

Workplace Health and Safety

This guideline will assist agencies to manage their building assets throughout each stage of the life-cycle (planning, investment/procurement, management-in-use and disposal) in a way that:

- positively controls the risks to the health and safety of workers and other persons who might be put at risk by the operation of the asset
- reduces the human and financial cost of workplace injuries to employers, workers and the community.

In this guideline the term 'agencies' is equivalent to, and used interchangeably with, 'departments' (as defined in s8 of the [Financial Accountability Act 2009](#)).

The [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#) (Qld) which provides a framework for managing health and safety risks in Queensland workplaces:

- applies to all persons, including the State
- imposes work health and safety duties on certain persons (including persons who conduct a business or undertaking, persons in control of workplaces, for example building owners, principal contractors, designers of structures, project managers and workers) who may affect the health and safety of others by what they do, or fail to do.

The [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#) describes what should be done to prevent or control certain hazards which cause injury, illness or death, including requiring licences for specific activities and the keeping of records.

[Work Health and Safety \(Codes of Practice\)](#) provide practical advice about ways to manage exposure to risks common to industry to meet the standards set out in the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and the related Regulation.

The [Guide to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, Queensland](#) provides an overview of the *Queensland Work Health and Safety Act 2011*. It is designed to help people understand their health and safety duties and rights in the workplace.

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In order to fulfil their duties for workplace health and safety in relation to government buildings, departments should:

- identify hazards and potential risks to health and safety (including at or in the vicinity of the workplace where construction work is taking place)
- implement measures to eliminate or minimise the level of these risks (including the documentation of steps undertaken so that all people are given the highest level of health and safety protection from hazards arising from work, so far as is reasonably practicable)
- write and communicate a workplace health and safety policy to workers, visitors and clients
- ensure that contractors (working in government buildings or on government building projects) are appropriately licensed and use correct safety equipment when undertaking works
- prior to work commencing, engage in consultation with the contractors and other persons responsible for management or control of a workplace where construction work is being undertaken to ensure that information about hazards are shared, risks are controlled and procedures are put in place to monitor and review their effectiveness
- if necessary, allocate responsibilities and accountabilities for health and safety advice to a specific person within the department (i.e. a safety advisor) or engage a consultant on an as-needs basis to assist officers to meet their due diligence duties under the WHS Act. The duty to exercise due diligence can not be delegated to the safety advisor. It always remains with each individual officer with management or control of fixtures, fittings or plant at a workplace to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that those things are without risks to health and safety of any person
- train persons in the workplace (in respect to their specific duties and responsibilities for workplace health and safety) in order to meet legislative requirements and to achieve departmental health and safety objectives
- implement a reporting and recording system for workplace health and safety incidents
- monitor progress and achievements on an ongoing basis
- develop and implement appropriate emergency procedures associated with events such as fire, bomb threats and gas or chemical leaks.

The effective identification and management of the risks associated with health and safety during each stage of the life-cycle of a building (as explained below) will result in the improved use of resources, reduced costs associated with accidents and more harmonious working relationships.

1.0 Planning

During the planning stage of the life-cycle of a building:

- risks that are likely to arise throughout the life of the building should be identified, assessed and considered in the design of the building

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- where possible, risks should be eliminated, or appropriate control measures developed, to ensure that the design of the building facilitates the health and safety of persons who:
 - are involved in its construction
 - will work in or visit the building
 - might be put at risk by its operation
 - maintain or repair the building or any fixtures, fittings and plant.
- the person conducting a business or undertaking that commissions construction work has a duty to consult with other parties responsible for workplace health and safety during construction work including the designer, project manager and principal contractor, and other persons responsible for management or control of a workplace where construction works is being undertaken.
- the designer should ensure the design of the building does not affect the workplace health and safety of persons during construction, when the building has been completed and is being used for the purpose for which it was designed and when the building is being dismantled and disposed off. This may include carrying out tests for hazards that are unique to the particular design (i.e. not common to all designs of that type) and making information available to those for whom the building was designed about its intended purpose, test results, and any conditions necessary to ensure that it is safe and without risks to health or safety.

2.0 Investment/procurement

In the case of existing buildings that are purchased or leased, risk assessments should be undertaken and appropriate action taken (as is necessary) before occupancy to ensure the health and safety of persons. Departments should ensure that buildings with asbestos containing material are not purchased or leased for occupancy unless all other alternatives have been considered and an Asbestos Management Plan has been developed to manage the assessed risk.

In the case of construction work, when a contractor is appointed as a principal contractor, the contractor has specific duties including the display of prescribed signage, the preparation of a work health and safety management plan, and obtaining a copy of safe work method statements prior to work commencing.

For government building projects¹ valued at \$1,000,000 over, departments should use the Prequalification (PQC) System to engage building consultants and contractors.

The PQC guideline: *Managing Occupational Health and Safety on Government Building Projects* outlines the occupational health and safety responsibilities for prequalified contractors undertaking government building projects and processes involved in monitoring the safety performance of these contractors.

These prequalification and contractual requirements are designed to reduce the incidence of injury, illness and death on such projects.

¹ The term 'government building project' is defined in **Attachment 1** of the *Capital Works Management Framework*.

3.0 Management-in-use

During this phase, operational risk management processes should be developed and implemented to ensure the ongoing health and safety of persons impacted by the building.

Outcomes of these processes include:

- documented safe working procedures used by workers
- regular audits undertaken to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of systems and control measures
- training workers including specific reference to controlling risks in the workplace
- regular inspections and risk assessments of asbestos containing material (if present in a building).

In the case of asbestos removal work, the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* requires the:

- asbestos removalist to be licensed in relevant units of competency
- nominated asbestos removal supervisor to be competent
- clearance inspection and certification for non-friable asbestos removal work to be undertaken only by a competent person
- air monitoring during friable asbestos removal work to be undertaken only by a licensed asbestos assessor
- clearance inspection and certification for friable asbestos removal work to be undertaken only by a licensed asbestos assessor or competent persons. Information about clearance inspection requirements and licensed asbestos assessors can be accessed from the website of the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/>

4.0 Disposal

Risks to health and safety associated with the disposal, sale or demolition of a building should be identified, assessed and appropriately managed, including:

- remediation of site contamination or other site preparation works necessary prior to the sale of the building
- the impact on the surrounding community in relation to demolition processes or the decommissioning of specific plant or equipment within a facility
- appropriate removal and handling of asbestos containing material during the demolition of the building.

Failure to manage these risks can not only result in injuries, ill health or death but may reduce job performance to an extent where budgets, delivery times and corporate objectives are not met.

Further information on the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* can be obtained from the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland website. (<https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au>) or from the Infoline (1300 369 128).

The suite of guidelines which comprise the *Strategic Asset Management Framework* (available online at www.hpw.qld.gov.au) is organised under the following categories:

1. **Overview** - explains the principles and concepts of strategic asset management as they apply to buildings.
2. **Guidelines** - expand on key aspects of strategic asset management to inform decisions over the entire life-cycle of the asset.
3. **Decision-making methodologies and guidelines** - support agencies to implement best practice strategic management of buildings.

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