

AS 1470—1986

Australian Standard<sup>®</sup>

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**Health and safety at work—  
Principles and practices**

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This Australian standard was prepared by Committee SF/1, Safe Working in Industry. It was approved on behalf of the Council of the Standards Association of Australia on 21 September 1986 and published on 3 November 1986.

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The following interests are represented on Committee SF/1:

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Australian Post  
Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy  
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*This Standard was issued in draft form for comment as DR 84128.*

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First issued (as AS CZ5) .....	1952
Revised .....	1968
AS 1470 first published .....	1973
Second edition .....	1986

PUBLISHED BY STANDARDS AUSTRALIA  
(STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA)  
1 THE CRESCENT, HOMEBUSH, NSW 2140

ISBN 0 7262 4413 9

## PREFACE

This standard was prepared by the Association's Committee on Safe Working in Industry to supersede AS 1470—1973, Code of General Principles for Safe Working in Industry.

The standard is based on a number of clearly defined trends in safety management that have become more evident since the 1973 edition, including the following:

- (a) Extensions of the functions of safety management to incorporate—
  - (i) the control of conditions that result in personal damage in the longer term, e.g. excessive noise;
  - (ii) product safety;
  - (iii) vehicular safety;
  - (iv) mitigation of the effects of industrial operations on the environment; and
  - (v) fire prevention and control.
- (b) Promulgation of the International Labour Office's Convention 155, to extend the scope of the term 'health', in relation to work, to include all physical and mental elements affecting health and directly related to safety and hygiene at work.
- (c) Compliance with legislation, in several States, which requires formal consultative arrangements at workplaces to promote employee participation in health and safety matters.

Recent extensions of the role and functions of safety management require a thorough knowledge of the accident phenomenon, as well as the need for recourse to assistance from the specialized disciplines of ergonomics, industrial hygiene, system safety, and loss control. This edition addresses itself to these needs as do modern tertiary courses in occupational health and safety.

Every effort has been made to preserve the broad simplicity of the previous edition of the standard so that the general principles expressed can be understood and applied by all organizations, irrespective of size. The standard covers all aspects considered necessary to ensure health and safety at work. However, the principles and practices listed herein are covered only in broad terms and reference to supplementary Australian standards is necessary to obtain detailed specifications for particular operations and equipment (e.g. guarding of power presses).

During preparation of this standard assistance was received from the following publications:

- 'Safety and Health at Work' — Department of Employment and Industrial Relations
- 'Policy Statement on Occupational Safety and Health' — The National Labour Consultative Council.
- Occupational Health and Safety — International Labour Office (ILO), Convention 155 and Recommendation 164.

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## FOREWORD

This is an advisory standard covering recognized principles and practices available to provide a healthy and safe working environment for all persons at work. The standard does not attempt to provide detailed explanations of Occupational Health and Safety Acts, Regulations, or Ordinances produced by Regulatory Authorities or other Government bodies, or detailed specifications for particular operations and equipment which are covered in individual Australian safety standards (see Appendix B).

Government involvement in this area is now headed by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, whose primary role is to develop, facilitate, and implement a national occupational health and safety strategy. This includes research, training, standards development, information collection and dissemination, and common approaches to occupational health and safety legislation. An essential aim of the Commission is the coordination of national resources in the occupational health and safety area so as to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of scarce resources.

This standard identifies health and safety as an integral part of work, enabling all tasks to be completed in a timely and productive manner and without personal or property damage. It reflects the three main bases for concern for occupational health and safety, viz:

- (a) *Ethical or moral.* Society strongly disapproves of those persons who show a lack of concern for the well-being of others, such as employers who do little about the safety of their employees and those employees who pay insufficient regard to their own health and safety and that of their colleagues, and to the security of their dependants.

The occupational health and safety activities of an enterprise should contribute significantly to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of persons both at work and during their recreational and social activities.

- (b) *Legal.* Most enterprises are subject to a variety of statutes and regulations administered by various government agencies.

Under common law, however, employers also have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of their employees. An employer's duty of care for the health and safety of employees involves the provision of—

- (i) a safe place of work;
  - (ii) a safe system of work;
  - (iii) proper plant and equipment and maintenance of it; and
  - (iv) competent staff to manage and supervise the enterprise.
- (c) *Economic.* Lack of safety imposes penalties such as the loss of earnings, the costs of insurance, lost production of goods and services, overtime, damage to plant, and resulting industrial disruption.

To meet these obligations and successfully 'manage' the problems of health and safety in the workplace, a key requirement for employers and occupiers is to develop a health and safety policy and introduce the necessary organization and administrative arrangements for its application.

This calls for a commitment to safety at the most senior level of the organization, the continued involvement of employees, and the deliberate application of management skills to the implementation of the policy. It will usually involve the development of health and safety programs tailored to the specific needs of the organization. The structure and scope of such programs will depend on a number of factors which take into account the nature and size of the enterprise.



## STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

**Australian Standard**  
for  
**HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK—PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES**

## SECTION 1. SCOPE AND GENERAL

**1.1 SCOPE.** This standard sets out recommendations aimed at promoting the health, safety and well-being of persons in the workplace.

**1.2 PURPOSE.** The purpose of this standard is to outline the action which should be taken by employers and employees in all occupational groups in order to achieve healthy and safe working conditions.

**1.3 APPLICATION.** The requirements apply primarily to the prevention of personal damage but apply also to the minimization of property damage.

The concepts are applicable to the whole range of conditions or events at work that can damage the individual with varying degrees of severity, either rapidly or over a period of time.

**1.4 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS.** A list with titles of the documents referred to in this standard and of additional documents relevant and supplementary to this standard is given in Appendix B.

NOTE: Attention is drawn to the need to refer to specific standards and reference documents relevant to individual operations, hazards and/or industries.

**1.5 DEFINITIONS.** For the purpose of this standard, the following definitions apply:

**1.5.1 Accident**—any occurrence arising out of and in the course of employment which results in personal damage or property damage, or the possibility of such damage.

**1.5.2 Employees**—persons engaged in activities for an employer for which they receive direct payment or remuneration.

**1.5.3 Employer**—a person, agent, firm, corporation, Government Department, Commission, Board, or other authority employing any person.

**1.5.4 Guard**—a physical barrier that prevents the entry of any part of the body into an area that is hazardous.

**1.5.5 Harmful processes**—processes where harmful substances or energies are used or where harmful substances or energies are produced; and which upon release may cause injury to or jeopardize the health and safety of persons or affect the integrity of components and structures.

**1.5.6 Harmful substances**—substances which alone or in combination with others are or could become toxic, irritant, explosive, flammable, corrosive, or obnoxious and for which special precautions are required.

NOTE: Included in this definition are all materials that are classified as 'dangerous goods' by the Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road or Rail.

**1.5.7 Hazard**—a situation at the workplace capable of potential harm (i.e. capable of causing personal or property damage).

**1.5.8 Health**—in relation to work, is a condition which includes—

- (a) the absence of disease or infirmity; and
- (b) the physical and mental elements affecting health which are directly related to safety and hygiene at work.

**1.5.9 Management**—person(s) having responsibility, authority or accountability for the conduct of the business affairs of the employer.

**1.5.10 Personal damage**—any damage to a person which arises out of and in the course of employment.

The term includes work injuries, occupational disease and work-connected disabilities.

**1.5.11 Reasonably practicable**—situations where, as far as is reasonably possible and economically practicable, account has been taken of all hazards which might arise from equipment or work procedures when standing, supported or fixed in a normal position and operating in a normal manner, with allowances for normal wear and tear and other depreciating factors which can reasonably be anticipated.

**1.5.12 Regulatory authority**—a Minister of the Crown, a Government Department, Commission, or other Statutory or public authority having power to issue regulations, order or other instructions having the force of law in respect of any subject covered by this standard.

**1.5.13 Risk**—the probability that the potential harm may become actual.

**1.5.14 Safeguard**—a screen, barrier, guard or safety device designed to protect persons from personal damage.

**1.5.15 Safety**—the provision and control of work environment systems and human behaviour which, together, give relative freedom from those conditions and circumstances which can cause personal damage.

**1.5.16 Safety device**—a protective device, other than a guard, barrier or screen, e.g. a presence-sensing device, which eliminates or reduces danger before access to a hazard.

**1.5.17 Shall and should**—the word 'shall' is to be understood as mandatory and the word 'should' as non-mandatory, advisory, or recommended.

**1.5.18 Standard procedures**—specific instructions prepared for the purpose of providing for operations or processes to be carried out in a safe manner.

**1.5.19 Workplace**—any place at which a person is required to be or to which a person has occasion to go during the course of employment.

NOTE: Although this definition includes all places of work, some for the requirements of this standard 'workplaces' may not be applicable or appropriate for mobile workplaces. Special provisions will need to be made for such workplaces.



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