

# **PART 4**

***The rules of  
the game***

**KNOW THE  
RULES!**



## Before Your First Day

It is very exciting starting work. Here's a list of things that you need to know or do, to help you overcome first day nerves.

### What you should know before you start work:

- Where you are to report to
- Who your supervisor is
- What hours you will be working
- Travel arrangements
- Dress code
- Is there a uniform?
- Is there a locker I can use?
- Facilities
- Is there a mess room for breaks?
- Is there a kitchen/ microwave?
- Is there a shower/ toilet facility?
- Your duties - a job description, outlining your responsibilities
- Letter of offer/ employment contract
- Tax File number or application
- Superannuation choice form
- Your qualifications
- Bank account details
- Driving licence
- Emergency contact details (parent or guardian)
- Tools - do you need to bring anything with you?
- Workplace policies

### What you need to plan and do before your first day:

1. Get a good night's sleep. Start the work sleep routine at least a week before.
2. Test the route to the workplace - especially at the time you will be using the bus, train or roads. Allow for traffic to be worse than normal.
3. Breakfast - have a big one. You may miss lunch.
4. Research the company, (you will have done this for the interview), but freshen up on what the company issues are.
5. Dress code. Know what you are expected to wear.
6. Grab a small (pocket) notebook and pen and put them in your work clothes.
7. If taking a packed lunch, make it the night before.

## On the first day

Your first experience of your new workplace is likely to be an induction in the form of a presentation.

This can be in the form of a personal presentation at the workplace, or on video, or in some case by a third party at their premises who specialise in this type of work. The general rule is that the bigger the company, the longer the induction program. For a small company, the induction / orientation can be as basic as a quick chat with the receptionist. Then you are given a tour around the whole business. Then you're introduced to a few of your co-workers, before starting work.

For a teenager on their first day of work, this can be extremely confusing. Don't worry, you are unlikely to be given any meaningful work until the induction / orientation is over. However, no matter if the induction is in the office or on the job, the induction process is important. It will say things about the work that this business does and its values.

It may seem like a bit of general knowledge, but be aware of the words that are said and what it says about the nature and culture of the business. For example:

- Does the business put safety before production?
- What does the business expect of its new starters?

You will generally be asked to complete a test or questionnaire at the end of the induction. This is the employer's record that you have understood what has been taught. Lots of "Work Skill" organisations are geared to get you through induction. But this is not a substitute for work readiness. Two golden rules on your first day:

1. Do not crack jokes, or criticise anyone. Attempting humour to ease your nerves is not a good idea.
2. Smile a lot. Be polite and positive. Offer to help should things get quiet.



## The five monkeys and the work situation

There's a story that describes a lot of work situations.

It concerns a room with five monkeys, some bananas up a pole and a fire hose.

So the monkeys enter the room and see the bananas up the pole. They start to climb the pole, and before they can reach the bananas the fire hose comes on and they are forced to the ground. The monkeys try to defeat the fire hose but it is no use.

After a while two monkeys are taken out of the group and two new monkeys are introduced in their place. These monkeys see the bananas and make for the pole to get them. But the other 3 monkeys hold them back, because they know that the fire hose will come on and soak them. So after a while these two new monkeys get sick of fighting the other three monkeys and give up trying to get the bananas. So it continues. Another two of the initial monkeys are taken out of the room and replaced by two fresh monkeys. Same thing happens. The new monkeys make for the bananas, only to be held back by the other monkeys – even the ones who have never seen the fire hose operating or experienced a soaking.

Eventually there are five monkeys in the room, who do not try to reach the bananas. They have all settled into a way of behaving that doesn't involve fighting or getting soaked with the fire hose, without understanding exactly why.

### End of lesson.

More than likely the business you are joining is doing fine, and will be doing fine whether you do a great job or a bad job. Of course if you do a bad job, it's likely that you will not be working there very long. That's why most people just do enough to get along. Or put another way "most people do enough at work to get by" – and don't go after the bananas. Also after being at work for a while, they forget (or don't realise) that they are doing a mediocre job, and start to develop a sense of being comfortable at work. "Hey, this is the way we do things around here."

Standards drop, no one brings the poor worker into line, and pretty soon this culture develops into something even darker. A sense of entitlement is the next stage. At this point the worker has lost touch with reality, and has certainly forgotten how excited they were when they were given the job in the first place.

### John's story

*I use to be involved with hiring mining workers. We'd interview them, take them up to the mine as a group, check out their behaviour, and then sit them down with the HR people and go through what the job meant and what we were looking for. I would move my chair to face the group as the presentation progressed, to watch the body language of the new recruits as the team went through the nitty gritty of the job.*

*The information that we were giving was about living conditions, whether FIFO or housing, health benefits, working hours, shift times etc. But the most interesting part was when the salary scales were put up on the screen. I'd be watching the expressions on their faces. Now I'm not great at reading people, but as soon as the dollars were thrown up on the screen, you could not wipe the smile off the faces of the applicants.*

*Then when we had made our selection, I'd sit down and talk to the successful applicants and remind them of their excitement they felt when they were offered the job.*

*I'd ask the new employee to keep that feeling for as long as they could.*



I'd guess the longest it lasted for some of the new employees was about a year.

For most employees that sense of excitement lasted less than 6 months. By that time the enthusiasm for the job had waned, and for some the joy of the new job had been replaced with a sense of just doing enough to get along.

Try not to let that happen to you!

What sort of things could you do to maintain that initial enthusiasm that you had for work?

- Write down in your journal your feelings when you start work
- Make a list of the pros and cons of the work you are doing
- Give yourself goals to improve
- Reflect on those worse off than yourself

### **What does the employer owe you?**

I'm from the old school. I believe that the employer owes you a safe place of work, and whatever terms and conditions have been laid out in the contract of employment. No more, and no less.

In Australia the "work deal" or contract of work is closely regulated and will usually refer to some wider conditions of employment that the government has included in law.

These terms and conditions are not negotiable, and every employer must provide whatever is in the award for that type of employment.

Typically awards contain things like:

- Hours of work
- Minimum pay
- Penalty rates (if any)
- Training
- Holiday entitlements
- Sick leave

Then there are other things that the employer must provide according to other (usually federal) laws:

- Safe place of work
- Taxation
- Superannuation



## What the employer doesn't have to provide

Notice that there are a few things the employer hasn't included in the deal:

- Your happiness
- Not to hurt your feelings
- Forgiving you if you mess up
- Responding to any personal crisis you may have
- Responding to any personal commitments you may have
- A great boss
- A job for life
- Really interesting work
- Use of company equipment for private purposes
- Great co-workers
- Promotion after a period of time

All of these things are YOUR responsibility. The things you have read in this book will help you be positive and happy at work, leading to your greater self-worth.

## Awards and Fair Work

I have kept the information on the legalities of employment to the end. I hope that these rules and regulations will be something that is working for you and your employer in the background, and doesn't become an issue. A good workplace is one where you are not continually questioning your work conditions.

However it is important that you know what the deal is and whether you are receiving your fair work conditions. Unfortunately with first time employees this sometimes is not true. Mostly this happens because of innocent mistakes. But these mistakes occur sometimes because you are not aware of your entitlements.

A good place to start is the Australian Fairwork website. It has really good information on what you need know as a new starter ([www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)).

The first thing to understand about work is that there are NATIONAL Employment Standards (NES), covering the MINIMUM standards of employment and deal with:

- Maximum working hours
- Arrangements for requesting change to working hours
- Annual leave
- Sick leave
- Public holidays
- Notice of termination of employment
- Unpaid leave
- Parental leave
- Long service leave

Also all new employees MUST be given a "Fair Work Information Statement" and this is a NATIONAL requirement for ALL jobs.

## Hierarchy of agreements

There are three broad levels of employment engagement rules:

1. Fair Work National Employment Standards (NES)
2. Industry Awards
3. Business or Enterprise Agreements

The general rule is that at a business level the employees and the business may negotiate certain things to suit the business/ employees but neither party (employees or companies) can override the MINIMUM standards in the Award or NES.

If there is no Industry Award, or Enterprise agreement, then the NES applies. It's a safety net for employees.

## Work type

Below are some types of employment that are common to all employment.

The first distinction is whether your work is full time, part time or casual??

These distinctions in job type are important.

Your entitlements are different for each of the job types. Your hours of work, rate of pay and some conditions will be more (and less) based on the job type.

Be sure to clarify with your boss which of the above applies to your new job.

### Full-Time (permanent) employees

This signifies that these jobs have an ongoing contract of employment. These jobs require a maximum of 38 hours / week, plus reasonable additional hours as required. You will likely have a minimum employment probationary period before you are eligible for the benefits of having a permanent job.

### Part time (permanent) employees

In this type of work, the employer has seen that he permanently needs your services but the job doesn't require 38 hours per week. A part-time worker will have regular work of less than 38 hours per week. You still receive the same entitlements as a full-time worker, but on a pro-rata basis. So if you work half the hours, you receive half the entitlements.

### **Casual employee**

In this type of employment, you have NO guaranteed hours, and no entitlements like sick leave.

However you may receive a casual loading (extra allowances) to compensate you for doing a job that does not have the same level of security as a permanent job.

Often casual jobs lead to permanent jobs. Most employers will fill permanent jobs from the people that have been working under a casual arrangement. So when you are working as a casual you need to remember that the boss will be evaluating your performance and suitability for a permanent job.

### **Fixed term employee**

An employer may also have a job that is required for a fixed length of time. Under this arrangement you know that there will come a time when the job is no longer required and you will leave the company.

For example, as a new starter you may also be engaged as a fixed term employee, to cover for a permanent employee while they are away. Under this arrangement you may be full time, or a part-time (permanent) employee.

A casual employee rarely fills a fixed term job, because there is normally a guaranteed number of hours that are required for work.

### **Apprenticeships**

Special rules apply to apprenticeships.

### **Junior employee**

As a new starter you will likely be a junior employee, under 21 years of age. You receive the same entitlements of sick leave, annual leave etc., but usually a lower rate of pay, based on your age.

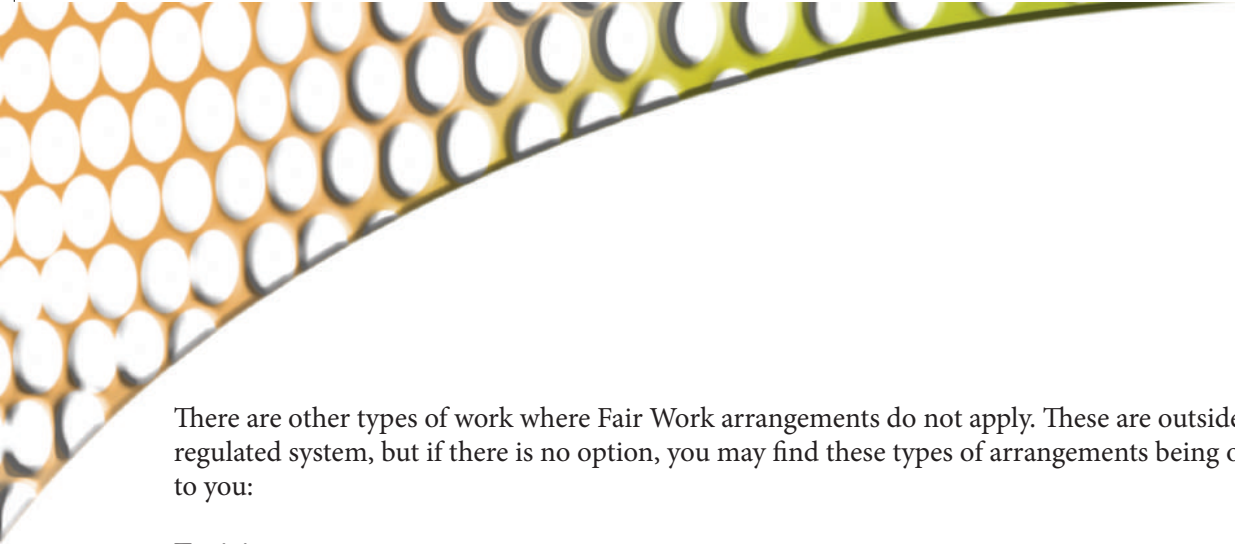
### **Can I be asked to work for NO PAY?**

Yes. Unpaid work trials are allowed. However, it must be brief and only to determine your suitability for the job. Fair work Australia suggests that a maximum of one shift is sufficient for a boss to confirm that you can do the most complex of jobs.

You should be continuously supervised during a work trial. For safety and health reasons, NEVER agree to a work trial where you are not going to be permanently supervised.

Other types of work arrangements that may apply to new starters





There are other types of work where Fair Work arrangements do not apply. These are outside the regulated system, but if there is no option, you may find these types of arrangements being offered to you:

### **Training rates**

In some Enterprise agreements, the employer and employee will have agreed training arrangements. This may include reduced rates while you are training. This is fair enough, but be cautious of some employers who abuse this and pay training rates while you are doing work that should attract the full rate.

### **Probation periods**

If your employment agreement includes a probationary period at the start of work, you are still entitled to be paid at the full rate for the job and workers entitlements during that period. (Sick leave, annual leave etc.)

If you are unsuccessful, at the end of the probation period you will be given notice of termination and after this notice period is complete your employment will be terminated. Benefits are paid out on completion of the notice period.

### **Commission Only**

These are usually sales positions, where the employer does not offer any guarantee of wages or working hours.

They may offer some benefits such as a uniform or perhaps use of a telephone for selling purposes but not sick leave or annual leave etc.

Commission only jobs are fraught with difficulty in terms of employment and need to be approached with a great deal of caution. However, some people have no choice but to accept them, and trust in their sales ability to create some commission.

In all circumstances, you should NEVER spend any of your money to secure “commission only” type of work.

If you are asked to invest, or to buy products so that you can sell these products on commission - WALK AWAY.

### **What about my pay?**

By law, you must receive a payslip no later than one day after payday.

A payslip will show how much you have earned, and payments that must be made by the employer to you and the government (tax and superannuation).

It will also show the hours that you have worked: ordinary hours, overtime hours, and any special payments or deductions.

That's why it's always a good idea to keep a diary for your personal record of all hours that you work.

Superannuation is paid by the employer on your behalf to your account (for when you retire) in addition to your pay.

You are not allowed to be paid superannuation monies in cash. They must be paid into an account in your name in an independent superannuation fund.

### **What about a break while I am working?**

Breaks are usually unpaid. Usually, a break in "your time" will be written down in the work agreement for your job.

Typically workers receive a 30-minute break after 4 – 5 hours of continuous work.

You may be expected to have your break at a certain location, so travel to / from that location is in "your time".

### **What about public holidays?**

Public holidays are the days that the government expects most people to have off work.

However, it is becoming more and more common for people to work on a public holiday.

If your job requires you to work on a public holiday then the work agreement should be clear about what the arrangement is. It may include penalty payments to offset the inconvenience, or it may have some other compensation (time off in place (or lieu) of you working on a public holiday, etc.)

### **Am I required to join a union when I start work?**

Everyone has a right to join a union covering the type of work you are doing. Normally the HR department will have told you what the "responding" union to your Work Agreement is and may give you the name of the local union official.

Union membership is confidential and it is illegal for anyone to discriminate against you because you are or are not in a union.

## **What should I do if I feel I am being taken advantage of while a trainee?**

It's always difficult for young person in this situation. Let's discuss ways that this can occur.

### **Concerning Terms and Conditions of Work**

In the first instance it's always best to assume that the employer has made a genuine mistake. Remember, you are positive and optimistic. But you are not a mug. So bring this to your supervisor's attention. Not in a demanding way.

Simply say "I think there's something wrong here...can you look into it for me?" If the supervisor's explanation still doesn't seem right then (and only then) you need to take it up a level.

This might mean getting someone on your side. In most cases this will mean going to a co-worker and asking them if they agree that you are missing out on entitlements, or being taken advantage of. If the co-worker agrees that you have a genuine grievance ask them if they would be willing to support you by taking this back to the boss.

If the co-worker does not want to become involved then you need to take it to the experts.

There are two ways of doing this. One is to go to the HR group and explain your issue to them. If you receive no joy from them, then you may need the support of an employee representative group, such as a union. There are a number of organisations that deal with employment grievances. All of them will tell you to keep records of your work and work hours. So as soon as you feel something is wrong, start keeping your notes. These can be as simple as the dates and hours you are working.

If your concern is about pay and conditions, then it is prudent to avoid confrontation and seek the advice of a third party. The company may have a grievance procedure, and in my experience those companies with such a procedure will generally try and do the right thing.

Those companies who do not have a grievance procedure are generally smaller companies. Complaints about pay and conditions in smaller companies can quickly become personal and often lead to conflict, unless they are handled very tactfully.

Or it may be that your complaint is more job specific, such as workplace health and safety. In these cases you should keep more comprehensive records, including witnesses, description of task, any instructions you have been given, etc.

Remember, disputes will arise from time to time. Be open and optimistic about your grievance; assume that people have made a genuine mistake in the first instance. Adopting a positive approach will prevent you from leaping to conclusions and maybe saying something that you regret later.

### Concerning bullying

Some new starters will experience bullying in the workplace. You need to know that this type of behaviour is not acceptable, and probably illegal.

If you feel that you are being bullied at work you need to bring it to the attention of the boss straightaway. The boss has a legal obligation to provide a safe place of work. If you feel scared or threatened at work, then that is an unsafe situation, and the boss must act to remove the bullying threat.

If the boss is the source of bullying (it happens) then you need to bring it to the attention of others. This could be inside the company, if there is a HR person. Or it could be that the company has no HR person, in which case you need to take your concerns to the Workplace Health and Safety body in your town.

It is always a good idea to keep detailed records in a diary of any bullying, noting the date, time, who was involved, any witnesses, the nature of the bullying, what was said or done etc.

### Unfair dismissal

If you have been working for an employer for 6 months, or 12 months in a small business, then you have some protection from being unfairly dismissed.

Laws exist to protect employees from being unfairly treated, and you cannot be sacked without good reason.

You can be dismissed without any notice period if:

- You act dishonestly (stealing, lying to your employer are typical reasons)
- You refuse to obey reasonable work instructions from the person in charge
- You behave so badly that a reasonable person would not want you at work (fighting, hooliganism, overly aggressive behaviour, etc.)

The road to dismissal is usually signposted with a few personal warnings. If you receive a warning from your employer, take it very seriously. You don't have to receive 3 warnings before you are dismissed.

The warning should make it very clear what you have been doing wrong. It is then up to you to get the training or advice to help you perform your duties better.





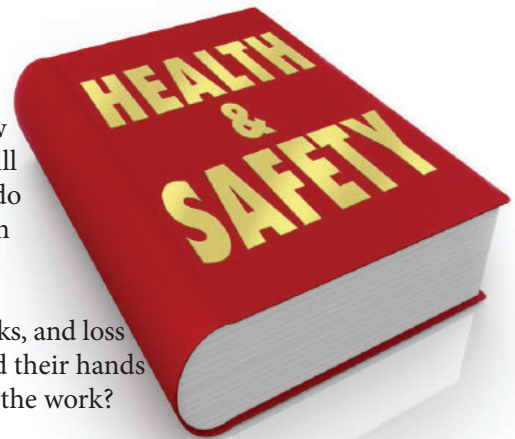
## Workplace Areas

### Health and safety in all workplaces

The employer is responsible for providing a safe workplace. He achieves this through various means:

- Reducing/ eliminating hazards in the workplace
- Establishing safety rules, policies
- Providing safety equipment
- Establishing a risk management environment

What this means for a new starter is that you must follow these policies and rules at all times when at work. You will not be thanked if you break these rules in an attempt to do things “quicker” or “better”. Breaking a safety rule is often grounds for dismissal.



There is a reason why older people generally have bad backs, and loss of hearing. But most old people have all their fingers and their hands work fine. How can this be when their hands do most of the work?

In your hands there are nerves that tell you when things are hot – so you don’t usually stick your hand in a fire. Because there are nerves in your hand you get immediate feedback that this is causing you pain, so better stop.

Your ears and your back don’t have any nerves to give you immediate feedback. So if you damage your ears or back, it doesn’t immediately translate to a signal to the brain to stop.

If, for example you are lifting a heavy load and using incorrect handling methods, your back won’t tell you to stop. Unless you burst a disc in your spinal column – and then it’s too late.

So you need to assess the weight and decide whether you need help in lifting it. If you don’t assess the weight and take on too much then the damage you are doing to your back will appear when you are older.

It’s the same story with your ears. Your ears have few nerves for feeding back pain, so you might think that sound exposure is doing no damage, until it’s too late.

Keep listening to very loud music and you’ll need a hearing aid later in life. Guaranteed.

Other dangers at work will be much more obvious, such as chemicals, vehicles, moving parts etc.

Unfortunately, until people are over 25 they have a higher risk tolerance because the frontal brain has not developed fully. (Some under-25s think they are indestructible). Unfortunately this means that you are a high-risk category for accidents.

Your HEALTH is your most important life asset, and at work you will be exposed to many things that could damage your health. Take care.

Health and Safety in particular is an area where new employees will most likely get some form of training if only in the form of an “induction” into the safety policies and procedures of the organisation. This is likely to be your first exposure to the legal framework of work. In very simple terms, the employer has a responsibility to provide a healthy workplace. He does this in several ways, but YOU also have a responsibility, which I’ll come to later.

From the employers’ perspective a providing a healthy and safe workplace involves a number of core things:

#### 1. Safe working policies

You can think of the policies as being pretty broad statements where the company says things like... “We value our employees and health and safety is Number 1”.

Although these are very broad, these are legal commitments and the owners of the company take them very seriously.

#### 2. Standards

The company may produce a set of standards for common work activities. Things like rules around fire protection, or working at heights, or areas of work where there is some degree of risk whether small or large.

#### 3. Practices

At this level we are talking about the specific tasks that make up jobs and processes.

Things like how a worker should go about fixing something. It will mention things like, what to do before starting work, what tools to have, how to check for risks, what step-by-step processes you should follow, etc.

Your responsibilities are also enshrined in law. You have a legal obligation at work with respect to your safety and those around about you.

You must follow these Health and Safety policies and procedures, and must not do anything that puts you or your co-workers at risk. So if you decide to remove an active machine guard (for instance) and expose you or your co-worker to risk or injury you are likely to find yourself in serious trouble.



## Marks' story

A new employee spends his first working morning watching the team bag components at the workstation. The supervisor has told the team that you are to be shown all the tasks under close supervision, as the equipment is highly automated and a little bit complicated. After two hours of watching the team bag components, the team go off for a tea break. In the lunchroom, you are getting bored, thinking that this is not complicated at all. However to show how willing, you are first back on the factory floor after tea break, ready to start work. After a few minutes, the team hasn't arrived, so you start up the machine that heat seals the bags. You have seen this hundreds of times this morning, place the bag under the beam and the machine comes down and seals the bag. Easy. Except the bag gets stuck, and you put your hand in to clear it, but this triggers the heating process, and your hand gets burnt. The rest of the team arrive to see your hand trapped in the machine. Your working life is over, because in your haste you did not follow instructions.

Never do an unsafe task.

## Examples

- Never work at heights without proper safety equipment
- Never work without protection from things that could fall on you
- Never work on equipment that is not electrically isolated
- Never work alone or without means of contact with a supervisor
- Never attempt a task you are not trained for

You are particularly vulnerable as a new starter on several fronts:

- (1) You don't have enough experience to recognise potentially life-threatening dangers
- (2) You probably want to impress, and are likely to take unacceptable risks
- (3) You are unlikely to question the boss if he asks you to do a risky job
- (4) You are young and your brain has not fully developed, so you will engage in higher risk taking.

Many new starters are severely injured or worse each year in incidents that could well have been avoided.

## Office work area

Working in an office for the first time can be fun. You may have your own desk and workstation and enjoy the feeling of being in the adult world.

However, although it may look a bit like the classroom, with the boss in the corner office, it is quite different.

In an office people are working closely together, so being polite and tactful is absolutely essential. It's best to adopt a very low profile in the office environment for a while until you have worked out the way the office works. The sort of office work styles you should try to pick up on are:

- How does everybody address the boss? Is it Mr Boss, or Mrs's boss, or is it first name terms?
  - How do the co-workers get others to help? Is it "Mate, give us a hand here?" Or "Can you give us a hand when you have a minute?"
  - How do co-workers give instructions? Is it "Get this done for 4pm will you?" or "Are you able to do this by 4?"
  - What about co-workers making suggestions? Is it "Don't do it that way, this is how you do it" or "May I suggest you try doing it this way?"
  - What about the noise level in the office? Is it like a quiet library, or a noisy like a kindergarten?
  - How about when visitors arrive in the office? Are meetings carried out at the workstation or taken to another room? (because of noise interference)
  - What about answering the phone? Do co-workers answer phones that are ringing out on others' desk? How do they answer the phone? Do they use a professional or casual voice?
  - What about breaks? Are they taken at the workstation? Are they staggered? Is someone expected to be in the office, taking calls at all times?
  - What about starting times? No doubt there are official start times, but when are people actually starting and finishing work? What is their expectation of a new starter?  
<https://pasafety.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/bigstock-safety-gear-kit-isolated-on-wh-38575195.jpg>
- Tom's story**

I remember I started work thirty minutes early at a new job, but there always seemed to be people in the office before me. So I gradually increased my start time by another ten minutes until I started at the same time as most of the office. (- that turned out to be 1 hour before the official start time)

- What about changes in the office routine? It's not unusual for office workers to work longer hours to meet the reporting requirements of Head Office for example.
- Or they may knock off earlier on a Friday if all the work is done. Be alert to the work environment, and look to help out as far as you are able.



## Factory work

Factories can involve many workers, and of course they all seem to be part of a big team, and they all seem to know what their role is, except you.

Probably the hardest adjustment in factory or plant work is understanding what the factory workers are actually saying to each other!

It can seem like a foreign language because in a factory much of the discussion is carried out in abbreviations that can sound like a code! The equipment and products and tasks will all have abbreviated names that mean something to the experienced factory worker, but are completely indecipherable to the new starter. A start of day conversation on the factory floor might go something like:

“We need to make sure VSD1 is ready for P1 sub plan at 4pm today, so make sure all PLCs have their protocols checked when the OC1 starts up.”

In a factory there is a rhythm to the production process. If the factory is working in harmony, then all is well. People depend on each other to interface with the production process and tools. It can be a quite physical and stressful environment, so it's important to have good working relationships and clear communications. The dangers in a factory are sometimes not self-evident, and this is a concern for the new starter. Equipment may be able to start remotely and without warning to you. It's very important in a factory environment to understand the risks in every task.

Good factories will have carried out a risk assessment for every job, which the new starter should become familiar with. Problems arise in factories when the regular controlled production environment changes. This is by far the most dangerous time for employees - for example at shutdowns, or when abnormal maintenance is carried out.

So the key activities for a new starter are:

- Learning the layout and production process
- Understanding the risks while at work
- Learning the language and abbreviations that your co-workers use
- Understanding your critical tasks
- Understanding the priorities of the overall production process



## Site work area

Many new starters will be working in a changing work environment such as construction, logistics, mining, or with service contractors who are working in different locations each day.

In these roles the risks to your health and safety are different every day. Equipment is being put together, buildings are going up, material is being excavated or moved around, freight is coming in etc.

As a new starter this work can be very rewarding. You feel part of something bigger. You may have pride in being part of a team that is constructing a building or growing a mine every day.

This regularly changing work environment has its pros and cons for the new work starter. You need to know that changing workplaces introduce higher levels of risk.

It may be something as simple as stacking boxes. Every day people are injured at work from falling materials or tripping over hazards. Did you know that the most frequent injuries don't occur at very high heights? Most injuries occur because people trip over.

Be alert to these risks.

The new site work starter can expect to be chaperoned for a longer period than office or factory work because of these risks.

The changing work environment will mean that only experienced workers will fully appreciate the risks involved in that task on that particular day. So you should not be working alone in unfamiliar areas, or be in construction areas without immediate supervision.

Key activities for the new starter are:

- Understanding the risks in this changing environment
- Being clear about your critical tasks, and the safety requirements around them
- Understanding your role in the overall development

## Meetings

If you are employed by a reasonable sized business, chances are you will attend meetings.

Simply this is when a group of co-workers get together to exchange information, and usually to exchange information and agree actions.

This may be as basic as gathering round the back of a van to listen to the boss, or sitting in the boardroom with a whole bunch of bosses in suits.

Mostly though it will be a get-together of your immediate work group. But you still need to know the rules of behaviour.

## **Purpose of the meeting room**

In many work situations the meeting room is the only place where you may be able to have lengthy conversations with your co-workers. It may be that your work involves answering the phone or responding to customers. These types of interruptions make any meaningful conversation impossible.

So when the team gets together for a meeting it is a great temptation to “catch up” on the latest issue. Resist this - unless that is the purpose of the meeting.

The meeting room should be used for a get-together with a specific purpose, and an allocated time. Someone may want the room when your planned meeting is over. So keep the “catch ups” till meal breaks.

## **Ten rules about meetings for new starters**

Some rules about meetings that you need to know:

1. Prepare for the meeting by knowing what is expected of your attendance
2. Be on time for the start of meeting. You may be asked to introduce yourself. Be confident and brief
3. Switch off your mobile during the meeting. Not on silent-off
4. Body language is important. Sit up, listen up
5. Eye contact is important. Look meeting participants and speakers in the eye
6. Work meetings usually have a chairperson, pay attention to them. They control the meeting
7. Take brief notes of any meeting points you don't understand. Check your understanding with co-workers after meeting. Don't hold the meeting up when you are learning the ropes
8. As a new starter you are unlikely to be asked for your opinion on a matter. But if you are asked your opinion, be very, very careful with your words. Never criticise or complain at a meeting. If you think you have something to contribute, keep it till after the meeting and mention it to your boss
9. If you are asked something at the meeting, and you don't know the answer then don't make it up or tell lies. Simply admit you don't know, but say “I will find out after the meeting.”
10. Never promise to do anything at a meeting that you are not sure that you can deliver on. Instead say that you will discuss it with your boss after the meeting.

## The workstation area

Computer desks areas, sometimes called “workstations”, are fairly commonplace in offices, in factories, on work sites. You may have access to one for work email or other work purposes. A few things that you need to be aware of:

- It's not your personal computer. Don't personalise it in any way. You may think it's cool to have your girl/boy friend as screensaver, but not everyone will agree
- Don't upload anything to it that is not work related
- Forget playing any games, or listening to music while on the workstation. You may think it makes you more efficient at work, but bosses generally get annoyed with workers who do this
- And don't think that you're smart and won't get caught as long as the boss isn't around. Seriously, do you think the boss doesn't know what's going on when he sees employees shutting down computer screens just as he gets near you?
- Even at lunchbreaks it's still the employer's computer. Resist the temptation to play games or use the computer for personal purposes, even in your own time.





### Key Messages from Part 4

- ☐ Be well prepared for the first day. First impressions matter.
- ☐ Work preparation involves a lot of detail. Make sure you have everything covered.
- ☐ In your early days at work you will be judged. Be on your best behaviour. Set the scene for the rest of your work life.
- ☐ Work is regulated. Know your obligations and your rights.
- ☐ There are many work arrangements, know which one is yours.
- ☐ If you think your rights are being abused, then take positive action.
- ☐ Be tactful, friendly, optimistic when seeking advice about your rights.
- ☐ Be firm if you are in the right, and are not being treated properly
- ☐ Look after your health at work.
- ☐ Look after your safety at work. Be aware of risks.
- ☐ There are many different types of work areas at work. Be aware of the risks and behaviours required in each of them.

## References

**This book was written to guide, inspire and encourage. None of the ideas are new but these authors and websites helped me frame the content.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
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| The changing benefits of early work experience    | Charles Baum (IZA)                        |
| Experiences in paid work during adolescence       | Jeremy Staff (US NHS)                     |
| Gaps in school leavers opportunities              | The Mitchell Institute                    |
| Where next for school leavers                     | Careerbuilder.co.uk                       |
| School leavers must lower their work expectations | Telegraph.co.uk                           |
| School leavers program                            | Thepersonnelgroup.com                     |
| The real reason graduates can't get work          | BBC                                       |
| Shine, how to survive and thrive at work          | Chris Barez Brown                         |
| Happy at Work                                     | Sophie Rowan                              |
| Impressive Interviews                             | Deborah Barit                             |
| Working Relationships                             | Bob Wall                                  |
| There's no shame in not loving your job           | Dailylife.com                             |
| Work Readiness                                    | Queensland Education                      |
| Youth Unemployment                                | Brotherhood of St Lawrence                |
| It's called work for a reason                     | Larry Winget                              |
| Get Real  | Elaine Glaser                             |
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| I wish I had known that earlier in my career      | Jane Horan                                |
| Higher Education Review (Bradley report)          | Australian Govt                           |
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| The reputation economy                            | Michael Fertik                            |
| Types of working arrangements                     | Queensland Government                     |
| The WorkGo Program                                | Victorian Government                      |
| Building good work relationship                   | Mindtools                                 |
| The importance of good relationships at work      | Humorthatworks.com                        |
| "People Glue" Ian Hutchinson Woodsland            | Press NSW 2009                            |
| The Enthusiastic Employee                         | David Sirota                              |
| The economics of just about Everything            | Andrew Leigh                              |

## Useful Websites

[www.fairwork.gov.au](http://www.fairwork.gov.au)  
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## Dedication

Since I retired, I have met many people who do great work for the community - helping the young, the old, the sick, the disadvantaged, the homeless, the many people who need a helping hand, often through circumstances beyond their control.

I didn't give these people a second thought for 40 years as I progressed through my career.

So on behalf of our great little Rotary Club, I'd like to dedicate this book to all of you who help those in need of a helping hand, and especially my brother, Alistair who saw the need to help people long before I did.

John Malloy  
Editor  
Rotary Club of Alexandra Headland  
District 9600



# WORKLIFE

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