

Health & Safety Fact Sheet

General Induction Training for Construction Work

The definition of 'construction work' within the *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011* covers a broad range of tasks. Construction work means any work carried out in connection with the construction, alteration, conversion, fitting-out, commissioning, renovation, repair, maintenance, refurbishment, demolition, decommissioning or dismantling of a structure.

Many activities that are performed in departmental workplaces fall under this definition, for example, activities that schools officers, facilities or maintenance staff may undertake including:

- repairs and maintenance to structures such as walls;
- excavation or landscaping associated with the construction of a wall, building or other construction; or
- refurbishment/top dressing of ovals.

Prior to undertaking any 'construction work' workers are to complete General Induction training. Schools officers, facilities or maintenance staff at schools, TAFE or workplaces may undertake construction tasks within the course of their duties. As a proactive approach, it is recommended that all these staff undertake general induction training and receive a Construction White Card.

White Card

In 2009, the General Induction (Blue Card) training course for construction work was modified to comply with a new nationally agreed model. From July 2009 onwards, participants who completed this modified training received a Construction **White Card**. It should be noted that:

- The Construction Blue Card is still recognised as evidence of general induction training.
- 'Blue Card' holders will not be issued with a 'White Card'.
- There is no requirement for staff with a 'Blue Card' to attend training to receive the new 'White Card'.
- There is no requirement for staff with a 'Blue Card' or 'White Card' which was issued under previous workplace health and safety legislation to complete any further training, however:
 - staff who are holders of a 'Blue Card' or 'White Card' and have not worked in construction in the previous two years will be required to complete the General Construction Induction 'White Card' training again. It is expected, however, that most staff working in these roles will undertake these 'construction' tasks periodically and not need to undertake further training.

High Risk Construction Work

In the majority of circumstances departmental staff should not undertake 'high risk construction work'. High risk construction work is defined in the Regulation (s291) and includes activities such as work involving the risk of a person falling 2m, work in or near a trench more than 1.5m deep, work adjacent to a road, work near powered mobile plant, disturbing asbestos, demolition of a load bearing structure, work in confined spaces, use of explosives, work on pressurised gas pipes, chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines, electrical installations and work carried out on or near water.

If departmental staff are involved in high risk construction work a work method statement must be completed. Specific competencies for many of these tasks are also required. These requirements are consistent with the previous legislation.

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Students

Some work that students undertake will be defined as construction work. Students **do** require white cards:

- in preparation for work experience or vocational placement;
- prior to, or within VET subjects, or pre-apprenticeship subjects; or
- when building permanent or semi-permanent fixtures at a school or TAFE campus e.g. a pergola or table settings that are going to be used by staff and others.

Students **do not** require white cards if:

- undertaking activities that are purely for educational outcomes and to learn a process or skill, for example, a scaled down "wall" may be built by students and then pulled down; and
- items are not used as a structural or permanent fixture; and
- the work is undertaken under the supervision of trained and experienced staff.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) accepts that under appropriate supervision in a class environment these types of activity undertaken by students do **not** amount to construction work.

Volunteers

General Induction requirements are administered by WHSQ, Department of Justice and Attorney-General. WHSQ recognises the important contribution that volunteers make to an organisation such as our Department, especially in Education Queensland schools. WHSQ has adopted an enforcement approach that differentiates between low risk and high risk construction work undertaken by volunteers.

Volunteers who undertake only low risk construction work do not require General Induction Training. Examples of low risk construction work include:

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| ➤ Brick laying | ➤ Basic joinery |
| ➤ Sanding and painting or preparing walls | ➤ Building rock walls |
| ➤ Replacing broken window panes | ➤ Repairing cracked footpaths |
| ➤ Rehangng doors | ➤ Landscaping around newly constructed facilities |
| ➤ Replacing carpet | |

A volunteer who undertakes high risk construction work activities would need to complete General Induction Training. Examples of high risk construction activities include;

- Work on a roof to repair tin sheets or lay tarpaulins
- Trenching* or excavation for laying pipes
- Working on ladders over 2m without adequate controls to prevent falls.

* a trench is excavation where the maximum depth is more than the minimum width (the trench is deeper than it is wide)

Department workplaces are reminded to contact their regional Facilities staff to support the management of construction projects. A range of regulatory requirements relate to construction work including the appointment of a principal contractor (PC) for projects over \$250 000 and the development of workplace health and safety management plans by the PC. Management of construction projects requires strong communication and consultation between the department and the PC to implement and maintain good safety practice.

More information from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Licensing

<http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/licensingregistrations/licences/whatlicence/genconstinduct/index.htm>

General Frequently Asked Questions

<http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/law/whslaws/faqs/index.htm>

