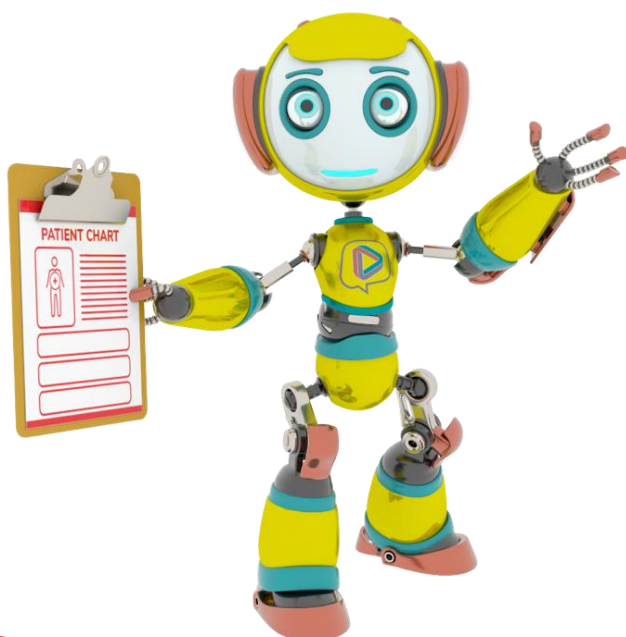




# WorkSafe SmartMove Certificate

## Health and Community Care Industry Module Study Guide



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# Health and Community Care Industry

## Learning outcomes

In this module you will:

1. Learn about common hazards encountered in the health and community care industry
2. Understand how to prevent injuries from common workplace hazards
3. Identify existing and potential hazards at a workplace and learn how to report and record them
4. Learn how to eliminate workplace hazards and control risks

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The health and community care industry is dynamic. Young workers may provide care in hospitals, aged care hostels, nursing homes, residential care, before and after school care, childcare or day care, and sometimes provide care in clients' own home.

Workers are often expected to carry out their work in rostered shifts and may work weekends and at night. They carry out their duties under direct or regular supervision, and within clearly defined care plans or organisational guidelines.

Job roles in the community care industry may include: nursing support workers, dental assistants, aged care workers, disability support workers, disabled care workers, personal carers, home care workers and child care workers.

The health and community care industry presents many hazards that are unique and are not found in other industries which young workers could be exposed to. Common hazards are found in tasks relating to:

- manual tasks
  - slips, trips and falls
  - work-related violence
  - work-related stress
  - hazardous substances
  - electricity
  - biological hazards
  - visiting a client's home
- 

## Manual tasks

*A carer in an aged care hostel was seriously injured while lifting a resident from the floor after she had collapsed. The carer injured his back and could not return to full time work for over three months. The hostel did not have hoists. The staff were not trained in manual tasks and there were no procedures in place for lifting fallen residents.*

Manual tasks are any activity or sequence of activities that requires a person to use their body (musculoskeletal system) physically to perform work such as lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, moving and holding or restraining a person, animal or things.

Most jobs require several types of manual tasks to be performed. However, not all manual tasks are hazardous. The most common injuries and health issues that can arise from performing hazard manual tasks are musculoskeletal injuries, which affect the muscles, bones, nerves and/or joints.

Examples of musculoskeletal injuries are:

- sprains and strains of muscles, ligaments and tendons (e.g. back strain)
- joint injuries
- disc protrusion or disc herniation of the back
- nerve injury or nerve compression
- muscular and nerve disorders (e.g. carpal tunnel syndrome or repetitive strain injury)

Body stressing remains the most common injury risk to workers in the health and community care industry. The most common injuries affecting carers are lower back and shoulder injuries.

## How does performing a manual task result in injury?

Contrary to popular belief, it's not just the weight of an object that creates the risk of musculoskeletal injuries. Workers are at risk of suffering injuries due to: increased effort (force), awkward postures, static posture, perform the same action quickly and repetitively, vibration (from hand tools) and lifting heavy objects.

In the health and community care environment, risks from performing hazardous manual tasks may come from:

- area layout - the work area may not be designed for wheelchairs or people requiring assistance
- equipment - lack of equipment or limitations of equipment such as weight ratings, inappropriate wheel types on wheelchairs for environment or load, lack of adjustability or inadequate maintenance
- capacity of the person you care for - inability to support their own weight due to muscle weakness, inability to understand instructions, have involuntary movements or have side effects from medication such as drowsiness, and lifting and carrying children.
- nature of loads handled - overloaded shopping bags, overweight patient or resident
- environment - poor lighting or wet floors
- the way you do something - working alone, working for long hours, working at low levels (on the children's furniture) or lack of manual task training.

## What can you do to prevent injury from performing manual tasks?

Your employer has a responsibility to provide and maintain a safe workplace. If you are unsure on how to perform manual tasks safely, ask your employer or supervisor for assistance.

Your employer should provide you with *\*risk management* and *\*\*task specific training* where hazardous manual tasks have been identified at your workplace.

*\*Risk management* are the steps taken to manage workplace hazards described as **SAMM** – **S**pot the hazard; **A**ssess the risk; **M**ake the changes; **M**onitor and follow-up.

*\*\*Task specific training* is the practicing of actual tasks that will be performed.

Task specific training should be provided:

- during induction to a new task
- as part of your refresher training
- when work tasks are about to be changed or new ones introduced.

There is a variety of ways you can be trained to perform hazardous manual tasks. Training methods include a buddy system, demonstrations, observation, staff meetings, toolbox talks and practice sessions.

After the training, you should be able to:

- recognise the risks and the sources of those risks, and in discussion with your employer or supervisor decide the best way to minimise them
- prepare the workplace layout and surroundings to perform manual tasks safely
- prepare the load for manual handling, where applicable
- organise the task and work flow to minimise the risk of injury
- use relevant mechanical aids and handling devices provided to you
- use tools or equipment provided to you.

## Examples of manual tasks that may be hazardous

### Storing items

To reduce the risk of manual task injuries:

- store items between mid-thigh and shoulder height to prevent overreaching
- avoid storing unstable items – surround loose items with packing material so they do not shift in the box
- make sure there is enough space in storerooms to handle items
- use equipment (such as a trolley) to move heavy or bulky items

### Moving and supporting clients

To reduce the risk of manual task injuries:

- ask your employer for the task specific training in safe lifting techniques, team handling and how to use the equipment and aids. Your employer should have safe procedures in place and provide you with the training.
- use correct equipment to assist clients, such as walking frames, handrails, hoists, transfer boards, sliding sheets
- make sure equipment is in good working condition
- reduce clutter and make sure there is enough space to do the job
- use light, compact equipment where possible
- check floor surfaces – wet floors, thick carpets and uneven surfaces can increase the risk of injury
- if a client falls, ask for assistance if you cannot safely move or lift the client.

### Using wheelchairs

To reduce the risk of manual task injuries when assisting people in wheelchairs:

- ask your employer for the task specific training in safe use of wheelchairs
- ensure the wheelchairs are in good condition, with inflated tyres and working brakes
- electric batteries should be charged
- avoid pushing wheelchairs over soft or uneven surfaces
- Check accessibility before you move a client
- if the wheelchairs are to be moved or transported in a car, choose the lightest ones that are collapsible. If this is not possible, use alternative transport, such as a wheelchair accessible van, bus or taxi

#### **Be aware!**

*Muscles and tendons can be injured when the same task is repeated for a long time or work is done in an awkward posture.*

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## Quiz – Manual tasks

1. You are using a wheelchair to move a client. Is this manual handling?
  - a. No, because the wheelchair is carrying the client
  - b. No, only when the client is moving into the wheelchair
  - c. Yes, you are still manual handling the client
  - d. All of the above
2. The most *common* health problems that can arise from hazardous manual tasks are:
  - a. musculoskeletal injuries

- b. cold and flu
  - c. tooth decay
  - d. food allergies
3. When should you receive task-specific training to perform manual tasks?
- a. During induction to the task
  - b. As part of your refresher training
  - c. When work tasks are about to be changed or introduced
  - d. All of the above

### Case study

*Sandy has developed a sore back, neck and shoulder. Most of Sandy's day is spent hunching over her client, assisting with bathing, dressing and meals. Recently, Sandy's client's mobility condition has deteriorated. The client is increasingly unsteady on his feet and relies on Sandy to support his full weight for trips to bathroom. Sandy's other duties include, food shopping, light cleaning and running errands (such as posting mail) for clients.*

4. What are some of the risk factors in Sandy's manual tasks? Choose **two** correct answers.
- a. Hunching over his client for most of the day
  - b. Posting mail
  - c. Sandy's client relies on Sandy to support his full weight
  - d. Light cleaning
5. How could Sandy manage her manual tasks? Choose **two** correct answers.
- a. Use aids, such as shower seats, to position her client so she won't have to bend down
  - b. Request for a wheelchair to assist her to move her client without having to exerting herself
  - c. Stop cleaning
  - d. Do nothing as by speaking up he could lose her job

---

## Slips, trips and falls

*A teenager working in community care tore the ligaments in her right knee after tripping on the power cord at work. A colleague had plugged in an electric fan for a client across a walkway. She required surgery to repair the damage to her knee.*

Slips, trips and falls are the most common cause of injury to young workers in community care industry. They can result in serious harm and lengthy time off work. These types of injuries can also affect young workers in their everyday social and school lives and may mean they cannot play sport or engage in physical activities or hobbies.

A slip, trip or fall may cause injuries, including:

- broken bones when colliding with an object or hitting the ground
- cuts if it occurs near sharp objects
- sprains or strains
- burns if it occurs near hot surfaces or while handling hot liquids.

## What cause slips, trips and falls?

- Slippery floors from water or liquid spills
- Wearing unsuitable shoes
- Unstable, loose, or uneven surfaces like broken tiles or torn carpet
- Stairs or steps, especially when carrying items that obscures the view of the floor
- Poor lighting
- Objects on the floor such as toys, loose cords or equipment left in walkways
- Clothing caught on furniture or equipment

## What can your employer do to prevent slips, trips and falls?

- Allow safe movement in the workplace, including entries and exits that are free of obstructions
- Ensure floors and surfaces in the workplace are well-maintained and installed with task appropriate surfaces
- Provide adequate lighting for safe movement
- Ensure sufficient space to work
- Maintain workplaces to keep them in a clean and tidy condition
- Provide tools and equipment to assist you to work safely
- Ensure workers wear suitable footwear with appropriate treads that are kept clean
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision so that workers are not exposed to slip and trip hazards.

## How can you prevent slips, trips and falls at work?

- Wear suitable shoes with treads that are kept clean. Incorrect footwear can cause slips and trips
- Clean up spillages straight away and dry the floor to ensure the surface is not left wet Don't leave spills for someone else to clean up
- Keep walkways clear of obstacles especially during busy work times
- Carry items only at a height that you can safely see over to avoid trip hazards and bumping into things

---

## Quiz – Slips, trips and falls

6. What safety precautions can help prevent slips?
    - a. Clean up spillage straight away and dry the floor to ensure the surface is not left wet
    - b. Wear appropriate shoes for work
    - c. Keep walkways clear of obstacles especially during busy work times
    - d. All of the above
  7. What can your employer do to prevent slips, trips and falls at work?
    - a. Store boxes of goods near entries and exits
    - b. Use ambient lighting in high activity areas
    - c. Ensure floors and surfaces in the workplace are well-maintained and installed with task appropriate surfaces
    - d. Tell you not to slip
-



## Work-related violence

*A client with dementia finds large crowds stressful and sometimes becomes verbally abusive in public. The employer limited activities away from the client's home, trained workers in dealing with aggressive dementia patients and provide staff with mobile phones with emergency contacts.*

Work-related violence is any actions or incidents in which workers are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. These may include any form of assault (e.g. biting, spitting, scratching, hitting, kicking punching, pushing, shoving, tripping, grabbing or throwing objects), indecent physical contact and intimidating behaviour that creates a fear of violence or harassment (e.g. stalking).

You are most at risk if you:

- provide care to people who have challenging behaviours that may be related to a medical condition, the use of alcohol or drugs or intellectual impairment
- provide care to people who are confused, distressed, afraid or unwell
- work in unfamiliar working environment without any security measures
- work in a home where other people such as family or friends may pose a risk to your safety
- work alone.

## Let's have a look on how to stay safe

Your employer must manage the risk of work-related violence in consultation with workers and health and safety representatives (HSRs). The process is known as SAMM.

Examples of the risk management may include:

- having safe work procedures in place (i.e. policies and procedures, and hazard management plans) including steps to be taken when an incident occurs, training you to spot early signs of violent behaviour and diffuse it, and encouraging you to leave a client's home if you feel unsafe
- reviewing and updating the client management plan regularly and after any changes or incidents and communicating this information to you
- making sure you can contact help in an emergency, and providing you with a list of emergency numbers
- providing you with a personal duress alarm system and have video cameras, alarms, security doors and guards to help if necessary
- providing you with information and training.

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## Quiz – Work-related violence

8. In the health and community care industry, you may be at risk of injury from violence because you may:
  - a. work with patients who are confused
  - b. work in a client's home
  - c. work alone
  - d. all of the above
9. What can your employer do to reduce the risk of work-related violence:
  - a. tell you to smile more
  - b. train you to recognise the signs of violence
  - c. give you a safety data sheet (SDS)
  - d. tell you to act tough

## Work-related stress

*A young female nurse developed work-related stress after a patient displayed violent and threatening behaviour during a night shift. The hospital knew that the patient could get aggressive, but had not advised the nurse. The hospital had no strategies or procedures for dealing with violent patients.*

Everybody goes through stress at one time or another, but when stress is continuous it can really affect your health and mental state.

Work-related stress describes the physical, mental and emotional reactions of workers who feel that their work demands exceed their abilities, and the lack of resources and support given to do work. While stress can build up over time it can also occur following specific incidents involving bullying, conflict, harassment, violence and trauma.

Working in the health and community care industry can become stressful depending on your job, you can sometimes:

- deal with violent and aggressive behaviour
- deal with injury, disease and death
- have continuous contact with people and their problems.
- have an inappropriate and demanding workload without help and support (e.g. there are not enough available staff).

## How do you recognise your work-related stress?

The effects of work-related stress may include physical and behavioural reactions, for example:

- **Physical** - fast heart rate, headaches, blurred vision, sweating, dizziness, aching neck and shoulder muscles, clenched jaw, skin rashes
- **Behavioural** - nervous, angry and moody, drinking too much alcohol, drug abuse, not sleeping properly, short attention span, eating too much.

## Let's have a look at how to keep stress under control

Your employer must manage the risk of work-related stress in consultation with workers and HSRs. This process is known as SAMM. These are steps taken to identify the stress hazards in the workplace and put in place control measures to minimise your risks of exposure to stress.

The following strategies may assist you to manage your stress.

- Talk to your employer about the source of stress (e.g. workload, staffing, conflicts, bullying)
- Follow the agreed standards of acceptable behaviour in place for workers and clients/ family member
- Have a clear job description and stick to that work only
- Report any violence, bullying or intimidation
- Use any counselling service provided by your employer if you have been exposed to a traumatic or challenging situation
- Keep fit and relaxed

---

## Quiz – Work-related stress

10. Work-related stress can be started or made worse by:

- a. work demands exceeding the ability and resources given to do the work
- b. bullying, conflict and harassment
- c. trauma
- d. all of the above

11. Stress can produce symptoms that can include physical (e.g. fast heart rate, headaches, clenched jaw) and behavioural reactions (e.g. nervous, angry and moody, and not sleeping properly).
- True
  - False

---

## Hazardous substances

*A dental assistant found that powdered latex gloves were irritating her skin. She began using non-powdered gloves. A few years later she began using powder-free latex gloves, but developed severe reactions to the latex. She now sues nitrile powder free gloves.*

A hazardous substance can be any substance, liquid, solid, dust or gas that may cause you harm. Common hazardous substances in the community care industry include: cleaning products, detergents, disinfectants, medical supplies and medications.

Hazardous substances shouldn't be a problem most of the time, but things can go wrong if you:

- get chemicals on your skin
- eat or drink them by mistake
- breathe in fine dust or chemical fumes from sprays and solutions
- mix substances so they become more harmful or toxic
- mistake one substance for another
- have pre-existing asthma or dermatitis.

## Irritant and allergic contact dermatitis

Contact dermatitis is an inflammation that occurs when a substance comes into contact with skin. Effects of contact dermatitis on hands may have a profound impact on workers' ability to perform a job. Severe conditions can affect workers activities of daily living and can even lead to job loss.

Irritant contact dermatitis occurs when physical or chemical damage to the barrier layer of skin exceeds the skin's ability to repair the damage.

Allergic contact dermatitis is a form of eczema caused by an allergic reaction to material, called an allergen, when it comes in contact with the skin. The skin becomes irritated and an abnormal (allergic) reaction happens. The skin may be red, swollen, tender, hot, painful or itchy. If the reaction is severe, the skin may blister or weep and can become cracked or crusty.

### **Be aware!**

*Performing tasks involving wet work with bare hands increases the risk of contact dermatitis.*

*Contact dermatitis is preventable by wearing disposable and non-latex gloves for wet work, drying your hands thoroughly with a disposable paper towel after wet work, moisturising your hands as often as possible with fragrance-free moisturiser, wearing a new pair of gloves for every customer, and checking your skin regularly for early signs of skin problems.*

*Latex gloves increase the risk of latex allergy. Nitrile gloves are often a preferred choice as they may reduce the risk of allergic contact dermatitis. Gloves should be single use, powder-free and fit properly.*

*Your employer should provide suitable gloves and special hand creams to stop you getting dermatitis. You should always use them.*

## Chemical burns

A chemical burn occurs when skin or eyes come in contact with a corrosive chemical such as an acid or a base. Some common cleaning agents like bleach, toilet and drain cleaners and disinfectants include corrosive chemicals.

### **Be aware!**

*Corrosive chemicals can “eat through” clothing, metal and other materials.*

*You must be trained and supervised when using corrosive chemicals.*

*You need to wear PPE (e.g. mask, safety glasses, gloves) and suitable clothing when using corrosive chemicals.*

*First aid should be given for chemical burns as soon as possible.*

*Strong acids and bases react dangerously when mixed together. They can generate heat, produce vapours and splatter.*

## How can you keep safe from hazardous substances?

- Read the label – look for warning labels and signs. Always follow the danger safety warnings. Talk to your employer or supervisor if you are unsure of warning instructions.
- Read the safety data sheet (SDS) for more information about the product and how to use it safely. Your employer must provide (or have available) safety information documents for any substances or products that are hazardous.
- Check the hazardous substance register at your workplace. It is a legal requirement that your employer keeps a current register of each hazardous substance that may be used or stored in the workplace.
- Don't eat, drink, smoke or store food when you are using or near to a hazardous substance.
- Always use the personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing provided by your employer. Your employer should train you how to use PPE.
- Know what to do and how to get help if a substance affects you. Check with your employer if you don't know.
- Your employer must provide hazardous substances information and training about potential health effects, safe work practices and suitable controls.

## Quiz – Hazardous substances

12. Select three actions you can take to keep yourself and others safe from hazardous substances:

- a. Read the label
- b. Read the product SDS
- c. Follow safe work procedures
- d. Smell the substance

13. To reduce the risk of contact dermatitis on your hands, you should:

- a. dry your hands thoroughly with a disposable paper towel after wet work
- b. moisturise your hands as often as possible with a fragrance-free moisturiser
- c. wear disposable and non-latex gloves for wet work
- d. all of the above.

## Electricity

*A nursing support worker received a severe electric shock from a hospital bed. When a patient was moved, the bed's power cord was dragged along the floor and damaged by the bed's wheels, exposing the wires. When the worker plugged in the cord, she received a severe electric shock.*

Electric shocks happen when a person becomes part of an electrical circuit and the current flows through their body. Electricity passing through the body can cause convulsions (involuntary contractions of the muscles) and the heart to stop beating, as well as internal and external burns. It can also cause secondary injuries resulting from falls or collisions and fire hazards resulting from an electrical fault.

Incidents with electricity are usually caused by:

- broken equipment or dangerous working conditions, such as electrical cables that are frayed, loose, or have exposed wires
- broken power cords, power points or rattling plugs
- electrical equipment that gives off a strange odour, and overheating equipment
- installation and/or repairs being undertaken by an unqualified repairer
- the absence of a \*residual current device (RCD) and lack of testing of RCDs.

*An \*RCD is a safety switch or life-saving device designed to prevent you from receiving an electric shock if you touch something live, such as a bare wire. If you are using portable electrical equipment and extension leads at work, it must have an RCD installed at the switchboard, built into a fixed socket or through a portable RCD outlet. The RCD must be regularly tested. This is a legal requirement.*

### What can your employer do?

- It is your employer's responsibility to make sure electrical equipment in the workplace is in good working order and regularly checked.
- Portable electrical equipment should be maintained regularly, and checked and tested by a qualified electrician. Once the equipment is checked and tested, it should have a durable tag attached to clearly display the test date and the next scheduled test. This is known as tag and test.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the installation and use of equipment.
- Removed from use, label as faulty and repair or replace faulty electrical equipment
- Store electrical equipment away from moist or wet areas.
- Train you to use electrical equipment safely.

#### Remember:

*When providing care to people in their own homes, workers have very little control over the working environment. Many homes in older suburbs or rural areas may not be protected by a residual current device (RCD). Even if a client's home is protected by a RCD in the meter board, this cannot be relied upon to provide adequate protection unless the client has been diligent in having the RCD inspected and tested on a yearly basis (and can provide documents to support this).*

*Your employer must supply a portable RCD outlet for electrical equipment to all workers who use handheld equipment when visiting a client.*

### What can you do to protect yourself from electric shocks?

- Leave electrical equipment repairs to a qualified person.
- Inspect and check equipment for potential hazards before each use. Check instructions and follow them.
- Remember water and electricity do not mix. Never use electrical equipment when your hands are wet or mop the floors around electrical outlets.
- Report any breakdowns or faulty equipment to your employer straight away.

- Switch off appliances at the power point before you pull out the plug.
  - Never overload power boards with lots of electrical appliances
  - Keep electrical cords off the floor.
- 

## Quiz – Electricity

14. A residual current device (RCD):
- a. is a safety switch to prevent electrical shock
  - b. is required to be installed at the switchboard when using portable electrical equipment, power tools and extension leads at work
  - c. is to be provided as a form of a portable RCD outlet to all workers who use handheld equipment when visiting a client
  - d. all of the above
15. What is the main reason for you to inspect and check the electrical equipment for potential hazards before each use?
- a. To prevent electric shocks
  - b. To follow your employer's instructions.
  - c. To have something to do
  - d. To look cool
16. Electric shock occurs when electric current flows through the body because:
- a. A person becomes part of an electrical circuit
  - b. A fatal shock occurs
  - c. There is no earth leakage device
  - d. A person is not wearing rubber-soled shoes
- 

## Biological hazards

Workers in the health and community care industry are at risk of contracting infectious diseases or transferring diseases from clients to others. They may be exposed to a range of communicable disease through their work including Hepatitis A and B, HIV, Influenza, Coronavirus (COVID) and MRSA (an antibiotic resistant bacterium or “superbug”).

- Workers are at risk when they provide health and personal care to clients. In particular from contact with a client's blood or body fluids
- Handling contaminated items and equipment
- Handling and disposing of clinical waste including sharps (e.g. used needles)
- Contact with a client's animals and animal waste

## Let's have a look at how to stay safe

- Workers should be provided with training and information on universal precautions for infection control to minimise risk of exposure and contamination.
- Workers who are at risk should have a Hepatitis B vaccination as protection against Hepatitis B infection

- Practice good hygiene to control the spread of diseases at work. Your employer must:
  - train you to clean surfaces properly, usually with water and detergent or disinfectant and a disposable cloth
  - instruct you to wash your hands regularly – especially between clients and before eating or drinking
  - provide you with suitable gloves if you are dealing with blood or body fluids and teach you how to use and dispose of the gloves safely
  - provide you with appropriate PPE such as a waterproof apron, gown, mask and protective glasses if your eyes, nose or mouth could be splashed with blood or body fluid
  - give you waterproof dressings to cover cuts at work
  - teach you how to handle material dirtied with blood or body fluid
  - train you how to use and discard needles safely if you need to use them at work
- Blood-based diseases can be passed on through broken skin or through the eyes, mouth or nose. Treat all body fluids as if they could harm you. Your employer should have safe work procedures on how to deal with this situation, which may include:
  - wash away the blood or body fluid straight away with soap and lots of running water
  - If blood is spat into your face, wash it out of your eyes with soap and rinse your eyes, nose and mouth thoroughly with water cold water. Spit the water out after washing your mouth. If you wear contact lenses, rinse before and after taking them out.
  - if you are cut, let it bleed and then wash it again
  - report the incident to your employer
  - you may need to get tested for diseases
  - you may want to see a counsellor if you feel anxious. Your employer can arrange this for you

**Remember:**

*Blood-based diseases can be passed on through broken skin or through the eyes, mouth and nose. Treat all other person's body fluids and blood as if they could harm you.*

---

## Quiz – Biological hazards

17. If you are exposed to blood that splashes onto your skin, you should:
- a. wash away the blood or body fluid off your skin with soaps and lots of running water
  - b. report the incident to your employer
  - c. you may need to get tested for diseases
  - d. all of the above
18. Surfaces should generally be cleaned with a disposable cloth and:
- a. water
  - b. 100% bleach
  - c. water and detergent
  - d. hand sanitiser



19. To practice good hygiene to control the spread of diseases at work, your employer must:

Select **four** that apply

- a. Tell you to wash your hands twice a day
- b. provide you with suitable gloves if you are dealing with blood or body fluids
- c. give you waterproof dressings to cover cuts at work
- d. teach you how to handle material dirtied with blood or body fluid
- e. train you how to use and discard needles safely if you need to use them at work

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## Visiting a client's home

*Isla visits a client with an intellectual disability once a week. When she first started visiting, her employer conducted a risk assessment of the client's house. Since then, the house has become cluttered. Isla slipped on a stack of magazines and fell on her wrist, badly spraining it. Her wrist took three weeks to fully heal.*

Some workers in the health and community care industry are required to work in a range of locations, such as visiting a client in their home, or taking a client to an appointment. If you are working away from the office, you still have rights under WHS law.

Your employer has responsibilities to provide and maintain a safe workplace, and you need to take reasonable care of your own safety including:

- Your employer should have a way of contacting you if you are working alone away from your main location. This could be a mobile phone and a set of times for you to “check in” with your supervisor.
- Where a client is visited on a regular basis, your employer should conduct a risk assessment on a client home, and provide you with an appropriate risk assessment checklist, hazardous substance register and safety data sheets (SDS) of all the chemicals found at the house.
- Your employer should train you to check and report hazards when you arrive at a client's home or business. Common hazards include slip and trip hazards (from clutter or uneven walkways), bites and scratches from uncontrolled pets, traffic hazards and aggressive clients.
- A client's home can change between visits. If the home environment changes, and you have any concerns, tell your employer so they can conduct another risk assessment.
- If you are moving equipment from a vehicle, your employer must conduct a manual task risk assessment and provide training and equipment (such as trolleys) so you can do the work safely.
- Your employer should supply a portable RCD outlet for electrical equipment, and a first aid kit to keep in your vehicle.
- When driving to a client's home or taking clients to appointments, follow road rules. Your employer should make sure the car you use is serviced regularly and safe. When walking, make sure you look out for traffic and use pedestrian crossings where possible.
- Your employer should provide you with adequate information on communicable diseases (i.e. symptoms, long term health effects, risk factors and controls to minimise risk, and immunisation), and give you adequate PPE.

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## Quiz – Visiting a client home

20. If you are working at a client's home, what should your employer do?

- a. Give you a portable RCD for electrical equipment
- b. Provide a first aid kit
- c. Make sure you have a way of contacting your supervisor if you are working alone
- d. All of the above



21. Where a client home is visited on a regular basis, your employer should:

(Choose **three** correct answers)

- a. Conduct a risk assessment on the client home
  - b. Keep a hazardous substance register at the client home
  - c. Provide you with an appropriate risk assessment checklist
  - d. Train the client's dog
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## Spot the hazards

### Regional Community Medical and Residential Care Centre

There are 6 hazards in this area. Try and find them all.



### Hazard notebook

Fill in the hazard notebook.

#	Spot the hazard	Assess the risk	Make the change	Monitor and follow-up
1	Physically supporting a frail resident who is bigger than them without aids	Moderate	Suggest to the staff member that they use a wheelchair	Ask the supervisor to conduct a risk assessment (SAMM) on taking care of the resident
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

## Health and community care industry – Knowledge quiz

1. You are using a wheelchair to move a client. Is this manual handling?
  - a. No, because the wheelchair is carrying the client
  - b. No, only when the client is moving into the wheelchair
  - c. Yes, you are still manual handling the client
  - d. All of the above
2. The most *common* health problems that can arise from hazardous manual tasks are:
  - a. musculoskeletal injuries
  - b. cold and flu
  - c. tooth decay
  - d. food allergies
3. When should you receive task-specific training to perform manual tasks?
  - a. During induction to the task
  - b. As part of your refresher training
  - c. When work tasks are about to be changed or introduced
  - d. All of the above

### Case study

*Sandy has developed a sore back, neck and shoulder. Most of Sandy's day is spent hunching over her client, assisting with bathing, dressing and meals. Recently, Sandy's client's mobility condition has deteriorated. The client is increasingly unsteady on his feet and relies on Sandy to support his full weight for trips to bathroom. Sandy's other duties include, food shopping, light cleaning and running errands (such as posting mail) for clients.*

4. What are some of the risk factors in Sandy's manual tasks? Choose **two** correct answers.
  - a. Hunching over his client for most of the day
  - b. Posting mail
  - c. Sandy's client relies on Sandy to support his full weight
  - d. Light cleaning
5. How could Sandy manage her manual tasks? Choose **two** correct answers.
  - a. Use aids, such as shower seats, to position her client so she won't have to bend down
  - b. Request for a wheelchair to assist her to move her client without having to exerting herself
  - c. Stop cleaning
  - d. Do nothing as by speaking up he could lose her job
6. What safety precautions can help prevent slips?
  - a. Clean up spillage straight away and dry the floor to ensure the surface is not left wet
  - b. Wear appropriate shoes for work

- c. Keep walkways clear of obstacles especially during busy work times
  - d. All of the above
7. What can your employer do to prevent slips, trips and falls at work?
- a. Store boxes of goods near entries and exits
  - b. Use ambient lighting in high activity areas
  - c. Ensure floors and surfaces in the workplace are well-maintained and installed with task appropriate surfaces
  - d. Tell you not to slip
8. In the health and community care industry, you may be at risk of injury from violence because you may:
- a. work with patients who are confused
  - b. work in a client's home
  - c. work alone
  - d. all of the above
9. What can your employer do to reduce the risk of work-related violence:
- a. tell you to smile more
  - b. train you to recognise the signs of violence
  - c. give you a safety data sheet (SDS)
  - d. tell you to act tough
10. Work-related stress can be started or made worse by:
- a. work demands exceeding the ability and resources given to do the work
  - b. bullying, conflict and harassment
  - c. trauma
  - d. all of the above
11. Stress can produce symptoms that can include physical (e.g. fast heart rate, headaches, clenched jaw) and behavioural reactions (e.g. nervous, angry and moody, and not sleeping properly).
- a. True
  - b. False
12. Select three actions you can take to keep yourself and others safe from hazardous substances:
- a. Read the label
  - b. Read the product SDS
  - c. Follow safe work procedures
  - d. Smell the substance

13. To reduce the risk of contact dermatitis on your hands, you should:
- dry your hands thoroughly with a disposable paper towel after wet work
  - moisturise your hands as often as possible with a fragrance-free moisturiser
  - wear disposable and non-latex gloves for wet work
  - all of the above
14. A residual current device (RCD):
- is a safety switch to prevent electrical shock
  - is required to be installed at the switchboard when using portable electrical equipment, power tools and extension leads at work
  - is to be provided as a form of a portable RCD outlet to all workers who use handheld equipment when visiting a client
  - all of the above
15. What is the main reason for you to inspect and check the electrical equipment for potential hazards before each use?
- To prevent electric shocks
  - To follow your employer's instructions.
  - To have something to do
  - To look cool
16. Electric shock occurs when electric current flows through the body because:
- A person becomes part of an electrical circuit
  - A fatal shock occurs
  - There is no earth leakage device
  - A person is not wearing rubber-soled shoes
17. if you are exposed to blood that splashes onto your skin, you should:
- wash away the blood or body fluid off your skin with soaps and lots of running water
  - report the incident to your employer
  - you may need to get tested for diseases
  - all of the above
18. Surfaces should generally be cleaned with a disposable cloth and:
- water
  - 100% bleach
  - water and detergent
  - hand sanitiser

19. To practice good hygiene to control the spread of diseases at work, your employer must:

Select **four** that apply

- a. Tell you to wash your hands twice a day
- b. provide you with suitable gloves if you are dealing with blood or body fluids
- c. give you waterproof dressings to cover cuts at work
- d. teach you how to handle material dirtied with blood or body fluid
- e. train you how to use and discard needles safely if you need to use them at work

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- d. All of the above

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