

Commissioner

My name is Rodney John MURRAY, I have a Graduate Diploma in OH&S Management (Uni SA)

I was employed by Workplace Services (now SafeWork SA) in the period 1999-2001 as an Inspector (OH&S).

During that employment I experienced efforts to influence my decisions on several occasions, all of which were resisted.

An Inspector's decision making process is influenced by many factors, having to take into account:

1. The legislation(s) covering the incident
2. Whether to expiate (only under the Dangerous Goods Act in my time) – could mean multiple expiations for the same offence, driver, transport company, consignor.
3. What appeared to be the attitude of the employer/manager to his/her staff
4. The general appearance of the worksite(s)
5. How many obvious breaches of safety
6. Whether breaches are life threatening
7. Whether to issue an improvement or prohibition notice
8. Whether to seize equipment
9. Etcetera

When initial contact was made at a workplace, often an Inspector would be attending alone which is not best practice.

One of the reasons for this was insufficient numbers of staff and also the assessment of the complaint leading to the visit.

We seldom "Cold Called" during my period i.e. inspecting premises without a prior complaint.

This is a very effective method of ensuring that compliance of the legislation was occurring.

This lack can be attributed to insufficient Inspectors and the overall policy of Workplace Services at that time.

Prior to being employed by Workplace Services I had been the acting Manager, Safety at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, had been an OH&S representative as well as a Radiation Safety Officer (profession Radiographer).

During my employment Workplace Services never used my Health Industry experience to either investigate, or assist other Inspectors to investigate, complaints in the Health Sector. It was their policy to “round out” Inspectors in other areas; I served in the Retail and Manufacturing teams.

In 2001 the Government decided to offer “older Inspectors” packages to bring in “fresh blood”.

Some of those newcomers were very short on life experience let alone work experience.

Naturally the overall expertise of the department was reduced.

I am willing to give oral evidence if required.