

October is Safe Work Month 2019

This October, events will run Queensland-wide for Safe Work Month 2019 to raise awareness of the importance of work health and safety and return to work.

Events across the state will focus on designing healthy and safe work, fostering a culture of health and safety and the latest research and innovations in safety and return to work.

Resources for the Month will also provide practical tools and resources to improve work safety, rehabilitation and return to work.

For more information go to www.worksafe.qld.gov.au.



Support for Workplace Health and Safety Reps

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) are essential part of your workplace health and safety, HSRs are trained to assist in circumstances where health and safety may be compromised.

If your workplace doesn't have trained HSRs or has any workplace health and safety concerns workers can receive advice through the HSR Support Service.

Contact Service Coordinator Damien McGarry on:

(07) 3010 2555

info@hsrsupport.org.au

www.hsrsupport.org.au

Mental illness from work leads injury statistics

The most common form of injury at work is a mental health issue caused by the conditions of a person's employment.

In a recent survey by the ACTU of 25,000 people more than 60 per cent of respondents had experienced poor mental health because of unaddressed psychological hazards within their workplace.

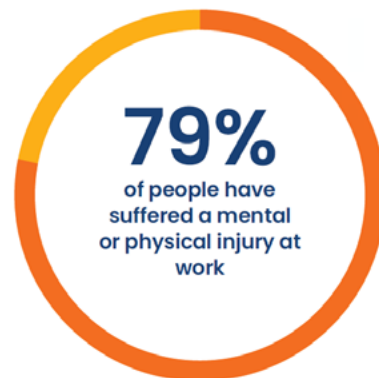
Responses paint a grim picture of workplace conditions in Australia which are causing a high rate of mental illness. The survey found:

- » 79 per cent said they have suffered a mental or physical injury at work;
- » 61 per cent said their employer failing to address workplace hazards had caused mental health issues;
- » 66 per cent have high workloads, to the extent they feel they cannot do everything they are asked;
- » 47 per cent have been exposed to traumatic events, distressed or aggressive clients, patients or customers;
- » 38 per cent work unsociable hours;
- » 46 per cent report a lack of support in their job from supervisors and insufficient training or resources; and
- » 49 per cent say they have experienced bullying, harassment, or other forms of conflict with co-workers.

The survey showed the desperate need for action to ensure that employers uphold their responsibility and



An ACTU survey on work health and safety in Australia.



provide a safe workplace free from physical and psychological harm.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* defines Health as physical and psychological, your employer must have systems in place to ensure your mental - as well as physical - wellbeing is looked after.

Industry fatality statistics for year to date

For 2019 to September 12, 111 workplace fatalities in Australia have been notified to the national body:

- » 37 in Transport, postal & warehousing
- » 25 in Agriculture, forestry & fishing
- » 16 in Construction
- » 7 in Mining
- » 6 in Electricity, gas, water & waste services

- » 6 in Public Administration & safety
- » 4 in Manufacturing
- » 2 in Professional, scientific & technical services
- » 2 in Wholesale trade
- » 2 in 'Other services'
- » 2 in Administration & support services
- » 2 in Arts & recreation services

Source: Safe Work Australia

Don't make your ladder a stairway to heaven!

I received a call last week about ladders at work from a recent attendee at the Safe Work College's Health and Safety Representative (HSR) course.

Workers from a work-group were being asked to undertake a task using portable ladders where the duty-holder had failed to identify, eliminate or minimise potential hazards..

Whilst it's not unreasonable to ask workers to use a ladder, it is unreasonable to ask workers to perform a duty they are unfamiliar with especially where there is a risk of a fall.

Over the past 12 months, three workers have been fatally injured and many other workers have been seriously injured due to falls from portable ladders.

The employer has an obligation under the Work Health and Safety regulations to manage the risk of

SAFETY WORKS

with *HSR Support Service*
Coordinator *Damien McGarry*

a fall by a person from one level to another.

It's worth noting that the *WHS Act 2011* permits a worker to cease or refuse to carry out work, if they have a reasonable concern that the work would expose them to a serious risk to their health or safety.

Be mindful a worker who ceases work must inform the person conducting the business or undertaking (PCBU) as soon as practicable and remain available to carry out alternative duties. In this case, the workers had concerns about performing this task and wanted more information about correct practices in using these ladders. Their work-group's Health and Safety rep was able to assist.

The HSR provided the workers from the work-group with the "Code of Practice for managing the risk of falls at workplaces", which empowered the workers by giving them the knowledge and understanding to make an informed decision.

You can view this Code of Practice by visiting www.worksafe.qld.gov.au and search for "managing the risk of falls".

If you have a similar situation like this and have a concern regarding your health and safety remember the PCBU has obligations to consult with workers regarding health and safety matters.

[Click here for more information regarding consultation](#) or visit www.worksafe.qld.gov.au and search for click "consultation Code of Practice 2011".



Code published on silica, reduction of coal dust exposure

Queensland has introduced an Australian-first Work Health and Safety Code of Practice on preventing exposure to silica dust.

It has also committed to lowering its workplace exposure standard for coal dust to the threshold set by Safe Work Australia later this year.

The new 48-page WHS Code, "Managing respirable crystalline silica dust exposure in the stone benchtop industry", will come into effect on 31 October 2019.

The Code will apply to "all fabrication or processing, including during installation, maintenance and removal of engineered and natural stone benchtops," State Industrial Relations Minister Grace Grace said.

"This Code goes a long way to ensuring long-term behavioural change in an industry that, until recently, has not put worker safety first," she said.

The code sets minimum, enforceable

Where is silica found?

Silica is found in many products :

- » stone products (natural and composite)
- » composite dental fillings
- » manufactured timber
- » bricks
- » cement
- » asphalt
- » drywall and some plasterboards
- » tiles, grout and mortar, and
- » even some plastic material.

Be mindful of exposure if working with any of the above products.

[A complete copy of the National Guidance Material can be downloaded from Safe Work Australia.](#)

standards, focusing on: dust control methods like water suppression to

eliminate respirable crystalline silica dust during mechanical processing; the use of appropriate respirable protective equipment; air and health monitoring for checking whether dust controls are effective; methods for safely installing engineered stone products in homes and other sites; and worker consultation, training and supervision.

Queensland Mines Minister Dr Anthony Lynham used Miners' Memorial Day to promise to lower the State's exposure limit for coal mine dust from an average of 2.5mg per cubic metre, over eight hours, to whatever limit SWA sets later this year.

He said the statutory agency is expected to lower the dust threshold in the national workplace exposure standards for airborne contaminants from a time-weighted average of 3mg per cubic metre over eight hours to 1.5mg.