



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Commerce**

Understanding the safety and health needs of your workplace Migrant workers: A guide for employers



This bulletin has been produced to provide guidance for employers in managing the occupational safety and health of migrant workers.

Managing safety and health issues for migrant workers should be considered within the context of safety and health management for all workers. As an employer you have a general duty to provide and maintain, as far as practical, a working environment where workers are not exposed to hazards. This includes:

- providing and maintaining safe workplaces, plant and systems of work so they do not expose workers to hazards;
- providing information, instruction, training and supervision so workers can perform their work safely;
- consulting and cooperating with safety and health representatives (if any) and other workers regarding occupational safety and health at the workplace;
- ensuring safe use, cleaning, maintenance, transportation and disposal of substances and plant used in the workplace; and
- providing personal protective equipment – however, this should be considered only when other control measures are not practical or to increase protection.

Know your workforce and its needs

As an employer, you have an obligation under your duty of care responsibilities to adapt your work practices according to the different needs of your workers. The key to maintaining a safe workplace is matching job-task demands with an individual's abilities and skill sets. This can be achieved through various processes, including:

- identifying workplace hazards and conducting risk assessments, which are appropriate to the cultural needs of the workforce;
- pre - placement discussions;
- ongoing consultation and communication;
- liaison with safety and health representatives; and
- monitoring and reviewing workplace practices.
- medical observation and/or assessment;

Specific issues for migrant workers

Issues to consider for migrant workers may include:

- language barriers;
- cultural or religious differences;
- literacy difficulties;
- limited knowledge of local legislation and safety standards; and
- reluctance to engage with authority figures.

As an employer, therefore, you may need to:

- consider how to convey information about safety to those with a limited knowledge of English;
- consider accessing English language support for workers;
- arrange for any necessary support to be provided by others within the workplace; and
- encourage supervisors to be understanding and approachable.

If you would like more information, contact WorkSafe:

WorkSafe

Level 5, 1260 Hay Street, West Perth WA 6005

Tel: 1300 307 877

Fax: (08) 9321 8973

Email: safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

Internet: www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

Employer checklist

The following checklist is provided to help employers to consider and address the needs of migrant workers when managing occupational safety and health at the workplace.

check	yes	no
Understanding your workforce		
• You have an awareness of the languages, cultural and religious practices in your workplace.		
• You use this knowledge to develop a range of effective communication and consultation mechanisms with workers, which are culturally appropriate and accessible.		
Consultation and communication		
• Communication strategies are culturally appropriate to your workplace and inclusive of all workers. For example: - providing language support through interpreters or bilingual facilitators; - using multiple forms of communication (verbal, visual and practical); - using short simple English phrases and avoiding jargon or technical / unfamiliar terms		
• All workers are encouraged to join in safety and health discussions.		
• Workers know how and who to contact with any safety or health concerns or issues.		
• The election of safety and health representatives and/or the formation of a workplace safety and health committee, has been considered.		
• Feedback is sought from workers regarding safe practices.		
• Consultation and communication about safety in the workplace is positively reinforced.		
Induction, training and instruction		
• Induction and training plans are designed to meet the needs of all groups of workers.		
• Induction and training plans are comprehensive and address: - how safety is managed at the workplace; - all critical and hazardous job tasks risks and controls; - consultation and communication mechanisms; - first aid, emergency and evacuation procedures; - use and maintenance of personal protective clothing and equipment; - how to resolve issues or complaints.		
• The workplace provides practical competency based training opportunities with opportunity for debriefing.		
• Workplace buddies or safety and health representatives are used to support and assist with training in the workplace.		
• Induction and training mechanisms are evaluated to ensure all participants understand information provided.		
• Relevant training and ongoing support for supervisors is provided to enable them to manage a culturally diverse workplace.		
Policies and procedures		
• Mechanisms are in place to clearly demonstrate to workers how safety and health is managed in the workplace (such as toolbox meetings or supervision of job-task performance).		
• Concerns that are raised are actioned where appropriate.		
• Where practical, written copies of policies and procedures in languages that match the demographic of the workforces are provided.		
• Policies, procedures and other written material are kept simple.		
• Key policies and procedures for the workplace are identified and incorporated into induction and training processes.		
• Policies and procedures are evaluated to monitor their effectiveness.		

Further Resources

WorkCover Western Australia

WorkCover WA is the State Government agency responsible for workers' compensation and injury management.

2 Bedbrook Place, Shenton Park WA 6008

Tel: (08) 9388 5555

Fax: (08) 9388 5550

Internet site: www.workcover.wa.gov.au

Unions WA

Unions WA is the state's peak union body, representing over 40 affiliated unions, and their members. Unions can provide advice on workers rights and entitlements.

Level 4 445 Hay Street, Perth WA 6000

Tel: (08) 9328 7877

Fax: (08) 9328 8132

Email: unionsyes@unionswa.org.au

Internet site: www.unionswa.com.au

Office of Multicultural Interests

The Office of Multicultural Interests can provide information on interpreter and translation services.

Level 2 Dumas House, 2 Havelock St,

West Perth WA 6005

Tel: (08) 9217 1700

Fax: (08) 9217 1555

Email: harmony@omi.wa.gov.au

Internet site: www.omi.wa.gov.au

Chamber of Commerce & Industry Western Australia

The Chamber of Commerce & Industry is a private, not for profit business organisation that provides members with access to a range of services, including training courses, business directories and OSH advice.

180 Hay Street, East Perth WA 6004

Tel: (08) 9365 7415

Fax: (08) 9365 7550

Email: osh@cciwa.com

Internet site: www.cciwa.com

Wageline

This service provides free and confidential information and advice on Western Australia state awards and agreements, including wage rates, conditions of employment, and advice on termination and dismissal.

Tel: 1300 655 266

Fair Work Australia

This service provides free and confidential information and advice on federal awards and agreements, including wage rates, conditions of employment, and advice on termination and dismissal.

Tel: 1300 799 675

Department of Commerce WorkSafe Division

Customer Help Centre: 1300 307 877
(for the cost of a local call statewide)

Level 5 Westcentre 1260 Hay Street West Perth Western Australia 6005

Mail: PO Box 294 West Perth Western Australia 6872

Administration: (08) 9327 8777

Facsimile: (08) 9321 8973

National Relay Service: 13 36 77

Website: www.worksafe.wa.gov.au

Email: safety@commerce.wa.gov.au

Regional Offices

Great Southern (09) 9842 8366

Mid-West (08) 9964 5644

North-West (08) 9185 0900

South-West (08) 9722 2888

This publication is available on request in other formats to assist people with special needs.