

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT 2015

INFORMATION FOR THE EDUCATION SECTOR | AUGUST 2016

TOPIC 6 | PART 1

Equipment and plant

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>

This guide covers the health and safety aspects of plant in the workplace, including what plant is, the Board’s/ECE’s duties (as the PCBU) in relation to plant, and the actions required to ensure plant and its use are both safe.

What is plant?

Plant has an all-encompassing meaning under the Act - it includes machinery, vehicles, equipment (including personal protective equipment), appliances, containers, implements, and tools.

Examples of plant and equipment in an education context may include:

- » Boilers and incinerators
- » Electrical equipment e.g. heaters, appliances
- » Vehicles
- » Office equipment e.g. laminators, guillotines
- » Playground equipment e.g. swings, slides, monkey bars
- » Technology class equipment e.g. saws, drills, grinders, sanders, etc
- » Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- » Hand and power tools for maintenance, gardening etc
- » Hand and ride-on mowers, trimmers, power blowers, water blasters
- » Laboratory equipment e.g. microscopes, weighing equipment
- » Technology e.g. computers and phones
- » Sports and PE equipment

What are the Board/ECE’s duties in relation to plant?

The Board/ECE has a **primary duty of care** to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- » the provision and maintenance of a **work environment** that is without risks to health and safety
- » the provision and maintenance of **safe plant and structures**
- » the provision and maintenance of **safe systems of work**
- » the safe use, handling and storage of plant, substances and structures

The Board/ECE must also ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the fixtures, fittings or plant at the school or ECE service are without risks to the health and safety of any person.

The Board/ECE also has a duty to **consult, co-operate, and co-ordinate activities with other PCBUs** where they have a duty in the same matter, for example, with designers, manufacturers, suppliers, importers and installers of plant that may be purchased by the Board/ECE.

What actions are needed to ensure that plant and its use are safe?

To ensure the workplace's plant and its use are safe, the Board/ECE needs to take action in the following areas:

Training

- » train workers in the use of all plant (including PPE) – this includes training on new plant and refresher training on existing plant

Procurement

- » obtain a certificate of compliance that shows the new plant complies with New Zealand Standards from the supplier or manufacturer, e.g. playground equipment complies with NZS 5828:2015 Playground Equipment and Surfacing
- » obtain safety information about the plant from the manufacturer
- » identify the hazards associated with the plant and the health and safety risks it may introduce to the workplace
- » implement the required safety procedures during installation, transportation, handling and storage in consultation and co-operation with other relevant PCBUs, e.g. manufacturer, supplier, installer
- » carry out commissioning of new plant or equipment to ensure it functions according to specifications
- » identify and implement any changes to work procedures and training needed to ensure safe operation of new plant

Maintenance procedures

- » establish maintenance standards for all existing plant and all new plant in accordance with manufacturer's instructions
- » carry out regular inspections of plant and equipment for any signs of damage or malfunctioning
- » ensure PPE is stored and maintained to keep it clean, hygienic and in good working order
- » maintain a maintenance log book detailing plant or equipment name, location, serial or identification number, work carried out, date, time, and who the work was carried out by

Safety procedures

- » ensure instruction manuals, standard operating procedures (SOPs), maintenance schedules and safety signage are available
- » ensure plant and equipment have all the required isolators, fuses, switches, emergency stops, indicators, guards and electrical components
- » ensure any personal protective equipment (PPE) that is required is available and used

Read *Equipment and Plant - Part 2* for information on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)