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1A

Legislation and regulations

All organisations in Australia are required to comply with legislation and regulations.

National and state legislation governs the way warehouses operate and how activities and tasks are performed. Regulations are rules that enforce compliance with legislation. Regulations support legislation by setting out specific requirements, duties and procedures that apply to specific areas of work.



Regulations relevant to despatch operations

You need to understand the regulations that apply to the types of goods you are handling.

The regulatory requirements that the warehouse needs to meet depend on the work performed and the goods handled. If goods are exported, management is legally responsible for the accuracy of information supplied to the Australian Government. If dangerous goods are handled and despatched, labelling requirements must be met. If heavy or awkward goods are shifted and loaded, staff must follow work health and safety (WHS) regulations.

A safety data sheet (SDS) is a document that must accompany supply of hazardous substances or dangerous goods. This obligation is stated in WHS regulations. The SDS must be prepared according to the Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace Code of Practice. The SDS sets out the ingredients, hazard classification, health effects, and emergency and first-aid procedures relating to the product. It also specifies the safety precautions for handling, transporting, stacking and storing the product.

Despatch operations are governed by:

- Australian and international regulations and codes of practice for handling and despatching dangerous goods and hazardous substances
- health and safety legislation and regulations
- environmental protection legislation and regulations
- export and quarantine regulations
- documentation requirements
- SDS obligations.

Export and inspection regulations

Goods to be despatched overseas may need to undergo inspection according to legislation and regulations.



Export regulations can be complex. Regulations that need to be upheld when despatching goods overseas vary according to the product being exported and the destination country. Goods may be held in a customs bond warehouse until the payment of duties and taxes goes through, or until the correct import documents are received.

The *Biosecurity Act 2015* relates to exporting goods. If the warehouse exports goods such as dairy products, eggs and egg products, fish products, meat and meat products there may be licensing and certification requirements.

The Regulation may be read in full at:

- www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2016L00717

Workplace policies and procedures

Workplace policies and procedures tell you how to work safely.

Organisational policies and procedures cover a wide range of subjects.

Policies outline the organisation's best practice principles, guidelines and legal obligations such as code of conduct, workplace health and safety (WHS) and reporting of incidents and hazards.

A procedure is a set of instructions that an employee must follow to complete a task safely and efficiently. Following workplace procedures ensures that each person in the warehouse meets their legal obligations and works the same way, using the same techniques and equipment. This allows organisations to build quality processes into their operations that can be monitored and improved.

Policies and procedures for organising despatch operations

Workplace policies and procedures outline how to organise despatch operations.

Workplace procedures may be kept in a printed manual or stored electronically on the organisation's computer system. You need to know how to access procedures relevant to you because these will give you detailed information about how to carry out despatch operations correctly and consistently.

Housekeeping standards and procedures

Good housekeeping practices help you to maintain required WHS standards and procedures.

In despatch, housekeeping standards and procedures outline the requirements to complete duties in a safe, competent and efficient manner. Housekeeping duties may include:

keeping the despatch area free from debris

- updating status of goods in inventory system as soon as possible
- reporting and recording WHS issues to the appropriate person
- eliminating or managing any hazard that has the potential to harm you or other workers
- keeping resources and equipment clean, well-maintained and correctly stored when not in use.



Watch this video [00m:44s] to learn about general housekeeping standards in the workplace.



Environmental protection procedures and guidelines

Workplace procedures and guidelines include environmental protection.

Australian workplaces have a legal responsibility to care for the environment. Some goods must comply with environmental protection guidelines, set by the environment protection authority (EPA) in your state or territory. The guidelines can differ between states, territories and industries. The EPA's aim is to prevent pollution and environmental damage. When despatching goods, activities must be undertaken in a way that does not harm the environment.

Watch this video [00m:49s] to learn about the environmental protection procedures and guidelines you need to follow.



1B

Warehouse systems and operations

Warehouse systems and operations vary between warehouses.

Operational work systems, equipment, management and site operating systems underpin all activities, work roles and equipment used in the warehouse. These systems work together with the aim of providing an efficient and smooth workflow of goods in the warehouse.

Operational systems

Operational work systems manage the flow of goods into and out of a warehouse.

In despatch, operational systems are used to ensure that activities are completed efficiently and effectively, and that goods despatch is integrated with other functions in the warehouse. Operational systems ensure that warehouse activities run smoothly and seamlessly between departments.

Equipment used to support despatch operations

The equipment used to carry out despatch operations varies according to the products being despatched.

All goods must be handled according to relevant procedures. Some goods have special handling requirements. Equipment must be chosen to suit unique requirements of the goods. An SDS will outline equipment requirements for dangerous and hazardous goods. Workplace procedures and work instructions will provide information on appropriate equipment to handle fragile, perishable, valuable or unstable goods.

Hand or platform trolleys are used for moving cartons and boxes; conveyor belts are used to move large volumes of goods. Forklifts are used to lift heavy goods safely.

During despatch operations, all equipment must be operated and used for its intended purpose only. It must be operated within the capabilities and specifications provided by the manufacturer.

Standard operating procedures outline precautions and instructions for safe operations. It is very important to follow these operating procedures because they are designed to prevent injury to workers and damage to stock and equipment.

1C | Problem-solving

There are many issues that can contribute to problems occurring during despatch operations.

Efficient and uninterrupted workflow depends on workers and systems working together. However, even when staff and systems are working well, unexpected events and changed circumstances can disrupt despatch activities and schedules.

Contributors to problems

When problems occur, it is critical to identify the cause of the problem.

When the cause of the problem or the contributor to the problem is identified, action can be taken to solve the problem. Issues that can arise in goods despatch include:

- communication problems
- equipment breakdown
- staff shortages
- incorrect documentation or labelling
- disruption to transport vehicle schedule
- WHS incidents
- warehouse layout and obstacles.



Communication problems

Many problems arise because of poor communication between workers or systems.

Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings resulting in incorrect orders being despatched, incorrect information being relayed and even WHS incidents occurring.

Staff shortages

A shortage of trained staff on a shift may occur due to illness or other unforeseen events.



The absence of staff can cause disruption to workflow. If the person that holds a forklift licence is unable to come to work, work activities requiring a forklift will need to be put on hold until a replacement worker can be located.

Unforeseen events can put a strain on even a full shift – a sudden influx of urgent orders or a large spill that needs several people to clean it up can also mean that there are not enough workers to deal with the tasks on hand.

Whatever the cause, a shortage of workers can delay despatch activities and complicate work schedules. Replacement staff will need to be located. If that is not possible, activities will need to be delayed and rescheduled.

Incorrect documentation or labelling

Documentation accompanying despatched goods must be correct and accurate.

It is critical that dangerous goods or hazardous substances are accompanied by the correct documentation type and that all information is accurate. If documentation is not right, the goods must not be despatched. The shipment must be delayed until the correct documentation is supplied. Incorrect documentation must be returned to the worker who issued it so that they can issue the correct documentation.

Disruption to transport vehicle schedule

Unexpected events can disrupt the transport vehicle's schedule.

Depending on the type of goods ready for despatch, and the length of delay, it may mean that perishable goods need to be returned to a refrigerator or dangerous goods returned to a secure storage area. This double handling of goods results in a loss of productivity.



Activity 3

Question 1

Draw a line from the issue on the left to the resolution on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| * Unclear communication | * Return perishable goods to freezer or cold storage. |
| * Disruption of transport schedule | * Take action to control or eliminate the hazard that has contributed to the event. |
| * WHS incident | * Seek clarification. |

Question 2

Which of the following must be considered in a warehouse layout? Tick all that apply.

- The type of goods handled and stored
- Access for emergency services
- Positioning of fragile or valuable goods
- Whether the record-keeping system is manual or computerised



Summary of Topic 1

1. Regulations are rules that enforce compliance with legislation. Regulations support legislation by setting out specific requirements, duties and procedures that apply to specific areas of work.
2. The Australian Dangerous Goods (ADG) Code describes the requirements for transporting dangerous goods by land.
3. The International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code describes the requirements for transporting dangerous goods by sea, such as packing and stowing requirements, and distancing and isolating goods from incompatible substances.
4. The purpose of health and safety legislation is to prevent injury or harm to everyone in the workplace, including workers and visitors.
5. Operational systems are in place to ensure activities conducted in the warehouse run smoothly and as seamlessly as possible between departments.
6. Management and site operating systems coordinate movement of goods between warehouse departments and to various sites and locations associated with the warehouse.
7. When problems occur, it is critical to identify the cause of the problem. When the cause of the problem or the contributor to the problem is identified, action can be taken to solve the problem.



Read the following workplace example to see how the concepts you have learned are applied in a real-life situation.

Workplace example for Topic 2

Tina has been in the despatch business for a couple of years. She works in a warehousing and distribution company that stores and despatches goods for a variety of customers. It's a very busy workplace, operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Tina started as a data entry operator, ensuring that goods arriving at the warehouse were correctly recorded in the warehouse management system. She used to enter information such as quantities, product codes and storage locations. She has a good eye for detail and can quickly spot where problems might emerge.

Now Tina has been promoted to a senior pick/pack role, making her responsible for despatch for a group of key customers. She relies on her team of workers knowing the workplace procedures that are important to getting their orders correct.

Tina has just received work orders for several customers. She quickly determines that one large order is for a customer in an outlying suburb and decides to action this order so it meets the transport departure deadline for that area.

The rest of the orders have similar priorities, so Tina sorts them according to the area of the warehouse where the goods are stored to make it easier to retrieve the orders quickly. While she is doing a pick/pack, Tina is contacted by customer service and told to prioritise a particular order. She is told that a vehicle is on the way, so she must get the order ready for transport in an hour.

When she checks the work order, Tina realises that it contains a large number of items, some of which require a forklift. Knowing the time lines, Tina requests assistance to get the order ready and delegates the forklift tasks to another team member, John. Working together, using their communication skills, Tina and John sort out some product location queries and still manage to have everything assembled before the truck arrives. Tina alerts fleet control so the correct bay can be allocated to the vehicle.

After double checking that everything has been assembled correctly for the prioritised order, Tina returns to her planned schedule.

