



THE CORE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE FOR GENERALIST OHS PROFESSIONALS

A project conducted by HaSPA
(Health and Safety Professionals Alliance)



**Australian OHS Education
Accreditation Board**

SYNOPSIS

Background

A defined body of knowledge is required as a basis for professional certification and for accreditation of education programs giving entry to a profession as well as to provide a benchmark for continuing professional development.

The *OHS Body of Knowledge for Generalist OHS Professionals* was developed in response to an identified need to define the collective knowledge that should be shared by Australian Generalist OHS Professionals as a basis for understanding the causation and control of work-related fatality, injury, disease and ill-health. With reference to key papers, each chapter of the OHS BoK gives a synoptic overview of a concept, its development and its application to understanding the causation and control of work-related fatality, injury, disease and ill-health (FIDI). The Body of Knowledge is not a textbook detailing all that the OHS professional needs to know; rather, it provides a 'picture' of current thinking that highlights key concepts and how thinking on these evolved.

WorkSafe Victoria funded the development of the first edition of the *OHS Body of Knowledge for Generalist OHS Professionals* published in 2012 assigning the copyright to the Safety Institute of Australia with the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board being the custodian responsible for managing updating processes to ensure currency. Four further chapters were developed during 2013-14 with the support of Safe Work Australia. Additional chapters continue to be developed to address identified gaps and as OHS knowledge and conceptual thinking evolve.

Development

The process of developing and structuring the main content of the first edition of the OHS Body of Knowledge was managed by a Technical Panel with representation from Victorian universities that teach OHS and from the Safety Institute of Australia, which is the main professional body for generalist OHS professionals in Australia. The Panel developed an initial conceptual framework which was then amended in accord with feedback received from OHS tertiary-level educators throughout Australia and the wider OHS profession. Specialist authors were invited to contribute chapters, which were then subjected to peer review and editing.

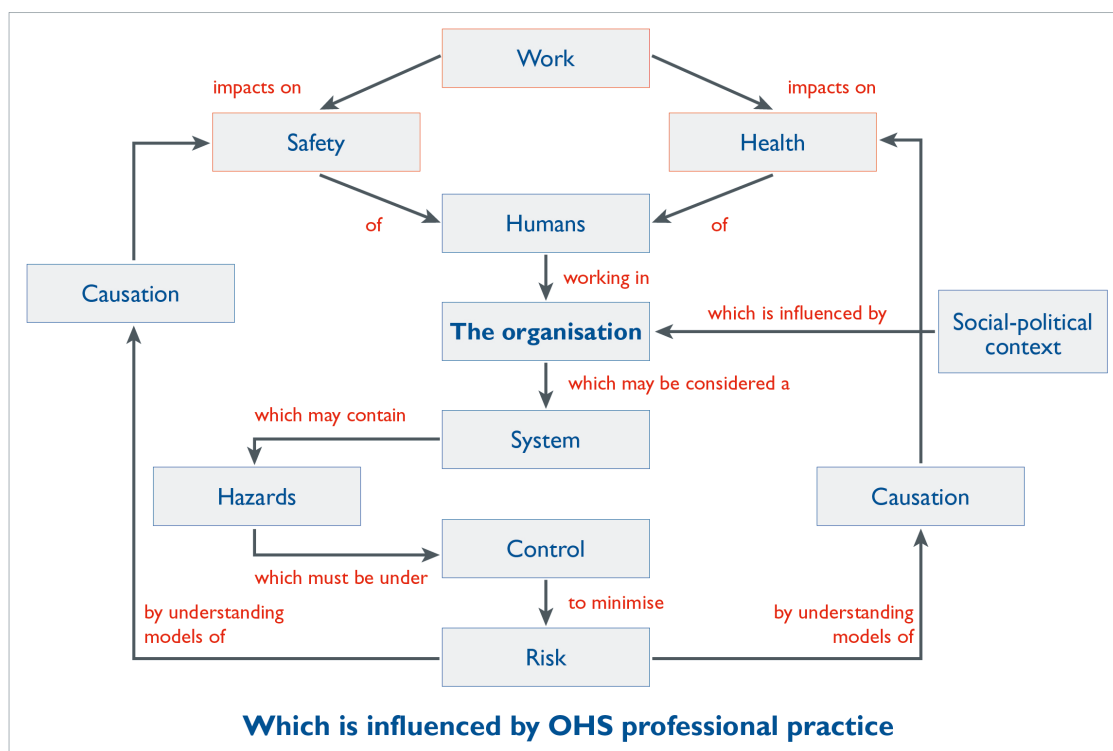
The development of the second edition and further chapters has been overseen by topic specific technical panels who in some cases have also been contributing authors. The actual authoring of the chapter has usually been by one or two principal authors.

Conceptual structure

The OHS Body of Knowledge takes a 'conceptual' approach. As concepts are abstract, the OHS professional needs to organise the concepts into a framework in order to solve a problem. The overall framework used to structure the OHS Body of Knowledge is that:

Work impacts on the **safety** and **health** of humans who work in **organisations**. Organisations are influenced by the **socio-political context**. Organisations may be considered a **system** which may contain **hazards** which must be under control to minimise **risk**. This can be achieved by understanding **models causation** for safety and for health which will result in improvement in the safety and health of people at work. The OHS professional applies **professional practice** to influence the organisation to being about this improvement.

This can be represented as:



Audience

The OHS Body of Knowledge provides a basis for accreditation of OHS professional education programs and certification of individual OHS professionals. It provides guidance for OHS educators in course development, and for OHS professionals and professional bodies in developing continuing professional development activities. Also, OHS regulators, employers and recruiters may find it useful for benchmarking OHS professional practice.

Application

Importantly, the OHS Body of Knowledge is neither a textbook nor a curriculum; rather it describes the key concepts, core theories and related evidence that should be shared by Australian generalist OHS professionals. This knowledge will be gained through a combination of education and experience.

Accessing and using the OHS Body of Knowledge for generalist OHS professionals

The OHS Body of Knowledge is published electronically. Each chapter can be downloaded separately. However users are advised to read the Introduction, which provides background to the information in individual chapters. They should also note the copyright requirements and the disclaimer before using or acting on the information.