



# VICTORIAN TRADES HALL COUNCIL APPROVED SAFETY STANDARD

VTHC2020.02

# Psychosocial Hazards

The Victorian Trades Hall Council, as the peak body representing workers in Victoria, is endorsing the following controls as the minimum protections against psychosocial hazards that must be implemented in all Victorian workplaces.

Injuries to psychological health can be prevented, and these standards must be adopted in order to stop the increase of such injuries, and to protect workers from exposure to further risk.

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# 1. Risk management

The employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate risks to health and safety associated with psychosocial hazards at the workplace in accordance with this standard.

Where elimination is not reasonably practicable the employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, minimise the risks to health and safety associated with psychosocial hazards at the workplace.

The employer has a duty to:

- a) provide and maintain a work environment that is safe and without risks to health and safety associated with psychosocial hazards; and
- b) provide and maintain systems of work that are safe and without risks to health and safety associated with psychosocial hazards.
- c) consult with workers and their elected HSRs regarding psychosocial hazards and potential controls

# 2. Definition

A psychosocial hazard encompasses anything potentially detrimental to the mental, emotional, and social dimensions of what it means to be healthy.

The table below outlines common psychosocial risks that must be addressed, and the aspect of work to which they relate:

Aspects of Work	Examples of Risks
Work Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High or low job demands</li><li>• Low job control</li><li>• High cognitive demands</li><li>• High emotional demands</li><li>• Exposure to occupational violence</li></ul>
Work Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poor organisational change management,</li><li>• High risk work arrangements such as shift work</li><li>• Job insecurity</li></ul>
Work Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of role clarity</li><li>• Low organisational justice</li><li>• Low recognition and reward</li></ul>
Work Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of supervisor or co-worker support</li><li>• Inequitable or disrespectful workplace cultures</li><li>• Exposure to violence and harassment, including gendered violence such as sexual harassment</li><li>• Bullying</li></ul>
Work Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Traumatic events</li><li>• Vicarious trauma</li><li>• Isolated or remote work</li></ul>

# 3. Hierarchy of Control

a) The employer must eliminate, where reasonably practicable, risks to health and safety associated with psychosocial hazards.

b) If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate these risks, the employer must minimise, so far as is reasonably practicable, these risks by one or more of the following:

- i. adapting the design, organisation and management of work;
- ii. adapting work environment, conditions or methods;
- iii. promoting supportive and respectful work relationships;

c) If after step (b) a risk to health and safety associated with psychosocial hazards remains, the employer must reduce the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable, by the use of information, instruction or training.

d) An employer may only rely solely or primarily on the use of information, instruction or training to control a psychosocial risk if none of the measures set out in the above hierarchy, alone or in combination, is reasonably practicable.