



Insecure work arrangements

(Contract and Non-Permanent)

What is it?

Insecure work is work that is not full time or part time ongoing employment. These types of employment might include, short term contracts, labour hire, gig economy, casual work and independent contractors. However for lots of workers insecure work means they have been employed on an ongoing or rolling contract for long periods of time, sometimes, years.

Around 40 per cent of Australians are currently employed in insecure work arrangements, meaning that less than half of employed Australians now hold a permanent full-time paid job with leave entitlements. This is the third highest rate of nonstandard forms of work in the OECD.

This working environment creates a sense of insecurity and fear for workers and often prevents them from speaking out about Occupational Health and Safety or other issues that may exist in the workplace. Those in insecure work are more likely to rate their stress, anxiety and depression levels as 'very poor' in comparison to those in secure work.

These symptoms can all be classified as psychosocial hazards and these hazards exist in and are created by the workplace culture and environment.

What is the law?

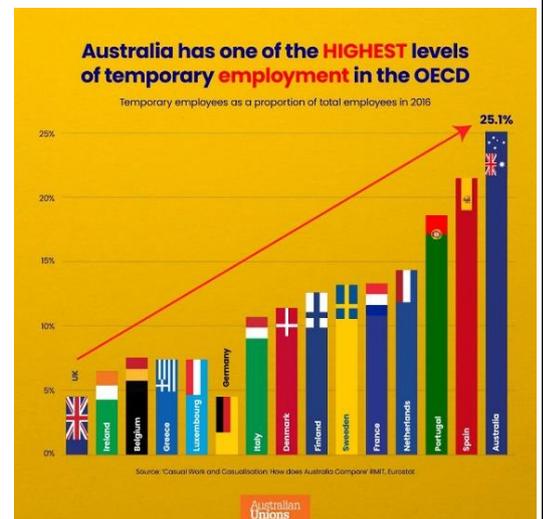
Workplace Industrial laws have been watered down over the years and therefore we need to rely on the Occupational Health and Safety Legislation to protect workers more often.

'General duty of care' and 'general duties' are terms used to refer to the duties outlined in the WA OSH Act. Employers, whether directly employing staff or under contract, labour hire arrangements must, to their best ability ensure that they provide and maintain a safe workplace. Workers' must, to their best ability ensure their own safety and that their actions do not adversely impact on others safety of others at the workplace.

The WA OSH Act (1984) outlines a range of duties that must be undertaken by a wide range of parties within a workplace. Whereas the WA OSH Regulations (1996) provide details on how to manage or deal with more specific health and safety topics that may arise in your workplace.

These duties include:

- Not exposing workers to hazards.
- Providing information, instruction and training.
- Conducting risk assessments.
- Investigating hazards or injuries that have been reported to employers by employees.
- Notifying WorkSafe of reportable injuries.
- Providing and maintaining safe workplaces.



Infographic: Australians Unions Facebook page

What can workers do?

Join your Union! The more members from your workplace the more power you have to make changes to workplace conditions as a group, with the support of your Union.

The best place to start is **report all hazards – even the psychosocial ones** to your employer. Under section 23K of the WA OSH Act the employer must get back to the employee that reports a hazard and tell them how they fixed the hazard or what they intend to do to reduce the level of risk associated with that hazard.

Request the Election of OSH Representatives. OSH Reps should be nominated and elected by workers to represent their interests in regards to health and safety. There is no requirement regarding the number of Reps that are elected, so determine how many you should have based on the size of your workplace, the type of work performed, where and when that work is performed. For example if you work in a small office of 20 employees you might only have 1-2 Reps however if you work in a school you might have 4-5 depending on the type of work performed. At the end of the day this should be decided in consultation with workers.

Request the establishment of a workplace OSH Committee. The committee should have at least half of its members directly nominated and elected by staff. The Committee should assist the employer to manage and review any health and safety issues at the workplace. The Committee should consult with workers to identify and resolve health and safety issues.

Get your Reps trained at Unity Training Services. We have been training OSH Reps for 30 years and are professional, passionate and highly qualified Health and Safety Trainers. Visit www.unitytraining.com.au or call 9227 7809.

Contact WorkSafe WA for advice and support **1300 307 877**.

Contact your Union to assist with the resolution of health and safety issues, to assist with elections of Reps and to provide advice and support on safety issues.

We all want safe workplaces! We want to return from work in the same condition we arrived and enjoy the things that matter most.