

# General information - Australian occupational health and safety organisations >

**This information bulletin has been developed to assist students, industry and the public to understand the functions of various occupational health and safety organisations in Australia.**

## **National Occupational Health and Safety Commission ([NOHSC](#))**

- NOHSC is a tripartite body made up of government, business, and unions established in 1985.
- The purpose of the Commission is to improve occupational health and safety in Australia through the development of national policies, strategies, standards and codes of practice.
- The composition of the Commission is three members from the unions (from the [Australian Council of Trade Unions](#)), three members from business (from the [Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)), three Federal Government representatives, one from the Commission Executive and one from each of the eight state and territory governments.

## **The [National Commission](#)**

The National Commission's current priorities are:

- National uniformity of OHS Standards
- Improved industry OHS performance
- Research responsive to the OHS needs of industry
- Other priorities of the National Commission include the administration of the [Industrial Chemicals \(Notification and Assessment\) Act](#) 1989 (Commonwealth)

## **[Worksafe Australia](#)**

- Worksafe Australia is a Commonwealth Department, which is the operating arm of NOHSC and is administered by the Executive of the Commission.
- It carries out the day to day workings of the Commission, e.g. research and compilation of documents, etc

## **[Comcare](#)**

Comcare is the Federal Government agency that administers the [Occupational Health and Safety \(Commonwealth Employment\) Act](#), which covers 500,000 Commonwealth employees. The objectives of the Act are:.

putting safety first >



- to secure the health, safety and welfare of the Commonwealth and of Commonwealth authorities;
- to protect people at or near workplaces from risk to health and safety arising out of the activities of employees at work;
- to ensure that expert advice is available on OHS matters for employers, employees and contractors;
- to promote an occupational environment for employees at work that is adapted to their health and safety needs;
- to foster a co-operative consultative relationship between employers and employees.

The employer must, in consultation with their employees and involved unions, develop their own occupational health and safety policy. Designated work groups must be set up which have a health and safety representative.

Representatives must attend a Comcare training course. Health and safety committees may be set up to assist the employer in developing appropriate health and safety procedures, to facilitate co-operation with employees and to help the employer to disseminate appropriate information.

In workplaces where there are normally less than 50 employees and the employees are in one or more designated work groups, employees must set up a committee if they are asked to by health and safety representatives. Membership of committees can be agreed between the employer and the involved unions or, if there are no involved unions between the employer and employees.

#### **The obligations for the employer are to:**

- provide a safe and healthy workplace;
- ensure the health and safety of the employee who handles, stores or transports equipment or substances;
- develop an occupational health and safety policy;
- provide appropriate medical and first aid services in the workplace;
- maintain records and information on workplace health and safety.
- Comcare also covers workers compensation and rehabilitation.

#### **[NT WorkSafe](#)**

In the Northern Territory as in other Territories and States, there is an organisation that is responsible for occupational health, safety, workers compensation and rehabilitation. It is the NT WorkSafe.

NT WorkSafe administers the [Work Health Act](#), which covers the health and safety of employees in all workplaces except mines (these are under the jurisdiction of the Northern Territory [Department of Business, Industry & Resource Development](#) and Commonwealth workplaces (Comcare).

The Act is similar to others around Australia and aims to minimise the economic and social costs of work related injuries and diseases to the Territory community through prevention compensation and rehabilitation.

#### **NT WorkSafe >**

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