

Risk Management Approach to Workplace Hazards for Retail & Wholesale Seafood Businesses

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* and *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2001* require that all businesses adopt a risk management approach to workplace health and safety. This means that all businesses must carryout:

1) Hazard Identification

All businesses must identify all foreseeable hazards in the workplace (anything that may cause harm) – consider who might be harmed and how. MFMA have developed a workplace hazard checklist to assist you in identifying hazards. Also refer to list of common hazards and injuries - attached.

2) Risk Assessment

All businesses must assess the risk of harm posed by the hazards identified in the workplace – decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether further controls are needed. *NB: Risk is a combination of the likelihood of harm occurring and the severity of the consequences should it occur.*

Consider the following:

- Who might be in danger (employees, contractors, customers)?
- What factors are contributing to the risk?
- What impact on health and welfare could result?
- How likely is it to occur?

Assessing Risk

There are many relatively simple techniques for assessing risk including the Hazpak Risk Assessment Model available in the WorkCover Hazpak publication – available from WorkCover. Alternatively, the level of risk posed can be classified into three levels: low, medium and high after considering the factors listed above. *NB: High level risk must be controlled immediately.*

3) Hazard Control Strategies

You must implement control strategies for the hazards you have identified based on the risk they pose. The best option is to eliminate hazards. If that is not possible then there are five options:

1. Substitution – replace hazardous substance, equipment or tasks with a safe one.
2. Engineering – modify tools and equipment, install guards.
3. Administration – develop and implement safe working procedures and training for hazardous jobs.
4. Personal Protective Equipment – Use protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, footwear hearing protection.
5. Training – train staff in techniques and methods designed to minimize hazards.

Hazard control strategies must be implemented and monitored to ensure a safe working environment is achieved and maintained.

NB: It is important that all stages of the risk management process are documented.

NB: The information provided above is intended as a guide only. If you are unsure of your obligations under the OHS Act and Regulations you should contact the MFMA on 02 9552 1611 or WorkCover NSW on 13 10 50.

COMMON HAZARDS & INJURIES IN THE RETAIL AND WHOLESALE SEAFOOD SECTOR

Hazard	Typical Problem	Typical injury / illness requiring first aid
Manual Handling	Working at inappropriate bench heights; moving and storing of fish crates and boxes, knives and cutting tools not properly sharpened.	Back sprains and strains; shoulder, arm and hand strains.
Working Environment	Slips, trips and falls from uneven and poorly drained floor surfaces; cluttered work layout; noise from band saw; trips because of poor lighting.	Fractures, bruises, cuts, dislocations, concussion, headaches, dizziness.
Electrical Equipment	Use of double adaptors and trailing cords through work areas; contact between electrical equipment and wet areas.	Shock, burns, loss of consciousness, death.
Cooking Equipment	Exposure to hot oil from deep fryers and grills.	Burns.
Hand Tools	Knives not strong or sharp enough to withstand forces applied in cutting; poorly designed or slippery handle; lack of arc guards or mesh gloves.	Cuts, bruises, amputation, hand, wrist or arm sprains.
Hazardous substances	Exposure to chemicals used in shop cleaning and disinfecting.	Dizziness, vomiting, dermatitis, respiratory problems, burns to skin or eyes.
Machinery	Inadequate guarding on band saws and mixers, ineffective means of securing machinery	Cuts, lacerations, amputations. Crushing and bruising.
Biological	Moist hands combined with untreated cuts; reusing gloves.	Warts, infected wounds.