

9.3 Health and safety

PRODUCT
DISTRIBUTION
PROMOTION
PEOPLE
FINANCE
RISK
GROWTH

- > *Hazards and risks*
- > *Your obligations*
- > *The responsibilities of your employees*
- > *Assistance*

The food industry is characterised by a highly mobile and youthful workforce engaged in a wide range of occupations including: growing, harvesting, picking and packing, processing, cooking, and serving. It provides employment for people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and has a large number of part-time and casual workers, particularly women. Much of the work is physically demanding, and requires specific skills training and instruction.

Some areas of the food industry are higher risk than others. The meat industry is one of the highest risk industries in South Australia. The hospitality industry experiences the fourth highest workers' compensation claims costs of all industry sectors. Nevertheless, regardless of which sector you are in, you should be aware of your responsibilities, the responsibilities of your workers, your major risks, and what you can do to minimise them.

Hazards and risks

Common hazards and risks include:

- > manual handling
- > colliding with mobile machinery, animals or boxes
- > cuts from knives
- > muscular stress caused by lifting, pushing and pulling
- > muscular stress through repetitive work
- > slips, trips and falls
- > fire and emergency
- > drugs and alcohol in the workplace
- > violence in the workplace
- > hazardous substances
- > injury reporting and management
- > workplace noise

Your obligations

All employers in South Australia are required to register with WorkCover within 14 days of employing a worker in employment to which the Workers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act applies.

As a registered employer you are responsible for:

- > Paying levy to WorkCover Corporation by the due date
- > Notifying WorkCover Corporation within 14 days of any amendment to registration details
- > Returning the end-of-year reconciliation statement/s

- > Notifying the appropriate claims agent when work-related injuries occur
- > Sending all claims for compensation to your claims agent using the prescribed form
- > Paying the first two weeks income maintenance to an injured worker unless the Buy Out Option applies
- > Ensuring that equipment is well guarded to avoid personal injury, with Standard Operating Procedures in place and clearly visible
- > Providing necessary protective equipment
- > Ensuring a healthy and safe work environment

The responsibilities of your employees

All workers have a responsibility to:

- > Use protective equipment that you provide to protect their health and safety.
- > Follow reasonable instructions.
- > Ensure alcohol, drugs and other substances do not affect them so that they endanger themselves or other employees.
- > Let you know if they see a problem or hazard.
- > Report work related injuries.
- > Follow procedures and instructions.
- > Participate in safe work programs.
- > Keep their workplace tidy.

Assistance

Getting your head around all of your responsibilities as an employer can be pretty daunting. WorkCover have developed a number of publications to assist in setting up a safe and responsible working environment.

Websites

WorkCover www.workcover.com/safety/managingsafety/hiringstaffemployer/newemployersmallbz/msnewemployer.htm

Telephone advice

WorkCover Customer Centre 13 18 55