

Bulletin

Workplace Relations



Reference No. WorkSafe Victoria/dh-8-24

Date: 20/08/2024

WorkSafe Victoria targeting automotive industry as part of a 'Proactive Intervention Program'

Members should note that VACC has recently received feedback from a number of members that they have been visited by WorkSafe Victoria Inspectors as part of WorkSafe Victoria's current 'proactive intervention program'. **VACC understands that automotive dealerships are one of the areas of focus for the program.**

Based on the Inspection Reports received by members, the visits appear intended to proactively address known hazards associated with mental injury in the retail trading environment, with the primary aim to prevent future incidents/harm occurring.

Whilst VACC strongly supports proactive approaches to occupational health and safety, it is surprised and disappointed that WorkSafe has chosen not to engage with VACC in its current campaign. This is particularly the case given VACC's continuing active engagement with WorkSafe as a key industry stakeholder and the fact that it is evident that such campaigns benefit from consultation, cooperation and collaboration with industry stakeholders to ensure the dissemination of accurate and actionable information to employers, leading to improved compliance and favourable safety outcomes.

What are they looking for?

The Inspection Reports suggest that the visits are looking to examine what systems of work (e.g. policies, procedures and training) the workplace currently has in place for preventing, responding to, and managing inappropriate behaviours – including bullying, workplace violence, sexual harassment and discrimination – as well as ensuring that genuine consultation on health and safety matters that may affect workers, is regularly occurring in the workplace.

Members will recall from previous Bulletins, including our most recent [Workplace Update](#), psychological health and by extension, psychosocial hazards, have become a particular area of focus of WorkSafe Victoria and its Psychosocial Inspectorate. As such, all members, and particularly those operating larger automotive businesses, are strongly encouraged to regularly review and evaluate their existing policies and organisational practices relating to hazards such as bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace, in consultation with their employees.

The review should ensure that the policies and practices continue to be both up-to-date and effective – with all workers inducted and trained (and periodically retrained as required) so that they understand both their rights and responsibilities. This is particularly important in respect to managers, who are perceived as cultural role models for, and enforcers of, appropriate behaviour, and who are often appointed to receive the initial complaint.

How can VACC help?

VACC Employee Handbook

The VACC Employee Handbook is a collection of essential workplace policies for your business and reflecting the requirements of the National Employment Standards and relevant modern awards. It is balanced (explains employee rights and obligations equally) and if necessary, can be relied upon for disciplinary purposes. The VACC Employee Handbook specifically deals with issues such as bullying, sexual harassment and discrimination, with a new update to be available shortly to incorporate the 'Closing Loopholes' legislative changes that take effect from 26 August 2024.

Stand-alone bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination policies and procedures

Specifically devised for larger employers, the VACC Industrial Relations Department has created a suite of stand-alone bullying (including workplace violence), sexual harassment (including sex-based harassment) and discrimination policies and procedures to complement the VACC Employee Handbook. Each contain a detailed issue resolution procedure to ensure that employees are educated on the importance of raising matters in a timely manner in the workplace so that they can be appropriately responded to.

VACC Workplace Awareness Training

The VACC Industrial Relations Department delivers customised, on-site, automotive industry-specific workplace training services at a subsidised rate to members. This training can be delivered to all staff and/or specifically focused for managerial level employees.

Members seeking further information or advice, including in relation to the VACC Employee Handbook, VACC bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination policies and procedures and/or Workplace Awareness Training, are encouraged to contact the VACC Industrial Relations on 03 9829 1123 or email us at ir@vacc.com.au.

If members are visited by WorkSafe Inspectors and subsequently receive a notice, it is strongly encouraged to reach out to the VACC OHSE Unit for support and assistance by calling 03 9829 1265 or email ohs@vacc.com.au

Daniel Hodges

Executive Manager – Workplace Relations

Industrial Relations | OHSE