Automotive workshops

Work health and safety guidelines

SafeWork SA

information ➤ advice ➤ support

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SafeWork SA

SafeWork SA has forged an important partnership with a range of organisations representing South Australia's automotive workshops.

We share a common purpose – keeping workers safe and helping employers in this industry sector achieve positive safety outcomes in line with current work health and safety laws.

The collaborative production of this guide would not have been possible without feedback and support from a range of industry stakeholders and technical specialists.

They have helped create a work health and safety management resource that is relevant to the hazards and risks common within the automotive workshop industry, and is adaptable to suit the nature, size and complexity of businesses across our state.

SafeWork SA thanks the following organisations for their involvement in and support of this initiative:

- Apprentice Employment Network South Australia (previously Group Training Australia SA)
- Australian Workers' Union
- Business SA
- Consumer and Business Services (Attorney General's Department)
- Motor Trade Association SA
- RAA
- WorkSafe Victoria, for use of their guidance material as a base source of information.

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As a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) one of your key responsibilities is ensuring that nobody's health and safety is put at risk by what your business does, what your workers do or the work that is done at your workplace.

This includes anyone who carries out work for you on a full time, part time or casual basis, apprentices and trainees, labour hire workers, contractors, volunteers and students participating in a school based work experience program.

Workers have responsibilities too – to take reasonable care of their own safety and ensure they don't impact on the health and safety of fellow workers, customers or visitors. They must also comply with reasonable instructions and co operate with any work health and safety policies and procedures that are in place.

Some of the workplace safety hazards related to automotive workshops are obvious, such as vehicles falling from hoists or jacks, moving vehicles or tyres exploding during inflation.

Other risks are less obvious, such as the long term effects of exposure to asbestos fibres or fumes from solvents and paints.

Injury statistics show that motor mechanics and car detailers (spray painting and powder coating) are also at high risk from muscular stress injury to their back, shoulders or knees, with a large proportion of these injuries resulting from manual handling or slipping, tripping and falling.

And in many workplaces new and young workers, including apprentices, are at greater risk of injury or death due to their lack of experience, maturity and awareness.

Breaking the workplace injury chain at an early stage is achievable, through effective work health and safety management, strong leadership and a commitment from everyone to make work as safe as it can be.

SafeWork SA is focused on improving safety in South Australian workplaces and minimising the risk of worker injury. We do this through active involvement and engagement with particular industry sectors, and by providing information, advice and support.

We want to help you take the guesswork out of what's expected when it comes to work health and safety standards. This guide is designed to help you do that.

Using this guide

This guide will help you understand your work health and safety responsibilities and the importance of safety in your business.

Start out by reading the *Simple steps to safety* section on pages 4-5. Delve a little deeper into these steps by completing the quick safety scans at the end of this first section to see how you currently rate on these basic aspects of setting up a safe workplace.

The following tabbed sections cover some of the most common risks faced by automotive workshops and provide practical safety solutions and tips for compliance. Each section also has a set of quick safety scans to help you measure (self audit) how well you are currently doing and identify areas for improvement. Select those that are relevant to the nature, size and complexity of your business. Those items where you tick 'Sometimes' or 'Never' will need action to fix or improve.

The final section contains proformas for forms and records you might commonly need to document what you are doing to set up, maintain and improve your work health and safety practices. These are sample documents to get you started. Personalise and tailor them to suit your particular business needs and operations.

Finding solutions

Finding safety solutions can be as simple as asking your workers for their ideas – that's consultation at its best.

Look at what others are doing well, ask for help from an industry association or group, get information from suppliers or manufacturers, or check relevant Codes of Practice and Australian Standards.

Safe behaviours should not be seen as the main means of injury prevention. Safety solutions that rely on administrative controls such as procedures, training, high levels of supervision and monitoring for success need effort and attention to maintain them.

Engineering, design and physical changes, such as an improved workplace layout and similar permanent control measures, are much more effective and sustainable solutions.

Search widely for solutions and challenge both yourself and your workers about the way you all work together.

Business benefits

Businesses that put effective work health and safety management solutions in place can benefit from:

- increased productivity
- less down time caused by safety issues and injury related absenteeism
- increased morale and teamwork
- avoiding injury related costs
- avoiding legal action or penalties for non compliance.

Simple steps to safety

You can go about setting up your safe workplace by following these simple steps.

Getting started

Successful safety cultures are led from the top, where your actions and attitudes send a message to the people who work in your business that you care about and are serious about their health and safety.

Commit to work health and safety by defining your own responsibilities and those of your workers, team leaders and supervisors. Provide the necessary resources to meet those responsibilities.

A simple written work health and safety policy, developed in consultation with your workers, will go a long way towards achieving this. A sample *Work Health and Safety Policy* can be found on on page 75 – this is a sample document for you to personalise and tailor to suit your particular business needs and operations. Your policy should:

- note everyone's duties and responsibilities
- state a commitment to improving work health and safety, and how best to achieve a safe workplace
- be dated and signed, displayed at the workplace and accessible to workers
- be regularly reviewed.

Talking with your team

Involve the people who work in your business to identify and resolve health and safety issues.

Effective consultation also encourages greater awareness of issues and can lead to an improved safety culture and outcomes. Consultation can be through informal toolbox talks or organised committees, while general safety information can be provided through notice boards and signage. Use the sample *Record of Safety Discussions* on page 77 to help note what has been talked about and actions taken.

Managing hazards

Managing hazards should be a continuous improvement process that finds problems (identify hazards), gathers information about them (assess the risks) and solves them (control the risks).

Use the hierarchy of control approach (refer to pages 6-7) to help you mitigate the risks.

Level 1 is the most effective control measure and level 3 the least effective. A combination of all the hierarchy control measures can be used.

Identify all hazards/tasks that can pose a risk to the people who work in or for your business as well as your customers and visitors. Take action to control the risks. Develop simple and safe work procedures detailing how this is done.

A sample *Hazard List and Risk Assessment* and *Risk Control Plan* and can be found on pages 79-81. These are sample documents for you to personalise and tailor to suit your particular business needs and operations.

Informing, training and supervising

Provide workers with easy to understand information and training about particular job hazards and how to work safely. Provide appropriate supervision to ensure that what's taught at training is being followed.

Make sure that workers who are new to your business are correctly inducted and adequately supervised.

A sample *Induction Checklist* can be found on page 73. A sample *Training Plan* and *Training Record* can be found on pages 85-87. These are sample documents for you to personalise and tailor to suit your particular business needs and operations.

Maintain a safe workplace

Once safe systems and procedures are in place, they need to be maintained through an ongoing focus on health and safety.

Maintain a safe workplace by:

- carrying out regular workplace inspections
- ensuring equipment and tools are safe to use and maintained
- fixing high risks immediately and others as soon as possible in order of level of risk
- discussing common injuries, work practices and procedures with workers
- keeping up-to-date knowledge of product labels, Safety Data Sheets and manufacturer's instruction manuals
- having an easy to use hazard, near miss and injury reporting process as well as reviewing incident reports
- planning and regularly testing of emergency procedures (e.g. for fire, medical, chemical leaks)
- keeping workers informed of any changes, and providing training opportunities when anything new at work is introduced.

Record keeping

Document what you're doing to maintain and improve your work health and safety. Keeping records will help you to monitor the health and safety performance of your business as well as meet your legal requirements.

You will need to keep the following records:

- all incident/hazard reports
- hazardous chemicals and asbestos registers (if those substances are in your workplace)
- plant registration documents
- tests, maintenance, inspection and repairs for specific items of plant.

It's also useful to keep records of:

- hazard identification, risk assessment and control processes
- maintenance of all items of plant and equipment
- workers' induction and training.

A sample *Incident/Hazard Report* can be found on page 89 and a sample *Hazardous Substance Register* on page 91. These are sample documents for you to personalise and tailor to suit your particular business needs and operations.

Monitoring and reviewing to improve

Managing and improving health and safety needs to be an ongoing process.

Safety processes and operations evolve with time, and workers and equipment come and go, changing the risks in your workplace.

Having followed these steps and established the ways you will work safely (known as your safety systems), you should regularly review and monitor how effective they are, as well as make any necessary adjustments to keep them up-to-date and continually improve.

Other responsibilities

Your work health and safety responsibilities also include the following:

Fire and emergency procedures

Develop fire and emergency procedures (e.g. fire extinguishers, alarms, emergency contacts), evacuation plans, and testing of procedures and plans.

First aid

Determine first aid requirements (e.g. first aid kits, people trained to administer first aid).

Work environment and facilities

Ensure tools and equipment are safe to use and are maintained and regularly serviced.

Supply workers with appropriate safety gear, where necessary.

Provide facilities for workers (e.g. toilets, drinking water, washing and dining areas, shelter).

Provide and maintain a physical work environment free of heath and safety risks (e.g. workspace, lighting, ventilation).

Ensure workers do not eat food in the workshop area (e.g. provide a separate dining area).

Hierarchy of risk control

The ways of controlling risks are ranked from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest as shown in diagram on page 7. This ranking is known as the hierarchy of risk control.

You must always aim to eliminate a hazard, which is the most effective control. If this is not reasonably practicable, you must minimise risks by working through the other levels in the hierarchy.

Level 1 control measures

The most effective control measure involves eliminating the hazard and associated risk. The best ways to do this are by either removing the hazard completely (e.g. getting rid of trip hazards, disposing of unwanted chemicals), or not introducing the hazard into the workplace in the first place (e.g. work at ground level, not at height, to eliminate the risk of a fall).

Eliminating hazards is often cheaper and more practical to achieve at the design or planning stage of a product, process or place used for work.

In these early phases, there is greater scope to design out hazards or incorporate risk control measures that are compatible with the original design and functional requirements. For example, a noisy machine could be designed and built to produce as little noise as possible, which is more effective than providing workers with personal hearing protection.

It may not be possible to eliminate a hazard if doing so means that you cannot make the end

product or deliver the service. If this is the case, eliminate as many of the risks associated with the hazard as possible.

Level 2 control measures

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the hazards and associated risks, you should minimise them using one or more of the following:

- Substitute the hazard with something safer (e.g. replace noisy machinery with quieter models).
- Isolate the hazard from people – physically separate people from the source of harm by distance or using barriers (e.g. install guard rails around service pits, store chemicals in a fume cabinet).
- Use engineering controls – introduce a mechanical device or process that is physical in nature (e.g. use trolleys or hoists to move heavy loads, place guards around moving parts of machinery, install residual current devices).

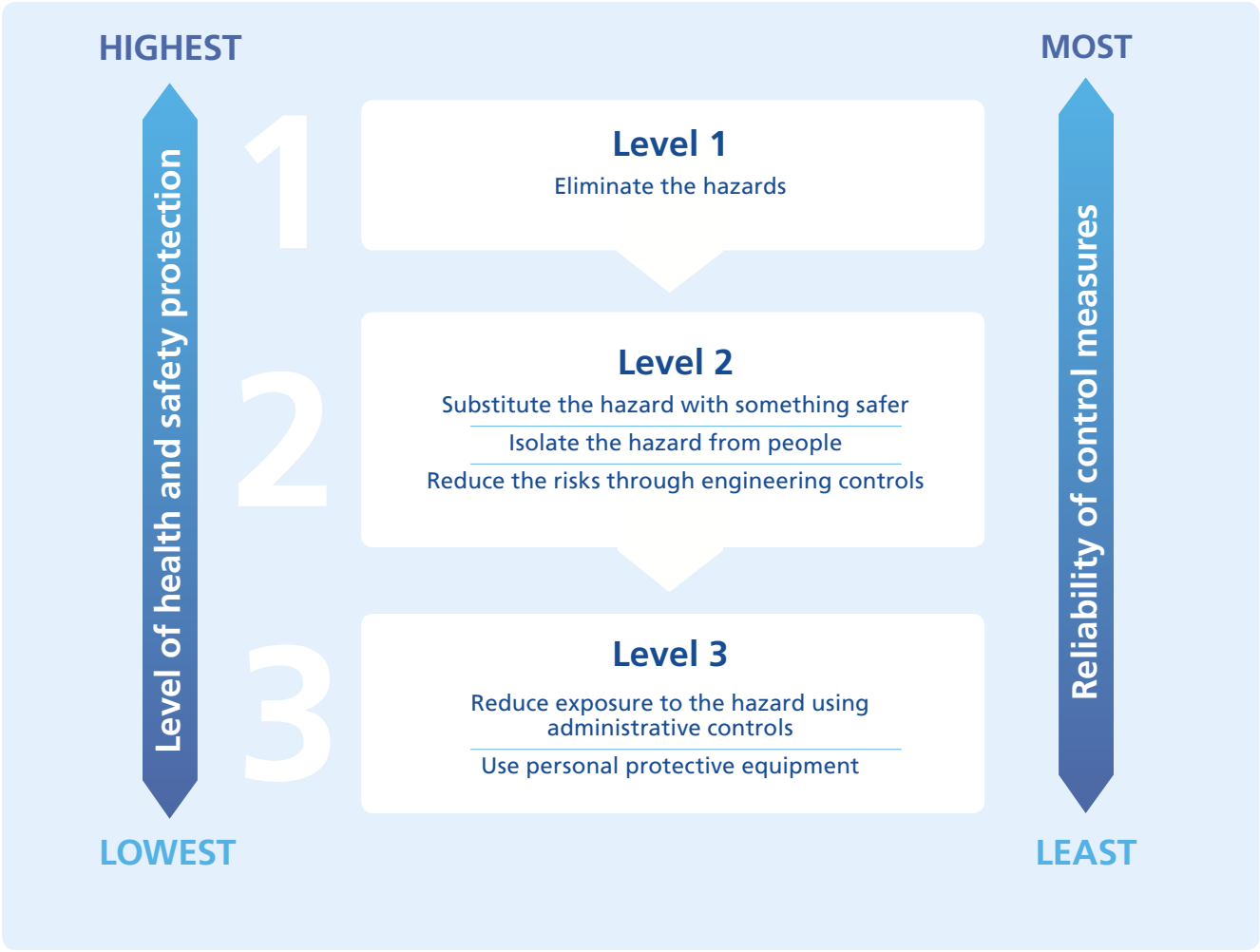
Level 3 control measures

These control measures do nothing to control the hazard at the source, relying instead on human behaviour and supervision. Used on their own, they tend to be least effective in minimising risks.

Two approaches to reducing risk in this way are:

- administrative controls – work methods or procedures designed to minimise hazard exposure (e.g. develop procedures on how to operate machinery safely, limit exposure time to a hazardous task, use hazard warning signs)
- personal protective equipment (PPE) – which limit exposure to the harmful effects of a hazard, but only if worn and used correctly (e.g. ear muffs, respirators, protective eyewear).

Administrative controls and PPE should be used as a last resort when no other practical control measures are available, as an interim measure



Further information

Work health and safety laws, codes of practice and Australian Standards

You should be familiar with the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) and the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* (SA). These laws protect all workers in South Australia, including employees, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, volunteers and employers who perform work. To access the full Act and Regulations, visit **legislation.sa.gov.au**.

The following supporting Codes of Practice provide further practical guidance on the basics of setting up a safe workplace for people responsible for managing risks to health and safety:

- *Code of Practice: How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks*
- *Code of Practice: Work Health and Safety Consultation, Co-operation and Co-ordination*
- *Code of Practice: First Aid in the Workplace*
- *Code of Practice: Managing the Work Environment and Facilities.*

Find all the Codes at **safework.sa.gov.au/cop**.

Other Codes of Practice that are specific to the types of hazards and risks found in automotive workshops are listed in individual sections of this guide, as are relevant Australian Standards, national guidance material and other useful publications and information.

Australian Standards can be searched for and purchased in either electronic or hard copy format from the online shop at **saiglobal.com**, or they can be borrowed for free from the SafeWork SA Library.

Product safety recall

Subscribe to the recalls section of the Product Safety Australia website **productsafety.gov.au** for daily recall notifications. These can then be delegated to one or two responsible workers who are tasked with checking for and removing any recalled products from use.

Ask our advisors for help

Our experienced work health and safety advisors can help you by providing free information, advice and support tailored to your workplace and the work you do. They have no inspector powers, so you can be comfortable asking them to help you.

We'd love to visit your workplace to help you find solutions to identified hazards and risks, lead an information session or participate in toolbox meetings or safety walks.

We can also help you implement your own safety management system – it's easy when you know how.

Call us on **1300 365 255** to book a free advisor's visit at a time and place that suits you.

Go to **safework.sa.gov.au/freeadvice** for more information.

Quick safety scans – simple steps to safety

Use these quick safety scans to look at key work health and safety (WHS) issues in your workplace. Those items where you tick 'Sometimes' or 'Never' will need action to fix or improve. Use the information provided earlier in this section to help you.

Getting started	Always	Sometimes	Never
You have a WHS policy which includes consultation, managing hazards, informing/training/supervising, maintaining a safe workplace, monitoring and reviewing	☐	☐	☐
The WHS policy is displayed and easily accessible	☐	☐	☐
The WHS policy is regularly updated	☐	☐	☐

Talking with your team	Always	Sometimes	Never
Workers are encouraged to be involved as you develop and later review your work health and safety policy and procedures	☐	☐	☐
You have discussions or consult regularly with workers about health and safety issues	☐	☐	☐
Records are kept of meetings, feedback, decisions and action items, and safety solutions are regularly reviewed for effectiveness	☐	☐	☐
You have procedures for resolving issues	☐	☐	☐

Managing hazards	Always	Sometimes	Never
Hazards are identified and their risks considered	☐	☐	☐
Control measures are implemented for all identified hazards	☐	☐	☐
Safe work procedures are developed for each work activity, with worker input	☐	☐	☐
Hazard identification, risk assessment and control processes are in place	☐	☐	☐

Informing, training and supervising	Always	Sometimes	Never
You speak to workers about their training needs	☐	☐	☐
A training plan is in place	☐	☐	☐
Records are kept of each worker's training	☐	☐	☐
Workers are trained to follow safe work procedures and can demonstrate their ability to do tasks safely	☐	☐	☐
You supervise workers in their tasks	☐	☐	☐
You have a new worker induction program/checklist	☐	☐	☐
New workers are adequately supervised until they can demonstrate task competencies	☐	☐	☐
There is a procedure for visitor/contractor sign-in and access to the workplace	☐	☐	☐
You have an induction process if visitors/contractors will access hazardous areas	☐	☐	☐

Maintain a safe workplace	Always	Sometimes	Never
Regular safety checks/inspections are carried out	☐	☐	☐
You have a reporting process for hazards and incidents/injuries (including near misses)	☐	☐	☐
Incident reports are reviewed	☐	☐	☐
Incident report forms are used	☐	☐	☐
Tools and equipment are kept in good condition, and regularly serviced and maintained	☐	☐	☐
All notifiable incidents are reported to SafeWork SA	☐	☐	☐

Record keeping	Always	Sometimes	Never
Induction records are kept for five years from the date of the last entry	☐	☐	☐
Worker training records are kept	☐	☐	☐
You maintain a hazard register	☐	☐	☐
You maintain a chemical register	☐	☐	☐
You maintain an asbestos register	☐	☐	☐
Plant registration details are kept and easily accessible	☐	☐	☐
Records are kept of testing and inspection of items of plant	☐	☐	☐

Monitoring and reviewing	Always	Sometimes	Never
You regularly review your safety processes with your workers	☐	☐	☐
You investigate all incidents or near misses to identify any safety gaps in your business	☐	☐	☐

Quick safety scans – other responsibilities

Use these quick safety scans to look at key work health and safety (WHS) issues in your workplace. Those items where you tick in this section 'Sometimes' or 'Never' will need action to fix or improve. Use the information provided earlier in this section to help you.

First aid	Always	Sometimes	Never
You have done a risk assessment to determine appropriate first aid requirements	☐	☐	☐
Approved first aid kits and equipment are provided, maintained and accessible	☐	☐	☐
An adequate number of people are trained to administer first aid	☐	☐	☐
Eye washing facilities are provided	☐	☐	☐
First aid records are kept	☐	☐	☐
First aid signs are posted	☐	☐	☐

Fire and emergency procedures	Always	Sometimes	Never
Correct types of fire extinguishers are provided, located and signed appropriately	☐	☐	☐
Fire extinguishers are regularly maintained	☐	☐	☐
Workers are trained in fire-fighting equipment use	☐	☐	☐
Fire-fighting equipment is in good condition	☐	☐	☐
You have an emergency response plan and evacuation procedure in place	☐	☐	☐
You have a fire alarm system and carry out system tests and emergency drills	☐	☐	☐
Emergency lighting is available, visible and periodically tested	☐	☐	☐
Emergency exits are clearly signposted and unobstructed	☐	☐	☐
Smoke detectors are fitted, tested and maintained	☐	☐	☐
Emergency contact numbers are displayed	☐	☐	☐

Work environment and facilities	Always	Sometimes	Never
Kitchen/lunchroom facilities are adequate and clean, well lit and well ventilated	☐	☐	☐
Drinking water is available	☐	☐	☐
Toilets (lockable) and showers/washing facilities/changerooms are adequate and clean (incl. sanitary units), well lit and ventilated, well provisioned	☐	☐	☐
Protective clothing is provided (and laundered, if appropriate)	☐	☐	☐
Secure personal storage is provided for workers	☐	☐	☐
Lighting is adequate for work-specific tasks/locations (e.g. lead lights) and in other public areas (e.g. walkways, offices)	☐	☐	☐
Lighting is clean and in good condition, and diffusers are in place	☐	☐	☐
Windows are clean and unbroken	☐	☐	☐
Workers are able to control incoming natural light	☐	☐	☐
Ventilation is adequate for work tasks/areas (check for temperature, draughts, odours, lack of fresh air)	☐	☐	☐
Heating and/or cooling operates at a comfortable level	☐	☐	☐
You have a process in place for work in extreme heat or cold	☐	☐	☐
Cleaning equipment and materials are available, and floors are kept clean	☐	☐	☐
Metal rubbish/waste storage bins are provided	☐	☐	☐
Waste (general and hazardous) is regularly removed	☐	☐	☐
Work areas and benches are tidy and uncluttered	☐	☐	☐
You have a process in place for isolated or remote workers	☐	☐	☐
You have an effective means of communication with isolated or remote workers (e.g. mobile/satellite phone, UHF radio)	☐	☐	☐