

Appendix 2: Occupational health and safety

For the purposes of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* (the OHS Act), the department and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) are recognised as separate employing authorities. For the purposes of the Act, Biosecurity Australia is part of the department.

Amendments to the OHS Act, effective from March 2007, required agencies to review, specify and formally document their health and safety management arrangements. These arrangements are documents that concern the management of OHS in an organisation. They are one of the main mechanisms by which an employer demonstrates its commitment to meeting its duty of care under the OHS Act.

The department

The department undertook a range of activities during 2008–09 to improve its occupational health and safety performance.

Significant activities during this period include:

- implementation of the department's health and safety management arrangements in September 2008. The purpose of these arrangements is to enable effective cooperation between the department and its employees in promoting and developing measures to ensure employees' health safety and welfare at work. The department's health and safety management arrangements were developed through consultation between management and employees
- review of all the department's health and safety policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the new Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice 2008
- implementation of a range of employee health and wellbeing programs including health seminars, health and fitness testing and vaccination for influenza

- management of the department's Employee Assistance Program to ensure delivery of the full range of contracted services. The program includes an online counselling service for employees and their families; an advisory service to managers to assist them in managing a range of workplace situations; and delivery of departmental-wide wellbeing, performance, professional, management and personal development seminars
- development of an online incident reporting system for implementation by the end of 2009. This system will replace manual incident reporting and provide a reporting facility that will enable early identification of occupational health and safety issues. The system is currently being trialled by the department's occupational health and safety unit and Health and Safety Representatives.

Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

A number of key activities were completed in the occupational health and safety area for AQIS during 2008–09. These include:

- implementing the AQIS health and safety management arrangements, which were developed in consultation with AQIS management and employees to accompany AQIS's occupational health and safety policies and guidelines
- commencing a review of health and safety policies and procedures, which included first aid, ultraviolet radiation in sunlight, noise, human immunodeficiency virus, and hepatitis B and C to ensure compliance with the new Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice 2008
- receiving accreditation from Comcare for the AQIS Health and Safety Representative training course

- implementing an online chemicals management system, which was endorsed by the AQIS National OHS Committee, to ensure a consistent approach to chemicals management in AQIS workplaces and ensure compliance with relevant legislation
- developing a framework to manage the introduction of random drug and alcohol testing of all people who perform safety sensitive airside activities, including AQIS employees, under new Civil Aviation Safety Authority legislative requirements
- installing automatic external defibrillators in all AQIS regional offices.

Notification and reporting of accidents and dangerous occurrences

In accordance with section 68 of the OHS Act, Table 42 details accidents and dangerous occurrences reported during the year.

Investigations and notices

Table 43 shows investigations, directions and notices under the OHS Act during 2007–08 and 2008–09.

Table 42 Serious personal injuries, prescribed incapacities and dangerous occurrences reported during 2008–09

	Deaths	Serious personal injuries ^a	Prescribed incapacities of 30 days or more	Dangerous occurrences ^b
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (excluding AQIS)	0	0	0	0
AQIS	0	11	11	15

a Serious personal injury means that a person needs emergency treatment by a doctor; treatment in a hospital as a casualty, with or without being admitted to the hospital; or admission to hospital.

b Dangerous occurrences are 'near misses' that could have, but did not, result in death, serious personal injury or incapacity.

Table 43 OHS investigations and notices, 2007–08 and 2008–09

	Department		AQIS	
	2007–08	2008–09	2007–08	2008–09
Investigations under Part 4 of OHS Act	0	0	1	1
Provisional improvement notices under section 29 of OHS Act	0	0	0	1
Directions or notices under section 45, 46 or 47 of OHS Act	0	0	1	0