

HSR ASSIST

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

As a Health and Safety Representative (HSR), you are elected to represent your work group in health and safety matters. It is not your duty to fix work health and safety (WHS) issues in the workplace, nor are you expected to be a WHS expert, however understanding the risks your work group face will better enable you to effectively represent them.

Further information on your role as a HSR can be found in SafeWork SA's [Health and Safety Representative Handbook](#).

This factsheet does not contain every circumstance you may encounter but is designed to give you some ideas about what you can do, and where to find further information.

What are psychosocial hazards?

Psychosocial hazards are sources of stress in a workplace that may cause psychological and/or physical harm. They arise from or relate to:

- workplace interaction or behaviours
- design or management of work
- working environment
- plant at a workplace



What can I do?

As a HSR, you could:

- understand psychosocial hazards and the legal obligations for PCBU's to manage psychosocial risks
- provide information and resources about psychosocial risk management to your work group, health and safety committee and management team
- consult with workers to identify sources of stress
- discuss findings with management to help them understand the nature of stress-related risks and measures to address them
- encourage and facilitate consultation processes between workers and managers to manage psychosocial risks
- if there is immediate or imminent risks, a trained HSR can direct unsafe work to cease
- trained HSRs may issue a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) if appropriate
- undertake issue resolution process to resolve WHS issues identified
- contact SafeWork SA for further guidance

Additional resources



[SafeWork SA | Psychosocial hazards](#)



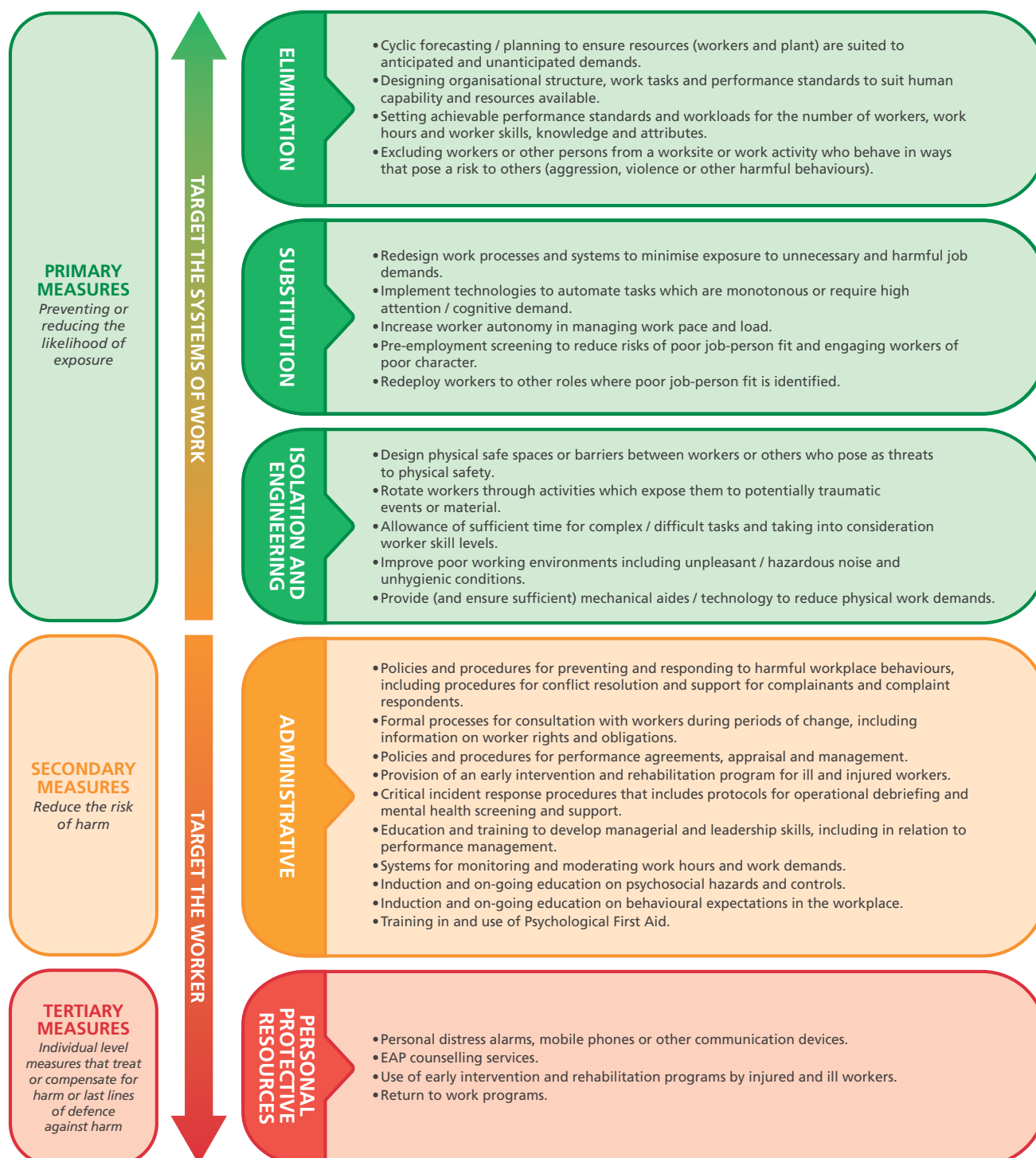
[Safe Work Australia | Psychosocial hazards](#)

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Below is an example of how to apply the hierarchy of controls to manage psychosocial risks. The controls below are just some examples of ways risk can be managed.

The key principle to remember when managing psychosocial risk is to change the systems of work as much as possible, rather than rely on things like training, policies, and interventions to help workers cope with stress.



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Is your workplace safe? Consult with workers and use the checklist below as a quick assessment.

If you say yes to any of the questions below, it is recommended that a risk assessment be undertaken to identify and mitigate any risks to workers.

Note: this is not an exhaustive list of considerations and should be used as a starting point when assessing risks in the workplace.



Job demands, job control and fatigue

Does anyone perform intense or sustained high mental, physical or emotionally demanding tasks?	Yes	No
Are there unreasonable or excessive time pressures?	Yes	No
Do workers have to follow prescriptive directions that do not allow them reasonable control over their work volume, complexity and tempo?	Yes	No
Are workers displaying signs of physical, mental and/or emotional fatigue?	Yes	No



Poor support, role clarity and organisational change management

Does anyone perform tasks where there is inadequate practical assistance and/or emotional support from managers or colleagues?	Yes	No
Are there inadequate training, tools and/or resources to perform tasks?	Yes	No
Do workers feel uncertain about their responsibilities and expectations?	Yes	No
Has there been insufficient consultation or consideration of new hazards when planning for, and implementing, change in the workplace?	Yes	No



Inadequate reward and recognition and organisational justice

Do workers report that their efforts are not recognised or rewarded?	Yes	No
Do workers report that they are not supported to develop their work-related knowledge and skills?	Yes	No
Do workers report that processes for making decisions (including in relation to complaints) lack transparency or are procedurally unfair?	Yes	No



Potentially traumatic events or material

Are workers exposed to critical incidents? (incidents beyond the range of normal experience that entail a threat to life and include elements of physical and emotional loss)	Yes	No
Are workers exposed to audio, visual, text-based and physical material that is graphic in nature and that a reasonable person would regard as confronting?	Yes	No

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Remote/isolated work and poor physical environment (including working from home)

Is work being conducted in locations with long travel times, or where access to help, resources or communications is difficult or limited?	Yes	No
Do workers ever work alone where routine or emergency assistance cannot be provided in a timely manner?	Yes	No
Are workers exposed to work environments that have poor air quality, high noise levels, extreme temperatures, hazardous chemicals or biological hazards?	Yes	No



Bullying, sexual harassment and other harmful behaviours

Are any workers exposed to unreasonable or harmful behaviour from co-workers, clients or customers? (including intimidation, exclusion, withholding resources, belittling, offensive language, victimisation, unwanted sexual attention and/or other sex or gender-based discrimination or harassment)	Yes	No
Are workers exposed to threats or acts of violence and aggression from other workers, customers, patients or clients?	Yes	No



Intrusive surveillance

Regardless of where they work, are workers monitored for reasons other than compelling physical safety and security reasons?	Yes	No
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Insecure work

Do any workers have a real or perceived threat of work/income loss due to being engaged on a casual, labour hire or fixed term contract basis?	Yes	No
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