

# OFF-THE-JOB SAFETY

- **Guarding Workshop Equipment vs Production Area**
- **Do We Always Need a Dogman?**
- **Vic Manslaughter Laws Commence**
- **Safety Webinar 14 July**



# What's New in July?

Welcome to the July Safety News. The media have recently reported a spike in home DIY injuries amid the coronavirus lockdown. Be sure to read our lead article on *Off the Job Safety*. The question of **Guarding Workshop Equipment vs Manufacturing Environment** is examined. We also note that the first Australian industrial manslaughter conviction has been recorded in Queensland.

*Stay Safe!*



**Andrea Rowe**

## Safety Webinar – July 14<sup>th</sup> 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Tuesday 14th July** for the second of our free monthly webinars to keep you up to date on workplace health and safety. Gary and the team present short informal sessions of only 20 to 30 minutes on topical issues and to answer your questions.

[Register here](#)

*Missed our first webinar? [View here](#)*

## SAFETY ACTION TEAM



**Gary**



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# Off-the-Job Safety

## Why it Should be an Extension of Your On-the-Job Safety Program

Training employees to be safe at home as well as at work has not been a standard part of most Australian workplace safety programs. However, incorporating off-the-job safety into your company's safety program can help the business and your employees.

***Majority of serious injuries occur off-the-job***

Despite the common perception that the home is safer than the workplace, workers are far more likely to suffer an injury at home, on the road or during leisure activities than they are on the job.

A US report shows that 10 out of 11 unintentional fatalities and 70 percent of disabling injuries occur off the job.



Person on roof at home without handrails or harness



Workplace roof safety

Although employers are generally not responsible for how their employees perform work at home, investing in an off-the-job safety program can reduce absenteeism due to workers being injured at home.

An injury to a family member may also require an employee to take time off as a care giver.

The absence of a skilled employee may require the company to spend time and resources to hire a new employee. Whether or not the injured person is replaced, it is likely that productivity will suffer.

Managers in best-practice organisations strive to create a culture of safety which encourages the transfer of safe work practices to the home.

## Safe at Home and Work

Off-the-job safety programs can also support workplace improvement efforts.

### Fewer work injuries when safety is part of values and lifestyle

*Don't switch off safety when you leave work*

Promoting safety outside the workplace can strengthen the company's safety culture by encouraging thinking about safety as a way of life, rather than a mindset that is switched off when leaving the workplace.

### Do-It-Yourself related injuries

Many of the serious injuries occurring at home are a result of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) jobs in the home. In Victoria, DIY activities account for 12% of adult emergency department visits.

Common DIY injuries occur during grinding, lawn mowing and ladder use. The most common types of injuries are finger and hand lacerations or foreign bodies in the eye.

*Many injuries would be prevented if the same safety practices used at work were used at home*

It is clear that many of the injuries could have been prevented by using personal protective equipment, appropriate tools, and using common safety precautions.



## Tips to help prevent off-the-job injuries

### Driver safety

Motor vehicle incidents are a leading cause of preventable injury and death.

Employees who are required to drive in the course of work are usually trained in safe driving techniques. These programs could also be offered to employees who are not required to drive for work, as many traffic accidents occur driving to and from work, or in leisure time.

Extending off-the-job safety initiatives such as driver safety programs to employees' families possibly at a discount rate, extends the *caring philosophy* that is often portrayed in the workplace and demonstrates a greater sense of care.

### **Preventing injury from DIY jobs**

As do-it-yourself (DIY) work results in many preventable off-the-job injuries, sharing resources from the workplace can assist to prevent these.

Consider allowing personnel to borrow personal protective equipment and possibly tools to use at home. This may allow workers access to better quality equipment. Of course, if the equipment being borrowed is not regularly used by the employee at work, it may not be appropriate to let them borrow it, and a waiver against liability would be reasonable.



### **Home fire safety:**

Whilst workplaces are generally well equipped to detect and warn of fire, homes require particular attention as people may be sleeping in the event of a fire. Workers should be reminded to regularly test smoke alarms, to replace batteries twice yearly if not hard-wired, and to have a family fire escape plan.

### **Ways to communicate off-the-job safety messages:**

- If there is a company newsletter, include regular articles with home and recreation safety tips.
- Display posters in the workplace with off-the-job safety messages. eg on noticeboards or on the back of toilet doors.
- Safety talks and or team meetings to periodically include home and leisure safety.

*This article is an update of our August 2008 Safety Action News on the same topic.*

*If you would like to expand your safety program to include off-the-job risks for your team give us a call T. 03 85 444 300 or [enquiries@safetyaction.com.au](mailto:enquiries@safetyaction.com.au)*

# Do We Always Need a Dogman?

Whilst preferable, workers are not always required to hold a dogman high-risk work licence (eg HRWL - DG) when moving loads with a crane or hoist.

Dogging and rigger work involve judgement in selecting the appropriate lifting equipment (such as slings and shackles), where and how to connect them to the load. Dogmen are also qualified to inspect lifting equipment.

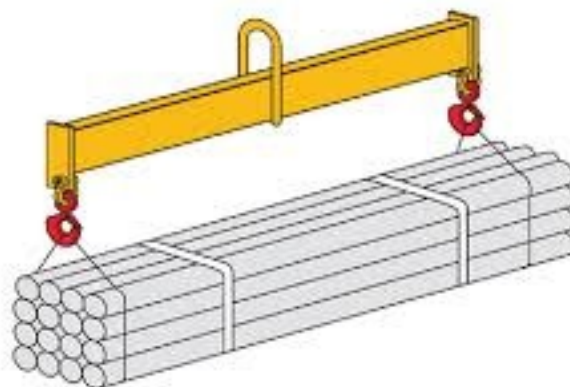
A dogman is also required to direct crane or hoist movement, if the load is out of sight for the crane operator.

Therefore, workers can be trained, in-house or by specialists, to connect pre-determined slings and shackles to pre-determined and rated lifting points, and operate a hoist or crane themselves (for categories that do not require a licensed crane operator), as long as the load remains in view at all times.



Load with designated lifting points

**Note:** If used, dogmen and riggers must hold a “high risk work” licence. Refer to our Fact Sheet or Newsletter from August 2014, for the difference between riggers and dogmen.



Lifting frame

# Guarding Workshop Equipment vs Manufacturing Environment

Many people get confused with what level of guarding is acceptable when they are told they must guard machinery to “zero access” standard, but then see tradespeople using power tools with exposed blades, grinding wheels and nip points and workshop machinery with different guarding standards.



Exposed cutting blade in workshop



Modern saw with interlocked cover and normally retracted blade and 2-hand controls

The workplace safety regulations state in part that “guarding must prevent access to the danger point (as far as reasonably practicable)” eg Vic OHS Plant Safety Regulation 99(2).

## Different Guarding Standards

How can using saws with partially exposed blades be OK when fully guarded saws with interlocked covers are available on the market, and where does the legislation distinguish between tools-of-trade and manufacturing equipment?



Worker using handheld saw



Cross cut saw with partially exposed blade

The answer to the above question is rarely explained in legislation or standards.

### Zero Access for Production Areas

If equipment is used in a manufacturing area (eg production line) then zero access standard is required, unless not reasonably practicable to do so, and then only specially trained and authorised personnel should be allowed to operate the equipment.

### Tools-of-Trade & Workshop Equipment

Whereas trade power tools and workshop equipment are primarily controlled by restricting access to workshops to trained and authorised workers eg qualified trades people, and the only part of power tools exposed is the part required to cut, grind or drill.



Typical signage at workshop entry

*Safety Action can train your team in zero access standards for your production areas and have a booklet on workshop safety. For a quote or a copy of the booklet call T: 03 8544 4300 or email [enquiries@safetyaction.com.au](mailto:enquiries@safetyaction.com.au)*

## Workplace Manslaughter Starts 1 July

The Victorian workplace manslaughter provisions come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July. Other jurisdictions have also commenced similar laws or are planned. See [Vic OHS Act manslaughter amendments](#)

Pro-active organisations have already reviewed their Key Risks Register eg fatality risks and adequacy of agreed controls, some via independent reviews. [See example](#)

In addition to updating your Key Risks Register you need to consider briefing all relevant managers on the new laws, and refresh knowledge of your critical incident protocols in order to minimise prosecution risks. For example, refer to [FCW Law serious incident handbook](#)

**Note:** The first Australian industrial manslaughter conviction has been recorded in Queensland. A recycling company was fined \$3m and two directors sentenced to 10 months imprisonment (suspended), after a worker was struck and killed by a reversing forklift.

*For a quote to review your key risks register or briefing for your team on the new legislation contact us on T. 03 85 444 300 or [enquiries@safetyaction.com.au](mailto:enquiries@safetyaction.com.au)*