

Free safety consultation session

Victorian businesses with up to 50 employees can register for a free 3 hour session with an independent health and safety consultant. The consultant will come to your workplace, help identify safety issues relevant to your business and provide useful advice on how to go about addressing the issues.

Who is eligible to receive assistance through the small business assistance program?

Any employer, operating in Victoria, which has 50 or less than 50 full time employees can apply for assistance under the program. Assistance is only available once. As the program is based on an employer, not a workplace, employers with more than 50 employees across all workplaces are not eligible for this assistance.

Why should I get a safety consultant to assist my business?

The safety of employees is paramount to the majority of small business operators. However the requirements of the legislation and the technical expertise required to understand what the legislation means can make it difficult to know where to start or how to go about it. By getting the advice of an independent safety consultant for 3 hours, the business can quickly and easily get an understanding of what the legislation means for their business and how to go about managing safety in a step by step way.

How do I apply for free safety assistance?

Contact the CMPA on 1300 267 222 or 03 5781 0655.

What does a safety consultant do when they come to assist my business?

The safety consultant will want to find out about the type of product you make or service you deliver, how you make or deliver what you do, the number of staff, what health and safety efforts have been done, and then will take a look around the workplace to identify any safety issues that may not have been addressed. They will also discuss with you how to manage safety, consult with your employees and what documentation you may need.

Does the safety consultant provide me with a report of what he/she finds?

The safety consultant will leave you with a Safety Action Plan which is ordered in terms of “High, Medium, and Low” priority. This Safety Action Plan provides you with a priority list of what issues the safety consultant believes need to be addressed, and provides advice on how to go about addressing these issues.

Does the safety consultant tell WorkSafe about safety issues relating to my workplace?

The safety consultant does not tell WorkSafe about the safety issues in the workplace. The consultant is required to provide WorkSafe with a brief document confirming they have been in the workplace and the types of issues discussed with the employer. The employer is required to sign this document. This document will then allow the safety consultant to be paid by WorkSafe for providing assistance to you.

CMPA will receive only that information that WorkSafe would be provided

Will my business be put on a list for inspection if I take part in this program?

No, WorkSafe conducts inspection services by targeting specific industry sectors eg transport, construction, manufacturing, or specific safety issues eg forklifts, chemicals etc. The inspection side of WorkSafe are not provided with a list of employers who receive assistance under this program.

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How long does it take for a safety consultant to come and assist my business?

The safety consultant will be forwarded your request for assistance within 2 days of WorkSafe receiving the request. WorkSafe requires the safety consultant to arrange an appointment and deliver the assistance within 30 days of receiving the request from WorkSafe.

What if I/my business cannot see the safety consultant within 30 days?

Where the employer/business cannot make an appointment within 30 days the consultant can arrange to meet with the employer after this time. However all requests for assistance should be finalised within 3 months of the request for assistance.

How often can I use this program to get assistance?

An employer can only use the program once. The assistance provided will give the employer a good opportunity to commence/improve the management of the health and safety issues within their workplace into the future. It will then be the employer's responsibility to continue to manage the safety requirements into the future.

Can I use the services of the safety consultant again after the initial 3 hours of consultation?

An employer is free to engage the services of the safety consultant after having the initial 3 hours of assistance paid through WorkSafe Victoria's safety program. It will be up to the employer and safety consultant to negotiate any costs involved in this arrangement.

Can I gain recognition for improving safety in my workplace?

Small Businesses can now get some recognition for improving safety in their workplace. A business that uses the Small Business Safety Assistance Program will receive a Safety Action Plan from the consultant. When the business has completely implemented the Safety Action Plan they can request recognition for the work they have done.

The consultant will return to the workplace and verify that the Safety Action Plan has been successfully implemented and where this is the case the consultant will make a recommendation to WorkSafe or your industry association (where they have arranged a consultants visit under the program) based on their assessment. The consultant should provide you with a copy of the assessment and recommendation before they leave your workplace.

Where a decision is made to recognise the business, WorkSafe or your industry association will issue a Certificate of Recognition to the business.

To apply, provide the CMPA with a copy of your Safety Action Plan and advice that you have implemented the requirements as set out in the Plan.

NB: Where a business has used the Small Business Safety Assistance Program to assist with one or two issues only (eg to respond to an inspectors notice) then the opportunity to recognise the business would NOT be available.

Information taken from www.worksafe.vic.gov.au

Text in italics indicates that changed by the CMPA for the purposes of this opportunity