



## WHS COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST

# For Australian Small Business (2026)

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If you run a small business anywhere in Australia, you are legally required to manage work health and safety risks. Most states and territories operate under the harmonised model Work Health and Safety laws; Victoria and WA run their own separate but similarly structured OHS legislation. Whichever applies to you, the obligation does not change because you only have a handful of staff, or none at all.

This is a practical starting checklist. It will not replace a full WHS system, but it will show you exactly where the gaps are.

### THE CHECKLIST — TICK AS YOU GO

- ☐ **1 Hazard identification**  
Have you actually walked your workplace (or job site) and written down what could hurt someone — manual handling, plant and equipment, chemicals, working at heights, driving, and psychosocial hazards like fatigue or bullying?
- ☐ **2 Risk assessments**  
For each hazard identified, is there a documented assessment of how likely it is and how bad the outcome could be? Verbal awareness is not a risk assessment.
- ☐ **3 Control measures**  
For every risk assessed, is there a control measure in place and actually being used? Elimination and substitution come first in the hierarchy of controls — PPE is last, not first.
- ☐ **4 Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)**  
If your business does any high-risk construction work, do you have current, signed SWMS for every high-risk activity your team performs? This is a legal requirement in every Australian state and territory.
- ☐ **5 Induction and training records**  
Can you prove, in writing, that every worker (including subcontractors) has been inducted and trained for the specific risks of their role?
- ☐ **6 Incident and near-miss reporting**  
Is there an actual process for workers to report incidents and near misses, and are those reports being reviewed and acted on?
- ☐ **7 Consultation**  
Are workers actually being consulted on WHS matters that affect them, and is that consultation documented? This is a specific legal requirement under the Act.
- ☐ **8 Review cycle**  
When was your WHS documentation last reviewed? If you cannot remember, that is the answer.

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Most small business owners we speak to have some of this in their head, a bit of it on paper somewhere, and none of it in a form that would hold up under real scrutiny. If you got through this checklist and found more gaps than ticks, that is worth taking seriously — not because of the paperwork, but because of what the paperwork is actually there to prevent.

## Want the actual system, not just the checklist?

SafeBase is MXM Institute's complete Australian WHS system — 16 documents, a digital portal, a safety dashboard, and AI prompts throughout, built so the system is actually usable rather than sitting in a drawer. One-off purchase, no subscription.

[mxminstitute.com.au/safabase](https://mxminstitute.com.au/safabase)

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