



# OFFICE SAFETY ESSENTIALS

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# OUR WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

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**CBC Staff Selection** recognises the importance of providing all employees, contractors, customers and visitors with a safe and healthy work environment. Our aim is to have an injury free workplace and to ensure all legal compliance and requirements are followed, whilst promoting a standard of excellence in Workplace Health & Safety and will abide by obligations and responsibilities under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011.

**Management:** All management at CBC Staff Selection have an obligation to be knowledgeable of the appropriate business standards and ensure that they maintain the health and safety of themselves, others and their work area in accordance with our Policies and Procedures. It will be the responsibility of all managers and supervisors to continually review their operations and working conditions, and whenever necessary provide adequate health and safety training to all staff under their care.

**Employees:** All employees are required to adhere to local safety rules, report unsafe conditions to their immediate supervisor, and be involved in and committed to a continual program which will ensure a safe and healthy working environment, in compliance with the Workplace Health & Safety Act 2011.

**Everyone:** is responsible for ensuring their own health and safety while at the workplace and for taking care to ensure the health and safety of other persons.





# RESPONSIBILITIES

**It is the responsibility of all staff and managers to assist in the implementation of, and for achieving the objectives of Workplace Health & Safety.**

**All staff must:**

- Perform their duties in a manner that adheres to safe working practices and procedures and protects their own health and safety as well as that of others
- As required, complete WHS training and actively take part in WHS information sharing
- Report incidents, injuries and hazards
- As relevant to them, be an active participant in resolving WHS issues as they arise

As required by the Workplace Health and Safety Act (2011), management retains the obligation to eliminate risks to health and safety, so far as is reasonably practicable, and, if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks to health and safety, to minimise those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.



**As an employee, you also have an obligation under the Act to maintain safe and healthy conduct.**

- This means that you must look after yourself by acting in a safe and responsible manner, following defined work practices and following the instructions of management.
- You also have an obligation to take reasonable care for the health and safety of others in the workplace. You cannot engage in any activity that harms another person or exposes another person to harm.
- You are required to report any dangerous activities or physical hazards to management so that appropriate action can be taken.
- Failure to observe safety regulations, or safety directions issued from time to time by management, is viewed as a serious matter and may result in instant dismissal.

# COMMON WORKPLACE HAZARDS

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In every workplace, whether it's an office, factory, or retail setting, there are various hazards that can jeopardise the safety and well-being of employees.

These hazards range from physical risks like slips, trips, and falls due to uneven surfaces or cluttered pathways, to ergonomic issues such as poor workstation setups leading to repetitive strain injuries. Other common hazards include electrical dangers, stress from high workloads, and exposure to hazardous substances.

Each workplace is different. You need to know what the hazards are in your business so you can assess the risk they pose. To help you get started, we've prepared information on how to identify hazards and manage the risks common to the administrative and support industry, including:

- ✓ **Sedentary Work**
- ✓ **Computer Workstation Ergonomics**
- ✓ **Poor Lighting & Ventilation**
- ✓ **Bullying & Harassment**
- ✓ **Sexual Harassment**
- ✓ **Psychosocial Hazards**
- ✓ **Violence & Aggression**
- ✓ **Chemical & Biological Hazards**
- ✓ **Electrical Hazards**
- ✓ **Fire Hazards**
- ✓ **Lifting & Manual Handling**
- ✓ **Slips, Trips & Falls**

Recognising and mitigating these risks through proper training, regular assessments, and maintaining a culture of safety is crucial for ensuring a secure and productive work environment for everyone.



# SEDENTARY WORK

Computer-based work often involves long periods of sitting in the same spot, which can lead to sprain and strain injuries, obesity, chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

There's even an increased risk of dying prematurely for people who sit for more than 11 hours a day - this includes sitting on the bus, train, or in your car getting to and from work or on the couch when you get home!

**Taking breaks frequently** is crucial to mitigate these risks. Regular movement improves circulation, reduces muscle tension, and boosts productivity.

Short breaks every 30 minutes to stretch, walk around, or perform light exercises can counteract the negative effects of prolonged sitting.

If you are in the position to do so, incorporating standing desks or ergonomic chairs can help maintain better posture and alleviate strain.

By prioritising breaks and movement, individuals can enhance their overall health and well-being in sedentary work environments.



## Tips to get moving when you're working

- Position your printer, scanner, photocopier and rubbish bin away from your desk so you need to walk to them.
- Use your sit/stand desk to change position regularly throughout the day.
- Use a Bluetooth/wireless headset to allow you to stand and move during phone or video calls.
- Vary your work tasks so that you change your postures and use different parts of your body.
- Take short regular breaks to move away from your desk and aim to change your position every 30 minutes.
- Find more active ways to get to work and getting around during the day, for example combine a meeting with a walk, park your car further away, get off the bus one stop earlier, use the stairs instead of the lift, go for a lunchtime walk.

# COMPUTER WORKSTATION ERGONOMICS

Your workstation should be set up so as to cause the least amount of stress on your body. Prolonged hours of poor posture or repetitive work habits can result in injury and illness.

Setting up your workstation properly encourages good posture and minimises discomfort and injury. Good posture is important to ensure the neck and spine do not carry more weight than necessary. Sustained awkward postures may lead to pain or injury of the neck and back.

**Did you know that for every inch (or 2.5 centimeters) the head moves forward, the pressure on the spine increases as though the head weighed an additional 4.5 kilograms?**

Chairs are one of the most important pieces of office equipment. To be effective, the chair needs to be adjusted to suit the user. By correctly adjusting your chair, you can maintain good posture and take pressure off your neck and back. A well-designed chair can be adjusted to suit a range of people.



## Tips to set up your workstation correctly:

- ✓ Your chair height should be adjusted so your feet rest firmly on the floor, allowing you to take some weight through your feet when you are seated.
- ✓ If you feel pressure near the back of the seat, raise your chair. As a guide, while standing, adjust the height of the chair so the highest point of the seat is just below your kneecap.
- ✓ The height of the back rest should ensure the lumbar pad supports the natural curve of your lower back. The back rest should be able to tilt slightly to allow a comfortable and supported sitting position to be achieved. Your backbone should be straight and your shoulders back.
- ✓ When you are seated, the top of your desk should be at elbow height. If your desk cannot be lowered or raised to accommodate this height, you can rise your chair and use a footrest to ensure your feet are still comfortably flat.
- ✓ You should be able to maintain the recommended seating position when using the keyboard. Place a keyboard around seven centimeters from the edge of the desk to allow your forearms to rest when you are not keying. The keyboard should lie flat or tilt slightly away from you, not propped up on keyboard legs.
- ✓ Position your mouse at the same level as the keyboard and within easy reach.
- ✓ Ensure the monitor is placed so there are no reflections from windows or other light sources. The monitor should be roughly an arm's length away. If you sit at your desk in a neutral position and straighten your arm in front of you, your fingertips should be touching the monitor. The top of the screen should be at eye level or just below so that you look down at a slight angle to your work.



# POOR LIGHTING & VENTILATION

Poor lighting and ventilation in office environments can pose significant health and safety hazards, impacting employee well-being and productivity.

Insufficient lighting can strain the eyes, leading to headaches, eye discomfort, and even long-term vision problems.

Inadequate ventilation contributes to poor air quality, increasing the concentration of indoor pollutants like carbon dioxide and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). This can cause respiratory issues, allergies, and fatigue among employees.

There should be proper lighting levels tailored to the tasks performed in each area of the office.

Natural light should be maximised where possible, supplemented by adjustable artificial lighting that minimises glare and shadows.

Incorporate natural ventilation by opening windows and using fans to help improve air exchange and quality.



## Tips to improve lighting and ventilation

- Glare is caused by light shining directly onto your screen and may cause eye strain. Glare might come from windows or interior lights. To test if you have glare on your computer screen, turn off your monitor. If there are reflections on the black screen, you have glare. To reduce the glare caused by window light, position your monitor so that your line of sight is parallel to the window.
- Keep vents unobstructed to allow for proper airflow. Avoid placing large objects or furniture in front of vents.
- In offices where natural ventilation is limited, using a small desktop fan can help circulate air and improve comfort.
- Take breaks in well-ventilated areas to refresh and rejuvenate.
- Report any discomfort or issues promptly can help maintain a healthy work environment.

# DISCRIMINATION & HARASSMENT

Discrimination and harassment in the workplace are serious health and safety hazards that can profoundly impact employees' well-being, productivity, and overall organisational culture.

Psychological and emotional harm from discrimination and harassment can lead to stress, anxiety, depression, and reduced job satisfaction. These negative effects not only affect the individuals directly involved but also ripple through the entire workplace, creating a toxic environment that undermines morale and teamwork.

## Discrimination

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

## Vilification

Vilification is a public act which incites hatred, severe contempt or severe ridicule of a person or group, because of race, homosexuality, transgender, transsexuality or HIV/AIDS.

## Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that is directed towards an employee or group of employees, that is repeated and systematic, and that a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten the employee or employees to whom the behaviour is directed.

## Harassment

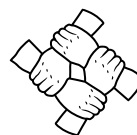
A person experiences 'workplace harassment' when they are subjected to repeated behavior by an individual, including their employer, co-worker, or a group of co-workers, which:

- Is unwelcome and uninvited,
- Is perceived by the person as offensive, intimidating, humiliating, or threatening
- Would be considered offensive, humiliating, intimidating, or threatening by a reasonable person.

**CBC Staff Selection are committed to providing a safe and respectful environment where employees and others in the workplace are treated fairly, with respect and dignity.**

CBC Staff Selection is an equal opportunity employer. All employees are treated on their merits, without regard to race, age, sex, marital status, religion or any other factor not applicable to the position. We believe all employees have the right to work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

Any reports of discrimination or harassment will be treated seriously and investigated promptly, confidentially and impartially. Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who discriminates against a co-worker. Discipline may involve a warning, formal counselling, demotion or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.





# SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment in the workplace constitutes a significant health and safety hazard. Such behaviors can lead to profound psychological distress, anxiety, depression, and even physical health issues.

**“Sexual Harassment”** is an unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that makes a person feel offended, humiliated and/or intimidated, where a reasonable person would anticipate that reaction in the circumstances.

**“Sex-based Harassment”** is defined as unwelcome conduct of a seriously demeaning nature by reason of the person’s sex in circumstances in which a reasonable person would anticipate that the person harassed may feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.

All CBC Staff Selection employees and contractors are prohibited from engaging in behaviour that could amount to sexual harassment and sex-based harassment and have a duty to prevent such conduct from occurring in the workplace. It is unlawful under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), the Work, Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) and Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) to sexually harass another employee, contractor or other person during work, or in connection with work.

## Examples of sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Physical contact such as touching, grabbing, kissing, hugging, cornering, actual or attempted rape or sexual assault;
- Suggestive or offensive comments, jokes or innuendo;
- Staring or leering at a person or at parts of their body;
- Requests for sexual favours;
- Persistent requests to date and/or attend social events;
- Intrusive questions about private life;
- Unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person;
- intimidating or threatening behaviours such as inappropriate sexual gestures, indecent exposure, or being followed, watched or someone loitering nearby
- Sexually explicit conversations, pictures, posters or gifts;
- Displays of offensive material such as posters, screen savers, internet material etc which could indicate a potentially hostile work environment;
- Accessing or downloading sexually explicit material from the internet;
- Sending rude or offensive emails, attachments or text messages;
- Inappropriate advances and/or contact via social media sites;
- Ongoing unwelcome contact (e.g. in person, phone, social media) following the end of a consensual relationship.

## Examples of sex-based harassment could include, but is not limited to:

- Asking intrusive personal questions based on a person's sex;
- Displaying images or materials that are sexist, misogynistic or misandrist;
- Making sexist, misogynistic or misandrist remarks about a specific person;
- Requesting a person to engage in degrading conduct based on their sex.

## If an employee feels that they have been subjected to any form of unlawful conduct, they should not ignore it.

If an employee or contractor feels that they have been subjected to any form of sexual harassment or have observed sexual harassment against another, they should not ignore it. CBC Staff Selection has adopted a reporting procedure that has numerous options available to suit the particular circumstances of each individual situation. The designated complaint officer for CBC Staff Selection is the Managing Director.

# PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

A psychosocial hazard is a hazard that arises from, or relates to, the design or management of work, a work environment or workplace interactions and behaviors and may cause psychological harm, whether the hazard may also cause physical harm.

Psychosocial hazards can create harm through a worker's experience of a frequent, prolonged and/or severe stress response, where stress is defined as a person's psychological response (e.g. feelings of anxiety, tension) and physiological response (e.g. the release of stress hormones, or their cardiovascular response) in relation to work demands or threats. Psychosocial risk is a risk to the health and safety of a worker or other person from a psychosocial hazard.



## Common psychosocial hazards:

- high and/or low job demands
- low job control
- poor support
- low role clarity
- poor organisational management
- low reward and recognition
- poor organisational justice
- poor workplace relationships including interpersonal conflict
- remote or isolated work
- poor environmental conditions
- traumatic events
- violence and aggression
- bullying
- harassment including sexual harassment

## Tips to control the risk of psychosocial hazards:

- **Manage your workload** by prioritising tasks and setting realistic goals. Communicate with management about workload concerns and seek assistance.
- **Maintain a healthy work-life balance** by setting boundaries between work and personal life.
- **Build a support network** and foster positive relationships with colleagues.
- **Learn and practice stress management techniques** such as deep breathing, meditation and physical exercise.
- **Utilise available support services** such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) offered by the organisation.



# VIOLENCE & AGGRESSION

Violence and aggression risks can manifest in various forms, including physical assaults, threats, verbal abuse, and even armed intrusions. Addressing these issues is crucial for fostering a safe and productive work environment.

Violence in the workplace can lead to immediate physical harm, emotional trauma, and long-term psychological distress for those involved. It creates an atmosphere of fear and insecurity, affecting not only the direct people involved but also bystanders and witnesses.

Instances of verbal abuse, threats, or physical altercations from clients, customers, or colleagues can create a hostile environment and pose significant safety concerns for employees.

Such incidents can also result in lost productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher turnover rates as employees feel unsafe and demoralised.

A worker may be exposed to work-related violence as a victim or witness to a violent incident.

Work-related violence is any incident in which a person is abused, threatened, or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.



## There will be no tolerance of violence.

Violence at work can come from a member of the public, a customer or even a colleague.

The term 'work-related violence' covers a broad range of actions and behaviours that can create a risk to workers' health and safety, such as:

- verbal threats;
- threatening someone with a weapon;
- throwing objects;
- pushing, shoving and hitting;
- spitting and biting;
- sexual abuse.

All incidents of violence and aggression will be reported and investigated. All causes will be identified, and appropriate action taken to prevent it happening again.

If any Worker is found to have been violent to another person within the workplace, the Worker may be subject to disciplinary action including termination of a Worker's employment or engagement.

## CHEMICAL & BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Chemical and biological hazards encompass a range of risks from exposure to harmful chemicals to potential infections from biological agents. Addressing these issues proactively is essential for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace environment.

Chemical hazards in an office setting can arise from cleaning products, printer toners, solvents, and other substances used in daily operations.

Improper handling, storage, or accidental spills of these chemicals can lead to skin irritation, respiratory problems, or more severe health issues over time.

Biological hazards such as bacteria, viruses, and mold can thrive in poorly ventilated areas or from inadequate cleaning practices. These hazards pose risks of infections, allergies, or respiratory illnesses among employees.

- **Read labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS)** for any chemicals used in your workplace.
- **Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** when appropriate and necessary
- **Practice good hygiene** and wash hands regularly
- **Report issues promptly** if you notice potential hazards or unsafe conditions

## ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

Electrical hazards can arise from faulty wiring, overloaded outlets, damaged cords, or improper use of electrical equipment.

Addressing electrical safety is crucial for maintaining a secure and productive workplace environment.

One primary concern with electrical hazards is the risk of electric shock. Improperly grounded equipment or damaged cords can expose employees to electric currents, resulting in injuries ranging from minor shocks to severe burns or cardiac arrest.

Overloaded circuits or extension cords can overheat and spark fires, endangering both personnel and property within the office.

- **Inspect equipment regularly** and check electrical cords, plugs and equipment for any signs of wear, damage or overheating
- **Avoid overloading outlets** and use power strips with built-in surge protection to prevent overloading circuits
- **Properly store cords** and keep them away from high-traffic areas where they can be damaged or cause tripping hazards
- **Use electrical equipment safely** and follow instructions. Unplug when not in use such as overnight or during extended periods of absence
- **Report malfunctions immediately** such as flickering lights, sparking outlets or strange odors coming from electrical equipment



# FIRE SAFETY

Fire hazards can arise from various sources such as electrical faults, flammable materials, heating equipment, or even human error. Addressing fire safety is crucial for ensuring a secure and prepared workplace environment.

One of the primary concerns with fire hazards is the rapid spread of flames due to combustible materials commonly found in offices, such as paper, cardboard, and upholstery.

Electrical malfunctions or overloaded circuits can ignite fires, while improper storage or handling of flammable substances like cleaning agents or printer toners can also pose significant risks.

By promoting a culture of fire safety awareness and actively implementing our tips, employees can contribute to a safer office environment.

Employers should also provide comprehensive fire safety training, conduct regular inspections, and develop emergency response plans to mitigate fire risks effectively.

**Working together, employees and employers can help prevent fires and ensure a secure workplace for all.**



## Tips for Fire Safety in the workplace:

- **Participate in fire drills** and familiarise yourself with evacuation procedures and assembly points
- **Maintain clear exits** and ensure that emergency exits and pathways are always clear of obstructions
- **Store flammable materials** properly in designated areas and away from potential ignition sources
- **Practice good housekeeping** by keeping work areas tidy and free from clutter, especially around electrical equipment and heating devices
- **Maintain fire safety equipment** and know the location of fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and alarms in the office

# LIFTING & MANUAL HANDLING

Lifting and manual handling in an office environment can pose significant workplace health and safety issues, potentially leading to musculoskeletal injuries such as strains, sprains, and back problems.

While office work may not involve heavy lifting as in industrial settings, tasks like moving boxes of documents, setting up equipment, or even rearranging office furniture can strain muscles and cause injuries if not performed correctly.

Improper lifting techniques, such as bending at the waist instead of using the legs or attempting to lift objects that are too heavy for one person, are common causes of injuries.

These injuries can result in pain and discomfort, reduced productivity, and even long-term health issues if left unaddressed.

By prioritising proper lifting techniques, utilising available tools and aids, and promoting a culture of safety awareness, employees can significantly reduce the risk of lifting and manual handling injuries in an office environment.

Working together, employees and employers can create a safer and healthier workplace environment for all.

Tips to minimise the risk of lifting and manual handling injuries:

- **Assess the load** before lifting any object and determine if its safe to be handled alone or if assistance is needed
- **Use proper lifting techniques** by bending your knees and keeping your back straight when lifting. Use the strength in your legs to lift rather than relying on back muscles
- **Team lift** for heavier or awkwardly shaped objects
- **Utilise handling aids** such as trolleys, carts or dollies to transport heavier items.





# SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

Slips, trips, and falls result in tens of thousands of injuries every year in Australian workplaces. The 2022-2023 Health and Safety at Work report revealed there were 561,000 reported cases of non-fatal workplace injuries, with 32% of these attributed to slips, trips, and falls.

These incidents can occur due to various factors such as wet or uneven flooring, cluttered walkways, poor lighting, or improper footwear.

**Slips** occur when there is insufficient traction between the footwear and the walking surface, often due to wet floors or slippery materials.

**Trips** typically involve obstacles or uneven surfaces that cause a person to stumble.

**Falls** can result from both slips and trips, leading to injuries ranging from minor bruises to more severe fractures or head injuries.

These incidents can all lead to musculoskeletal injuries, cuts, bruises, fractures, and dislocations.

CAUTION  
WET FLOOR



## Tips to avoid slips, trips & falls in the workplace:

- **Keep walkways clear** and ensure hallways, corridors and stairwells are free from obstacles that can cause tripping hazards
- **Report spills immediately** and clean up if able. If not, alert others and place a wet floor sign until the area is cleaned and dried
- **Wear appropriate footwear** with non-slip soles
- **Use handrails** when using stairs for support. Ascend and descend stairs slowly and carefully to avoid losing balance
- **Practice good housekeeping** and keep workstation free from unnecessary items that would obstruct walkways or contribute to falls