



Government  
of South Australia

SafeWork SA

# Workshop & Field Worker Safety in Councils – Proactive Compliance Project Report 2021

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## Executive Summary

- From 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2021, SafeWork SA undertook a compliance campaign focused on workshop and field worker safety in Councils (the campaign).
- The objective of this proactive campaign was to monitor compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) (the Act) within Local Government in the Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area, Yorke Peninsula, Barossa Valley, and Fleurieu Peninsula.
- The campaign was undertaken following analysis of injury and complaint data for the period of 2018 to 2020, obtained from ReturnToWorkSA and SafeWork SA. ReturnToWorkSA had accepted 223 injury claims related to local government authorities, and SafeWork SA had raised 102 files during this same period.
- The campaign involved conducting compliance audits onsite in relation to the duties of a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) relating to systems of work to eliminate so far as is reasonably practicable injuries resulting from muscular skeletal stresses, falls, being struck by falling objects, and the separation of workers from moving and fixed objects.
- SafeWork SA conducted 71 site visits and 21 compliance audits during the campaign.
- A total of 7 compliance notices were issued where breaches of the work health and safety legislation was identified, consisting of 5 Improvement Notices and 2 Prohibition Notices.
  - The Prohibition Notices related to:
    - 2 x bench grinders inadequately guarded.
  - Improvement Notices related to:
    - maintenance and inspection of a vehicle hoist
    - incorrect storage of hazardous chemicals
    - lack of chemical registers and access to Safety Data Sheets
    - unsecured items stored at height
    - the inspection of storage racking.

It is recommended that SafeWork SA:

- communicates the outcome of the compliance campaign to internal and external stakeholders

- maintains engagement with the Local Government Association to reinforce the need for PCBUs to manage safety in consultation with workers
- monitors injury rates across this cohort to measure industry level improvements.

## Introduction

The Community and Business Services Team (CBS) identified that work conducted by workshop and field workers in Councils posed a significant health and safety risk to those workers due to both an increased number of injury claims recorded by ReturnToWorkSA and of notifications made to SafeWork SA.

ReturnToWorkSA claims data and notifications to SafeWork SA has evidenced the target workgroup have sustained injuries related to muscular skeletal stresses, falls, being struck by falling objects, and insufficient separation of workers from moving and fixed objects.

SafeWork SA investigations evidenced a large number of the injuries were as a result of ad-hoc work being conducted without a dynamic risk assessment, or similar named process being conducted immediately prior to work commencing.

This was SafeWork SA's first proactive compliance campaign relative to safety of workshop and field workers in Local Government (Councils).

SafeWork SA regulates compliance with the Act and can require PCBUs to rectify safety breaches.

SafeWork SA engaged with the Local Government Association (LGA) at the start of the campaign, shared the audit tool and discussed the format of the audits. The LGA undertook to advise all sites about the campaign and provide the audit tool for their information.

## Background

- For the three years of 2018 – 2020 inclusive, ReturnToWorkSA accepted 223 claims related to the audit criteria of muscular skeletal stresses, falls, being struck by falling objects, and insufficient separation of workers from moving and fixed objects (the target criteria).
- In that same period, 102 files were raised by SafeWork SA for matters relative to local government authorities. 16% of these files met the criteria for notifiable incidents, including one fatality, 39% of the files were matters that did not meet all the elements of a notifiable incident but an injury resulted from the precipitating event, and the remaining files were complaints.

## Scope

- Audits were conducted on a range of council workshops and itinerant outdoor workplaces across the geographical area of the State. This included the Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area, Yorke Peninsula, Barossa Valley, and Fleurieu Peninsula.
- The campaign involved undertaking site visits to conduct compliance audits in relation to the PCBU's systems of work to eliminate so far as is reasonably practicable injuries resulting from muscular skeletal stresses, falls, being struck by falling objects, and the separation of workers from moving and fixed objects.
- A focus of the campaign was to interrogate what system of work PCBUs have in place to conduct dynamic risk assessment (or similar named process).
- A component of the campaign raised awareness of safety systems and control measures available to PCBUs by providing information to help PCBUs understand their responsibilities, meet compliance obligations and manage the health and wellbeing of their workers.
- A Campaign Audit Tool was completed for each audit; i.e. one for the workshop and one for the temporary/remote workplace. The audit tool used is appended to this report at Appendix A.
- Due to the audits being conducted during COVID restrictions all audits were announced visits.
- Statutory notices were issued where legislative breaches were identified.

## Industry Audits

- The campaign was scheduled to run for the period of April to May 2021, but was later extended due to restrictions associated with COVID-19.
- During the period of 12 April 2021 to 30 June 2021, SafeWork SA Inspectors completed campaign-related compliance activities with 21 PCBU's in South Australia.
- This consisted of contact with selected PCBUs, site visits, audits conducted and in some cases notices issued.
- Throughout the campaign, Inspectors from CBS Team, Inspectorate attended 21 council sites and conducted audits in relation to their council workshop and an itinerant outdoor workplace.
- The Inspectors conducted 71 site visits during the campaign.
- The pre-prepared audit tool was used to assess compliance against the Act in two broad areas; safe systems of work and workplace conditions with assessment of a

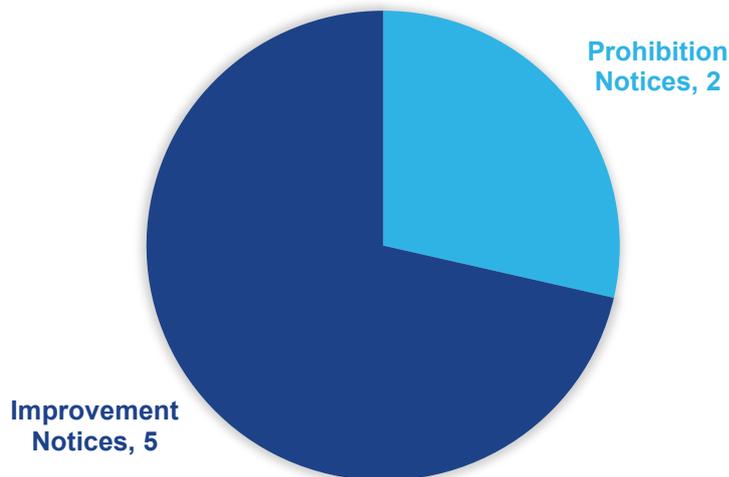
field work activity addressing the management of hazards in the workplace that may result in:

- muscular stress
  - a person falling from the same level
  - a person being struck by falling objects
  - a person being struck by moving mobile plant and other equipment
  - a person striking a fixed object
  - hearing loss to a person.
- During the campaign 7 compliance notices were issued, consisting of 2 x prohibition notices and 5 x improvement notices.
- Prohibition Notices related to:
- 2 x bench grinders inadequately guarded.
- Improvement Notices related to:
- maintenance and inspection of a vehicle hoist
  - incorrect storage of hazardous chemicals
  - lack of chemical registers and access to Safety Data Sheets
  - unsecured items stored at height
  - inspection of storage racking.

## Statutory Notices

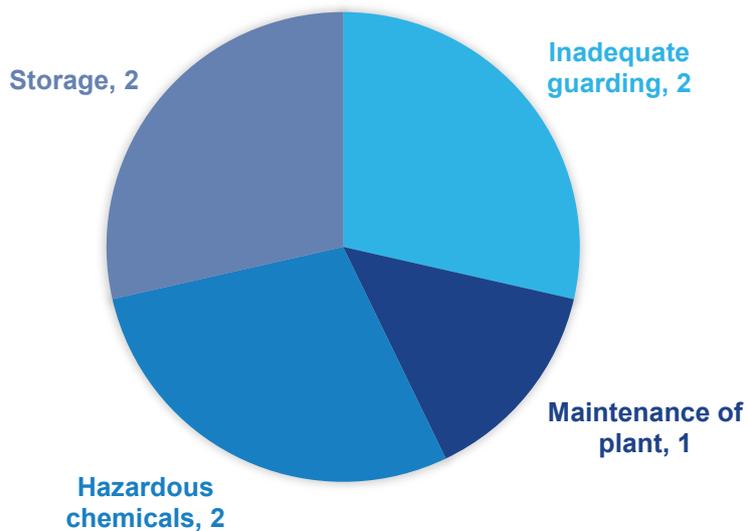
- SafeWork SA issued 5 improvement notices and 2 prohibition notices. A breakdown of the compliance notices is below at figure 1.

Figure 1: Compliance Notices



- The reasons for issuing the improvement and prohibition notices, broken down into broad categories, is depicted in the graph below at figure 2.

Figure 2: Notice Reasons



## Trends

A majority of the PCBUs audited had no legislative breaches in their workplace, with two sites receiving the bulk of the notices. This showed that in the main, the Local Government sites were giving consideration to and implementing safe systems of work and dynamically assessing the risk for adhoc field based work operations.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- communication of the outcome of the compliance campaign is provided to internal and external stakeholders
- this report is provided to the Local Government Association for information and distribution to its members. Worksites that were not audited are encouraged to conduct their own self audit to identify any safety areas for improvement
- SafeWork SA engages further with the Local Government Association to reinforce the need for PCBUs to manage safety in consultation with workers
- given the low level of enforcement notices issued to the PCBUs audited in this campaign; SafeWork SA monitor injury rates across this cohort to measure industry level improvements.

## Further information

Businesses requiring further information and advice can telephone SafeWork SA on 1300 365 255 or visit the SafeWork SA website at [safework.sa.gov.au](https://safework.sa.gov.au).

Workplaces can request a visit from the SafeWork SA advisory service who can provide practical advice based on a workplace's industry, size, risk, and complexity.

SafeWork SA advisors can help with understanding work health and safety responsibilities, and provide practical support to improve systems, practices, and safety generally.

# Appendix A – Audit Tool



**Government of South Australia**

SafeWork SA

## PROACTIVE COMPLIANCE CAMPAIGN

### Inspection Date:

PCBU Details			
Entity Name	<input type="text"/>	ABN	<input type="text"/>
Trading as	<input type="text"/>		
Business Type	Local Government	Industry Sector	Local Government
Address	<input type="text"/>		
Contact Details (Phone/Email)	<input type="text"/>		
Association Member	<input type="text"/>		
Site Address	<input type="text"/>		
Area of workplace inspected	E.g. workshop, outdoor location, roadside etc		
Work activity being undertaken	<input type="text"/>		

### Campaign Focus

Muscular skeletal stresses; falls; being struck by falling objects; and the separation of workers from moving and fixed objects.

**Persons Involved**

PCBU Rep. Name

PCBU HSR Name

Inspector Name

Other

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date entered

Entered by

File code

<b>ASSESSMENT TOPIC / COMMENTS</b>		
<b>1. General hazard control</b>		
1A: Does the PCBU have a system of work in place for workers to identify, report and or manage hazards generally and prior to commencing ad-hoc work? (E.g. included in written procedures, induction or a 'Take 5" or similar)	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
1B: Does the PCBU have a process in place to recognise and report notifiable incidents to SWSA? [s.38]	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
<b>Has the PCBU identified and controlled in a reasonably practicable and systematic way the following things that may pose a risk to a persons health and safety? [s.19(3)]</b>		
<b>2. Muscular-skeletal injuries</b>		
2A: [Reg 34-38] Hazards that may or will result in muscular stress for persons that handle objects?	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
<b>3. Persons falling from same height</b>		
3A: [Reg.40 or 79] Hazards that may or will result in persons slipping tripping or falling whilst moving about the work area?	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
<b>4. Persons being struck by falling objects</b>		
4A: [Reg 34-38] Hazards resulting from objects falling onto or striking workers during work? (NB: The response to 1A may cover this off in some cases)	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
4B: [Reg 213] Where lifting equipment is used or available, is it maintained as per regulatory requirements?	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
4C: [Reg 36] Where PPE is being used to protect workers from falling objects, has the PCBU adequately first considered all other higher level heirachy of control options to eliminate the risk of injury to workers?	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments

<b>5. Separation of workers from fixed or moving objects</b>		
5A. [Reg 214 & 35] Persons being struck by moving mobile plant and other equipment?	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
<b>6. Persons striking fixed objects</b>		
6A: [Reg 35] Hazards that may or will result in a person sustaining an injury as the result of hitting a fixed object when using hand held powered and unpowered tools?  [I.e. electric drills, hammers, presses, small engine powered tools such as jackhammers, grinders, concrete cutters, crowbars, Wacker packers etc]	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments
<b>7. Noise</b>		
7A: [Reg 56 & 32-38] Has the PCBU managed, risks to health and safety relating to the risk of hearing loss associated with noise in accordance with Chapter 3 Part 1 of the WHS regulations for the work area or work activity this audit pertains to?	<b>Y / N</b>	Comments

<p><b>Notes</b></p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
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