



## Fact Sheet

# An introduction to subcontractor OHS management

### Introduction

This fact sheet provides guidance to the building and construction industry on the importance of effective subcontractor OHS management.

It also provides broad guidance how effective subcontractor OHS management is assessed as part of the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme (the Scheme).

### Why subcontractor OHS management?

Subcontractors are a critical section of the industry who can make a real difference to improving OHS on Australian building and construction sites.

In many cases, subcontractor effort represents the majority of the site endeavour. As such, the way in which subcontractors perform and are managed can directly impact the OHS outcomes of a project.

Head contractors must take reasonable steps and work proactively to ensure the health and safety of their employees. This duty also extends to subcontractors under their control.

Effective subcontractor OHS management is simply about engaging and supervising subcontractors in the same manner as employees with respect to OHS.

This can be achieved through effective consultation and communication particularly in relation to arrangements for OHS planning, inspection and importantly, risk management.

### The Scheme and subcontractor OHS management

The Scheme was established as part of the Australian Government's commitment to foster a new culture in the industry where work must be performed safely, as well as on budget and on time.

The Scheme operates such that, subject to certain thresholds, only head contractors who are accredited can enter into contracts for building work that is directly or indirectly funded by the Australian Government. Subcontractors do not require accreditation.

As part of the Scheme criteria, head contractors must demonstrate effective subcontractor OHS management:

*Effective subcontractor OHS management – the degree to which subcontractor OHS management arrangements are demonstrated across building and construction projects.*

### Establishing effective subcontractor OHS management

The following examples (see over page) of good practice in subcontractor OHS management have been used by industry when applying for accreditation.

#### For further information you can:

- visit the FSC website at [fsc.gov.au](http://fsc.gov.au)
- contact the FSC Assist Line on **1800 652 500**
- contact the OFSC via email at [ofsc@deewr.gov.au](mailto:ofsc@deewr.gov.au)

## Examples to demonstrate subcontractor OHS management

<p><b>OHS plan</b> Subcontractors are required to provide an appropriate OHS Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tender documentation stipulates OHS requirements for subcontractors.</li> <li>▪ A safety information start up pack is available for subcontractors.</li> <li>▪ A process is in place for subcontractors to submit an OHS plan to demonstrate hazard identification, risk assessment and control procedures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Site induction</b> Subcontractors are incorporated into the common system for site induction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All subcontractors are instructed in the site safety rules and site specific emergency procedures.</li> <li>▪ A procedure is in place to ensure subcontractors have met minimum induction requirements prior to commencing work.</li> <li>▪ Pre-start checklists are used to identify whether the subcontractor is licensed to conduct the required work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communication</b> Subcontractors are regularly provided with OHS information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Toolbox and pre-start meetings are used to regularly communicate information and to discuss OHS issues with subcontractors.</li> <li>▪ Toolbox and pre-start meetings, and other relevant consultations, are documented.</li> <li>▪ A site notice board or safety alert/bulletin is used as a weekly source of OHS information and is regularly checked by subcontractors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hazard identification and risk management</b> Subcontractors are consulted in the Job Safety Analysis process and in the development of Safe Work Method Statements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A procedure for JSAs and SWMS is in place, and is communicated to subcontractors through the induction process.</li> <li>▪ A SWMS appropriate to the work activity is completed and signed by the subcontractor before commencing work.</li> <li>▪ All SWMS are regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with subcontractors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OHS inspection and audit</b> Subcontractors are engaged in OHS inspection and evaluation processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A schedule for inspections and audits is in place and lists attendance by subcontractors.</li> <li>▪ A procedure is in place to regularly inspect the safety of plant, substances, equipment and temporary structures used by subcontractors.</li> <li>▪ Corrective actions are developed in consultation with subcontractors, and included in the applicable SWMS.</li> </ul>

These practices are applicable to construction companies seeking to establish subcontractor OHS management arrangements. Building and construction industry participants should also refer to applicable Commonwealth, state or territory OHS legislation to ensure they are meeting their OHS obligations with regards to subcontractors.

The examples of effective subcontractor OHS management used in this fact sheet are provided to assist industry. Adoption of the practices described in this fact sheet does not guarantee accreditation under the Scheme.

This fact sheet is correct as of 1 July 2008. Produced by the Office of the Federal Safety Commissioner.

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