

**PR15 0044 - WOW Focus Area Videos - Health & Safety - Rebecca Loudoun
(Duration 2 min 32 sec)**

What is Health and Safety at work?

Health and safety at work is concerned with protecting the health, safety, and welfare of people engaged in employment or work. For most people, this means an organisation's workers, their volunteers perhaps, their contractors - but it can also mean people who come onto the work premises, for example, suppliers and customers. And it can also mean people who are affected by work activities. This can be by virtue of their proximity to the workplace or through hazards that people bring home or away from the workplace.

What does Health and Safety at work look like?

Ideally, health and safety at work focuses on the primary prevention of hazards. For some organisations this means compliance with relevant legislation. For many other organisations, however, compliance is only a small part of their response to health safety. These organisations strive to constantly improve their performance in this area, seeking information both internally and externally to the organisation, and often they set new industry standards.

Why is Health and Safety at work important?

There are legal, ethical, and economic reasons for focussing on health and safety at work. Looking at the legal reasons, Australian legislation sets out the rights and responsibilities of people at work, such as employers, workers, and suppliers; it also outlines consequences for neglecting these responsibilities. However, these legislative instruments are simply a reflection that as a society we believe that regardless of the nature of the work, people should be able to carry out their work responsibilities in a safe and secure environment free from hazards. If a person suffers a work injury or illness it can have implications for their quality of life, their job prospects, and their career advancement. An Australian worker is seriously injured every two to three minutes - this is four times the annual national road toll. The majority of costs associated with these injuries are borne by individual workers. Safe Work Australia estimates that 74 per cent of costs are borne by workers, 21 per cent of costs are borne by society, and only 5 per cent of costs are borne by employers. So health and safety at work is clearly important for workers, for their families, for society in general, and for employers.