



ETU OHS NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2006

DANGERS OF EXPOSURE TO RADIO FREQUENCY

TRAINING DATES OHS—CONTACT TANYA AT EEIT PH. 93269377

INITIAL 5 DAY

August 9,10,15,16,17

1 DAY REFRESHER

August 8,

OHS Reps Meetings 2006 10am—12pm

31st August—Melbourne
27th Sept—Trades and Labour
Shepparton
25th October—Melbourne
29th November—Mallee
Murray Trades and Labour
Council 162 Seventh St
Mildura
December tbc—Melbourne

Working near radio transmission devices, such as dishes and antennas typically mounted on roofs, can be dangerous or may effect health if exposure to excessive levels of Radiofrequency radiation occurs.

Workers at most risk are those involved in tasks where access is required to roof tops containing communication transmission hardware.

RF radiation, is low frequency radiation (3kHz-300 GHz) which includes microwave transmission. The major sources of RF radiation are radio, television, mobile telephone and paging transmission antennas.

RF radiation heats in the same way that microwave ovens heat food. Harmful heating of body tissue is a possibility where there is exposure to RF fields above the maximum recommended exposure levels.

Employers must ensure that employees, independent contractors or the general public are not exposed to RF radiation above recommended maximum levels outlined in the radiation protection standard, **Maximum Exposure Levels to Radiofrequency Fields 3kHz to 300GHz** published by the

Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, ARPANSA. www.health.gov.au/arpansa/rf_standard.htm

No person should be able to access a roof with radio antennas without first receiving training and information on the risk of any RF radiation present and the controls needed to avoid over-exposure.

Hazard ID / Risk assessment

These actions of hazard ID and risk assessment need to be taken **prior** to workers accessing any area where RF radiation is likely.

Identify radiation sources and list the contact numbers of all companies controlling transmissions from the work location.

Determine “No Go” areas where maximum exposures levels may be exceeded.

Document information on “NO GO” areas.

Control measures

The preferred method of controlling exposure to RF radiation is to cease or power down transmissions. However employers need to ensure continual monitoring of the RF

signal during the works using a RF monitor.

Develop a Safe Work Procedure giving consideration to all identified risks, including RF radiation.

Induct all trained workers in the Safe Work Procedure.

Make sure that “NO GO” areas are sign-posted, marked or provided with physical barricades.

All identification, mapping and monitoring of RF radiation should be undertaken by competent persons experienced in this work. A list of companies accredited for electromagnetic emission measurements may be obtained from the National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) www.nata.asn.au (03) 9329 1633

The National Site Archive is a data base of all RF transmission devices Australia wide and should be used to identify equipment within your work location by address or post code. www.rfnsa.com.au

Further information on RF can be obtained from Work Safe www.workcover.vic.gov.au

MILDURA OH&S REPS MEETING

The need to expand, develop and support regional OH&S Reps is a challenge that the ETU needs to address, so the Regional Victorian meeting calendar has

been revised and the meeting for the 29th November has now been moved to Mallee Murray Trades and Labour Mildura, so give your employers plenty of

notice and make every effort to attend. It will be the first time that the ETU has conducted a OH&S meeting in Mildura and may become an annual event .

CONFINED SPACE

“Confined Space” as defined in the regulations means a space in any vat, tank, pit, pipe, duct, flue, oven, chimney, silo, reaction vessel, container, receptacle, underground sewer, shaft, well, trench, tunnel or other similar enclosed or partially enclosed structure, **if the space-**

(a) is, or is intended to be, or is likely to be, entered by any person; **and**

(b) has a limited or restricted means for entry or exit that makes it physically difficult for a person to enter or exit the space; **and**

(c) is, or is intended to be, at normal atmospheric pressure

while any person is in the space; **and**

(d) contains, or is intended to contain, or is likely to contain

* an atmosphere that has a harmful level of any contaminant; or

* an atmosphere that does not have a safe oxygen level; or

* any stored substance, except liquids, that could cause engulfment.

In summary, whether a space is a confined space or not is determined by the hazards associated with a set of defined circumstances (restricted entry or exit, hazardous atmosphere or risk of engulfment) and not

just work performed in a physically restrictive location.

Employers have the responsibility to ensure that people performing their duties under the regulations have the appropriate training competency to enable those people to safely perform their tasks.

Hazard identification and risk assessments must be carried out and employees inducted to the JSA and work method procedures prior to entry to a confined space takes place, they must be reviewed after entry and on subsequent occasions to take in to account

any changes in the state of knowledge of the conditions of the confined space.

Testing the atmosphere to determine the level of oxygen or contaminants should be carried out by a competent person.

The employer in consultation with the DWG or the OH&S Rep must establish and rehearse a Emergency response plan that includes rescue and first aid procedures.

Further information can be found in;
The Code of Practice for Confined Spaces (March 1997)

REBAR-CAPS DO NOT PREVENT IMPALEMENT—WORKSAFE ALERT

Work Safe Victoria has issued an alert on the 28/07/06 to advise employers and employees of the dangers of falling against exposed reinforcement bars, even if they have plastic protective covers known as rebar-caps installed.

An incident occurred in which a worker stumbled and fell, impaling himself on a reinforcement bar which had a rebar-cap installed.

The rebar-cap provided no protection against impalement as the weight of the worker against the cap was sufficient for it to be

pierced by the bar.

Research carried out following the incident showed that rebar-caps provide little if any protection against impalement.

These findings were supported by information obtained from various suppliers that stated that the caps are only intended as a visual warning and are not a means to control the risk of impalement.

The ETU recommends that all

workers in areas with exposed reinforcement bars where possible must be relocated, if this is not possible workers must be effectively separated from the exposed reinforcement bars by guardrails or screens etc.

Where workers are on scaffolds adjacent to exposed reinforcement bars, the scaffolds must be fitted with edge protection.

Where it is necessary for work to be done adjacent to exposed reinforcement bars adequate and sufficient protection of the

exposed bars to eliminate the risk of impalement must be installed.

The alert can be downloaded from
<http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au/wva/alerts.nsf/docsbyUID/905F13B1726DFA1BCA2571B90008B048?Open>



OH&S INFORMATION

The ETU web site at www.etu.asn.au has a wealth of information regarding OH&S issues as well as providing links to other relevant web sites. Use and get to know this site, download the material and start your own library, let us know of any other relevant information as the site is continually developing.

Once in the ETU site you will see various tabs, under the [OH&S tab](#) you will find pages for;

OH&S News Letter – (a library of all past News Letters)

OH&S Issues – (procedures, guidelines and incident notification)

OH&S Alerts – (electrical safety, non-compliant equipment, product recalls)

OH&S Policies – (no live work, training, vehicle barriers, msds)

OH&S Manual – (current 216 pge ETU OH&S Manual)

[Links tab](#)

Under the links tab you will find links to various sites such as;

OCEI now Energy Safe Victoria Standards Australia

Victorian Trades Hall Council – OH&S Reps @ Work

Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents

Victorian Work Cover Authority – Work Safe Victoria