

*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.

## Contractor Safety Management (Pt 1)

Engaging Contractors to perform works makes sense for a lot of organisations. Whether it be to fill a short-term resourcing gap or to perform specialised works, it remains important to take a WHS governance approach that covers contractors throughout the contractor management lifecycle.

This article is Part 1 of 2 designed to provide some useful information to assist your organisation with its Contractor Safety Management considerations.

### What is the Contractor Management Lifecycle?

The contractor management lifecycle consists of a number of stages as outlined in the diagram below:



With our focus on the work, health and safety aspects, let's take a look at what each stage consists of.

### Works Planning Stage

As you would for any scope of work, planning should include WHS considerations such as:

- What WHS hazards exist that are associated with the work?
- What is the level of risk associated with the work?
- Does the work include any defined high-risk construction work activities?
- Does the work constitute a Construction Project and therefore require a Principal Contractor?
- Are any special WHS licenses, qualifications, regulatory requirements or notifications required for the work?

Understanding the details of the work, the types of activities and level of risk associated with the work is fundamental in planning an appropriate WHS governance approach.



### Contractor Assessment Stage

When it comes to assessing contractors, one of the first things to determine is what are you assessing them against? Yes, they need to be competent to complete the work safely, but how is this determined? And should the same rules of assessment apply to a contractor servicing the photocopier as for a contractor performing demolition work?

The answers lie largely with a risk-based approach that combines with your organisation's appetite for risk. The higher the level of risk associated with the work, the higher the scrutiny of potential contractors that should occur prior to their engagement. Larger organisations have moved to software-based or independent Contractor Pre-Qualification programs, but as an absolute minimum, contractors seeking to perform work must be able to demonstrate they have the capability and competency to meet the legislative and your organisation's WHS requirements.

In Part 2 of Contractor Safety Management, we will look at the remaining stages of the Contractor Management Lifecycle: the engagement, the onsite management and the post-work review, as well as the WHS inputs that require consideration and management within each of these stages.

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

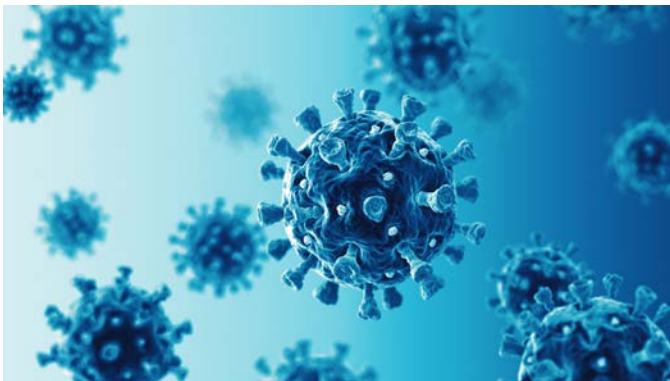
## COVID-19 ... what have we learned in relation to Business Continuity?

There is no doubt that we have learned a great deal over the last 18 months of the COVID pandemic; we have learned the importance of mask-wearing, how the different vaccines work, and a host of new terms like 'social distancing', 'adverse reaction', 'organisational pivot' and 'hybrid working'.

But have we learned how to effectively manage our business continuity risks?

International studies have confirmed that organisations worldwide were unprepared for the COVID-19 crisis. This is a fairly obvious statement, especially when we consider how many organisations either didn't have a BCP in place or had perhaps underestimated the potential business interruptions that would arise during an extended event (e.g. lockdowns)."

The same studies actually highlighted that the more 'successful' organisations were the ones that were truly agile, adjusting their work arrangements as best they could. With this key factor identified – being agile and 'thinking on your feet' – the question arises for further consideration: what do we need to focus on moving forward given the nature of the pandemic and the lockdowns, etc.?



Some suggested areas that your business may wish to consider are:

- The fluidity of the situation may prompt the use of less structured BCPs and more principles and guidance (allowing 'thinking on your feet' by Senior Management)
- There appears to be a need to build extra contingencies into key roles, a greater need for organisations to adopt new practices to build contingency skill matrices, and deeper succession plans beyond the Executive Managers
- The required agility may prompt organisations to adapt their management structure and decision-making processes
- Digital connectivity may need to be strengthened while being cognisant of the need for cyber security
- Organisations need to be acutely aware of the mental health impacts on their employees, and the changing nature of this in the short and long-term as the lockdowns, quarantines, etc. develop
- Overall, there may be a need to institute formal Continuity Management Team(s) that meet regularly as a response to the Pandemic and its shifting restrictions and regulations
- And, of course, updates would need to be made to the Organisation's Risk Register

One thing that hasn't changed from the pre-COVID traditional approach to BCPs to now, is the need for timely and effective communication, and keeping everyone informed up and down the organisational structure, as well as the key external stakeholders.

COVID-19 has set a new benchmark for preparedness in which organisations will need to continuously adapt and evolve their strategies to better prepare for future risks, even though there may be some they cannot ever be fully prepared for.

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