



# Three incidents that all outdoor workers should think about

The accepted way of managing OHS issues is essentially a fairly simple 'risk management' approach in which hazards (i.e. risks) are identified, assessed, treated (i.e. controlled) and the treatments evaluated.

Three recent incidents investigated or prosecuted by the relevant State Government Authority highlight how this has been neglected. Each involved outdoor work and together they give a pretty good indication of how broadly the OHS management process outlined above should be applied.

## Roadworks incident

A recent article in South Australia reported that when passing road workers, motorists will travel at speeds of 40kph or more in a 25kph area - a fact that has prompted several recent initiatives in S.A. and Queensland aimed at curbing this behaviour, including "police crackdowns".

However, police cannot be everywhere and another fatality, this time in Queensland, occurred on Tuesday 7th June at roadworks in Whitfield, Cairns. A traffic controller died when he was laying orange 'witches hats' along the centre line of a dual carriageway and was struck by a car while attempting to jump out of its path.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is investigating the incident.

## Training and adequate supervision the key

A Monarto (S.A.) flower grower was recently fined in excess of \$30,000.00 as a result of a safety shortcoming which contributed to a young worker injuring himself with a circular saw.

A 21 year old male employed as a farm worker, had been tasked with cutting lengths of recycled greenhouse timbers. During the process, the circular saw he was using kicked back and dropped onto his leg, causing a deep laceration to his left thigh.

A Safework investigation found that amongst other things:

- There was no evidence of safety induction or training.
- The employee's supervision and training was wholly inadequate, in that the supervisor's knowledge of the tool was insufficient.

The Magistrate described it as "a serious breach of the defendant's obligations to its youthful and inexperienced employee".

## Contractor fatally struck by a tree in Queensland

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is investigating a



It's fairly obvious that a 'risk management' approach wasn't applied to this job. The third place-getter in *Absolute Shocker* and *Bodgey Scaffold of the Year 2004* (WorkSafe Victoria 'Award')

fatal incident that occurred on Friday 20th May, at a property near Gympie, where a tree-logging contractor died when he was working on a tractor to assist felling a tree.

The contractor was struck by the tree when it fell.

## The conclusions are probably fairly obvious

Each time you go to work, you have a right to expect to be able to return home uninjured. So the messages from these incidents include:

- Each job should be risk assessed. Not just a generic assessment but one specific to the task at hand.
- Safe operating procedures should be developed as a result of the assessment....do you know what they are and do you follow them?
- You need to be trained to use each tool you are asked to use.
- The correct PPE should be available and used correctly.
- An appropriate level of supervision should be provided.

***If you reflect on these points and find that you are uncomfortable with your own work situation, make your concerns known to your supervisor or ring your Maxima consultant.***

## An apprentice, a member of staff and Maxima vie for WorkCover SA awards

On the back of last year's title as *Large Employer of the Year*, Ben Potter, Sue Worrall and the Maxima Group have been nominated for this year's *WorkCover SA Recovery and Return to Work Awards*.



Ben is an apprentice mechanic who has fought back from a workplace injury,

displaying a flexible and positive attitude to return to work and who used the opportunity given by an alternate placement during his rehabilitation to learn some new skills that will also help him in his future career.

Sue is a member of the Maxima OHS team and nominated for her ability to empathise and work with injured workers and hosts to get the best results for all parties in the workers' compensation process.

Maxima's nomination arises from the "systems" management approach to OHS risks and the effectiveness of workers' compensation and return to work processes - with a particular emphasis on working and communicating effectively with all stakeholders.

We value the nominations made by clients and users of our systems and wish Ben and Sue every success in this year's awards.

## The pace of change increasing

You may be aware of changes to the OHS legislation, that in various forms, is before Parliaments throughout Australia. The intent of the legislators is to bring uniformity to the laws that exist in each State.

Maxima has offices in four States and must currently comply with the different laws in each State - which can be confusing when trying to initiate procedures and train staff to comply with their safety obligations.

Over the next few months you will receive information sheets about these new, more consistent arrangements that

will bring you up-to-date with the changes as they affect you in the workplace. This information will include:

- Changed responsibilities
- Increased levels of penalties, enforceable undertakings, fines
- Workplace consultation
- Regulations and licensing requirements for high risk work areas

In the meanwhile, contact your consultant or a member of the OHS team if you need any information in respect to the new laws.

## Time is running out on old licenses

*Do you operate forklifts, cranes, hoists, pressure equipment, erect scaffolding, or engage in rigging and dogging? Do you hold a pre 3rd April, 1995 qualification?*

Recently, all Tempskill employees were advised of the need to start the process of converting to the new license system by September 1st, 2011. Again, we encourage all people who fall into this category to contact Safework as soon as possible and remind you that failure to do so will mean you are no longer entitled to undertake that type of work anywhere in Australia.

For more information call Safework SA's Help Centre on 1300 365 255

## Injury rates too high

The main injuries currently occurring within Maxima are slips, trips, falls and minor cuts. However, in May we had two significant injuries which led to SafeWork SA being notified of the incidents.

## Tell us about any changes to your role

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, recently indicated that a labour hire and group training organisation should have made it clear to on-hire workers what their roles entailed and instructed them to immediately contact the placement consultant if they were asked to perform tasks they weren't contracted to do.

It was also noted that labour hire and group training companies should ensure that their employees only did tasks that had been properly risk assessed.

Maxima will do all in its power to ensure you understand your role and that you get appropriate training to do required tasks.

However the bottom line is, only do what you were sent to do and what you have been trained to do.

Its not unreasonable for a host to see your potential and want you to bring that to your work, however changes must be cleared with the Maxima consultant and we must assess risks associated with any new task before you perform it.



Amy Cosh

## Tempskill welcomes Amy Cosh

Maxima employed Amy as an employment consultant in April. She has a

background in sales, marketing and account management and has already made an impression amongst staff and clients alike by seamlessly transitioning the accounts previously serviced by Kym Evans and also securing some new business.

Kym has been given leave for one year to fulfill his travel dreams in Europe but don't worry – he will be back !

In previous roles, Amy was responsible for recruitment and rostering of staff for functions and major events.