

From: "ACT Work Safety Commissioner" <worksafety@act.gov.au>
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Work Safety News

Issue 02 - July 2009



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Dear subscriber,

Welcome to the second issue of our monthly newsletter series.

In this issue you will see the commencement of two regular items;

1. New Legislation in Focus, where each month we will take a closer look at a specific area of the new legislation, be it from the Act, the Regulations or the Codes of Practice, and
2. Upcoming Events, a summary of events and important dates over the coming months.

Record number of entries for the 2009 Safe Work ACT Awards

Entries for the 2009 Safe Work ACT Awards closed on Friday 17 July 2009. There has been a record number of entries for this year's awards with an increase of more than 30% over numbers from 2008, which was itself a record year at the time.



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A place where you can share health and safety ideas, resources and information with like minded people.



Good luck to all the entrants.
Judging has now commenced.

The judges will review all entries and prepare shortlists for each category. Once that has been done they will then decide whether any site visits are necessary.

Entrants should note that the fact that a site visit does not occur does not necessarily mean they are no longer in the running for an award. Site visits are not always required and will only be conducted where the judges feel that is necessary.

All entrants will receive an invitation to attend this year's awards ceremony which will commence at 12 noon on Thursday 22 October 2009. The ceremony will be held at the National Convention Centre in Canberra. The 2009 ACT Health and Safety Show will be held at the Convention Centre on the same day as the awards.

Book early for the Safety Seminar on OHS Harmonisation

This half-day seminar, to be held at the National Museum of Australia at Acton Peninsula, Canberra, will focus on OHS Harmonisation, what it looks like at this point in time and where we might expect it to take us in the short, medium and long term.



Clearly, the future of OHS laws in Australia is inextricably linked with moves to harmonise the various laws across the Australian states and territories (and Comcare).

As drafting of the proposed new model laws is due for completion in September this year, with final sign-off by Workplace Relations Minister's Council (WRMC) by the end of the year, October will be an ideal time for both a stock-take as well as an assessment of where this initiative is likely to take us over the coming years.

A range of speakers will provide differing viewpoints on OHS Harmonisation. Speakers include:

- Mr Robin Stewart-Crompton and Mr Barry Sherriff - co-authors of the National Review of Model OHS Laws
- Ms Julia Collins, who heads up the team at Safe Work Australia tasked with developing and implementing the model laws
- Mr Martin Kingham - Assistant National Secretary of the CFMEU, for a union perspective
- Mr David Segrott, President of the ACT Division of the Safety Institute of Australia

The fee for attending this event is \$115.

The event will commence at 8.30 am (for a 9.00 am start) and conclude at Noon. Coffee and tea will be available on arrival and there will be a short break for morning tea.

To book for this seminar, [visit our website](#), email us at worksafety@act.gov.au or phone the OHS Commissioner's office on 6205 0333.

OHS Support for the Community Sector

Workwatch, in collaboration with the OHS Commissioner's Office and with the support of the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services, has been rolling out a training and support program for the ACT's community sector over the past six months.



The program has been well received and a large number of community sector workplaces have taken up this opportunity which includes training, provision of support material, on-site audits and follow-up support.

To register your interest in participating in this program, [contact Workwatch](#). To view the OHS Commissioner's workbooks for the Community Sector program, visit the [Community Sector page](#) on the Commissioner's website.

Construction Induction Card and High Risk Work licenses for the ACT

The ACT Government has foreshadowed the introduction of legislation to confirm ACT participation in two nationally agreed requirements for the construction industry.



Construction Induction Card

From 1 October 2009, possession of a Construction Induction Card will be mandatory for those engaging in work in the construction industry in the ACT, in accordance with the National Code of Practice for Induction for Construction Work.

All other jurisdictions are moving to adopt this standard, which will be harmonised across Australia by the end of 2009. Once issued by any jurisdiction, cards will be recognised in all other jurisdictions. Thus, a card issued in NSW will be valid in the ACT and a card issued in the ACT will be recognised in NSW.

Licensing for Persons Performing High Risk Work

The ACT is also adopting the National Standard for Persons Performing High Risk Work from 1 October 2009.

All other states and territories are moving to adopt this standard. The major changes are:

- Certificates of Competency will be replaced by

licenses. Whereas certificates were valid for life, licenses will be valid for 5 years only. After that period, license holders will need to apply for a renewal of their license.

- All training and assessment associated with the licenses must be done through a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

Licenses issued by any jurisdiction will be recognised by all other jurisdictions. As the license will therefore be a national license, there will be no need to convert an ACT license for use in other states.

When a person first applies for a license, they must apply in the jurisdiction where their statement of attainment was issued.

A great deal of detail surrounding the licensing and induction card systems will be finalised over coming months by the ACT's Office of Regulatory Services (ORS). Further detail will be provided before 1 October 2009.

New Legislation 'In Focus': Provision of Amenities in workplaces

The New Legislation in Focus series will be a regular item in this newsletter. Each month we will focus on a specific aspect of the new legislation - be it from the principal Act, the regulations, or the codes of practice.



This month the focus is on the *Work Safety Regulation 2009*. In particular, we will take a look at the provisions with regard to **Amenities** in Part 3, Division 3.1.

The Work Safety Regulation contains a provision that "a person conducting a business or undertaking at a workplace [an employer] commits an offence if the person does not provide adequate amenities for workers while they are at the workplace."

Amenities is defined as "facilities for the welfare or personal hygiene needs of people".

The regulation goes on to provide further detail with respect to the following amenities:

- safety and cleanliness of amenities
- facilities for personal belongings
- facilities for changing clothes
- meal facilities
- combined facilities
- toilet facilities
- washing facilities
- shower facilities
- drinking water
- seating

- working space.

Seating, for example, must be provided if it is reasonable for a worker to perform some tasks while seated. Such seating must be ergonomically sound, provide suitable support and be adequate for the type of work.

Toilet facilities must be accessible from the workplace, hygienic, protected from the weather and kept in a clean and hygienic working condition. Failure to comply is a 'strict liability offence' with a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units [\$2,000].

To see the full text of this part of the *Work Safety Regulation* [click here](#).

Upcoming Events

The following events and important dates are scheduled for the coming months:

- Friday 21 August - [New Legislation Seminar](#)
- Thursday 1 October - Commencement of Work Safety Act 2008
- Thursday 1 October - launch of [Safe Work ACT Month 2009](#)
- Tuesday 6 October - [Safety Seminar # 2 - OHS Harmonisation: Where to From Here?](#)
- Thursday 8 October - [New Legislation Seminar](#)
- Thursday 15 October - [Global Handwashing Day](#)
- Thursday 22 October - [Safe Work ACT Awards](#) ceremony
- Thursday 22 October - [ACT Health & Safety Show 2009](#)
- 25-31 October - Safe Work Australia Week
- Thursday 29 October - [Serious About Safe Business](#) Seminar

To find out more about any of these events either click on the link above or [visit our website](#).