

# ADVICE SHEET 1

## Management commitment

### Why is management commitment important?

...because responsibility for safety starts at the top.

Everyone agrees that a safe workplace is important, but it won't happen if you don't do all you can to make your workplace as safe as possible. The primary responsibility for a safe workplace rests with you, the employer, the person conducting the business or undertaking (PCBU).

Demonstrate your commitment to safety and ensure that everyone in your business is clear about their health and safety responsibilities. In your business you may have officers, such as directors and managers, who will have specific responsibilities.

Your workers are your greatest asset when establishing an effective safety management plan. Involve them when dealing with health and safety issues that affect them.

#### Management commitment

Develop a successful safety culture in your business by leading from the top, where your actions and attitudes send a message to your workers that you are serious about safety. From this commitment, effective partnerships are formed with your workers to achieve safer workplaces.

#### WHERE YOU TICKED IN THE RED ZONE...

...it is unlikely that safety responsibilities in your business have been made clear or that safety is seen as a priority.

Ticks in the RED zone indicate that you need to take immediate action to develop a safety culture by clarifying people's roles in managing safety, defining your role, allocating resources to meet your safety responsibilities, and demonstrating your personal commitment to operating a safe business.

#### Outline safety responsibilities in your workers' job descriptions. Be clear about who is responsible for safety.

#### Determine safety responsibilities

Speak with your workers about what is expected of them regarding safety in the workplace and about what you need to do to help them achieve these expectations.

If you expect them to report incidents, they need a safety reporting procedure and they expect you to act upon the safety reports. Similarly, if you expect them to work safely, they need safe work procedures and they expect you to involve them in the development of those procedures.

These expectations are the safety responsibilities of you and your workers.

<p><b>Time and money spent on safety is an investment in good business practice. It means reduced costs for workers compensation, less time lost due to injuries, and better productivity.</b></p>	<p><b>Commit time and money</b></p> <p>When responsibilities have been identified, commit enough time and money to ensure these responsibilities are met.</p> <p>Spend time to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop safe work procedures</li> <li>• supervise and train your workers</li> <li>• act on safety reports.</li> </ul> <p>Spend money to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintain and repair equipment</li> <li>• provide personal protective equipment</li> <li>• fix safety problems.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good communication between your workers and management ensures that workplace systems will be effective. Discuss safety issues at workplace meetings, implement an incident reporting procedure for accidents and near misses, and treat safety issues as a priority.</b></p>	<p><b>Make safety a priority</b></p> <p>When you have identified safety responsibilities and committed resources to make your business safe, make safety a priority. Your safety management approach should involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementing safe work procedures for all tasks that expose your workers to risk</li> <li>• following these safe work procedures at all times</li> <li>• involving workers in decisions about their health and safety</li> <li>• training workers to do their jobs safely</li> <li>• reporting and fixing safety problems quickly</li> <li>• reviewing procedures after an incident or changes in the workplace</li> <li>• providing resources to meet safety responsibilities</li> <li>• maintaining an accurate, up-to-date workers compensation insurance policy</li> <li>• displaying a return to work program in your workplace.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WHERE YOU TICKED IN THE ORANGE ZONE...</b></p>	<p><b>...you're on the right track, but you need to do more to address the risks in your workplace.</b></p> <p>Ticks in the ORANGE zone indicate that you need to be more consistent with your commitment to workplace safety. Are safety responsibilities effectively communicated? Are there enough resources to meet safety responsibilities? Are you appropriately involved in safety issues?</p>
	<p><b>Ensure safety responsibilities are clearly defined and understood</b></p> <p>Your workers will contribute to safety if they understand their responsibilities and have the skills to meet those responsibilities.</p> <p>Are new workers given induction training on safety issues and safety responsibilities? Are they given instructions about dealing with safety issues? Do managers understand their role in ensuring safety in the workplace?</p>
	<p><b>Review resources to support safety initiatives</b></p> <p>Demonstrate your commitment by providing enough time and money to deal with safety problems – and fix problems when they arise. Where problems cannot be fixed immediately, provide an alternative solution.</p> <p><b>Demonstrate your commitment</b></p> <p>Get actively involved with safety issues when they arise. Attend workplace meetings, regularly. Speak with your workers and act upon their feedback regarding safety issues. Ensure solutions to safety problems are implemented promptly by those responsible.</p> <p>Inform your workers of any plans you may have regarding new technologies, work practices or equipment – they may have safety concerns. Ask them how best to use safety resources. Ask them what training they need.</p>

<b>WHERE YOU TICKED IN THE GREEN ZONE...</b>	<p>...your workers understand their role – and yours – in getting their work done safely.</p> <p>Ticks in the GREEN zone indicate that safety roles, responsibilities and procedures have been defined.</p>
	<p>Maintain your commitment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring and reviewing your safety performance</li> <li>• building safety into your business plans</li> <li>• promoting safety to your workers</li> <li>• providing positive feedback to workers about their safety performance</li> <li>• providing ongoing training to enhance skills</li> <li>• providing workers with information to improve their knowledge of safety issues and solutions.</li> </ul>

## Typical workplace responsibilities

Owner/manager responsibilities	Worker responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement safe work policies and procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow policies and procedures.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consult with workers about safety.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in training.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train your workers in safe work procedures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use equipment properly.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure safe equipment is purchased.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report incidents and injuries.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an incident and injury reporting procedure, and act upon the incident and injury reports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use safety gear.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply safety gear – eg personal protective equipment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in your return to work plan.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a workers compensation insurance policy and a return to work program.</li> </ul>	

### Disclaimer

This publication may contain work health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website [legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://legislation.nsw.gov.au)

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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