



# Advice from Alan

## Health and safety obligations

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No one wants their employees or customers to be hurt at work. Every Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) – which includes sole traders, self-employed persons, not-for-profit organisations, and ordinary businesses – must take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the safety of their workers and others, such as customers or the general public, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015.

What does reasonably practicable mean?

To determine what is reasonably practicable, you must identify and consider all of the risks and hazards in your workplace. You must determine what health and safety measures it is possible for your PCBU to undertake to prevent those risks from happening.

The measures available to you will be different depending on the size of your particular PCBU and the type of work you undertake. You must then consider what is reasonable in your particular circumstances. You must ask what you can actually undertake given your business resources.

Factors that must be considered are the size of the risk and the severity of the potential harm, the availability of risk prevention measures and how suitable they are for your business, and the costs of the measure compared to the seriousness of the risk. Conduct thorough risk assessments to ensure that all available risk measures are being utilised.

What do these safety measures look like?

The safety measures required will be different depending on what type of business you operate. For example, a construction company that operates heavy machinery will need different procedures to an office.

There are some health and safety measures which will be common for all PCBUs. However, it is important to consider exactly what hazards and risks are prevalent in your workplace, and implement the most effective risk prevention measures available to you.

The Act also requires a PCBU to report to WorkSafe when a “notifiable event” happens. This may include a death in the workplace, serious injury or illness, or any other significant incident.