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1B | Understanding duty of care

Duty of care in the workplace means that by law each duty holder must do everything in their power to work in a way that is safe for themselves and others.

Duty of care is covered by the health and safety laws in each state and territory. Each duty holder must follow these laws. For more information about duty of care in your state or territory, go to the Safe Work Australia website:

- www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA.

In the following example, Frank is an apprentice. He has some questions about duty of care for his supervisor, Jack.

Read Frank's questions and Jack's responses.

Frank



I know different people on a construction site have different duty-of-care requirements. Does this include workers?

Jack



Yes, it does!

A worker must do their job in a way that does not cause harm to themselves or other people. They can do this by following instructions, policies and procedures. Workers need to be alert at all times and to report hazards. In fact, workers should control hazards if it is safe to do so.

If a worker does not meet their duty of care, they can be guilty of breaking the law.



I was told that PCBUs have a duty of care to make the workplace safe for workers. Is this correct?



No, not quite.

PCBUs have a duty of care to do everything in their power to make the workplace safe for the workers and other people like visitors or customers.

They do this by making sure the workplace does not risk the health and safety of others, and that all plant, machinery, equipment and structures are safe to use.

PCBUs have to make sure that all workers are properly trained to do their work safely and that there is nothing in the workplace that could make workers sick.



Topic 2 | Identify and control workplace hazards

Every time you are on a construction site, you must be on the lookout for hazards.

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Basic principles of risk management

2B Hazards on construction sites

2C Personal protective equipment (PPE) and how to use it

2D Hazard and risk control

Working at heights

Some workers on a construction site need to work high off the ground. This is called working at heights.

Working at heights is a hazard because it is possible to fall. Falling from heights can result in serious injury or death.

Working at heights might mean you are working on:

- scaffolds
- roofs
- structures
- ladders
- plant
- trucks
- excavations.

You might need special training before you can work at heights. Ask your supervisor if you are not sure.

Watch this video [00m:35s] to learn about working at heights.



Hazards related to working at heights include:

- weather, such as wind, rain or cold
- open unprotected edges
- unstable structures
- falling materials
- waste or loose materials on a structure.

Electrical hazards

Electrical hazards are common on construction sites.



There are different kinds of electrical hazards, including:

- power cords (powering tools and other equipment)
- overhead powerlines
- underground powerlines
- electrical wiring in or around structures
- electrical parts of plant, equipment or tools.

Electricity is a hazard in dry conditions, but it can be more of a hazard in wet conditions. This is because water conducts electricity. If electricity comes into contact with water someone is in contact with, they are likely to get an electric shock.



Topic 3 | WHS communication and reporting

For a construction site to be safe, communication about work health and safety (WHS) is important. There are different ways to communicate about WHS on a construction site.

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Health and safety documents

3B WHS personnel

3C Safety signs and symbols

3D Reporting hazards, incidents and injuries



Activity 10: Health and safety documents

Check your understanding of health and safety documents.

Read each question and tick the best answer. There may be one or multiple correct answers.

Question 1 There is some high-risk construction work about to happen. Your supervisor asks you to get the right safety document so it can be filled out. Which document will you get?

- ☐ Job safety analysis (JSA)
- ☐ Safe work method statement (SWMS)
- ☐ Safety data sheet (SDS)
- ☐ White card
- ☐ Incident report

Question 2 Chan asks his supervisor, David, to explain what information is in an SDS. Tick all the things David tells Chan.

- ☐ What the chemical is
- ☐ Hazards caused by the chemical
- ☐ A list of all chemical hazards on a construction site
- ☐ How to handle and store the chemical
- ☐ What to do if there is an emergency involving the chemical
- ☐ How to dispose of the chemical safely

Question 3 How can you find additional information about WHS documents?

- ☐ Ask suppliers of safety equipment
- ☐ Check your site induction book
- ☐ Read manuals
- ☐ Speak with other workers
- ☐ Use the internet

Click to
complete
Activity 10



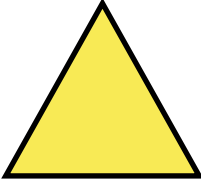

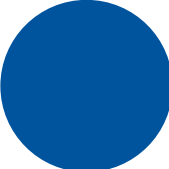



3C

Safety signs and symbols

On every construction site you will see many signs and symbols that are there to help keep you and everyone else on the worksite safe.

These signs and symbols must be followed. Construction industry signs are colour-coded to indicate the actions or procedures you must follow.

If you don't follow the signs and symbols, you or someone else might be seriously injured or killed. Sometimes you might be breaking the law.

Types of signs	Meaning	Colour and shape	Examples
Safe condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Where to go in an emergency • Safe to go 		
Warning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caution • Hazard ahead • Risk of danger 		
Mandatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must carry out an action • You must wear the appropriate PPE 		
Prohibition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must not do something • You must not enter the area 		

Safety signs

Make sure you know what all the safety signs in your workplace mean.

If you are unsure what a sign means, ask your supervisor.

Here are some examples of signs you might find on a construction site.

Exit



Indicates where you can leave the building.

Emergency equipment



This is where you will find equipment that is used in an emergency.

First aid



This is where you will find the first-aid kit, which includes bandages, band aids, eye wash and scissors.

Fire alarm



This is where you will find the fire alarm. If there is a fire, you may need to pull down on the lever to set off the alarm.

Fire extinguisher



This is where you will find the fire extinguisher. If there is a fire, the fire extinguisher may be used to put out the flames.

Danger



This means there is a risk of danger – you or someone else might get hurt.

Warning or caution



This means you need to be careful so you do not get hurt.

Prohibition



This means you can't do something. For example, no smoking.

Mandatory



This means you must do something. In this example, you must wear head protection.

Restriction



This means there are limits on what you can do or where you can go. In this example, you must not travel faster than 10 kilometres per hour.

Safety and lockout tags

Safety and lockout tags are another kind of sign.

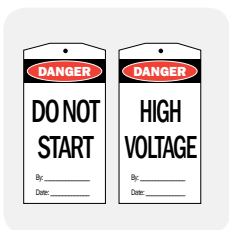
Tags may be attached to:

- plant and equipment
- doors
- gates
- vehicles.

Tags provide important information. They can stop people turning on faulty equipment by mistake. Whatever the tags are attached to must not be used.

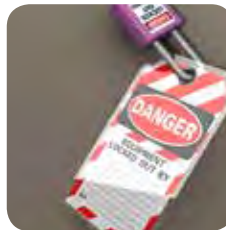
You must take notice of what the tag says and follow any instructions on it. Be familiar with the different tags in your workplace and make sure you know what they mean.

Here are some examples of tags that you might find on a construction site.



Danger tag

- Do not use the equipment
- You or other people might be hurt



Lockout tag

- Do not use the equipment
- The equipment is damaged or faulty

4A

Responding to an incident or emergency

Like all workplaces, incidents and emergencies can happen on construction sites. In this section, you will learn what you should do if there is an incident or emergency.

Frank has some questions about incidents and emergencies.

Read Frank's questions and Jack's responses.

Frank



Hi, Jack. How would you explain what an incident is?

Jack



An incident is something that happens that results in injury or damage to property. If you fell from a ladder and broke your leg, this would be an incident.

A near miss is also an incident. That is when something dangerous happens that didn't cause an injury or damage, but could have.

Let me give you an example: if scaffolding collapsed or an electric tool caused a short circuit and no one was injured, they would be considered near misses. For less serious incidents, the report would go to the supervisor and/or site manager.



So is that different to an emergency?



Yes, it is. An emergency is a serious, unexpected and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

On a construction site, an emergency may be a fire, chemical spill, or plant or vehicle accident. Leaks such as toxic or flammable gas leaks are also emergencies. So is the collapse of a structure. In fact, an injury to a person may also be considered an emergency.

Fire extinguishers

Fire extinguishers are the most common type of fire safety equipment.

There are different types of fire extinguishers. Each type is designed to be used in a different situation. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use of any fire extinguishers. Ask your supervisor if you need help.

Water fire extinguisher

Description: No band



What it does:

- Shoots a stream of water at the fire.

Can be used to fight fires on:

- paper
- textiles
- wood
- most plastics
- rubber.

Carbon dioxide fire extinguisher

Description: Black band



What it does:

- Uses carbon dioxide to reduce the amount of oxygen available to the fire.

Can be used to fight fires on:

- flammable liquids
- electrically energised equipment.

Powder fire extinguisher (ABE)

Description: White band



What it does:

- Shoots powder, which helps take away the fuel source.

Can be used to fight fires on:

- paper
- textiles
- wood
- most plastics
- rubber
- flammable liquids
- combustible gases
- electrically energised equipment.

Foam fire extinguisher

Description: Blue band



What it does:

- Covers the fire with foam, which cuts off the fire's air supply.

Can be used to fight fires on:

- paper
- textiles
- wood
- most plastics
- rubber
- flammable liquids.

Source: Combined Fire Protection Specialists, <http://www.combinedfire.com.au/index.php>



Read the following workplace example to see how the concepts you have learned are applied in a real-life situation.

Workplace example for Topic 4

Two distressed construction workers, Anh and Steve, race up to another worker, Bill. Steve says he needs to use the phone urgently. Anh says it's an emergency. Bill hands them his mobile and says that 000 is programmed in – they just need to press a button. He asks what has happened. Steve says someone has been injured. Anh adds that it looks like the person's leg is broken.

Steve starts talking to emergency services on the phone.

Anh is a first-aid officer, and follows the signs to grab the first-aid kit. He asks Bill to find the boss and wait for the ambulance to direct them to the injured worker. Anh runs back to the injured worker to see what he can do while the ambulance arrives.

The incident is now over and the worker has gone to hospital. The supervisor and health and safety officer will soon discuss with the workers what happened that led to the accident. Anh says that his first-aid and emergency training paid off as he knew what to do when the accident occurred.



Summary of Topic 4

1. Your construction site should have emergency plans in place. Make sure you know what these plans are before an emergency happens.
2. Every construction site should have at least one first-aid officer. Make sure you know who the first-aid officers are at the site.
3. Make sure you know where the first-aid kit is so you can access it if needed.
4. Your construction site should have fire safety equipment. Make sure you know what fire safety equipment is available and where it is stored.