

CAN YOU SPOT A LIAR?

**Minimizing
Employee Stress
in Lockdown**

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Liable for Bee
Sting**

**New Standard
on Portable
Ladders**

**Testing
Disposable
Respirators**



What's New in September?

Welcome to the September Safety News.

What a busy month it has been. Melbourne in lockdown, People lying to avoid quarantine when entering Queensland, and an employer being held liable for a bee sting in Western Australia.

In this months newsletter we go into detail on how to spot a liar and minimize the stress for employees in lockdown as well as sharing with you about a new antimicrobial adhesive film that is certified to fight against Coronavirus and the importance of fit testing disposable respirators.

Stay Safe!



Andrea Rowe

Safety Webinar – 8th September 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Tuesday 8th September** 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 any of our webinars? View them [here](#)

SAFETY ACTION TEAM



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Can You Spot a Liar?

Have you ever had difficulty understanding someone or interpreting the motivation for their behaviour? If so, you are not alone.

History is riddled with examples of people thinking they had superior intelligence and communication skills and knew people's intentions because they had met them.

Most people cannot detect a liar any better by meeting them

We think information gained from a personal interaction is uniquely valuable

The Spanish conquistador, Hernan Cortes, thought Montezuma was surrendering to him, as conveyed via multiple layers of translators and confusing cultural context. For example, royal "false humility" often uses polite language to a visitor eg "offering everything".

Chamberlain failed to detect in face to face meetings that Hitler was lying and had wider intentions, and indeed imminent plans and preparation well underway to invade neighboring countries.

We intuitively think that meeting someone face to face will allow us to gauge their motivations and intentions more accurately.

However, studies show we can be more accurate about personal intentions if we focus on factual data, confirmed reports, and history of behaviour.

One study had people auditioning for an orchestra or singing role behind a curtain so the selectors could not apply unconscious biases to appearance or mannerisms that had no impact on their singing or instrument playing.



Another case dating back to the 1960s where a Cuban spy operated at a high-level in the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for many years without detection despite regular security checks and even passing numerous lie-detector tests.

CIA didn't detect a liar and spy within their organization for many years

Skilled CIA counter-intelligence specialists were all fooled and did not spot any of the many clues. He was a lazy drunk with a fascination with Cuba and in hindsight left obvious warning flags eg spy chose holidays and study tours to Cuba.

The Cuban spy was even presented with awards from both Fidel Castro and the US Government.

So, if the CIA specialists can't spot a liar what chance do we have selecting good, reliable, and honest staff or judging people we choose to do business with?

Part of the answer lies in the fact that we (normal people) default to the belief that strangers are telling the truth unless you have overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Little inconsistencies are not enough to shake most people.

We Default to Believing it is True

The reason for this is it would be exhausting to test every bit of information from everyone you speak to, and you would be tedious and unpopular to be with eg those with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) or classic auditors.

Studies show that less than 1% of statements and information we receive are false. So, assuming that what you are told is correct is both efficient and correct the vast majority of the time.

***99% of statements
are true, so easier to
accept***

This partly explains why Ponzi schemes keep popping up and work for extended periods of time, even with highly skilled financial institutions and government authorities scrutinizing transactions and tracking the flow of cash.

***We continue to
believe until
overwhelming
evidence arises, or
until the crash
occurs***

They know there are some inconsistencies or gaps, but rationalise them away because we default to assuming they are good people eg there is probably an honest explanation, I just do not know what it is.

We often have doubts about what we are told but we continue to believe people until we have compelling evidence to shake our natural assumption of truth.

Really skeptical people are rare eg cynics & OCD people, but we would waste more time always doubting every bit of information.

Unfortunately, most people socially adapt to accept minor inconsistencies in stories or reports until catastrophic failures occur eg collapse of Ponzi scheme or company declaring bankruptcy with no warning.

***We really need
those OCD auditors***

Even expression on faces is cultural eg smiling or not smiling, yet we may falsely assume something from this eg if a stranger does not smile may not mean anything, as we don't know their cultural norm.

Some Tips to Help Spot a Liar:

- People lie an average of 10 times per day, but generally innocent eg being polite not to embarrass someone, like not saying you look fat have you put on weight?
- Truthful people try to convey information and generally answer yes or no.
- Innocent people will also quickly deny false allegations categorically.
- Liars talk about peripheral issues eg I was in a hurry, or my dog was sick.
- Liars don't answer the question but try to convince you. For example, I am an honest person, I work long hours and first in every day, I don't take long breaks like everyone else etc.
- If someone pauses to answer, does the pause make sense? eg "what were you doing on the 10th January" would take a moment to think, but "did you take the money" requires an immediate yes or no response.
- Ask follow-up questions, don't let vague responses go unchallenged.

If you would like to know more about effective communication call us or [email](#) for a quote to conduct a safety culture audit or safety climate survey.

Article loosely based on Talking to Strangers by Malcolm Gladwell (2020), also author of Tipping Point and other books

WorkSafe Victoria Dangerous Goods Inspections

In response to chemical waste stockpiling that caused two large chemical fires in Melbourne in 2018 and 2019, WorkSafe Victoria have established a dedicated Dangerous Goods Strategic Inspection team. They will conduct annual site inspections for workplaces storing DGs.

Premises that store Dangerous Goods are currently being contacted by WorkSafe and requested to provide information, including:

- Dangerous Goods Manifest
- Dangerous Goods register
- Details of notifications to WorkSafe
- Copies of fire service written advice

TIP: Check that you have these items now.

Did you know...?

Your workplace must request fire service advice on your emergency plan if the quantity of DGs on the site exceeds manifest quantity. Often, it is incorrectly believed that fire service advice is only required when exceeding 'fire protection' quantity.

You must notify WorkSafe if the type and quantity of materials exceeds 10% of the Major Hazard Facility Threshold.

[Email](#) or call Safety Action on 03 8544 4300 for help with your DG compliance.



Massive fire of stockpiled chemicals in West Footscray in 2018

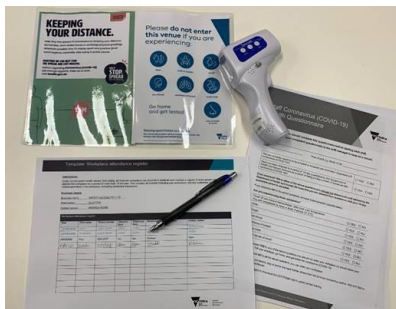
Preventing Introduction of COVID-19

The main measure for reducing the risk of a person introducing coronavirus (COVID-19) into a workplace is having staff work from home. Where staff need to attend the workplace, you must prevent persons who are unwell or may have come into contact with someone with COVID-19 from entering your workplace.

Employers should confirm with employees, contractors and visitors, before they enter the workplace, that they do NOT have:

- COVID-19 symptoms
- contact with any confirmed cases of COVID-19
- any health directions, such as isolation, quarantine or in relation to travel

See the [Staff COVID-19 Health Questionnaire](#) from Business Victoria



For contact tracing and to ensure that occupancy restrictions are adhered to, a sign in register is recommended. A common problem with these sign-in stations is that they pose an infection risk. Especially where shared equipment is provided, such as pens, paper and thermometers. Once touched, they could be contaminated.

To reduce the risk:

- Inform staff and visitors of your site access requirements before their visit.
- Provide hand sanitiser at these stations, with instructions to use before touching anything.
- Do not provide shared pens or paper.

Sign in stations pose an infection risk! Commonly touched surfaces, paper and shared pens can easily become contaminated

Better yet, move the sign-in process to an electronic process!



QR Code

Our friends at LinkSafe have solutions which can allow Contactless sign-in via QR codes. By simply holding up your phone to scan the QR code, signs in immediately. All your records are private and uncontaminated.

You can include your temperature records within the Linksafe Site Register with Visitor Management. LinkSafe systems can also monitor number of people on-site and send alerts when maximums are exceeded.

For more information, contact LinkSafe on 1300 558 102 or at linksafe.com.au

Minimizing Employee Stress in Lockdown

In periods of unprecedented crises, the overall health and wellbeing of employees can be jeopardized due to stress.

Employers are required to ensure that risk to mental health and wellbeing of their employees is managed. Investing in the wellbeing of employees ensures the profitability of any business.

Sources of Stress for Workers in Lockdown

- Physical health worries for themselves family and friends e.g. worrying about aged parents.
- Financial concerns e.g. due to job loss or insecurity
- Isolation e.g. from colleagues, supervisors and personal support network like family and friends
- Distractions while working from home e.g. from a child or partner
- Problems with meeting deadlines
- No clear divide between work and leisure
- Unsuitable workspaces e.g. unsuitable workstations, poor internet connections, lighting, and noise issues
- Coping with new learning and changes in work procedures and protocols e.g. working on new web-based platforms



Signs of Worker Stress

- Often distracted with decline in productivity and efficiency
- Increased propensity to be overwhelmed and frustrated
- Memory problems and inability to concentrate
- Anxiety, Irritable, Depressed and Sad
- Worse sleeping patterns
- Low confidence and motivation
- Easily irritable and Fatigue

Tips for Minimizing Stress During Lockdown

- 1) Show empathy
- 2) Provide flexible and reasonable adjustments to workload and schedules
- 3) Provide honest information on the impact of the lockdown on the business and the contingency plans in place
- 4) Be authentic in asking about their wellbeing and try to provide support when needed
- 5) Maintain regular contact with workers
- 6) Help workers get into a routine
- 7) Encourage workers to take regular breaks and follow healthy habits e.g. regular exercise
- 8) Provide ongoing training and support for new procedures and protocols in the workplace e.g. online training sessions.
- 9) Remind workers of support services available.
- 10) Encourage workers to seek professional support if necessary.



Support Service Links

[Lifeline](#)

[Heads up](#)

[Sane](#)

[Beyond Blue](#)

[Black Dog Institute](#)

[Mental health resources - coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Contact Safety Action on 03 8544 4300 or [email](#) for a copy of a home workstation set up checklist.

Antimicrobial Adhesive Film Kills Coronavirus

The Pure Zone Antimicrobial Film reduces coronavirus viraemia by 95% after a contact of 15 minutes, and nearly 99.9% after a contact of one hour. It contains anti-microbial agents that inhibit and neutralise the growth of microbes on its surface killing bacteria and viruses. An affordable approach to high traffic surfaces where hygiene protection is paramount.

Suitable for all flat or slightly curved surfaces such as:

- Doors
- Windows
- Tables
- Counters
- Touch screens

For more information, [click here](#).



Testing Disposable Respirators

This article summarises the key things you need to know about wearing disposable respirators and testing that they fit correctly.

1. **"One size fits all"** is a common term we hear, and unfortunately often applies to supply of disposable respirators used in the workplace eg they are not offered in different sizes or models.

As a result, many workers end up using disposable respirators that do not provide a good seal around their face, which exposes them to the airborne contaminants the mask is intended to protect them from.

Employers should procure brands which offer varying size range e.g. large, medium and small to cater for as many of the natural variations in the workforce as possible.



Fit testing a worker



Disposable respirator



Reusable respirator

2. **Best practice businesses** and high-risk industries that use respiratory protection have conducted fit testing for many years to ensure that the respirators provided to their workers fits correctly and is effective.
3. **Most workers do not know how to adjust their respirators correctly.** Passing a fit test alone does not guarantee that the workers will be protected from airborne hazards. Workers need to be trained how to conduct a pre-use 'fit check' of their respirator every time before commencing work.
4. **Consider reliability of supply** when selecting your respirator(s), as some brands are experiencing shortages, which may cause you to change brands and then need more fit testing.
5. **Qualified assessors** need to conduct respirator fit testing, as while the testing procedure is standardised, the method for achieving a good fit differs.

Some fit testers have limited experience with the wide range of disposable respirator brands and as a result more fit tests fail.

Good fit testing also involves coaching users in practical adjustments to help achieve the best result with available respirators, and guidance on wearing and maintaining their selected respirator. As opposed to simply failing the fit test.

6. **Re-test workers if worker's experience significant facial change** e.g. significant weight gain / loss, surgery or dental work, their usual respirator may not fit. In these circumstances' employers need to arrange a new fit-test, per the relevant Australian Standard AS 1715.

AS 1715 also recommends annual fit testing for personnel required to wear respirators regularly, particularly if the workplace contaminants are harmful e.g. toxic or pose serious health risks.

7. **If workers normally wear other PPE, then test both together.** This is to ensure other personal protective equipment (PPE) does not interfere with each other. For example, if spectacles or safety glasses are normally worn at work, they should also be worn during the respirator fit test.
8. **Safety and comfort:** Finally, when choosing the preferred make and model of disposable respirator, comfort for the wearer is an important factor, along with cost and effectiveness. Consider a few choices to accommodate likely variations in personal. Reputable brands like 3M often achieve better results.



Person wearing a surgical face mask

Note: Traditional surgical masks (see below) are designed to primarily protect the patient, not the user, and because they are open on the sides and do not form a seal on the face, they cannot be fit tested.

[Email](mailto:info@safetyaction.com.au) or Call us on 03 8544 4300 for a quote to fit test your team.

New Standard on Portable Ladders

Ladders have traditionally been used as a handy mobile platform to do things at height, including painting and other minor maintenance at home and work. Falls from height represent the most common cause of fatal accidents in the home and the second most common cause of workplace fatalities.



Unsafe ladder use



Safe roof access system

Today, we need to view ladders differently eg as a major cause of serious injuries and therefore only a means of access to height - not a work platform!

Ladders are not work platforms, but a means of access to work areas



Standards Australia have released a new Standard, AS1892.5: 2020 Selection and safe use of portable ladders, which formalises the correct use and precautions for ladders.

For copy of our checklist on safe ladder use – call safety action on 03 8544 4300 or [email us](mailto:info@safetyaction.com.au).

Employer Held Liable for Bee Sting

A WA company, Indus Mining Services Pty Ltd, has been held liable and fined \$60,000 after an engineering surveyor died as a result of a bee sting at a client mine site.



Following the prosecution case, the WA Mines Safety Director offered:

“a reminder for all mining companies to prioritise safety”.

We found this statement strange knowing the high standards and efforts of most mining companies for workplace safety, and the difficulty for employers to understand the level of allergy sensitivity of workers.

However, if you look past the shallow response of the regulator and the sensational headline ***“employer held liable for bee sting”***, we find some facts that provide an insight to the logic of the courts in this case:

- a) Bees were common and known to be prolific at the particular mine; and
- b) Indus Mining had informed the mine location that their engineering surveyor was allergic to bees, but failed to tell them his condition was life-threatening; and
- c) The person was working alone; and
- d) The worker self-administered an EpiPen and radioed for help but was found unconscious by the time assistance arrived.

Some of the lessons from this tragic incident include:

- 1) Conduct a risk assessment for all new projects / site work.
- 2) Risk assessment to include all likely emergencies, including worker health issues.
- 3) Working alone to trigger a risk assessment including comprehensive review of health & fitness of workers for the circumstances, communications equipment and contact protocol, first aid and timeliness of emergency response.



COVID Manslaughter Charges for Government?

A legal expert has suggested in an article in a national newspaper that government ministers and bureaucrats should be charged with workplace manslaughter over the COVID failures.

Areas cited where ministers and bureaucrats may have breached their duty of care and were therefore negligent include:

- 1) Failure to maintain control of quarantine eg hotels and cruise ships, allowing infected people to leave quarantine and spread the infection, which now account for the vast majority of active COVID cases and deaths in Victoria; and
- 2) Failure to issue appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE); and
- 3) Failure to ensure PPE masks are effective when worn eg fit testing of masks for all health and aged care workers; and
- 4) A lack of training on when to use and how to properly adjust PPE masks for; quarantine guards, hospital staff and aged care workers.

WorkSafe lay charges every day against business and managers with less evidence of negligence than appears to exist for these tragic circumstances, where there has been over 500 COVID related deaths in Victoria alone.

The workplace safety laws apply to federal and state government departments, who should be held accountable to the same high standards expected of all business managers.

The newspaper author asserts that failure to charge those responsible for the added COVID deaths would weaken the workplace safety laws where business is sometimes charged over matters where the business managers may have little knowledge or control eg bee sting prosecution on previous page.

The news article author doesn't think COVID manslaughter charges will be laid against the government but if not, the newspaper author asserts it will highlight the inconsistencies in workplace safety prosecutions and provide a dramatic contrast to what negligence looks like for general business and for the government itself.