

DRAFT: Common psychosocial hazards

The [Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#) and the South Australian [Approved Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#) list common psychosocial hazards without these lists being exhaustive¹.

Psychosocial hazards can be grouped or described in different ways. How they are categorised is less important than ensuring you and your workers have the same understanding of what is happening and how it may be causing harm.

Key

	Job characteristics, design and management
	Harmful behaviours

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS – PRESENCE / TOO MUCH OF

High job demands

- Intense or sustained high mental, physical or emotional effort.
- Unreasonable or excessive time pressures or role overload.
- High individual reputational, legal, career, safety or financial risk if mistakes occur.
- High vigilance required, limited margin for error and inadequate systems to prevent individual error.
- Shifts/work hours that do not allow adequate time for sleep and recovery.

Violence and aggression

- Violence, threats of violence or assaults from other workers (including workers of other businesses), customers, patients or clients (including assault).
- Aggressive behaviour such as yelling or physical intimidation.

Remote or isolated work

- Working in locations with long travel times, or where access to help, resources or communications is difficult or limited.

Conflict or poor workplace relationships & interactions

- Poor workplace relationships or interpersonal conflict between colleagues or workers from other businesses, clients or customers.
- Frequent disagreements, disparaging or rude comments. A worker can be both the subject and the source of this behaviour.
- Inappropriately excluding a worker from work-related activities.

Harassment including sexual and racial harassment

- Harassment due to personal characteristics such as age, disability, race, nationality, religion, political affiliation, sex, relationship status, family or carer responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Traumatic events or material

- Experiencing fear or extreme risks to the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Exposure to natural disasters, seriously injured or deceased persons.
- Reading, hearing or seeing accounts of traumatic events, abuse or neglect.
- Supporting victims or investigating traumatic events, abuse or neglect.

Bullying

¹ The list provided here includes Lack of Meaning and Purpose which is not recognised in the model code but important in the public sector context.

Intrusive surveillance is not mentioned in the Model code but is in the SA code.

Fatigue is not listed here as a psychosocial hazard as it can be considered and addressed as an outcome of poorly managed psychosocial hazards.

- Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.¹ This includes bullying by workers, clients, patients, visitors or others.

Invasive surveillance

- Excessive surveillance methods / tools used to monitor and collect information about workers at work for the purpose of work performance monitoring

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS – LACK OF / TOO LOW

Low job control

- Workers have little control over how or when the job is done.
- Workers have limited ability to adapt the way they work to changing or new situations or to adopt efficiencies in their work.
- Tightly scripted or machine/computer paced work.
- Levels of autonomy not matched to workers' ability

Low job security

- Continued employment is uncertain

Poor organisational justice

- Inconsistent, unfair, discriminatory or inequitable management decisions and application of policies.

Poor physical environment

- Exposure to unpleasant or hazardous working environments.

Lack of meaning and purpose

- Tasks or jobs with no clear link to organisational goals and purpose or no alignment to a worker's values.
- A lack of meaning connected to the task or job.

Poor organisational change management

- Insufficient consultation, consideration of new hazards or performance impacts when planning and implementing change.
- Insufficient support, information or training during change.
- Not communicating key information during periods of change

Low job demands

- Low levels of physical, mental or emotional effort are required.
- Long idle periods while high workloads are present, e.g. where workers need to wait for equipment or other workers.

Poor support –management

- Inadequate support for task or jobs, including practical assistance and emotional support from managers

Poor support –Resources

- Inadequate training, tools and resources

Lack of role clarity or role conflict

- Uncertainty, frequent changes, conflicting roles or ambiguous responsibilities and expectations.

Inadequate reward and recognition

- Low positive feedback or imbalances between effort and recognition.
- High level of unconstructive negative feedback from managers or customers.
- Low skills development opportunity or underused skills.