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## Topic 1 | What you need to know about organising despatch operations

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*You must organise all despatch operations to ensure workers use the correct equipment for packing, loading or unloading goods and use the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for specific despatch operations.*

Stock item characteristics determine the handling requirements, and you must be familiar with all legislative requirements in relation to storage, labelling and use of goods.

Workplace policies and procedures help you to work safely, identify stock-handling requirements, record information accurately, and record and report any issues during the despatch process.

In this topic you will learn about:

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1A Despatch operations

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1B Safety in the workplace

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1C Documents used for despatch operations

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## Activity 1

### Question 1

Circle the correct answer.

Workplace procedures and guidelines are based on laws and best practice.

\* True

\* False

### Question 2

Which of the following regulations and codes of practice can affect despatching goods? Tick all that apply.

- Corrections Regulations 2009
- Work Health and Safety (WHS) Regulations
- International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR)
- Bus Safety Regulations 2010
- The Australian Dangerous Goods (ADG) Code
- The International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code
- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code

**A record of the site floor plan may be needed when:**

- emergency response services need to know where entries to the site are located
- the location of alternative emergency exit routes are needed
- drains on the site need to be located
- dangerous goods and hazardous chemicals storage information is required
- isolation points for power and fuel are needed
- knowledge of businesses next to the site is required.



## Use the site layout to minimise risks

***Knowing the site layout helps minimise the risk of incidents and emergencies occurring.***

If you know about the site layout, including the location of obstacles in the warehouse, this will minimise risks when conducting picking/packing, and loading and despatch activities.

**To minimise risks, you need to know the location of:**

- pedestrian walkways
- exits, evacuation routes and assembly areas
- motorised equipment laneways
- alert signals
- alarms
- hazardous substances
- dangerous goods
- first-aid facilities.

### Problems that may occur during the despatch process include:

- no stock on hand (at the location)
- incorrect stock being despatched
- stock sent to the wrong location
- incorrect quantity being despatched
- special order requirements not being met (related to pricing, packing, size, etc.)
- customer delivery requirements not being met
- despatch schedules not being met
- injuries to workers or customers
- damage to goods or equipment.



## Broken or damaged equipment

### *Broken or damaged equipment can be an inconvenience or a safety risk.*

Any equipment that is broken or damaged must be reported to a supervisor as part of housekeeping procedures. Such equipment can injure a worker or contribute to unsafe goods being delivered to a customer. For example, if the refrigeration is broken or damaged, food stored inside it may be unsafe to eat, which could result in illness or even death.

### Procedures that may apply to broken or damaged equipment include:

- risk assessment procedures
- hazard management procedures
- lockout/tag-out procedures
- lockout tagging and isolation procedures
- lockout and tagging of plant procedures.

## Communication problems

### *A breakdown in the communication process may cause significant difficulties for operations.*

Procedures, plans, instructions, work orders, packing lists, licences, signs and rosters are all methods of communicating a message between people. Communication can be verbal (spoken), nonverbal (body language or other visual signs) or written.

One example of communication breakdown is when there is no handover communication at shift changes. Without a clear communication process,

a shift worker may have difficulties completing tasks because they may be unsure what stage the task is at. Stock can be misdirected and the wrong item may then be despatched. Confusing batch numbers, incorrect labelling and failure to read special order needs or damaged stock can all cause problems with the despatch process.

How a company solves problems is vital to the continued success of the organisation. Each company has its own complaint resolution process. You need to understand this process in your organisation to assist in solving problems.

# Legal requirements

## *Documents give you information about your legal obligations, work tasks, or storing and handling products.*

In your workplace, some documents need to be completed to meet legislative and regulatory requirements. You need to check that when you create documents, they meet all the requirements of these regulations. The regulatory requirements that your organisation needs to meet depends on the type of products handled by your organisation. For example, if your organisation imports or exports goods, the organisation is legally responsible for the accuracy of information you supply to the Australian Government.

Documents can include manual-handling codes of practice, recordings of cool room temperatures, regulations regarding date-sensitive products and manufacturers' instructions regarding equipment used.



Here are a range of workplace documents that tell you what to do during a work task for goods being received or despatched.

### Legislation, regulations and related documents

These may include logbooks, licensing requirements, customs regulations, hazardous goods and documents relating to WHS, such as workers compensation regulations. You need to know the regulations that apply in your workplace.

Codes of practice may vary depending on the kind of work you do. This may cover manual handling, fatigue management, and handling and transporting dangerous goods and hazardous substances.

Organisations that are certified to various standards may be required to keep specific documentation; for example, if a logistics company deals with bonded quarantine materials.

### Workplace policies, procedures and instructions

Workplace policies, procedures, checklists and instructions describe how to perform a task or activity. They are often in the form of standard operating procedures (SOPs).

You also need to follow policies and processes for completing documents in your workplace.

### Quality assurance procedures

These documents relate to whether a task has been done according to quality assurance standards. They provide a customer with a guarantee of service; for example, delivery dockets that display the time of delivery or the condition of goods being delivered.

# Procedures for completing documentation

***When completing documents for receiving and despatching goods, correct procedures must be followed so that appropriate information is completed.***

Workplace procedures (which can also be called company, enterprise, organisational or established procedures) can change over time. Records need to be handled with care, accuracy and attention to detail.

A procedure might outline the steps to take when an order is received and the work requirements to fill the order. For example, when stocking a temperature-controlled product in a cool room, the procedure says that the earliest dated stock must be stacked closest to the door of the cool room, and new stock must be placed furthest away. This procedure ensures that the next worker will know where to collect their stock from the cool room. There may also be procedures in relation to appropriate PPE to wear in the cool room.

Time lines and procedures for regularly produced documents may be included in workplace policies and procedures. However, you should ask your supervisor about deadlines for preparing 'one-off' documents.

## Despatch operations policies and procedures may include:

- Procedures for order preparation with locations identified
- Order assembly procedures
- Despatch schedules and priorities for order movement
- Despatch procedures
- Policies for despatch and handling of dangerous goods/hazardous substances
- Policies for securing and placing goods in storage zones
- Procedures for checking goods against the order form

# Store and manage documents

***All information and documents must be recorded accurately and with attention to detail.***

Each workplace will have a procedure for gathering and consolidating warehouse information and records. Warehouse records related to work activities may be collected daily and entered into a record system. The structure, operation and maintenance of records will be unique to each warehouse. The information may be written by hand, entered into a computer, or a combination of the two.

Large warehouses with fast stock movement may have developed their own customised stock system that meets their specific needs. Customers such as supermarkets may use point-of-sale technology that is linked to the warehouse to provide up-to-date and immediate information about stock levels.



# Summary of Topic 1

1. Workplace procedures and guidelines are based on laws and best practice. You must comply with all legal requirements and despatch the right stock in the right quantities to the right customer and delivery location.
2. Laws, codes and standards will apply to the activities you do, depending on the warehouse type, products, operations, and tasks involved. You must comply with these rules whenever you store, handle, despatch and transport certain goods.
3. Australian dangerous goods regulations and codes apply to any substance that may be dangerous when stored or transported. Warehouses will have rules and document requirements depending on what substances they deal with.
4. Warehouse workers must comply with all quarantine and bond requirements depending on the product, and the country they are imported from or exported to. The Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) will require documentation.
5. Operational work systems are used to plan how order request documentation comes into an organisation and how the orders will be processed and despatched.
6. Always use equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions, obtain training and/or licences as required, and follow workplace procedures for using and maintaining equipment.
7. The WHS Regulations keep you and others safe in the workplace. You must also follow environmental protection guidelines to avoid risks to the natural environment or a person's health.
8. Understanding the site layout can speed up the despatch process because you need to know where goods are stored and where to move them for despatch. Telling emergency services the location of obstacles helps them access the site quickly and safely.
9. Housekeeping standards and procedures for organising despatch operations may relate to:
  - the timing of cleaning
  - procedures to follow for different work areas
  - equipment and consumables that should be used
  - documentation that must be completed.
10. Incorrect or missing information could result in order and delivery errors, loss of customer confidence, and fines or prosecutions for failing to comply with government requirements. If errors can be detected early, quality and accuracy is assured for the rest of the warehouse operations.
11. Despatch documents must meet legislative requirements, regulations and codes of practice or standards. Information and documents must be organised, stored and easily accessed and tracked.



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# Access the right information

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***You may need to ask questions to get the right information about the stock you are working with.***

For example, you may need to ask about:

- the type of materials you are dealing with
- if the materials are hard to handle
- if the materials are hazardous to health and safety or the environment
- if the materials need to be kept at certain temperatures.

Suppliers, manufacturers, transporters or other organisations must provide all relevant information about the stock being despatched or delivered to the warehouse.

## Information provided with the stock may be found in:

- safety data sheets (SDSs)
- handling instructions
- storage recommendations
- transport requirements
- requirements for climate-controlled stock (for example, in cold or dry conditions)
- end purpose for stock (what the item will be used for)
- environmental considerations
- personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, such as gloves, safety headwear and footwear
- correct labelling information for stock, including labelling of dangerous goods.

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# Apply legislation and workplace procedures

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***Workplace procedures are steps in a process that have been trialled and are known to improve efficiency.***

The procedure for an order can include a checklist that must be completed as part of the receipt/despatch process. There may be information on where documents are kept, how to access them, who needs them and how they are stored. For example, a procedure may describe the requirements for despatching particular goods and laws you may need to comply with.

Some goods are easy to despatch, while others require special consideration. Your workplace procedures will tell you how different products should be stored, handled and transported. Remember, if you have any questions about analysing stock or finding out about the types of materials you are dealing with, ask your supervisor.



## Examples of symbols for GHS chemical classification labels

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### Acute toxicity

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Substances with this symbol are very toxic and dangerous. They may cause death and must be handled with extreme care. You may come into contact with them via your mouth (oral), skin (dermal) or by breathing them in (inhalation).

Safety measures to take include:

- using correct PPE
- ensuring there is adequate ventilation (airflow)
- using personal monitoring devices and/or alarms
- working in pairs.

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### Explosive hazard

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Substances with this symbol can explode under certain conditions.

Safety measures to take include:

- using correct PPE
- storing these substances in a temperature-controlled area
- keeping containers in an upright position
- having 'No smoking' or 'Open flame' signs on display.

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### Flammable hazard

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Substances with this symbol are extremely flammable. They may be in solid, liquid, gas and/or vapour form. Some may catch fire easily if they are exposed to air; some heat up quickly if large quantities are stored; and some release flammable gases if they are exposed to water.

Safety measures to take include:

- using correct PPE
- storing flammable substances away from sparks and flames
- washing hands after handling substances
- storing flammable substances in an area with adequate airflow
- storing substances at the right temperature.

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### Oxidising hazard

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Substances with this symbol may intensify a fire.

Safety measures to take include:

- using correct PPE
- keeping the substance away from heat
- storing the substance away from combustible (flammable) products.

### Resources for handling dangerous goods

If dangerous goods are present in your workplace, you must know how to store or transport them. You must understand the hazards and risks involved when working with dangerous goods and moving equipment, goods and materials to ensure you are adequately equipped to perform your job.

If you need to have a dangerous goods licence, talk to your supervisor or manager about training in this area.

### Resources for manual-handling tasks

A well-designed workplace helps to avoid manual-handling injuries, as does having plenty of open storage space available. It is important to have the correct equipment for use in packing, loading or unloading goods, such as:

- a forklift for lifting pallets
- a crane for long, heavy or bulky loads
- a hand trolley for small items
- other equipment, depending on the type and nature of the materials.

### Human resources

Each person in the supply chain has different tasks to perform. It is important that each work area (for example, storage, packing and distribution) has the right number of workers to do the job properly.

Workers need to have the skills, knowledge and experience working with different types of goods. Training may be provided to increase a worker's skills and knowledge so that they can work safely and effectively with certain goods, such as dangerous goods and hazardous substances.

Managing staffing levels requires good time-management and scheduling skills. If you allocate workers to specific tasks, choose people who have the right skills and abilities to do the job efficiently, safely and effectively. If necessary, rotate workers until the right mix is found.

## Allocate and supervise workers

***A work structure or operational team ensures that each worker knows their responsibilities, who they should report to and where they fit in the organisation.***

Workers in each operational area should be competent and able to perform their tasks. Team leaders or supervisors must monitor the work in their section and make sure teams are meeting the goals of the organisation. Workers must be correctly trained to meet their responsibilities.

Under WHS legislation, employers must provide and maintain a safe workplace. This includes ensuring workers are supervised and properly trained, particularly if they need to operate plant or machinery.

If you do not understand how to perform tasks in the workplace or think that you need training, talk to your supervisor. Each organisation has a responsibility to provide correct training or develop individual training plans.

### Training may be required in the following areas:

- orientation or induction
- emergency procedures
- plant operator licensing
- working with dangerous goods
- workplace policies and procedures, including WHS procedures
- Australian and international explosives codes
- environmental protection and awareness
- working in confined spaces.

# Monitor work processes

*Monitoring processes, workers and equipment allows the organisation to see how successful an operation is.*



## Monitoring can be done by using:

- processes to monitor equipment
- procedures to monitor staff productivity
- workplace policies and procedures to monitor operations
- WHS regulations or procedures to monitor safety compliance
- customer satisfaction surveys to gather feedback and improve processes
- job satisfaction surveys to gather feedback from workers and improve processes
- quality assurance systems.

# Monitor activities to meet schedules

*A warehouse works within tight schedules and deadlines.*

Schedules and deadlines help a business to function efficiently, but at times the schedules need to be adjusted. Monitoring the difference between the planned schedule and the actual schedule promotes continuous improvement.

It is also important to be flexible. Flexibility allows people to change plans and activities, and adapt to changing circumstances. Monitoring and prioritising your own work activities means being aware of the schedule and thinking about the best and most efficient way to complete tasks to meet deadlines.

You should also keep in mind that your tasks and the time taken to complete them can have an effect on the work of others. This may mean using a checklist or a schedule to complete tasks so that no steps are missed or overlooked.

Overlooking details can damage the goods you are working with, or can cause an injury or incident if there is a rush, causing health and safety to be overlooked. For example, people working in the unloading bay need the documents that give them information on how to stay safe when working with hazardous substances.

Watch this video [00m:42s] to learn about how to work systematically to a schedule.



# Follow manual-handling procedures

*When doing a manual-handling task, the action must be done correctly to avoid an injury occurring.*

Large, awkward or unbalanced items need to be moved or shifted using the correct method and/or equipment. A well-designed workplace with plenty of storage space available helps to avoid manual-handling injuries.

Remember, lift things manually only as a last resort. If you need to manually lift something, you must use the correct lifting technique.



## To lift objects correctly, you should:

- plan the move
- test the weight of the object
- adopt a wide base by placing your feet apart
- maintain the natural 'S' curve of your spine
- bend your knees, and brace your stomach and leg muscles
- keep the object close to your body
- lift in small stages.

Watch this video [01m:03s] to learn about lifting and carrying boxes and light objects in a warehouse.



# Select and use manual-handling equipment

*Lifting equipment refers to devices that help you lift and move items.*

You must have the correct equipment, training and licences for packing, loading or unloading goods. Using the wrong resources and equipment for tasks increases the risk of injury to yourself and others, or damage to equipment.

Load-shifting equipment or mechanically assisted lifting equipment should be used to lift heavy items or goods.

# Modify activities if required

## *Risk situations can occur at a local or a global level.*

For example, a fire at a local goods supplier may mean the manufacturer cannot supply those products to the warehouse. You cannot stop such events from happening, but you should prepare contingency plans to manage the effect on your warehouse.

Supply chain contingency plans involve identifying potential risks and working out what the company would do if such an event happened and what alternatives are available. You may need to modify activities to address these contingencies. You must build some flexibility into your despatch processes and be ready and able to respond to a disruption if or when it happens. When you need to modify an activity for any reason, make a note of the activity being changed, the circumstance of the modification and any other actions. This helps in future planning.



## Contingency planning may include:

- Identifying potential hazards and risks, such as natural disasters, labour issues, and equipment failure or communication breakdowns.
- Sourcing alternate suppliers or using multiple carriers and transport modes.
- Leasing equipment if your equipment breaks down.
- Training workers in multiple areas so they can step in to carry out other activities if necessary.
- Having a list of labour suppliers and/or contract workers you can call on if required.
- Keeping documentation up to date, backed up and stored off site.
- Ensuring all warehouse data is regularly backed up, and protected from energy surges and computer hackers.
- Ensuring supplier businesses are financially sound and follow quality assurance programs.
- Ensuring your warehouse has the appropriate insurance to cover unexpected events.
- Notifying your supply chain partners as soon as possible and offering them solutions if you can.
- Auditing suppliers to ensure they have their own contingency plans and alternative arrangements in place.

### You may need to check that the goods:

- are the correct type
- are the correct number (quantity)
- are in good condition/quality
- are packaged properly
- are labelled correctly
- are arranged for special transport, if necessary
- have any necessary dangerous goods declarations and markings
- are scheduled for despatch
- have accompanying documentation, such as an SDS, invoice or operating instructions.



## Attach documentation

### *One reason to attach documentation is to ensure the goods can be identified.*

Workplace procedures and relevant regulatory requirements determine what documentation needs to be attached to goods when they enter or leave the warehouse. Completing receipt and despatch documentation is particularly important when handling dangerous goods or hazardous materials. Documentation for these types of products must be completed in accordance with relevant regulations and the current ADG Code.

Some documentation needs to accompany orders to customers, and may be used by the transport operators and the receipt staff. If this documentation is not sent, delivery errors can occur. This is particularly important for exported goods; if the paperwork is not present and correct, the product may miss the transport (such as a ship or plane) and fail to reach the customer on time.

### Products can be identified and grouped by:

- manufacturer
- barcode
- label appearance
- volume
- physical shape
- hazardous nature
- security
- storage zone
- demand.





*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

Graham works as a warehouse coordinator at Warehouse Manufacturing Supplies (WMS) and has been asked to also cover the position of despatch organiser.

On his first day (13 May) carrying out both positions, Graham notices the forklift has not been serviced since 9 January. Without consulting the schedule, Graham has the forklift sent to the mechanic for a full service. The mechanic tells Graham the forklift will not be finished before 17 May, and that his records show the forklift was due for a full service on 17 May.

On 14 May, Graham arrives at work to find an international shipping container has been delivered on schedule to the shipping yard. Inside the container is a pallet load of machinery spare parts that need to be unloaded, stored in the warehouse, cross-referenced for customer orders, repacked into packages and sent on to the customers before the end of the next day. The package must be sent the next day because WMS will shut down for five working days for urgently needed building upgrades. During the shut-down period, the workers will do a complete physical stocktake.

In a quick staff meeting, Graham asks Sophie in customer service to cross-reference customer orders. He also asks Eli, the despatch assistant, to repack and prepare the packages for delivery. Graham reminds everyone that the packages must be sent for delivery no later than 4pm tomorrow because of the five-day shut-down period.

Eli reminds Graham that the forklift has been sent to the mechanic for a service. 'What am I supposed to use to load the shipping container?' asks Eli.

'You'll have to hire a forklift,' replies Graham.

The forklift hire company deliver a forklift quickly so that unloading can begin by 10am. By 11am, Sophie has printed a list of all the customer orders. Graham asks her to help Eli pack the order, but she tells him, 'I can't because I don't know what any of the parts are.'

Graham shows Sophie how to identify the parts and asks her to stay in the warehouse to help repackage boxes of parts.

During the repackaging process, Eli notices that some of the parts are the wrong size and shape. Graham goes into the office to get the order forms. He rings the manufacturer to organise an urgent delivery of the correct parts and calls for all staff to help in the repackaging process to meet the deadline. However, this leaves several workers behind in their work.

In future, Graham makes sure he checks the schedule of events before making arrangements for equipment maintenance. He also decided to plan more thoroughly in the future to ensure all work tasks are appropriately staffed and that equipment is ready for use. He sets up an order checking process to ensure stock is checked before it is unloaded.

