

# The Science Safety Snippets

Welcome to this month's edition of the Faculty of Science's Safety Snippets newsletter. This month focuses on the proposed changes to the Victorian OHS regulations. Please direct all comments and feedback, including suggestions for articles particularly relevant to your area to [Sharon.Lockhart@sci.monash.edu.au](mailto:Sharon.Lockhart@sci.monash.edu.au)

## Of interest

A safety improvement campaign at Chadstone Shopping Centre has resulted in one of the best results in the history of WorkSafe's Safer Work Zones campaign. Inspectors spent four days at the Centre between 11–15 June carrying out 129 inspections and issuing 29 Improvement Notices. One Prohibition Notice was also issued. Follow-up visits to ensure Notices are being complied with are scheduled to begin next week and are likely to run until mid-July.

The main issues identified included inappropriate ladders, blocked exits, problems with fire extinguishers and ergonomic issues. High levels of consultation about safety-related matters was also a feature at Chadstone.

More than 2300 serious WorkCover injury claims have been made in the City of Stonnington in the past five years. The cost of medical treatment, rehabilitation and compensation (where appropriate) exceeds \$28.9million.

"The challenge for businesses in the Chadstone Shopping Centre and all other businesses and workers in the region is to stay on top of safety issues, not to rely on past good performance. Safe workplaces, systems and practices have to apply every day, not just when WorkSafe inspectors are in the area. Risks need to be identified and monitored. Good safety procedures need to be used and reviewed, not just left in a folder in the office."

**Relationship with the OHS Act**  
 Regulations are not made by Parliament, but by the executive government (the Governor, in a council setting with a number of ministers of the government). Where Regulations impose duties, they do not replace the broader duties in the OHS Act. The Act duties continue to apply. However, where a regulation addresses the same subject as a duty in the Act, compliance with the regulation is regarded as compliance with the duty in the Act.

**Streamlining Victoria's safety regulations** From 1st July 2007, a new single Occupational Health and Safety regulation will come into effect replacing existing regulations. As part of the modernisation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* 2004 the regulations which underpin the act are being streamlined in an attempt to cut red tape and compliance costs. Victoria has 13 occupational health and safety (OHS) regulations. These have

been reviewed and consolidated into a single, document to improve health and safety in by making it easier for employers and workers to understand their safety obligations. The main focus has been in removing duplication and improving the alignment with national standards. People and organisations who comply with their obligations at present will be well placed to comply with the new streamlined regulation.

The new regulations have a greater focus on Hazard Identification and control, standardising licences to operate high risk plant (i.e. forklift), reference to the national standard in the area of Hazardous substances and emphasis of consultation through the OHS Representative networks. (Workcover website and notes)

## **What's different?**

The table below summaries some of the major changes applicable to the faculty;

Regulation chapter	Comment
Noise	Reduction in red tape regarding noise exposure in excess of standard
Hazardous substances	Further alignment with national regulations, Standardisation of licensing requirements for use of carcinogenic substances, - incorporation of the production of hazardous substances from non hazardous substances
Involving HSR's in consultation	Provide information to HSR's before employees if possible
Risk identification & control	Greater focus on identification and control Risk assessment only mandatory for high risk industries

The Faculty of Science should see little change in the implementation of the new regulations especially as we are well set up with our systems for consultation, risk management, chemical safety and OHS induction/training.

Additional information on the new regulations can be found at [www.workcover.vic.gov.au](http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au)