

February 2022

SAFETY SPOTTER VS SAFETY OBSERVER

Join Our
Monthly
Webinars

Safety Audits
& Training

Driver Medical
Fitness
Responsibility

Reporting
Covid-19 Cases
in NSW



What's new in February?

Safety Spotter and Safety Observer. Words that are used often, but do you know the difference?

Also this month, who is responsible for the medical fitness of a driver?

The pandemic has had multiple impacts on businesses and their workers. As a new year kicks off is it time to review and refresh the safety culture in your business with some safety leadership training or a strategic safety audit?

Safety Action has numerous services to support your leadership team.

[Email us](#) or give us a call to discuss how we can assist.



Andrea

Stay Safe!

Safety Webinar – 11th February 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Friday 11th February** 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 TEAM



Andrea Rowe



Stephen Weber



Katie Weber



Gary Rowe



Sarah Oliver



Miriam Oliver

Safety Spotter vs Safety Observer

Many people use the term **Safety Spotter** and **Safety Observer** inter-changeably, when describing the role of the person guiding the operator in safe movement of mobile plant.

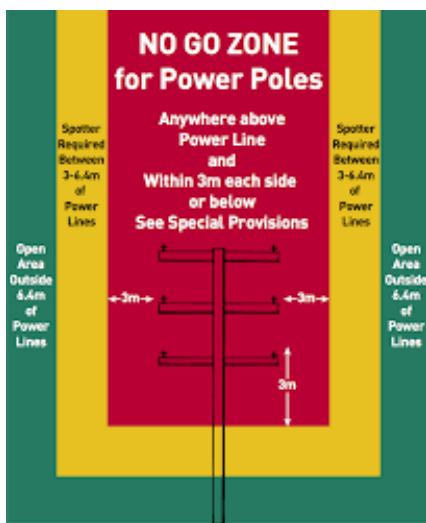
Whilst neither of these two terms is prescribed in Australian workplace safety regulations, the Industry Standard on elevating work platforms, dated April 2021 by WorkSafe Victoria, assigns different meanings to each term, per below.

Safety Observer is a worker with line of sight who helps direct the operator with safe movement of mobile plant in the workplace, including loading and unloading from transport, but is not necessarily qualified to guide movement in proximity to overhead powerlines.



A safety observer

Safety Spotter is a specifically trained and qualified person to guide plant operators in proximity to overhead powerlines eg within 6.4m of low voltage lines on poles. The spotter must have completed an approved training course and be registered with the state electrical authority eg Hold an Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) electrical spotter card.



Example of No Go and Spotter Zone for powerlines on poles



An Electrical Spotter

In order to remember which term is which, get used to using the terms:

- a) Electrical Spotter, and
- b) Safety Observer

Gary Rowe, CEO Safety Action Pty Ltd

Who is Responsible for Driver Medical Fitness?

Would you answer, “the driver is responsible for driver medical fitness” or “the operator is responsible for driver medical fitness”?

The answer is: Driver medical fitness is a shared responsibility between the bus operator and the driver under chain of responsibility laws.

If a driver is medically unfit and has a medical episode while driving that causes an incident – whether it is serious or not – it is the operator who could potentially be charged with a failure to meet safety duty responsibilities. This is a serious and indictable offence and may result in a prosecution, says TSV spokesperson Gwen Carbone. It is imperative that driver medical certifications be monitored and kept up to date.



What should operators do to mitigate this risk?

1. Require each driver to undergo a medical as a condition of employment.
2. Keep records of the age of each driver, their individual requirement for a medical (every three years, or annually if over 70 or if certain medical conditions are present), and record the medical having been undertaken.
3. Consider the type of service a driver undertakes against their capabilities when rostering. Different age groups may be impacted differently by distance travelled, types of roads, time of day and rest periods.



It may not be adequate to simply rely on a requirement that a driver have a medical when they obtain their accreditation. This step alone may not mean that the operator has met their safety responsibilities.

Managing safety risks associated with driver health relies on good communication between drivers and their employers. Drivers have a responsibility to advise of any reason why they may not be fit to drive. Employers need to ensure they have appropriate mechanisms in place to encourage drivers to have those conversations with you when they need to.

Source: Bus Safety News 21 Dec 2021, per Transport Safety Victoria

Changes to Reporting COVID-19 Cases

NSW

Businesses in New South Wales are no longer required to notify SafeWork NSW if a worker tests positive to COVID-19. In line with recent changes in Victoria, NSW businesses are only expected to notify SafeWork NSW if a worker is hospitalised and / or dies because of contracting COVID-19 at work. Website [Guidance for businesses with a worker who tests positive for COVID-19](#) has been updated.

VIC

Victoria has introduced a Bill to amend incident reporting criteria in the OHS Act. The changes when introduced will specifically target things like infectious diseases and illnesses, including Covid.



Safety Audits & Training

As we emerge from Covid constraints over the last two years **it is time to refresh your WHS strategies and practices, catch up on staff training, and arrange that delayed independent audit.** We can help to focus on ensuring a culture where everyone understands and follows your important safety rules.

Staff are the critical element in any safety program. They are the ones who will be hurt if not provided with the adequate knowledge, training, and experience in how to work safely and how to manage safety in the workplace.

We coach and develop your staff using our popular training programs. These programs provide an understanding of personal and corporate obligations and ensure you have the tools and knowledge to manage workplace safety within your business.

Our highly qualified trainers have extensive experience in training, coaching, and mentoring personnel, providing them with the knowledge to manage safety programs in the workplace.



See our [2022 Training Calendar](#) for topics and dates. Contact us on 03 8544 4300 or [email](#) to discuss training for your team, or to discuss a strategic safety audit for your business.