

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 2015

INFORMATION FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR | AUGUST 2016

TOPIC 5

Workplace Management

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT CAME INTO EFFECT ON 4 APRIL 2016. IT MAKES THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF WORKERS AND WORKPLACES A PRIORITY.

This series of guides provides general information for the Education sector about the different elements of an effective health and safety system.

In these guides, “Boards/ ECEs” refers to school Boards of Trustees, early childhood education (ECE) services and kōhanga reo as entities that meet the definition of Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) under the Act.

These guides draw on information published by WorkSafe New Zealand and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. To keep fully informed about your health and safety obligations, visit WorkSafe’s website: <http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/hswa>

What is workplace management?

In the context of health and safety, workplace management means:

- » ensuring **every person has an appropriate induction to the workplace**, whether they are a worker or other person such as a visitor, parent, student, volunteer, etc
- » ensuring an **emergency plan is in place** for the workplace
- » developing and encouraging a **health and safety culture** in the workplace

What is a workplace?

A workplace, in an education context, is a place where work is carried out for a school or ECE service.

It includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work, including classrooms, the school’s or ECE service’s grounds, vehicles, remote locations and some EOTC activities where the school or ECE service is in control, such as excursions and school camps.

For home-based ECE services, the educator’s home is a workplace when it is being used to provide education and care.

What is induction?

Induction is the process of familiarising people new to the workplace with the health and safety requirements of that workplace.

The Board/ECE must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, it provides any information, training, instruction or supervision necessary to protect everyone from risks to their health and safety arising from work carried out by and at the school or ECE service.

Everyone coming into the workplace for the first time should receive a level of induction training appropriate to their circumstances. For example new workers should receive an in-depth induction whereas other people such as visitors normally receive induction training that covers the risks they are likely to encounter and what to do in the event of an emergency.

What should induction training cover?

Induction training for new workers should:

- » include a **full health and safety briefing** covering workplace hazards and safe working methods
- » identify and explain the **hazards they will be exposed to** in the workplace as well as **hazards they may create as they work**
- » explain the person's **health and safety responsibilities** and any **reporting requirements** for accidents
- » introduce the **health and safety representative, fire warden and first aider**, and explain any emergency and **evacuation** plans
- » show the **location of first aid kits**, Civil Defence kits, phones, fire extinguishers, fire alarms, emergency exits, emergency meeting points, etc
- » explain any **compulsory personal protective equipment** and safety gear, and how and why it must be used

What is an emergency plan?

An emergency plan outlines what workers and others at the workplace should do in an emergency.

An emergency plan will usually cover the following:

- » emergency procedures, including an effective response to an emergency
- » evacuation procedures
- » emergency lockdown response, e.g. what to do in an armed offenders call out
- » notifying emergency services at the earliest opportunity
- » medical treatment and assistance procedures, e.g. when a teacher or student is injured
- » effective communication between the person authorised by the Board/ECE to coordinate the emergency response and all people at the workplace
- » testing of the emergency procedures (e.g. fire drills) including the frequency of testing
- » providing information, training and instruction to relevant workers whose job is to manage these emergency procedures

What types of emergencies should be covered?

The types of emergencies to plan for may include:

- » fire
- » medical emergency
- » natural disasters, e.g. flooding or earthquakes
- » hazardous substances
- » violent confrontations or threats
- » explosion, e.g. gas bottles, science lab materials, or boilers

Your emergency plan should be based on a **practical assessment of hazards** associated with your work activity or workplace and the **possible consequences of an emergency** occurring as a result of those hazards.

Read “*Preparing for and dealing with emergencies and traumatic incidents*”:



www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/emergencies

What is a workplace health and safety culture?

Where there is a strong workplace health and safety culture, everyone works together to achieve health and safety goals. A positive health and safety culture means a safer, healthier and more productive workplace. And like any aspect of an effective school or ECE service, growing a positive health and safety culture requires a commitment of time, resources and focused actions.

Health and safety is an essential part of good management. When the Board/ECE gets health and safety right, it will succeed in other ways, because a healthier and safer workplace is a productive workplace. The Board/ECE and the officers in the school or ECE service (e.g. individual Board members, principals, chief executives) influence the health and safety culture by what they do, what they say and what they focus on.

What are the benefits of a strong health and safety culture?

Research from the former Department of Labour shows that the benefits of a strong health and safety culture (as opposed to a poor culture) include:

- » **fewer incidents**, injuries, illnesses and lost time
- » **healthier and safer behaviours** among workers
- » **improved wellbeing** and job satisfaction
- » better relationships between management and workers

What does a strong health and safety culture look like?

A variety of factors indicate a strong workplace health and safety culture. These include:

- » leaders are regularly seen in the workplace promoting health and safety with the workers
- » everyone agrees that **if a job can't be done safely, then it shouldn't be done at all**
- » everyone has the **knowledge and skills** to do their jobs safely and stay healthy
- » everyone knows what their health and safety **responsibilities and duties** are
- » staff, contractors and health and safety representatives are **actively involved in decision making** on health and safety
- » there is **open and honest communication** about health and safety across the organisation
- » there is **mutual respect** between workers and managers
- » everyone actively reports incidents, risks and near misses
- » incidents and risks are investigated without fear of blame or recrimination
- » **people** who break health and safety rules or condone rule breaking by others **are held accountable**
- » the **organisation learns from incidents and near misses** and makes sure they don't happen again
- » there is an emphasis on the use and **continuous improvement** of the health and safety system
- » **risk assessment** is routinely and actively used at all levels and in all processes
- » health and safety is adequately resourced with **sufficient people, equipment and time**

How does your organisation's health and safety culture measure up? Take the *Safety Culture Snapshot* survey:

www.eat.business.govt.nz/worksafe/tools-resources/health-and-safety-workplace-kit/safety-culture-snapshot/safety-culture-snapshot-survey.pdf/view



A positive health and safety culture means a **safe, healthy and productive** workplace

Read *Workplace Management - Part 1* for information on worker induction training and emergency planning