

'It's no accident' is the OHS newsletter of the AMWU. Feedback and story ideas to amwu@amwu.asn.au

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 **AMWU Care**
A counselling service for members
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Reviewing your (Designated) Work Groups

As companies change, and if, for example, there are redundancies or reallocation of work, it might be a good time to check whether the work groups (DWG) for your HSRs are still relevant and appropriate. Discuss this between delegates, HSRs and your organiser and see if any change is needed. Don't raise it with your employer/PCBU until you have collectively decided that change is necessary.

GOOD QUALITY APPROVED HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING

The AMWU has produced standard letters you can use when requesting training (see 2014 AMWU H&S booklet page 46 and 2013 AMWU Delegates Manual page 252) or the AMWU web page – www.amwu.org.au/content/upload/files/campaigns/OHS/HSR_Election_templates.pdf. Additionally, State offices have standard letters and/or HSR election kits.

Introductory HSR training is five days and refresher training (except WA) is one day. South Australia HSRs have rights to a total of ten days training over three years.

The relevant sections of the laws are:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 [section 72: ACT, NT, Comcare, NSW, Qld]
- Work Health and Safety Act 2012 [section 72: SA & Tasmania]
- Victorian OHS Act 2004 [section 67] and
- WA OSH Act 1984 [Regulation 2.2].

For training timetables and course details (including Comcare) contact:

ACT (ACT WHS Act only) – Work Watch 02 6249 1099 or www.workwatch.com.au

NSW – HOSTA Toll Free 1300 046 782 or www.hosta.org.au/nsw/

NT and Queensland – HOSTA Qld 07 3238 5500

South Australia contact the branch office on 08 8366 5800

Tasmania – Unions Tasmania WH&S Unit, 03 6234 9553
<https://secure.unionstas.com.au/index.php/en/whs/whs-training>

Victoria – AMWU OHS Training Unit 03 9230 5700,
vctrainingunit@amwu.asn.au

Western Australia – Unity Training 08 9227 7809,
admin@unitytraining.com.au
www.unitytraining.com.au/

Face Book page for Health and Safety Reps
www.facebook.com/pages/Health-and-Safety-Representatives-HSRs/286480938168502



IT'S NO ACCIDENT

HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWS

JANUARY
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PLEASE PLACE ON
NOTICEBOARD

HSRs RIGHT TO CHOOSE APPROVED UNION TRAINING

Health and safety laws give Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) the right to choose the course they wish to attend for their HSR training. This includes the right to choose an approved course run by a union.

Many times HSRs don't use this right, often because their employer organises the training. Of course, HSRs need to consult with their employer/PCBU about attending the course. In WA and Victoria the HSR must give the employer a minimum period of notice to attend the course (3 and 2 weeks respectively).

If there is a lack of agreement on which course to do or the timing of the course, either the HSR or the employer/PCBU can ask an inspector to decide on the matter.

The AMWU and the whole union movement strongly encourage HSRs to attend union approved training. The courses offered by unions are all approved by the relevant State and Commonwealth WorkCover or health and safety authorities. Late last year Virgin in NSW tried to stop a HSR attending the approved Transport Workers Union course. The NSW WorkCover Inspector was called in and reaffirmed that the HSR had the right to choose their course.

Approved union HSR training is good quality training. Learning with peers is a great way to build skills and confidence. Union training gives HSRs the opportunity to get ideas from others doing similar work or working for similar employers.



EVERYONE
KNOWS
UNION
WORKPLACES
ARE SAFER




AMWU
PROTECTION
1300 732 698
www.amwu.org.au

WELL KNOWN RISKS STILL CAUSING HARM

Safe Work Australia (SWA) has published the findings of the circumstances of 523 fatalities that involved machinery, plant and powered tools between 2006 and 2011. Unsafe design or design related factors contributed to 188 deaths.

The most common categories for the design related fatalities were:

- Inadequate guarding
- Lack of roll-over protection structures/ seat belts
- Lack of residual current device
- Lack of interlock
- Driver obstructed vision.

The findings are essentially the same as in a similar study in 2005:

- That unsafe design is a significant contributor to fatal incidents
- **Often the machinery is old and has been in use for many years.** Old machinery and plants still have to be made safe, age is no excuse.
- **There are existing solutions for most of the common identified design-related problems.**

It appears some employers are 'clueless' and do not appear to have learned some very basic things about machinery, such as:

- Moving parts are dangerous
- People should not be able to access moving parts
- Emergency stops must be accessible, easy to operate and clearly identified
- Roll-over protection saves lives
- **Owners of machines must not rely on good luck to control these risks, the hierarchy of control must be followed**
- **Everyone - casual/permanent, skilled or unskilled - must be trained and encouraged to speak up about safety risks.**

The case study below is in the SWA report. It highlights what can go wrong when these basics are ignored.

An 18 year old, employed as a casual, was required to assist in the operation of a cardboard box maker. Its overall size is approximately 7.5 metres in length and 4.5 metres wide. The rotation speed of the rollers varies between 40 and 80 RPM.

For at least one particular job, which was done on average once a month, the conveyor arm of the box maker was raised up at a 90 degree angle. Raising the conveyor arm creates a space of approximately 600mm between the out feed rollers of the two colour printer, slotter and stacker machine and the bed of the out take conveyor leading to the stacker at the end of the line. This allowed bodily access to the moving out feed rollers. The machine continued to operate and the rollers continued to move while the cardboard product pieces were removed from this location and stacked onto a pallet.

On this day, the young man had moved into the space between the out feed rollers of the two colour printer, slotter and stacker machine and the raised arm of the out take conveyor, (this should have stopped the conveyor) probably to remove cardboard pieces that had exited through the out feed rollers. His clothing was caught on an out feed roller and his body was dragged over the top of the roller as its revolution proceeded clockwise. Another worker heard a scream and a 'big' noise, pushed the emergency stop button and ran to the space between the out feed rollers and the raised arm of the out take conveyor. The man was trapped in the rollers of the machine for approximately 45 minutes until he was released and taken by ambulance to hospital. He died the following day.

No hazard identification had been undertaken prior to commissioning this plant. Emergency stops were not properly labelled and there was inadequate information, instruction training and supervision. Guarding was later installed and the conveyor was interlocked so that the rollers could not operate when the

conveyor was in the 'up' position. The cost was about \$6000.

When under financial pressure, employers often cut corners on safety and do not invest in new plant and equipment. As in the case above, a number of the fatalities involved old machinery and plant, some of which have been in use for many years.

www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/SWA/about/Publications/Documents/886/work-related-fatalities-unsafe-design.pdf

'Reducing red tape'

In the interests of 'reducing red tape' the Coalition Federal Government is considering changing some regulations including those relating to guarding - it has been suggested that employers/PCBUs have 'matured enough to manage specific risks without regulation'. The evidence of course is that many employers are still 'clueless' when it comes to controlling risks to health and safety.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER AND REMIND EACH OTHER THAT HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW GIVES US THE RIGHT TO:

- Refuse to work where it is unsafe
- Have a say on health and safety including that of our fellow workers
- Stand for election as a Health & Safety Representative (HSR)
 - Vote to elect a HSR
- Report health and safety issues and hazards to elected HSRs
- Consult the union delegate.

AUSTRALIAN UNIONISTS WORKING ACROSS BORDERS TO BAN ASBESTOS

The trade union overseas aid organisation - APHEDA - has been assisting projects in Vietnam and Cambodia to build local campaigns to move towards a ban on asbestos. As richer countries have stopped importing asbestos, the asbestos industry has changed its focus and propaganda. The asbestos industry claims that white asbestos is safe. There is no scientific evidence to support this claim. South East Asian countries are the destination for

raw asbestos which is used in roofing and building materials (just like it was in Australia).

This Federal Government has just slashed more than \$1.1 billion from the aid budget over the next five years. This will bring our national contribution to foreign aid back to the levels of 60 years ago.

To become a sponsor of APHEDA, contact - 02 9264 9343 or office@apheda.org.au or www.apheda.org.au/



WHOSE BEHAVIOUR NEEDS FIXING?

Programs like **Take 5** and **STOP** are common in our industries. These programs often rely on workers watching each other or managers watching workers to make sure they 'do the right thing'. But who is watching the managers and those in the company who decide on what and where money and resources are spent?

These off the shelf programs are imposed by senior or even overseas management and not designed by the local workforce or the joint health and safety committees. Involving HSRs and workers early, before making decisions, ensures that risk

control measures and systems are built on the organisation's own unique way of doing things, rather than something imposed from outside.

Organisations are more likely to sustain improvements, not by viewing their workforce as problem children in need of some behavioural fix - but as the solution to health and safety problems.

While some worker's behaviour may need changing, the evidence points to the need for a major change of managerial behaviour!

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NEW NSW MINING LAWS:

After years in the making, the new work health and safety (WHS) laws for the NSW mining industry - the Work Health and Safety (Mines) Act 2013 (NSW) and Work Health and Safety (Mines) Regulation 2014 (NSW) (New Mining Laws) - will commence on 1 February 2015.

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STAY UP TO DATE