



PREVENTION. CARE. RECOVERY.  
Te Kaporeihana Āwhina Hunga Whara



# How to manage hazards

*For small businesses*





Department of Labour  
TE TARI MAHI



# Why should you do hazard management?

- This is the step that will make the biggest difference to your staff's health and safety.
- It is the most basic step and it's not hard.
- You don't have to do it by yourself – you achieve better results by actively involving your staff.
- The law says you have to.
- Fewer injuries mean lower cost to your business and this becomes more apparent with the introduction of experience rating. Under experience rating, eligible businesses and self-employed people, who have lower-than-average injury rates, with better-than-average return-to-work rates, may get a discount on their levies. Those with worse-than-average claims experience may get a loading on their levy.

Experience rating recognises and rewards those business owners with good claims experience. It also encourages businesses to prevent injuries in the workplace and when accidents do happen, help injured employees return to work as safely and quickly as possible.

For more detailed information about experience rating please go to [www.acc.co.nz/er](http://www.acc.co.nz/er).

*If you are thinking about improving the health and safety of your workplace, hazard management is a good place to start.*

# How well are you going with hazard management?

To see how well you are going with hazard management, ask yourself, health and safety representatives, and your staff the following questions.

	Yes	No	N/A
Do you have a record of workplace hazards and how you are dealing with them?			
Are health and safety representatives and staff actively involved in hazard management on an ongoing basis?			
Have you and your staff identified hazards relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plant – eg machinery is guarded, regularly maintained</li> <li>• people – eg lifting, carrying, pulling or pushing loads</li> <li>• locations/environment – eg housekeeping, ventilation and extraction systems</li> <li>• chemicals – eg storage, labelling</li> <li>• tasks – eg working alone, driving or away from base.</li> </ul>			
Have you and your staff decided which hazards are significant (see the next page for a definition), and which are of a lesser concern?			
Have you and your staff worked out how you will deal with hazards and taken action?			
Do you check regularly to see that you have dealt with hazards effectively?			
Do you and your staff identify hazards and adapt processes as new things, equipment or people are brought into the workplace?			
Do you monitor the workplace and staff for exposure to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• noise?</li> <li>• contact with chemicals, lead and asbestos?</li> <li>• blood-borne and other body fluid diseases and infections?</li> </ul>			
Do you tell contractors and visitors about relevant hazards and how they can keep safe?			
Do you find out from contractors what hazards they bring into your workplace and how to keep your staff and visitors safe?			
Do you make sure that contractors have the right knowledge and skills to do the job safely?			

If you could not answer **Yes** to all these questions, note down below the action you and your staff need to take.



## Hazards

The Health and Safety in Employment Act (1992) defines hazard as follows:

- (a) means an activity, arrangement, circumstance, event, occurrence, phenomenon, process, situation or substance (whether arising or caused within or outside a place of work) that is an actual or potential cause or source of harm; and
- (b) includes:
  - (i) a situation where a person's behaviour may be an actual or potential cause or source of harm to the person or another person; and
  - (ii) without limitation, a situation described in subparagraph (i) resulting from physical or mental fatigue, drugs, alcohol, traumatic shock, or another temporary condition that affects a person's behaviour.

## What do you need to improve?

	Who	When



# Is this hazard significant?

The Health and Safety in Employment Act (1992) defines significant hazard and serious harm as follows:

## Significant hazard

A hazard that is an actual or potential cause or source of:

- (a) serious harm, or
- (b) harm (being harm that is more than trivial) the severity of whose effects on any person depend (entirely or among other things) on the extent or frequency of the person's exposure to the hazard, or
- (c) harm that does not usually occur, or usually is not easily detectable, until a significant time after exposure to the hazard.

## Serious harm

1. Death.
2. Any of the following conditions that amounts to or results in death, permanent loss of bodily function or temporary severe loss of bodily function: respiratory disease, noise-induced hearing loss, neurological disease, cancer, dermatological disease, communicable disease, musculoskeletal disease, illness caused by exposure to infected material, decompression sickness, poisoning, vision impairment, chemical or hot-metal burn of eye, penetrating wound of eye, bone fracture, laceration, crushing.
3. Amputation of body part.
4. Burns requiring referral to a specialist registered medical practitioner or specialist outpatient clinic.
5. Loss of consciousness from lack of oxygen.
6. Loss of consciousness or acute illness requiring treatment by a registered medical practitioner, from absorption, inhalation or ingestion of any substance.
7. Any harm that causes the person harmed to be hospitalised for a period of 48 hours or more commencing within seven days of the harm's occurrence.

# How to manage hazards

The law says you must have a systematic approach for dealing with hazards.

There are three parts to this:

1. Identify all the hazards in your workplace.
2. Identify the significant hazards. Then work out which ones need immediate attention and which are of a lesser concern.
3. Take action to deal with the hazards – remove them or at least reduce their impact.

When these things have been done you will need to:

1. Review the situation regularly.
2. Adapt processes as new things/equipment and people are brought into the workplace.

## 1. Identify hazards

Make a list of all the hazards in your workplace. (See our example hazard record on page 10.)

Some of these will be really obvious, such as potentially dangerous equipment, stockpiles of chemicals or over-stacked high shelves. But you will need to look further and also consider the hazards that can't necessarily be seen but may result from work processes and tasks that:

- are repetitive – eg strains from constant lifting of loads
- build up gradually – eg fatigue from shift work or long hours
- involve working off-site.

Also think about hazards that come about from having untrained, new or part-time staff or volunteers, newly installed equipment, and changing tasks or processes for staff.

Update this list regularly.

Think beyond the obvious.

## 2. Rate the significance of hazards

Note the hazards that can cause serious harm and deal with these ones first.

You will now need to decide which hazards you will deal with first. To do this think about:

- whether the law would call them 'significant'
- the injuries people have had already
- whether there have been near misses

- the likelihood of it happening
- the potential seriousness of the illness or injury.

Also consider hazards that staff want addressed immediately, and those that will result in good cost/benefit and can be addressed quickly and easily.

Involve your staff, they might have a better idea of what hazards are from their day-to-day activities.

### 3. Deal with the hazards

#### Why should you do anything?

This is how you will protect yourself and your staff from getting hurt at work. It is safe work practice. And the law says you have to or you could face big fines.

So how do you go about doing this?

You and your staff need to develop a suitable system or action relevant to each specific hazard. The law says you can do this by considering these actions in the following order.

#### **A. GET RID OF THE HAZARD ALTOGETHER (ELIMINATE)**

- Replace hazardous chemicals with non-hazardous materials.
- Install another lower shelf to take overload stock.
- Replace or remove dangerous machinery.
- Redesign the workstation so that staff don't need to reach over moving equipment.

If that's not possible:

#### **B. ISOLATE THE HAZARD**

- Use guards to cover moving parts of machinery.
- Keep cleaning fluids, solvents and chemicals stored safely.

If that's not possible:

#### **C. REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD OF ANY HARM (MINIMISE)**

- Use personal protective equipment, such as earmuffs.
- Train staff in safe work procedures.
- Remember that if you minimise a hazard you are required to continue to monitor the hazard and the controls you have put in place.

In six months' time, have a look at it all again to see that you and your staff are involved and taking preventative action. Is your plan effective?

### What does a hazard record look like?

On page 8 is an example of how to record this information for each of the three parts. There is also a template for you to photocopy and record your workplace hazards.

Information on managing specific hazards, best practice and codes of practice are available from [www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz) and [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz)



## Questions to ask when buying equipment, tools etc

- What safety information has been obtained regarding the item?
- What hazards are associated with the item?
- What health and safety risks will the item introduce?
- What strategies need to be implemented to ensure safety during installation, transport, handling and storage?
- What changes need to be made to work procedures and training?





## Example hazard record for a small business *continued ...*

Hazard recorded for:

Date:

Hazard

Significant? Action

Review

Hazard and harm	Where or what task	Yes/No	Does the action eliminate, isolate or minimise the risk?	Action	How often is action monitored?	Date of last review
Slips, trips and falls – risk of bruising, laceration, broken bones <b>Hazards associated with processes and tasks have been identified</b>	All work areas – but particularly kitchen	Yes Contact DoL if crushing, broken bone, other serious injury or fatality occurs	Minimise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install non-slip surfaces in the kitchen.</li> <li>2. Install handrails on stairways and the raised walkway.</li> <li>3. Provide steps or ladders in the storeroom.</li> <li>4. Maintain ladders and platforms.</li> <li>5. Train staff in safe work practices including to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– use ladders and platforms where necessary</li> <li>– clean up spills immediately</li> <li>– keep work area tidy and uncluttered</li> <li>– wear non-slip footwear.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	By March 10 By March 10 By March 10 Annually At induction, then annually	28/2/11 25/1/11 31/1/11 11/4/10 28/2/11

Continued ...

## Example hazard record for a small business *continued* ...

Hazard recorded for:

Date:

Hazard

Significant? Action

Review

Hazard and harm	Where or what task	Significant? Yes/No	Action Does the action eliminate, isolate or minimise the risk?	How often is action monitored?	Date of last review
Manual handling – risk of muscle strain and back <b>The employer and staff have worked together to identify hazards and find workable solutions</b>	All tasks that require moving and lifting heavy loads – particularly in the storeroom	Yes Contact DoL if person is hospitalised for 48 hours, within 7 days of harm occurring	Minimise  1. Talk to suppliers about reducing the weight of incoming goods. 2. Train staff in reducing the load including: – use trolleys and pallet jacks to move heavy loads – store heavy items down low – organise work tasks so that loads are lifted between mid-thigh and shoulder height – use ladders rather than reaching above shoulders – keep loads close to the body – use team lifting for heavy loads.	Annually  At induction, then annually	31/9/10  28/2/11

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## Further resources for small businesses

ACC brochures for small business:

- Improving workplace safety and health.
- Training and supervision.
- Emergencies and incident investigation.

Visit [www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries](http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries) or call 0800 844 657.







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