

What are our obligations & responsibilities?

4 examples of WHS due diligence



It is essential that business owners and managers show due diligence and make every effort to keep their team safe. So what exactly is due diligence...

Applied to work health and safety, due diligence means that employers shall take all reasonable precautions, under the particular circumstances, to prevent injuries or accidents in the workplace... **This includes making dangerous areas and dangerous activities safer. Simple as that!**

As business owners and managers, **we have a legal obligation, and a moral responsibility to show due diligence.** Examples of showing due diligence include – but are not limited to – induction, planning, implementing policies and procedures, training, emergency preparedness, hazard identification.

Lets discuss a couple of these...

1 Consultation

2 Induction

3 Emergency Planning

4 Training & Competency



1 Consultation

Effective consultation is essential to ensure the team has input into the Work Health and Safety (WHS) system, the opportunity to provide ideas and solutions and feels comfortable to discuss WHS at any time.

When to consult?

Consultation must be regular and ongoing. You must consult with your workers when:

- identifying hazards and assessing risks
- deciding how to eliminate or minimise risks
- proposing changes that may affect the health and safety of your workers
- making decisions about workplace facilities
- making decisions about how you will consult.

How to consult?

When deciding how to consult, consider the size of your business, the way work is arranged and what suits your workers. The code of practice for consultation provides lots of useful info on this topic.

 [Consultation code of practice](#) 

You can consult with workers in a variety of ways, including holding regular meetings (formal or informal), having a whiteboard, providing a space to make notes on a timesheet, electing a health and safety representative or appointing a health and safety committee.



2 Induction

Demonstrating your intent to keep your team safe from the outset of employment is essential. This can be done with a thorough and rigorous induction.

An induction sets the scene that safety is a priority and provides basic safety information on physical aspects of the workplace and key activities to keep everyone safe. An induction may simply be a series of short policies that provide information on the parts of the business that could potentially be deemed unsafe. This could include but is not limited to: vehicle use, working at heights, drug and alcohol, fatigue, motorbikes, hygiene, confined spaces, machinery operation and maintenance, and working with livestock.



Who

needs to be inducted?

Everyone! Workers (paid, unpaid, volunteers, work experience) and contractors. We need to keep everyone who comes into your business safe.

Anyone who is contributing to the productivity and profitability of your business needs to be protected. That being said, they only need to be inducted into the part of the workplace that they are involved in (and excluded from the rest!).

Contractors need to be provided with basic information to ensure they have safe access to the area of your business they are working in.

What

does an induction need to include?

Contact details, a map or directions, emergency provisions, hazards, instruction for specific tasks or equipment and no-go zones are a good place to start.

Any information that needs to be passed on to make the area of the business the person is working in or the activity safer.

General information about the physical risks and hazards of your particular business needs to be conveyed – each business is different.

Common inclusions in a basic farm induction are included in our template.

 [Download induction template](#) >

2 Induction Continued

How

do I know they have read and understood it?

There is no point providing safety information if it isn't computed and understood. Even if you are confident someone CAN read and they speak English, how can you be sure they have? This is important information and we genuinely want people to understand it and take it on board, so take whatever steps are necessary, even if this means reading it to them! Don't assume the information alone will make them safer.

What

if someone has been employed by our business or family for a long time... surely I don't need to induct them?

Absolutely you do. It's a great opportunity to bring everyone up to speed and onto the same page. It is a chance to reset and reconfirm standards and behaviour that may have slipped over time.

How

many pages is the right number of pages for an induction?

Extra pages doesn't always mean a better quality document! Provide enough information to keep the person safe but don't provide information that won't improve the safety of the individual. There's lots of information to take in during an induction so don't assume it will all be remembered. That's why providing the reference material is important!



Try something different

Do a demonstration, ask them to explain it back to you, provide a video.



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3 Emergency Planning

Farming and fishing are unique industries as operators often work alone and in isolated environments – we are rarely 5 minutes from the closest hospital or fire station. So, we need to make sure the team is equipped and prepared should an emergency situation arise.

The **common emergencies** that occur in our industries include a medical emergency (when someone is not breathing, his or her heart isn't beating or he or she is bleeding profusely), a fire, or a chemical emergency. A **simple plan** should be in place to deal with all of these emergencies.

Once there is a plan in place, ensure the team is **trained and practiced** to follow it! Practice will help your brain go into auto pilot during a panicked time.

In addition, make sure the team are **equipped!** First aid kits, firefighting equipment and spill kits are all important for dealing with emergencies in remote or isolated environments. Remote or isolated workers are often their own first aid officer. **Are you trained and equipped to swing into action?**

One of the most important provisions you can make is to ensure that everyone is **able to be contacted** or raise assistance when they are in trouble. If mobile phone range is patchy, provide a UHF radio. Also be aware of peoples movements – where they are going and how long are they expected to be... so you know when to start looking!!

In addition, make sure everyone knows **where they are**. This might sound ridiculous, but make sure everyone knows the address (gazetted road name and rural property number) and even a GPS location so they can provide it to emergency services if required. This is something that is commonly reported as not being done well! Emergency Plus is a great mobile application to download to provide your location in case of emergency, but it requires phone service!

Lastly, understand the **requirements of your team** – do you have anyone in your team that might need emergency assistance? Asthmatic, epilepsy, anaphylaxis, diabetic? **Discuss how you can provide emergency assistance to them!**

/// EMERGENCY + ///

Know emergency numbers



Know your location



Have the right safety equipment with you



**FIRST
AID KITS**

**SNAKE BITE
KITS**

SPILL KITS

**FIRE
FIGHTING
EQUIPMENT**



Emergency
planning template



What are our obligations & responsibilities?

4 Training & Competency



Department of
Primary Industries

It is essential that people are confident and comfortable to do whatever is asked of them in a safe manner. This can be achieved through training, both formal and on the job training as well as coaching, mentoring and supervision.

Relevant qualifications

It is important that all staff hold the relevant qualifications that are legally required to complete high risk tasks. This includes high-risk plant such as forklifts and/or slewing cranes as well as high-risk activities such as chemical handling, confined spaces and/or rigging and dogging. Operators that do not hold these “tickets” can't conduct the task!

Even if a job or particular task doesn't require a “ticket”, licence or competency, it doesn't mean you don't need to be trained. Farming and fishing include lots of dangerous places and activities that don't require the operator to be formally or legally trained, but on the job training is essential to make the activity safe!

Ongoing training & supervision

After someone is provided with training, ensure ongoing coaching and mentoring is in place to allow the person to hone his or her skills in a safe and productive manner. If he or she is left unattended, ensure that they have a line of contact (mobile phone or UHF radio) and “go to” person who is approachable if they have any questions, require further information or instruction or want to check on something.



Potentially dangerous activities

Any activity that is potentially dangerous needs training that is RIGOROUS, i.e. more than a simple “this is how you do it”. It might include attending an off-site training course, development, review and implementation of a safe system of work such as a safe work procedure, and review of the operators manual.

It is a good idea to officially deem an operator competent in a high-risk task, and record it in a training register.

This demonstrates your intent to have a trained workplace.

For those operating plant and equipment, the manufacturer's guidelines are a great place to start. As well as safety information, it will provide information about age for operation and maintenance requirement.

 [Training register template](#) 

Summary

We have discussed four examples of due diligence that business owners and managers need to consider to keep their team safe.

Examples of showing due diligence include:



Consultation

- Engage with your team in the process and program
- Use a variety of ways to engage effectively
- Keep a record
- Follow the consultation code of practice.

[Consultation code of practice](#) >



Induction

- Everyone who contributes to your business needs to be inducted
- Create a series of short policies to keep everyone safe in your business
- Be creative - Read it, demonstrate it, explain it to ensure it is understood.

[Induction template](#) >



Emergency Planning

- Ensure your team understand what emergencies could be faced
- Have a plan in place for each emergency, and people are trained to respond
- Make sure the equipment is available to respond
- Practice the plan!

[Emergency planning template](#) >



Training

- Ensure legally required training is completed
- Provide training for high risk tasks with safe work procedures available
- Embed a culture of ongoing training, coaching and mentoring
- Maintain a training register.

[Training template](#) >