



INFORMATION SHEET

Workplace Services

Date: 31 January 2012
Reference: NFSOHS0892A

What is 'Reasonably Practicable'?

The work health and safety laws provide that duties to ensure health and safety must be achieved, 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.

You will need to consider what can be done and whether it is *reasonable* to do all that is possible. What can be done should be done unless it is reasonable in to do something less.

How do I determine what is reasonably practicable?

You must take into account and weigh up the following factors:

- 1) **What is the likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring?**
If harm is more likely to occur, then it may be reasonable to expect more to be done to eliminate or minimise the risk.
- 2) **What is the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk?**
The greater the degree of harm that could result the more that may reasonably be expected to eliminate or minimise the risk.
- 3) **What should you know or should you reasonably know about;**
 - o **the hazard or the risk; and**
 - o **ways of eliminating or minimising the risk.**Consider what persons concerned actually know, what you know and what a reasonable person (who is required to comply with the same duty) should know about the hazard or risk and any ways of eliminating or minimising the risk. Some of this information may be found in codes of practice.
- 4) **Are there any available and suitable ways to eliminate or minimise the risk? If so what are they?**
What information is on the open market? Is it feasible to manufacture a way to eliminate or minimise the hazard? Is it feasible to implement a new work process or change an existing process?
- 5) **After assessing the extent of the risk and ways of eliminating or minimising it, consider the cost associated with eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.**
The consideration of whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk is regardless of the duty holder's capacity to pay.

For more information contact your Workplace Adviser on 1300 650 620.