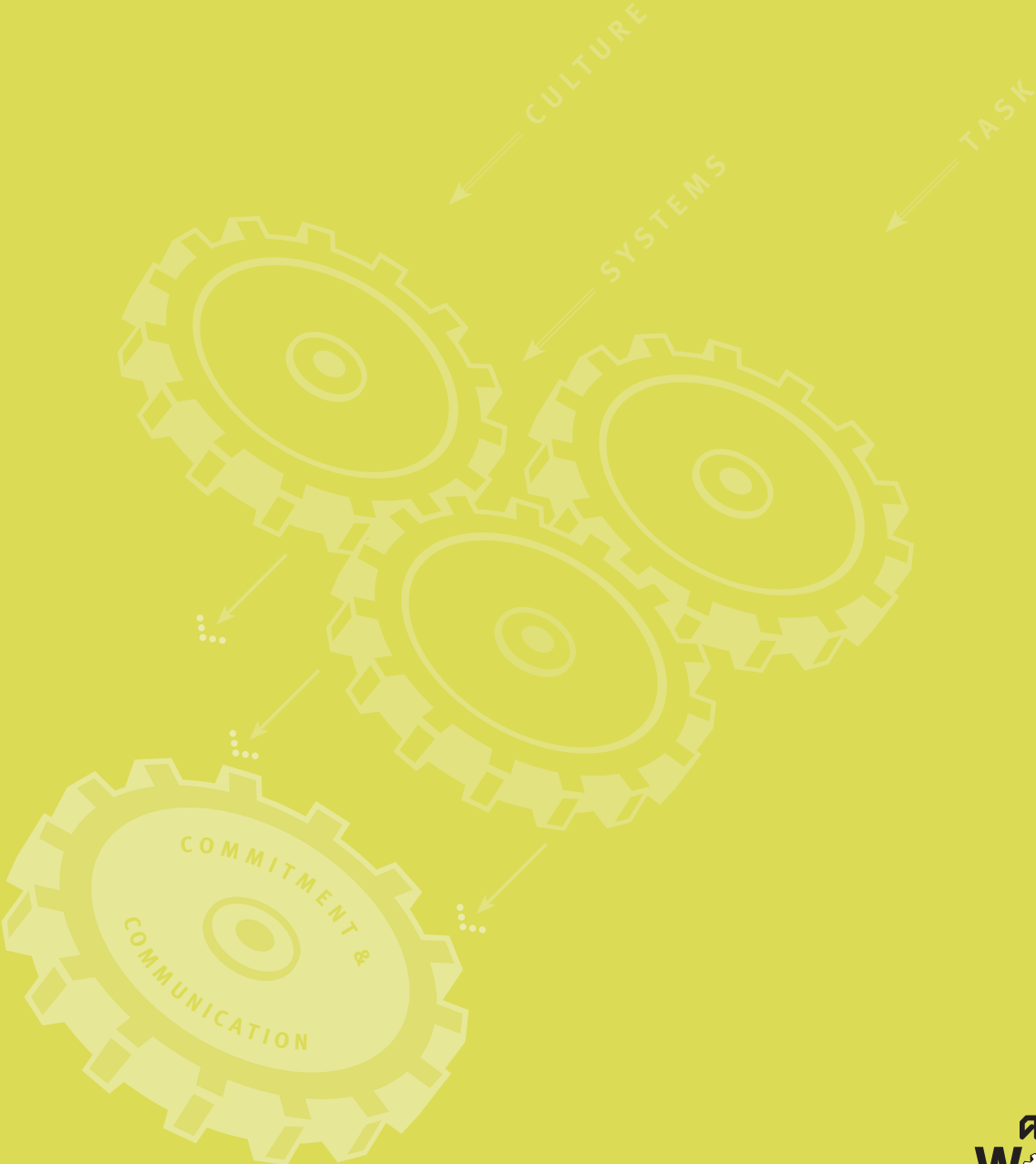


# Workplace Health and Safety

••• HOW TO SET UP AND SUPPORT WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY





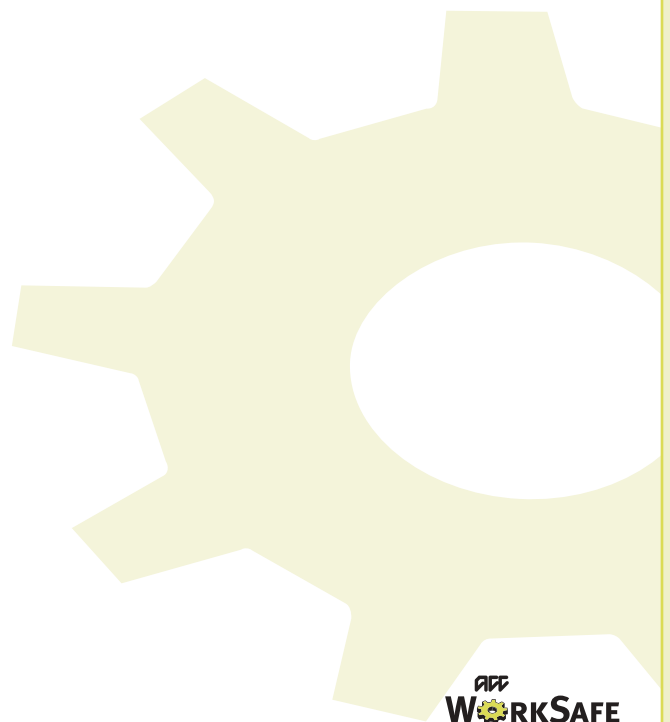
## HOW TO SET UP AND SUPPORT WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

### INTRODUCTION

As an employer or manager, getting involved in workplace health and safety will:

- Reduce the costs of workplace injuries and illnesses. Workplace injuries and illness are probably more expensive than you think. You may have to pick up costs relating to lowered productivity, loss of valued staff, staff recruitment and retraining, effects on product and service quality and damage to plant and process.
- Help you to comply with law, which requires you to provide a healthy and safe workplace.
- Provide a happier and more productive environment for staff, where they are safe and healthy.

To keep your workplace safe, and to comply with the law, you need health and safety systems. ACC WorkSafe is a guide to help you build these health and safety systems, and can apply in a wide range of workplaces and industries.





# ACC WorkSafe Cycle

At ACC WorkSafe's heart is the ACC WorkSafe Cycle, which provides for a continuous process of improvement. By working through the ACC WorkSafe Cycle, you can set up and support the comprehensive health and safety systems needed to keep workplaces safe.

## → ACC WorkSafe Cycle



The three steps of review, plan and action keep you working in a process of continuous improvement. The action step includes all the key activities of a comprehensive health and safety programme. Commitment and communication are needed at each of the three steps and in each key activity listed under action.

### COMMITMENT

It is vital that managers are committed to health and safety in their workplace.

This must have the same status within a workplace as other business and production goals.

Commitment from employees and their representatives is also needed for policies and procedures to be effective.

Workplace commitment requires understanding how workplace injuries and illnesses are caused and the actions needed to prevent them (see the ACC WorkSafe Injury Model on page 7).



Commitment comes in many forms and may include, among other things:

- a highly visible policy;
- managers who understand the organisation's health and safety issues and lead by example;
- adequate resourcing (time, people and dollars);
- writing health and safety into job descriptions and performance reviews;
- production or performance goals that reflect health and safety;
- involving and training employees in health and safety;
- a positive workplace that supports health and safety systems and procedures.

There also needs to be commitment to building a strong foundation for health and safety. A strong foundation includes key people, their skill base, identifying health and safety “champions”, and the proper channels to drive effective health and safety activities.

It means building a structure for health and safety to ensure that it becomes a part of core business.

## COMMUNICATION

Without good communication about health and safety issues, our best injury prevention efforts will be wasted.

The lines of communication within an organisation need to be open and effective so that health and safety messages can be given efficiently and accurately.

Choose appropriate communication channels to make sure health and safety initiatives are co-ordinated and well understood. They may be:

- Formal: audits, workplace inspections, health and safety committee meetings, training, incident investigations and reports, or hazard registers; and/or
- Informal: tool box meetings, suggestion box, verbal reports, day-to-day interactions, or leading by example.

Communication skills are equally important. The right approach will help “sell” health and safety strategies, and “bridge” gaps in knowledge. Necessary skills include:

- consulting with employees, management and/or contractors;
- listening to the issues when health and safety issues are raised;
- giving information through talks, publications, training sessions, or as immediate feedback;
- facilitating group learning;
- mediating to reach solutions.



Good communication within a workplace supports people in healthy and safe practices and is integral to the WorkSafe Cycle.

### 1. REVIEW

Reviews are important to assess an organisation's injury prevention performance. They determine the value of health and safety activities, and provide a basis for planning.

The main purpose of an initial review is to gather material to help develop an improvement plan. This could include:

- identify the effectiveness of systems and practices currently in place;
- establish baselines against which future progress can be measured;
- quantify up-front and hidden costs related to workplace illness and injury;
- identify hazards and injury factors.

In later reviews, progress against activities and targets set in improvement plans is also measured.

### 2. PLAN

Planning involves setting goals, objectives and action steps in order to make improvement strategies happen. When planning, you need to:

- identify goals. These are usually activities or controls designed to eliminate, isolate or minimise hazards and factors that are causing injury/illness;
- determine the resources needed (time, money, people, skills, knowledge);
- identify objectives. Ensure that they are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and have a time-line);
- prioritise actions;
- identify measures and targets;
- create an action plan that details the specific steps needed to meet objectives.

### 3. ACTION

Action means developing, implementing and monitoring the following systems and practices:

- hazard management;
- incident reporting and investigation;
- training and supervision;
- employee participation;



- emergency readiness;
- contractor management;
- injury management.

Evaluation data will be collected at this stage as well, so that successful implementation of the activity can be recognised, and opportunities for improvement can be identified when the cycle proceeds to review again.

For more information on the health and safety activities listed under action, see the ACC website [www.acc.co.nz/injury-prevention/safe-at-work/worksafe/action](http://www.acc.co.nz/injury-prevention/safe-at-work/worksafe/action) or call 0800THINKSAFE (0800 844 657) and ask for a copy of “How to implement safer workplace practices” (ACC 366).



# ACC WorkSafe Injury Model



Linked to the ACC WorkSafe Cycle is building the understanding of how injuries are caused. The ACC WorkSafe Injury Model allows you to analyse factors that contribute to injuries. This analysis directs you to the most effective injury prevention solutions.

## ACC WorkSafe Injury Model



Like other analytical models used by leading injury prevention professionals, the ACC WorkSafe Injury Model traces an event back to several causal factors rather than a single cause. Factors that contribute to an event often include characteristics of:

- the workplace culture;
- the systems that are in place;
- the tasks that are carried out.

An event might be a work-related illness, injury (including gradual process injuries) or death. Post-event refers to the workplace response to the event. This is when activities such as first aid, emergency response, rehabilitation, injury management and incident investigation are applied.

Feeding into the model are external factors that might influence the culture of the workplace.

The model is usually read from left to right to make clear the process that led to the event.

### THE ACC WORKSAFE INJURY MODEL IN DETAIL

**External factors** are those things that shape the culture of the workplace and include:

- business environments;
- government policy;
- economic environment;
- technology.

Although we cannot change external factors, we may be able to change how we respond to them.



**Culture factors** include management decisions and organisational processes that influence “the way things are done around here”.

A positive workplace culture is one that gives attention and priority to preventing injury and work-related illness.

Determine the culture for health and safety in your workplace by asking:

- Do any “culture” factors get in the way of putting appropriate workplace safety systems in place?
- Is health and safety a priority relative to other goals?
- Do people with a role in health and safety share the same status in the workplace as (say) production managers?
- Is health and safety integrated into the day-to-day running of the business?
- Are managers aware of, and committed to, injury prevention?
- Is injury prevention adequately resourced?

One way of changing culture is by ensuring everyone makes injury prevention a priority and that it is integrated into the day-to-day running of the business.

**Systems factors** shape the environment in which the person has to work.


Examples of systems include:

- business systems including people management and communication;
- physical and environmental features of the workplace including workstations, machinery, hand tools and their design, housekeeping and maintenance;
- health and safety systems such as hazard management, incident reporting and investigation, training, supervision and injury management.

Systems (or the lack of systems) influence how a person might act. A workplace that does not give enough attention and priority to injury prevention will tend to have systems and environments with characteristics (deficiencies) that contribute to injury.

To determine whether poorly designed systems, environments and equipment will contribute to workplace injury, ask:

- Are business systems (e.g. good people management and effective communication) in place?
- Are environmental features of the workplace (e.g. noise levels, air quality, temperature, lighting etc) managed to prevent injury and illness?
- Is the prevention of illness and injury included in the purchase, design and use of machinery, tools and equipment?

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- Is the workplace kept tidy?
  - Are equipment, machinery and tools well maintained?
  - Are health and safety systems (e.g. hazard management, incident reporting and investigation, training, supervision and injury management) in place?
  - Are health and safety systems and safe work practices understood and used by all employees?

**Task factors** are the actions and movements used by people to perform their work. Poorly designed systems, environments and equipment may encourage people to act and move in ways that promote injury, while performing their work.

Examples of actions and movement that contribute to injury include:

- awkward or prolonged posture;
- repetitive movement and/or manual handling;
- error/mistake;
- breach of safety rules.

To determine whether activities at task level contribute to workplace injury, ask:

- What actions and activities are involved in the task?
- Who is performing these actions?
- When are the actions and activities performed?
- How are the actions and activities performed (including are safe work procedures used?)

**The Event** is work-related injury or illness, or a near hit incident investigation.

**Post Event** refers to the workplace response to the event such as first aid, rehabilitation and incident investigation.



## CASE STUDIES ANALYSED USING THE ACC WORKSAFE INJURY MODEL

### *Scenario one*

A meat process plant employee strains a shoulder muscle while scooping meat pieces off a conveyor and placing them in boxes. He has worked for the company for a number of years and finds this particular packing station requires him to lean a long way forward to reach the product. Taller people on the line do not have this problem.

Event	Strained shoulder muscle
Task	Awkward trunk and upper arm posture
Systems	Design of packing workstation requires excessive forward reaches, particularly for short people
Culture	Ergonomic design of equipment and process not considered important, safety given a lesser priority than production

### *Scenario two*

An office manager in a legal firm develops severe and persistent aches and pains in the forearm and elbow. She has been to see her doctor who has diagnosed epicondylitis (an occupational overuse syndrome condition).

She works for several different lawyers and there is often a rush to meet deadlines for all of them at once. Because she does some handwritten work and some computer work, the partners decided to give her a large wooden desk that has space to do handwriting and has room for her computer. Like everyone at the firm she works long hours to get the job done.

Post-event	Visit to doctor
Event	Aches and pains and a diagnosis of epicondylitis
Task	Repetitive movement, awkward posture, prolonged posture
System	Inappropriate workstation design and positioning of computer equipment, long hours of work, pressure to meet deadlines
Culture	Working long hours is acceptable practice and health and safety is not a priority



### *Scenario three*

A wood processing company employee was rushed to hospital after he lost a finger while manually clearing woodchips from around the rotating cutter-head of a notching machine.

The company had imported the second-hand notching machine a few weeks prior to this event, and the employee had been quickly shown how to use the machine that morning.

The machine's extraction system, designed to automatically remove woodchips, was not yet working. The guard on the machine that would have blocked access to the cutter-head had a hole cut in it. There were no warning signs on the machine about the dangers of the cutter-head.

Post-event	First aid and treatment at hospital
Event	Amputated finger
Task	Mistake – made in ignorance about the risk of clearing woodchips from the cutter-head while it was still rotating
Systems	Appropriate guards not in place on the machine, no hazard management of new machines and processes, poor training, poor supervision, no warning signs
Culture	Injury prevention not a priority, injury prevention not integrated into the business

A CD-ROM and video that explain the ACC WorkSafe Injury Model using more case studies are available by calling 0800 THINKSAFE (0800 844 657).

**Use the ACC WorkSafe Cycle and ACC WorkSafe Injury Model to improve health and safety in your workplace** and benefit from a happier and more productive workforce, fewer incidents, and better efficiency, and meet many of the legal requirements under the Health and Safety in Employment Act.





**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

See our website [www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz)

Or call 0800 THINKSAFE (0800 844 657)