



CHRIS JONES RISK MANAGEMENT

Induction for New Employees – Ensuring a Safe Start

By Chris Jones

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Quite a few years ago I conducted a statistical survey in Queensland for the Department of Safety that involved reviewing every lost time injury in thirty companies over a period of six months. Over half of all the injuries occurred to employees who had been employed in their current job for less than twelve months.

These results verified the conventional wisdom that induction training is an important part of an Occupational Health and Safety programme. The real surprise was just how critical the first twelve months are. If your new employee didn't get injured, your company could halve the number of injuries it experiences.

How Long is the Induction Period?

A formal induction programme should not be restricted to the first few days. It should cover the first twelve months. Prepare a documented programme that covers the first day, the first week, the first month, and extends over the first year of employment.

Documenting Induction

Induction can be documented by using a checklist, passport, or similar record. These items should be filed on completion. Employee handbooks, including the safety rules, should be issued to the new employee, and receipt of the rules should be signed, dated, and filed. A documented assessment provided further evidence that the induction training has been effective.

Don't forget to include a formal record of feedback to the employee, in the form of performance appraisal. This should tie in with the probationary periods.

Content

The specifics of induction training will, of course, depend upon the nature of the employment.

However, ensure that it includes:

- The company Occupational Health and Safety rules.
- Requirements for personal protective equipment.
- Isolation procedures.
- How to report a hazard, near miss, or injury.
- Consultation procedures, such as the OHS committee, OHS representative and tool box meetings.
- Company OHS procedures manuals and documentation, including risk assessments.
- Emergency procedures, including fire and evacuation and first aid arrangements.
- The rehabilitation and return to work procedures.



Include a tour of the premises in the induction, and introduce the new employee to their OHS representatives, first aid attendant, and the RTW coordinator. Many employers find it useful to appoint a mentor or "buddy" to look after the new employee during the first week.

Work Hardening

A major cause of injuries in the work place is manual handling. New employees in particular are likely to suffer sprains and strains caused by undertaking new activities that they are not used to. This applies even to those who are otherwise in



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good physical shape. Induction training procedures should take into account the time taken to become “work hardened”, before the minimum level of output is required.

Casuals and Sub-contractors

Induction training should, of course, not be limited to permanent employees. Casuals, labour hire staff, and sub-contractors should also be inducted to the same standard as full time, permanent employees.

In fact, any person entering your premises should have some form of induction. If they are to work alone, they may need the same level of induction as new employees. Visitors who are only on the premises for a short period, and are to be accompanied by an employee at all times, will only need a shorter induction, relevant to the areas they are to visit, and the activities they are to undertake.

Re-inductions

Of course, from time to time, your induction procedures will be updated, to reflect the changes in rules and in line with the continuous improvements achieved in your Occupational Health and Safety programme. To ensure that those previously inducted are up to date, it is recommended that all employees and sub-contractors be re-inducted annually.

Construction Work

Many organisations have employees and sub-contractors undertaking construction work. The national standard, regulated within each state, requires three types of induction training for construction work:

- Site induction - usually conducted by the principal contractor, builder, or site owner;
- General OHS induction for construction work – administered by the state authority, such as the green card in NSW, or the blue card in Queensland; and
- Work activity induction – which is the responsibility of the employer or contractor retaining the sub-contractor.

Company induction procedures should take into account the need to conduct work activity

induction. The certificate numbers of the general OHS induction should be recorded. You should also take into account the need for site induction in case the builder does not meet their responsibilities effectively, and for domestic home owners.

Induction training makes a major contribution to the safety of new employees, and will have a direct and measurable impact on reducing accidents.

Chris Jones Risk Management provides a wide range of Occupational Health and Safety services and training, including:

- ✓ OHS Audits – SafetyPlan; SafetyPlan Gold; AS 4801
- ✓ OHS programme implementation
- ✓ Risk Assessments
- ✓ OHS culture surveys
- ✓ Accredited training for construction induction and consultation (NSW)
- ✓ OHS training for management and supervisors

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