

PSA LINK

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PSA SHOP STEWARD NEWSLETTER

Occupational Health and Safety

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993, requires the employer to bring about and maintain - as far as reasonably practicable - a work environment that is safe and without risk to the health of workers. This means, amongst others, that the employer must ensure that the workplace is free of hazardous substances that may cause injury, damage or disease.

In a situation where hazardous substances cannot be avoided, it is the responsibility of the employer to inform workers about these dangers. The employer must educate workers on how they can protect themselves from danger, how to work safely and also provide protective measures for a safe workplace.

The workers also have a responsibility to bring unsafe working conditions to the employer's attention. The *OHS Act* is based on the principle that dangers in the workplace must be addressed by communication and cooperation between the workers and the employer. Both parties must pro-actively identify dangers and develop control measures.

Workplaces must have regular safety inspections.

Inspections are usually planned on the basis of accident statistics, the presence of hazardous substances or the use of dangerous machinery in the workplace. Unplanned inspections arise from requests or complaints by workers, employers, or members of the public. This kind of inspections are treated confidentially.

Should inspectors find dangerous or adverse conditions at the workplace, they may issue the employer with prohibition notice, which forbids the use of machine or equipment. They may also issue a contravention notice, which will constitute immediate prosecution, but in some cases the employer may be given the opportunity to correct the contravention within a time limit specified in the notice - usually 60 days. An improvement notice can also be given to grant the employer chance to bring about more effective measures.

The employer must provide and maintain all equipment necessary to do the work and all the systems according to which work must be done in a condition that will not affect the health and safety of workers. Before personal protective equipment may be used, the employer must first try to remove or reduce any danger to the health and safety of workers.



The PSA cares

