynic in me is swayed to believe that the hazard of sitting is currently out of proportion with the direct risk, as these workers have been “forgotten” from the conversation. Alternatively, this may be because those reporting the importance of standing at work are those with the most to gain – the suppliers of the sit-stand workstations or aligned products. Either way, it is important that drivers are considered in any sit-stand strategies your workplace is looking to establish.

This all being said – if you have any questions regarding workstation ergonomics, sit-stand workstations or policies – please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

Ergonomics: Safe Workstation Setup Assessor Training

[Beginner/Intermediate Level]

Have the confidence and skills to competently conduct workstation assessments at your workplace.

Why Attend?

Reduce the financial burden associated with workplace injury and time-off.

Managing in house, only needing to engage consultants to undertake "complex" ergonomic assessments.

Understand your workstation equipment purchases – stop wasting money on items that end up in storage.

At the end of the training workshop, attendees will have an understanding of:

Basic principles of human anatomy

The causation of muscle pain and discomfort

What safe workstation posture looks like

The purpose of stretching and rest breaks

How to conduct an assessment

What to look for when purchasing equipment

Manual handling considerations for the office

All attendees are provided with:

A safe workstation setup assessment template

One month's access to our online module "Safe Workstation Setup"

Certificate of Attendance issued by the trainer

Need more information, please contact:
training@actionohs.com.au

Training Registration Form Safe Workstation Setup Assessor

Please return completed form to:
admin@actionohs.com.au

Training will be conducted at Action OHS Consulting's Training Room
501 Church Street, Richmond, Victoria

Training Dates

- ☐ Tuesday 24 March – 9 am to 12 pm
- ☐ Wednesday 22 July – 9 am to 12 pm
- ☐ Thursday 26 November – 9 am to 12 pm
- ☐ Make me aware of other training date
- ☐ Conduct training in house – price on application

For information on on-site training, please contact:
admin@actionohs.com.au

Attendees Details	
Business Name	
First & Last Name	
Job Title	
Email Address	
Postal Address	
Invoice Details	
Email Address for invoice to be issued	

Attendance is confirmed on payment of the invoice.

Training Information

- ✓ Investment: \$225.00 per person (inc. GST).
- ✓ Registration and coffee from 8:45 am. Course hours 9 am to 12 pm daily.
- ✓ Course documents provided.
- ✓ Refreshments and morning tea provided.
- ✓ Certificated issued to attendee within 10-days of completing the training session.

Cancellation Policy

- ✓ Cancellations, less than 10 day notice prior to course commencement, are non-refundable under any circumstances. However, another person may attend in lieu of the original registrant.

8 WORKPLACE FATALITIES POSSIBLY ASSOCIATED WITH POORLY DESIGNED MACHINES

Safe Work Australia recently published a new report on work related fatalities [Nov 2014]. The report indicates that 188 fatalities could have been avoided between 2006 and 2011 if risks associated with machinery, vehicles, plant and powered tools had been eliminated through safer design.

The most common circumstance categories were:

- ✗ Inadequate guarding — 21% of design-related fatalities
- ✗ Lack of roll-over protection structures / seat belts — 15%
- ✗ Lack of residual current device — 12%
- ✗ Lack of interlock — 8%, and
- ✗ Driver obstructed vision — 8%.

There were 28 work-related fatalities where the design-related issue identified was a lack of roll-over protection structures, or seat belts. Most fatalities involved roll-overs of tractors or quad bikes — both well-known issues that have received considerable attention.

Less well-known is the number of fatal incidents involving the users of elevating work platforms being crushed against roofing and beams. There were seven (7) fatalities during the period 2006 to 2011. Some manufacturers are responding to this risk with caged platforms with anti-entrapment devices such as a frame fitted to the basket that provides a 'safe zone' within the platform and sensor bars or pads that stop the movement of the basket should the operator be pushed onto them.

Designers and manufacturers of new machinery and plant must fulfil their duty of care for the safety of users of their products. Where possible, designs should include passive protection mechanisms (i.e. those that protect from harm, or decrease the likelihood of injury, with no input from the worker). Examples of passive safe design include: guarding to protect a worker from the risk of entrapment; shielding to protect worker from projectiles; interlocks that shut systems down should guarding or shielding be removed for maintenance or cleaning; lockout systems that protect a worker conducting maintenance on machinery from inadvertent start up by another worker; roll-over protection structures on vehicles; and residual current devices that shut off power supply when earth leakage is detected.

Is ALL of your workplace equipment safe and adequately guarded?

ONLINE SHOP

www.actionohs.com.au/shop

Can't find what you are looking for?

Let us know.

Email sales@actionohs.com.au to find out about the discount we offer should you make us a "preferred" provider.



LEAD INDICATORS IN THE WORKPLACE – ARE YOU PROACTIVELY MANAGING YOUR RISK?

Lead Indicators are a measure of the "safety potential" of a workplace. They represent the positive steps that workplaces can take to prevent harm and better control OHS outcomes. Well-designed lead indicators will provide senior managers with an understanding of how effectively the resources that have been directed to OHS are implemented and how these improve OHS performance. Typical lead indicators include:

- ✓ OHS being discussed as part of all management and team meetings
- ✓ specific completion rates (e.g. workplace inspections, risk assessments, training, etc.)
- ✓ scheduled review of OHS procedures
- ✓ reporting of near misses, or
- ✓ positive feedback and recognition for safe performance.

...anything you are doing to reduce incidents by specific monitored activity constitutes a lead indicator.

How will lead indicators benefit your business?

1. They will give you confidence that you are measuring your workplace safety effectiveness, without relying on incident numbers.
2. They will promote awareness of OHS and drive OHS engagement by measuring "things" that can be controlled.
3. They will allow you to focus on, or monitor, high risk areas within your business by establishing indicators that are specific to these.

There are many ways organisations can monitor lead indicators. Our [web-based compliance software Mango](#) is one method that has been used by clients to improve their visibility of OHS performance.

HIGH RISK WORK LICENCES: AN OVERVIEW

A licence to perform high risk work is required if you work with high risk equipment or plant. There are currently 28 classes of competency under the licence to perform high risk work.

High risk work includes scaffolding, dogging and rigging work. It also involves using cranes, forklifts, reach stackers, boilers and boom-type elevating work platforms. A table of these classes has been provided below.

Class Code	Class Name
Scaffolding, Dogging, Rigging	
SB	Basic Scaffolding
SI	Intermediate Scaffolding (includes SB)
SA	Advanced Scaffolding (includes SB, SI)
DG	Dogging
RB	Basic Rigging (includes DG)
RI	Intermediate Rigging (includes DG, RB)
RA	Advanced Rigging (includes DG, RB, RI)
Load shifting	
LF	Forklift Truck Operation
LO	Order-picking Forklift Truck Operation
Cranes and Hoists	
CT	Tower Crane Operation
CS	Self-erecting Tower cranes
CD	Derrick Crane Operation
CN	Non-slewing Mobile Crane (>3 tonnes [t])
CV	Vehicle Loading Crane Operation (>10 t)
C2	Slewing Mobile Crane Operation (up to 20 t)
C6	Slewing Mobile Crane Operation (up to 60 t)
C1	Slewing Mobile Crane Operation (up to 100 t)
C0	Slewing Mobile Crane Operation (over 100 t)
CB	Bridge and Gantry Crane operation
CP	Portal Boom Crane Operation
HM	Material Hoist Operation (Cantilever Platform)
HP	Hoist Operation (Personal and Material)
PB	Concrete-placing Boom Operation
WVP	Boom-type Elevated Work Platform Operation Z (boom length > 11 meters)
Pressure Equipment	
BB	Basic Boiler Operation
BI	Intermediate Boiler Operation
BA	Advanced Boiler Operation
TO	Turbine Operation
ES	Reciprocating Steam Engine Operation

The high risk work licence is valid in every Australian state and territory, enabling workers to operate high risk equipment under consistent standards everywhere in Australia.

The Commonwealth, state and territory work health and safety regulators issue licences in their jurisdiction that are valid for 5-years.

If you would like to apply, renew, have lost your licence or have questions relating to your licence please contact your work health and safety regulator.



HARMONISED LEGISLATION UPDATE

If you have reviewed previous editions of “Building a Safe Workplace Together”, you will be aware that most states and territories (with the exception of Victoria and Western Australia) now function under the model WHS Act and Regulations.

Whilst the initial intention of harmonising the legislation was to bring uniformity, there has been discussion recently regarding each state making amendments to these laws.

As the legislation is state-based, it means that each state and/or territory government has the ability to make changes to its legislation.

A list of the changes that have been made is summarised below:

Queensland

- Removed ability of HSR to direct cease work
- Entry requirements – must give 24 hours’ notice
- Increased penalty for contravening WHS entry permit conditions
- Removed list of HSRs to be provided to regulator

South Australia

- Must see written evidence of licence to carry out high risk work
- Diving work – various
- Amusement devices – also inserts “passenger ropeway” to many regulation

New South Wales, Northern Territory, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania

- No amendments