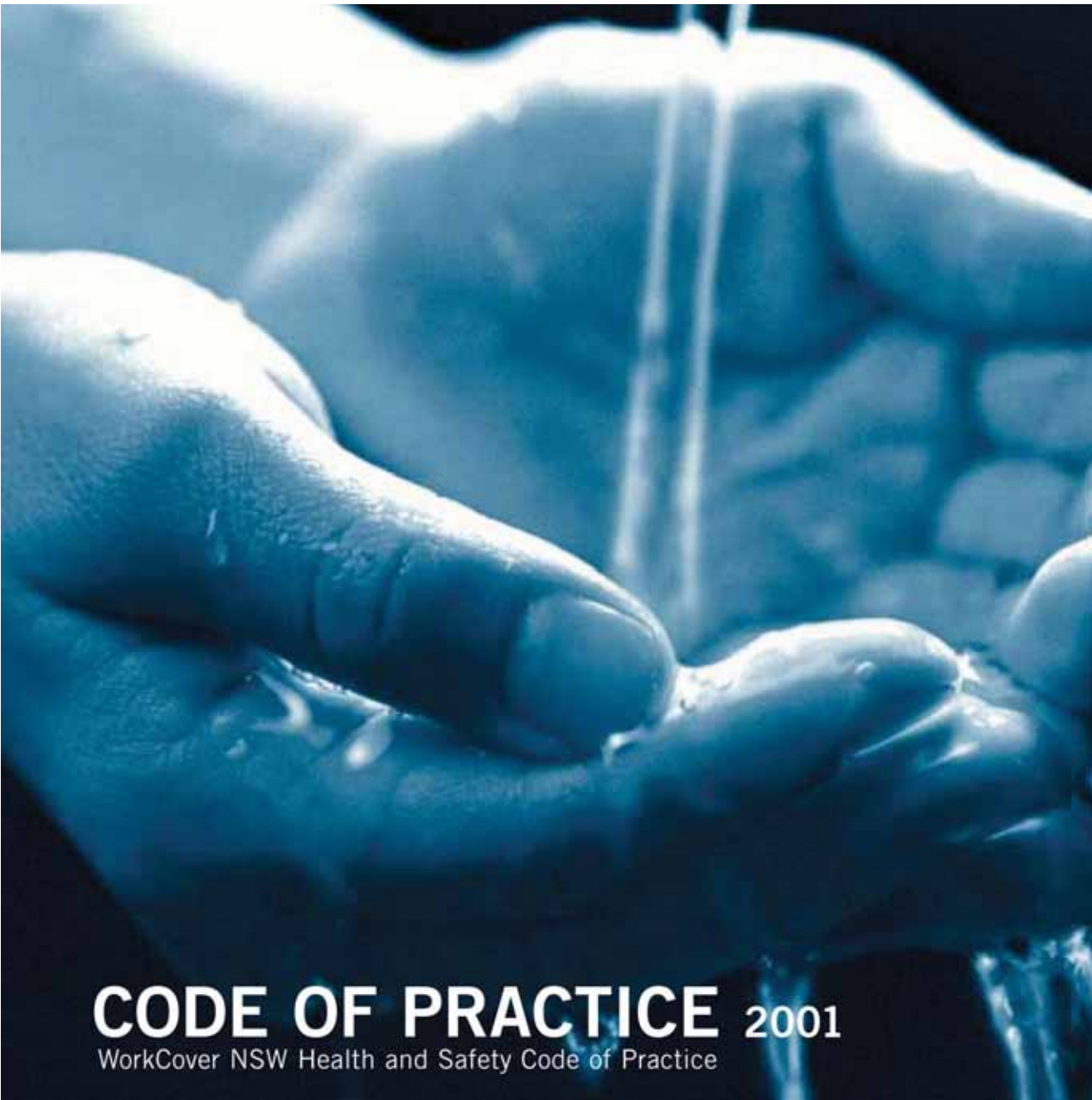


**WORKPLACE**

# **AMENITIES**



**CODE OF PRACTICE 2001**

WorkCover NSW Health and Safety Code of Practice

**Disclaimer**

This publication contains information regarding occupational health, safety, injury management or workers compensation. It includes some of your obligations under the various workers compensation and occupational health and safety legislation that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate Acts.

This publication may refer to WorkCover NSW administered legislation that has been amended or repealed. When reading this publication you should always refer to the latest laws. Information on the latest laws can be checked at [www.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nsw.gov.au) or contact (02) 9238 0950 or 1800 463 955 (NSW country only).

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## What is an industry code of practice?

An approved industry code of practice is a practical guide to achieving the standard of safety required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* and *OHS Regulations 2001* for a particular area of work.

An approved industry code of practice should be followed unless there is an alternative course of action, which achieves the same or better standard of health and safety in the workplace.

An industry code of practice is approved by the Minister for Industrial Relations. It comes into effect on the day the notice of this approval is published in the *NSW Government Gazette* or on the day specified in the Gazette notice.

An approved industry code of practice is designed to be used in conjunction with the Act and Regulations but does not have the same legal force. A person or company cannot be prosecuted for failing to comply with an approved industry code of practice.

However, in proceedings under the Act or Regulations, failure to observe a relevant approved industry code of practice can be used as evidence that a person or company has contravened or failed to comply with the provisions of the Act or Regulations.

A WorkCover Authority Inspector can cite an approved industry code of practice in a direction or in an improvement or prohibition notice, indicating the measures that should be taken to remedy an alleged contravention or non-compliance. Failure to comply with a requirement in an improvement or prohibition notice is an offence.

### ***In summary an approved INDUSTRY CODE OF PRACTICE:***

- gives practical guidance on how the required standard of health, safety and welfare can be achieved in an area of work;
- should be followed, unless there is an alternative course of action which achieves the same or better standard of health and safety in the workplace;
- can be used in support of the preventive enforcement provisions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*;
- can be used to support prosecutions for failing to comply with or contravening the Act or Regulations.

## Preface

### ***What are 'amenities' and what role do they play in workplace health and safety?***

### **How to use this information**

The aim of this code of practice is to assist employers in deciding on appropriate amenities for the welfare of their employees. It provides practical advice on implementing the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*.

'Workplace amenities' are facilities provided for the welfare or personal hygiene needs of employees. They include toilets, rest rooms, shelter sheds, seating, dining rooms, change rooms, drinking water, lockers and washing facilities.

The provision of workplace amenities can help minimise illnesses and diseases, which may result from the absence of appropriate hygiene and welfare facilities.

- **What is this code of practice about?**

This code of practice provides information to assist you in determining appropriate amenities, and in turn ensuring welfare for people in your workplace. If you follow the advice set out here, you will be well on the way to complying with responsibilities for the provision of amenities outlined in occupational health and safety laws. This guidance should be read in conjunction with the OHS Regulation 2001.

- **Who is this code of practice for?**

This code of practice is for employers, managers, health and safety representatives, OHS committee members, employees, unions and employer organisations who need to know about establishing or improving workplace amenities.

- **When to use the information**

Use this code of practice to assess your arrangements for amenities – are they adequate and effective? If you are setting up a new business, this code of practice should be your step-by-step guide to determining your requirements for amenities.

## What do the symbols used in this code of practice mean?

To help you work out what you require, a number of symbols are used to highlight things you need to take into account and tools to help you.



**Assess the risks in your workplace**



**Legal obligations that you must follow**



**Consult and communicate with employees**



**Questions you (or others) might ask to clarify issues**



**Tools that can help you work out your plan**



**The process of finding things that cause harm, working out how big a problem they are and then fixing them**

# Chapter 1

## 1.1 Title

## 1.2 Purpose

## 1.3 Scope

## 1.4 Commencement

## 1.5 Authority

# Establishment

This is the Code of Practice for Workplace Amenities.

This code sets out and explains the requirements for amenities in the workplace, to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees when at work. It provides practical guidance on determining what is appropriate for the particular circumstances of each workplace.

This Code of Practice applies to all workplaces in NSW, apart from:

- (a) Agricultural workplaces, covered by the *Code of Practice: Accommodation and Amenities for Rural Agricultural Work*;
- (b) Construction workplaces, covered by the *Code of Practice: Amenities for Construction Work*; and
- (c) Mines within the meaning of the *Coal Mines Regulation Act 1982* or the *Mines Inspection Act 1901*.

*Note:* The former OHS shop provisions contained in Part 3 of the *Factories Shops and Industries Act 1962* and the *Factories (Health and Safety) General Regulation 1913* continue to have effect. The recommendations contained in this Code should be considered in conjunction with those provisions.

This code commences on the date it is published in the NSW Government Gazette.

This is an industry code of practice approved by the Minister of Industrial Relations under section 43 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000*.

# How to establish the special needs of your workplace



**An employer must ensure that appropriate amenities are available for all employees while they are at work. The amenities must be maintained in a safe and healthy condition.**

Amenities are facilities provided for the welfare or personal hygiene needs of persons. They include toilets, rest rooms, shelter sheds, seating, dining rooms, change rooms, drinking water, lockers and washing facilities.

The provision of appropriate workplace amenities is important for the basic health and welfare of employees. To some extent, workplace amenities also depend upon your industry and the specific activities required by your operations. To evaluate your amenities needs, employers should understand and analyse the workplace activities and hazards, and consult their employees when doing this.

Employers are required to have regard for all the circumstances of the work, including:

- (a) The nature of the work undertaken at the place of work;
- (b) The size and location of the place of work; and
- (c) The number of men and women at the place of work.

## 2.1 Linking amenities with health, safety and welfare

The table following sets out the basic types of amenities and explains how they link with employee health and safety.

<b>Workplace Amenity</b>	<b>Link to employee health, safety and welfare</b>
<b>Toilets</b>	Needed for basic health and welfare. Clean and hygienic toilets reduce exposure to germs and disease.
<b>Rest rooms</b>	Needed for recovery or rest if suffering an injury or illness at work. Provides an area for short-term respite if employees are fatigued.
<b>Shelter sheds</b>	Needed for respite from weather (e.g. heat, cold, rain, wind). They reduce the likelihood of stress due to heat or cold working environments.
<b>Seating</b>	Provides the opportunity to rotate from standing to sitting, thus reducing fatigue and stress on the legs and back.
<b>Dining rooms</b>	Provides a hygienic area for the consumption of food, reducing the likelihood of food being contaminated by substances used in work processes, or by infectious agents.
<b>Provision of drinking water</b>	Needed for basic health and welfare. Water reduces the likelihood of heat stress for employees undertaking physically demanding tasks. It is essential for bodily function, especially kidneys and bladder.
<b>Washing facilities</b>	Needed for personal hygiene. Enables employees to remove hazardous or dirty substances associated with the work process from hands/bodies.
<b>Change rooms</b>	Enables employees to change dirty or contaminated work clothing, reducing employee exposure to the contaminating substances.
<b>Lockers</b>	Needed for the storage of personal belongings or clothing, so that substances associated with the work process do not contaminate them. Needed for the storage of personal protective equipment to ensure it remains clean.

First aid facilities and rooms are additional to that above. For advice on the requirements for first aid facilities or rooms see WorkCover's *Health and Safety Guide: First Aid in the Workplace*.

# Consultation at the workplace



**Employers are required by the OHS Act 2000 to consult with employees when taking steps to assess and control workplace risks.**



Employers must consult their employees about issues that may affect their health, safety and welfare at work.

Consultation involves: sharing information with employees; giving them the opportunity to express their views before decisions are made; valuing their views and taking them into account.

Consultation is based on recognition that employee input and participation improves decision-making about health and safety matters. Consultation will assist in developing safe systems of work based on: the identification of hazards that may be present; and the assessment of the risks these hazards might give rise to.

Consultation must occur in the following circumstances:

- When changes that may affect health, safety or welfare are proposed to the:
  - work premises;
  - systems or methods of work; or
  - plant or substances used for work.
- When risks to health and safety arising from work are assessed.
- When decisions are made about the measures to be taken to eliminate or control those risks.
- When introducing or altering the procedures for monitoring those risks.
- When decisions are made about the adequacy of facilities for employee welfare.
- When decisions are made about the procedures for consultation.

Employers must establish an OHS consultation mechanism and need to consult employees about what the consultation arrangements are going to be.

Readers should refer to the WorkCover NSW *Code of Practice: OHS Consultation*.

## Chapter 4



### **4.1 Nature of the work undertaken**

### **4.2 Size and location of the place of work**

### **4.3 Composition of the workforce (men, women, people with special needs)**

## Identifying the requirements for amenities



An employer must ensure that appropriate amenities are available for all of the employer's employees while they are at work. The appropriateness of amenities is to be determined having regard to all of the circumstances of the case, including:

- (a) the nature of work undertaken at the place of work;
- (b) the size and location of the place of work;
- (c) the number of men and women at the place of work.

In assessing the requirements for amenities, the following factors should be considered, in consultation with employees.

The type of work performed will influence the amenities required. For example, amenities provided for office employees may differ from those provided for employees undertaking dirty, hot or arduous tasks (such as foundry work or fire fighting), or for employees working in hospitals or nursing homes. Indeed, different areas within the one workplace may have different amenity requirements, depending on the tasks being undertaken and the equipment being used. For example, those who do dirty work will require washing and showering facilities.

Consider whether the place of work is in a building or structure, or whether work is undertaken outdoors, or in a remote area. Work may also be undertaken away from base e.g. sales representatives or tradespersons. The following questions should be asked:

- Does the place of work cover an extensive area, or is work undertaken in a relatively compact location?
- Do employees travel between workplaces, to numerous work sites, or other locations?
- Is the place of work close to appropriate amenity facilities or in a remote area?
- How long would it take to access the nearest amenity facilities if necessary?

The number of employees at the workplace will influence the amenities required. Facilities should ensure adequate privacy and security for the needs of men and women. People with disabilities or special needs should also be provided with appropriate amenities.

## 4.4 Type of workplace

Workplaces include any places where people may go while at work. In determining what is required, consider the type of workplace (e.g. indoors or outdoors), and whether it is permanent or temporary.

The table below describes different types of permanent and temporary workplaces.

Type of workplace	Examples
Permanent – fixed in a building	Office, factory, hospital, school.
Permanent – fixed or mobile, but not always in a building	Bus and truck drivers, airline crews.
Temporary – seasonal	Tourism, show workers, recreational workers (e.g. ski instructors).
Temporary – where employees work in a one off situation for hours, days or weeks	Tradespersons (e.g. plumbers, electricians), gardeners, emergency services.

There may be other factors relevant to your workplace, in addition to those above. An example is the time of work, such as in shift work, where workers may not have access to facilities that are closed at night.

The WorkCover NSW Code of Practice for Risk Assessment can also help you in assessing your needs.

## Chapter 5



## Putting your information into action

Having assessed the workplace requirements, you are now ready to work out what specific amenities are appropriate for the welfare and personal hygiene of persons in the place of work. These decisions should be based on what is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Apart from the provisions in OHS Regulation 2001, you should also be aware of the requirements of the Building Code of Australia. The Building Code of Australia sets out requirements for the design, construction and modification of facilities in a building. The local government building requirements should also be checked.

### 5.1 Toilets

It is essential that employees have ready access to toilet facilities for the maintenance of good health.

#### 5.1.1 Health reasons

Research has shown that where toilets are not readily accessible, employees may reduce their fluid intake to compensate. A reduced fluid intake is not recommended and can lead to health problems such as bladder and kidney disease, or heat stress in hot conditions. Where toilets are not accessible, people may sometimes try to delay going, which is also inadvisable, and may lead to health problems in the longer term such as incontinence.

#### 5.1.2 Design

It is preferable that toilets are connected to the sewer. If this is not practicable, self-contained freshwater flushing or open-closet portable toilets should be provided. Toilets not connected to the sewer must be serviced regularly to ensure that they are maintained in a sanitary condition.

Each toilet should be fitted with a hinged seat and lid, and hinged door capable of locking from the inside. Adequate and hygienic means for the disposal of sanitary items should be provided for female employees. Toilets should be kept clean and hygienic at all times, and be positioned to ensure privacy for users.

#### 5.1.3 How many toilets are needed?

The number of toilets required depends on the number of employees, or users of the facilities, and the type of building. In assessing needs, also consider how many visitors or members of the public might come to your workplace. Consult the Building Code of Australia for specific guidance on the number of toilets required, however the following ratios will be applicable to most workplaces:

<i>Employees</i>	<i>Closet Pan(s)</i>	<i>Urinals</i>
Males	1 per 20 males	1 per 25 males
Females	1 per 15 females	Not Applicable

#### 5.1.4 Considerations for different types of workplaces

- **Permanent workplaces in buildings or structures**

For workplaces within buildings, the Building Code of Australia outlines the ratio of toilets to employees, and the specifications for toilets. In most cases, employers are expected to provide their own toilet facilities for employees, rather than relying on access to external public toilets.

Separate toilets should be provided for male and female employees, and should be clearly signposted. However, in some small businesses with only a few employees (e.g. less than 10) a unisex facility may be provided, as long as the privacy of male and female employees can be assured. In such situations, one toilet, one washbasin and a means of disposing of sanitary items is required.

Toilets must be accessible, preferably located inside a building, or as close as possible to the workplace to control any risk to employees' safety. They should be installed to prevent any odours escaping.

In multiple storey buildings, toilets should be located on at least every second storey. Where shops are located in a shopping complex, the owner of the complex should provide sufficient toilets to satisfy the needs of all the shops. Larger employers within shopping complexes, such as department stores and supermarkets would reasonably be expected to provide their own toilets to facilitate quick access for employees. Further guidance is provided in the Building Code of Australia.

- **Short-term temporary workplaces, and workplaces in remote areas**

Short-term temporary workplaces include maintenance of parks and gardens. This type of short-term workplace, or workplace in a remote area, requires the provision of temporary toilets.

Any temporary toilet should be located in a secure place, with safe access. Temporary toilets must be installed so as they are prevented from toppling over or becoming unstable, to ensure the safety of employees. Privacy (a lockable door), lighting, and ventilation should be provided.

- **Workplaces away from base locations**

Reasonable access to toilet facilities needs to be provided for employees working away from base locations and at outdoor work sites. These include gardeners, bus drivers, emergency service personnel, sales representatives and couriers.

The amenity may be in the form of access to public toilets, or the provision of temporary toilets. However, the employer must ensure access is available while they are at work.

## **5.2 Rest Rooms**

Employees may need access to a rest area for a period of short-term respite while at work. The need for rest may be due to illness, injury or fatigue.

Rest rooms may take a number of forms. If there is a first aid room, the rest area facilities may be part of that room. Alternatively, a quiet office with a comfortable chair may serve as a rest area. If it is not practicable to provide an appropriate rest area within the place of work, then other arrangements may be adequate. This may include transporting the employee to a nearby medical clinic, or home. Some employees may have different needs for rest areas. For example, the rest area for long distance truck drivers may be the sleeper berth behind their seat, or in a busy call centre or hospital, employees might need time out from their work activities.

In general, a rest area should be:

- clean, hygienic and comfortable (e.g. comfortable seating );
- separated from the main working area (though not necessarily a separate room);
- quiet and well ventilated;
- conveniently accessible to toilets and washing facilities.

## **5.3 Shelter Sheds**

Outdoor workers, such as road maintenance workers and gardeners, should be provided with reasonable access to shelter if weather conditions make work unsafe, for example, high winds, lightning, rain or very hot weather.

In some situations where employees have a vehicle nearby, this may provide appropriate short-term shelter. Where larger numbers of workers require shelter a shed or caravan may be needed. Portable shade canopies may also provide shelter against the heat. In some situations, access to appropriate nearby public shelter (for example, rotunda in the park, awnings under nearby buildings) may be suitable.

## **5.4 Seating**

Employees should be provided with seating appropriate to the tasks being undertaken.

An assessment of work activity, in consultation with employees, should consider whether the work is best carried out in a seated or standing position (or a combination of the two). Ideally, employees should have a mix of seated and standing tasks – neither prolonged sitting nor standing is desirable.

Many tasks are best done in a seated position – screen based tasks, fine component assembly, tasks involving the frequent use of foot controls. For tasks best undertaken in a seated position, employees should be provided with suitable seating. The seat design should:

- (a) be appropriate for the work performed;
- (b) enable the worker to adopt a comfortable, ergonomically sound working position;
  - be fully adjustable to accommodate different sized employees;
  - provide good body support, especially for the low back;
  - enable good foot support – this may mean the use of a footrest which should be moveable if necessary.

Some standing tasks can be done using a sit/stand chair – for example, some process or inspection work. This means that the employee can prop themselves on the chair while still having the flexibility to undertake the standing task.

If the job is primarily carried out while standing, but the nature of the work allows the worker to sit from time to time, appropriate seating should be provided. This allows the worker to vary their position between sitting and standing.

Employees need to be provided with hygienic facilities for eating their meals and for preparing and storing food.

In some workplaces, mixing working and eating areas can create risks to health and safety. Substances or processes used in the workplace may have the potential to contaminate food, posing a risk to employees. In some situations, mixing working and eating areas may have the potential to spoil work being done, or equipment being used, e.g. crumbs in sensitive equipment. In such workplaces, employees need to be provided with appropriate facilities for eating during meal breaks. In many situations, an area within the workplace for making tea and coffee and preparing and storing food might be all that is needed.

In all workplaces, appropriate systems for the removal of rubbish associated with eating and dining areas should also be implemented.

The appropriate amenities for your workplace will be determined by examining the assessment factors. A range of options could be considered appropriate:

- **For large permanent workplaces**

A dedicated dining or eating area may be provided. The dining area should be separated from the work area and protected from weather. It should provide hot and cold running water; facilities for washing and storage of utensils; and hygienic storage and heating of food. Adequate numbers of tables and seats should be provided, as well as the appropriate crockery and cutlery.
- **For smaller permanent workplaces**

Where dining facilities are not practicable, there should at least be access to a separate area, which has a sink with running

## **5.5 Dining Areas**

### **5.5.1 Basic requirements**

water, a clean storage cupboard, a facility for boiling water and a refrigerator to avoid food spoilage. In workplaces where work processes may contaminate food, no matter how small those workplaces are, a separate dining room is required.

- **For temporary or remote workplaces**

Where the work involves travelling between different workplaces, or is remote or seasonal, employees need reasonable access to dining facilities. This may involve organising rosters for mobile workers (such as bus drivers or couriers) to ensure that they are back at their base location for meal breaks. Alternatively, mobile workers such as sales representatives may take their meal breaks en route.

It may be determined appropriate for some temporary workplaces, to provide portable dining facilities. Mobile caravans or transportable lunchrooms are suitable.

Employees working in remote areas, such as loggers or mining exploration workers, may face severe constraints in dining facilities. At times the only enclosed facility available to them may be their vehicle. In this instance portable food storage facilities may be required, such as a car fridge or insulated lunch box.

## 5.6 Change Rooms

Sometimes employees need to change clothes before, during or after work. Operating theatre workers, meat workers and asbestos removalists are in this group. This enables the removal of clothing that may be contaminated with substances from the work process. In other situations, employees may need to change out of a uniform that is required to be worn at work. In all of these circumstances, access to a change room is required for privacy reasons.

### 5.6.1 What type of change room is needed?

When establishing change rooms, consider:

**Privacy and security needs:** separate change rooms should be provided for males and females. In some small workplaces, as long as the privacy of individuals can be assured by administrative means (e.g. an "engaged" sign on the door), only one change room may be necessary. The room should be secure and lockable.

**Space requirements:** change rooms need sufficient space and adequate seating to accommodate the maximum number of people changing their clothes at any one time.

**Location:** the room should be separate from other parts of the workplace, in a position convenient to washing and toilet facilities.

**Fittings:** the room should contain adequate storage space for clothes, a reasonable number of hooks and appropriately positioned mirrors.

**Seating:** suitable seating (e.g. benches) should be provided to accommodate the numbers of people likely to be using the room at any one time.

### 5.6.2 Change rooms for temporary workplaces

**Special requirements for hazardous substances:** where the work involves the wearing of protective clothing due to hazardous substances (e.g. asbestos work, lead processing, electroplating), special decontamination changing facilities may be needed. This special change room should be separate from other changing, washing and toilet facilities.

**Special requirements for wet outdoor work:** some outdoor workers, such as emergency services personnel, and parks and gardens maintenance workers, may regularly get wet during the course of their work. As wet clothing and footwear may be a risk to their health and safety, drying facilities for clothes and shoes should be arranged.

Portable changing facilities may be needed for temporary workplaces such as road maintenance sites. In these situations a caravan or other portable change room may be used.

Where the work is in a remote area, or involves travelling between different workplaces, reasonable access to change areas may need to be organised. This may, for example, involve employees being able to use the facilities provided at the base location at the beginning and end of each shift.

## 5.7 Drinking Water

An adequate supply of clean drinking water must be provided at all workplaces, and be readily accessible for all employees. Drinking enough fluids is essential for normal body functioning, especially bladder and kidney function.

In general, drinking points should be:

- positioned where they can be easily accessed by employees;
- close to where hot or strenuous work is being undertaken to reduce the likelihood of dehydration or heat stress;
- separate from toilet or washing facilities to avoid contamination of the drinking water.

The temperature of the drinking water should be at or below 24 degrees Celsius. This may be achieved by:

- refrigeration of the water;
- provision of non-contaminated ice;
- shading of water pipes and storage containers from the sun.

Where connection to a water supply is possible, the drinking water must be presented in a hygienic manner. This may involve:

- a drinking fountain, where the water is delivered in an upward jet;
- a supply of disposable cups or washable glasses.

Where connection to a water supply is not possible (for example in some remote or rural outdoor workplaces), drinking water must be provided by other means. The risk assessment will determine the most appropriate alternative, perhaps individual water bottles, a water bag or dispenser. To avoid the spread of germs, drinking water should not be dipped from a shared container, and workers should not drink directly from a shared container.

## **5.8 Lockers and storage**

Employees should be provided with space to store personal belongings (such as handbags and coats) while at work.

Personal protective clothing and equipment should also be stored and secured to ensure that it will be available for use when next required.

Many items of PPE should not be transferred from worker to worker. These include respirators and moulded earplugs that have been fitted to provide maximum protection for their owner. There is also potential for transmission of disease if items such as these are shared.

The safe storage of personal belongings may be more difficult for mobile workers, such as parks and gardens or road maintenance workers. In these cases, temporary lockable containers stored in a secure place may be appropriate. Employees working from a vehicle, such as sales representatives or couriers, may be able to use the vehicle as their lockable, secure space.

In some circumstances, work involves the use of tools provided by the employee. In these situations, secure, weatherproof storage of the tools during working and non-working hours should be organised.

Where people need to change their clothes during the course of their work, a locker may be required. It should be:

- big enough to store the personal belongings;
- fitted with a hook on the back of the door, coat hanging space, and a shelf;
- fitted with a door capable of being locked;
- positioned so that there is adequate space to change clothes in front of the locker; and,
- located in an accessible but secure place.

## **5.9 Washing Facilities**

An employer must provide access to suitable hand washing facilities to enable employees to maintain standards of personal hygiene. Depending on the nature of work undertaken, hands will require washing at different times (for example, after handling chemicals, changing children's nappies, or handling greasy machinery).

### **5.9.1 Hand washing facilities**

Hand washing basins should be separate from troughs or sinks used in connection with the work process. The workplace assessment will determine where they should be positioned, but in general they should be located within easy access of:

- work areas;
- dining or eating areas;
- toilets.

### 5.9.2 How many hand basins are required?



The washing facility should be protected from weather, and provided with an adequate supply of non-irritating soap (preferably from a soap dispenser), and hygienic hand drying facilities (such as automatic air dryers or paper towels).

The ratio of hand washing basins to employees, and specifications for basins depends on the number of users, the type of building and the nature of the work. Consult the Building Code of Australia for information about the number of basins required for your workplace (e.g. there are special provisions for certain workplaces such as health care buildings, schools, and early childhood centres), however the following ratio will be adequate for most workplaces:

<i>Employees</i>	<i>Wash Basins</i>
Males	1 per every 30 males
Females	1 per every 30 females

### 5.9.3 Showering facilities

Jobs such as fire fighting, work in abattoirs, foundry work, welding, and police search and rescue are examples of situations where showering facilities may be required. Such jobs may involve dirty, hot or arduous work. The appropriate ratio of showers to employees will be determined by the nature of the work.

Separate showering facilities should be provided for male and female employees. However, in small or temporary workplaces where the privacy of male and female employees can be assured, it may be acceptable to provide one shower. Each shower area should have a lockable door, and non-slip flooring.

### 5.9.4 Considerations for different types of workplaces

- **Permanent workplaces**  
Clean hot and cold water should be provided for washing facilities at permanent workplaces.
- **Temporary workplaces**  
Where washing facilities are required at temporary work locations, the facilities should be provided with clean water as a minimum. If possible, hot water should also be provided. In some situations, individual plastic washbasins or other portable equipment may need to be provided.

## Chapter 6

### 6.1 Managers



### 6.2 Employees

### 6.3 Contractors and visitors

## Who needs to know about your workplace amenities?

Employers need to ensure that managers and supervisors understand the amenity requirements and provisions for the workplace.

Managers and supervisors will be accountable for making sure that amenities are available for employees and maintained in a safe and healthy condition.

Employees need to know where they can access the amenities provided for their health and welfare, such as toilets, change rooms and washing facilities. The appropriate positioning of amenities and clearly visible signs will help to make sure that employees know where the amenities are located.

The induction of new employees should include a walk-through of the workplace, pointing out relevant amenities. Consider also the needs of employees with languages other than English, and make sure signs are appropriate for everyone's needs.

Access needs to be ensured, for example for those who need permission to leave their workstations to go to the toilet – a replacement might be needed.

All people entering the workplace should be provided with information about relevant amenities, such as toilets and washing facilities. This may be done using signs and/or written information, and if necessary explained by the receptionist or the person to whom they report on arrival.

### Checking that the workplace amenities are adequate

There may already be amenities for employees in your workplace. It is important that you know whether or not they continue to meet the needs of employees – preferably before the health and welfare of a person is compromised.



**An employer must ensure that any amenities or accommodation provided for the welfare of employees are maintained in a safe and healthy condition.**

- (a) Periodically review the amenities, involving the people who have accountabilities for health and safety. If new information is obtained which identifies a previously unidentified need, review the provision of amenities.
- (b) If work practices are modified, or new work practices introduced, review the amenities provided against the assessment factors to ensure they are still adequate.
- (c) If an incident impacting on the health and welfare of employees does occur, review the amenities provided, and make changes if necessary.
- (d) Ensure that cleaning and maintenance are carried out (e.g. are consumable items such as soap and toilet paper replenished regularly?).

## Appendix 1



### The most likely questions a WorkCover Inspector will ask about your amenities

- How many people work on this site, and are the toilets and washing facilities adequate?
- For outdoor sites, in the case of bad weather, where can employees take shelter?
- What consultation has occurred to ensure that the amenities provided meet the needs of the health and welfare of employees?
- Where can employees store their personal protective equipment?
- What facilities are available when employees undertake work requiring them to shower and change their clothing?
- Are there enough drinking points for employees, especially for those undertaking physically demanding work?
- Is appropriate seating provided for employees?

## Appendix 2



### Some frequently asked questions

**Are there any building regulations that I need to be aware of?**

**Yes.** The Building Code of Australia sets out requirements for the design, construction and modification of facilities in a building, as well as specific provisions in relation to sanitary facilities. These provisions are also regulated at the planning stage and during construction or alteration by Local Government Authorities.

**Is it necessary to provide eating and food preparation facilities for employees?**

**Yes.** However, the appropriate facility will vary from workplace to workplace. Employees need to be provided with reasonable access to hygienic facilities for eating during meal breaks. This might simply mean provision of an area for boiling water, preparing and storing food and washing utensils in the workplace. But if there is a risk to health and safety by food being contaminated by substances related to the work process, a separate dining or eating area will be required.

**Is it necessary to provide showers and change rooms for all employees?**

Where some or all of an organisation's employees undertake hot, dirty or arduous work, shower facilities should be provided. Change rooms, with secure personal lockers, should be provided where the nature of the work requires employees to change out of uniforms or protective clothing before, during or after work.

## Appendix 3



### Amenities planning checklist

#### Assessment Factors, consider the following:

- Nature of work undertaken

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- Size and location of the place of work

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- Composition of the workforce (number of men and women)

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- Type of workplace (permanent or temporary)

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#### Planning amenities, consider the following:

- Toilets – numbers, location, management

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- Rest area – location, management, alternative arrangements

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- Shelter sheds – size, location

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- Seating – adequate number and type

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- Dining rooms – size, location, seating, storage facilities

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- Change rooms – size, location

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- Clean drinking water – accessibility, presentation and temperature

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- Lockers – numbers, location, management

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- Washing facilities (hand basins, showers) – numbers, location, management

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### **Checking that the amenities are adequate**

- Consider when the checks are made, how this is done and who does it

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## Appendix 4



## Sample Amenities Plan: Temporary workplace – Gardening

<b>Assessment of Amenities Requirements</b>	<b>Amenities Plan</b>
<p><b><i>Nature of work performed</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Garden maintenance. Employees gather tools from depot at the start of the shift, and work outdoors in pairs most of the day, returning to the depot at the end of the day.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Size &amp; location of the place of work</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depot located in township – gardens within 8 kms of depot.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Composition of the workforce</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 men and 3 women.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Type of workplace</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depot is a permanent building, garden maintenance done at temporary sites.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Need for maintenance</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cleaning.</li><li>• Replenishing consumable items.</li></ul>	<p><b><i>Toilets</i></b> (as required by Building Code of Australia )</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Separate male &amp; female toilets available at depot. Staff can use public toilets if required in gardens.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Rest rooms</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comfortable chair and blanket available in first aid room at the depot.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Shelter sheds</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some of the gardens have public shelter accessible to employees. Can also seek temporary shelter in vehicle, or return to depot.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Seating</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sit/stand chair provided in potting room, and comfortable seating in lunchroom. Most other tasks done when standing or kneeling.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Dining rooms</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employees have the option of returning to base for lunch where a lunchroom is provided, or taking lunch on site. Vehicles equipped with folding stools if latter is chosen.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Change room</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Separate male &amp; female change rooms provided at the depot.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Drinking water</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cool drinking water provided at depot, plus refrigerator for other types of drinks.</li><li>• Workers take insulated individual flasks when off site.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Lockers</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lockable locker provided for each employee, located in change room.</li></ul> <p><b><i>Washing Facilities</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hand basins located adjacent to male &amp; female toilets; employees can use garden taps if off site.</li><li>• One shower located adjacent to change rooms – with room to change clothes and lockable door.</li></ul>

\* This is not an exhaustive checklist and is designed to illustrate the approach to planning for amenities.



Assessment of Amenities Requirements	Amenities Plan
<p><b><i>Nature of work performed</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Toilets</i></b> (as required by Building Code of Australia )</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees undertaking general office work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toilet block located on 2nd floor.</li> <li>• Lift provides access for disabled.</li> <li>• Male – one toilet &amp; urinal provided.</li> <li>• Female – four toilets provided.</li> <li>• Facilities for workers with disabilities – one unisex toilet provided.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Size &amp; location of the place of work</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Rest rooms</i></b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-storey building located in the central building district. All floors in use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfortable chair with blanket available in small alcove near lunchroom on ground floor.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Composition of the workforce</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Shelter sheds</i></b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 females and 20 males.</li> <li>• Some staff have disabilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable, as all work is indoors.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Type of workplace</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Seating</i></b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permanent – building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All employees provided with fully adjustable office chair.</li> <li>• Kitchen area provided with comfortable, non-adjustable dining chairs.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Need for maintenance</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Dining rooms</i></b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning.</li> <li>• Replenishing consumable items.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dining room on ground floor has tables and seating to accommodate up to twenty persons at any one time, it also has a kitchen.</li> <li>• 2nd &amp; 3rd floors have kitchenettes for boiling water &amp; washing utensils.</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>Change room</i></b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change rooms not provided.</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>Drinking water</i></b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinking water and refrigerators provided in kitchen &amp; kitchenettes.</li> <li>• Cool water dispenser in ground floor kitchen.</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>Lockers</i></b></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each employee has lockable drawer for personal belongings at their workstation, or a locker or cabinet to store valuables on the same level as their workstation.</li> </ul>
	<p><b><i>Washing Facilities</i></b> (as required by Building Code of Australia)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand basins located adjacent to male &amp; female toilets.</li> <li>• Male – one hand basin provided.</li> <li>• Female – two hand basins provided.</li> <li>• Facilities for workers with disabilities – one hand basin provided.</li> </ul>

\* This is not an exhaustive checklist and is designed to illustrate the approach to planning for amenities.







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