

# Fusion WISE

Safety @ Work

## Welcome to Fusion WISE

Welcome to the August edition of Fusion WISE, a monthly candidate newsletter covering OH&S, Hot Jobs, industrial relations, reminders, important updates/changes for Fusion employees and a range of other topics.

## National Model Work Health and Safety Regulations & Codes of Practice – Update

Safe Work Australia Members met in Sydney in July, taking another significant step towards harmonising work health and safety laws. All Members reiterated their support of the harmonisation process and its potential benefits. Members, with the exception of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), endorsed the draft model Work Health and Safety Regulations, the first stage Codes of Practice and the National Compliance and Enforcement Policy subject to the resolution of a small number of policy issues.

The draft model WHS Regulations and first stage Codes of Practice have been developed through an intensive consultation process over the past 18 months which included a four month public comment period.

The Regulations, Codes and National Compliance and Enforcement Policy will now be provided to the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council in early August for final endorsement, to allow sufficient time for the implementation of model legislation in all jurisdictions by the end of December 2011.

This represents a positive step for Australian businesses and workers, who have had their say on the new laws. This harmonised legislation forms the basis to further enhance Australia's work health and safety regulatory framework.

## Excavation Safety & Trench Collapse

**A recent trench collapse in Victoria highlighted the risks associated with working in trenches. WorkSafe provided the following report prepared by Ambulance Victoria:**

A young man is very lucky to have such quick thinking

workmates after a trench collapse in Templestowe this afternoon. Advanced life support paramedics from Templestowe, intensive care paramedics and a paramedic Team Manager were called to the scene at 2.47pm.

Intensive care paramedic Craig Hazelwood said they arrived within seven minutes to find the man being dug out by his workmates.



'He'd been working in the trench about halfway down when the walls have collapsed, similar to a mudslide, forcing him to the bottom about three and a half metres down, filling it with dirt,' he said.

'The 25-year-old man had dirt up to his ears so his workmates, without any regard for their own safety, jumped in and started digging.

'I climbed in and assisted until we could free his boots and he was able to walk to the top of the trench and was loaded into the ambulance. 'He suffered suspected fractured ribs, a suspected collapsed lung and leg injuries.

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'We put a drip in his arm and gave him a significant amount of pain relief to make him more comfortable and fluids to stabilise his blood pressure.

'He was taken to the Royal Melbourne Hospital in a serious but stable condition. 'He's very lucky that he was a fit young man and that his workmates jumped in so quickly to free him.'

The wet conditions now experienced in Victoria have increased the risk of excavation collapse and this and other recent incidents provide a timely reminder of the need to protect against collapse.

You do not need to be fully buried to receive significant injuries such as broken bones and you will not be able to breathe if your chest is buried. Even a shallow excavation about a metre deep can be deadly if it collapses when a person is kneeling or squatting down inside the excavation.

**Worksafe has released a safety alert highlighting the importance of protecting workers from trench collapse. Some of the key points contained in the alert are as follows:**

### Control measures

#### Before trenching work starts, ensure:

- work is planned so it can be done safely, including determining appropriate engulfment protection and site security requirements
- a safe work method statement (SWMS) is developed for high risk work that involves mobile plant or if the trench depth is 1.5m or more
- an emergency response plan (ERP) is developed to deal with potential incidents (eg worker rescue, ground slip or flood).

#### When undertaking trenching work, ensure:

- a competent person, experienced in trenching works, supervises and monitors the work
- workers are instructed on the ERP and SWMS (and it is followed)
- workers never work ahead of the protection or remove it prematurely if protection is being progressively installed
- materials, spoil and plant are kept away from the edge of the trench
- workers not involved with the work and the public can't access the trench and works area

- where there is a risk of children or other members of the public accessing the works area, secure and stable site fencing is provided to prevent access

While the trench remains open, the contractor should ensure the trench and site security is inspected regularly - and as soon as possible - after any event that could affect the safety of the trench (eg a storm or ground slip).

### Engulfment protection methods

Workers must be protected while undertaking any work where they are required to enter a trench and there is a risk of engulfment. When appropriately used, the following methods can provide the required protection:

- batter the walls to a safe angle.
- bench the walls to form one or a series of steps.
- shore up the walls to support the sides
- work inside trench shields

## Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek, Slide

With Melbourne's weather starting to warm up, it's worth reminding everyone to the importance of protecting yourself from the sun when working outdoors. Sunburn can of course occur in colder weather as well however in hotter weather the ultraviolet (UV) index will rise from it's current low or moderate levels to high, very high or extreme levels.



Slip



Slop



Slap



Seek



Slide

Remember, there's more to sun protection than sunscreen. No sunscreen provides complete protection against UV radiation. Always use sunscreen together with shade, sun protective clothing, hats and sunglasses. Sunscreen also needs to be carefully applied and reapplied: apply it liberally, to dry skin, 20 minutes before going outside. Reapply every two hours or more often if swimming or sweating.

