

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.

Reflections on the Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice (Part 3)

In [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#) of this series on the impact of the *Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice*, we looked at the changes that have been brought into effect and the impact to organisations, and the key approaches to identifying psychosocial hazards. In this part we explore the Code's wealth of guidance information available to assist organisations in how to control psychosocial hazards at work.



The legislative requirement for managing physical risks 'so far as is reasonably practicable' in accordance with the hierarchy of controls, also applies to managing psychosocial risks. Those used to managing physical safety can find it challenging to apply the principles to psychosocial safety.

[Appendix 4](#) of the [Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice](#) provides an incredible volume of information and detailed examples for what types of controls can be implemented for each of the commonly occurring psychosocial hazards:

- High and/or low job demands
 - Low job control
 - Poor support
 - Low role clarity
 - Poor organisational change management
 - Low reward and recognition
 - Poor organisational justice
 - Remote or isolated work
 - Poor environmental conditions
- Traumatic events
 - Violence, abuse and aggression
 - Bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment
 - Poor workplace relationships including interpersonal conflict

Regardless of the type of psychosocial hazard, there are many things that organisations can do to address *all* psychosocial hazards. Generally speaking, focusing on higher level control measures that address work design will function to address the risk of harm at the source, as opposed to using measures that only reduce the impact of harm after it has occurred. In most cases a combination of controls will be needed to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risk.

Additionally:

- Ensure there are policies and processes for reporting and responding to psychosocial hazards in your workplace.
- Ensure there is training for leaders on how to respond in a timely and empathetic manner to support workers who may have experienced demanding, distressing, or traumatic events, or have been exposed to bullying, violence, aggression, or harassment.
- Educate workers and managers about early warning signs of stress and fatigue and how to respond when they recognise them in themselves or others.
- Provide clear guidelines and expectations about respectful workplace behaviours and ensure leaders and line-managers model these behaviours.
- Ensure professional psychological support is available to workers who are directly or indirectly exposed to traumatic events or other emotionally demanding work.
- Create an environment in which workers feel comfortable raising concerns about any psychosocial hazards.
- Promote work-life balance and encourage workers to implement self-care practices, to take annual leave regularly, or to recover from periods of high demands.
- Embed meaningful recognition and reward processes within the organisation.

But this is not a set and forget situation. The assessed level of risk does need to be reviewed, the implemented controls need to be monitored to ensure that they remain in place and effective, and the workplace operation needs to be attuned to identifying any further psychosocial hazards that require addressing.

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

New and Emerging Technology and Work Design Risks

The rapid integration of digital technologies and evolving work design is reshaping workplaces across Australia, creating both opportunities and significant WHS risks. While innovations such as artificial intelligence (AI), automation and digital platforms can improve efficiency and reduce exposure to traditional physical hazards, they are also introducing complex new risk profiles that organisations must actively manage.

One of the most significant developments is the growing use of AI and algorithm-driven systems to allocate work, monitor performance and manage workflows. Recent legislative changes in NSW have clarified that these “digital work systems” fall squarely within WHS duties, requiring employers to ensure they do not create risks to worker health and safety. These systems can generate psychosocial hazards, particularly where workers experience (or perceive) constant monitoring, reduced autonomy or anxiety about job security.

Psychosocial risks are now central to discussions about technology in the workplace. Emerging issues include “techno-stress” (where workers struggle to adapt to new systems), and cognitive overload caused by managing complex digital tools. Surveillance technologies and performance algorithms can also create feelings of mistrust, reduced privacy and behavioural pressure, negatively affecting workplace culture and mental health.

Changes in work design are further amplifying these risks. The rise of gig and platform work, remote and flexible work arrangements, and multi-employer environments has altered many traditional employment relationships. This can create uncertainty around roles, responsibilities and



accountability for WHS, making risk management more challenging. Additionally, algorithmic management systems may reduce worker control and decision-making capacity, which is a recognised psychosocial hazard.

Another emerging concern is the impact of AI on job design and workforce dynamics. AI-driven decision-making can introduce perceived unfairness, bias and lack of transparency, particularly in recruitment and performance management processes. This can lead to stress, disengagement and workplace conflict if not properly managed. Furthermore, over-reliance on AI systems may reduce human judgement and accountability, creating new behavioural and safety risks.

Importantly, these risks are often not caused by the technology itself, but by poor implementation, inadequate consultation and communication, and weak governance. Effective WHS management requires organisations to consider how technology interacts with job design, workload, supervision and organisational culture. Regulators increasingly expect businesses to proactively identify, assess and control these risks as part of their broader WHS obligations.

The intersection of technology and work design represents a critical frontier for WHS. Organisations that fail to address these emerging risks may face not only legal consequences but also reduced workforce wellbeing and performance. A proactive, human-centred approach to technology adoption is essential to ensure that innovation enhances, rather than undermines, workplace safety.

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