

Workplace Advisory Services Operational Guide

SafeWork SA
information > advice > support
OG – WAS01

This *Workplace Advisory Services Operational Guide* (OG) provides guidance to WHS Advisors relative to the advisory services available.

SafeWork SA's WHS advisory service goal is to provide practical and personalised support and assistance to help business owners and their workers understand their health and safety responsibilities, identify and manage their work health and safety risks by implementing effective safety systems.

This service aims to build the business' capability to manage their work, health and safety. The WHS Advisors within the Workplace Advisory Services (WAS) Team can provide information, advice and support to business owners, managers, HSRs and workers by meeting face-to-face, visiting the workplace, via written communication or by phone. The WHS Advisors will not 'sign off' on a business' systems, plant or write documents for them.

As our WHS Advisors do not have any inspector powers under the WHS Act and Regulations, they cannot issue a prohibition, improvement or an expiation notice for any potential breach of WHS laws. This should be explained to the customer at the point where a service is provided.

The process

Due to the nature of this service to provide practical and personalised support to each workplace, the process and requirements in each request for assistance will vary.

The general approach to providing support when we receive a request for visit should follow the steps outlined below:

1. Workplace request

A request for assistance may originate from various sources, including online requests, walk-ins to our Customer Service Centres, word-of-mouth referrals, or via the promotion of the service by SafeWork SA inspectors, ReturnToWorkSA and/or their claims agents, or through industry associations or unions.

All requests will be referred through the AGD:SWSA Workplace Advisory Services mailbox for assessment and allocation by the Principal WHS Advisor or their proxy.

All requests to the mailbox will be acknowledged immediately by an automated email response.

The Principal WHS Advisor (or proxy) will check the information contained in the workplace request to assess the suitability for allocation to a WHS Advisor. This may include a courtesy telephone call or email to the requester to confirm details and requirements.

Speak to the Principal WHS Advisor (or proxy) if you do not think the workplace request is suitable for the services of the WAS Team.

2. Schedule

Once allocated, the Advisor should contact the customer within three business days.

If the business needs can be met by phone or mail/email and there is no need to schedule a workplace visit, the advisor should still make the offer of a visit. However, a workplace visit is not a mandatory requirement of the service.

Where a workplace visit is arranged:

- arrange a time and location with the business that suits their needs, this may be at their workplace or one of SafeWork SA's Customer Service Centres (metro and regional offices)
- confirm with them what it is they are seeking assistance with
- explain that our service and core function is to support them to build their capability, not to write their policies/procedures for them
- build rapport by asking about their business operations, e.g.
 - o what products or services they make/provide
 - o how many people work there
 - o if they have a Health and Safety Representative
 - o what areas of their business do they have any concerns with or they wish us to focus on from a WHS perspective
 - o if they have had any previous interaction with SafeWork SA
 - o if they are a member of any association or industry body (they also may offer support and assistance).
- ask if there are any specific requirements or matters to consider for accessing the workplace (PPE requirements, location, dirt roads, inoculations etc)
- confirm your appointment by email.

3. Prepare

Before visiting the workplace, you must check:

- the history of the business on InfoNET to understand any prior interactions with SafeWork SA. (note: Refer to the '*principles of engagement*' covering Educator and Regulator interaction)
- for information/guidance material on any issues the customer raised during your conversation with them or that you believe would be relevant. Remember to check <G:\Educator\WAS\WHS Resources> for any industry or hazard specific information that may be relevant
- the location of the business so you can plan your visit accordingly, taking into consideration travel time.

Remember, advisory visits may require significant travel and can be up to 3 hours long so plan your trip in accordance with any SafeWork SA policies and procedures.

The initial visit should be used to establish a rapport with the customer and to gauge their level of understanding and awareness of WHS and their responsibilities.

The advisor should start by discussing the business' core functions, operations and an overview of their understanding of health and safety, including any safety management systems they may already have in place.

The advisor should then outline the process or steps they can undertake by showing them the *Simple steps to safety* tool. If appropriate, ask the questions in the tool to get an understanding of their current systems to help identify where their systems may be lacking.



The advisor should ask if they can walk around the workplace to gain a better understanding of the business operations by observing work activities undertaken.

Throughout the visit (and the walk around the workplace) the advisor should:

- help the PCBU to spot hazards in their workplace
- discuss practical solutions to control the hazards
- emphasise the potential for other benefits, e.g. production, quality, staff morale and wellbeing
- demonstrate how tools and templates can be used
- identify what resources will assist the business
- ask if it is ok to take photos (both good and bad) of issues observed.

At the end of the visit, the advisor should discuss with the PCBU about:

- any high risk activities or hazards that may require immediate attention
- priority issues that should be addressed first
- areas where their systems are lacking
- templates and information that will assist the business
- our online resources

- the importance of acting on WHS issues and the potential consequences if issues are not addressed
- the follow up process. A further visit or visits may be arranged with the PCBU.

Promoting best practice

Where you observe good examples of practical safety systems and compliance, ask the customer if they are willing to share their systems and methodology with others. This may be in the form of a case study to share their story. Promoting their ideas is one way of fostering good relationships within industry sectors and to promote simple practical solutions to common hazards that can be replicated across other workplaces and industries.

5. Activity recording

All activities are to be recorded at the earliest opportunity against the correct client in InfoNET. This enables accurate history checks to be performed across the agency as well as up-to-date reporting on activities undertaken by the WAS Team.

As soon as an appointment is made, an InfoNet file should be created for the client. The WAS InfoNet Form should be completed and forwarded to the WAS administration officer for electronic file creation.

If a workplace visit is not required, Advisors may record their interaction with a client in their general InfoNet file called General Responses to Workplace Requests.

The following InfoNet activities are available to Advisors:

- Advisory visit:** records advice/support to a client that you have visited. Where detailed advice and recommendations have been provided to a client, these must be confirmed in writing, using the Advisory Visit Report (see section 6 below).
- Advice – face to face:** records detailed advice/support to a client who has visited our office or customer service centre
- Advice – phone:** records detailed advice/support to a client via telephone
- Advice – written:** records detailed advice/support to a client via email or letter
- File notes:** records useful information (e.g. *client is closing business for 3 months, would like follow up on dd/mm/yy*)
- Phone Call/Email:** records useful details only (e.g. *visit scheduled next week at 10am dd/mm/yy*)

- Advisory Presentation:* records when you have delivered a presentation/seminar/workshop. The number of attendees and number of businesses presented must be entered
- Survey Ready:* See part 7 Customer satisfaction
- Stakeholder consultation:* records of meetings or attendance at forums where engagement with stakeholders has occurred. The number of attendees must also be entered.

6. *Advisory Visit Report*

The Advisory Visit Report is a crucial element to ensure SafeWork SA's Educator function, is bringing matters to the attention of the duty holder at a workplace. The report makes it clear to the PCBU the issues that may need their immediate attention to fix. It also provides a mechanism for follow-up with the PCBU to check-in to see how they are going.

If there is a WHS incident at the workplace which results in an investigation, this report will provide crucial information about SafeWork SA's interaction with the PCBU.

Advisors should prepare a report as soon as practicable, following the advisory visit. The report must contain:

- the name of the business, the duty holder and the Advisor
- the date the advisory visit took place
- a brief background of the client and the reason for them seeking assistance
- matters of discussion and areas observed during the visit.

The report must also contain:

- specific recommendations and/or priority focus areas
- details and photographs relating to any recommendations (see example wording below)
- indicative time frames in which certain matters should be attended to. This should be negotiated at the time of the visit
- links or references to specific information or where more help may be obtained on a matter.

Example 1: I recommend the John Heine power press, s/n 1234 (pictured above), is no longer used until it has been adequately guarded to prevent access to the moving parts.

Example 2: I recommend that the boxes stacked near the southern fire exit in workshop 33 (pictured above), are removed immediately so not to cause any obstruction in the case of an evacuation.

Advisors should ensure that the report is tabled in a way that is appropriate to the customer's knowledge, capacity and capabilities. Consideration should be given to whether the report would be better delivered in stages, allowing the customer to progressively address the issues raised and not to be overwhelmed by the recommendations, resulting in no action being taken.

The report must be emailed to the client in a PDF format as soon as practicable (within 48 hours). On the rare occasion where email is not available, the report must be mailed using registered post or hand delivered.

Note: the report is NOT to be attached to the InfoNet file, but record the fact that it has been sent using the 'Advice – written' activity (example below).

	Client/Officer	Date/Followup	Activity/Output	Comments	Attachments
<input type="checkbox"/>	[REDACTED]	23/11/2016 09:00	Advice - written	Advisory visit report emailed to [REDACTED]	

Once the report has been sent to the client, a copy of the email, containing the report, must be saved in your individual folder on the G-Drive.

To enable easy retrieval of these reports in the future, ensure you have them stored in a folder that is named by the company name, followed by the InfoNet file number

(e.g. [REDACTED]).

Keep copies of these in a folder named '2016 Advisory Visits' as per the following example:

[G:\Educator\WAS\WHS Advisors\](#)[REDACTED]

7. Customer satisfaction

To continually improve our service, we need to ensure the customers we interact with are satisfied with the service we have provided. A survey has been developed which is to be sent to clients after an advisory visit or where we have provided detailed written advice and information e.g. via email. To do this:

- select the activity '*survey ready*' on the relevant file on InfoNET and populate the required information.

Surveys are scheduled to be sent out to clients each Wednesday at 11.00am. All clients with the 'survey ready' activity entered will automatically be included in that mail out. A reminder email will also be sent to the client 7 days later if they have not responded to the survey.

Advisors should encourage their customers to respond to the survey so we can continually improve the service. Customers also have the opportunity to refer the service to another business/colleague who they think would benefit from a visit. Advisors should tell the customer that any referral remains confidential and does not come to SafeWork SA.

8. Follow up

Following all advisory visits, ensure a follow-up phone call is conducted. The purpose of the follow-up may be:

- to enquire how they are going with any recommendations
- to arrange a follow up visit
- to let them know they can call you if they need more assistance.

Title	location
WAS Advisory Visit Report	G:\Educator\WAS\Administration - WAS Team\007 Lists and General Templates
WAS InfoNet form	G:\Educator\WAS\Administration - WAS Team\012 InfoNET
WHS Resources	G:\Educator\WAS\WHS Resources

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