

Chapter 8

Contractor safety



Contractors are often required for maintenance and upgrade work. Both the employer of the contractor and the PCBU/employer where the work is being done have health and safety obligations - the obligations of the host PCBU/employer cannot, under H&S laws, be transferred to the contractor or their PCBU/employer. Each party has obligations. See section 16 and 17 WHS Act, and Victoria OHS Act Section 23.

Careful planning is essential.

PCBU/Employers have a duty of care to contractors, their direct workers and visitors.

PCBU/Employer Representative

Date Start _____

Finish Date _____

Contractor: Job:

- Ensure someone is appointed the Employer person responsible for health and safety matters (ideally this should be the senior person at the workplace)
- Discuss health and safety issues at the planning stage and have key health and safety requirements placed in the tender and contract documents
- Make sure the contractor(s) workers have an elected HSR to report issues to and that the HSR is introduced to contractors, so they know who they are
- Check that contractors are suitably qualified (e.g. licensed plumbers for roof work, licensed electricians for electrical work, etc.)
- The contractor to provide evidence of compliance with relevant Regulations and Codes of Practice

- Ensure that the employer provides the contractor with copies of all relevant contractor information documents: workplace policies, emergency evacuation details etc. and discuss safety requirements prior to the commencement of work
- Ensure the contractor in turn passes on and discusses health and safety issues with all sub-contractors
- Once work commences, ensure that contractors advise the employer representative of where they are working each day
- If there is more than one contractor on site, ensure there is an understanding as to which contractor is responsible for which work (e.g. who is authorised to isolate and reconnect the power supply, etc.)
- Consider access requirements for vehicles. It may be necessary to restrict access at certain times and/or nominate areas where vehicles may not enter without reasonable notice. Ensure that deliverers of materials are also aware of restrictions
- Consider visitor passes for contractors, particularly in any areas restricted from the public, or in large workplaces
- Determine how contractor activities and usual work activities are to be separated:
 - if possible, isolate the work area completely
 - place barriers and/or warning lights around the work site
 - carry out all (or the most hazardous) work during periods of shut down or weekends
- Determine where and how material will be stored
- Consider chemicals and paints (contractor to provide Material Safety Data Sheets [MSDS] for hazardous materials) pieces of equipment, sharp materials such as guttering, reinforcing mesh, nails and rubbish
- Ensure all workers and visitors/clients are aware of, and comply with safety arrangements
- Consider how work could impact on emergency management arrangements (e.g. are corridors/aisles blocked, can all workers access the assembly points, do contractors know of the workplace arrangements?)
- Once work is completed, ensure all refuse is removed and reinstate equipment such as fire extinguishers, evacuation plans and safety signs.