

**December 2021**

# IS THAT TREE SAFE?

**New  
First Aid  
Compliance  
Code**

**New Silica Regulations**

**Safety Update  
Webinar  
10<sup>th</sup> December**

**Holiday Safety  
tips for camping  
near trees,  
driving and  
Christmas trees.**



# What's New in December?

Welcome to the December Safety News.

Strong winds and heavy rains have caused a lot of damage to trees.

We share key tips on holiday tree safety and Christmas tree precautions.

We explain the new First Aid Code of Practice and silica regulations.

Tips on staying safe while driving and at work in this busy period are provided.

We wish you have a safe and merry Christmas.



**Andrea**

***Stay Safe!***

## Safety Update Webinar – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December** for our free monthly webinar 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 answer your questions.

**Register [here](#)**

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

Safety Action Office is closed from 24 December 2021 and reopens 17 January 2022.  
Contact your consultant directly for support during the Christmas break.

## SAFETY ACTION TEAM



**Gary**



**Stephen**



**Katie**



**Ben**



**Sarah**



**Miriam**







## Is That Tree Safe?

Given the numerous storms and the wet and wild weather we have experienced on the east coast of Australia in recent months, specialists tell us we should expect more trees to fall and drop large branches, even as the weather improves into summer.

Apparently, trees which have suffered many years of prior drought, as we have in Victoria, reduce their root system and when heavy rain weakens the soil and increase the weight of the canopy, they fall over or drop branches, often without any warning.

Another problem is we tend to under-estimate the significant weight (and danger) of branches over-head, or stability of solid looking trees.



*All trees pose a risk of falling*

WorkSafe Victoria have published a [Safety Alert](#) following another fatal accident involving falling trees.

A man set up camp in his allocated camping spot but located his tent under the tree canopy. Tragically a large branch fell on his tent as he slept.

***Signage to deter people from camping under dangerous trees should not be solely relied upon.***

WorkSafe point out that all trees pose a risk of falling over or dropping branches.

### **Tree Safety at Work:**

1. Employer to inspect all designated work areas under trees.
2. Increase inspections if circumstances change eg storms.
3. Inspections to consider circumstances for work usage, and alternatives.
4. Staff to be briefed on the circumstances that require escalation to a qualified arborist.



## ...and that other tree?

Before you start decorating, there are some important safety tips to ensure your Christmas doesn't end in disaster.

- Check old Christmas lights for damage before re-using them.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Don't alter or modify lights.
- Ensure all lights, extension leads and power boards are suitable for the intended use (e.g external or internal).
- Test your safety switch and smoke detector to make sure they are working.
- Keep Christmas lights out of reach of children.
- If you have a living Christmas tree, switch off and unplug lights when watering the tree.
- Always turn off decorative lighting before going to bed or leaving your house.



## Buying Christmas lights

As with all electrical equipment and appliances, Christmas lights must meet safety standards and are required to have an Australian certificate of approval before they can be sold. Non-compliant lights are often sold on the internet from overseas.

Buy your lights from a reputable dealer who will know the electrical equipment safety requirements for selling Christmas lights.



Regulatory compliance mark

Look for an approval number (e.g. Q12345; V12345; N12345; NSW12345) or the regulatory compliance mark logo. These indicate compliance with Australian Standards. These marks must be on the Christmas lights and are normally found on the packaging, plastic tag near the plug, or on the transformer body if it is an extra low voltage type.

Click [here](#) for further information on ensuring a safe Christmas.





# New First Aid Compliance Code



The new Victorian Compliance Code on First Aid, dated November 2021, requires employers to consider additional equipment and training in their first aid risk assessments, which are summarised below:

## 1) Asthma Inhalers & EpiPens

Consider the inclusion of asthma-relieving inhalers and EpiPens in the first aid kit and training first aiders or other employees on how to help people in distress to use the inhaler or EpiPen.



Using inhaler



EpiPen Auto-Injectors are used to treat severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis).

## 2) Mental Health Training

Consider training employees to provide initial, informal support for persons experiencing mental health crises in the workplace.

## 3) Emergency Eyewash

Provide emergency eyewash equipment in the workplace where there is a risk from hazardous chemicals or infectious substances injuring the eye.



Small eye wash bottle

## 4) Defibrillators

Assess the practicability of having an automated external defibrillator (AED) in the workplace, if specific risks associated with the work performed at the workplace increase the likelihood of cardiac arrest (plumbers, builders, electricians and other tradesmen are at higher risk), or if there are large numbers of people present. If provided, place AEDs in visible, and accessible locations.



A small portable automatic defibrillator

For more information click [here](#).



# Holiday Road Safety Tips

As lockdowns have lifted the traffic on roads has increased with an added sense of urgency and impatience to get things done prior to Christmas.

Car fatalities this year have increased 10%.

So what can we do to help keep ourselves and others on the road stay safe this holiday season?

## Show Courtesy to others.

Many of the examples of bad driving we see on the roads these days are not being addressed by current laws or road safety efforts. e.g. lack of courtesy.



- A vehicle travelling dangerously fast in traffic. **Lack of courtesy.**
- A vehicle rush through an amber light while you are waiting to turn? **Dangerous and lack of courtesy.**
- Aggressive drivers in traffic? **Lack of courtesy and impatient**
- Vehicles turn without indicating or too late? **Lack of courtesy to others.**
- Cars stopped and holding up a long queue of traffic so they can turn right? **Lack of courtesy for those who go out of their way to avoid holding up traffic.**
- Vehicles travelling slowly in the righthand lane holding up traffic? **Lack of courtesy.**
- Drivers using a smart phone while driving, or at the lights? **Lack of courtesy.**
- A vehicle hanging out of a parking bay obstructing other traffic? **Lack of courtesy to others**
- A driver pulls in front of you without looking? **Lack of courtesy.**
- A pedestrian steps onto the road without looking? **Deadly and lack of courtesy.**
- A driver doesn't 'wave' or acknowledge when they have been let in by another driver? **Lack of courtesy.**

### Top tips from a Police Traffic Accident Investigator

1. Take your time on the roads
2. Drive to the conditions
3. Drive within your own capability

If all drivers had ***courtesy as a core value*** we would see less road rage and car accidents.



## Don't Let the Holiday Rush Lead to Tragedy

The end-of-year holiday season is fast approaching and many of us are keen to get 2021 over and done with. The holiday season is a busy time for everyone, that's why it's important to keep safety top of mind. When workers are rushed to finish jobs before the holidays, the chances of mistakes are higher and can lead to serious, or even tragic incidents.

Safety authorities are reminding everyone to "Slow down and stay safe, so we can all put 2021 safely behind us."

See industry specific guidance at WorkSafe Victoria [here](#).



## New Vic Silica Regulations Commence

Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (Crystalline Silica) Regulations 2021 came into effect on 15 November 2021. The Regulations replace the interim Regulations 2021.

The Regulations help protect workers from exposure to respirable crystalline silica by:

- Introducing Australia's first licensing regime for engineered stone, including increased manufacturer and supplier duties;
- Permanent prohibition on uncontrolled dry-cutting of engineered stone; and
- Additional regulatory oversight of high-risk crystalline silica work outside of engineered stone across all industries, including the construction and earth resources industries.



Commencement of the Regulations will be a phased to allow duty holders time to comply with changes to their duties and obligations.

For more information see the [Guide to changes](#).