GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety



REPORT Construction site security

2025



Contents

Introduction	.1
Purpose of the project	.1
Work health and safety laws	.2
Implementation	.2
Inspection program	.2
Results	.3
Conclusion	.4
Recommendations	.4

Introduction

In March 2024, the WorkSafe Industrial and Regional Industry Safety Directorate of the WorkSafe Group (WorkSafe) commenced the Construction site security project

The project was initiated following an incident on 9 May 2022 where a 12-year-old boy was fatally injured after falling from height when he accessed an unsecured construction site after hours.

The project involved a proactive inspection program to look at the security of construction sites in Western Australia. Through these site inspections, WorkSafe gained data that provided an understanding of construction workplace security compliance and safety standards being practiced under the *Work Health Safety Act 2020* and Work Health Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WHS General Regulations).

This report provides information on the purpose of the project and the steps taken to achieve this purpose.

Purpose of the project

A wide range of safety issues may be present in the construction industry. Site security plays an important role in protecting people from the hazards of a construction site.

The primary purpose of the project is to work collaboratively with stakeholders to reduce the work-related injuries and illnesses in the construction industry.

The project provided information to make sure persons conducting a business or undertaking, also known as PCBUs, were fully aware of the risks and hazards, while supplying them with information on the measures that can lessen these risks.

The project promoted awareness in the construction industry to:

- conduct risk assessments of the health and safety hazards to people at the workplace
- prevent unauthorised access of the workplace
- isolate hazards in case unauthorised access is not prevented.

The enforcement action was directed at noncompliance concerning persons with management or control of the construction work who must assess risks to the health and safety of an unauthorised persons accessing their workplace, and how hazards at the workplace will be isolated in case unauthorised access is not prevented.

Strategically, the project sought a longer-term goal of achieving voluntary compliance and raising awareness of industry specific hazards through providing information on hazards and practicable control measures in the prevention of unauthorised access to construction sites.

Work health and safety laws

The work health and safety laws in Western Australia set the requirements for the security of sites where construction work occurs.

Under the work health and safety laws, a person with management or control of a workplace where construction work is carried out must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace is secured from unauthorised access.

Similarly, a person with management or control of a scaffold at a workplace must ensure unauthorised access to the scaffold is prevented while the scaffold is incomplete or unattended.

If access cannot be prevented, the hazards within the workplace must be isolated.

Implementation

The following actions were undertaken as part of the project:

- developed an information sheet for industry
- developed a checklist for industry
- developed an industry-specific checklist for use by inspectors
- promoted the publications through ThinkSafe magazine
- maintained contact with industry stakeholders by telephone calls and emails during the project
- briefed inspectors in the construction and regional teams about the progress of the project
- carried out proactive inspections during the period of March to September 2024, including at metropolitan and regional locations
- provided information about the project during WorkSafe inspections
- took enforcement action for identified breaches of the work health and safety laws.

Inspection program

The inspection program looked at randomly selected sites across the metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia during the period of March to September 2024.

WorkSafe's inspectors examined whether sites had suitable security measures to prevent unauthorised access. Additionally, inspectors conducted general site inspections to check compliance with work health and safety laws and focused on hazards associated with:

- excavations
- slips, trips and falls, including falling from height
- temporary electrical installations
- partially constructed structures
- stored construction materials
- plant and equipment.

Results

WorkSafe's inspectors visited 702 workplaces as part of the project.

Enforcement action was taken in the form of:

Improvement notices	227
Prohibition notices	1
Verbal directions	27

The top five reasons for issuing notices were:

- excavations
- slips, trips and falls, including falling from height
- temporary electrical installations
- partially constructed structures
- stored construction materials.

Additionally, 532 notices relating to breaches of regulation 298 of the WHS General Regulations were issued during the period 1 March 2024 to 10 April 2025. These notices include those issued as part of this project, as well as those notices issued during the course of routine inspection work.

Notices on site security were generally issues in circumstances where:

- there was a risk of unauthorised access, particularly by children. This may be due to specific local amenities such as schools and parks, or due to the construction taking place in an occupied residential area where it is likely children live
- site hazards were identified, such as accessible scaffolding or ladders, stacks of material or debris that could become unstable, trenches or excavations, or poor housekeeping presenting trip hazards.

In situations where there were no external hazards and the building was secure, or where the area was not currently residential, inspectors did not generally require site security to be installed.

Regulation 298 requires site security to be used where reasonably practicable, and it is the duty of the PCBU to assess the risks to determine whether site security is needed for each site. The *Construction site security: Information sheet* provides guidance to assist with this process.

Conclusion

Inspectors were able to achieve voluntary compliance by educating and working with industry participants to meet work health and safety requirements. The use of enforcement actions, such as improvement notices, also helped industry participants to achieve compliance with work health and safety laws.

Through consultation with industry stakeholders during the project, WorkSafe developed new guidance materials about the health and safety hazards associated with construction work and the likelihood of authorised access by persons in proximity to public places and facilities. These included the *Information sheet: Focus on compliance: Construction site security: Unauthorised access* and the *Checklist: Construction site security.*

Recommendations

WorkSafe recommends PCBUs involved with construction work to undertake a risk-based approach to installing and managing site security. This may include fencing, signage and other control measures to prevent unauthorised access to the workplace. Some of the considerations to support the installation of site fencing or other relevant security arrangements may include:

- proximity to schools, parks or residential housing
- traffic or public density in the area
- stage of construction
- onsite hazards
- occupied residential use of the area.

The WorkSafe Industrial and Regional Industry Safety Directorate will continue to monitor security at construction sites through its general proactive and reactive work and continue to encourage industry and its stakeholders to assist in promoting safety within the construction industry.



Department of Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety WorkSafe Western Australia 303 Sevenoaks Street CANNINGTON WA 6107

Telephone:1300 307 877NRS:13 36 77Email:wscallcentre@lgirs.wa.gov.auWebsite:www.worksafe.wa.gov.au