

PREVENTING WORKPLACE STRESS AND BURNOUT

As a business owner or manager, you have a duty under WHS laws to prevent harm caused by psychosocial risks in the workplace, including stress. Ensure you have a WHS Management Plan to manage this risk and help protect your business from prosecution and fines.

COMMON STRESS FACTORS

HAZARD	EXAMPLES
Role overload	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High workload and unreasonable working hours.• Workers face regular exposure to emotionally distressing situations.• Unpredictable shifts or inadequate recovery time between shifts.
Low job control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low control over how work is conducted, when breaks can be taken, etc.• Lack of involvement in decisions that impact their work.
Conflict between workers or managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bullying and harassment between co-workers or between workers and managers.• Lack of cooperation and communication.• Lack of support from managers or performance feedback.
Poor organisational change, management or procedural justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inconsistent application of workplace policies and job performance management.• Lack of consultation about significant changes and/or poor practical support for workers affected by significant changes.

RISK AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

- ☐ Conduct a risk assessment to determine any individuals, groups, or scenarios who are more likely to cause workplace stress.
- ☐ Develop a system for monitoring individual workloads and ensure that staffing is increased during peak times to manage role overload.
- ☐ Develop an escalation protocol so senior staff can handle more complex matters or difficult situations.
- ☐ Ensure that workers who regularly deal with stressful environments (e.g. frontline customer service workers) have adequate breaks and training on de-escalating or exiting a stressful situation.
- ☐ Consider providing access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for workers.
- ☐ Ensure proper training, coaching, and mentoring are provided to workers so that they feel in control of their work and careers.
- ☐ If working from home is an option, offer workers to work remotely part-time, to increase their control over their work and work-life balance.
- ☐ Ensure any toxic workplace behaviours such as bullying and harassment are addressed and quickly stamped out.