

Insight aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Work Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

Welcome to the new look QRMC



QRMC is proud to launch our new look, accompanied by a brand-spanking new website.

Our services, our team and our commitment to delivering quality outcomes on time and on budget remain the same however!

Jump onto [our website](#) and have a look – there's also a great selection of interesting information and resources in our articles archive.

New QRMC team member



QRMC is excited to welcome a new member to our team.

Chris Simmonds joins our senior consultant group, bringing a wealth of experience in safety and risk management.

In addition to auditing, systems development and training across these areas, Chris also brings specific expertise in ICAM investigations, construction safety, rail and road safety, electrical safety, Chain of Responsibility, and change management.

Read more about Chris on QRMC's [Our People](#) page.

Risk Assessing Mental Health



Mental Health continues to emerge as a WHS risk that, if not managed, has the potential to severely impact the wellbeing of workers.

The WHS Legislation requires employers to provide and maintain a working environment that is *safe and without risks to health*. This includes psychological health.

In order to meet these requirements, employers need to identify, assess, control and review the risks relating to the mental health issues, the same as they would to any other WHS risk.

However, many managers and employers appear unprepared to undertake this process in a confident and robust way.

The first step is to identify the psychosocial hazards that increase the risk of work-related stress. These can include:

- High job demands (sustained high levels physical, mental and/or emotional effort required – i.e. high pressure)

- Low job demands (sustained low levels physical, mental and/or emotional effort required – i.e. boredom/no challenge)
- Conflicting job responsibilities or expectations from managers/supervisors
- Poor support from managers/supervisors
- Poor relationships in the workplace, with either managers/supervisors or colleagues, or both
- Poor clarity around roles
- Low control of responsibilities or tasks
- Badly managed change management in the organisation
- Inadequate recognition and reward
- Injustice in the workplace, e.g. inconsistent application of policies and procedures
- Poor performance of management (either real or perceived)
- Remote and / or Isolated work
- Experience of violent or traumatic events in the workplace

Once the risks have been identified, the process of assessing them is the same as for any WHS risk:

- Identify the harm that could be caused by the risk
- Determine the possible consequences to workers, in light of known control measures
- Determine the likelihood of it happening (this may incorporate frequency, intensity and duration of exposure to the risk)

Psychosocial hazards can also interact with each other with consequently more serious impacts. For example, a combination of high job demands, low control, and poor support would increase both the likelihood and the severity of harm.

A number of safety regulators have developed strategies and toolkits to assist with the identification and assessment process including [Safe Work Australia](#) and [WHSQ](#).

Training Workers to Spot Hazards



Workplace hazards can sometimes be 'looking you in the face' and still not be recognised. This is especially the case where a hazard has existing for a long time and become part of the accepted 'norm' in the workplace. Sometimes a fresh eye is needed to recognise the risk.

Alternatively, workers can be trained to become better at spotting hazards.

When a workplace is familiar, people typically stop looking at their surroundings with any objectivity, and instead tend to 'fill in the gaps' with their memory or expectations.

They no longer see the details of what they're looking at, but rather they make assumptions about what's in front of them. A common sign of this is the ticking and flicking of a workplace inspection form, with some Supervisors even admitting that they completed the form from memory without leaving their office.

This state of affairs readily leads to near misses and accidents, if (when) the assumptions and gap-filling turn out to be wrong.

Conducting some structured hazard identification training, changing the inspection forms, changing the 'inspectors' or even not using a checklist at all are strategies that can be employed to counteract this. Some organisations even set aside time in their schedule for 'hazard hunts' . The more effective organisations embed this responsibility for identifying, reporting and actioning within the cultural expectations for each and every worker – inclusive of the Senior Manager, the apprentice and the hired-contractor – and they are held accountable for this. The management system and the safety culture work together to address the hazards before the accidents develop.

Please [contact QRMC](#) for more information.