

## 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](https://www.mpi.govt.nz/health-safety) or email the team at [ghsl@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:ghsl@mpi.govt.nz)

## Our Final 2025 Breakfast Event:

Our final Tier 2 Health, Safety & Wellbeing (HSW) Leaders' Breakfast event for this year will be on 23rd October and featuring Hugo Vitalis, DCE at the Public Service Commission, introducing Your Complaint, Your Rights and updated Speaking Up standards. Richard Waggott, DCE Organisational Resilience and Safety, will lead a discussion on agency approaches to behaviour-based complaints.

## GHSL Mobile App (Safe-Gov)

As the public service digitises systems to meet the needs of people in a changing world, through the support of the Ministry for Primary Industries, the GHSL is developing a mobile app to enable Officers and Executives to more easily meet their due diligence obligations. The app includes publicly available features to share news, updates, events and resources, and for members to record site visits, learning records and self-assessments. We anticipate the app to be available by the end of this year, with [Liam.Bourne@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:Liam.Bourne@mpi.govt.nz) the point of contact. Expressions of interest from officers / executives to participate in User Acceptance Testing are welcome.

## Are you interested in shadowing another agency governance committee?

We want to be able to provide T2 HSW Leaders with as many practical development opportunities as possible. If you are interested in attending another agency's governance committee to see how it works, or if you would like to host another T2 HSW Leader at your committee, please contact Debbie Bridge at [deborah.bridge@mpi.govt.nz](mailto:deborah.bridge@mpi.govt.nz)

## T2 HSW Leaders Field Trip

We hosted our first Tier 2 HSW Leaders field trip, to the MBIE Customer Service Centre in Porirua, on Thursday, 21 August.

Set within the context of MBIE's Customer Service Centre, the visit highlighted how these teams consistently deliver information, advice and guidance on a wide range of topics, from Tenancy and Immigration, through to Radio Spectrum Management - managing 1.2 million calls and over 100,000 emails a year. The half day visit included each Tier 2 leader being paired with a Customer Service Advisor, listening in on live calls and then sharing insights into the customer service roles. The group was encouraged to identify the risks, controls and assurance mechanisms in action. Discussions highlighted the H&S risks faced by call centre operators, including indirect violence & aggression and psychological harm, and the effectiveness of controls used to manage these risks, including AI in practice and monitoring personnel in the field by the National Communications Centre. The discussions focused on officer due diligence and insights into the operational reality - what 'work as done' truly looks like on the frontline - and how to balance operational and governance responsibilities. The visit concluded with a reflective session where participants shared their observations, considered how the risks aligned with those in their own agencies and discussed assurance processes used to evaluate the effectiveness of their controls.

The feedback we received from the group was that it was a valuable and insightful experience that highlighted the critical balance between operational delivery and governance responsibilities in a high-risk frontline environment.

*"Thank you so much for again organising yesterday's site visit. This was so valuable, and I have picked up a few things that I will be following up here!"*

*Catherine Taylor, Chief People Officer,  
Natural Hazards Commission*

Picture right: Above picture Laura Dixon, Ministry for the Environment and Jackie Clarke, Ministry for Justice listening in on live calls.



# AROUND THE SECTOR

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



## **Update from the Government Property Office to Property Managers re Asbestos Contaminated Fire Doors**

There has recently been a notice from Pacific Doors Systems (PDS) Limited, and related media coverage, regarding potential asbestos contamination in the fire-retardant board (FRB) core used in certain fire-rated doors.

PDS Limited has published a notice on their website and is informing relevant parties as part of steps to help ensure safe working and handling practices in connection with any fire-rated doors that may be impacted. Any party affected should refer to the notice and contact PDS directly for further information.

As reported in recent media, Worksafe and MBIE's Building System Delivery and Assurance team are also actively working to gather further information and determine appropriate next steps. We encourage agencies to keep updated on the situation via the following sources:

- [PDS website](#)
- [News and media | WorkSafe](#)

[The Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment](#) will also be providing updates on their website as further information from PDS becomes available.

## **Health and safety reform: Sector-specific updates signal targeted regulatory relief**

The Government has launched targeted health and safety reforms to reduce red tape, improve clarity and better align regulations with real-world risks. Minister Brooke van Velden's announcements span a number of sectors, with consultation and legislative changes expected ahead of the next election. Targeted regulatory relief includes:

- Simpler rules for working at heights and prequalification.
- Updated codes for farm safety and machinery use.
- Risk-based machine guarding and exposure standards.
- Streamlined lab safety and support for hydrogen innovation.
- Reduced compliance for low-risk and volunteer-led adventure activities.

[Read MinterEllisonRuddWatts full article here](#)

## **Unsafe Conveyor Belts Lead to Over \$800,000 in Penalties – WorkSafe article**

Since mid-March, New Zealand courts have imposed over \$800,000 in penalties following a series of tragic incidents involving unsafe conveyor belts in the manufacturing sector. In the latest incident, WorkSafe found missing machine guards, ignored safety advice and poor risk assessment at the Timaru site where a young worker was fatally injured. The company and director were jointly sentenced. This case highlights the critical importance of proactive machine safety and leadership accountability.

[Read WorkSafe's full article here](#)

## **Qube Ports NZ Limited v Maritime New Zealand – Maritime New Zealand**

Maritime New Zealand recently prosecuted a stevedoring company, Qube Ports NZ Limited, with the courts fining the company \$300,000 following a stevedore being badly injured after falling six metres while unloading cargo. According to the Maritime New Zealand summary, despite the relevant safety documentation being in place, Qube failed to implement the identified safety measures within its operating procedures to protect its workers. Working from heights is a known critical risk. The outcome is an important message for operators to properly ensure critical risks are appropriately controlled in order to keep people safe.

[Read Maritime New Zealand's full article here](#)

## **Heavy industrial company fined \$350,000 over serious injuries to worker – WorkSafe Australia**

WorkSafe Western Australia recently prosecuted a Hope Valley heavy industrial company, which was fined \$350,000 on two counts over causing serious injuries to a 16-year-old apprentice and not reporting the injury. The case highlights the failure to provide and maintain a safe work environment for workers and the importance of near miss reporting and active supervision, particularly of those new to a role and of a young age.

[Read the WorkSafe Australia's full article here](#)

# INSIGHTS AND RESOURCES

Current resources and insights from experts on health and safety.



## How health and safety practice lifts governance - Institute of Directors

This article by Helen Sadgrove explores why boards need more dialogue not the perfect dashboard. Helen, who is doing her PhD on Governance in Crown Entities, states that current models for H&S governance tend to be linear, compliance-focused and overly reliant on static indicators. They rarely account for the dynamic nature of emerging organisational safety risks. Advocating for a shift from control to insight – encouraging boards to move beyond dashboards and reports to engage in deeper dialogue, shared learning, and adaptive practices. Effective governance, she argues, is shaped by trust, reflection, and culturally inclusive approaches. By embedding health and safety into broader governance and embracing systems thinking, boards can better support safe, healthy, and resilient organisations.

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

## New Zealand's Security Threat Environment 2025

The New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS) recent report has noted further deterioration in the threat environment since last year's report, largely driven by less stable relationships between states and increasing levels of polarisation and grievance.

[Read the full report by the NZSIS here.](#)

## Building a Fatigue Risk Management System guidelines

The Port Industry Association (PIA) Fatigue Working Group was the winner of the Supreme Award at the 2025 Safeguard Awards for its fatigue management initiatives for worker health and safety. Fatigue is a recognised and serious risk in New Zealand's ports sector, driven by unpredictable schedules, long shifts, and complex work patterns. This guide developed by regulators, unions, employers, and fatigue experts at Massey University offers tailored, practical advice for implementing a robust Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS).

[Check out the Fatigue management – Port Industry website](#)

## State of a Thriving Nation 2025

This year's annual report presented by the Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum and prepared by economists Shamubeel Eaqub and Rosie Collins takes a performance focus, exploring the position of business and organisations to lead. This year's cost of harm estimate is \$5.4 billion (an increase on last years revised \$5.2 billion), conservatively representing an equivalent of 1.3% Gross Domestic Product. Positively, workplaces injuries continue to trend downward, although conversely time off work has doubled with claim costs rising. The workforce is highly mobile with 41% of employees having less than a year in their current role and 10% of new starters coming from within the same industry. Fatalities remain stubbornly high across industries, though this is not associated with the national economy being differently structured with comparable countries but instead pointing toward systemic issues.

[The full State of a Thriving Nation 2025 report is available here.](#)

## Presenteeism at Work – Umbrella Wellbeing

This article in the Umbrella Annual Wellbeing Report 2025, dives into the hidden cost of presenteeism across Aotearoa New Zealand.

[Read the full report by Umbrella here](#)

## View on Health and Safety Reporting: moving away from TRIFR and lag indicators

*by Francoise Barton for New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice*

This research paper presents the findings of the Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum's 2025 CEO Survey, offering a fresh and insightful look into how senior leaders across New Zealand are evolving their approach to health and safety. Moving beyond traditional lag indicators like TRIFR, the survey highlights a growing shift toward more meaningful, proactive measures—such as mental wellbeing tracking, worker engagement, and supply chain collaboration. With data from 137 CEOs, this research provides a valuable benchmark for organisations seeking to mature their health and safety practices, foster safer workplaces, and lead with purpose in a changing landscape.

[Read the full paper by Francois Barton, New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice here](#)

## Mapping Overlapping Duties - Guidance Tool

This draft guidance tool is designed to help public sector agencies identify and map overlapping duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. It introduces five core relationship types - Contracts, Property, Emergency Response, Events and Workflow Crossover - to support consistent classification and understanding of shared responsibilities between PCBU's. The draft [guidelines](#) have been shared with your Heads of H&S for feedback. If you have any feedback you would like to provide directly, please feel free to do so.