

WHY SAFETY PROGRAMS FAIL

**WHS Duties in a
contractual chain**

**Hot Water
Bottles**

**From 'Nice To Have' To
'Must Have' In The
Post-Covid Workplace**

**Join Our Monthly
Webinars**



What's new in May?

"No one ever suspected the extensive and conscientious efforts applied to control safety in the organisation would have failed so spectacularly"

Welcome to our May Safety News. This month we look at why safety programs fail and with winter fast approaching the safe use of hot water bottles is a pertinent topic.

We share a new job opportunity for 2 people to join our friendly team at Safety Action.

Stay Safe!



Gary Rowe, CEO

Safety Webinar – 13th May 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Friday 13th May** 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



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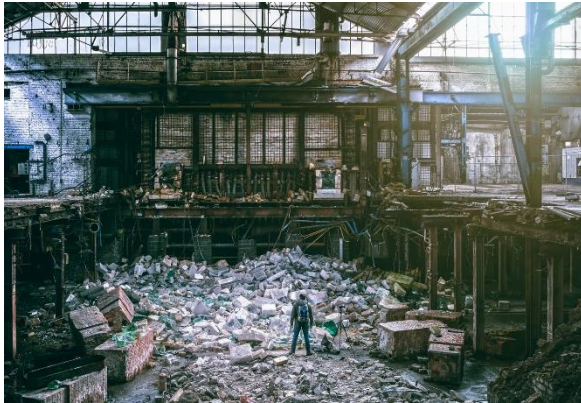


Miriam Oliver

Why Safety Programs Fail

“No one ever suspected the extensive and conscientious efforts applied to control safety in the organisation would have failed so spectacularly”

These are the famous words uttered by so many senior managers and directors, while in shock, after a workplace disaster.



Nothing in the monthly safety report or annual review of the Key Risk Register hinted at such a catastrophic loss scenario. Subsequently, each successive “positive report” increased the false impression of low risk and a sense that controls were in place and effective, when in reality the precarious situation was just waiting for an adverse circumstance to trigger the calamity.

Why does this happen? One suggestion is ***feel good*** reporting, which concentrates on the level of activity, rather than on the serious risk exposures.

We have noticed some safety managers concentrate on reporting all the “good stuff” they are doing, and not on the things they have not had time or budget to review or develop effective and sustainable programs for. They mistakenly believe to report such things may adversely reflect on their personal performance or “commitment to the team”. In reality they are “disguising” the systemic inadequacies in organisational resourcing or processes.

*Feel Good reporting
gives a false sense
of security*

The Problem with “Safety First”

We have all heard safety slogans such as ***Safety First***, so what is the potential problem with this? One unfortunate and unintended influence of pushing Safety First is to separate safety from the operational requirements, rather than building safety into every procedure and process.

*If we separate safety
from productivity,
safety rarely wins*

If we place priorities on segments of the task, staff will have to continually make choices between production and safety, and safety rarely wins, particularly if personnel believe the safety rule is excessive or not applicable at this time or to their situation.

Toyota is famous world-wide for their fantastically efficient and reliable production system called Toyota Production System (TPS), where they shun separate safe work procedures, and focus on standardised work.

Standardised work instructions include everything the workers need to know to perform their tasks, and nothing more or less. Safety is an important part of every piece of standardised work, along with quality, efficiency, and reliability.

The solution is to **build-in safety**, not prepare separate safe work procedures. Having said this, it will take some time for most organisations to develop the culture and capability to do this routinely moving forward. So start the journey now!

Let's Communicate Safety

Most organisations have safety notice boards, safety posters, safety videos, safety awards, safety contests with prizes, and similar efforts to communicate or motivate staff to work safely.



Are they effective, and do they change attitudes and behaviour? Safety expert, Dan Petersen*, says little research has been done in this area, and what little research has been done has provided conflicting findings. Petersen also states that we do not know if

any of these well-intended things motivate or even communicate effectively with workers.

* Safety Management a Human Approach, ASSE, 2001

Safety is one of the few professional areas which run competitions and offer prizes to get people to follow the rules. By comparison accountants, engineers and scientists don't rely on competitions to achieve compliance with their important processes.

So why are safety programs unique in their use of posters and competitions etc? It is possible that most safety managers don't have sufficient budget or resources to do anything else, or lack the engineering knowledge to help design the hazards out.

Use of competitions to encourage compliance

Even though there is no compelling evidence to show these motivational type activities are effective, careful selection and application should cause no harm to the safety program and may still appeal to the interest of some of the workforce, who like variety in their information flow.

Un-focussed Training

Training is an integral part of every safety program, and no one would sensibly suggest we stop doing it. However, anecdotal observations by our team suggest a large proportion of safety training is wasted as it is boring, un-disciplined and not focused on the key risks and precautions.

For example, we still see many site inductions taking way too long. Many attempt to repeat every bit of safety detail even those not applicable to the site or the tasks in hand, or provide work instructions already covered by formal work certifications.

Site inductions need to focus on site specific issues

What we should be doing is only instructing on site specific hazards and procedures eg site traffic controls, site first aid and emergency arrangements, safety officer & H&S Rep(s), worker facilities, key activities for the day and any special precautions.

If interested in an independent review of your safety program give us a call.

Hot Water Bottles

Hot water bottles are used by some, particularly in cold weather to pre-warm their bed, or for comfort to ease pain.

The water bottles are typically made from rubber or polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

The Potential Problem

Every year, around 200 people in Australia are admitted to hospital with serious burns related to hot water bottles. Many of the incidents involve leaking hot water from old or defective water bottles. Check out these steps you can take to stay warm and safe this winter.



Risks and Injuries

Hot water bottles can cause burns if placed directly on the skin. These burns are serious and happen gradually, often the user cannot feel these burns until it is too late. Hot water bottle burns can lead to third degree burns and may require skin grafts. The skin of younger and older people is often thinner and more delicate and vulnerable to more serious burns. Diabetics are prone to burns to their hands and feet while using a hot water bottle.

Hot water bottles can burst or leak if used improperly or poorly manufactured.

Expiry Date for Hot Water Bottles

Many users don't realise the rubber or PVC in hot water bottles deteriorate over time like many other products and need to be replaced periodically.

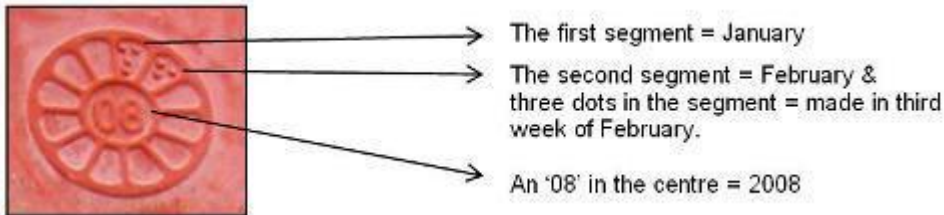
All competent manufacturer's mark their products with the date of manufacture and recommend replacement if more than 3 years old.

Hot water bottles are date marked with a 'daisy wheel' date, which indicates when the item was manufactured. Each of the 12 segments in the daisy wheel represents a

month of the year, starting with January at the top, progressing clockwise until the 12th segment, which represents December.

The last segment in a clockwise direction with dots indicates the month the bottle was made. Each dot in the last segment with dots in it represents the week of the month the bottle was made. For example, three dots equal the third week.

This daisy wheel (below) shows that the manufacturer produced this bottle in the third week of February in 2008.



Buying tips

- Ideally, buy a new hot water bottle every year. Hot water bottles that are in good condition on the outside may be damaged on the inside.
- Check the daisy wheel date when buying a new bottle and note the year of manufacture. If it is more than 3 years old and/or appears aged or faded, don't buy it.

Safe use

- Don't overfill or use boiling water in your hot water bottle – use hot tap water.
- Examine the hot water bottle before using and throw it away if it leaks, looks cracked, damaged, brittle, worn or faded.
- Always use a hot water bottle cover or wrap the bottle in a towel or fabric to prevent the bottle being in direct contact with the skin.
- Remove hot water bottle from bed before going to bed to avoid rolling onto it and bursting it. Do not lie, rest, or put pressure or weight on a hot water bottle.
- Store the hot water bottle by hanging it upside down with the stopper removed in a dark, dry place and make sure it is completely dry inside and out before putting away.
- Mark your hot water bottle, the year and month it is due to be replaced.

We Are Hiring

Safety Action is looking for 2 people to join our friendly team in Clayton, Melbourne. Please see the links below for more information.

1. [Administrative Officer – Permanent Part Time](#)
2. [WHS Advisor – Full Time](#)

Please apply or pass on to your friends or family.



Contractual Chain Duties



Safe Work Australia has recently published a fact sheet providing information for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) who are working as part of a contractual chain.

A contractual chain refers to the situation where, in relation to the same project or work matter, there are multiple contractors and subcontractors.

A contractual chain can form in any industry but is a common way of conducting business across the economy, for example in industries such as building and construction, road transport and events management.

It provides guidance on duties under the [model WHS laws](#) and examples of how contractual relationships fit within the model WHS framework. This includes individual contractors and self-employed persons, who may be both a [PCBU](#) and a worker in a contractual chain.

For more information or to download the SWA fact sheet please use the following link. [WHS duties in a contractual chain: Factsheet | Safe Work Australia](#)

FROM 'NICE TO HAVE' TO 'MUST HAVE'

In September 2021 three Melbourne university academics published the above-named article and determined the collective experiences of workers pre and post-pandemic offered five lessons for organisations to reimagine workplaces and practices.

The five lessons learned from a range of research conducted in Australian workplaces pre and post-2020 include:



1. RISING EXPECTATIONS AROUND FLEXIBILITY: REFLECTING ON HOW WE WORK
2. A SERIOUS CONVERSATION ROUND WORKPLACE DESIGN
3. HEALTHY WORKPLACES ARE A REAL THING AND THEY'RE HERE TO STAY
4. WORKPLACES ARE ECOSYSTEMS AND WE HAVE A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM
5. CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP TO ATTRACT WORKERS BACK TO HQ IN A POST-COVID ERA

"This article was first published on [Pursuit](#). Read the [original article](#)."