



30 March 2016

General Assistants in Schools Working Alone Risk Assessments

Working Alone

During the 2015/2016 Christmas school holidays, the PSA was informed of two of our members being involved in WHS incidents while working alone.

One General Assistant (GA) required stitches after the top section of a door that wasn't installed properly by contractors fell and struck him on the head. Another GA had contractors removing asbestos adjacent to his workshop.

Prior to both of these incidents there was no Working Alone Risk Assessment undertaken in their schools.

On notification to the PSA, we contacted the WHS Directorate about both incidents. With the asbestos hazard, the GA was sent home with pay until a risk assessment was completed.

Your GA Advisory Group Delegates conducted a survey and identified there were a large number of GAs who indicated that they have never had a

discussion or been consulted on a risk assessment in their school.

On a number of occasions, the PSA has raised Working Alone Risk Assessment non-compliance on behalf of members with the Department. The PSA believes the Department's passive approach to ensuring that these vital Working Alone Risk Assessments are routinely undertaken in schools is not appropriate.

If you are injured while undertaking your duties at work, you will lose money

The PSA reminds all GAs there have been massive changes to workers compensation provisions. Both the O'Farrell and Baird Government changes to workers compensation are skewed to the interests of insurers and employers, to the direct detriment of injured workers.

During the school holiday period the PSA instructs all members to adhere to

the General Assistants' Statement of Duties to limit your chance of injury.

For this upcoming school holiday period, approach your Principal and request a Working Alone Risk Assessment be conducted in accordance with Safety Alert 45. We know there are a lot of GAs who have not had a working alone risk assessment completed with them.

The PSA continues to push with the Department that Working Alone Risk Assessments:

- are required to be completed prior to each school holiday
- in case of emergency, include a suitable means of contact and for daily communication with your approved supervisor
- should detail the jobs that are to be completed through the holidays
- ensure that both the Principal and the General Assistant are

fully aware of any potential risks and importantly, what controls are to be put in place to mitigate the risk of injury

- are the responsibility of the Principal to complete in consultation with GAs.

If you have concerns about the risk assessment or questions you should firstly contact the Department's WHS advisor for your area or you can contact the PSA on schools@psa.asn.au

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