



# Safety Bulletin

Catholic Safety Health & Welfare SA

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## Circulation

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- Priest, Principal, Manager
- WHS Coordinator
- WHS Committee members
- WHS representatives
- Staffroom notice board
- Other

Responsible entity:

Catholic Church Endowment Society Inc.

[www.cshwsa.org.au](http://www.cshwsa.org.au)

## CATHOLIC SAFETY UPDATE

Welcome to the February 2022 edition of the Safety Bulletin.

Firstly, give yourselves a pat on the back for getting through the last two years and for the changes and adaptations you are making, entering our third year of COVID.

Please do not miss this opportunity to reflect upon not so much what you have been through, but what you have discovered about yourself, what's important to you and what is possible.

The CSH&W SA Team are developing Information and Training Packages concerning Self-Insurance and Hazardous Tasks. These will be available in the coming months.

Remember if you need any assistance with Work Health & Safety please contact your WHS Consultant.

## Self-Insurance in South Australia

Self-insurance in the context of the South Australian Return To Work Scheme means that an employer is granted the ability to fund and manage compensation claims made by its own workforce.

Self-insurance is only possible for organisations that can meet a series of financial criteria and can conform to set standards of work health and safety and return to work management.

In order to be able to determine and manage claims for compensation, the self-insurer has certain powers delegated to it under the legislation. The self-insurer is in effect an insurer in its own right, because it must fund all claims made upon it by its employees. It is also subject to the same review and appeals mechanisms as ReturnToWorkSA and its claims agents.

A self-insurer is still subject to regulatory control by ReturnToWorkSA because under the legislation, ReturnToWorkSA remains the 'insurer of last resort'. All self-insurers must, among other things:

- Provide a financial guarantee from an approved financial institution to ReturnToWorkSA and pay into the insolvency aggregate for a specified period to protect the scheme in the event that a self-insurer is unable to meet its liabilities.
- Pay an administrative fee to ReturnToWorkSA (calculated as a percentage of the premium it would have paid had it not been self-insured).
- Carry excess of loss insurance.

Grants of self-insurance are made by a delegate of the Board of ReturnToWorkSA and cannot exceed five years. There are various conditions an employer must meet before self-insurance can be granted. After five years, (or whatever lesser period has been granted), the self-insurance grant can be renewed provided the self-insurer continues to meet the various conditions and performance standards.

ReturnToWorkSA has the power to reduce or revoke grants of self-insurance where there is a clear failure or refusal to meet the conditions. These events are extremely rare.

## Electrical Safety

Electrical hazards have the potential to cause shock, burns and electrocution.

It is essential that you strictly follow practices such as:

- Making sure that only qualified tradespersons perform work on electrical equipment and installations
- Only using workplace-provided, tested and tagged electrical equipment
- Visually checking electrical equipment prior to use to make sure that it is not damaged
- Immediately withdrawing from use any faulty electrical equipment, using Danger or Out of Service Tags and reporting it to your Supervisor / Manager
- Removing equipment leads from power outlet by the plug and not by pulling at lead
- Coiling all equipment leads to make sure there is no tension between the lead and the appliance
- Replacing leads if the insulation becomes frayed or broken. If the lead needs to be repaired it is to be carried out by a qualified electrician.
- Always follow your work instructions

## SafeWork SA Inspectors

SafeWork SA is the regulator responsible for ensuring work health and safety and public safety standards are met. Inspectors visit workplaces to provide advice and information, and to monitor and enforce compliance with work health and safety laws.

They may attend a workplace to investigate a notifiable incident or other reasons listed in the brochure included with this bulletin.

If a SafeWork SA inspector attends your site, contact your CSH&W SA WHS Consultant on 8215 6850 for guidance and support.

## Incident Categories and Definitions

The recent update to the Incident Reporting Database has led to changes in classifying incident types. Below are definitions that can guide you on how to select the appropriate category when reporting an incident or hazard.

### Safety

**Hazard** – A situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person.

**Near Miss** – An unintended event that could have caused damage, injury or death.

**Incident** – An unintended event that disturbs normal operations.

**Psychological** – A belief that you have been threatened, punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.

**First Aid** – The immediate treatment or care given to a person suffering from an injury or illness until more advanced care is provided or the person recovers.

**Medical Treatment** – Any treatment provided for an injury or illness above immediate first aid.

**Lost Time** – Where at least one full day / shift has been lost due to an incident / injury.

**Restrictive Practice** – any practice or intervention that has the effect of restricting the rights or freedom of movement of a consumer.

### Quality

**Complaint** – A statement that something is unsatisfactory or unacceptable

**Process Error** – An error arising from the faulty implementation of planned implementation methods.

**Audit** – Non-conformances from internal or external audits.

**Supplier Error** – An error arising from the wrong charges / or supply of goods.

**Medication Error** – Any preventable event that may cause or lead to inappropriate medication use or omission.

### Environment

**Environmental** – An occurrence or set of circumstances, as a consequence of which pollution (air, water, noise, or land) or an adverse environmental impact has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.

### Security

**Property Damage** – Any property damage.

**Theft** – The act of dishonestly taking something that belongs to someone else and keeping it.

**Trespass** – To enter someone's land or property without permission

## Recognising Tree Hazards

Trees provide significant benefits to our homes, workplaces and cities, but when trees fall and injure people or damage property, they are liabilities. Taking care of tree hazards makes your property / site safer and prolongs the life of the tree.

Trees or parts of trees may fall and cause injury to people or damage to property. We call trees in such situations hazardous, to signify the risk involved with their presence. While every tree has the potential to fall, only a small number actually hit something or someone.

Below is a checklist to assist you in determining if your trees are safe. However, it is recommended an arborist is engaged to properly assess the trees and where recommended, trees are removed.

### Tree Hazard Checklist

Consider these questions:

- Are there large dead branches in the tree?
- Are there detached branches hanging in the tree?
- Does the tree have cavities or rotten wood along the trunk or in major branches?
- Are mushrooms present at the base of the tree?
- Are there cracks or splits in the trunk or where branches are attached?
- Have any branches fallen from the tree?
- Have adjacent trees fallen over or died?
- Has the trunk developed a strong lean?
- Do many of the major branches arise from one point on the trunk?
- Have the roots been broken off, injured, or damaged by lowering the soil level, installing pavement, repairing sidewalks, or digging trenches?
- Has the site recently been changed by construction, raising the soil level, or installing lawns?
- Have the leaves prematurely developed an unusual colour or size?
- Have trees in adjacent wooded areas been removed?
- Has the tree been topped or otherwise heavily pruned?
- Is the tree being inspected as per the [Preventative Maintenance Schedule \(040F\)](#)?



## Preventing Voice Strain

### What are some of the symptoms that people should be aware of?

Vocal fatigue: Your voice is tired, it is difficult to speak for long periods of time, muscles around the throat may feel tight, and you might have general body fatigue.

The other symptom to watch is change in the quality of your voice. You might hear hoarseness, breathlessness, cracking and pitch breaks.

### There are six major things you can do to protect your voice:

1. **Stay hydrated.** Drink water throughout the day and in the evening.
2. **Use your breath.** Instead of forcing the voice from the neck, take a deep breath before speaking and use your stomach muscles to project your voice.
3. **Rest your voice.** You might even try to keep sentences shorter than usual, where possible.
4. **Relax your jaw.** Drop your shoulders, unclench your jaw, and try to keep your whole vocal mechanism as relaxed as possible.
5. **Avoid irritants.** Caffeine or high fat, spicy and acidic foods could irritate the throat and larynx.
6. **Do vocal warm-ups.** Hum a few scales on the way to work to get the blood flowing to the neck.

Vocal strain can be just like any other injury; you can usually rehabilitate an injury but you're more susceptible to experiencing a similar problem down the road.

If you are experiencing voice strain, please report it to your Supervisor and seek medical attention. Log an incident report on the [Incident Database](#).

## SafeWork SA Safety Alert

SafeWork SA is issuing a safety alert to remind the construction industry to assess whether a ladder offers the highest level of protection to workers after a person was killed and two were seriously injured in falls less than 2 metres over the past 6 weeks.

On 19 January 2022, SafeWork SA received notification that a worker suffered fatal head injuries when they fell to the floor while installing ceiling joists from a ladder within a warehouse. SafeWork SA is currently investigating the incident. Two other workers have received serious injuries after falling from height.

The first incident occurred when a worker, traversing between two levels of a modular scaffold at a residential construction site, sustained fractures to their shoulder and a serious laceration to their left hand when the foot of the access ladder slipped out causing the worker to fall heavily on the platform. The scaffold access from level 2 to level 3 had been inadequately installed by the builder and not undertaken by a scaffolder holding a [high risk work licence](#).

In the second incident, a worker, drilling holes for a down pipe at a residential construction site, fell from a ladder, impaling their left foot on an unprotected vertical reo bar. At the time of the incident the ground around the work area was uneven.

Duty holders are reminded to consider reasonably practicable control measures to manage the risk of falls from heights, particularly providing adequate information, training and supervision when workers are required to use ladders.

Portable ladders are one of the least stable but most commonly used tools for working at heights and typically require workers to be more vigilant about the risk of falling. Portable ladders can be a sensible and practical option for working at height when the use of other equipment is not reasonably practicable because of the low risk and short duration of the work.

Before choosing to use a ladder, you must identify whether a ladder offers the highest level of protection that is reasonably practicable. This is performed by assessing all known and potential risks associated with the use of the ladder, including the environment they are used in, and following the hierarchy of control for prevention of falls.

SafeWork SA Acting Executive Director, Glenn Farrell reminds duty holders that the type of work that can be safely performed on a ladder is limited. Work platforms or scaffolding provide a much safer way to work at heights.

“Deaths and serious life changing injuries through falling from ladders can occur from surprisingly low heights”.

“This is highlighted by the fact that in 2021, 61% of serious injuries associated with a fall below 2 metres were from a ladder. Most of these incidents involve a ladder being used incorrectly or inappropriately”.

“If a suitable safe system of work had been in place prior to the incidents, the serious injuries sustained by the workers could have been prevented”.

“Sadly, one of those workers will not be going home to his family as a result of falling from a ladder at work”.

In most cases, working from a ladder should be the last option as a fall from a ladder can have devastating consequences. Duty holders can, in accordance with the [hierarchy of control](#):

- eliminate the risk by, where practicable, doing all or some of the work on the ground or from a solid construction
- use a passive fall prevention device such as scaffolds, perimeter screens, guardrails, safety mesh or elevating work platforms
- use a positioning system, such as a travel-restraint system, to ensure employees work within a safe area
- use a fall arrest system, such as a harness, catch platform or safety nets, to limit the risk of injuries in the event of a fall
- use a suitable fixed or portable [ladder](#)
- implement administrative controls

Source: SafeWork SA

## Procedure Review

The following two (2) Procedures have been reviewed and placed on the CSHWSA Website under <https://www.cshwsa.org.au/consultation/documents-for-consultation/> for your comments. Please send all comments to [cdonnelly@cshwsa.org.au](mailto:cdonnelly@cshwsa.org.au).

The following changes have been made:

- Fall Prevention (24)
  - Added reference to Permit to Work in section 6.2
  - Added reference to Fragile Roofing Guideline (036G) in section 5.10 & 7.1
- Management of Plant (15)
  - Information added on when a risk assessment requires review section 5.6 Existing Plant & Equipment Risk Assessments.



## About Us

SafeWork SA is the regulator responsible for ensuring work health and safety and public safety standards are met.

Our inspectors undertake workplace visits to provide advice and information and to monitor and enforce compliance with work health and safety laws.

If any health and safety issues are detected during a visit to your workplace, our inspectors will discuss these with you and provide you with the necessary information to help you improve your health and safety practices.

You can find out more about us, the work we do and how to keep your workers safe at: [safework.sa.gov.au](https://safework.sa.gov.au).



## Our conduct

SafeWork SA inspectors are professional, objective and consistent when enforcing the law. They are also accountable for how they do their job.

If there is a need to inform SafeWork SA of any aspect of an inspector's actions, whether it is a compliment or a complaint, please feel free to do so. You may call us during business hours Monday to Friday, or visit our website and complete an online Complaint/Feedback form.

Complaints about an inspector's conduct are investigated independently of the inspector and their line manager.

Level 4, 33 Richmond Road  
Keswick SA 5035

Tel: 1300 365 255

Email: [help.safework@sa.gov.au](mailto:help.safework@sa.gov.au)



# Workplace inspections

What to expect when a SafeWork SA inspector visits your workplace



## How can I identify a SafeWork SA inspector?

SafeWork SA inspectors will always introduce themselves to you as an inspector when carrying out their duties. Each inspector carries identification and will produce this on attendance. Our inspectors will also be wearing a SafeWork SA uniform displaying the SA Government logo.

## Do I need to let the inspector onto my premises?

Yes. SafeWork SA inspectors have the authority to enter any premises that they reasonably believe is a workplace.

## What kind of powers do inspectors have?

Inspectors have a variety of powers available to them under the Work Health and Safety Act. These include the power to:

- enter a workplace
- collect documents and/or information
- ask questions, conduct interviews and take statements
- check work licences, such as high risk work licences
- take photographs, sketches, samples or make audio or video recordings
- issue notices.

## What can I expect when an inspector visits my workplace?

Inspectors may enter any place they reasonably suspect is a workplace. They may attend a workplace without prior notice to exercise their powers. An inspector can enter a workplace with, or without, the consent of the person with management or control of the workplace.

When a SafeWork SA inspector visits your workplace they will advise you of the purpose of their visit. This could be in response to an incident, complaint, or as part of a targeted proactive compliance campaign.

Inspectors may want to:

- inspect the workplace
- speak to the manager, or person in control of the workplace, workers or Health and Safety Representative
- review your health and safety documentation
- speak to you about identified hazards and the controls that you have in place.

## What do I need to do during an inspection?

Wherever possible, inspectors will aim to cause minimal disruption to your work. To help the inspection process we ask that you:

- be honest, courteous and provide information as requested
- provide necessary access to the workplace
- provide reasonable help to assist the inspector in their work
- not conceal the existence of a location, person, plant, substance or thing.

## What kind of enforcement options do inspectors have?

While the inspector will always aim to provide guidance on how to meet your WHS requirements, there are circumstances when they may need to enforce compliance.

Enforcement measures include issuing:

- Improvement Notices – directs a person or organisation to undertake corrective action for an identified risk
- Prohibition Notices – directs the cessation of any activity that exposes any person to a serious risk to their health or safety, including visitors to the workplace or members of the public
- Non-Disturbance Notice – directs a person to preserve a site OR directs a person to prevent the disturbance of a particular site, item, plant, substance, structure or thing
- Expiation Notice – a fine for a specified breach of the legislation

An inspector may also initiate and conduct investigations to identify causes of incidents, injuries and illnesses.

Compliance and enforcement activities also may lead to prosecution or an enforceable undertaking. For more information about these outcomes, visit <https://safework.sa.gov.au/enforcement>.

## What happens to the information that I provide?

Information gathered by inspectors is governed by laws on how it is used, disclosed and stored.

If you request anonymity, the inspector will talk with you about confidentiality issues as they arise and will advise you if they are unable to maintain your request for confidentiality, such as when there is an overriding safety concern or legal obligation.