Work safety is about the health, safety and wellbeing of people at work.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011, applies to all workers in the ACT, including:

- employees,
- contractors, unpaid trainees,
- part time and casual staff,
- apprentices,
- volunteers, and
- people doing work experience placements.

It also applies in all ACT workplaces, including:

- offices,
- hospitals,
- schools,
- factories,
- shops,
- cafes and restaurants,
- construction sites, and
- farms and forests.

Workplace accidents, injuries, illnesses and bullying are all work safety issues. Awareness of work safety and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 is vital to protect you at work and reduce the number of workplace injuries.

Responsibilities of your employer

Your employer has a duty to ensure a safe workplace by managing risk. This means that your employer must identify workplace hazards and then take steps to eliminate or reduce the risk that those hazards pose to people’s safety. The hazards and the risk management strategies will vary from workplace to workplace depending on the industry. Some examples of workplace hazards are:

- frayed electrical cords that could cause an electric shock,
- lifting or carrying objects incorrectly,
- supporting equipment on worksites such as scaffolding and ramps incorrectly set up,
- handling hot objects in a kitchen, and
- slippery floors that could cause someone to fall.

The law also sets out specific requirements that an employer must fulfil regarding manual handling, slips, trips and falls, electrical safety, emergency exits, personal protective and safety equipment, safety lines, ladders, extreme temperatures, loud noise, ventilation, lighting, plant equipment, dangerous substances, isolated work and confined spaces to name a few.

Nothing that your employer asks you to sign or agree to can remove their duty to ensure work safety. Your employer is ultimately responsible for your work safety. You also have a legal right to refuse to do work that you believe is unsafe.

Your employer has a responsibility to consult you about work safety and allow you to contribute to creating a safer workplace. This could include consulting you about possible workplace hazards, about ways of reducing risks, or about the facilities available in the workplace.
Your responsibilities as a worker

You have a responsibility to take care of your own safety as well as the safety of others in your workplace. This means:

- reporting any hazards that you notice to your employer,
- following instructions your employer gives you about work safety,
- asking questions about work processes or practices you are unsure of, and
- using appropriate protective equipment and procedures.

Most importantly, you need to ask your employer about anything that could affect your safety at work. This could be as simple as asking to be shown how to do a particular task again to be sure you can do it safely.

Further Information | Phone: WorkSafe ACT on 02 6207 3000 | Email: worksafe@act.gov.au | Web: www.act.gov.au/accesscbr

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