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# WPCG Newsletter: Edition 4, July 2020

Welcome to the 4th edition of the Work Place Clearance Group (WPCG) Newsletter.  We hope that you and your families are safe and in good health.  Everyone's lives have been impacted in some way by the pandemic and restrictions imposed to contain it.  Our thoughts are particularly with those who's physical or mental health may have been directly impacted by the pandemic.  Please continue to reach out to friends, family and colleagues to help yourself and others, and to seek physical or mental health assistance when needed.

Much has changed over the 3 months since the last WPCG Newsletter.  However, many of controls for work places remain the same and are expected to do so for some time whilst the world continues to try to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.  The Safe Work Australia website remains an excellent resource to help workplaces manage COVID-19 risks.  The site is regularly updated with new materials including checklists; cleaning and disinfection guidance; signage and posters; and risk register templates.

Whilst restrictions ease across the country it remains essential to keep abreast of what the requirements are in the State in which you are working.  All States have or are planning to move imminently to Step 2 of the Federal Governments' 3-Step Framework for a COVIDSafe Australia.  Each State is implementing the 3 Steps in its own way and according to its own timeline depending on the State's individual circumstances.  This includes the way in which they are all managing their State borders.  It is essential that local State government guidance and regulations be consulted for exact requirements and timelines as they relate to your work and your workplace.

Fundamental to the COVID-19 requirements, and the current restrictions in place in each State, is the protection of the health of the community.  Please take care of your own health and help to minimise the spread to those most vulnerable in the wider community.

The WPCG has continued to operate throughout this time.  Our phone and email services have remained open and all online courses have been available. All Work Clearance Issuer face to face training was moved online into our virtual classroom with fantastic take up by participants. As restrictions ease we are looking to recommence Work Clearance Issuer face to face training in Melbourne and Brisbane next month with other regions to be reviewed as states open up their borders and domestic travel returns. We will continue with our virtual classroom sessions to ensure the training is available for anyone that requires it.

Planning is underway for Permit Officer face to face training to recommence in Melbourne with a course sometime in July-August as venues to conduct the training become available.

Please reach out to us if you have particular needs or concerns regarding WPCG training in the coming weeks and months.

**Contact us:**
E-Mail: enquiries@wpcg.com.au
Phone: (03) 9399 8002
Website: www.wpcg.com.au

We welcome the input and feedback from contractors using the WPCG system as we want this newsletter to be of value to you and your workforce, with the primary objective that it helps support workplace health and safety.

# Upcoming Training

| State | Suburb | Training Date | Training Type |
|-------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 01-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 02-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 06-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 07-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 08-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 09-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 10-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| QLD | Keperra (Brisbane) | 14-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| On-line | Virtual Classroom | 15-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |
| VIC | Williamstown (Melbourne) | 16-07-2020 | Clearance Issuer |

Note that virtual courses are being released based on demand

See www.wpcg.com.au for the full calendar of training, instructions on how to book, and details of how to apply to be a Permit Officer.

If you would like to be kept informed of upcoming training each month register to have Company Admin profile. You don't need to be WPCG accredited to get this profile. Go to the WPCG Website www.wpcg.com.au  and register yourself selecting the Company Admin profile.

Please reach out to us if you have particular needs or concerns regarding WPCG training in the coming weeks and months by sending an e-mail to enquiries@wpcg.com.au.

# The "new normal" in a COVID -19 world

As we all try to return to some form of normality, or the "new normal" as it is being referred to, workers may feel new actual or perceived pressures to deliver work that in turn can result in serious incidents at the workplace whilst in transit to or from work.  Factors that can contribute to this may include:

- Company or worker perceived pressure to secure work for financial security after a period of inactivity or reduced work income.
- Worker perceived pressure to mask symptoms consistent with COVID-19 in order to continue working.
- Job site closure due to a COVID-19 confirmed case resulting in anxiety to workers until tested, and then delays and subsequent additional anxiety or even work pressure (perceived or actual) once the work place re-opens.
- Delayed or reduced supplies of equipment, plant, materials or PPE.
- Reduced workforce due to workers following testing and self-isolating protocols after displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Worker distraction due to the wide range of physical and mental health and financial issues at work and home.

To help manage this for your workers and your workplace ensure that you have:
- Updated risk assessments to cover COVID-19.
- Considered direct COVID-19 health risks but also other impacts from distraction and mental wellbeing, and any changes to risks identified such as increases in customer aggression.
- Updated your work place practices and procedures to comply with new regulatory requirements for COVID-19 infection control.

Safe Work Australia has released some useful guidance to support you with this.  These include:
- [Key considerations for undertaking a risk assessment - COVID-19](#)
- [Template and example COVID-19 risk register](#)

# Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the difference between Minimum Controls Checklists and High-Risk Certificates?

The WPCG Minimum Controls Checklists and High-Risk Certificates are part of different authorisation levels and are not intended to be used together.

The **WPCG Minimum Controls Checklists**, when utilised, must only be used in conjunction with a WPCG Work Clearance Form, issued by a WPCG Work Clearance Issuer. They outline the minimum controls that shall be applied by contractors conducting specified activities at in scope facilities under the Work Clearance Process.

The **WPCG High Risk Certificates** when utilised, must only be used in conjunction with a **WPCG Work Permit,** issued by a WPCG Permit Officer.

When assessing the work and the required authorisations using the WPCG Activity Matrix, if part of the scope requires a Work Clearance plus a Minimum Control Checklist and part of the scope requires a Work Permit plus High-Risk Certificate, then the whole scope would be authorised using a Work Permit plus High-Risk Certificates, not a combination of Minimum Control Checklist and High-Risk Certificates. For example, excavating a trench 600mm deep inside a hazardous area using a petrol operated concrete cutter. The excavation could be authorised using Work Clearance plus a Ground Disturbance Minimum Control Checklist, however because the use of the petrol operated concrete cutter inside a hazardous area requires a Work Permit plus Hot Work Certificate a Ground Disturbance Certificate would also be issued by the Permit officer.

Note: A Permit Officer may use the Minimum Controls Checklists as guidance for possible controls however the appropriate Certificate must be completed.

### What is a complete Work Permit Set?

A Permit Set comprises, the Work Permit & Certificates (signed and closed out), plus Risk Assessments, SWMS marked up to be task specific, Isolation Records, Entry Logs, Service Location reports and all other associated and referenced documents.

Permit Officers are reminded under the WPCG procedure you MUST retain copies of the Permit Sets for at least 2 years. Note Viva Energy require these documents to be kept for 7 years.

### Can a Permit Officer work under a Work Permit they have issued?

No, the Permit Officer shall not work under a permit they have issued. The Permit Officer cannot be part of the work crew on the tools, the job needs to be adequately resourced, so as to not require the permit officer to assist the workers for example by handing them tools, operating an EWP, lowering a worker in to a confined space or holding a piece of equipment, these would all be considered as work conducted under the permit and require a worker to perform such actions not the Permit Officer.

The only exception to this is if the Permit Officer is acting in a role dedicated to safety such as a standby / observer for a confined space, a fire watch, or spotter.

### Does Gas Test Atmospheres training need to be refreshed?

The WPCG do not require the Gas Test Atmospheres training to be refreshed if the Authorised Gas tester uses this competency regularly in the field. It is up to each business to ensure their workers are trained and have the appropriate skills to carry out a particular task safely.

# Observations

**Use of Ladders.**

The use of ladders on WPCG member facilities is covered by the use of the WPCG Minimum Controls Checklist for Minor Work at Height, as a minimum. Member companies may also have additional requirements for work at height or the use of ladders. It has been noted in recent work place inspections that many workers have overlooked the requirement to complete the Minimum Control Checklist for Minor Work at Height for work **inside the store** that requires a WPCG Work Clearance Form.

According to data from Safe Work Australia, falls from ladders are the greatest contributor to work place fatalities and serious injuries. Several fatalities occur per year and several serious injuries occur each day at work places across Australia from falls from ladders. Older males make up a disproportionate number of the fatalities, whilst serious injuries are more evenly spread across all age groups of the workforce.

Workplace Health & Safety Queensland (WHSQ) recently issued a safety alert highlighting the potential for degradation of fibreglass ladders that can lead to a structural failure. The alert emphasised the importance of inspecting the ladder before use, and to store the ladder correctly in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/alerts/whsq/2020/fibreglass-ladder-failure

The alert was issued following an incident in March 2020 when a worker was seriously injured following the catastrophic failure of a fibreglass ladder. The worker was coming down a 120 kilogram load-rated fibreglass dual purpose step ladder that was set up in its unfolded (straight) configuration when it snapped in two.

The failure occurred at the main hinge point, where the stiles contact the back of the top cap (remembering the ladder is approximately straight with the rear legs upside down). The break occurred through the fibreglass stiles. He fell approximately two metres, injuring his back.
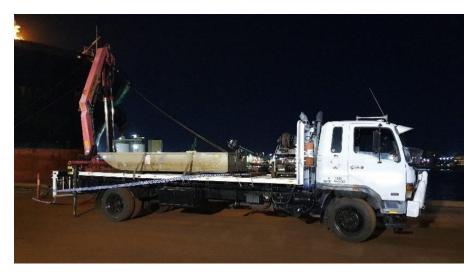
WHSQ recommended the following actions in the safety alert:
- Ladders should be checked frequently and maintained in good condition.
- A ladder inspection should be made:
    o when originally purchased, received or put into service
    o before each use
    o after mishaps, drops and impacts
    o periodically
    o to check for signs of UV degradation.
- Always refer to the manufacturer's specifications for the safe use, inspection, maintenance and storage of portable ladders. The inspection should include checking:
    o the fibreglass has not started to separate, wear away or crack, especially around rivets and bolt holes
    o for fibreglass 'blooming', where the glass fibres break through the surface of the fibreglass. This can be an indication that the material is degrading or is defective from manufacture. While blooming may not cause a significant reduction in strength, it will result in discomfort to the user from glass fibres in their skin and can reduce the electrical insulating properties of the ladder
    o all bolts and rivets are present and secure
    o there are no loose or cracked rungs or hinges
    o for corrosion of members, bolts and rivets – both internal and external corrosion
    o the integrity of rung/tread to stile connection and deferment flanges
    o the free movement of all pivoting or rotating surfaces (these may need to be lubricated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications)
    o the ladder feet are not excessively worn or missing and are the feet supplied by the manufacturer
    o for repairs or replacement parts that do not look genuine.
- When a defect is identified, the ladder should be marked and taken out of service for either repair by a competent person (i.e. the manufacturer or authorised agent) or destroyed. Defects include any missing or damaged parts on the ladder and alterations made to the original ladder design.

**SafeWork NSW: Vehicle Loading Crane crushes worker**

https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/compliance-and-prosecutions/incident-information-releases

A 60-year-old worker was crushed and died after becoming trapped between the arm of a vehicle-loading crane and the truck it was mounted on. The incident occurred as the crane was lifting equipment onto the back of the truck and, although the emergency stop was activated, the worker couldn't be freed until emergency services arrived.



Above: Crane involved in the incident

SafeWork NSW states that you must implement 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks associated with using vehicle-loading cranes.  SafeWork NSW issued the following actions in the media release for the incident:

Make sure:

- you choose the right equipment for the job and only use it for the purpose it was designed
- you follow the manufacturer's guide for inspections, maintenance and testing
- any inspection, maintenance or testing is completed by a competent person
- fluid levels and pressures are correct, and any hydraulics are working correctly
- all operators are trained in how to use the crane, and hold a high-risk work licence for a vehicle-loading crane - class CV or one of the four slewing mobile crane classes - if the crane has a capacity of 10 tonnes or more
- there are no obstructions to the crane operator – they can see the load at all times during the lift; if the load is outside the operators view, the lifting process must be directed by a licensed dogger or rigger
- operational warning devices (where fitted) are automatically operated when the crane is in use
- emergency stops are located at each control station
- the crane is always level and only operated within its rated capacity
- outriggers are fully extended and located on pads or other support material
- you establish exclusion zones to separate people and moving plant.

Consider:

- using constant pressure controls, so operation stops when you release the controls
- using remote controls
- installing operational warning devices (audible alarm or flashing light) if not already provided
- installing slew limiters, to stop the boom hitting the operator
- installing physical barriers or guards to prevent access to dangerous parts
- providing controls that can only be operated from where the boom or load can't be lifted over the operator.

**SafeWork NSW: Electrician suffers serious burns**
https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/compliance-and-prosecutions/incident-information-releases

A 24-year-old electrician suffered serious burns to his forearms, hands and face when he touched a live electrical circuit and caused an arc flash explosion. The incident took place at a data centre under construction in Macquarie Park.



Above: Portable load bank involved in the incident

SafeWork NSW stated that businesses are reminded of their duty to identify hazards and manage risks to health and safety in accordance with the provisions of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017. This includes eliminating or minimising electrical risks, so far as is reasonably practicable. In NSW, it's prohibited to work on live electrical equipment unless one or more exceptions apply.

The Code of practice for managing electrical risks in the workplace outlines when working live in permitted, and how to do it.  WPCG Member companies may have additional requirements for energy isolation, including working on or near live equipment.

Working de-energised eliminates significant electrical risks.

SafeWork NSW issued the following actions in the media release for the incident:

To isolate electrical supply, you must:

- consult with the person who manages or controls the workplace about timing of the work, and tell anyone who may be affected
- identify the circuit that needs to be isolated
- disconnect active conductors from the relevant source - there may be multiple sources - and stand-by systems, generators and photovoltaic systems, as well as auxiliary supplies, from other boards
- if a removable or rack-out circuit breaker or combined fuse switch is used, make sure it's racked-out or removed, then locked open and danger tagged
- earth each high-voltage exposed part after proven de-energised
- lock the isolating switch, or remove and tie back relevant conductors, to protect those carrying out the electrical work
- tag the switching points, to provide general information to those at the workplace
- test that the relevant circuits have been de-energised, along with any other relevant conductors, and re-test as necessary.

'Test for 'dead' before you touch', always.

**Worksafe Victoria: Worker crushed in elevating work platform**
https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-alerts/employee-fatally-crushed-elevating-work-platform

WorkSafe has issued a safety alert on the risks of being crushed against fixed structures on a mobile elevating work platform (EWP).

On 27 January 2020 an employee undertaking painting tasks from a scissor-type elevating work platform (EWP) was fatally injured. It is likely the EWP was raised to reach an internal window located near the roof of the workplace. Tragically, he was crushed between the EWP and an overhead structure.

While EWPs are commonly used to control the risks of working at height, they may introduce other risks. Serious and fatal incidents involving EWPs can occur when operators or passengers are crushed against fixed structures.

The risk of crushing increases when:
- overhead/adjacent fixed structures are present where the task is being carried out
- ground-based obstacles divert an operator's attention when it's moving
- there is unexpected movement of an EWP due to:
  o unstable ground conditions
  o malfunction of controls (debris and dust clogging the controls can increase this risk)
  o an operator's lack of familiarity with the model specific controls
  o an operator or passenger leaning on or against the controls while undertaking a task
  o poor communication between operators and passengers.

**In the Safety Alert, Worksafe Victoria recommended the following ways to control risks of EWP crushing:**
- Employers and self-employed persons must undertake an assessment to determine the correct or safest method to perform the work at height. In some cases, an EWP may not be the safest option and other methods, such as scaffolding, will be more appropriate and the risks of crushing will be eliminated.

**Common risk control measures for EWP crush hazards**
In the Safety Alert, Worksafe Victoria reminded that it is an employer's duty to provide training, information and instruction for EWPs that ensures, for example, the operator understands the model-specific controls. In addition, EWP-specific emergency procedures should be in place and communicated to those with the responsibility to undertake tasks contained within it.

Operator protective devices - known as secondary guarding^ - may also be used to control risks. They include, but are not limited to:
- physical barriers attached to the platform (Figure 1)
- pressure sensing devices positioned over the control panel which detect potential crush incidents and prevent further hazardous movements (Figure 2)
- proximity sensing devices which prevent movement into high-risk areas near fixed structures



**Figure 1:** EWP with physical barriers attached.



**Figure 2:** A pressure sensing device positioned over the control panel.

The operator may also control risks by:

- operating the EWP in creep mode when near fixed/overhead structures
- lowering the platform of the EWP to its stowed position when relocating it to another location
- 'walking' the EWP with the operator at ground level using the removable controls or other mobile control device.

^ Secondary guarding is now regularly fitted to boom-type EWPs. Recently, secondary guarding systems have become available for use with scissor-type EWPs. It may be reasonably practical to consider the use of a scissor-type EWP fitted with secondary guarding when there is a risk of crushing.

**If risks of crushing still remain**

In the Safety Alert, Worksafe Victoria stated that if risks still remain after implementing control measures such as secondary guarding, then administrative controls may be introduced. These include but are not limited to:

- EWP inspection and maintenance regimes consistent with manufacturer's instructions
- altered work procedures
- assigning a safety observer who has line of sight to the EWP while the EWP is in operation
- ensuring the safety observer is trained to use the mobile EWPs ground-based and emergency controls.

When operating powered mobile plant—including operation of EWPs—to undertake construction work, a SWMS must be developed as it is deemed high risk construction work. Measures to control crushing and other risks (e.g. falls from height and demolition work) from EWPs must be documented in the SWMS.

**Genie Lift Safety alert**

https://www.necanet.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/genie_safety_notice_01_29_2020_1580486485.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Genie has been notified of three instances where the bottom turntable rotation bearing bolts in the machines referenced above have come loose causing the separation of the turntable from the chassis. Separation of the turntable from the chassis can result in a machine tip-over or other structural failure.