



March 2020

Autumn is finally here and aside from the first day or two, we seem to be having some much appreciated cooler weather and rain! We are also heading into virus season so we've got a couple of articles about the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the spread of infections. (There's even a tip on how to make your own hand sanitiser and beat those empty shelves at Coles and Woolies!)

We have lots of Safety news this week including the adoption of the GHS, the introduction of a WHS Amendment (Review) Bill to deter breaches and mitigate workplace risks, a new Asbestos Finder tool launched by the EPA, industrial chemical reforms and a new Guide on Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation.

In Wellbeing news, the Benestar onsite counselling service is moving to a temporary new venue, we have a new series of Wellbeing at Work workshops running this year and the Global Challenge is back! For one last time. Come to the info session on Tuesday to find out all about it.



Why is hand hygiene so important?

Why are we being told to wash our hands often? Frequent and thorough washing of our hands is the easiest way to help stop the spread of infection!

People who are coughing and sneezing, either into their own hands or onto surfaces, are contaminating their hands and those surfaces with infectious particles. If we touch a contaminated surface (eg. doorhandles, lift & traffic light buttons, handrails, keyboards, seating) the infectious particles can transfer onto our hands.

Did you know that we touch our faces, on average, 23 times an hour? Many germs, such as the coronavirus, need to get into our respiratory system to make us sick, and can do this via our mouth, nose and eyes. There are abundant blood vessels in these places, especially the eyes, and it's our eyes that are an important pathway for respiratory viruses to get into our cells.

So, don't touch your face! That's easier said than done because we do this subconsciously and if our hands have coronavirus on them, and we touch our face, then there is a real risk we will get infected!

Stop touching your face and wash your hands! **We are not likely to get sick if the virus goes no further than our hands!**



Effective Handwashing Guide

Frequently washing your hands, especially before eating, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of illness or contamination from things that you may have touched.

Basic soap and water is as good at cleaning your hands as any hand disinfectant or sanitiser. The sad reality is, about 25% of people don't wash their hands at all, and of those who do, they don't wash them frequently or adequately. In fact those who do wash their hands on average do so for only around 10 seconds which at best will remove about

90% of germs.

It should take about 30 seconds to wash your hands adequately (steps 1-9 in link below). the problem is, the remaining bacteria will grow and can double in number in less than 20 minutes! It doesn't matter what you use to wash your hands, if your technique is poor then your hands will not be clean. [Read more.](#)

For a how-to guide to using a hand rub disinfectant that you can print out and stick up in your office, [click here](#). For instructions on how to make a WHO recommended hand rub formulation, [click here](#).



Global Challenge Information Session

Have you heard people talking about the Global Challenge at UNSW and want to know more?

Do you wish you took part last year and don't want to miss out in 2020? Did you know that 2020 will be the last year of the Global Challenge (in its current format)?!

This information session will answer all your questions!

Come along and hear Julie Townrow from Virgin giving the inside scoop on the Global Challenge for 2020. This info session will take place on Tuesday 10 March from 12pm - 1pm in Colombo Theatre C ([map reference B16](#)). Book [here](#).



Asbestos Finder Tool

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) recently launched a new online [Asbestos Finder](#) tool to help determine products and materials which may contain asbestos. The tool allows users to search for products or locations where asbestos may be found. It is easy to use and may be helpful in identifying possible asbestos materials in any building or residence built before the late 1980s.

Remember if you think you have asbestos, treat it like it is - whether a material contains asbestos can only be confirmed via scientific testing.



Wellbeing at Work Workshop

Rita Holland is back in 2020 with a refreshed resilience and wellbeing workshop. These workshops ran every month last year (from February to November) and were called 'Resilience at Work'. Rita has updated her workshop for this year and we will be running them every second month - in May, July, September and November. The broad aims of this workshop include and are not limited to:

- Learn about the science of wellbeing and resilience
- Understand stress and burn out
- Explore nine techniques to increase wellbeing
- Goal setting to build wellbeing and resilience
- Create self-accountability and support for each other

Workshops are three hours long and run from 9.30am - 12.30pm. At this stage all dates are still available, but these workshops tend to book out quickly so don't hesitate to book your spot [here](#).



Industrial Chemical Reforms

Reforms to industrial chemicals regulation will commence in July 2020 with the view to streamlining processes, focus regulatory effort on higher risk chemicals and maintain Australia's health, safety and environmental standards. The new scheme, Australian Industrial Chemicals Introduction Scheme (AICIS), replaces the National Industrial Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS).

The scheme regulates the use (importation and manufacture) of industrial chemicals (ie. any chemical that is not for therapeutic, agricultural, veterinary or food use) in Australia. The scheme's [general rules](#), [categorisation guidelines](#) and [transitional rules](#) were recently finalised and are available on the [NICNAS website](#).

If you require further information or assistance, please contact your [HSE Business Partner/Coordinator](#).



Safe Work Australia News

Safe Work Australia (SWA) members recently agreed to adopt the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) 7. The intent is to ensure that Australia's requirements are current and aligned with international trading partners. SWA is looking to adopt GHS Revision 7 from July 2020 with a two-year transitional period. More information can be found [here](#).

A number of health monitoring guidelines have recently been released highlighting duties, substances that trigger this obligation and how to respond to medical reports. These include:

- [Health monitoring for persons conducting a business or undertaking guide](#)
- [Health monitoring when you work with hazardous chemicals guide](#)
- [Health monitoring for registered medical practitioners guide](#)
- [Crystalline silica health monitoring guide](#)

Also, a number of guides (30) providing practical WHS guidance to registered medical practitioners engaged to monitor workers' health have also been released. Further information can be found on the [SWA website](#).

WHS Amendment (Review) Bill 2019

This bill was introduced to the Lower House in November 2019. The bill focuses on breach deterrence and the need to ensure risks are mitigated via a health and safety management system (HSMS). The HSMS must enable the management of hazards and risks, appropriate consultation, effective contractor management, investigations and audits, and the timely reporting and management of incidents.

The reforms include (amongst other things) a prohibition on insurance against WHS fines and a clarification that the death of a person at work



may constitute manslaughter and be prosecuted under the Crimes Act, attracting a maximum penalty of 25 years imprisonment.



Solar UV Radiation

Safe Work Australia has recently released a Guide on Exposure to Solar Ultraviolet Radiation (UVR). This provides good information on the risks of solar UVR exposure, control measures and guidance on how to implement a sun protection program.

Whilst the exposure of workers to solar UVR may vary, it is important to acknowledge it is accumulated exposure that creates the risk to health and safety such as skin cancer and eye damage. Further information can be found in the [Guide](#).

Benestar Onsite Service - New Temporary Venue

The Benestar onsite counselling service will be moving venue from March until June to allow Room G033 to be used for the annual flu vaccination clinic.

From Wednesday 25 March until Wednesday 20 May, Benestar onsite counselling will be held in Room G6 in the Blockhouse. Appointments will return to room G033 in the Quad on Wednesday 17 June.

Ishana Harrysunker is our new regular Benestar onsite counsellor. Appointments with Ishana can be booked by calling 1300 360 364. It is also possible to book in on the day for any appointments which remain free by going to the room and putting a cross next to your chosen time on the appointment sheet on the door.

Benestar services are available free to all staff, including casual staff, and their immediate family members.



