

Environment Scan:



Health and Safety Matters, offers a snapshot of key recent events and changes across health, safety and wellbeing (HSW). For more information on the Government Health and Safety Lead (GHSL) and the public sector please visit our website or email the team at ghsl@mpi.govt.nz

2025 Breakfast Events:



23 July 2025

Our next Tier 2 Health, Safety & Wellbeing (HSW) Leaders' Breakfast event will be hosted at the Ministry for the Environment and will outline their case study of Managing an Onsite Psychological Harm Event. See the Breakfast event agenda [here](#).

October 2025

If anyone is interested in preseting and hosting the final Tier 2 Health, Safety & Wellbeing Leaders Breakfast. Please contact Debbie Bridge at Deborah.Bridge@mpi.govt.nz.

Update on T2 HSW Leaders Field Trip

Coming soon we will be able to confirm our host and date for the T2 HSW Leaders field trip. for more information or book your place, please contact Debbie Bridge at ghsl@mpi.govt.nz

- Event duration: 3-4 hours - Location: Wellington
- Max. of 10 attendees.
- Theme: "A day in the life of a T2 leader—highlighting operational and governance responsibilities, key challenges and the levers they use for due diligence, assurance and frontline visibility.

Planning for a Catastrophic Event

While the likelihood of catastrophic level events remains low, it still remains a possibility, and as such there is a lot of work underway across government, to ensure the country is as ready as it can be, to respond to such an event.

The Delegated Chief Executive's Network is a central government initiative to support system readiness for senior staff who have been identified as their agency's delegated Chief Executive, following a catastrophic Wellington earthquake or similar event that significantly disrupts Wellington's ability to operate.

Their recent forum looked at the challenges of working and responding through a catastrophic event, providing advice and guidance on:

- What is your role as a Delegated CE?
- Personal Preparedness in a crisis -Getting through the initial hours? First few days. Focusing on your own and your people's wellbeing, health and safety first and foremost.
- Occupational Stress, Overwork Risks and managing work expectations.
- Crisies will heighten H&S risks: Extra care needs to be taken around HS awareness and decision making to reduce the risk of harm. Officer duties are not suspended.
- Catastrophic Programme Scope - operational principles and tasks etc.

To check out the full presentation [click here](#) or feel free to contact Matt Shaw via: DCENetworkSecretariat@mbie.govt.nz

T2 HSW Leaders Programme recognised as finalist

We were delighted that our Public Sector Tier two Health, Safety and Wellbeing Leaders Programme was selected as a finalist at the 2025 New Zealand Workplace Health and Safety Awards, in the Governance category. It was great to see Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) win for their improving critical control assurance programme and the Department of Corrections for winning the Safety II Category using Human and Organisational OP Principles and learning teams to improve efficiency and engagement and NZ Post for winning the Wellbeing and Mental Health Champion Categories.



From the Courts

A snapshot of cases we have seen from New Zealand, Australia and further abroad.

Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited v WorkSafe New Zealand Prosecution - WorkSafe court summary

WorkSafe New Zealand recently prosecuted Ballance Agri-Nutrients following a tragic incident in which a worker sustained fatal crush injuries while cleaning a conveyor belt system.

The court found that Ballance Agri-Nutrients had failed to:

- Provide adequate training for workers on how to safely clean and maintain the conveyor system.
- Install effective guarding to prevent access to dangerous parts of the machinery.

Ballance Agri-Nutrients pleaded guilty to breaching sections 36(1)(a), 48(1), and 48(2)(c) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 ("the Act"). According to WorkSafe's summary, the company's failure to ensure the health and safety of the victim also placed other workers at risk of similar harm

[Read full WorkSafe's court summary here.](#)

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015: Belly Gully's article on legislative reforms

The Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, Hon Brooke van Velden, made a series of announcements regarding proposed reform of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (the HSW Act). The stated intention of the proposed reform is to reduce compliance costs and provide greater certainty for businesses in areas for example:

- Amending the purpose of the HSW Act to focus on critical risks.
- Reduce notification requirements so only fatalities or serious injuries, illness and incidents need be notified.
- Change the HSW Act for small, low-risk businesses. so they need only manage their critical risks and provide first aid and emergency plans.
- Clarify the officer duties so that it is clear that day-to-day management of H&S risks is the role of managers, not those in a governance role.

Amended legislation will be put before Parliament before the end of 2025 and likely come into force early in 2026

[Read Belly Gully's full article here.](#)

UK has updated sentencing guidelines could see fines 'significantly increase' for health and safety offences – British Safety Council article

The Sentencing Council has updated its guidelines as of 1 June 2025, which could lead to significantly higher fines for very large organisations (VLOs)—those with turnover far exceeding £50 million—for offences related to health and safety, food safety, corporate manslaughter, and environmental violations.

The changes aim to address inconsistencies in sentencing and provide clearer direction to judges, especially in cases involving the largest companies to ensure that 'fines must bring home to directors and board members the need to comply with health and safety legislation'.

[Read full British Safety Council article here.](#)

Australian Government agency charged after worker assault – Comcare article

Services Australia has been charged with breaching federal work health and safety laws after a worker was violently attacked at a Melbourne Centrelink office.

Comcare, Australia's National Authority for work health and safety and workers compensation, has investigated Services Australia an government agency and the CDPP has charged them with failing to comply with its duties under Section 19(1) of the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act.

The charge follows an incident in which a worker sustained serious injuries after being stabbed by an individual at their place of work. Comcare alleges that Services Australia failed to meet its primary duty to ensure the health and safety of its workers.

The hearing is scheduled for 1 July, and if found guilty, the agency could face a maximum penalty of \$1.5 million.

[Read ComCare's full article here.](#)

Useful Insights and Resources

Compiled current resources and identified article insights from experts on health and safety.

GHSL H&S Reporting Draft Guide for Governance and Executive Leadership (For Review)

Reporting to the governance function is a constant source of discussion and requests, alongside the difference in reporting for governance versus senior management functions. With this in mind, the GHSL has drafted a [H&S Reporting Guide for Governance and Executive Leadership](#)

This early draft has been favourably reviewed by a handful of folk across the GHSL membership and so it is time to get a wider review completed. Does it cover the right topics, is it helpful – Please provide any feedback and we'll try to finalise the Guide in August or September. The draft has been included in the latest Directors Update for your Heads of H&S to review.

Institute of Directors - The value of H&S investment

Phil Parkes, ESG Director, argues that integrating broader thinking into health and safety can drive sustainability for organisations – not just in the long term, but also in the face of current challenges. He warns that failing to adapt could lead to financial risks, including losing contracts, access to funding, or market opportunities. He emphasizes the need for boards to take a proactive approach, balancing short-term pressures with long-term strategy to ensure competitiveness and resilience.

[Read the full article by the Institute of Directors.](#)

How leaders can prevent organisational failures IOSH UK

This IOSH article explores the idea of how the absence of strong leadership and effective governance can lead to disasters that cost lives. Looking at the actions leaders should take to prevent organisational failures, not least asking the right questions for assurance such as:

- Know what the organisation's internal and external context is, including factors that affect organisational goals.
- Ensure that the organisational strategy, goals and objectives are aligned with the management system.
- Set and understand the organisation's risk appetite and tolerance levels.

[Read the full article by IOSH UK](#)

CEO vs Board liability for Health & Safety – by Parry Field Lawyers

This article explores why the Board members weren't liable in the Port of Auckland case. Former Port of Auckland CEO Tony Gibson was sentenced for health and safety breaches related to the 2020 death of a worker. Despite his hands-on approach to safety, he failed to exercise due diligence, leading to his prosecution. The Board of Directors was not charged, likely because Gibson had direct responsibility for safety measures and their implementation. This case highlights the importance of oversight at all levels, emphasising that boards must actively ensure safety systems are effective rather than relying solely on executives.

[Read the full article by Parry Field Lawyers](#)

Suicide prevention in the workplace

The Mental Health Foundation has released new guidance and resources for employers and people leaders to support staff experiencing suicidality and responding to a staff member's suicidality.

[Read the full Mental Health Foundation Guidance.](#)

HSE chair calls for an 'urgent culture shift' on health - Engagement

Sarah Newton, Chair of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) for Britain, urges a cultural shift to prioritise workplace health. Speaking at a recent Health and Safety Event, Newton highlighted declining fatalities but warned that work-related illnesses remain a major issue, affecting 1.7 million workers and causing 33.7 million lost workdays in 2023/2024. Newton stressed the need for stronger oversight and prevention, with the HSE committed to improving workplace health and supporting worker recovery.

Three key actions presented to achieve a transformation in occupational health:

1. Strengthening workplace health risk controls through robust assessments, effective measures, and regular monitoring.
2. Improving health surveillance to assess risks and ensure compliance, as inspections show gaps in adherence.
3. Prioritising mental health, with stress, depression and anxiety now causing nearly half of work-related illnesses.

[.Read the full article by HSE UK](#)

New Guidance from WorkSafe New Zealand Managing Psychological Risks at Work

WorkSafe has released new guidance providing advice for businesses on how to manage psychosocial risks at work. This guide is to help persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) recognise, manage and prevent psychosocial risks.

[Read the new WorkSafe guidance here.](#)