

INFORMATION FOR CONGREGATIONS

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH

A new compliance code (Code) was introduced this month (December 2025) in Victoria to support the psychological health and wellbeing of people in workplaces. An equivalent Code was introduced in Tasmania and NSW in 2023.

As we have many workplaces across the Synod (Victoria and Tasmania) the people this Code supports includes ordained ministers, ministry agents/pastors, employees, volunteers and contractors.

The new Code was developed by WorkSafe Victoria (WorkSafe) and focuses on the identification and management of risks in relation to conditions at a workplace and the way work is done.

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance about how to comply to the duties in relation to psychological hazards under the OHS Act and OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations.

The Code includes how to identify a hazard and how to control risks associated with them. It cites five areas that present risks to psychological health in relation to the work environment.

A. DEFINITIONS:

Psychosocial hazard means any factor or factors, regarding:

- work design
- systems of work
- management of work
- carrying out of the work
- personal or work-related interactions

that may,

- arise in the work environment, and
- cause an employee to experience one or more negative psychological responses that create a risk to their health or safety.

Psychological responses include both:

- cognitive, emotional and behavioural responses
- the physiological processes associated with.

B. PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

A safe work environment will include, but not limited to the following:

- placement/employment contracts and work structures
- clear position description – role clarity
- opportunities to express ideas about how to complete work tasks and/or work demands
- the name of the one person as manager or team leader
- written policies, work processes, manuals and handbooks that outline work systems and codes of conduct
- training opportunities to learn new skills as required

- consultation during times of significant change
- respectful and professional interpersonal interactions at-all-times
- consideration to the hours of work, the amount and life balance
- support if unexpected and unsettling events occur
- all necessary work equipment and materials
- clear guidelines about how to report a psychological hazard

C. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Congregations and presbyteries have a clear duty of care under the OHS (Psychological Health) Regulations to manage psychosocial hazards in workplace environments.

Presbyteries and congregations must be aware of the risks to mental well-being and act to mitigate them.

We have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace for our employees, ordained ministers, pastors/ministry agents, volunteers and sole traders. Failure to do this may lead to sustained injuries, penalties, hefty fines and in severe cases criminal convictions.

This new Code provides comprehensive guidance about:

1. What risks to psychological health may look like, including symptoms
2. How to make changes to reduce risks
3. How to review initiatives (or control measures) to ensure improvements to safety and well-being have been achieved

D. RESOURCES

Health and Safety Manual – Resource for Presbyteries and Congregations
[OHS - Uniting Church in Australia. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania](#)

Compliance Code - Victoria
[Compliance code: Psychological health | WorkSafe Victoria](#)

OHS Regulations & Legislation - Victoria
[OHS \(Psychological Health\) Regulations 2025 | legislation.vic.gov.au](#)
[Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#)

WHS Codes of Practice – Tasmania
[Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#)

WHS Regulations – Tasmania
<https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sr-2022-109>

PEOPLE AND CULTURE CONTACT

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