

## WHS regulation changes infographic

# Managing psychosocial hazards at work

The ACT Government has made changes that will better protect workers from psychosocial hazards in ACT workplaces



follow the new **Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice** to understand and comply with your work health and safety duties



understand and eliminate or minimise, as far as is reasonably practicable, psychosocial hazards in your workplace



have a mechanism for, and encourage reporting of, psychosocial hazards and incidents



consult with your workers about psychosocial hazards and incidents



provide your workers with information, training and instruction to help them recognise psychosocial hazards and ensure work can be done safely

## WHS laws require PCBU's to manage psychosocial hazards

- > **Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice** comes into effect on **27 November 2023**
- > **Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011**

**Psychosocial hazards** at work may cause **psychological harm**, such as harming someone's **mental health**

- > **common examples:**  
low job control • poor support • traumatic events or material • remote or isolated work • poor physical environment • violence and aggression • bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment • conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions • insecure work
- > **they can arise from or relate to:**  
the **design or management** of work • the **work environment** • **plant** at a workplace • workplace interactions or behaviours
- > **psychological harm** may include **anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders**
- > **psychosocial hazards can also cause physical harm** such as **musculoskeletal injuries, chronic disease or fatigue related injuries**

### Psychosocial hazard example: job demands

Michael has just started out at work. His manager told him that the harder he works the more he will benefit at the workplace. His duties are diverse and he has been assigned tasks that are not possible to complete without committing excessive after hours work. He is worried about making a mistake with his work, as this could have significant consequences for his clients and himself. When Michael raised his concerns with his manager, the response is 'all of his colleagues are doing excessive after hours work also'.

**Harm can be caused by a single instance or over time with repeated exposure**

## Things your workers might say to let you know there is a psychosocial hazard in your workplace

*I'm not able to stay on top of my workload • they were threatening me during that conversation • I have no way to raise this issue • I'm being excluded by everyone at work • no one has explained to me how to do this task • I feel like a failure because I can't meet these expectations • people are making assumptions based on my gender • I wasn't given any notice about these changes • I haven't been sleeping • that was very difficult to handle*

### Good consultation will help you understand how workers describe hazards and help identify the cause


Examples of workers who may be at a greater risk from psychosocial hazards are those with:

- limited experience in the workplace, such as young workers
- language or literacy barriers to understanding safety information
- barriers to raising safety issues such as power imbalance or workplace stigma
- previous exposure to a hazard

#### More information

 [Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice](#)

 [Work Safety Group](#) ACT Government

 [WorkSafe ACT](#) (ACT work safety regulator)

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Work Safety Group August 2023

## Early reporting of hazards by workers means they can be managed before causing harm

### Encourage reporting by:

- > treating all reports of psychosocial hazards **seriously, appropriately and confidentially**
- > using agreed mechanisms, such as HSRs who can **raise safety concerns anonymously**
- > **regularly discussing psychosocial hazards** at team meetings or toolbox talks
- > providing a **range of accessible and user-friendly ways to make a report** informally, formally, anonymously or confidentially
- > making it clear that **victimising those who make reports will not be tolerated**
- > **training** supervisors, managers, contact persons and HSRs
- > providing **regular updates** on progress to address concerns
- > ensuring processes and systems for reporting and responding to **complaints of bullying, sexual harassment or other inappropriate behaviours** are suitable, transparent and well understood
- > **acting decisively** to control the risks your workers identify.

## Provide different ways for workers to report hazards

**You should protect privacy and allow for anonymous reporting if possible. Some ideas are:**

- > **a board in the kitchen** for workers to write up hazards they identify or a **locked box** for confidential reports
- > **incident report forms** or an **email box**
- > **discussions** with supervisors or HSRs.