

SMALL BUSINESSES

WE CAN ALL HELP SMALL BUSINESSES IMPROVE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Strategy’s vision is that work is healthy and safe for everyone in New Zealand. Its goals and priorities focus everyone’s effort on what will make the biggest impact to reduce harm and on building capacity to do this well.

97% of all businesses in New Zealand are small businesses and 70% have zero employees. They employ 29% of our workforce and contribute over a quarter of our GDP across a range of sectors. The success and growth of small businesses is vitally important to our country’s economic and social wellbeing.

All businesses should be able to deliver good health and safety outcomes efficiently and effectively regardless of their size or health and safety risks. Good health and safety supports the wellbeing of workers and is good business. When a worker is kept safe and healthy at work, they are more likely to be productive and engaged.

Small businesses have a number of challenges in managing health and safety well.

What are some of the challenges small businesses face?

- They tend to be owner-operated and have limited access to external support.
- Their owners are time-poor and tend to wear many hats.
- They face budget constraints.
- They may not be aware of their obligations
- They can have difficulties meeting the multiple requirements needed to be shortlisted in a tender process.

If everyone plays a part in helping to support small businesses it will be good for all of New Zealand.

What we can do to support small businesses

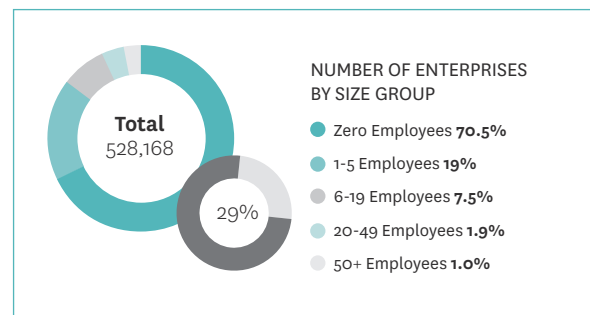
The Strategy prioritises small businesses as a key group with greater needs. This means everybody has a role to play in helping small businesses succeed.

Sector bodies have a key role in helping small businesses keep workers healthy and safe. They can bring small businesses into networks that can help them to understand their risks and how to manage them. Groups such as industry associations, sector bodies, sector-based health and safety groups, as well as small business representative bodies play a key role in helping small businesses. These groups can provide advice, case studies, innovations and insights that are useful for small businesses in their specific sector.

Unions can help to provide experience, tools and insights about effective health and safety practices in similar workplaces in the sector to assist small businesses, particularly to encourage worker engagement, participation and representation in a way that can meet its individual needs.

Health and safety practitioners need to be well equipped to help small businesses manage their risks effectively and proportionately – including providing advice, tools, or services that are practical and useful for what the business really needs. It’s important that small businesses are given support to make smart choices when seeking advice, to ensure their individual needs are met.

Larger businesses have a key role in influencing supply chains to encourage good health and safety practices. Businesses in every sector, but particularly those sectors with the highest harm, need to make sure they procure services in a way that’s accessible to small businesses, while promoting good health and safety practice. This includes ensuring health and safety requirements that can be tailored to work for small businesses. Large businesses can look for ways to streamline processes, in particular making sure tendering processes work well for small businesses and are aligned with others in the sector, and working with sector groups where a joint approach is needed.



How do I use the Strategy?

CHECK OUT THE PRIORITY AREAS AREAS IN THE STRATEGY BELOW FOR ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE HARM AND BUILD CAPABILITY FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

Encouraging leaders at all levels to integrate health and safety

Good health and safety is about effective risk management. The effort put into managing risks should be proportionate to the harm they cause. This means knowing about health and safety risks in the business, and managing them systematically.

SafePlus self-assessment tool: This is a free online tool designed for small and medium-sized businesses:

<https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/businesses/safeplus/online-self-assessment-tool/>

WorkSafe's Around the Block tool: covers a range of small business types to help them to better understand and manage their key risks.

<https://worksafe.govt.nz/the-toolshed/tools/around-the-block/>

Better management of work-related health risks, including physical and mental health risks

Work-related health risks, including risks to mental health, can be harder to identify and manage, but have a huge impact on workers' health. Estimates show 600 to 900 people in New Zealand die each year from work-related diseases, compared to 50-60 from injuries.

Healthy workers: health risk guidance for small businesses <https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/work-related-health/tools-and-resources-work-related-health/health-risk-guidance-small-businesses/>

Preventing & responding to bullying at work: advice for small businesses

<https://worksafe.govt.nz/the-toolshed/tools/bullying-prevention-toolbox/>

Workplace Policy Builder: Health and Wellbeing Policy <https://wpb.business.govt.nz/workplacepolicybuilder/>



Enable workers to be represented, engaged and to participate

Everyone should be encouraged to build their capability to manage risks. Engaging workers in health and safety and encouraging their participation is a Strategy priority. Workers can help to identify risks and assess practical ways to eliminate or minimise them.

Owners of small businesses have a key role, and unique opportunity to work closely with their workers to use everyone's collective knowledge, expertise and capability.



Workers with greater need: Maori and other workers at greater risk

The Strategy encourages everyone to work to reduce harm among the workers at greatest risk, including Maori, young workers, older workers and migrant workers. Businesses will find the benefits of worker engagement are felt most strongly if they engage their workers in meaningful ways – for example, having regular and informal conversations about health and safety, and making communications short, simple and easy to follow, or using photos, pictures or videos.

Small businesses are likely to have a good understanding of their workforce and can be well placed to engage in a way that meets their workers' needs.

Information on worker engagement, representation and participation:

<https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/workers/>



Health and safety practitioners

Small businesses who have limited time and resources can end up with health and safety advice, tools, or services which aren't right for them, and don't help them.

What a business needs depends on their context - there is no single product or document that is a silver bullet, it's about supplementing the business' own knowledge and tools to ensure it can manage its risks effectively and proportionately.

While there are good health and safety consultants out there, they don't all have the same quality and effectiveness and or the same experience and skills. Shop around, look online, ask other businesses and make a decision based on sound information.

The **HASANZ Register** is a new tool for businesses to find quality health and safety advice and services, including advisors experienced at working with small or medium sized businesses or in specific sectors.

<https://register.hasanz.org.nz/>



Help to improve decision making

WorkSafe's website has a range of information that small businesses can use to help figure out what their key risks might be: <https://worksafe.govt.nz/data-and-research/ws-data/>

Case studies can help provide examples of good practice to make it easier for small businesses to know what to do: <https://worksafe.govt.nz/the-toolshed/case-studies/>

Information sharing between sectors and businesses on emerging risks and best practice is another powerful tool for better risk management.

Forums and networks for engaging with other businesses, such as the Safeguard Forum, can be a good way of connecting with others and sharing good practice:

<https://forum.safeguard.co.nz/>