Workplace Health and Safety Plan

The Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 imposes obligation on employers, self employed persons, persons in control of a workplace, manufacturers, suppliers and importers of plant and substances, designers, erectors of plant, owners of high risk plant, principal contractors, workers and other persons.

This act may be accessed at:
http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/CURRENT/W/WorkplHSaA95.pdf

For example an employer is obligated to ensure the health and safety of:

- their workers
- themselves
- others to the extent that they are not effected by the way they conduct their business.

One way of ensuring we meet our obligations under the Act is to carry out risk assessments and put into place controls to minimise the risk of injury or illness to ourselves and others. Risk assessment is part of our risk management process.

Risk Management

Risk management plays an important role in our management of workplace health and safety. It is a logical and systematic approach, which can result in a reduction of the incidence of injury and disease.

The four steps of risk management are:

1. Identify the hazard.
2. Assess the level of risk.
3. Decide on, and implement appropriate control options.
4. Monitor and review control options chosen.

Identifying the hazard.

- Plant walk through or walk around inspections using a checklist. Possibly accompanied by a person or persons who do not normally work in the area under inspection. This provides another viewpoint through a 'new' set of eyes.
- Past records, statistics and incident reports provide useful information on hazards.
- Consulting employees will give first hand information of hazards in a workplace as well as possible hazard solutions.

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- Product information such as Material Safety Data Sheets, product labels and manufacturer's instructions will also highlight hazards associated with any plant or substance.
- Task analysis of a given process or task to identify hazards and risks.

2. Assessing the Risk.

In assessing the risks, the following should be considered:

- The nature of the hazard.
- The type of hazard energy.
- The likelihood or probability of injury or disease.
- The possible consequences.
- The level of risk or severity of the consequences.

3. Risk Control Option.

A list of risk control options is shown below with the most effective means at the top and the least effective or 'last line of defence' at the bottom.

- Design - hazards are designed out and control measures are designed in.
- Elimination - Eliminate hazards, work processes and substances totally.
- Substitution - Substitute or replace substances or processes with a less hazardous one.
- Engineering - Change a work environment or process by isolating the persons by safeguarding or by space or time.
- Administration - Adjusting the time or condition of risk exposure by probation, training or increased supervision.
- Personal Protective Equipment - Using appropriately designed and properly fitting equipment where other controls are not practicable.

4. Monitor and Review Control Options.

To ensure the effectiveness of control options, periodic monitoring should occur. This will ensure no new risks are created; control measures should be reviewed before and after implementation.

Further information on risk management is available from Australian/ New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4360: 2001 Risk Management.

A copy of this standard is available at:
http://www.standards.com.au/catalogue/script/Details.asp?docn=AS0733759041AT

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