

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Construction

These are the most common injuries to workers in the construction industry based on accepted workers' compensation claims.

* The construction industry covers demolition and site preparation services, building construction, construction services (e.g. landscaping), road and bridge construction, water supply and drainage services, electrical and plumbing.

Eye

Loose metal or dust fragments striking the eye from grinding, welding, sanding, drilling or digging

7%

Shoulder

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from lifting, carrying or moving metal, steel or timber

6%

Back

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from bending down to pick up various objects

20%

Hand, fingers, thumbs

Wounds/lacerations from moving or cutting metal or steel

19%

Knee

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from kneeling, walking or falling over uneven surfaces or objects on the ground

7%

Source: Queensland Employee Injury Database. Data current as at October 2008 and is subject to change over time. Based on eight years of accepted workers' compensation claims, excluding commuting claims.



Health and safety tips

Employers should undertake a risk management process in order to protect workers by preventing or minimising the risk of injuries in their workplace. Below are some health and safety tips to reduce the risk of injury. Employers should work with their employees to ensure the most effective solutions are put in place.

Manual tasks	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid using vibrating hand tools or sitting or standing on vibrating equipment (e.g. forklifts) for long periods of time. If possible, replace with equipment that causes less vibration. • For work involving hard physical effort: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - organise work to reduce the physical force needed - use mechanical and assistive equipment/devices - train workers in safe use of equipment/devices - buy small, light cartons of stock - use pumps or taps on drums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For work involving awkward or static working positions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work in a position that minimises the need to twist, slouch or bend with arms in close to body - adjust work spaces to allow for different sized workers - use adjustable stools. • For work that is highly repetitive or done for long periods, workers should use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - machines - job rotation.
Construction safety plan and inductions	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure principal contractor prepares construction safety plan (CSP) and has it readily available. • Make sure principal contractor signs off subcontractor's work method statements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep subcontractor's work method statements with CSP. • Ensure you sight general safety induction evidence (blue cards). • Conduct site-specific safety inductions for any person doing construction work (except for domestic).
Work method statements	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal contractor to make sure work method statements are prepared for high risk activities where they conclude an activity could result in death or bodily harm, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - entering trenches over 1.5 m deep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - working in confined spaces - using explosives - working at heights greater than 2 m - mobile plant.
Work at heights	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal contractor and relevant person to ensure falls from heights are eliminated. • Keep controls in place if risk of fall is greater than 2 m for commercial and 3 m for domestic by using edge protection or catch platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and use adequate work platforms. • Ensure no gaps in perimeter protection. • Make sure penetrations are covered/secured.
Knives, sharp tools and personal protective equipment (PPE)	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knives should be sharp and maintained in good working condition. • Provide the correct knife or sharp tool for the task. • Train and instruct your workers about using and sharpening knives. • Ensure steels for knife sharpening have hand guards. • Provide knives with handles that are comfortable to use. • Provide accessible first aid equipment and trained first aid officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select appropriate PPE for the work to be performed (e.g. gloves, aprons, protective footwear, hearing protection, respirators and masks, safety or sun glasses, hats and trousers). • Use PPE in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. • Ensure all workers wear PPE and are instructed in its proper use.
Licence/certificate	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure workers are licensed to perform high risk work, have an earthmoving and particular crane certificate or are licensed for the removal of asbestos containing material or demolition work. 	
Young workers	
Activities/instructions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that younger workers are still physically growing and may also lack understanding, experience and/or confidence in performing their duties safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induct, train and place younger workers with a suitable mentor to demonstrate and reinforce sound and safe work practices.