POOR SUPPORT

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management involves identifying potential risks, assessing their likelihood and impact, and developing strategies to mitigate or control them. It is a proactive process that seeks to prevent risks from occurring or minimise their impact if they do occur.

No person should be injured in their workplace, including psychological injury. To meet their duties to ensure health and safety, employers must identify and eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks so far as is reasonably practicable. How long (duration), how often (frequency) and how significantly (severity) workers are exposed to psychosocial hazards impacts the level of risks. Hazards interacting or combining with each other may also impact this. Further guidance on the risk management process is available in the Code of Practice: *__How to manage work health and safety risks.__* For more information on the risk management process for psychosocial hazards, please view *__Section 2 of the Model Code of Practice__*.

Mind Your Head advocates for *prevention* – that is, identifying risk, implementing or changing systems to prevent worker harm or injury *before it occurs.*

Examples of Risk Management Strategies for Poor Support include:

Job design, safe work systems and procedures:

- Job Design and Task Allocation: Design jobs in a way that considers the workload and complexity of tasks, ensuring they are manageable and achievable within reasonable timeframes. This can prevent employees from feeling overwhelmed and unsupported in their roles.
- Resource Allocation: Adequately allocate resources such as staff, equipment, and tools to ensure workers have the necessary means to perform their tasks efficiently and effectively.
- Training and Development: Provide comprehensive training and development programs to equip employees with the skills and knowledge required to carry out their responsibilities successfully. This can help prevent issues arising from inadequate training.
- Clear Communication Channels: Establish clear lines of communication within the organization, ensuring that workers know whom to approach for support, guidance, and problem-solving.
- Performance Feedback and Recognition: Implement regular performance feedback and recognition mechanisms to acknowledge employees' efforts and provide constructive feedback. This can boost morale and motivation.
- Promote a Supportive Culture: Foster a work culture that encourages teamwork, mutual support, and open communication. This can prevent feelings of isolation and encourage a collaborative environment.

- Work-Life Balance Initiatives: Implement work-life balance initiatives to promote employee well-being and prevent burnout. This could include flexible work arrangements or wellness programs.
- Conflict Resolution Strategies: Develop conflict resolution procedures to address issues between employees and supervisors promptly, reducing tensions and fostering a harmonious work environment.

Increasing Support:

- Enhance Communication and Collaboration: Conduct regular team meetings to address challenges, support needs, and training requirements, fostering open discussions among workers.
- Promote Cooperative Work Culture: Cultivate a workplace culture that values cooperation over competition by setting team-oriented goals and acknowledging and praising collaboration.
- Review and Maintain Tools and Equipment: Ensure that tools, systems, and equipment are well-maintained and suitable for the tasks at hand. Consider upgrading equipment for better efficiency if necessary.
- Schedule Supervisor Availability: Schedule meetings to align with workers' regular hours, ensuring supervisors are available to address issues and answer questions promptly.
- Provide Extra Support during Peak Periods: Increase support during demanding tasks or busy periods by rostering more workers or providing additional check-ins.
- Backfill Roles and Distribute Work: Fill in vacant roles or redistribute tasks when workers are absent or on leave to maintain support continuity.
- Strategically Design Rosters: Design rosters so that supervisors are accessible during challenging or busy times, providing timely assistance when required.
- Set Clear Work Goals: Clearly outline work goals and tasks to workers, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities.
- Comprehensive Training: Provide workers with thorough training on their job tasks, relevant tools, equipment, systems, and policies.
- Promote Open Communication: Establish an open-door policy and encourage workers to share concerns early, fostering a safe environment for voicing issues.
- Recognise and Reward Supportive Behaviour: Encourage and reward workers who support each other, creating a positive and cooperative work environment.
- Strengthen Working Relationships: Invest in team planning and building activities to foster positive working relationships among employees, facilitating team discussions.
- Develop Interpersonal Capabilities: Enhance the team's interpersonal skills, such as emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, communication, and feedback abilities.
- Promote Empathetic Leadership: Encourage supervisors to demonstrate empathy in their leadership by addressing worker concerns sensitively and offering assistance when needed.
- Supervisor Role Understanding: Ensure supervisors fully understand their roles in supervising workers, providing guidance and support.

The Worker

- Hire Qualified Supervisors: Recruit supervisors with the necessary skills, experience, and training to effectively perform their roles and support their teams.
- Supervisor Development Programs: Offer development programs to enhance supervisors' skills and leadership capabilities.
- Comprehensive Inductions and Training: Establish comprehensive inductions, training, and mentoring programs, including buddy systems, to support new workers in their roles.

WAYS TO MANAGE RISKS

Consult workers and HSRs. Establish Health and Safety Committees with at least 50% representation from workers. Encourage feedback, especially on any changes.

Consider how long, how often and how severely workers are exposed to hazards. The longer, more often and worse the low job control, the higher the risk that workers may be harmed.

Utilise surveys and tools to assess psychosocial risks in the workplace, particularly for businesses with over 20 employees.

Establish a system for workers to report their concerns, while ensuring anonymity and treating their concerns with respect and seriousness to encourage reporting.

Observe work and behaviours, such as prolonged work duration, excessive paperwork, or customer frustration, which may indicate low job control.

Review available information, including employee retention, incident reports, complaints, time-off records, injuries, incidents, and workers' compensation to identify potential hazards.

Identify other hazards present and evaluate how they may interact or combine to create new, heightened risks. For instance, low job control could pose a greater risk in workplaces with high job demands if workers are unable to take breaks or switch tasks to manage fatigue. Finally, consider the duration, frequency, and severity of workers' exposure to hazards, as prolonged and severe exposure to low job control could increase the risk of harm.