

## Workplace Health and Safety Officer (WHSO)

### Information for Officers in Charge (OIC) and WHSOs

Workplace Health and Safety Officers (WHSO) play an important role in fulfilling the department's commitment to providing and maintaining safe and healthy workplaces. The WHSO can assist Officers in Charge (OIC) with their responsibilities under legislation and departmental procedures. The ability of a WHSO to perform the responsibilities listed below will depend upon the level of support they are offered at their workplace.

#### Department and Whole of Government Requirements

- ➔ All department workplaces (e.g. schools, TAFE campus, DET workplace) with 30 or more workers, including volunteers and pre-service teachers and trainees, to appoint a qualified WHSO for their workplace.
- ➔ In order to become and remain qualified, a WHSO must complete regular [approved training](#). Please refer to the Creating Healthier Workplaces website for information about WHSO training courses provided by the department. **Approved departmental training courses are still under development and transitional arrangements are in place during 2012 to allow time for WHSOs to complete or update training.**
- ➔ The WHSO has functions summarised below.
- ➔ The OIC, as manager, has a range of responsibilities to ensure the WHSO can fulfil their functions.
- ➔ The appointment of a WHSO does not diminish the OIC's workplace health and safety obligations.

#### Checklist for Officers in Charge e.g. Principals, TAFE Institute Directors

<input type="checkbox"/>	Discuss with your WHSO their role, priority activities for your workplace and area of responsibility if more than one WHSO.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure WHS Data systems are updated to incorporate current WHSO details e.g. SMS, MyHR or Employee Portal
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure the Annual Assessment process is completed and priority issues are noted in the Action Plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incorporate priority issues and strategies into your workplace's Operational Plan
<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish a forum for discussing and actioning health and safety issues. e.g. health, safety & wellbeing committee
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule regular meetings with your WHSO to map progress and discuss emergent issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide resources to the WHSO to allow the officer to properly fulfil their functions, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular, dedicated time to perform the functions of the role e.g. inspections, investigations</li> <li>• Time to coordinate the Annual Assessment and finalise the report</li> <li>• Time for other team/committee members to conduct parts of the Annual Assessment</li> <li>• Access to staff to interview during inspections, assessments or investigations</li> <li>• Facilitate access to continued training and professional development e.g. regional network meetings</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discuss with the WHSO any potential or existing risks to staff or others e.g. proposed structural or grounds works at the workplace, new activities, new equipment or substances used by staff or others
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advise staff of their responsibility to use the risk management processes in their planning and preparation. The WHSO role is to assist staff undertake the risk management process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote and support the role of WHSO and display WHSO name on notice boards or in staff rooms
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep information, recommendations and reports provided by the WHSO

# Health & Safety Checklist

## Checklist for the WHSO

<input type="checkbox"/>	The WHSO should discuss time and resources requirements for the role with their OIC.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Coordinate the completion of the Annual Assessment. Conducting the Annual Assessment is a process that informs the OIC via written report about the overall state of health and safety at the workplace. The process includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewing staff using approved Annual Assessment template that has been developed to assist the WHSO conduct the Assessment</li> <li>• Complete the Action Plan which summarises results and provides a planning document for budgeting to rectify hazards, unsafe conditions and practices identified on the assessment</li> <li>• Forwarding a copy of the Assessment and Action Plan to the OIC within 30 days of completion.</li> <li>• Access Fact Sheet, Template and Action Plan to complete the Annual Assessment:</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><a href="http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/managing/annual.html">http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/managing/annual.html</a></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Inform the OIC of any serious injuries or illnesses, dangerous incidents or immediate risks to health and safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise staff of the requirement and processes by which health and safety incidents are reported to management; this includes activities coordinated by your workplace, e.g. field work, excursions and open days</li> <li>• Ensure that processes are in place to record health and safety incidents</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Conduct, or assist with, investigations of health and safety incidents refer to <a href="#">HLS-PR-019 Health and Safety Incident Investigation</a>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Undertake inspections to identify hazards and unsafe conditions and practices
<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in and support health and safety consultative arrangements (e.g. committees) and networks
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Facilitate staff access to appropriate training that will improve health and safety awareness and practices at the workplace. This may include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver staff training within areas of expertise; other workplace staff may be able to assist</li> <li>• Participate in the dissemination and rollout of departmental health and safety information and programs e.g. support Regional/Institute Health and Safety Consultants</li> <li>• Research and coordinate training options by other providers</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Access information and resources on the Creating Healthier Workplaces website:  <a href="http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/index.html">http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/index.html</a></p>

### More information

Refer also to [HLS-PR-022 Workplace Health and Safety Officers](#)