

Glossary of Terms – Workplace Health and Safety

absenteeism	The practice of absenting oneself from duties, studies, employment, etc., often for inadequate reasons.
accident	An unplanned occurrence or incident that causes or contributes to personal injury or damage to property.
ACD	Asbestos-contaminated dust or debris
ACM	Asbestos containing material
administrative control	A method of work, a process or a procedure designed to minimise risk, but does not include an engineering control, or the use of personal protective equipment.
asbestos	The fibrous form of the mineral silicates belonging to the serpentine and amphibole groups of rock-forming minerals and includes actinolite, amosite (brown asbestos), anthophyllite, crocidolite (blue asbestos), chrysotile (white asbestos), tremolite; and any mixture containing one or more of the minerals mentioned above.
authorised officer	A person from a union, given legal power to enter a workplace on occupational health and safety issues.
carcinogen	A substance or mixture that causes or is suspected of causing cancer.
Code of Practice	An approved industry code of practice is a practical guide to achieving the standards of health, safety and welfare required by the Acts and Regulations covering workplace health and safety.
consultation	The sharing of information and exchange of views on workplace health and safety matters between managers and workers or their representatives. This may include participating in decision-making on WHS issues.
dB	Decibel: The unit for measuring sound levels.
Duty of Care	The responsibility of the employer to look after the health and safety of people at work.
employee	An individual who works under a contract of employment or apprenticeship.
employee representative	A person elected by employees to represent them on the Workplace Health and Safety Committee.
employer	A person who employs persons under contracts of employment or apprenticeship.
First aid	Emergency assistance or help given to a sick or injured

	person until full medical treatment is available.
GHS	Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals
guard	A device that prevents or reduces access to a danger point or area.
hazard	Anything that might cause harm to a person.
hazardous substance	Products that can harm a person's health causing illness, injury or disease. For instance, cleaning solvents and hairdressing chemicals.
Hierarchy of control	A method of deciding what is the best or most practical way to reduce the risk of injury by an identified hazard. For example stopping the loud noises in a factory is better than handing out ear plugs. The hierarchy of risk control shows ways of controlling risks, ranked from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest.
hazard	A situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person. Any source of potential damage, harm or adverse health effects on something or someone under certain conditions at work.
Health and safety representative	A worker who has been elected by a work group under the model WHS Act to represent them on health and safety issues.
inspector	An inspector appointed by WorkCover to ensure Workplace Health and Safety law is observed.
manual handling	The lifting, lowering and moving of objects by a person. For instance, carrying boxes or house bricks.
National Standard	National Standards draw together best practice from Australian state and territory authorities into a framework that promotes a nationally uniform approach to the management of WHS.
Occupational Health and Safety	Keeping people safe and healthy at their place of work by prevention of accidents, injury and illness. This term is now generally replaced by Workplace health and Safety.
Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS)	An injury caused when using your body in unnatural positions or carry out repeated actions. For example working at the computer or on a factory assembly line or playing music for long periods of time. Problems occur in muscles.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Equipment used by workers to protect them from hazards in the workplace. Equipment includes safety boots, gloves, goggles, aprons and sunscreen.

place of work	Premises where persons work.
plant	Any machinery, equipment or tools used at work.
premises	Includes any place and in particular any land, building or part of a building, any vehicle, vessel or aircraft, any installation on land, on the bed of any waters or floating on any waters or any tent or movable structure.
Regulation	A specific part of the Workplace Health and Safety Law that details how to carry out work safely.
risk	The probability that harm might come to a person.
risk assessment	The process of evaluating the probability and consequences of injury or illness arising from exposure to an identified hazard or hazards.
risk management	The process of managing risks caused by hazards in the workplace. Risk management involves hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control.
safe work method	The way employees should be trained to do a job safely.
Safety Data Sheets (SDS)	Safety data sheets, once called material safety data sheets (MSDS), are forms with data regarding the properties of a particular substance and how to deal with this substance in emergencies, e.g. spills, fire, etc.
self-employed person	A person who works for gain other than under a contract of employment, whether or not employing others.
stress	Illness caused by mental strain causing psychological illness through negative experiences at work.
supervisor	The person chosen by the employer to organise and oversee the work carried out by employees.
training	Instruction on how to do a job safely. For example, operating a forklift.
ultraviolet radiation	Rays of the sun that can damage the skin and cause skin cancer.
union	An industrial organisation that represents workers.
warning	A signal, word on a label or safety data sheet that is used to indicate the relative level of severity of a hazard; Warning is used for less severe or significant hazards.
worker	Any person who carries out work for an employer, including work as an employee, contractor, subcontractor, self-employed person, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer' and volunteers.

workplace	The premises of the employer and any place where an employee carries out work.
workplace bullying	The repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.
Workplace Health and Safety Act	The main law covering the responsibilities and rights of employers and workers. It also outlines fines and penalties for breaking this law.
Workplace Health and Safety Committee	A group formed to allow consultation between employer and employees on workplace safety issues.