

# Safety Chat



**HAZCON**

ISSUE 2 - July 2011

## National Harmonisation - What it means for you?



There are significant changes in Occupational Health and Safety legislation that will soon affect every Australian worker. The aim is to ensure there is a consistently high level of protection for all Australians and, over time, reduce compliance burdens for business.

The proposed Work Health and Safety legislation to be enacted in each state and territory from 1st January 2012 will comprise of a new Work Health and Safety Act and new Work Health and Safety Regulations. This legislation will be underpinned by National Codes of Practice covering the following topics:

- How to manage health and safety risks
- How to consult on work health and safety
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- Facilities for construction
- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Confined spaces
- How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace
- How to safely remove asbestos
- How to prevent falls at workplaces
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Preparation of safety data sheets for hazardous chemicals.

Further Codes of Practice are planned and will include, for example, plant safety.

To prepare for the new legal requirements and stay proactive you will also need to consider:

- A gap analysis for your organisation to determine what is actually required and priorities
- Developing a strategic plan to implement the provision of WHS Act, Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice
- Briefing your senior managers and board about the changes and what it means in terms of due diligence, resources and personal liabilities
- Developing a policy and procedure review committee
- Running WHS session/s for supervisors and managers to explain the changes.

## IN THIS FEATURE

- ▶ **National Harmonisation**  
... What it means for you?
- ▶ **Indoor Air Quality and Bio-aerosol Monitoring**  
... Are you at risk?
- ▶ **Hazardous Material Audits**  
... As part of the contract of purchase.
- ▶ **WorkSafe Victoria's Intergrated Approach**  
... Identify key systemic OH&S issues.
- ▶ **Electromagnetic Forces (EMF)**  
... Near schools and residential buildings.

## National Harmonisation Information Sessions

HAZCON can run an information session for your company which will help give managers, supervisors and employees an understanding of the new Model Work Health and Safety Act and will cover the changes and implications for your workplace resulting from the new laws.

The participants will hear about the key elements of the Model Work Health & Safety Act, as well as the draft model Regulations and Codes of Practice.

The information session will cover the following topics:

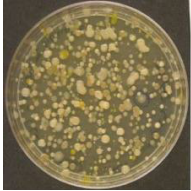
- Introduction to harmonisation
- What does it mean
- Why was there a need for harmonisation
- The new model act
- How the new laws will impact the roles, responsibilities and duties of employees, managers and HSRs
- The model regulations and Codes of Practice
- Significant changes and challenges from current legislation.

For further information on National Harmonisation or to organise an information session for your company, please contact HAZCON on 1800 429 266.

**HAZCON will be conducting public update seminars in Melbourne and Gippsland. Please see the back page of this newsletter for more information and to RSVP.**

# Safety Chat

## Bio-aerosol Monitoring



Exposure to airborne biologically active materials such as bacteria and mould has been implicated in a number of health scares in public buildings, schools and workplaces.

There has been a 'fear factor' and any cases of sickness experienced within the building are often attributed to bacteria and mould present.

The difficulty with assessing airborne micro-organisms is that they occur in open air environments and there is limited evidence which links airborne micro-organisms to a particular disease state.

Pre-existing conditions are often made worse by high levels of mould or bacteria but in the average healthy populations, the health risk is less clear.

There are no Australian Standards on airborne mould and bacteria, however, international guidelines use 1000 (Colony Forming Units) CFU/m<sup>3</sup> as a guide where the levels may be of concern.

The solution to concerns about airborne micro-organisms is to undertake an inspection of the area to determine dampness levels or sources of moisture, and then compare indoor bio-aerosol levels to external levels.

HAZCON has been involved in several studies of bioaerosols in offices, schools and hospitals across the state following the recent floods and has been invested in the latest bio-aerosol monitoring equipment.

The advantage of bio-aerosol monitoring is it quantifies the likely risk and deterrents if any remedial work is required.



## Hazardous Material Audits as Part of the Contract of Purchase



Purchasing a commercial building can be a costly venture. Unforeseen hazards can create pitfalls for the unwary. A hazardous building materials audit provides property owners or purchasers with a thorough understanding of the building materials used and their associated hazards, particularly in relation to asbestos.

Asbestos may exist not only in the Super Six roof or the cement sheet walls but also in the underlay to various materials such as ceramic tiles, the vinyl tile flooring coverings and glues, expansion mastics and fire door insulation.

Legislative requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007, the Code of Practice for the management and control of asbestos in workplaces [NOHSC:2018 (2005)] and the impending National Harmonisation legislation require the preparation of an asbestos report which includes the inspection and sampling of asbestos containing materials (ACM) and the provision of an ACM Register documenting the location, condition, risk and recommended control measures of all identified ACM.

Additional to identification of asbestos our audits also include identification of Synthetic Mineral Fibres (SMF), Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB's) and Lead, particularly lead paint, all of which can pose a health risk during remedial or refurbishment work. Copper Chromium Arsenic (CCA) treated timber can also be identified where requested.

We understand the requirements of pressing timeframes therefore, site investigations are generally commenced within one week of the appointment and reports aim to be delivered within two weeks of commencement. Where necessary a verbal overview of any "major issues" can be conveyed to the client within 24 hours of the inspection.

Don't be caught out not knowing the potential hazards and the costs associated with their remediation or removal where refurbishment works are planned. Include a hazardous materials audit with your purchase, a full report including a hazardous materials register will provide the information you need to make an informed decision.



## WorkSafe Victoria's Integrated Approach



The WorkSafe Integrated Approach (IA) program seeks to adopt a 'whole of organisation' approach using various divisions of WorkSafe Victoria to identify key systemic OHS issues and prevent similar hazards arising repeatedly.

By using an integrated approach to enforce Victoria's OHS laws, WorkSafe combines the use of one or more enforcement measures (for example, issuing an improvement or prohibition notice) with the provision of advice and guidance material.

Integral to WorkSafe's Constructive Compliance Strategy is the recognition that real and sustainable improvement in workplace health and safety is achieved primarily by the active involvement of employers and employees in hazard identification, management and elimination.

## Learning & Development: Partnerships



Learning and development within an organisation can be a project that gets passed from one person to another due to our busy schedules. However, section 21 of the Act tells us that we need to train our staff. Sometimes a partnership arrangement can be a simple a cost effective means to ensure that your training needs are identified, aligned with the strategic direction, administered, organised, delivered and recorded.

Partnership arrangements can be as extensive or as simple as an organisation requires. Training and development partnerships even have the ability to put together training calendars for your organisation.

These partnership arrangements have the ability to provide a simple and cost effective way for an organisation to meet its legislative and regulatory requirements in regards to the training of staff.

For more information on partnerships, please contact HAZCON on 1800 429 266.

## Learning & Development: Training Needs Analysis



How many times have you had to figure out in what staff in the organisation need to be trained?

How often have you started to put together spread sheets that track staff training only to find out that the planned training is no longer relevant due to changes within training packages or regulations?

Most organisations need to undertake a training needs analysis on a regular basis. A training needs analysis (TNA) should not just focus on what staff have been trained in and what they haven't.

A TNA needs to focus on the strategic direction of the organisation and then be developed to figure out what skills and knowledge your staff need to have in order for the organisation to meet the stated strategic direction of the organisation.

Once this has been analysed, then the staff's current capabilities, strengths and training needs are aligned with the strategic direction that the organisation intends to embark upon. In this way, training value adds to the organisation and there is less training that is not focussed on both staff and organisational needs.

By focussing the TNA in this way, it is possible to develop a strategic human resource development plan.

This strategic human resource development plan can be built to ensure that all aspects of the learning and development needs that the organisation has for its staff are addressed.

These issues are becoming more and more important as National Harmonisation draws closer. Staff development will need to be reviewed and possibly redesigned to fit new legislative and regulatory requirements with the first stage of this training to include information sessions to alert supervisors and management of the impending changes.

For more information on training needs analysis, please contact HAZCON on 1800 429 266.

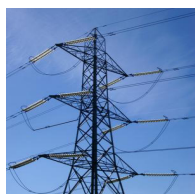
# Safety Chat



**HAZCON**

ISSUE 2 - July 2011

## Electromagnetic Forces (EMF)

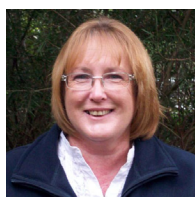


Electromagnetic Forces has been raised as a concern amongst the general public and employees.

This has been the case in relation to construction of preschools next to High Voltage (HV) Lines or as a result of workplaces being in close proximity to electrical substations or telecommunication towers. Electric and magnetic field measurements can be taken using EMF survey meters and the results measured in volts per meter, or for magnetic fields, as Gauss or milli-Gauss.

The standards that apply are different depending on occupational or public exposure and there are also guidelines for levels suitable for persons with cardiac pacemakers. Survey results can be useful to identify the actual risks posed by EMF and provides a degree of assurance to concerned staff and the general public about their respective health risks.

## New Additions



HAZCON would like to welcome Kaye Tyter to the team as the new Operations Manager.

Kaye is an experienced educator and trainer in the field of OH&S. She has spent several years in the VET sector as a Teacher and Coordinator and was involved in various capacities with the local branch of the Australian Education Union.

Her blend of OH&S knowledge with Human Resource and Education and Training skills will allow HAZCON to provide a range of solutions to organisations that are looking for improved outcomes with their OH&S training.

Kaye holds a Masters Degree and Graduate Certificate in Professional Education and Training, Diplomas in Human Resources, Training and Assessment Systems, a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and a Certificate IV in OH&S. She is a welcome addition to the HAZCON team.

## National Harmonisation Update Seminars



HAZCON will be conducting two national harmonisation update sessions in August in both Melbourne and Gippsland.

The one hour session will provide participants with an update of the latest news and information on the upcoming model laws including employer/employee obligations and significant changes to the legislation.

Attendees will also be provided with a scrumptious morning tea to follow, as well as a chance to have a chat with the HAZCON team.

**When:** Tuesday 9th August  
9:00am (for a 9:15am start) - 12:00pm (incl. morning tea)  
1.00pm (for a 1.15pm start) - 4.00pm (incl. afternoon tea)  
**Where:** HAZCON's Notting Hill Facility  
8 Industrial Avenue, Notting Hill

**When:** Wednesday 17th August  
9.00am (for a 9:15am start) - 11.00am (incl. morning tea)  
**Where:** PowerWorks Muesum  
Ridge Road, Morwell

Don't miss this great opportunity to get the most up to date information on national harmonisation and meet the HAZCON team.

## RSVP TODAY!!

If you are interested in attending an update seminar, or for more information, please contact Ms. Lisa Andrew on 1800 429 266 or [lisa.andrew@hazcon.com.au](mailto:lisa.andrew@hazcon.com.au) by Wednesday 3rd August.

## CONTACT HAZCON

**Postal:** GPO Box 1479, Melbourne VIC 3001  
**Melbourne:** 8 Industrial Avenue, Notting Hill VIC 3168  
**Gippsland:** 107 Princes Highway, Trafalgar VIC 3824  
**Phone:** 1800 HAZCON (1800 429 266)  
**Fax:** 1800 429 267  
**Email:** [hazcon@hazcon.com.au](mailto:hazcon@hazcon.com.au)  
**Website:** [www.hazcon.com.au](http://www.hazcon.com.au)