

## WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

### Health & Safety Considerations

Women offer diverse perspectives and skills, shaped by varied backgrounds and experience, and are essential to creating inclusive, balanced and dynamic teams within the workplace. However, they continue to face distinct challenges that directly impact their well-being and productivity.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of women in the workplace is a legal and ethical responsibility. However it can also be a strategic advantage, in that when women feel safe and valued they are more likely to be engaged, productive and loyal to employers or the organisations within which they operate. Supporting women in the workplace goes beyond meeting compliance requirements; it is about fostering an innovative and future-focused culture, where employees feel respected and valued.

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE:

##### PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES

###### Ergonomic Issues

Workstations, tools and equipment tend to be designed with a “one-size-fits-all” approach, often catering for the average male physique. This can lead to discomfort, repetitive strain injuries, chronic fatigue and long-term musculoskeletal problems for women.

###### Pregnancy-Related Health

Pregnant employees may face physical limitations and increased vulnerability to certain workplace hazards. Exposure to toxic substances, heavy lifting, prolonged standing and high stress levels can adversely affect both the mother and the developing baby.

##### MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Stressors such as workplace harassment (including sexual harassment and gender discrimination) remains an issue that can contribute to anxiety and depression, which can severely impact a woman’s mental well-being. Such experiences can lead to decreased job satisfaction, increased absenteeism and even long-term psychological trauma.

##### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Standard PPE is often designed with men in mind, resulting in ill-fitting safety clothing and gear that fail to provide adequate protection for women. Poorly fitting PPE can be uncomfortable, limit mobility and reduce the effectiveness of the protection it is meant to offer.

Actively involving women in workplace decision-making, particularly on health and safety matters, is critical. Their first-hand insights into workspace design, ill-fitting PPE, and challenging working conditions help identify and address issues that might otherwise be overlooked. Women’s empathy enables them to understand and address colleagues’ and clients’ needs effectively. They often excel in administrative and organisational tasks - keeping operations running smoothly, by turning complex challenges into practical solutions, using their creativity and innovative problem-solving skills.

<https://serr.co.za/empowering-women-in-the-workplace-health-and-safety-considerations>



**GIVE TO GAIN** 8 MARCH  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**WOMEN'S DAY**

When we give, we gain.  
Together, let's help forge  
gender equality through  
abundant giving.



The IWD 2026 Give To Gain Campaign encourages a mindset of generosity and collaboration. Give To Gain emphasises the power of reciprocity and support. When people, organisations and communities give generously, opportunities and support for women increase. Whether through donations, knowledge, resources, infrastructure, visibility, advocacy, education, training, mentoring or time, contributing to women's advancement helps create a more supportive and interconnected world.



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Department of Employment  
and Labour Approved  
Inspection Authority  
(OH0049-CI-09)



OH0049



OHAIA-A 005 (2026)

**CONTACT US TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING SERVICES FOR YOUR BUSINESS:**

- Occupational Hygiene Surveys
- EHS Risk Assessments
- Ergonomics Risk Assessments
- EHS Management System Development and Implementation
- Environmental Monitoring
- Identification of EHS Legal Requirements and Compliance Audits
- Internal Auditor Training
- Specialised EHS Training



Department of Employment and Labour Approved Inspection Authority (OH0049-CI-09)



OH0049



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# WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

for workplace Safety

## new tech in health & safety

Technology is evolving rapidly to meet the evolving challenges in the health and safety landscape. Wearable devices track environmental conditions, worker movements, vital signs as well as exposure to hazards. Data is transmitted instantly to supervisors or centralised safety systems, enabling quick response to potential dangers. Ranging from wristbands and helmets to smart clothing, devices are designed to monitor workers in real time - helping to prevent accidents and ensure compliance with safety regulations.

## how they assist

-  **Heat Stress Detection:**  
Wearables that monitor body temperature, heart rate and environmental conditions can send alerts when workers are at risk of heat-related illnesses.
-  **Proximity Alerts:**  
Devices like smart wristbands detect when workers are too close to hazards, heavy machinery, or each other, reducing risks from collisions or unsafe distancing.
-  **Fall Detection and Lone Worker Safety:**  
Advanced sensors in wearables can identify slips, trips and falls, triggering automated alerts for faster emergency responses.
-  **Fatigue Detection:**  
EEG sensors and other technologies can detect when someone is becoming tired or inattentive. There are even apps on smartphones that can notify someone when their fatigue or attention levels are becoming unsafe.
-  **Ergo-Science:**  
Wearable devices, such as smart clothing or exoskeletons, can be used to monitor body posture and identify movements in real time to provide feedback on ergonomics.


Real-time monitoring reduces the need for manual supervision. Incidents are logged automatically, creating a clear audit trail for HSE inspections. Instant alerts enable managers to act before risks escalate into accidents.

No device can guarantee complete safety; however, when implemented effectively, wearable technologies have the potential to significantly reduce workplace accidents.



IMPORTANT


## LEGAL UPDATES

 23 January, 2026

COVID Amendment Act

The Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Amendment Act, 2022 (Amendment Act) has formally come into operation following the publication.


COMPENSATION FOR OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND DISEASES ACT, 130 OF 1993  
Government Notice 2026 in Government Gazette 53990

 30 January, 2026

Training Providers of Lifting Machine Operators

The Chief Inspector has published a Correction Notice to the National Code of Practice for Training Providers of Lifting Machine Operators, as incorporated under the Driven Machinery Regulations, 2015.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 85 OF 1993  
Government Notice 5588 in Government Gazette 5167

 20 February 2026

Physical Agents Regulations

The Minister of Employment and Labour has amended the Physical Agents Regulations, 2024 as Published in Notice No. 5952, in Gazette No. 52226, Published on 6 March 2025

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT 85 OF 1993  
Government Notice 7149 in Government Gazette 5177