

## INTRODUCTION

In this edition of 'Building a Safe Workplace Together' we take a look at questions that are routinely raised with our consultants. In particular, we look at the purpose of workplace inspection checklists, the role of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the workplace and provide a technical overview of what incidents are notifiable to your state regulator. Additionally, this edition looks at how your workplace may incorporate the recent changes to the Healthy Eating Pyramid.

We trust that this edition provides you with complementary 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 October 2015. As always, if you require any health and safety support – we trust that you will think of us.

## OVERVIEW

- What have we been up to lately?
- What savings can your workplace make from the recent federal budget?
- Inspections, are you doing them right?
- What you need to know about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the workplace
- Free OHS Consultations – Victoria
- Wellbeing: Eating Healthy at Work
- Ergonomics: Safe Workstation Setup Assessor Training
- Notifiable Incident Notification.

## 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 deliver an internal "Injury Management and Return to Work Training for Managers" Program.
- Consolidating "onsite OHS consulting roles" within government department, local council and private companies. The roles vary between strategic OHS management, operational support, and development of their Health and Safety Management System.
- Transitioned many clients from paper-based to web-based Health and Safety Management Systems. Supporting communication on responsibilities and reductions in safety administration.
- Establishing Health and Safety Risk Management Frameworks – next step, facilitation of Risk Management Forums with key stakeholder groups.

## WHAT SAVINGS CAN YOUR WORKPLACE MAKE FROM THE RECENT FEDERAL BUDGET?

You would have had to be stuck under a rock or in the remote wilderness not to have heard about the \$20,000 small business tax write-off within the recent Federal Budget.

This "tax-break" is available to all registered business (i.e. you have an ABN) that turns over less than \$2 million within the financial year. As a small business, this means that you can buy any equipment related to your business, if each item is valued at less than \$20,000 and claim the full amount from your income to reduce your tax bill. There is no limit on the number of items a business can claim.

### When does it start and end?

You have effectively two years to take up the tax break. The small business tax deductions started 7.30 pm 12 May 2015 and will end on 30 June 2017.

### What does this mean?

As a business, you are now in a better position to purchase business related equipment. This may include:

- ✓ Updating and/or upgrading equipment and machinery.
- ✓ Purchasing ergonomic equipment such as sit-stand desks, office chairs, etc.

### Make your saving this financial year!

In addition to the "tax-break", next financial year will see a 1.5 cent tax break for small businesses. Therefore, along with improved workplace safety and operations, a greater "tax savings" will be had if purchases are made this year.

Purchase Price	Price After Tax and GST Saving FY2014/15	Price After Tax and GST Saving FY2015/16
\$5,000	\$3,182	\$3,250
\$10,000	\$6,364	\$6,500
\$19,999	= \$12,727	= \$13,000

## Purchasing Safety Equipment?

[www.actionohs.com.au/shop](http://www.actionohs.com.au/shop)

Otherwise, contact us to see how we can support you:

[sales@actionohs.com.au](mailto:sales@actionohs.com.au)

## INSPECTIONS, ARE YOU DOING THEM RIGHT?

The aviation industry could be defined as the Godfather of the checklist world, as pre-flight checks are something that have been happening (we hope) for a long time. So, when a recent publication by NASA's Safety Aviation Reporting System delved into the main reasons for error in checklist usage, we listened.

Almost all businesses we have worked with have checklist procedures in place for certain activities. Be it workplace or workshop inspections, equipment audits, or even something as simple as a prestart check, getting the process "right" could quite literally mean the difference between life and death.

While checklists are great at guiding us through our procedures, they are by no means impervious to human error. The most common errors according to NASA were categorised into five sections.

### 1. Checklist Interrupted

Interruption and distraction ranked as one of the major causes of human error when it came to checklist completion. Distractions (inherent in last minute checks) can easily result in omissions.

- Be extra vigilant and aware of the impact of distractions when completing a checklist. Establish processes to minimise distractions.

### 2. Checklist Item Overlooked

Even though you may habitually perform an inspection checklist on a regular basis, there is still a chance to absentmindedly overlook an item.

- It is important to visually check everything on your checklist because it will help when your habit pattern is broken. Consider undertaking in pairs with someone whom is not familiar with the checklist.

### 3. Use of the Wrong Checklist

If you are involved in a company with multiple checklists in place, with improper organisation, there is a chance that these checklists can be mixed up.

- It is important to always confirm the correct checklist is being used. Do your checklists have easily identifiable titles?
- From a system's point of view, if the steps of the checklist don't make sense for the activity you are doing, stop. Backtrack and make sure you are using the correct checklist.

### 4. Failure to use a Checklist

Checklists exist for a reason. They have been proven to work and

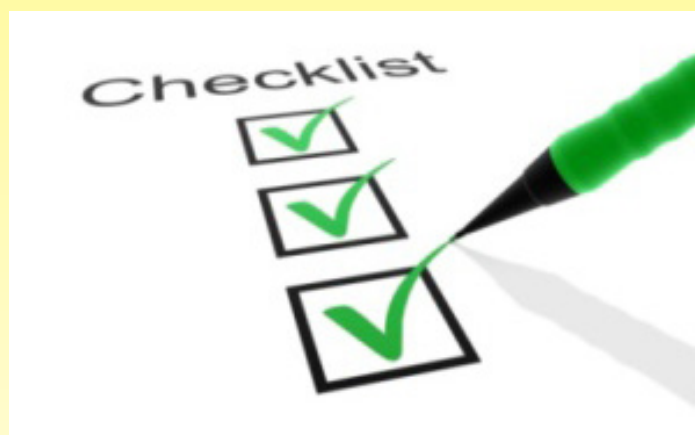
reduce reliance on "common knowledge", which can result in human error and/or oversight every once in a while. Therefore, it is important that checklists are followed in full.

- If workers are not completing or are resistant to the checklist, consult with them. Do they understand the criteria? If not, have you trained them in how to complete the checklist?
- If the checklist criterion is understood and workers remain resistant, what is your goal for the checklist? Often checklists include "would be nice to have" or "seek information additional to the purpose of the checklist" – if this is the case, refine the checklist. Ensure all criteria address the purpose, remove the noise and capture this information other ways.

### 5. Checklist Confusion

Have workers been trained how to use the checklist? Wording needs to be clear, unambiguous and well defined to avoid confusion or individual interpretation.

- Checklists need to present a clear, unambiguous set of actions that will reach the end result efficiently and without trouble. Workers should be trained in the purpose and use of the checklist to ensure that they achieve the checklists intended purposes.



Once you have your checklist right, the next goal is to ensure that corrective actions and/or improvements are easily communicated to those whom are responsible for closing these out.

Whilst there are a number of phone and tablet applications that allow you to conduct, store and record your inspections online – they do not allow you to communicate the corrective actions and/or improvements to those responsible – our OHS Software does facilitate this communication. If you would like a demonstration, please view [OHS Software](#) on our website, or [contact us](#) to discuss.

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) IN THE WORKPLACE

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is anything used or worn by a person to minimise risk to the person's health or safety and includes a wide range of clothing and safety equipment. PPE includes boots, face masks, hard hats, ear plugs, respirators, gloves, safety harnesses, high visibility clothing etc.



As the hazard or risk exposure remains, PPE should only be used:

- when there are no other practical control measures available (as a last resort);
- as an interim measure until a more effective way of controlling the risk can be used; or,
- to supplement higher level control measures (as a back-up).

Where PPE has been identified as an inherent requirement of the job, the employer who is directing the work must provide PPE to workers at the workplace. This will usually be the person's employer but could also be, for example, a main contractor at the workplace.

### Who is financially responsible for PPE?

It is an offence for an employer to charge or levy a worker for PPE, or cause a worker to be charged. This includes footwear if it has been identified as a requirement of the role. Workplace

relations laws also prohibit deductions from employee's wages for work-related items such as PPE.

An employer can provide a PPE allowance, providing the allowance covers the cost of the PPE required under work health and safety laws. If your workplace provides an allowance, you must ensure that any PPE purchased by the worker meets the minimum standards required by your workplace.

The Health and Safety Legislation does not place a duty on employers to pay for uniforms, shoes or clothing that are not considered to be PPE. This includes workers' regular clothing such as pants or jeans that are worn in a factory environment. The requirement to provide and pay for clothing and other equipment (i.e. hard hats, safety glasses) only applies to items that are PPE.

### How to choose the correct PPE

When choosing the right PPE for the job, the selection process must include consultation with users and their representatives and should also include:

- a detailed evaluation of the risk and performance requirements for the PPE;
- compatibility of PPE items where more than one type of PPE is required (e.g. how will a worker combine both ear muffs and a hard hat?);
- consultation to ensure PPE is suitable for the work and workplace conditions; and
- only choosing PPE that complies with the relevant Australian Standard or equivalent standard.

As part of the review process you should assess if:

- wearing PPE may adversely affect the performance of tasks being undertaken (e.g. restricting vision or auditory cues, or mobility);
- PPE may be uncomfortable to wear and some workers may not be able to wear it (e.g. workers who are allergic to latex cannot wear rubber gloves); and
- PPE may create new hazards (for example, some items of PPE can hinder the body's natural cooling mechanisms by preventing evaporation of perspiration).



## What is the Employer's role once PPE has been issued?

Employers should ensure:

- PPE is used properly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- PPE fits correctly and is reasonably comfortable for the worker who is to use or wear it
- workers are instructed and trained in how to use, maintain and store the PPE
- PPE does not interfere with any medical conditions of the worker using the PPE
- appropriate signs are used to remind workers where PPE must be worn, and
- periodic assessments are carried out to ensure PPE is used and maintained/stored effectively. (Maintenance refers to ensuring that the PPE is clean and hygienic; and in good working order).

## What is the workers role once issued with PPE?

A worker who is provided with PPE by their employer must:

- use or wear the PPE in accordance with any information, training or reasonable instruction provided by the employer, so far as they are reasonably able
- not intentionally misuse or damage the PPE
- advise the employer of any damage, defect or need to clean or decontaminate any of the PPE they are aware of, and
- consult with their manager if the PPE is uncomfortable or does not fit properly.

If a worker refuses to wear or use the PPE, the employer can take action against the worker. A worker who does not wear or use PPE, or intentionally misuses or damages it, may also face prosecution.

## What is the visitor's role once issued with PPE?

A visitor must wear the PPE at the workplace in accordance with any information; training or reasonable instruction provided by the workplace that they are visiting.

# FREE OHS CONSULTATIONS

Does your business employ less than 200 employees? You may be eligible.

Contact us NOW: [info@actionohs.com.au](mailto:info@actionohs.com.au)

## WELLBEING: EATING HEALTHY AT WORK

Wellbeing programs often provide reference to dietary advice and healthy eating guidelines. Are you aware that during May, Nutrition Australia released a new looking Healthy Eating Pyramid? The new look Pyramid aims to provide clearer advice on the five (5) core food groups we should be eating for a healthy balanced diet – this is consistent with the latest Australian Dietary Guidelines.

Key points include:

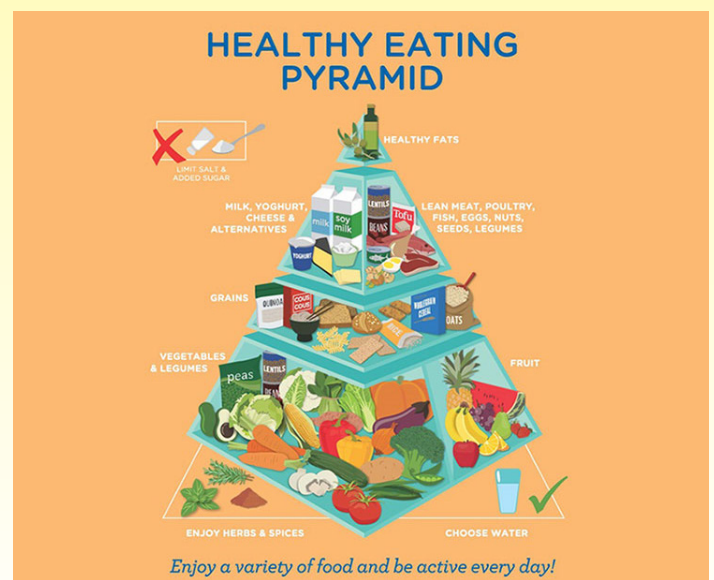
- ✓ Eat mainly vegetables and fruit.
- ✓ Eat a variety of whole grains and carbohydrates for energy.
- ✓ Have a variety of protein from both plant and animal sources.
- ✓ Include healthy fats including olive oil and avocado.
- ✓ Limit salt and added sugar.
- ✓ Make water your preferred fluid for hydration.

Employers can help their staff to meet these recommendations by providing access to palatable water (i.e. cool water) for hydration and support workers to take meal breaks to ensure they meet their nutritional needs.

Have you considered reviewing what food is supplied for morning teas, scheduled meetings or luncheons? Instead of cake or biscuits, can your workplace provide:

- A platter of fruit?
- Vegetables and dips?
- Wholegrain as opposed to white bread sandwiches?

Want more information about the new pyramid or how you can optimise the health, nutrition and wellbeing of your employees? Enquire about our Health Promotion & Wellbeing programs today!





## 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](mailto:training@actionohs.com.au)

## Training Registration Form Safe Workstation Setup Assessor

Please return completed form to:  
[admin@actionohs.com.au](mailto:admin@actionohs.com.au)

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

### Training Dates

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

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

## NOTIFIABLE INCIDENT NOTIFICATION

A 'notifiable incident' as outlined in the health and safety legislation is:

- the death of a person,
- a 'serious injury or illness', or
- a 'dangerous incident',

that arises out of the conduct of a workplace at a workplace. 'Notifiable incidents' may relate to any person— whether an employee, contractor or member of the public.

Notifiable incidents trigger a requirement for the workplace to preserve the incident site until further direction is provided by the state regulator.

### What is a serious injury or illness?

Notification is required of a serious injury or illness of a person if they require any of the following:

- Immediate treatment:
  - as an in-patient in a hospital
  - for the amputation of any part of the body
  - for a serious head injury
  - for a serious eye injury
  - for a serious burn
  - for the separation of skin from an underlying tissue (such as degloving or scalping)
  - for a spinal injury
  - for the loss of a bodily function
  - for serious lacerations.
- Medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance.

'Treatment' means the kind of treatment that is, or would be, required for a serious injury or illness and includes 'medical treatment' (i.e. by a registered medical practitioner), treatment by a paramedic or treatment by a registered nurse practitioner. Treatment does not refer to assistance provided by First Aid Officers.

### What are dangerous incidents (commonly referred to as 'near misses')?

Notification is also required for any incident in relation to a workplace that exposes a worker or any other person to a serious risk resulting from an immediate or imminent exposure to:

- An uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance, implosion, explosion or fire; escape of gas or steam; escape of a pressurised substance

- Electric shock
- The fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing
- The collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant that is required to be design or item registered under the Regulations
- The collapse or partial collapse of a structure
- The collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation
- The inrush of water, mud or gas in workings, or, the interruption of the main system of ventilation in an underground excavation or tunnel.

### When and how to notify

A regulator must be notified of a 'notifiable incident' immediately after the workplace becomes aware of the incident meeting the "notifiable" criteria.

The notice must be given by the fastest possible means which could be by telephone or in writing (e.g. fax, email, or other electronic means). If notifications are made by telephone, follow-up information is often requested. Typically, if you are asked to follow-up in writing, you must provide the required information within 48 hours of the request being made.

In general, a workplace 'becomes aware' of a notifiable incident at the time that any of its workers in supervisory or managerial roles become aware of that incident. For example, if a worker suffers a serious injury and notifies their immediate supervisor, it is at this point that the workplace is considered to be aware of the incident. Therefore, it is essential that the workplace develops appropriate internal incident reporting communication systems (written and verbal) to ensure all safety incidents are promptly brought to the attention of the relevant person within the workplace.

*Reference: Incident Notification Fact Sheet, Safe Work Australia (November 2013).*

