

Background

In 2008 WorkSafe Victoria conducted research into a new group of workers in medium size workplaces. These workers play an important role in the constant battle to reduce workplace incidents and improve return to work (RTW) outcomes. WorkSafe refers to them as the jugglers. These workers are responsible for occupational health and safety and RTW in addition to their normal duties. Employees from medium sized businesses seek OHS advice from the juggler who also carries out RTW tasks when a worker is injured. Requests for advice and assistance are often made despite the fact many jugglers don't have formal OHS qualifications or limited OHS and RTW training. The juggler's responsibilities are often not recognised by colleagues, managers and the business owner(s).

Proposed work

The following will assist jugglers in their role:

- Training and support to ensure they adopt a preventative strategy in relation to OHS matters rather than handling OHS on an incident-by-incident basis.
- Awareness of when to engage a suitably qualified OHS professional for assistance in managing OHS in the workplace.
- Training and support to put processes in place to initiate and monitor RTW plans, and liaise with health professionals and the injured worker at key stages of the process.
- Acknowledgment for work done to encourage colleagues to assist more and take responsibility for safety in the workplace.
- To be suitably recognised and receive more time for their role as a juggler.

WorkSafe will address these needs and continue to work with jugglers to develop strategies for training and support materials required to satisfy these needs.

To ensure proposer consultation takes place WorkSafe will liaise with industry groups and unions that regularly deal with jugglers to ensure support materials address specific needs. WorkSafe will also conduct an awareness campaign aimed at raising the recognition of jugglers among colleagues, senior managers and business owners.

WorkSafe will also collaborate with safety organisations in NSW, Queensland and New Zealand to enable initiatives from these organisations to be implemented in Victoria.

Further information

Stephen Pehm is the Project Manager for supporting the juggler and is be interested in talking to jugglers or other parties with an interest in the initiative. For more information contact Steve on 9641 1562 or stephen_pehm@worksafe.vic.gov.au