

## Appendix 2: Common psychosocial factors with examples of risks and protective factors

This appendix outlines common psychosocial factors in three key areas of risk management:

- how work is designed
- social factors at work
- the work environment.

This table provides examples of how these common psychosocial factors show in work when risks and harm may be present (risk factors). It also shows what you might see when work is healthy and risks are managed (protective factors).

Psychosocial risks can interact with each other and are influenced by the specific work context. By creating healthy work conditions, you can reduce exposure to risks and minimise potential harm.

These examples are a guide to help you assess how effectively your business is managing these risks.

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTOR	RISK FACTORS	PROTECTIVE FACTORS
<b>How work is designed</b>		
<b>Role and expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work is highly complex, high-risk, or done under constant pressure</li> <li>- work has high physical, mental, or emotional demands</li> <li>- there is low job satisfaction or work feels meaningless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers understand how their work contributes to the bigger picture and feel a sense of purpose</li> <li>- work tasks match workers' skills</li> <li>- there is a sense of community at work (feeling part of the team)</li> </ul>
<b>Role clarity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- roles, tasks, or work standards are unclear</li> <li>- workers have conflicting tasks or duties with other workers (for example, two workers assigned the same task)</li> <li>- there are frequent changes to job requirements or timeframes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers understand their daily responsibilities with clear targets and goals</li> <li>- good communication and feedback helps workers to stay on track and manage priorities</li> <li>- workers know how their roles fit into the team and the wider organisation</li> </ul>
<b>Job demands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work requires high mental effort or constant attention</li> <li>- workers are constantly exposed to emotionally distressing situations or aggressive customers</li> <li>- tasks are highly repetitive or fail to utilise workers' skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work expectations are realistic, with support available when needed</li> <li>- responsibilities are clear and workers can prioritise or adjust tasks when necessary</li> <li>- work is designed to reduce risks from repetitive or high-stress tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Workload</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there is too much work to do in too little time (work overload)</li> <li>- there is too little work, leading to low effort to do the job or disengagement (work underload)</li> <li>- rapidly switching between demanding tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workloads are manageable and allow workers to maintain a safe and sustainable pace</li> <li>- the work environment supports tasks (for example, good lighting, comfortable spaces, temperature control)</li> <li>- workers have some control over the order, speed, and schedule of their tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Job control (autonomy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers have little say over how or when the job is done</li> <li>- strict processes allow no flexibility or adaptation</li> <li>- there is lack of control over workload and timeframes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers have a say in how they complete their tasks</li> <li>- workers have a reasonable level of control over their workload and deadlines</li> <li>- there is flexibility in how work is done, within safe and practical limits</li> </ul>
<b>Work schedule</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there is shift work, especially at night</li> <li>- working hours are unpredictable or irregular</li> <li>- working long hours including unplanned overtime</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work schedules allow enough time for rest and recovery</li> <li>- work hours and shift patterns are assessed for health and safety risks</li> <li>- worker input is considered when planning rosters to ensure fairness and flexibility</li> </ul>

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<b>Organisational change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there are frequent or prolonged changes without proper consultation</li> <li>- workers' views on change are not considered</li> <li>- practical support or training for new ways of working is insufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- changes are communicated clearly, with opportunities for feedback (you must consult if changes are likely to affect the work and worker)</li> <li>- workers receive practical support to adapt to change</li> <li>- change is planned with reasonable timeframes and expectations</li> </ul>
<b>Job security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers have insecure employment with low pay or uncertain contracts</li> <li>- fixed-term contracts roll-over instead of becoming permanent</li> <li>- increasing competition for role opportunities leads to low trust and lack of collaboration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- have permanent appointments or contracts that meet the needs of business and workers</li> <li>- workers have opportunities to develop skills that support long-term career growth</li> <li>- employment decisions are fair, transparent and made in good faith</li> </ul>
<b>Remote or isolated work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- working alone in a remote area, or where emergency help (for example, fire service or hospital) is far away</li> <li>- working outside normal business hours or shift/night work</li> <li>- working alone or separated from colleagues leading to stress, low morale, and loneliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work is assessed to ensure it is safe to be carried out by a lone worker</li> <li>- regular check-ins and support (for example, supervision or buddy system) are in place</li> <li>- workers have access to clear emergency procedures, training and communication devices</li> </ul>
<b>Social factors at work</b>		
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- leaders poorly communicate priorities or decisions</li> <li>- workers do not feel heard or supported by leadership</li> <li>- decision-making practices are poor and inconsistent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- visible and approachable leadership that engages with workers to problem-solve</li> <li>- leadership/management style matched to the nature of the work and the needs of workers</li> <li>- leadership takes proactive steps to manage psychosocial risks in the workplace</li> </ul>
<b>Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there is lack of support from managers or colleagues</li> <li>- there is no access to necessary services, information or training to support work</li> <li>- responses are slow or decision making is delayed when risks are raised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- people leaders are accessible and willing to listen</li> <li>- workers have access to appropriate tools, equipment and practical resources</li> <li>- workers receive encouragement, clear expectations, and timely feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- disrespectful behaviours or incivility is ignored</li> <li>- experiencing threats, abuse, or assaults (physical or verbal)</li> <li>- contacting workers outside of work hours with demands</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers feel valued both personally and professionally</li> <li>- strong worker engagement practices to ensure conflicts are addressed early</li> <li>- clear expectations of acceptable behaviours</li> </ul>
<b>Organisational culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers are not engaged in decisions that affect them</li> <li>- there is lack of transparency in the way procedures are implemented, and decisions are made</li> <li>- the reasonable needs of workers are not recognised or accommodated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers treated with fairness and respect at all times</li> <li>- accountability for inappropriate interpersonal behaviours</li> <li>- workers have authentic opportunities to be heard and feel valued</li> </ul>

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<b>Recognition and reward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers' efforts are not appropriately appreciated</li> <li>- workers get little praise or reward for good work</li> <li>- effort and reward are not matched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers' efforts are acknowledged and appreciated in a timely manner</li> <li>- celebrate achievements and discuss 'what went right' (not just what went wrong)</li> <li>- workers have opportunities for growth and development based on their contributions</li> </ul>
<b>Civility and respect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rudeness and disrespect are tolerated</li> <li>- personal attacks or unconstructive feedback are common</li> <li>- workers fear reporting misconduct due to retaliation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- policies and practices built on respect and valuing people</li> <li>- provide training on effective communication and conflict resolution</li> <li>- provide safe and effective way to report concerns, with early intervention when needed</li> </ul>
<b>Work/life balance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- there are expectations that cause workers to continue working in their own time</li> <li>- workers experience conflicting demands of work and home during periods of additional need</li> <li>- there is after-hours contact that pressures workers to respond</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work schedules are flexible enough to accommodate personal and family needs</li> <li>- employers respect boundaries between work hours and home time</li> <li>- workers are supported to engage in healthy activities</li> </ul>
<b>Career development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- under promotion or over promotion that does not account for skills and expertise</li> <li>- there are low chances of stepping into higher roles when ready or lack of 'acting up' opportunities</li> <li>- inequitable access to training, resources, and opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers have access to training and development opportunities</li> <li>- performance reviews provide useful feedback and career support</li> <li>- strengths and skills are recognised, with opportunities for development</li> </ul>
<b>Work environment</b>		
<b>Physical work environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- environmental conditions are poor (for example lack of space, poor light, or excessive noise)</li> <li>- equipment or tools are poorly maintained and not fit for purpose</li> <li>- working on, or around, unsafe machinery/equipment with low levels of supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- comfortable and appropriate workplaces that support tasks (for example, good lighting, temperature, and noise levels)</li> <li>- break areas allow workers to rest and recharge</li> <li>- workstations and equipment are ergonomically designed support workers' needs</li> </ul>
<b>Traumatic events (notifiable events)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- witnessing a serious near miss, injury or workplace fatality</li> <li>- lack of follow-up and learning from harm associated from a specific hazardous task</li> <li>- exposure to vicarious trauma where workers must repeatedly listen to, view, or read detailed descriptions of harrowing and traumatic events experienced by others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workers receive early and proactive intervention when serious harm, injury, or death occurs in a workplace</li> <li>- workers receive clear, timely information and support, particularly with those directly involved</li> <li>- exposure to distressing situations is minimised where possible</li> </ul>