



## JOB DEMANDS

What are job demands?  
Examples of high and low job demands  
Impacts on workers and organisations  
Risk Management  
Control Measures

### WHAT ARE JOB DEMANDS?

High and Low job demands are one of the most common workplace mental health hazards, there include both physical and cognitive demands.

Sometimes, challenging tasks can make workers feel excited and motivated about their work. However, it is important that workers aren't overloaded with excessive, unrealistic or unreasonable demands. Resource constraints or time pressures can also often lead workers to feel overwhelmed or unable to cope.

Similarly, low job demands like repetitive or monotonous tasks, can often make workers feel disengaged or underutilised.

### EXAMPLES OF HIGH AND LOW JOB DEMANDS

There are many examples of jobs demands in the workplace, which can vary depending on the type of work, industry and location of the workplace, including:

#### HIGH JOB DEMANDS

##### TIME DEMANDS

- **Time pressure:** Jobs that require employees to make quick decisions or act under time pressure, such as emergency responders or air traffic controllers, can create high demands on their cognitive abilities and stress levels.
- **Tight or unrealistic deadlines:** When a job requires completing a task or project within a short timeframe, it can create high demands on an employee's time and energy.
- **Long working hours:** Jobs that require employees to work long hours, including overtime and weekend work, can create high demands and lead to work-life conflicts.

##### COGNITIVE & EMOTIONAL DEMANDS



# PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 1

- **Complex tasks:** Jobs that require employees to perform complex tasks, such as analysing data or solving technical problems, can create high demands on their cognitive abilities.
- **Emotional labour:** Jobs that require employees to manage their emotions or deal with difficult customers, such as in customer service or healthcare, can create high emotional demands.
- **Excessive Vigilance:** Staying alert for extended periods for infrequent events
- **Speed:** the requirement to work hard and fast,
- **Low role clarity:** this is a recognised psychosocial hazard on its own and refers to a situation in which an employee has an unclear understanding of their job responsibilities, the expectations placed on them, or how their role fits into the larger organizational context

## WORKLOAD DEMANDS

- **High workload:** When an employee is responsible for a high volume of work or facing unrealistic/impossible amounts of work, it can create high demands on their cognitive and physical abilities, leading to stress and burnout.

## PHYSICAL DEMANDS

- having to sit or stand for long periods,
- working in hazardous conditions, such as exposure to dangerous chemicals or equipment,
- working in awkward positions for extended periods
- working in environments with extreme temperatures or poor air quality
- jobs that require physical exertion or exposure to hazards (such as leading fitness classes, construction, mining)

## ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS

- **Remote or isolated work**
- **Poor environmental conditions,** such as extreme temperatures, noise, or poor air quality. Working in an office with poor ventilation, for example, can lead to symptoms such as headaches, eye irritation, and respiratory problems.

## LOW JOB DEMANDS

### COGNITIVE & EMOTIONAL DEMANDS

- **Highly repetitive, monotonous and routine tasks:** performing the same or similar tasks repeatedly, such as data entry or assembly line work



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- **Lack autonomy or decision-making authority:** when workers have little control over their work or decision-making processes, leading to stress and dissatisfaction

## WORKLOAD DEMANDS

- **Long periods of insufficient work** or being responsible for a minimal volume of work

## PHYSICAL DEMANDS

- **Jobs that involve exposure to repetitive motions:** Jobs that require repetitive motions, such as typing or using a mouse, can lead to repetitive strain injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome.
- **Jobs that involve prolonged sitting:** While sitting for long periods may seem like a low demand activity, it can still pose health risks, such as musculoskeletal disorders, back pain, and poor circulation.

## Indicators include situations where:

- workloads are excessive or create unreasonable time pressure;
- workers have very little say in the way they do their work or when they can take rest breaks;
- workers are not involved in making decisions about work that affects them or their clients; and
- workers have skills and experience that are underused.

## IMPACTS OF JOB DEMANDS

The impacts of job demands on both workers and organisations is numerous. Some impacts to consider include:

### ON WORKERS

**Stress and anxiety:** High job demands can lead to increased stress levels among workers. This can result in physical and mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

**Burnout:** If job demands are consistently high, workers may experience burnout. This is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that can make it difficult for workers to perform their jobs effectively.

### ON ORGANISATIONS

**Reduced productivity and engagement:** Workers who are stressed or burnt out may be less productive and have lower performance levels, which can have a negative impact on the organisation's overall productivity.

**Increased absenteeism and turnover:** When job demands are consistently high, workers may be more likely to miss work or leave their jobs, leading to increased absenteeism and turnover rates. This can be costly for organisations in terms of recruiting and training new employees.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 1

**Decreased job satisfaction:** High job demands can lead to decreased job satisfaction if workers feel that they are not able to meet the demands of their job. This can result in decreased motivation, commitment, and engagement.

**Health problems:** The stress and burnout caused by high job demands can lead to a variety of health problems, including high blood pressure, heart disease, anxiety, and depression.

**Physical injury:** physically demanding jobs and those with poor environmental conditions increase the risk of physical injury to an employee, such as musculoskeletal or repetitive-use injuries.

**Compensation claims:** Increased risk of both psychosocial or physical injury workers compensation claims, including common law claims if injury is on behalf of negligence through the organisation.

**Decreased employee morale and engagement, poor workplace culture:** Workers who feel overwhelmed by high job demands may experience reduced job satisfaction and engagement, leading to lower levels of motivation and commitment. If employees feel that they are overworked or underappreciated, they may have lower morale, contributing to lower engagement and productivity.

**Decreased innovation and creativity:** High job demands can limit workers' ability to be creative and innovative in their work, leading to decreased innovation and reduced competitiveness for organisations.

**Increased costs:** High job demands can lead to increased costs for organisations, including costs associated with employee turnover, absenteeism, and workers' compensation claims.

**Reputation damage:** via negative reviews and comments, public scrutiny and potential legal issues. Complaints from customers or clients.

## 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 High and Low Job Demands include:

### Prevention

#### Job design, safe work systems and procedures:

- Consult workers who may be affected by work health and safety issues, agree on consultation arrangements, and use them for changes that may impact safety. Establishing employee feedback mechanisms to identify and address issues related to job demands before they become problematic, such as health and safety committees.
- Modify and adjust work plans to accommodate changes (for example, KPIs or performance targets whilst a worker learns a new role)
- Conducting a job analysis can help organisations identify the demands of different jobs and ensure that they are appropriately matched to the skills and abilities of employees. This can help prevent both high and low job demands.
- Organisations can implement workload management strategies, such as job rotation, job enrichment, or flexible scheduling, to prevent high job demands and promote a healthy work-life balance for employees.
- Providing training and development opportunities to employees can help them acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the demands of their jobs. This can help prevent low job demands and promote employee engagement and motivation

#### Physical work environment:

- identify the physical demands associated with each job and perform ergonomic assessments to identify potential hazards and make adjustments to equipment, workstations, and tools to reduce the risk of injury.
- consult with workers, HSRs and experts in specific fields to identify potential hazards that may be overlooked by those who do not perform the roles themselves
- Provide training and education to employees on proper lifting techniques, posture, and ergonomics to reduce the risk of injury.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of risk management strategies to ensure that they are reducing the risk of injury and adjust them as needed, including access to improvement/suggestion forms for workers

### Intervene Early

- If a review indicates that the current measures for control measures are inadequate or failing, immediately take steps to identify and establish new measures to mitigate the risks.
- In case of workers experiencing symptoms of work-related stress, the employer should consider modifying their job responsibilities and providing additional workplace support.



# PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 1

- Employees who are at higher risk of suffering an injury should be offered early assistance to minimize the chance of an incident occurring.
- Consistently monitor workloads and physical environments and provide ways for workers to report potential hazardous.

## Support Recovery

- Provide early assistance and support to access treatment and rehabilitation services, from the time an injury occurs.
- Support timely and sustainable recovery at work (RAW) or return to work (RTW) through effective consultation, addressing any remaining work-related hazards and risks that may exacerbate the existing work-related psychological injury or cause a new injury.

## 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, high job demands could pose a greater risk in workplaces with low job control 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.



## CONTROL MEASURES

*Control measures are specific actions or procedures that are put in place to manage or mitigate identified risks. They are reactive measures that are implemented after risks have been identified and assessed as part of the risk management process. Control measures are designed to reduce the likelihood or impact of risks, and they can take many forms, including administrative controls, engineering controls, and personal protective equipment.*

### Manage Time Demands:

- Ensure that the number of employees is sufficient for the required workload and that they have adequate time to complete their tasks.
- Give employees the chance to provide feedback on the work pace and timing. Set realistic targets that can be achieved.
- Monitor workloads during peak periods like the holiday seasons.
- Conduct regular workload reviews to ensure that employees have the necessary support.
- Encourage employees to speak up early if they feel their workload is excessive.

### Manage Cognitive and Emotional Demands:

- Provide job variety and reduce the impact of repetitive tasks by rotating tasks and schedules where possible.
- Provide adequate training to leaders so they understand the risks of these demands.
- Encourage autonomy whenever possible and give employees some control over the way they perform their work, such as work pace and task order, including flexible working arrangements when possible.
- Ensure workers are provided with the tools and resources needed to do their job, and that there is no expectation and work beyond the hours of the role so workers can maintain a work/life balance and are able to cognitively “switch off”.
- Implement support systems for workers who make complex or difficult decisions, such as a second person to assist.
- Provide training and ongoing support to workers on how to manage difficult or confronting situations. If these situations cannot be removed completely, limit them as much as possible.

### Manage Physical Demands

- Provide regular breaks and rotate repetitive manual tasks between employees where feasible. Limit the amount of time spent doing manual physical labour, ensuring adequate recovery.
- Create a comfortable physical environment, such as making changes to the workstation, equipment, or the job process.
- Replace heavy manual tasks with machinery to reduce physical workloads wherever possible.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 1

- Ensure that workers are well trained and physically able to perform the job.

### DO

Discuss projected workloads and address anticipated absences with workers, allowing for suggestions

Discuss workloads with individuals, identify challenges encountered or anticipated and establish feasible workplans with them

Ensure workers are aware of their job responsibilities and are not given tasks outside of their position descriptions

Identify peaks and troughs for workload and incorporate into staffing rosters

Recruit early and effectively to ensure there are no staff shortages

Allocate resources such as time and equipment to ensure workers can undertake their jobs properly

Ensure utilisation of skills within everyday work

Ensure workers have adequate time management skills and provide training where needed

Give realistic deadlines

Rotate job tasks for repetitive or highly demanding tasks or to reduce exposure time for workers' dealing with aggressive clients  
minimise environmental stressors (e.g. noise, heat, vibration)

Engage workers in making decisions about the way they do their work

Allow workers to participate in the decisions making processes about issues that affect their work

### DO NOT

Ask people to undertake tasks they are not trained or skilled to do

Expect people to work longer hours than rostered or work on their days off

Increase an individual's workload without appropriate resources for the task

Under-utilise skills

Limit workers to repetitive and monotonous tasks  
micro-manage or dictate how workers are to carry out all duties involved in their role





## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 1

Conduct a performance review processes as this can be an opportunity for workers to have input into the way they do their work

Provide opportunities for skill development



## **LOW JOB CONTROL**

- 1. What is low job control?**
- 2. Examples of low job control**
- 3. Impacts on workers and organisations**
- 4. Risk Management**
- 5. Control Measures**

### **WHAT IS LOW JOB CONTROL?**

Low job control refers to the extent to which an employee feels they have control over their work environment and the tasks they are assigned, including situations where an employee has limited autonomy and decision-making power over their work. This can include factors such as having little control over their schedule, being unable to choose the tasks they perform, and having limited input into workplace policies or procedures. When employees have low job control, they may feel that they have little say in how they perform their work or the decisions that affect their job. This can lead to feelings of powerlessness, frustration, and stress.

Low job control can be a hazard for a number of reasons. When employees feel that they have little control over their work, they may feel that their efforts are meaningless or that they are not making a valuable contribution to their organisation, leading to feelings of demotivation and disengagement, which can ultimately affect their productivity and job satisfaction.

Low job control can also lead to stress and burnout; when employees feel that they have little control over their work, they may feel that they are unable to meet the demands of their job or that they are constantly under pressure to perform. This can lead to a range of physical and psychological symptoms, including headaches, fatigue, anxiety, and depression.

### **EXAMPLES OF LOW JOB CONTROL**

There are many examples of what job control might look like in the workplace, which can vary depending on the type of work, industry and location of the workplace. Some examples include:

- not being able to decide what work tasks are performed and when
- having little influence on how work is performed, such as when tasks are changed or breaks taken
- not having the ability to choose where work is performed (ie: at home or in the workplace)
- not having the freedom to decide how to do work tasks (i.e.: prescriptive processes that does not allow workers to apply their skills or judgement)
- Strict processes that can't be changed or adapted to fit a situation
- being supervised heavily (i.e. requiring permission for basic decisions or tasks, requiring sign-off before progressing routine or low risk tasks)



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 2

- a workers level of autonomy not matching their abilities
- lack of consultation about changes that impact work
- limited scope for workers to adapt the way they work to changing situations or adopt work efficiencies
- workers not having control over their physical environment.

### Indicators include situations where workers:

- have little control or say in the way they do their work;
- are not involved in decision making about their work;
- are required to work at a pace that exceeds staffing capabilities or resources;
- are being micro-managed and required to perform tasks in specific ways;
- have their skills and experiences undervalued or underutilised; and
- are unable to refuse to work with, or provide service to, aggressive customers or clients.

This hazard is exacerbated when paired with **high job demand**; situations where workers have excessive responsibility but little authority in respect to decision making.

## IMPACTS OF LOW JOB CONTROL

The impacts of low job control on both workers and organisations is numerous. Some impacts to consider include:

### ON WORKERS

Boredom; loss of interest or care in the job/task  
Disengaged or withdrawn from work  
Depression  
Anxiety  
Mental stress or fatigue  
Anger or mood swings  
Diminished performance

### ON ORGANISATIONS

Poor workplace culture – bored and disengaged employees  
Higher employee turnover - and the costs associated with frequent recruitment and training  
Negative or strained work-team relations and team dynamics  
Reduced productivity  
Increased absenteeism (resulting in reduced productivity)  
Complaints from customers or clients  
Increased worker injury and illness



## RISK MANAGEMENT

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**Examples of Risk Management Strategies for Low Job Control include:**

### Prevention

- Ensure good work design and safe systems of work by addressing the indicators of low job control (outlined in *What is Low Job Control*) in your workplace.
- Identify work-related hazards and risks via consultation with workers and their representatives.
- Conduct risk assessments and implement effective control measures. The Mind Your Head OHS Checklist for Psychosocial Safety is [available here](#).
- Provide workers with adequate and effective training, information and supervision they need to do their job safely and well. Consult workers and ask for feedback for to assess effectiveness.
- Encourage feedback and act promptly to address it.
- Maintain, monitor and review control measures and revise if necessary.

### Intervene Early

- If reviews, consultation or feedback show control measures are not effective, take prompt action to identify and implement additional controls.
- Immediately support workers showing signs of work-related stress or distress (i.e. modifying work, extra workplace support. Consult with the individual to ensure effective support.
- Provide early assistance for those with an increased risk of injury.

### Support Recovery

- Provide early assistance and support to access treatment and rehabilitation services, from the time an injury occurs.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 2

- Support timely and sustainable recovery at work (RAW) or return to work (RTW) through effective consultation, addressing any remaining work-related hazards and risks that may exacerbate the existing work-related psychological injury or cause a new injury.

### 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.

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### CONTROL MEASURES

***Control measures are specific actions or procedures that are put in place to manage or mitigate identified risks. They are reactive measures that are implemented after risks have been identified and assessed as part of the risk management process. Control measures are designed to reduce the likelihood or impact of risks, and they can take many forms, including administrative controls, engineering controls, and personal protective equipment.***

**Job redesign:** Redesigning job tasks to provide workers with more control over their work can help reduce the risk of low job control. For example, allowing workers to have more say in their work schedules, work methods, and the tasks they perform can help improve their sense of control.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 2

**Communication and feedback:** Open communication channels between workers and management can help workers feel more involved in decision-making processes and provide them with feedback on their work. Regular feedback and recognition can help workers feel more valued and in control of their work.

**Encourage employee participation:** Employers should encourage employee participation in decision-making processes whenever possible. This can help employees to feel more engaged and invested in their work, and can provide them with a sense of control over their environment.

**Workload management:** Ensuring that workloads are manageable and realistic can help reduce the risk of low job control. This can include workload assessments, the use of workload management tools, and the allocation of resources to manage workload demands.

**Workplace policies and procedures: Implementing** workplace policies and procedures that promote a healthy work-life balance can help workers feel more in control of their work. This can include policies around flexible work arrangements, job sharing, and leave entitlements.

### DO

Encourage worker involvement in decision-making related to their work by allowing them to participate in the decision-making process for matters that affect them.

Conduct review processes to give workers the opportunity to provide input on the way they do their work.

**Provide clear job descriptions:** Employers should provide clear and detailed job descriptions that outline the responsibilities, tasks, and expectations of each employee. This can help employees to understand what is expected of them and can provide a sense of structure and control.

**Provide opportunities for training and development:** Employers should provide opportunities for employees to learn new skills and develop their knowledge and expertise. This can help employees to feel more confident in their abilities and can provide them with a greater sense of control over their work.

**Foster a positive work culture:** Employers should foster a positive work culture that values employee

### DO NOT

Do not expect workers to stay after hours or be available for work-related tasks/communication outside of their working hours

Expect workers to use their personal devices for work-related communication

Avoid dictating how workers should carry out all their duties, instead provide a reasonable level of autonomy by allowing workers to make decisions related to their role, wherever possible.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 2

well-being and promotes work-life balance. This can help employees to feel supported and valued, and can reduce the risk of burnout and other psychosocial hazards.



# **POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

- 1. What is poor organisational change management?**
- 2. Examples of poor organisational change management**
- 3. Impacts on workers and organisations**
- 4. Risk Management**
- 5. Control Measures**

## **WHAT IS POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT?**

When change happens in the workplace, it can be either positive or negative. Poor organisational change management refers to a situation where a company fails to properly plan, implement, and manage changes within its operations or structure. When change is managed poorly, it can have a negative impact on workers, including feelings of anxiousness and job insecurity.

Poor organisational change management refers to a situation where a company or organisation fails to effectively plan, implement, and communicate changes to its workers. It can occur when an organisation makes a change without fully understanding the potential impact on employees or customers, or when there is a lack of communication or support throughout the change process.

Some common signs of poor organisational change management include resistance from employees, confusion or frustration among stakeholders, decreased productivity, increased turnover, and ultimately, failure to achieve the desired outcomes of the change initiative. Effective change management involves careful planning, communication, and collaboration to ensure that everyone is on board with the proposed changes and understands their role in the process. It also involves providing support and resources to employees to help them adapt to the changes and mitigate any negative impacts.

## **EXAMPLES OF POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT**

There are many examples of poor organisational change management in the workplace, which can vary depending on the type of work, industry and location of the workplace, including:

- Making changes without talking to or allowing workers and their representatives to have a say
- announcing changes at the last minute
- Not ensuring that workers and their representatives understand the changes that will impact them properly
- Using inappropriate communication channels to advise workers and their representatives about changes
- Not allowing enough time for the changes to take effect to give workers time to adjust.





## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 3

- Lack of clear communication: Failure to communicate the need for change, the specific changes that will be made, and the expected outcomes can lead to confusion and resistance.
- Insufficient planning: Lack of planning can result in a lack of direction and resources, leading to delays, errors, and failures.
- Resistance to change: When employees feel left out of the change process or are not given enough time or resources to adapt to new systems, they may resist the change or even actively work against it.
- Inadequate training: Failure to provide adequate training and support for employees during the transition can lead to confusion and errors.
- Poor leadership: Lack of leadership or inadequate leadership can lead to poor decision-making, confusion, and disorganisation.
- When planning and implementing changes, not adequately assessing potential new hazards or impacts on performance.
- Lack of support and information provided during changes.
- Failure to communicate crucial information to employees during periods of change.

### Indicators include situations where there is:

- uncertainty about roles, responsibilities, and expectations during the change process, leading to confusion and frustration.
- inadequate support or resources to adapt to the changes, leading to stress and burnout.
- feelings that they [the workers] are not being kept informed about the changes or their impact on the organisation, leading to anxiety and uncertainty.
- resistance to changes, if workers feel that their needs and concerns are not being addressed, leading to conflict and delays in the change process.
- demotivation or disengagement from workers if they perceive the changes as negative or disruptive, leading to decreased productivity and morale.
- increased turnover: If workers feel that their needs are not being met or that they are not valued during the change process, they may leave the organisation, leading to increased turnover rates.

## IMPACTS OF POOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT

The impacts of poor organisation change management on both workers and organisations is numerous. Some impacts to consider include:

### ON WORKERS

Increased stress due to uncertainty, lack of support, and changes in their work environment or job responsibilities.

### ON ORGANISATIONS

Decreased profitability from disruptions in workflows, decreased productivity, and increased costs, ultimately impacting the profitability of the business.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 3

Decreased job satisfaction due to the negative effects of poorly managed change.

Reduced productivity due to disruptions in work processes, reduced efficiency, and decreased productivity.

Burnout due to overwhelm from the demands of poorly managed change and experience burnout, leading to decreased job performance and increased absenteeism.

Health issues: Prolonged stress and anxiety caused by poorly managed change can lead to physical and mental health issues, such as insomnia, depression, and cardiovascular disease.

Damage to reputation: Poorly managed change can result in negative publicity, leading to damage to the business's reputation and loss of customer trust.

Loss of competitiveness/loss of competitive advantage as the business struggles to adapt to new market trends and customer demands.

Reduced employee morale, to decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates.

Decreased customer satisfaction due to disruptions in customer service, resulting in decreased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Legal and regulatory issues due to non-compliance with employment laws, safety regulations, and environmental standards.

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**Examples of Risk Management Strategies for Poor Organisational Change Management include:**



## Prevention

### Job design, safe work systems and procedures:

- Consult workers who may be affected by work health and safety issues, agree on consultation arrangements, and use them for changes that may impact safety.
- Modify and adjust work plans to accommodate changes (for example, KPIs or performance targets whilst a worker learns a new role)
- Ensure that changes to duties, tasks, objectives, and reporting arrangements are reasonable and fair.
- Encourage workers to participate in the creation of new job descriptions and work procedures.
- Encourage workers to engage in the consultation process and express any questions, worries or suggestions they may have.
- Acknowledge individual differences and be aware that workers may have diverse responses to change, thus requiring different levels of consultation and support.
- Workers must receive all the necessary information, training, instruction, and supervision to safely perform their work. For example, if new equipment is introduced, workers should be trained on how to use it safely.
- The person who communicates changes should have the necessary skills and authority to do so. Additionally, supervisors should have the skills to support workers through periods of change.

### Physical work environment:

- Offer practical assistance, such as ensuring that workers have the necessary tools and resources to effectively carry out new tasks.
- Establish mechanisms, such as information or feedback sessions, to guide them through the process and address any concerns.

### Managing and communicating organisational change:

- Provide reliable and accurate information about upcoming changes and options being considered as soon as possible. Keep workers informed and up-to-date on any developments, and ensure that they understand the changes being made (e.g., by providing updates at team meetings or on notice boards).
- Inform customers and suppliers about any upcoming changes and the potential impacts they may have.
- Provide workers with clear reasons for any changes being made.
- Provide support to workers who may experience challenges or frustrations as a result of the change and uncertainty.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 3

### Intervene Early

- Monitor the change management process closely: Keep track of how the change is being managed, including the communication process, the level of engagement with employees, and the extent of the impact on the workforce.
- Identify potential issues: Pay attention to signs of resistance, confusion, or dissatisfaction among employees. This can help you identify potential issues and address them before they escalate.
- Involve employees: Involve employees in the change management process by seeking their input, feedback, and ideas. This will help to increase their sense of ownership and commitment to the change.
- If current systems and control measures are not effective, take prompt action to identify and implement additional controls.

### Support Recovery

- Provide early assistance and support to access treatment and rehabilitation services, from the time an injury occurs.
- Support timely and sustainable recovery at work (RAW) or return to work (RTW) through effective consultation, addressing any remaining work-related hazards and risks that may exacerbate the existing work-related psychological injury or cause a new injury.

## 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.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 3

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.

### CONTROL MEASURES

*Control measures are specific actions or procedures that are put in place to manage or mitigate identified risks. They are reactive measures that are implemented after risks have been identified and assessed as part of the risk management process. Control measures are designed to reduce the likelihood or impact of risks, and they can take many forms, including administrative controls, engineering controls, and personal protective equipment.*

**Establish effective communication:** Communicate changes to workers early and often, and be transparent about the reasons for the changes. Encourage workers to ask questions and provide feedback, and be responsive to their concerns.

**Provide adequate training and support:** Ensure that workers have the skills and knowledge they need to adapt to the changes. Provide training, coaching, and other forms of support to help workers adjust to new roles or responsibilities.

**Involve workers in the change process:** Encourage workers and HSRs to participate in the change process, and solicit their input and feedback. This can help to build buy-in and ownership for the changes, and increase the likelihood of success.

**Monitor and evaluate the impacts of the changes:** Track the impacts of the changes on workers, customers, and other stakeholders, and be prepared to adjust course if needed.

**Seek external expertise:** Consider seeking the advice of external consultants or experts who have experience in organisational change management. They can provide valuable insights and recommendations for improving your change management processes.

#### DO

Involve workers and HSRs in the change process through consultation and communication.

Identify the main issues of the change and provide workers with relevant information.

#### DO NOT

Ignore the potential effects on individuals or teams, even small changes can have an impact.

Be disingenuous or withhold information from workers.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 3

Keep workers informed about how the change will affect their roles as more information becomes available.

Choose appropriate communication methods to effectively inform workers about the change process.





# **POOR SUPPORT**

- 1. What is poor support?**
- 2. Examples of poor support**
- 3. Impacts on workers and organisations**
- 4. Risk Management**
- 5. Control Measures**

## **WHAT IS POOR SUPPORT?**

Support in the workplace is the practical assistance and emotional support that managers, supervisors, or co-workers provide to workers. Providing adequate support can help workers get through challenging situations in their work. The availability or quality of support can vary depending on the type of work, industry and location of the workplace.

Poor support is when this practical assistance and emotional support is not provided or is inadequate. This can include when training, equipment, tools and resources, including adequate staffing, is insufficient for a worker to perform their role.

This can lead to impacts such as stress and mental fatigue, which also have physical impacts. Inappropriate responses and harmful behaviour such as bullying may result from a worker not having adequate support to complete tasks or perform their role, leading to further psychosocial hazards.

## **EXAMPLES OF POOR SUPPORT**

There are many examples of poor support in the workplace, which can vary depending on the type of work, industry and location of the workplace, including:

- Insufficient, unclear, or conflicting information or instructions.
- Lack of necessary resources to perform tasks effectively and punctually.
- Frequently competing with others for essential resources required for the job.
- Poorly maintained or inadequate tools, systems, and equipment.
- Inadequate training provided for assigned tasks.
- Supervisors being unavailable to assist with decisions or offer support.
- Insufficient guidance from supervisors or assistance from colleagues.
- Inability for workers to seek help when necessary.
- Workplace cultures that discourage supervisors or co-workers from supporting one another
- Working environments that discourage open communication and discussion.
- Limited emotional support or unsympathetic leadership.
- Infrequent or ineffective performance feedback and discussions.



## IMPACTS OF POOR SUPPORT

The impacts of poor support on both workers and organisations is numerous. Some impacts to consider include:

### ON WORKERS

**Fatigue:** acute, ongoing tiredness from mental exhaustion, preventing people from functioning normally.

**Increased Stress and Burnout:** Insufficient support can cause increased stress levels among workers, especially if they face constant challenges without adequate assistance. Over time, this can lead to burnout and negatively affect their mental and physical health.

**Reduced Job Satisfaction:** Workers who feel unsupported may become dissatisfied with their jobs, leading to decreased motivation and engagement. They may feel unappreciated and undervalued, affecting their commitment to the organisation.

**Physical and Mental Exhaustion:** The combination of inadequate support, increased stress, and overwhelming work demands can lead to physical and mental exhaustion. This can manifest as fatigue, sleep disturbances, and even potential health issues.

**Impaired Work-Life Balance:** Poor support may require workers to invest more time and effort in their jobs, impacting their work-life balance negatively. With limited assistance, they may find it challenging to create boundaries between work and personal life, leading to potential burnout.

**Strained Relationships:** The stress and frustration resulting from inadequate support

### ON ORGANISATIONS

**Decreased Productivity:** When workers lack the necessary support, it becomes challenging for them to perform their tasks efficiently. This can lead to decreased productivity and lower overall output.

**Higher Turnover:** Employees who don't receive adequate support are more likely to seek opportunities elsewhere, resulting in higher turnover rates for the company. This can be costly and disrupt the continuity of the workforce.

**Decline in Work Quality:** Without proper guidance and assistance, the quality of work may suffer. Mistakes and errors may increase, potentially impacting the reputation and credibility of the organization.

**Lack of Innovation:** When workers feel unsupported, they may hesitate to share new ideas or take risks, leading to a lack of innovation within the company.

**Increased Safety Risks:** In industries where safety is critical, inadequate support can lead to accidents and injuries due to workers not having the necessary resources or training to perform their jobs safely.

**Negative Workplace Culture:** A lack of support can foster a toxic work environment, where employees feel isolated and reluctant to collaborate or help each other. This can further exacerbate the issues and create a cycle of poor support.





## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 4

can spill over into personal relationships, leading to tension and strain with family and friends.

**Feelings of Isolation:** A lack of support can lead to feelings of isolation and detachment from the workplace community. Workers may feel disconnected from their colleagues and the organisation, impacting their sense of belonging and camaraderie.

**Reduced Employee Loyalty:** Workers who don't receive proper support may feel less loyal to the organisation, leading to decreased commitment and willingness to go the extra mile for the company.

**Impact on Customer Service:** In customer-facing roles, poor support can affect the quality of service provided, leading to dissatisfied customers and potential loss of business.

## 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.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 4

- **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.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 4

- **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

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**Efficient Information Sharing:** Implement effective information sharing systems to enable workers to access the necessary information promptly for their job tasks. This includes keeping databases up-to-date and user-friendly.

**Optimised Work Design for Supervisors:** Design job roles in a way that allows supervisors to manage manageable workloads, access sufficient resources, and have an appropriate span of control for effective supervision. This includes providing supervisors with time to address questions and assist with challenging tasks.

**Regular, Fair, and Goal-Focused Feedback Discussions:** Establish systems to ensure regular and constructive feedback discussions between workers and supervisors regarding work tasks and support or development needs. For example, implementing end-of-shift debriefs or quarterly check-ins for supervisors.

**Clear Management Structures and Reporting Lines:** Provide well-defined management structures and reporting lines to ensure workers understand whom to approach for help and guidance. This may include providing organisational charts or clarifying reporting hierarchies.

**Provision of Necessary Resources:** Provide workers with the appropriate tools, equipment, systems, and resources they need to perform their jobs safely and efficiently. Ensure these resources are easily accessible and conveniently located, so workers do not need to compete for access.

**Access to Supervisors:** Ensure workers have access to supervisors, either by locating them close to their working area or by providing tools like videoconferencing for remote workers.

**Culture of Cooperation and Help:** Design the work environment to promote cooperation and support among employees. This includes providing suitable meeting spaces and facilitating easy discussions among workers, encouraging them to ask for help when needed.



## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS FACT SHEET 4

### DO

Foster a workplace culture that supports open communication, enabling workers to feel comfortable in discussing issues.

Provide training, skill development, and employee assistance services to workers, empowering them in their roles.

Promote work-life balance by allowing for flexibility and implementing flexible work arrangements that accommodate employees' personal needs.

Enhance supervisor and managerial skills through coaching, mentoring, and relevant training initiatives.

Utilise regular performance reviews for managers and workers to provide support and constructive advice for future performance.

Provide opportunities for career and professional development, such as allowing employees to act in managerial roles during the manager's absence or higher duties.

Prioritise effective early rehabilitation for all injuries to ensure employees receive timely support and assistance during their recovery process.

### DO NOT

Implement performance tools as a means of disciplinary action.

-Engage in discrimination or bullying tactics to manipulate performance outcomes.