

# Four steps to preventing psychological injury at work

Prolonged or severe work-related stress can cause psychological and physical injury.

**Under work health and safety laws, psychological hazards and risks are treated the same as physical hazards and risks.**



Poor psychological health and safety is **expensive**.

It's estimated to cost Australian organisations

**\$6 billion** per annum in **lost** productivity.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL HAZARDS



Psychological hazards are anything that **increases the risk of work-related stress** including:

- high or low job demands
- low job control
- poor support
- poor workplace relationships
- low role clarity
- poor change management
- low reward and recognition
- poor organisational justice
- poor environmental conditions
- remote or isolated work
- violent or traumatic events



## What is work-related stress?

Stress is a physical, mental and emotional reaction that a worker may experience when the demands of their work exceeds their ability or resources to cope.

## FOUR STEPS TO PREVENTION

Safe Work Australia has developed a step-by-step process for managing psychological injury, intervening early and for taking action to prevent your workers becoming ill or sustaining a psychological injury.

### Step 1: Identify

Identify psychological hazards and risks by:

- talking and listening to your workers
- inspecting your workplace
- taking note of how your workers interact
- reviewing reports and records, and
- using a survey tool to gather information from staff.

### Step 2: Assess

Consider what could happen if workers are exposed to the identified hazards and risks. Many hazards and their associated risks are well-known but some may need to be identified through a formal assessment process.



### Step 3: Control

Where possible, eliminate the risk. This is always the safest option, but if it isn't possible, minimise the risk as much as possible through planning and prevention.

### Step 4: Review

Maintain, monitor and review control measures when necessary. It is important to regularly review control measures to ensure they remain effective.