

# OHS Risk Management for Supervisors



## Contents

Icons used in this manual .....	3
1. Introduction .....	4
2. Fatigue .....	5
3. Traffic & Pedestrians .....	9
4. Working Outdoors .....	14
5. Drugs & Alcohol .....	21
6 .Working with or near glass.....	24
7 .Working with or near electricity .....	28

### Version Control

This version is Version 7, September 17, 2010

### WorkCover Disclaimer

This material was developed by Outdoor Media Association as part of a project funded under the WorkCover NSW WorkCover Assist Program.

Any views expressed are not necessarily those of WorkCover NSW.



## *Icons used in this manual*

For quick reference, icons are used to indicate common instructions and tasks throughout this manual. Below is an explanation of each icon.



This is the '**ask a question**' icon. It's used whenever you are to ask a direct question of the group. Answers that should be elicited from the group are also given.



This is the '**play video**' icon, and appears to prompt you to play a section of the DVD.



This is the '**discuss**' icon which appears whenever discussion points are given.



This is the '**activity**' icon. Whenever you see this it indicates an activity for the group follows.



This is the '**summary**' icon that appears at the end of each module, and indicates that the information in the module is to be summarized for the group.

## 1. Introduction

Timing: 10 minutes



Introduce the course and topics you will be discussing today. Ensure participants understand their role as supervisors, and that workplace safety is everyone's responsibility.

Discuss the program's objectives which are to:

1. Improve the competency of supervisors in risk management principles,
2. Educate supervisors working within the industry how to better communicate and consult with employees in identifying and controlling identified hazards and risks,
3. Give instruction and training in specific areas of work identified as industry specific to the target audience; and
4. Create an ongoing resource that addresses language and literacy barriers for employees working in high risk situations.

## 2. Fatigue

Timing: 15 minutes



Ask: What is fatigue? How does it make you feel?

Answers should include:

Fatigue is a feeling of general exhaustion. Fatigue can make you feel very tired or sleepy.



Ask: How can being affected by fatigue make your work unsafe?

Answers: by not being focused on your work, not being alert enough to assess risks, not paying attention to tasks you are doing, taking risks.



Show the DVD module **Fatigue**

Pause on graphic of **Fatigue** key points



Discuss:

It is important that everyone is fit and alert for work. It is the individual's responsibility to make sure they get enough rest between work shifts.

Everyone should make sure they are allowing enough time to rest between work shifts.

Understanding or being able to identify fatigue will help you make sure that you and your fellow workers are able to perform at your best, without risking your health or safety due to fatigue.

Fatigue can occur due to any of the following

- Lack of sleep,
- Ongoing physical or mental exertion,
- Poor eating habits,
- Emotional stress,
- Long work hours;
- Insufficient rest between shifts,
- Life style & work arrangements.



Discuss: the DVD discussed that not having enough rest between work shifts can add to the risk of fatigue.

Remind trainees that they have a responsibility to let their employer know if they or a member of their team may be fatigued, and unable to safely or competently complete their work.



Discuss: other signs of fatigue can be any, or a combination of several of the following.

Signs of fatigue may include:

- Loss of appetite,
- Lack of motivation,
- The feeling of weak, sore or aching muscles,
- Slowed reflexes and responses,
- Impaired decision-making and judgement,
- Irritability,
- Blurred vision,
- Reduced productivity / performance,
- Short-term memory problems; and
- Poor concentration.



**Exercise:** Separate into groups and have one supervisor read the following, then, as a group work through the exercise questions.

- It is Thursday 10am. Jim is driving and starts to feel the lanes are all merging into one. He has had to get up early a few mornings this week and has not felt like breakfast and just had a couple of cups of coffee only.
- Jim and Robert are working together today and have a few kilometres to travel between job sites. After the 1<sup>st</sup> job at around 12.30pm Robert asks Jim where they should stop for lunch as he was hungry.
- Jim says he is not really hungry and is happy to fit in another job before lunch. Robert does not think he can wait that long so they stop for lunch and Jim has a soft drink as he is still not hungry. Jim is impatient while Robert finishes his lunch.
- On the next job Robert notices Jim is holding his back and makes a few small mistakes which meant they were longer at the site for that particular job.
- Robert offers to drive to the last job of the day and Jim has a sleep on the way.
- Jim feels a little better when they arrive at the site. He unpacks the tools required and heads up the ladder without his hard hat.
- Robert notices Jim does not have his hard hat on and reminds him he must wear it.
- When the job is finished Robert drives back to the workshop and Jim tells him his plans for Thursday night.

A. List at least 4 possible signs of fatigue

1. e.g Jim makes a few small mistakes

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

B. What should Jim do to avoid fatigue?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

C. How has Robert assisted his work mate Jim?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Discuss the key points on the DVD graphic.

**Fatigue is a major safety risk.**

**It can be caused by illness, overwork, being unfit, sleeping problems, and partying too hard.**

**Fatigue can impair vision, concentration, memory, strength, driving and reaction times.**

**Consult with your team, and make sure everyone is fit for work.**

**Plan work carefully, especially during busy periods.**

Sum up the discussion, emphasising the key points of what fatigue is, how it occurs, and how it can be avoided by good rest.

Remind everyone to look out for fellow workers showing symptoms of fatigue.

Also remind the participants that as supervisors, they have a responsibility to alert management if they consider that they or their fellow workers may be showing signs of fatigue in the workplace.

Finally, remind the participants that the best way to eliminate fatigue is to get a good night's sleep.

### 3. Traffic & Pedestrians

Timing: 30 minutes



Ask: What are some of the issues of working near pedestrians?

Answers should include: The public entering your work area, working around the public or having tools & material laid out on the footpath, and trip and slips caused by your work.



Ask: What are some of the issues of working near traffic?

Answers should include: Risk of being hit by vehicles, possibly making the pedestrians move closer to the road / kerb, traffic noise, and being alert for traffic.



Show video,  
Pause on graphic of Traffic & Pedestrians key points



Discuss that it is important to always perform a risk assessment of your work area; you need to identify and discuss what sort of issues are present if you are working near or around members of the public, especially the elderly or people with a disability or impairment.



Discuss that as a supervisor you need to be sure that your fellow workers are not exposed to danger from passing traffic, and that your work activities do not create a risk to the public by making them move around your work, closer to the road.

Be sure that as part of your risk assessment you discuss what controls are needed with your fellow workers.



Ask: What are some controls you might use to minimise the risks associated with working around traffic and pedestrians?



Discuss the following controls.

- Do you need a road closure for the work?
- Where are you going to set up safety cones, barriers or tape?
- Has your team made sure that pedestrians are not forced near or onto the road to get around your work area?
- Are the barriers enough protection from the passing traffic for the area you are in?
- Do you need to have someone acting as a spotter to direct people around your work area?
- Does the work need to be planned to avoid the busy times?
- Is there enough lighting and are the workers wearing hi visibility clothing?
- If a team member needs to cross the road they will need to cross at the traffic lights?
- 



Ask: What would you do if someone enters your work area?

Answers should include: stop work until they leave, ask them politely to leave.



Discuss:

Not everyone sees warning signs or barriers, or some people may just decide to ignore them. It is important that you always remain calm and polite when dealing with the public.

Be aware that elderly or disabled people may become confused, and need to be treated with kindness, patience and respect. Always stop work while you escort them out of the work area.

If people are regularly entering your work area, you may need to look at improving your controls with better barriers. This should be recorded on your risk assessment and discussed with your management.



Ask: What other types of pedestrian behaviours could be a hazard?



Discuss: Some people may be drunk or aggressive. As a supervisor, you should regularly remind your workers that it is unacceptable to argue with any member of the public, and you must always act in a calm and non aggressive manner.

In these situations always have your fellow workers stay together and do not commence work until you are all sure the aggressive or drunk persons have left the area.

If needed do not hesitate to call the police.

Remember: Everybody has the right to a safe work environment. This includes freedom from violence and intimidation.



Questions

1. If the public regularly enter your work area you may need to put up more barriers and a sign keep out **True or False**
2. If a member of the public starts to abuse and threaten you with violence, you should call the police and then management **True or False**



From information in this section of the workbook fill in the blanks

- a) Do you need a \_\_\_\_\_ closure for the work?
- b) Where are you going to set up witches' hats, \_\_\_\_\_ or tape?
- c) Has your team made sure that \_\_\_\_\_ are not forced near or onto the \_\_\_\_\_ to get around your work area?
- d) Is the \_\_\_\_\_ enough protection from the passing traffic for the area you are in?
- e) Do you need to have someone acting as a \_\_\_\_\_ to direct people around your work area?
- f) Does the work need to be planned to avoid the \_\_\_\_\_ times?
- g) Is there enough \_\_\_\_\_ and are the workers wearing \_\_\_\_\_ clothing?



Discuss the key points on the graphics.

**You have a duty of care to pedestrians, motorists, your team and yourself.**

**Protect pedestrians from injury – keep them away from your work area.**

**Keep watch for people with special needs.**

**Make sure motorists can see your team and your workplace.**

**Workplace violence, harassment and bullying are unlawful.**

**Back away from threatening behaviour.**

**When driving, take regular breaks.**

Sum up the discussion; refresh everyone on how important it is to always conduct a risk assessment prior to conducting any work.

Working near traffic has risks that need appropriate controls. If the supervisors feel that the controls they have at their disposal are not enough to eliminate the risks, they must stop work and contact management

As supervisors, you have a duty of care to make sure your fellow workers and all members of the public are considered when assessing the work location.

You should always avoid confrontation and never add fuel to a fire when dealing with aggression.

Remember that **WorkCover** can be called on **13 10 50** if anyone would like any further advice, on this topic or any topic relating to their health and safety at work

## 4. Working Outdoors

Timing: 50 minutes



Ask, what are some hazards that you would be exposed to working outdoors?

Answers should include: wind, rain, heat, sunburn, lightning, storms, floods, dangerous driving conditions, bushfires.



Discuss that in Australia we can experience many environmental hazards that we need to regularly monitor and assess.

As supervisors working outdoors, daily and ongoing risk assessments are essential to help make sure your fellow workers have discussed what the weather may bring, and are prepared for any change that may come.



Ask: What Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E) can help protect your fellow workers from exposure to environmental hazards.

Answers should include: sunscreen, hats or brims for your hard hats, covered short or long sleeve shirts, wet weather gear and sunglasses.



Discuss that P.P.E should always be appropriate for the work environment and made available when required. This means that as you are often on the road, P.P.E should always be available in your work vehicles.

Part of your team's daily risk assessment should also be to check all P.P.E required is available, including readily available sunscreen.

Remember to remind your fellow workers to reapply sunscreen 10 – 15 minutes before going outside, and then re apply often, but at least every two hours as a minimum.

Appropriate clothing should always be worn. No one should be allowed to work shirtless or in singlets. Comfortable clothing that covers the neck and shoulders should be considered a minimum when working outdoors.



List 4 items of PPE appropriate to help protect you from environmental hazards

1. e.g. Collared shirt with sleeves
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



Show video Working Outdoors

Pause on graphic of Working Outdoors key points:

**Australia's environment can be hazardous, with storms, extremes in temperatures, wind, lightning, and heavy rain.**

**Protect yourself and your team from environmental hazards.**

**In hot conditions, try to work in the shade and during the cooler times of the day.**

**Wear protective clothing such as a hat, sunglasses and sunscreen even when working in the shade.**

**Re-apply sunscreen often.**

**Stay hydrated – drink plenty of water.**



Introduce discussion on the above key points.

Discuss that lightning can, and does, strike many miles away from the thunderstorm cloud itself.

As a supervisor, you are the front line defence in assessing when to react to thunder and lightning storms. Remember that at certain times of the year storms can develop very quickly and you need to be ready to react.



Ask: What are some ways we can tell if there is bad weather coming?

Answers: Observations, the radio reports, newspaper forecasts, the Bureau of Meteorology website.



Discuss one immediate control you have is to call management and have someone look at the weather warning alerts on the **Bureau of Meteorology** website where they can even look at the storm cell and monitor its path and speed.

Always treat lightning with great respect. The work you perform with your fellow workers involves being near and around metal structures and often these structures are high or the only raised object around you. Lightning is naturally attracted to metal and always tries to find the closest way to the ground. Make sure your team are safe and secure in a building or shelter if an electrical storm is around.



Ask: What do you do if you are caught outside in the middle of an electrical storm?

Answers should include take cover, get away from metal or tall objects, and crouch low to the ground.



Discuss what to do if you are caught in an electrical storm:

- Do not touch metal surfaces or objects
- Don't stand near the outdoor signs you are installing on, or near tall objects like trees or light poles.
- Always try to go inside a building.
- If no other cover is available find a low area. Make sure that it is not near flowing water.



### List 5 hazards you will come across working outdoors

1. e.g. Strong winds \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



Ask: What are some risks of working in the sun?

Answers should include sunburn, heat illness and stress, dehydration from sweating and skin cancer.



Discuss that working outdoors in the heat and sun can cause harm to our bodies both inside and out. Dehydration and heat illness through to skin cancers are caused from working outdoors if care is not taken.



Ask: What is sunburn?

Answers should include: sore, red burnt skin from being in the sun too long.



Discuss that the skin is affected by UVA and UVB from the sun's harmful rays.

When we are exposed to UVB and get sunburnt the top layers of our skin release chemicals that cause our blood vessels to expand and leak fluids, causing inflammation, pain and redness – this is what sunburn is.

It can occur in as little as 15 minutes and will continue to develop for 24 to 72 hours after exposure to the sun.

UVA penetrates deeper into the skin, affecting the living skin cells that lie under our skin's surface. It is these rays that cause longer-term damage like wrinkles, blotchiness, sagging and discoloration while also laying the ground work for future cases of skin cancer.



Ask: Why can we get sunburnt on cloudy days?

Answers should be the UV rays pass through cloud and cause us to be burnt even on an overcast day.



Discuss that even on cloudy days supervisors should be aware that it is possible to get sunburnt and they should remind workers to reapply sunscreen often.



Ask: What is Skin Cancer?

Answers should include: Skin cancer is a disease of the body's skin cells caused by overexposure to ultraviolet radiation or 'UV'.



Discuss that although skin cancer is one of the most deadly cancers, it is also ***one that is most easily cured if there is early discovery***

Everyone should regularly self check their body, and have regular screening by their doctor.



List 4 risks of working in the sun

1. e.g. Heat Stress \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



Ask: What is dehydration and how can it make you feel?

Answers should include not having enough water in our bodies, being thirsty or having a dry mouth.



Discuss that dehydration is the body's lack of water.

The human body can last for weeks without food unless a medical condition exists, but it can only last for a few days without water. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

As a supervisor you should be aware of any signs that you or your fellow workers are dehydrated.

If these signs are ignored they can lead to a serious and possibly fatal outcome.

Some early signs of dehydration can include:

- thirst,
- impatience,
- fatigue; and
- lack of concentration.

Some serious signs of dehydration starting to lead to more serious and potential fatal results may include;

- increased pulse and respiration,
- dizziness,
- laboured breathing,
- mental confusion; and
- kidney failure.



Ask: If you are thirsty is soft drink or coffee as good as water?

Answer: No, soft drinks and coffee actually make you urinate more and increase dehydration. Water has a positive effect on your body and help prevent dehydration.



Discuss that if ignored, dehydration can also lead to heat cramps, which are muscle pain or uncontrollable spasms - usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs. Other heat illness such as heat exhaustion, and possibly fatal heat stroke may also occur.



### True or False

1. It is it okay to wear a singlet or no shirt on a hot day when working outdoors – **True or False**
2. Dehydration is not having enough water in our bodies – **True or False**
3. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated – **True or False**
4. Coffee and soft drinks can increase the chance of dehydration and also make you urinate more frequently **True or False**
5. You can get sunburnt on cloudy days **True or False**
6. Although Skin cancer can be deadly, if it is discovered early then it can often be easily cured **True or False**
7. I should have regular skin cancer checks. **True or False**



### Summary

Sum up the discussion by reiterating the key points on the Working Outdoors graphic.

Remind everyone that it is important to always perform a risk assessment of the weather before work.

Remind supervisors that it is important to keep their fluids up, especially on hot and humid days when everyone is sweating.

Discuss the importance of sun safety, using sunscreen regularly and having regular skin cancer checks.

## 5. Drugs & Alcohol

Timing: 20 minutes



Ask: How do drugs or alcohol affect the ability to work?

Answers may include: your judgement is impaired, you can make silly decisions, dangerous risk taking is increased, your reflexes are affected, and it's difficult to concentrate on work.



Discuss that some effects that drugs and alcohol have on you can include:

- Poor judgment and decision making;
- Inability to work safely;
- Inability to perceive dangerous or unsafe conditions;
- Poor hand-eye coordination; and
- Lessened concentration, attentiveness, and vision.

Any one of these effects could easily contribute to workplace accidents and injuries.

Working under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol makes it harder to carry out normal tasks in the correct manner, and our ability to react quickly if something goes wrong could be greatly reduced.



Ask: As supervisors; is it your responsibility, and "Duty of Care" to alert management if you think someone in your team is affected by drugs or alcohol?

Answer must only be yes.



Explain that, as a supervisor you have a responsibility to identify if you think any of your fellow workers may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Contact your management immediately for advice.

As part of your ongoing risk assessments and safety discussions you should remind your workers that they should also let you know if they are taking any prescription drugs that may affect their ability to work

Discuss that as supervisors, working in potentially high risk situations, often around traffic or at heights, even one alcoholic drink is too many.

Your employer should have some clear guidelines on the use of drugs and alcohol in your workplace.

If you feel you or a fellow worker has a drug or alcohol problem help can be sought by visiting a doctor.



Discuss that drugs and alcohol can affect the safety of your work, and that of your fellow workers.

Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol can also have serious consequences for your workers compensation insurance.

Take a moment to think, who will be left to look after you or pay for your medical bills if you are refused payments due to being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol?



Play the video. Pause on graphic of Drug and Alcohol key points

**It is unlawful to use illicit drugs.**

**Don't drink alcohol immediately before or during work.**

**If you drive, don't drink alcohol or take drugs.**

**Check with your doctor or pharmacist to make sure any prescription or non prescription medication you're taking doesn't affect your ability to work safely.**



1. A co-worker has come back from her lunch break slurring her words and repeating herself and you can smell alcohol on her breath. Should you tell management about her behaviour? **Yes No**

Discuss your answer



Fill in the blanks

Some effects that drugs and alcohol have on you can include:

- Poor judgment and \_\_\_\_\_ making
- Inability to work \_\_\_\_\_
- Inability to perceive \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ conditions
- Poor \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ coordination
- Lessened concentration, attentiveness, and \_\_\_\_\_



**Summary**

Sum up the discussion by reiterating the key points on the Drugs and Alcohol graphic.

Sum up the importance of remaining sober at work, and making sure all workers have a duty of care to look out for other workers and themselves whilst at work.

## 6. Working with or near glass

Timing: 15 minutes



Ask: What should be the first thing we do before working with glass?

Answer should be to complete a risk assessment. You need to firstly identify what could go wrong. For example, the glass could break or be dropped.



Ask: Why do we need to do a risk assessment?

Answers should include as glass is a potential hazard in the work place in many forms.



Discuss that as a supervisor working with glass it is important to always perform a risk assessment of your work area. You need to identify and discuss what sorts of issues are present.

What are your controls?

- Do you need to isolate the work area to protect the public and the members of your team?
- What P.P.E do you need when handling the glass?
- How will you carry the glass?
- How is the glass stored when not in use?
- How is the broken glass disposed of?
- Does the glass need to be put into any special bins for disposal?



Play the video.

Pause on graphic of Working with or near glass key points.

**Always wear PPE when working with or near glass.**

**Broken glass can be a hidden hazard. Keep watch for glass hazards in or near your workplace.**

**Protect passers by from glass hazards.**

**Broken glass needs to be sorted for recycling. Broken glass light fittings may need to be recycled separately.**



Ask: How is the best way to handle and carry glass sheets?

Answers should include with the use of glass suction pads and that two people are needed to carry.



Discuss that glass suction pads lock onto the glass and provide a proper handle to grip onto the glass. There are different types of glass suckers for various applications and sizes of glass.

Glass can, if handled incorrectly shatter and break.

Always consider your body position and where your limbs are when moving glass and make sure you do not put your body in a position where it can be struck by falling glass.

Glass should always be handled and installed by trained and competent persons only.



Ask: How should glass waste be disposed of?

Answers should include so no one can hurt themselves, using gloves or a pick up device.



Discuss if you need to pick up any broken glass always use gloves or a pick up device.

When cleaning up a worksite, make sure all broken glass has been removed as it is a hazard to you, your colleagues, and anyone coming into contact with it. It should be discarded into a recycling bin.

Always consider how the waste glass is disposed, make sure no one can come into contact with the glass once it is safely removed.

Your employer should have set procedures for working with glass and provide training in these procedures to you.

WorkCover has a safety alert for the storage and handling of glass sheets.



List at least 5 controls you can put in place to ensure the safety of your team when handling glass

1. . e.g. Put up barriers around the work area
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



Fill in the blanks

1. When handling, storing and moving glass you should always use the \_\_\_\_\_ gear.
2. Glass \_\_\_\_\_ lock onto the glass and provide a proper handle to carry the glass.
3. Glass can, if handled incorrectly \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If you need to pick up any broken glass always use \_\_\_\_\_ or a pick up device.
5. When cleaning up a worksite, make sure all broken glass has been removed. It should be discarded into a \_\_\_\_\_ bin.
6. Glass should always be handled and \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ and competent persons only.



Sum up the discussion by reiterating key points on the graphic

Summarise why it is important to always perform a risk assessment before handling or working with glass.

## 7. Working with or near electricity

Timing: 20 minutes



Ask: What are some of the dangers involved with working near or around electricity?

Answers should include: it can kill, it is invisible, you can't see it, it can jump from its source.



Discuss that electrical hazards are often hidden or not immediately obvious.

As supervisors it is very important that you always include a review of any electrical hazards as part of your risk assessment.



Ask, do you need to turn power off before changing light bulbs or fuses?

Answers should only be yes, each and every time you change a bulb or fuse you should double check that the power is turned off.

Talk to your employer about how you manage electrical hazards in the workplace.

WorkCover has clear guidelines on electrical safety so if you are unsure of your requirements; call them on 13 10 50



Discuss that if there is ever even the slightest doubt about if the power is on or off you must not let yourself or any member of your team perform the work. You must immediately contact your management for guidance.

As a general rule, always assume that the power is on until it has been clearly proven that the power is off.

If there is any sign of damaged, exposed or frayed electrical gear, do not proceed. Only qualified accredited personnel are allowed to service damaged electrical equipment.

Remind supervisors that electrical gear should not be used in wet or damp conditions.



Ask: Do my work tools need to be regularly tested and tagged?

Answers should be yes, all electrical work equipment needs to be regularly tested and tagged by a qualified person.



Discuss that all electrical gear has requirements that they are tested and tagged at set intervals for faults or damage. An electrician or qualified electrical tagging person can tell you what intervals different classifications of gear need to be checked.

Always look to see if the electrical gear you are using has a test sticker on it. This is usually near the plug. If you cannot see one, ask your employer why? Perhaps it has fallen off.

This is why all electrical gear must also be listed on a company electrical tagging register. It lists all the electrical gear, the date it was tested, and what date it needs to be retested.



Play the video.

Reiterate the key points of the module.

**Electricity is a hazard.**

**Electrical hazards can be hidden.**

**Use an overhead power line risk assessment check list and safe work method statements.**

**Always assume all electrical infrastructure is live.**

**Take care changing light bulbs and fuses – turn the power off before beginning work.**

**Stay more than 3 meters away from overhead power lines.**

**The minimum safe clearance between metal scaffolds and overhead power lines is 4 meters.**

**Carry ladders horizontally.**

**Only accredited personnel are authorised to work near overhead power lines or service electrical infrastructure.**



Ask: Can I work any distance near to overhead powerlines?

Answer: No, there are set distances required when working near overhead powerlines.



Discuss that work near overhead powerlines has set rules for how close persons can be to the power.

This involves awareness on:

- What type of power it is- is it insulated or uninsulated?
- What kind of work is being performed (using plant, scaffold etc)
- What voltage is the power?

As a supervisor, you need to be aware of what limits need to be observed when working near or around power. Ask your employer to list the safe approach distances needed when working around power.

Your employer must have safe work method statements available that discuss the procedures that need to be followed when working near or around electricity.

As a supervisor you must make certain that you cover these controls and discuss them as part of your risk assessment that you and your fellow workers do.

WorkCover has a **Code of Practice on Work Near Overhead Powerlines**. This lists all requirements and recommended controls for work near or around powerlines. Ask your employer to run through this with you and confirm all current work procedures address this Code of Practice.



Ask: What are Tiger Tails? Do they protect from electrocution?

Answer: No, Tiger Tails are used to provide a visual warning that power is close. They do not insulate or protect you from receiving an electrical shock.



Ask: What is the best way to carry a ladder or other long equipment like metal poles and tracking?

Answer: Always level to your waist, never sticking the ladder or other long object upright until you are ready to place the ladder.

Use 2 persons if possible carrying an end each.



Discuss that as well as the danger of coming into contact with power, electricity can also leap from powerlines across to other objects if a safe distance is not maintained.

This is known as an **electrical arc**. Electricity can arc from an uninsulated line to a metal object.

Always perform risk assessments on any power in the vicinity of your work area and identify where you, your fellow workers, and any equipment, especially metal objects like ladders and scaffolds, are going to be positioned.

As supervisors, always remind your fellow workers to look up before removing a ladder or other long piece of equipment from a vehicle.

Fibreglass ladders do not conduct electricity and should always be used whenever working near or around electricity.



#### Exercise: **True or False**

1. Tiger Tails are used to provide a visual warning that power is close. They do not insulate or protect you from receiving an electrical shock. - **True or False**
2. One of the dangers involved with working near or around electricity is that it is hard to detect because it is invisible. - **True or False**
3. You should always carry your ladder vertical to your waist. - **True or False**
4. Fibreglass ladders do not conduct electricity and should always be used whenever working near or around electricity. - **True or False**
5. The danger of coming into contact with power is that electricity can also jump from powerlines across to other objects if a safe distance is not maintained. - **True or False**
6. The term **arc** is known as an **electrical arc**. Electricity can jump from an uninsulated line to metal object. - **True or False**
7. All electrical gear has requirements that they are tested and tagged at set intervals for faults or damage. - **True or False**
8. All electrical gear should also be listed on a company electrical tagging register. - **True or False**
9. I should always ensure myself or my fellow workers look up before removing a ladder or other long piece of equipment from a vehicle. - **True or False**



Sum up the discussion by reiterating the key points on the graphic.

Remember that, as a supervisor, you need to be aware of what limits need to be observed when working near or around power.

Remind everyone of the information available from WorkCover for working near electricity and that **WorkCover** can answer any questions on **13 10 50**

Make sure you understand the safe approach distances needed when working around power.

Discuss with the group the importance of always looking up before removing a ladder from a vehicle and being aware at all times of the danger of working near or around electricity.