

Risk management strategies: Metal fabrication: Industrial Technology

In this activity you will gain an understanding of the OH&S Act and how it impacts on the workplace. You will also be required to implement safe working practices in the development of your practical projects.

This material addresses aspects of the following syllabus outcomes:

5.1.2 A student applies OH&S practices to hand tools, machine tools, equipment and processes.

Extract from: Years 7–10 Industrial Technology Syllabus © Board of Studies NSW 2003.

Occupational health and safety (OH&S)

The main aim of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 (NSW) is to reduce the risk of workplace accidents and this includes technology workshops in schools. The OH&S Act requires employers to consult with employees to make sure the workplace is safe and that any risks are eliminated or controlled. The end result and the main purpose is to protect the health, safety and welfare of people in the workplace.

There are laws and regulations that enforce the OH&S Act and there are severe penalties and fines for people found to be breaching these laws. Regulations are set guidelines that break down the OH&S Act into more specific areas. An example of a regulation enforced in schools is the safe handling of chemicals. Teachers and assistants are required to undertake training courses that clearly identify potential risks and strategies for dealing safely with chemicals.

There are many key organisations that have a role to play due to the OH&S Act. These organisations include:

- National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC)
- NSW WorkCover Authority
- Occupational Health and Safety Council of NSW
- National Safety Council of Australia (NSCA).

Activity 1: Multiple choice

Highlight the most appropriate response to the following questions.

1. The OH&S Act is
 - a) a workplace performance acted annually.
 - b) a law relating to a safe and healthy workplace.
 - c) a code of practice.
 - d) a standard request from your employer.
2. The OH&S Act aims to
 - a) maintain and ensure the health, safety and welfare of all people visiting the workplace.
 - b) protect the employee.
 - c) protect the employer.
 - d) maintain an efficient workplace.

3. OH&S works best when
 - a) employers and employees participate fully in the process.
 - b) heavy fines are issued to unsafe workers.
 - c) WorkCover visits the workplace.
 - d) the workplace is free from machinery.
4. A regulation is
 - a) a code of practice.
 - b) a high level, protective rule.
 - c) a guideline that gives greater detail about dealing with the OH&S Act.
 - d) a workplace promotion.
5. An OH&S committee is responsible for
 - a) enforcing the OH&S Act.
 - b) raising OH&S awareness amongst employees.
 - c) organising meetings.
 - d) giving employers a hard time.
6. Whilst Tina is working in the metalwork room she notices that a chuck key is left in the chuck of the pedestal drill. This is obviously a definite safety risk. The teacher has briefly left the room to help Jasmine. Tina should
 - a) wait for the teacher to return and report the danger.
 - b) remove the chuck key immediately and then inform the teacher.
 - c) ignore the situation.
 - d) tell some of her friends and see what happens.
7. Whilst Theo is working in the metalwork room he accidentally drops a glass jar full of rivets. The glass shatters. Theo should
 - a) pick the glass up carefully with his fingers.
 - b) go to the teacher and report the accident.
 - c) pick up the rivets carefully.
 - d) isolate the area and ask another student to report the accident to the teacher.
8. Before a student uses any machine they must
 - a) have a teacher's permission.
 - b) have undergone the necessary training.
 - c) be wearing the necessary protective clothing.
 - d) have done all of the above.
9. A hazard is
 - a) anything that could cause harm to someone.
 - b) an accident that has happened.
 - c) something that requires a flashing light to bring attention.
 - d) obvious to employees and employers.
10. The NSW WorkCover Authority is an organisation responsible for
 - a) starting trouble in the workplace.
 - b) resolving safety issues in the workplace.
 - c) managing the State's workplace safety.
 - d) provides safety items to the workplace.

Activity 2: Internet research

Each of the key safety organisations has an informative web site. The most recent web addresses are:

- National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC)
<http://www.nohsc.gov.au>
- NSW WorkCover Authority
<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au>
- Occupational Health and Safety Council of NSW
<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au>
- National Safety Council of Australia (NSCA)
<http://www.safetynews.com>

1. Visit one of these web sites and describe the role this key organisation plays in maintaining the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

2. Visit the National Safety Council of Australia web site <http://www.safetynews.com> and find an article that details with a recent breach of the OH&S Act. Describe the breach and discuss the implications it has had on the employer and the employee.
