

Guide for using the HOW Toolkit



Establish a Steering Group

Begin by establishing a steering group within your organisation to facilitate the development and implementation of your action plan to create a healthy workplace for older workers. It is important to have a mix of work health and safety (WHS) people, HR people, managers and older workers who bring a range of experience and expertise to your steering group.

The steering group should be representative of the people who work in your organisation. The suggested composition is:

- WHS Manager (or a senior WHS person for large organisations)
- WHS representative(s)
- Older workers (consider gender, manager/non-manager responsibilities)
- HR Manager (or a senior HR person for large organisations)
- Wellbeing and/or diversity people

The ideal size of the steering group is 5-10 people. Some steering group members may meet more than one category (e.g. A WHS representative may also be an older worker)



Identify a risk scenario

Now that you have a steering group, identify a risk scenario where you have concerns that older workers are exposed to hazards in your workplace. Examples are provided within the HOW Toolkit to help you think about this. Once your steering group has agreed on a scenario you are ready to start using the HOW Toolkit.



The HOW Toolkit (Step 1-4)

The HOW Toolkit has been designed to guide you through the steps needed to move from a scenario to an action plan. Please work through each Step at your own pace.

Step 1: Hazard detection and assessment

- a) Write down as much detail as you can to describe the scenario and your rationale for choosing this scenario. A group discussion is a good way to gain an understanding of the scenario from multiple perspectives (e.g. WHS, HR, older workers). Examples are provided within the HOW Toolkit to help you think about this.
- b) We recommend that the steering group goes through the hazard checklists as a group. This is an opportunity to have deeper discussions about items where there may be disagreement about whether older workers are exposed to the hazard. It will also help to identify priority areas for older workers and to complete the tables in the HOW Toolkit about the hazards that you have identified.

Step 2: Specify the context

In Step two the steering group will be more focused on the context in which the older workers are carrying out activities. Discussions for Step 2 often result in the steering group realising that they need more information to help them to understand the context and may reconvene after consulting with colleagues, managers, older workers, and HR to complete this section.

Step 3: Identify and discuss existing controls

In Step three the steering group will identify and discuss existing controls. When completing the HOW Toolkit, steering groups find that they often list controls that exist in the workplace generally, it is important to focus on controls that exist for older workers to ensure a safe working environment. This may include general controls as well as those more specifically designed for older workers.

Reflection

Once you have completed Step 1–3 of the HOW Toolkit, the steering group should reflect on the scenario, the hazards identified, the existing controls and areas where they are lacking satisfactory controls for older workers. In discussing how to move forward from here, ensure that your discussion is focused on how to create a safer work environment for older workers related to your identified scenario.

Step 4: Action planning

The final step is to create an action plan. This section of the Toolkit begins with a summary of the types of actions that can be taken to minimise risks for each of the four main areas identified through the HOW research team's literature review and previous research – Scheduling of roles/tasks, Work design/redesign, HR practices, and Workplace accommodations (see HOW Toolkit page 20).

In Step Four, the steering group may find that the responsibility for some of their proposed actions may fall outside of their steering group's scope. This is a benefit of having broad representation on the steering group (e.g. some actions may need to be implemented and managed by HR or operational managers). The steering group will now develop an action plan that will provide a safe workplace for older workers for the scenario that they identified in Step 1.



Next steps

Once the HOW Toolkit has been completed the steering group will need to determine the best course of action towards implementation within their organisation. This may involve:

- Developing a business case (the HOW Toolkit provides the information required to develop a strong business case, particularly when the scenario, rationale, hazards and controls identified reveal a risk for organisations).
- Incorporating items from the action plan into WHS, HR and/or Corporate Plans/Strategies.
- Engaging outside skills and expertise (e.g. WHS consultant)
- Developing a working group that could be an extension of the steering group and/or could report to the WHS committee.