



Media Release

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NATIONAL FOCUS ON MANUAL HANDLING TASKS IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

Australian workplace safety inspectors will conduct follow-up visits to manufacturing workplaces to assess how they're managing the risks of injury from manual handling tasks at the workplace.

This is another example of the States working together to harmonise key areas of workplace safety so as to reduce injuries and improve safety outcomes for employers and workers across the board.

'Body stressing', the term given to muscular stress due to hazardous manual handling or repetitive movement has been a major social and economic burden to the manufacturing industry. It accounted for 43% of all the industry's workers compensation statistics in 2006/2007.

The visits are the sequel to a national safety campaign conducted in 2007 to counter the rates of injuries and disease resulting from heavy lifting, repetitive tasks, and sustained awkward posture in the manufacturing industry. 334 manufacturing workplaces around the country were inspected.

The purpose of the follow-up activities is to assess the impact of the 2007 intervention and in particular, to look at the changes in the use of risk assessments for high-risk manual handling tasks and the level of controls implemented at workplaces to reduce manual handling risks. It will also be an opportunity to provide practical OHS guidance and information to workplaces.

The four sectors to be targeted again within the manufacturing industry are: automotive components; wooden furniture and upholstered seats; sheet/structural fabricated metals and non-metallic mineral products.

Nationally, 181 audits will be conducted over a 2-month period from mid June 2009 to mid August 2009. The workplaces audited will be drawn from those involved in the original audits in 2007.

For more details, please contact the relevant government workplace safety authority in your state or territory.