

Think Safe

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

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PAGE 3
THE WAY FORWARD:
2023-24 TO 2025-26

PAGE 7
RISE OF SILICOSIS
CASES LEADS TO BAN
ON ENGINEERED STONE

PAGE 8
ESTABLISHING GOOD
SAFETY PRACTICES
ON FARMS

PAGE 13
ROB CURTIS HEALTH AND
SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE YEAR



Th!nkSafe

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Rob Curtis, Health and safety representative of the year for the 2023 Work Health and Safety Excellence Awards.

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New Department Name

On 1 December 2023, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) was renamed the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS).

Announced by the WA Government in November 2023, the new identity better reflects the importance of Western Australia's energy portfolio and the critical role it will play in the WA Government's decarbonisation ambitions.

Energy Policy WA continues to lead the State's energy transformation by delivering expert advice and initiatives to support the interests of WA's energy consumers.

The renaming does not affect DEMIRS' other regulatory functions. DEMIRS will continue to support a safe, fair, and responsible community, industry, energy and resources sector.



COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

- 2 WA fatalities statistics trends
- 3 WorkSafe: The way forward 2023–24 to 2025–26

ENFORCEMENTS AND PROSECUTIONS

- 4 Safety prosecution updates
- 6 WorkSafe agrees to enforceable WHS undertaking for the first time

HEALTH AND SAFETY TOPICS

- 7 Rise of silicosis cases leads to ban on engineered stone
- 8 Establishing good safety practices on farms
- 9 Asbestos 20-year ban anniversary: where are we now?
- 10 Building human factors capability in the petroleum and geothermal energy industry

EVENTS

- 12 Awards recognising excellence in workplace health and safety now open
- 13 Meet Rob Curtis
- 14 Did you miss Safe Work Month 2023?
- 15 Agricultural field days

MARS PROGRAM

- 17 MARS Program updates and milestones

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ESSENTIALS

- 18 Mine safety management system: Next steps
- 19 Timeline extended for mining statutory positions certification
- 20 Unauthorised access on construction sites
- 21 WorkSafe looks into security on construction sites
- 22 Updated guidance for petroleum and geothermal energy operations operators
- 23 Emergency planning under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- 24 Transitional arrangements for WHS regulations commenced
- 25 Changes to the workplace exposure standard for welding fumes

DANGEROUS GOODS SAFETY

- 26 Lessons learned from the ammonium nitrate emulsion tanker explosion



WA FATALITIES STATISTICS TRENDS

Welcome to the May edition of Th!nkSafe magazine. In this column I feature some interesting statistics on workplace hazards.

Recent statistics have shown Western Australian (WA) workers have a much lower chance of being fatally injured at work in 2024 than they did 34 years ago.

In WA, a worker's risk of being fatally injured fell by 83 per cent between 1988-89 and 2022-23. Taking into account the increase in workforce numbers, the risk has decreased dramatically. In 1988-89, WA recorded 49.5 fatalities per million workers. By 2022-23, this number had reduced to 8.5 fatalities per million workers.

A steady increase in awareness of workplace health and safety over recent decades, along with improved laws, lots of great work from employers, workers, health and safety representatives, unions and industry bodies, coupled with an improved understanding of risks and hazards and the maturing of the health and safety profession, have all contributed to a fall in the relative number of deaths and injuries.

Although this decrease in the rate of fatalities is good news, we should never become complacent about the safety of workers. A recent WorkSafe publication, [Worst hazards in Western Australian workplaces 2012-13 to 2021-22](#), analyses lost time due to workplace injuries and fatalities and

reveals some interesting statistical facts about WA workplaces. For example, manual handling is the worst hazard group by total time lost from work, accounting for 41 per cent of all lost time. The worst specific workplace hazard is trips on clear ground.

Women are more likely to be harmed by psychosocial hazards and handling other people, while men are more likely to be harmed by falls and vehicle crashes. Workers under 25 years of age lose more time to electrocution and vehicle crashes, while workers over 65 lose more time to assaults and trips. The greatest hazards in industry are falls, trips and manual handling.



When looking at years of lost work time over the 10-year report period, the top twenty workplace hazards combined resulted in a huge 25,000 years of lost time.

I'm confident we can continue to improve safety standards in WA workplaces.

Sally North
Acting WorkSafe Commissioner

WorkSafe: The way forward

2023–24 to 2025–26

Following the introduction of the work health and safety legislation, WorkSafe began working on a strategy to focus the direction of the organisation through to the end of the 2025–26 financial year.

WorkSafe: The Way Forward 2023–24 to 2025–26 is a high-level three-year rolling strategy guiding efforts to reduce work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses, that goes beyond day-to-day regulatory activities. The aim is to drive workplace change through education, specialist advice and enforcement.

The Way Forward describes the goals, priority areas and measures of success for health and safety actions undertaken by WorkSafe to achieve the goals of reducing work-related fatalities by ten per cent and incidents of serious injuries and illness by seven per cent.

To meet the objectives of this strategy, over the next three years, WorkSafe is focusing on four key priorities.

It also sets out a strategy to ensure emerging challenges are recognised and addressed in a coordinated and collaborative fashion. Emerging challenges include the rise of artificial intelligence, automation and related technologies, hybrid work, demographic shifts and climate-related risks.

The Way Forward provides an overview of WorkSafe's commitments for general industry as well as mining and petroleum, so workplaces can better understand why focus areas are targeted, along with the desired outcomes, measures and achievements. The strategy should also contribute to the work of all stakeholders in the work health and safety system, including researchers, experts and practitioners, who play a role in owning, contributing to and realising the vision.

Progress on our commitments will be reported annually.

For more information, the full strategy can be found on our [website](#).

**Priority one**

Repeat hazard exposure

**Priority two**

Psychosocial hazards

**Priority three**

Respiratory hazards

**Priority four**

Consultation and representation

SAFETY PROSECUTION UPDATES

RECENT CONVICTIONS

Northern Star Carosue Dam Operations, Whirling Dervish underground gold mine

Sentenced: 18 December 2023

In July 2020, a mine worker suffered fatal injuries when they fell approximately 25 metres into an open stope (hole in underground mine) while operating an underground loader (bogger).

Northern Star (Carosue Dam) Pty Ltd (Northern Star) was the principal employer at the mine. Byrnegut Australia Pty Ltd (Byrnegut) was contracted to provide underground works at the mine. The fatally injured worker was employed by Byrnegut.

Three offenders pleaded guilty in the Perth Magistrates Court for breaches of the *Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1992*.

1. As the principal employer, Northern Star was fined \$700,000 for engaging a contractor (Byrnegut) that failed to provide a safe working environment which caused the death of a worker.
2. As an employer, Byrnegut was fined \$850,000 for failing to provide a safe working environment which caused the death of a worker.
3. As an employee, mine supervisor Arsen Korzhov was fined \$20,000 for not taking reasonable care of the safety of another person which caused the death of a worker. It was found that on the day of the incident, he removed a barricade and warning signs from the stope shortly before the fatally injured worker started building the bund, and then left the area which meant the stope was unguarded.

Northern Star and Byrnegut failed to complete the required job hazard analysis and neither company took steps to instigate a proper risk assessment for the task. Mine operators must erect a physical barrier before an open stope is created or changed by firing explosives and it must be maintained to prevent access. In this instance, there were no physical barriers to prevent the loader entering the stope, nor were there effective wall markings to help the driver judge the distance to the open edge. These factors are especially important as a loader's configuration can limit the driver's forward visibility.

Sandfire Resources Limited – DeGrussa underground mine

Sentenced: 16 November 2023

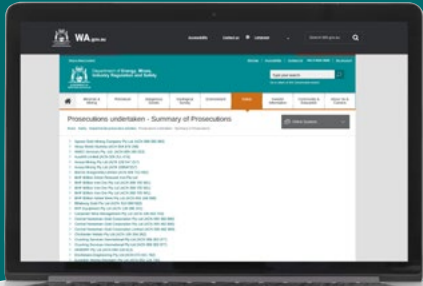
Sandfire Resources Ltd was fined \$551,250 after a worker was fortunate to survive an underground rockfall that pinned him to an elevated basket he was working in at the DeGrussa underground mine.

In May 2020, an underground explosives operator was working from an elevated basket attached to a mobile charging unit when the ground above him collapsed. The rockfall pushed the basket to the ground, trapping the worker inside, making it difficult for him to breathe. Co-workers worked for nearly 20 minutes to free him. During the rescue, the workers were unsure of the integrity of the ground above them and feared they might be killed by a further rock fall. The trapped explosives operator was eventually freed having suffered scratches, lacerations and broken ribs.

Underground mining requires detailed analysis of the rock structures and planning in accordance with accepted safety factors that are designed to ensure that tunnelling and blasting rock to remove ore is safe for persons working underground. Underground workers had raised concerns about the integrity of the ground with Sandfire Resources in the days prior to the rock fall. The company had implemented remedial measures, but they were inadequate as they were based on inaccurate information and did not take into account significant geological features in the area.

!

For information on WorkSafe Mines Safety prosecutions see the [Summary of prosecutions](#).



2022–23 CONVICTIONS

During 2022–23, workplace safety enforcement proceedings resulted in 24 convictions.

Where incidents occurred prior to the introduction of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*, prosecutions were actioned under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984* and the *Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994*.

<i>Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 And Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996</i>			
Offender	Section	Regulation	Penalty
1. Badge Constructions (WA) Pty Ltd	23D 19(1) and 19A(3)		\$120,000
2. CDM hydraulics Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(2)		\$375,000
3. Centurion Transport Co. Pty Ltd	23D, 19(1) and 19A(3)		\$40,000
4. Chain Applications Pty Ltd	23(1) and 23AA(2)		\$300,000
5. Clinton Douglas Morey	55(1), 19(1) and 19A(2)		\$60,000
6. Expressway-Civic Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(2)		\$390,000
7. L & M Radiator Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(2)		\$500,000
8. Luke Fraser Corderoy	55(1), 19(1) and 19A(2)		\$60,000
9. Mode 2 Group Pty Ltd	23F 19(1) and 19A(2)		\$60,000
10. PT Supplies Group Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(2) and 23I(2)(a) 23J(1) 54		\$240,000
11. Ryan and Melissa Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(2)		\$600,000
12. Swinging Bricklayers Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(2)		\$600,000
13. Swissport Australia Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(2)		\$110,000
14. Unique Metal Works Pty Ltd	19(1) and 19A(3)		\$300,000
15. Van Lam TRAN		6.2(1) and 4.41	\$6,000
16. VL Tran Family Company Pty Ltd	22(1) and 22A(2)		\$110,000

<i>Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994</i>			
Offender	Section	Regulation	Penalty
17. Dampier Salt Limited	15A, 9(1) and 9A(3)		\$ 20,000
18. Hanson Construction Materials Pty Ltd	9(1) and 9A(3)		\$130,000
19. Karara Mining Pty Ltd	9(1) and 9A(2)		\$120,000
20. Minjar Gold Pty Ltd	9(1) and 9A(3)		\$35,500
21. Nifty Copper Pty Ltd	13 and 13A(3)		\$165,000
22. Steven Mark Davis	10 and 10A(3)		\$1,500
23. Three Rivers Drilling Pty Ltd	9(1) and 9A(2)		\$300,000
24. Tungsten Mining NL	9(1) and 9A(2)		\$300,000

For information on the WorkSafe prosecutions under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1984* and its regulations see the [Summary of Successful Prosecutions](#)

WORKSAFE AGREES TO ENFORCEABLE WHS UNDERTAKING FOR THE FIRST TIME

WorkSafe and miner Fortescue have agreed to an enforceable WHS undertaking as an alternative to prosecution in relation to Fortescue failing to provide documents to WorkSafe.

Fortescue was charged in February 2023 with 34 counts of refusing or failing to comply with a requirement to provide documents to a WorkSafe inspector within a specified period without a reasonable excuse. The documents related to 34 cases of alleged sexual harassment at three of Fortescue's mining operations – Christmas Creek, Solomon and Cloudbreak.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* provides for the WorkSafe Commissioner to accept an enforceable WHS undertaking as an alternative to prosecution for a party alleged to have contravened the Act. It is not an admission or finding of guilt, but instead aims to deliver a workplace safety outcome instead of a fine. This is the first time WorkSafe has agreed to this alternative.

The money Fortescue must spend is to be applied to a number of projects and programs aligned with certain recommendations of the *Enough is Enough* report, published following the Parliamentary Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in the Mining Industry.

Agreed WHS undertakings include, Fortescue developing a security and duress app to be made available to all workers in the mining industry; developing and delivering education sessions for contractors and sub-contractors; developing respectful behaviour advertisements and funding research into strategies to prevent and respond to psychosocial hazards for use across the mining sector.

Acting WorkSafe Commissioner Sally North said Fortescue had committed to spend more than \$1.4 million on their WHS undertakings.



This is a substantial investment in improving industry capability, and I firmly believe that this agreement is in the best interests of workers across the mining sector," she said. "Fortescue's investment is well above the fine that could be expected if it was convicted of the underlying charges".

Fortescue's initiatives must be made available throughout the mining industry, and the benefits are expected to have widespread positive outcomes for Western Australian workers. WorkSafe will monitor the progress of the WHS undertaking by meeting with Fortescue on a quarterly basis, and further action may be taken if the WHS undertaking is not delivered.

To find out more, go to [Enforceable WHS undertakings](#)

RISE OF SILICOSIS CASES LEADS TO BAN ON ENGINEERED STONE

The rise in silicosis cases across Australia has prompted a national response from safety regulators, primarily targeting the engineered stone industry, but extending to address the risks from exposure to respirable crystalline silica dusts in other industries.

Since 2018, there have been 56 recorded cases of silicosis in WA; of those, 50 were workers in the engineered stone industry. This over-representation of engineered stone workers reflects the elevated risk associated with working on engineered stone, which can contain up to 95 per cent crystalline silica.

Despite efforts by engineered stone manufacturers to develop products with lower silica content, the risk to workers is deemed too high. In response, Safe Work Australia, in consultation with safety regulators nationwide, has recommended a prohibition on the supply, installation or processing of engineered stone slabs, panels and benchtops. This prohibition will take effect in WA on 1 July 2024.

Until the prohibition takes effect, persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) and workers must ensure proper control measures are in place for any work involving engineered stone.

In Western Australia (WA), a person must not use a power tool on engineered stone, unless the use is controlled. The use of a power tool is controlled if it is used with:

- an integrated water delivery system that supplies a continuous feed of water; or
- a commercially available on tool extraction ventilation system connected to a Dust Class H vacuum, or other suitable systems that captures dust; or
- where the above is not reasonably practicable, local exhaust ventilation.

In addition to the above, the worker must use respiratory protective equipment which complies with AS/NZS 1716:2012 *Respiratory protective devices*.

In March, Work Health and Safety Ministers met and most jurisdictions, including WA, decided a transitional period of six months to 31 December 2024 will be implemented after the 1 July ban. The WA Government recognises there are businesses and consumers who have already entered into contracts to obtain engineered stone products. Contracts entered into before 1 January 2024 may be honoured during the transitional period ending on 31 December 2024.

Engineered stone benchtops already installed in homes do not pose a health hazard, as the finished product does not release dust. However, those working with already installed engineered stone, for example to remove it, will need to notify WorkSafe.

Additionally, further regulations will be implemented for high-risk silica work in other sectors, commencing in September 2024. This will include the requirement to document a silica risk control plan for high-risk crystalline silica processes, provide silica specific training, conduct air and health monitoring, and report exceedances of the workplace exposure standard for silica to WorkSafe. These regulations will apply to general industries in WA as the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022 already contain equivalent provisions. WorkSafe will provide further information on the new requirements.

See [Prohibition on the use of engineered stone](#) for more information



ESTABLISHING GOOD SAFETY PRACTICES ON FARMS

WorkSafe has developed a basic farm safety guide, *First steps to farm safety*, to assist farmers on their journey towards establishing good safety practices on their farm.

This guide simplifies the essential requirements for a farmer or farm owner to fulfill their work health and safety obligations under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020*.

The first section provides general information applicable across all industries:

- introduction to work health and safety laws
- consultation
- induction
- training, supervision and record keeping
- hazard identification and workplace inspection.

The second section focuses on the high priority farming hazards that WorkSafe has identified as being the leading cause of fatalities in the agricultural industry. These include:

- plant and machinery
- working at heights
- machinery and guarding
- electrical hazards
- hazardous chemicals.

Every hazard has essential compliance requirements and a corresponding checklist. Acknowledging that activities on farms differ, the hazard information and checklists are not extensive. They have been developed as a foundation for identifying hazards and allow farmers to customise their checklists to suit their specific activities. The QR codes in the guide direct to additional information such as Codes of practice relevant to the respective hazards.

Once the basic compliance requirements have been established, farmers can address other hazards present on their farms. Further information can be found on the WorkSafe [agricultural health and safety](#) page.

While the guide has been developed for farmers, it can be used by people conducting business or undertakings (PCBU) in other industries who would like to start their safety

compliance journey and are seeking guidance.



ASBESTOS 20-YEAR BAN ANNIVERSARY: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Asbestos continues to be a hazard in Australia, despite the ban on new uses in 2003. This is because products containing asbestos still exist in our everyday built environment.

WorkSafe has resources to assist with identification, removal and management of asbestos in workplaces, including [codes of practice](#) which detail the legal requirements of persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) and others in the workplace.

ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT

For buildings constructed before 31 December 2003, PCBUs must conduct asbestos surveys. If found, an asbestos register and an asbestos management plan must be created and the register reviewed every five years or sooner. If uncertain, the material should be presumed to contain asbestos and treated as if it is asbestos.

See [Asbestos: Frequently asked questions](#) for detailed information.

INFORMATION FOR TRADESPERSONS

Workers may be unknowingly exposed to asbestos or may not know what to do if they come across it. WorkSafe's [Asbestos safety for trades and construction workers](#) can assist with raising awareness.

ASBESTOS REMOVAL LICENCES

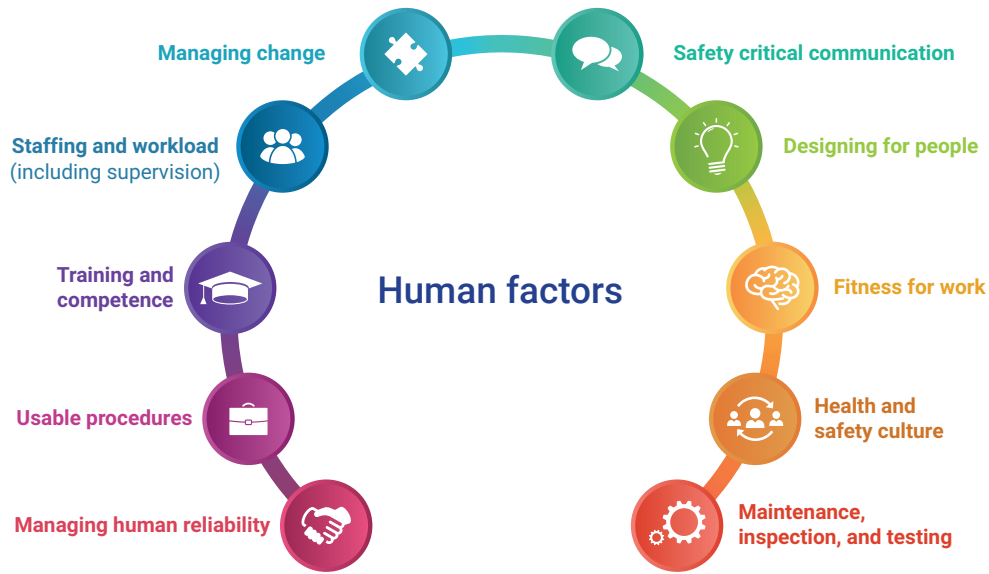
Removal of 10m² or more of bonded material (e.g. flat sheet cladding, fencing) may be removed by a Class B or a Class A licence holder for friable material. Check WorkSafe's [register](#) for licensed contractors. All licensed asbestos removal must be [reported](#) to WorkSafe before the work commences.

CLEARANCES

Removal of asbestos of more than 10m² requires authorisation that the area is clear of asbestos before others occupy or work in the area. For Class B work, the removal must be undertaken by a person who is suitably trained and experienced and is independent of the PCBU. Clearances after the removal of friable asbestos materials must be completed by a licensed asbestos assessor as it requires a visual inspection and air monitoring.

IMPORTING PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT

It is the importer's responsibility to ensure products and equipment do not contain asbestos. Australian Border Force could seize items if they are suspected of containing asbestos. See [Prohibited Goods: Asbestos](#).



BUILDING HUMAN FACTORS CAPABILITY IN THE PETROLEUM AND GEOTHERMAL ENERGY INDUSTRY

The WorkSafe Petroleum Safety and Dangerous Goods Directorate (WorkSafe) is responsible for the 22 major hazard facilities and 56 petroleum and geothermal energy operations that conduct drilling, pipelines and production operations in Western Australia. Each of these facilities and operations has the potential for an incident on a catastrophic scale if the operations are not conducted safely.

Human factors are an integral component of safe and reliable operations. Many of the safety critical tasks to prevent and mitigate major accident events depend on human performance as a barrier or safeguard.

WorkSafe recognised the need to proactively address human factors and, in 2020, commenced the human factors capability strategy. This four-year strategy is focused on building internal and external human factor capability through stakeholder engagement, education and guidance, industry forums and an industry-wide project to establish an industry baseline and measure industry’s progress integrating human factors into safety management systems.

The inaugural Human Factors Forum in 2021 encouraged knowledge-sharing and participation within the industry. At the second forum in 2023, industry [presentations](#) demonstrated how small changes make big impacts to safe and reliable operations.

Based on consultation with industry, WorkSafe published external [guidance](#) on human factors topics of usable procedures, incident investigations and bowtie analyses of major accident events, along with case studies.

The major project of the strategy, the Human Factors Industry Baseline Project commenced in 2022–23. The project provides education and guidance on human factors and how to conduct an assessment of human factors integration within a safety management system. Inspectors conducted the initial assessment with industry participants, who then completed the remainder of the assessment independently. This methodology facilitated the transfer of knowledge, sharing of learnings and strengthening of stakeholder relationships.





From left: Sally North, Justine McGillivray, Luke Van Baaren, Stephen Lane, Vaughn Hinkley, Graeme Offer, Eunice Lai and Iain Dainty

The project report will soon be publicly available. The report describes the process and outlines the results and recommendations. Eleven recommendations were identified to strengthen the integration of human factors into safety management systems for major hazard facilities and petroleum and geothermal energy operations. WorkSafe will publish guidance to assist industry with addressing the eleven recommendations.

WorkSafe has also developed a human factors inspection checklist and inspectors will be using the checklist to integrate human factors into routine inspections and audits. WorkSafe will share the findings and learnings from the project with other health and safety regulators and similar organisations around Australia and in New Zealand. Knowledge sharing with other regulators may create an opportunity to conduct

the project on a national scale. The potential outcome of this would not only create safer industry practices across Australia, but it would also position Australia as a global leader in the management of work health and safety in highly hazardous industries.

The strategy is a great example of collaboration between the regulator and industry to improve work health and safety outcomes on an industry-wide scale.

Thank you to the operators who enthusiastically participated in the project and shared an accurate picture of how human factors is integrated into their operations. This project would not have been possible without industry participation and the key individuals who volunteered their time to complete the human factors industry baseline assessment on behalf of their operations.



[Human factors self-assessment guide and tool for safety management systems](#)





Work Health and Safety EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024

AWARDS RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY NOW OPEN

Nominations are open for the 2024 Work Health and Safety Excellence Awards.

The awards recognise outstanding solutions and innovations to specific health and safety problems in WA workplaces and are presented at an awards ceremony culminating Safe Work Month in October.

Submissions are open in five categories for both small to medium organisations and large organisations.

Last year's winners were announced at Optus Stadium on Friday 27 October 2023. Of 65 submissions, 25 became finalists, with seven recognised with a winner's trophy and five receiving a certificate of merit.



Work health and safety invention of the year

This award recognises development of plant and equipment engineering and infrastructure to enhance health and safety.



Best solution to a work health and safety risk

This award recognises innovation, implementation and design of systems or procedures to improve health and safety.



Best intervention to address a psychosocial hazard in the workplace

This award recognises an organisation's commitment to the prevention of psychosocial hazards in the workplace.



Leadership excellence award

This award recognises an organisation's excellence in leadership in improving health and safety in the workplace.



Health and safety representative of the year

This award recognises an elected health and safety representative who has made a significant contribution and demonstrable difference to health and safety in the workplace.



Submissions for 2024 close on 31 May with finalists announced in August. Winners will be announced at the awards ceremony in October.

Not sure which category is best for your submission? Visit the [WorkSafe nomination submission webpage](#) for category criteria and more information.



Work Health and Safety
EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2023

Health and Safety
Representative of
the Year

TYC

Hon Matthew Swinbourne MLC and Rob Curtis, HSR of the year

MEET ROB CURTIS THE 2023 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YEAR

St John WA paramedic, Rob Curtis was awarded the 2023 Health and Safety Representative (HSR) of the year at the Work Health and Safety Excellence Awards held at Optus Stadium on 27 October 2023.

With eight years of experience in the field of health and safety, Rob has been recognised for his unwavering commitment to health and safety in the workplace, with the last four years as a designated HSR.

Rob's dedication to ensuring the health and safety of his 300 colleagues is evident in his proactive approach. Rob has implemented initiatives on a range of issues across St John WA, including, manual handling techniques, driver safety, violence against paramedics and patient care. He has also represented St John WA on public awareness campaigns such as the RAC WA "bstreetsmart campaign".

Rob plays a crucial role in representing his work group through consultations with management on various projects. He identified a safer method of using lifting equipment for paramedics and worked closely with the Safety and Injury Management department to amend work instructions, establishing safer procedures for St John WA workers.

Rob spearheaded initiatives such as the introduction of "observer shifts" with the aim of improving understanding and communication between managers and paramedics, and between different departments. Observer shifts give non-clinical workers the opportunity to ride with a paramedic while they carry out their duties. The paramedic assumes responsibility for the safety of the observer during the shift, but this is outweighed by the insight it provides into the daily challenges and responsibilities of paramedics.

Rob continues to be a driving force behind creating a safer work environment for all employees at St John WA and his efforts have had a positive impact on fostering a culture of collaboration and mutual respect, and he has been instrumental in encouraging others to take on safety conscious roles. Improved procedures resulting in enhanced health and safety, along with better communication and understanding, are the demonstrated outcomes of his commitment to the wellbeing of his colleagues and, by extension, the community at large.



Nominate today

Have an outstanding HSR in your organisation? Submissions are now open.

Visit the [Work Health and Safety Excellence Awards page](#) for more information.



DID YOU MISS SAFE WORK MONTH 2023?

WorkSafe's theme for Safe Work Month last year was *Our way forward: Prioritising healthy and safe workplaces*.

Through October, WorkSafe offered three hybrid forums to allow participants to hear from a range of professionals, leaders and inspectors on important topics around prioritising healthy and safe workplaces.

Each forum was registered at full capacity, with a total of 2,639 in-person and online registrations.

Breathe easy: Occupational health and hygiene forum at Optus Stadium in Perth

With respiratory hazards an area of focus for WorkSafe, this forum brought together industry experts to discuss air quality and ventilation, silica, asbestos, radiation, and issues around inhalable toxins that can affect workplace health and safety.

Psychosocial hazards forum at Optus Stadium in Perth

Psychosocial hazards are a key factor in health and safety in the workplace and this is recognised in the Work health and safety (WHS) laws. This forum was planned to coincide with Mental Health Week, bringing together industry experts to discuss topics around mental health and psychosocial hazards that can affect worker health and safety.

Sowing the safety seeds: Agricultural safety forum at Bunbury Mantra

The health and safety of workers in the agricultural industry is extremely important to WorkSafe, as evidenced by the recent comprehensive independent [Inquiry into Safety in the Agricultural Industry](#). This forum featured field experts presenting on key topics, including understanding WHS laws, electrical safety, psychosocial hazards in the sector and the safe handling and storage of chemicals.



RESOURCES

You can still access videos and slides from all the presentations shared across the three [2023 Safe Work Month forums](#).

Primed for 2024

Make sure you're subscribed to [WorkSafe news alerts](#) and follow us on social media for early notice on how you can participate in this year's Safe Work Month.



#safeworkmonth

AGRICULTURAL FIELD DAYS

In a proactive effort to prioritise safety in the agricultural sector, WorkSafe is participating in agricultural field days being held throughout WA, offering crucial safety information to farmers. The initiative aims to address potential hazards, promote best safety practices and provide farmers with knowledge to create secure working environments.

WorkSafe's presence at these events highlights our commitment to promoting work health and safety within the sector. Information booths provide farmers

with guidance and resources specific to their needs. Current focus areas include machine guarding, mobile plant, fall from heights, electrical safety and hazardous chemicals.

Dangerous Goods Safety team members will attend the Dowerin Machinery Field Day alongside WorkSafe.

If you are attending one of these events and have any questions, do visit our booth and chat with a team member.

2024 Calendar



Field days

- Mingenew Field Day: 7–8 August
- Dowerin Machinery Field Day: 28–29 August
- Newdegate Machinery Field Day: 4–5 September



Mining Industry Summit

Driving Respect

The Mining Industry Summit: Driving Respect (the Summit) was held on 1 August 2023 at Optus Stadium, with almost 1200 delegates attending. The event showcased an impressive array of keynote speakers, panel discussions, and case studies from experts across government, industry and academia.

The Summit was part of the WA Government's response to the Parliamentary *Enough is Enough* report which focussed on sexual assault and harassment in the WA resources sector. The Summit aimed to educate, inspire and empower leaders to drive respect and take meaningful action towards preventing and responding to sexual harassment.

Holly Ransom, a globally renowned leadership speaker, facilitated the proceedings. Keynote speakers included:

- Professor Sharon Parker, who shared preliminary findings of the Landmark Study into the safety culture of the mining industry that is funded through the Mental Awareness Respect and Safety (MARS) Program
- Dr Dean Laplonge, a global expert challenging gender norms and practices in the mining sector, who discussed his regional roadshow findings

- Kate Jenkins AO, former Sex Discrimination Commissioner, who provided a broad context on her work delivering the landmark *Respect@Work* report, the evolving workplace culture towards women, and the challenges ahead.

The program also included six panel sessions on topics that explored ways to eradicate sexual harassment in the mining industry. Each session had a panel discussion, followed by an audience-led Q&A. See [Summit presentations](#).

Hon Roger Cook MLA (Premier); Hon Bill Johnston MLA (former Minister for Industrial Relations) and Hon Sue Ellery MLC (Minister for Women's Interests) all presented at the Summit, highlighting the government's commitment to supporting key programs and working with industry to create a workplace culture that is free from violence, harassment and discrimination.

The Summit provided an opportunity to engage with leaders who are building respectful workplaces and driving positive change. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, recognising the commitment from the mining industry to confront and address sexual harassment in the workplace.

! FURTHER INFORMATION

The MARS Program continues its work in this area through the development of programs and supporting initiatives aimed at tackling these challenges.



Dr Dean Laplonge



Kate Jenkins AO



Premier Roger Cook

MARS PROGRAM UPDATES AND MILESTONES



Led by the Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS), in partnership with the Mental Health Commission, Equal Opportunity Commission and the Department of Communities, the Mental Awareness, Respect and Safety (MARS) Program supports the mining sector to create safe, respectful and mentally healthy work environments.

Through the delivery of multiple initiatives and partnerships, the MARS Program has provided a platform to build a broad range of industry skills, knowledge systems and synergies to create mentally healthy workplaces, build a culture of safety and respect, and prepare for workplace safety in future mining.

MARS Program initiatives foster innovation and collaboration within the sector.

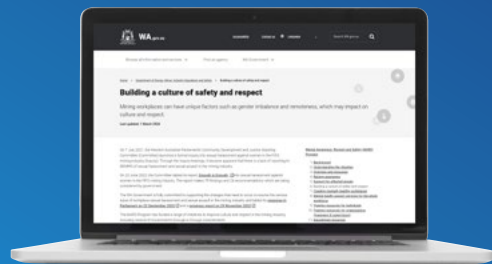
- The Landmark study by the Centre for Transformative Work Design at Curtin University to gather baseline data on workplace practices related to mental health, respect and safety in the WA mining industry
- Sponsorship of the AusIMM – International Women’s Day program in 2023, 2024 and 2025 and the AusIMM – International Mine Health and Safety Conference held on 15–17 April 2024. This conference attracted more than 500 industry leaders and practitioners from across the globe.
- Triaged non-legal guidance and referral through the Mines Industry Respect Infoline (MIRI) service hosted by Circle Green.
- The Mining Industry Summit: Driving Respect in 2023 brought together representatives from industry, peak bodies, member groups, supply operatives, unions, government agencies, and academia and research specialists who can contribute to driving and influencing lasting cultural change in the mining sector.

- The Professorial Chair in Mining WHS at Edith Cowan University will provide leadership in mining work health and safety, develop undergraduate and postgraduate education and a research program.
- Psychosocial education and training programs for frontline managers and workers delivered by FIFO Focus.
- Thrive at Work in Mining masterclass series and related industry community of practice delivered by Future of Work Institute at Curtin University.
- Thriving in Mining online microlessons and face-to-face capability training managed by the Mental Health Commission.
- Respect in Mining pilot program to develop cultural change using a customised program built upon Respectful Relationships principles by the Department of Communities.
- MATES in Mining delivery of a World Health Organisation recognised suicide prevention and mental health peer support program for industry.



FURTHER INFORMATION

[MARS Program: Mental Awareness, Respect and Safety \(MARS\) Program \(www.wa.gov.au\)](http://www.wa.gov.au)





MINE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: NEXT STEPS

WHAT IS A MINE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (MSMS)?

An MSMS is a comprehensive and integrated system for the management of all aspects of risks to health and safety in relation to the operation of a mine. The Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022 (WHS Mines Regulations) require that the MSMS must be designed to be used by the mine operator as the primary means of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers and other persons at the mine.

The MSMS should include all site-specific documentation, risk assessments, controls, organisational structures, statutory appointments and supporting processes. It must be readily available and understood by all mine workers and provide information about hazards, risks and controls that are in place to ensure safety while at work.

All mines were expected to have a fully functioning MSMS by 31 March 2024 and WorkSafe Mines Safety inspectorate will take appropriate regulatory action where it is found that the MSMS has not been fully developed as mandated.

REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Now that two years of the transition period have elapsed, mine operators should be moving into the review and continuous improvement phase. There are three levels of review required to maintain and improve the MSMS:

1. a review of controls is required if the controls are found to be deficient. This could be triggered by a change to the operation, a notifiable incident, audit or a specific request
2. an audit process should be in place to ensure the effectiveness of the MSMS
3. the whole mine safety management system is to be reviewed every three years.

Appropriate consultation with workers is a key element in developing and improving the MSMS. [The *Mine safety management system: Code of practice*](#) may be a useful source of guidance, along with the [Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination: Code of practice](#).

WorkSafe is developing self-assessments for MSMS and principal mine hazard management plans, which are scheduled for release in the near future. In the interim, mine operators that are applying the current suite of self-assessments should note that regulatory references in the mining self-assessment audit guides need to be updated to align with the WHS Mines Regulations, but the underlying principles remain applicable.

TIMELINE EXTENDED FOR MINING STATUTORY POSITIONS CERTIFICATION

The appointment of suitably qualified and experienced people into statutory positions has been a key principle ever since the requirement to appoint managers was enshrined in the *Mines Regulation Act 1906*. In recent years, the number of statutory positions has increased to the 15 listed in Schedule 26 of the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022, plus site senior executives and exploration managers.

Eight of the statutory positions require the candidates to acquire statutory certificates before being appointed to the roles. Most of the statutory positions require the candidates to pass an approved WHS risk management unit and applicable legislation exam conducted by WorkSafe. Several also require the candidates to pass a mining practice exam.

Following the commencement of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* on 31 March 2022, workers who held an equivalent role under the previous mine safety legislation could be appointed to a statutory position for a three-year transitional period. WorkSafe has extended the transition period to complete the mining statutory position certification from 30 March 2025 to 30 March 2026. After this 2026 deadline, the person appointed must meet the eligibility criteria for their statutory position, including having passed any required examination. The extended transition period will ensure applicants can attend the relevant examination.

MINES STATUTORY POSITIONS PORTAL

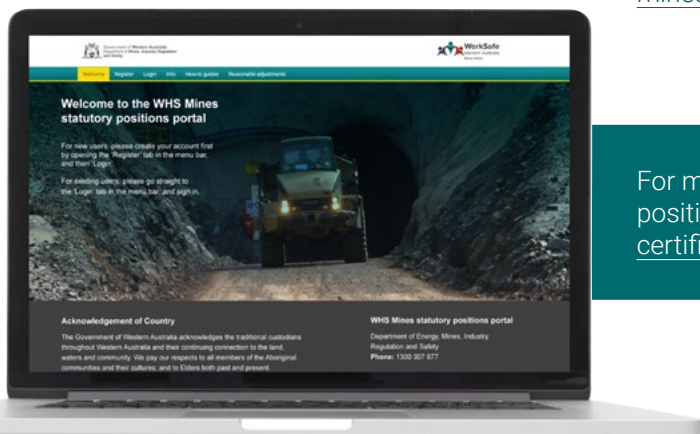
Launched in February 2023, the mines statutory positions portal hosts the applicable legislation examinations. Mining practice examinations are also hosted in the MSPP. The mining practice examinations for surveyors are scheduled to go live in the second quarter of 2024 and are planned to be held in a face-to-face interview format.

Bookings for the site senior executives and exploration managers supervisor applicable legislation examinations opened in March 2023, followed by underground managers, underground supervisors, quarry managers and statutory supervisors. The mining practice examinations went live in June 2023 and examination venues in Kalgoorlie and Bunbury were established in late 2023.

All of the examinations have reasonable adjustment provisions approved by the Mining Competency Advisory Committee to ensure access and equity.

By April 2024, 2,691 candidates attempted the applicable legislation or mining practice examinations with a success rate of over 80 per cent.

WorkSafe is aware of the demand for the legislation examinations and is currently working on strategies to increase their availability in the Perth metropolitan area and selected regional centres. Bookings can now be made through the [mines statutory positions portal webpage](#).



For more information on mining statutory positions visit [Mining statutory positions and certificates](#)



UNAUTHORISED ACCESS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

When people enter construction sites, they may be exposed to hazards that can cause fatalities or serious injuries.

As part of the duty of care responsibilities, the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 stipulate that a person with management or control of a workplace at which construction work is carried out must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace is secured from unauthorised access. The legislation is not prescriptive as different sites have different risks and there is no 'one size fits all'. This means that the most appropriate controls should be chosen for the particular site.

In assessing the risk, the person with the management or control of the workplace must consider:

- the likelihood of unauthorised access
- the risks to the health and safety of an unauthorised person
- how to confine hazards if unauthorised access cannot be prevented
- additional child security requirements for sites near schools, parks and shops.



WorkSafe's *Construction site security: Unauthorised access: Information sheet*, *Construction site security: Checklist* and *Construction work: Code of practice* may assist you in the evaluation of the risks associated with unauthorised access to your construction site.

WORKSAFE LOOKS INTO SECURITY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES

WorkSafe has commenced a proactive inspection program to look at site security issues on construction sites in Western Australia (WA).

The inspection program will look at a number of randomly-selected sites across metropolitan and regional areas of the state throughout the 2024–25 financial year.

There have been incidents in which construction sites have been accessed by unauthorised people, exposing them to serious hazards.

Inspectors will examine the security measures in place to determine whether sites are suitably secured against unauthorised access and will also conduct general site inspections.

WA's workplace health and safety laws require the person with management or control of a construction site to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace is secured from unauthorised access. If access cannot be prevented, the hazards within the workplace must be isolated.

General site inspections will include checking for compliance with work health and safety laws, with a focus on hazards associated with:

- excavations
- slips, trips and falls, including falls from height
- temporary electrical installations
- partially constructed structures
- stored construction materials
- plant and equipment.

Inspections will be conducted with the aid of a checklist to ensure consistency across all workplaces.

Acting WorkSafe Commissioner Sally North said the proactive inspection program aimed to assist employers in the construction industry to fulfil their responsibilities for the health and safety of workers and others at their sites.

“The primary goal of our proactive programs is to provide information and to collaboratively work towards a reduction in work-related injuries and illnesses in the industry sectors we target,” Ms North said.

“However, if our inspectors find non-compliance with work health and safety legislation, they will take appropriate action that could include the issuing of verbal directions or notices requiring the situation to be remedied.

“A wide range of safety issues may be present in the construction industry, and site security plays an important role in protecting the public from the hazards of a construction site.

“It's our aim to make employers fully aware of the risks and supply them with information on the measures that can be put into place to reduce those risks.

“Employers are encouraged to download the Construction site security [information sheet](#) and [checklist](#) from the WorkSafe website in preparation for a possible inspection.”

WorkSafe has an extensive schedule of proactive inspection programs that closely examine safety issues in a wide range of industries and activities.

UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR PETROLEUM AND GEOTHERMAL ENERGY OPERATIONS OPERATORS

When the work health and safety legislation was enacted, it led to amendments in various petroleum Acts and the repeal of related regulations. All onshore and offshore petroleum, pipeline and geothermal energy operations are now subject to the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* (WHS Act) and the *Work Health and Safety (Petroleum and Geothermal Energy Operations) Regulations 2022* (WHS PAGEO Regulations).

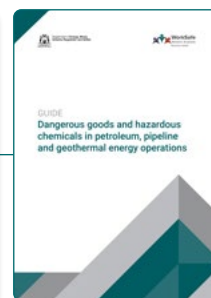
WorkSafe Petroleum Safety has recently published a suite of guidance material to support operators in meeting their requirements under the WHS Act and WHS PAGEO Regulations. These must be implemented prior to operations being undertaken.

Two interpretive guidelines, [Development and submission of a safety case](#) and [Development and submission of an onshore facility – drilling operations safety case](#) assist onshore and offshore petroleum, pipeline and geothermal energy operators develop safety cases for facilities.

A further interpretive guideline, [Development and submission of a diving safety management system](#) assists diving contractors in developing diving safety management systems.

THE COMPLETE RANGE OF UPDATED GUIDES INCLUDES:

- [Audits, review and continual improvement](#)
- [Bridging documents and simultaneous operations \(SIMOPS\)](#)
- [Dangerous goods and hazardous chemicals in petroleum, pipeline and geothermal energy operations](#)
- [Decommissioning and management of ageing assets](#)
- [Demonstration of risk reduction so far as is reasonably practicable \(SFAIRP\)](#)
- [Diving start-up notices](#)
- [Emergency response planning](#)
- [Facility design case](#)
- [Hazard identification](#)
- [Health and safety leading and lagging performance indicators](#)
- [Identification of major accident events, control measures and performance standards](#)
- [Inspections – Land-based drilling rigs](#)
- [Involvement of workers](#)
- [Management of change](#)
- [Nomination of an operator](#)
- [Records management including document control](#)
- [Risk assessment and management including operational risk assessment](#)
- [Validation requirements.](#)





EMERGENCY PLANNING UNDER THE WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 2020

The implementation of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* and subsidiary legislation has driven significant transformation in safety management systems across industries. The focus has shifted from legislative prescription to empowering persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) as industry experts, to identify hazards and implement effective control measures.

While the changes encompass various aspects of safety management, emergency management planning and response have undergone significant prescription in the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulations 2022. The evolving landscape of emergency management is influenced by several factors, including increased risks of fires and floods due to climate change, the emergence of new industries and materials presenting new threats, and the increased proximity of industries, which both heightens potential emergencies and fosters collaborative mitigation efforts.

A crucial aspect of managing potential emergency events lies in interoperability – the ability to collaborate effectively with other PCBUs, response agencies and stakeholders. Past incidents have highlighted interoperability as a key area for improvement, emphasising the need for organisations to work seamlessly together during emergencies.

Emergency management plans require a more specific focus, tailoring them to the scale, nature, and location of the PCBU. Stakeholder consultation is a mandatory step in the planning

process, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered. In mining operations, emergency management plans must form a part of the mine safety management system.

For general industries, higher-risk workplaces may require additional information in their emergency plans.

Technology also plays a pivotal role in enhancing industry responses to emergencies. Innovations such as fire fighting robots, virtual reality training, and improved communication technologies have positively impacted emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

Key areas of emphasis in the new emergency planning legislation include the identification and training of workers responsible for planning and responding to emergencies, regular testing and maintenance of emergency response equipment and routine testing of emergency management plans to ensure effectiveness in real-life scenarios.



Visit the [emergency management webpage](#) for more information

TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR WHS REGULATIONS COMMENCED

Transitional arrangements apply where duties are new or substantially changed from previous requirements. The Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WHS Regulations) include a transitional period allowing duty holders time to assess their situations and make necessary adjustments for continued compliance.

Transitional arrangements that ended 30 March 2024

- Concrete placing booms, materials hoist and personnel hoist classes of high risk work licenses (HRWL) will be required to operate concrete placing booms and material hoists. Existing operators may need to undertake training and apply for an HRWL to continue to operate these types of machinery. See [High risk work licence](#) for more information.
- Plant designs and items of plant not registered under OSH Regulations 1996 and not completed by 30 March 2024 must be registered under the WHS Regulations.
- The minimum mass threshold for a tractor requiring roll-over protection under the WHS Regulations is 560 kgs. Tractors weighing between 560 and 800 kgs manufactured before 31 March 2024 are exempt. Tractors produced, imported, or purchased before 1 January 1981 are also exempt under the WHS Regulations.

New requirements that commenced 31 March 2024

- Air monitoring for friable asbestos removal work must be conducted by a licensed asbestos assessor (LAA).
- When friable asbestos removal work is conducted, a clearance inspection of the area must be carried out by an LAA.
- To qualify as asbestos removal workers, the WHS Regulations mandate that workers conducting asbestos removal work must complete specified VET courses.

Further information can be found at [How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace: Code of practice](#), [How to safely remove asbestos: Code of practice](#) and [Construction work: Code of practice](#).

Audiometric testing

In workplaces where hearing protection is necessary, a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must provide audiometric testing for workers within three months of commencing work and follow up at least every two years. Refer to [Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work: Code of practice](#) for more information.



FURTHER INFORMATION

More information can be found on the [Work Health and Safety \(General\) Regulations 2022 – transitional and savings provisions](#) information sheet



CHANGES TO THE WORKPLACE EXPOSURE STANDARD FOR WELDING FUMES

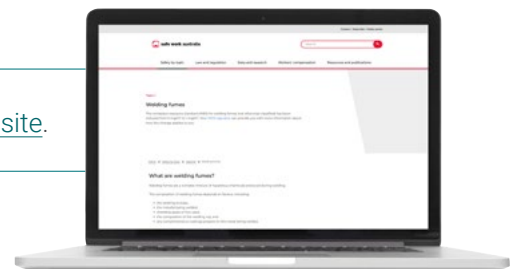
The workplace exposure standard (WES) for welding fumes (not otherwise classified) has been reduced from an eight-hour time weighted average of 5 mg/m^3 to 1 mg/m^3 . The new exposure standard is now effective in Western Australia.

Under the work health and safety legislation, a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must ensure no person at a workplace is exposed to an airborne contaminant above the concentration listed in the [Workplace exposure standards \(WES\) for airborne contaminants](#).

To protect workers and others from the adverse health risks of welding fumes, PCBUs must ensure exposure levels to welding fumes and other chemicals released during welding processes are below their respective exposure limits.

In addition, reasonably practicable steps must be undertaken to eliminate or minimise the risks of exposure. The [Welding processes: Code of practice](#) provides guidance to help manage these risks.

Further information is available on the [Safe Work Australia website](#).



LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE AMMONIUM NITRATE EMULSION TANKER EXPLOSION

In October 2022, a tanker trailer carrying ammonium nitrate emulsion (ANE) caught fire and exploded approximately 150 kilometres east of Laverton in WA. ANE is commonly used in the manufacture of explosives.

The incident began with a tyre fire on the rear tanker trailer. When attempts to put out the fire using fire extinguishers were unsuccessful, the driver detached the rear tanker and dolly, drove to a safe distance and set up a 3-kilometre exclusion zone. The intense and prolonged fire caused the ANE to spill and eventually explode two hours later. The blast left a large crater in the road and destroyed the tanker and dolly.

This explosion was the world's first known detonation involving ANE during transportation since the introduction of bulk transport in the 1980s.

The incident investigation prompted a comprehensive review of the hazards associated with the transport of ANE. The Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DEMIRS) took immediate steps to educate both industry and the public through the release of an [animated reconstruction](#) of the incident and an [incident alert](#). Publication of the investigation report followed the review, along with a condensed version with key information for drivers and transport companies.

Work continues as DEMIRS drafts legislative amendments and develops a new code of practice with the aim of improving the transportation of dangerous goods by even higher safety standards, thereby reducing the risk of such incidents.

Lessons for industry

DEMIRS' investigation resulted in 16 recommendations, including:

For drivers:

- pull over to an area where the product will flow away from the vehicle
- attempt to extinguish the fire in its early stages using pressurised foam or water-based systems
- establish an exclusion zone, alert emergency services and evacuate if the fire is uncontrollable.

For transport companies:

- fit hubs and tyres with temperature and pressure monitoring systems
- increase maintenance schedules, especially for vehicles traveling on poor roads
- provide drivers with comprehensive fire fighting and emergency response training
- improve vehicle design to include heat-shielding mudguards, fire screens and protect critical components.

If you are interested in the safety measures being introduced by WorkSafe, the draft code of practice, *Minimising the risk of tyre fires when transporting ammonium nitrate explosion risk goods*, will be available for public consultation shortly. Keep an eye on the [Open consultations page](#) for its release.



Further information can be found in the full [investigation report](#), [condensed version](#) and [animated reconstruction](#)



Become a WorkSafe Inspector

Passionate about work health and safety?

Want to make a difference?

Consider a career as a WorkSafe inspector.

To learn more scan the QR code or visit
demirs.wa.gov.au/content/current-vacancies



Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety

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WORKSAFE

for general industries, mines safety and petroleum safety

Telephone: 1300 307 877 (general enquiries)
1300 424 091 (licensing)
1800 678 198 (24 hours serious incident and fatality reporting)

Email: WSCallCentre@demirs.wa.gov.au (general enquiries)
WSLicensing@demirs.wa.gov.au (licensing)

WorkSafe WA

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www.demirs.wa.gov.au/subscribe

MINE PLANS

Telephone: 1300 307 877

Email: rsdmineplans@demirs.wa.gov.au

DANGEROUS GOODS SAFETY

including explosives and fireworks

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Email: dgsb@demirs.wa.gov.au (dangerous goods safety enquiries)
cso@demirs.wa.gov.au (dangerous goods licensing enquiries)

SAFETY REGULATION SYSTEM (SRS)

Telephone: 1300 307 877

Email: SRSManager@demirs.wa.gov.au

SAFETY EDUCATION

including publications and events

Telephone: 1300 307 877

Email: safetycomms@demirs.wa.gov.au

NOTIFYING WORKSAFE

Call WorkSafe immediately on **1800 678 198** to report a notifiable incident.

Notifiable incidents include:

- If a worker dies, is seriously injured or becomes very ill because of their work.
- Dangerous incidents such as chemical leaks, explosions, fires, fall from heights, collapse of a structure.

Reporting an incident and definitions are available at www.demirs.wa.gov.au/WHSincident



For a **non life-threatening dangerous incident**, preserve the site and immediately notify WorkSafe **online**



To report a **death, serious injury or illness, or life-threatening dangerous incident**, preserve the site and immediately call **1800 678 198**