

# Working effectively

## Learner Guide

Supporting  
FPICOR2201B:  
Work effectively in  
the forest and forest  
products industry





# Acknowledgements, copyright and disclaimer

## Acknowledgements

This learner guide was developed by McElvenny Ware Pty Ltd, trading as Workspace Training. It is a print-based adaptation of the *Working effectively* e-learning unit developed by McElvenny Ware for the Australian Flexible Learning Framework in 2009.

The Working effectively e-learning unit is available in two formats:

- as a free 'learning object' download from the Flexible Learning Toolbox Repository at: <http://toolboxes.flexiblelearning.net.au/repository/index.htm>
- as part of the Timber Toolbox, a website resource covering six units from the Forest and Forest Products Training Package (FPI05), available for purchase on a CD through Australian Training Products at: <http://www.atpl.net.au/>

For more information about the Timber Toolbox, and other e-learning resources developed by McElvenny Ware, go to the Workspace Training website at:

<http://www.workspacelearning.com.au/>

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## Introduction

Welcome to the industry that produces the most environmentally friendly building material in the world!

Unlike any other material used in manufacturing or construction, wood is infinitely renewable, and when it's re-generating it has a purifying effect on the earth's atmosphere. In fact, of all the activities humans can engage in to reduce the dangerous levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, planting trees is by far the easiest, and one of the most effective.

You can be proud of being part of an industry that will play a key role in shaping the way we address global warming issues in the future, while at the same time providing one of the most beautiful raw materials available to us.



Trees are the most energy-efficient manufacturing plant on earth

### Working through this unit

There are two sections in the unit *Working effectively*:

1. Your place in the industry
2. Good planning

Each section begins with *Your job*, which introduces you to the topics covered. There are also several lesson pages in each section, and a *Task* at the end. Your trainer may ask you to submit the completed *Tasks* as part of your assessment evidence for the unit.

# Section 1: Your place in the industry

## Your job

The forest and forest products industry makes a very big contribution to the economy of rural and regional Australia. It directly employs about 76,800 people throughout the country, with roughly 13,200 workers in the forestry and logging sectors and 63,600 in the wood manufacturing sectors (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry \*). With world's best practices in forest management and 'sustained yield harvesting', the industry has a bright long term future and will continue to play a major role in the country's social and economic well being.

In this section, we'll look at the different sectors that make up the industry, and also examine the main rights and responsibilities of employees.



A harvesting contractor instructs his machine operator on the boundaries for the forest area that needs to be harvested.

## Here's your job



1. Have a look at the Task for this section to preview the questions you'll need to answer at the end.
2. Work through each of the lessons for more detailed information on the concepts covered, and complete the learning activity at the end of each topic.
3. Complete the Task in your workbook.

## Sectors in the industry

The Forest and Forest Products Industry is divided into six main sectors:

- Forest growing and management
- Harvesting and haulage
- Sawmilling and processing
- Wood panel products
- Timber manufactured products
- Timber merchandising

Although each of these sectors has its own range of qualifications and activities, there is often some overlap between them in particular jobs, and many companies are involved in several sectors at the one workplace.



A sawyer looks out the window of his sound-proofed booth.

### Forest growing and management



Forest growing and management is where everything begins. It includes plantation forests as well as regrowth and native forests. Employment in this sector is generally with larger organisations, many of which are public companies or government agencies.

Jobs include:

- road builder
- nursery staff
- fire management staff
- forester
- silviculture officer.

## Harvesting and haulage



Most harvesting operations are highly mechanised these days, with operators driving modern machines with computerised technology. However, chainsaws are still used for certain tasks and particular types of forest areas.

Jobs include:

- harvesting machine and other heavy equipment operator
- log truck driver
- chainsaw operator
- log grader
- team leader.

## Sawmilling and processing



Converting logs to timber or other wood-based products is generally done in a sawmill or manufacturing plant. Most companies now use computerised equipment and automated processes.

Jobs include:

- sawyer
- timber grader
- forklift operator
- saw doctor
- wood machinist

## Wood panel products



Wood panel products include plywood, particle board, hardboard, softboard, and medium density fibreboard. Because the process is highly automated, plants are generally very large with high volume outputs.

Jobs include:

- machine operator
- maintenance mechanic
- forklift operator
- quality controller

## Timber manufactured products



Timber manufactured products include doors, windows, wall frames, roof trusses, and pallets. Although some of the jobs are still done by hand, many plants use mechanised processes and computerised equipment. This sector also employs estimators and detailers who use sophisticated software to design and specify wall frames and roof trusses.

Jobs include:

- machine operator
- forklift and vehicle operator
- wood machinist
- estimator
- detailer

## Timber merchandising



Timber products are marketed and sold through the merchandising sector of the industry. Businesses include wholesale distributors, trade outlets and retail timber yards.

Jobs include:

- storeperson or yardperson
- shop salesperson
- forklift or vehicle driver
- sales representative.



### Learning activity

This activity is designed to help you learn about other jobs in the industry, and share with others your own job responsibilities and experiences.

1. What is your job title, and what sector do you work in?
2. What are your day-to-day duties?
3. What sorts of skills do you need to do your job?
4. What would be the next step up in your line of work, and when do you think you would be ready for that promotion?

## Rules and responsibilities

There are many rules and procedures you need to follow in your day-to-day work. Some of these are law, where not complying is a serious matter and may result in legal charges.

Others are not legally binding, but are set down as company policies, and so require everyone within that company to follow them. And still others are workplace procedures, or methods for doing things in a particular way.

Below are the main rules that define what you must and must not do at work.

### Acts of Parliament

An Act is a law written and passed by the government. Some Acts are federal, and so apply to all states and territories. Other Acts are state or territory specific.

Examples of Acts are:

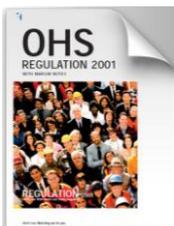


- *Occupational Health & Safety Act*
- *Environment Protection Act*
- *Anti Discrimination Act*
- *Disability Discrimination Act*
- *Equal Opportunity Act*
- *Racial Discrimination Act*

In practice, you don't need to know the details of these Acts to carry out your job properly, because your employer will have already built them into the company's policies and procedures.

However, it is worth remembering that sometimes when you don't abide by a company policy, you might also be breaking the law.

### Regulations



Acts often have accompanying regulations, which specify particular ways in which the Act applies.

An example of this is the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation in NSW, which sets out a wide range of workplace applications, such as when a Safety Committee is required and how employees are to be consulted on safety matters.



This computer-operated docking saw has a Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) posted up on the side of the box housing the screen. Before a worker is allowed to use the saw unsupervised, they must be trained according to the procedures set out in the SOP, and assessed as 'competent' in its operation.

## Codes of Practice



Codes of practice provide practical guidance on how to carry out specific tasks in an approved way.

Although they aren't law, unless they have been incorporated into a piece of legislation, they should be followed unless there is an alternative method that achieves the same results or better.

There are codes of practice for sawmilling, working on roofs, handling preservative treatment chemicals, and many other workplace tasks.

## Standards



Standards are developed by recognised bodies, such as Standards Australia or the International Standards Organisation, and set minimum levels of quality or specifications for products, equipment and materials.

For example, there are separate Standards for visual stress grading, machine stress grading and appearance grading of timber.

## Company policies



When you join a company, you are expected to follow the policies, or rules, it operates by. These policies may be explained to you at an induction session, where you will be asked to sign a statement to say you understand and agree to abide by them.

Policies cover all the main aspects of the company's operations, as well as the behaviours that are required of employees. They include the smoking policy, the injury management policy, the use of company vehicles policy, and so on.

Company policies are different from workplace procedures in that a policy states the general approach taken by the company, whereas a procedure is the step-by-step process that people need to follow to ensure that the policy is being implemented.

## Workplace procedures



There are several different types of workplace procedures. Machines generally have Safe Operating Procedures, which specify how to use the machine safely and correctly.

Complex or hazardous workplace tasks have Safe Work Procedures, which provide step-by-step instructions on how to do the task properly.

And many company policies have procedures accompanying them, setting out how the policy is to be applied in particular circumstances, such as the procedure for processing a credit claim from a customer.



## Learning activity

You're probably familiar with your company's policies and procedures, and you may have been taken through the ones relevant to your job when you were inducted.

But you may not have seen any of the official documents that control particular aspects of your work. Most of these documents can be found on the internet, and are generally available as a free download.

This activity is designed to show you where to look if you want to access original documents from a government authority or department. Note down your answers to the following questions.

1. Go to the WorkCover website for your state or territory. Note that it may be called either WorkCover or WorkSafe. Look for a code of practice or guideline that applies to your own work. What is it called? Where did you find it (what tab or link was it under)? Note that the Queensland Workcover website is no longer available.
2. Go to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) link for your state or territory. Note that it, too, may have a variation in its name. Look for an information sheet or other publication that is relevant to the environmental care procedures you need to carry out at work. What is it called? Where did you find it?

## Awards, agreement and unions

Depending on the type of work you do and the company you work for, your pay and employment conditions may be set by an award or workplace agreement. You may also be invited to join the union that represents your job designation. Below are some more details on these aspects of your employment.

### Industrial awards

Industrial awards set out the terms and conditions of employment for particular types of jobs, and include such details as the normal working hours, rates of pay and working conditions. Awards are established by either the state or federal government, and relate to specific industry sectors.



The site union representative hands out copies to workers of the enterprise agreement that has been struck between the employer and employees

### Enterprise agreements

An enterprise agreement is like an award, except that it is negotiated voluntarily by the employers and employees, or by a union on behalf of the employees. Enterprise agreements generally only apply to specific tasks or workplaces.

All workplace agreements must comply with state or federal legislation and must cover annual, parental and long service leave entitlements. The agreements must be in writing and signed by, or on behalf of, the parties concerned.

You'll find more information about enterprise agreements and industrial awards from the Fairwork website at:

[www.fairwork.gov.au/pages/default.aspx](http://www.fairwork.gov.au/pages/default.aspx)

### The role of the union

One of the main responsibilities of a trade union is to make sure that the award covering their members is enforced. In cases where a worker believes their employer is not paying them correctly, or not providing the conditions they are entitled to, or in some other way not complying with the requirements of the award, their union will represent them in any action they take.

In simple cases, this may mean that the union delegate speaks to the worker's boss to try to negotiate a solution to the problem. In more difficult cases the union or the employer may take the matter to the Arbitration Commission and ask for a ruling that's legally binding on both parties.

Most union members employed in the forest and forest products industry are members of either the CFMEU (Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union) or the TWU (Transport Workers Union of Australia). See their website below:

**CFMEU:** [www.cfmeu-forestdivision.com.au/](http://www.cfmeu-forestdivision.com.au/)

**TWU:** [www.twu.com.au/](http://www.twu.com.au/)



### **Learning activity**

Find out whether your job is covered by an industrial award or an enterprise agreement. Your supervisor will be able to help you if you don't already know.

## Equal employment opportunity

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) refers to the legal requirement that workplaces are fair to all people and do not discriminate against any individual or group. It particularly relates to the fair treatment of people who are most likely to be disadvantaged now, or have been disadvantaged in the past.

The people who are more likely to suffer disadvantage at work include:

- women
- indigenous people
- people who belong to minority ethnic or religious groups
- people with disabilities.

EEO forms part of the Anti-Discrimination Acts in each state, and is incorporated into the policy documents of all government departments and most companies.

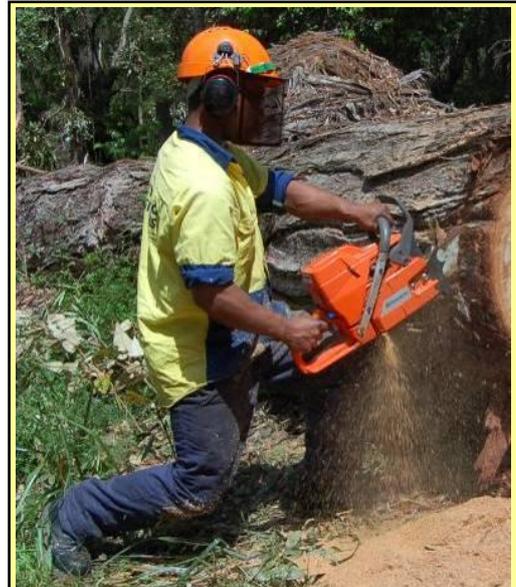
For more information about these laws, see the government websites referenced under the following two categories:

### **EEO:**

[www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Organisation/Government/Federal/EmploymentFramework/EqualEmploymentOpportunityAct1987.htm](http://www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Organisation/Government/Federal/EmploymentFramework/EqualEmploymentOpportunityAct1987.htm)

### **Anti-discrimination:**

[www.humanrights.gov.au/about/legislation/index.html#age](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/legislation/index.html#age)



Most employers know that in the workplace, it's the ability to do the job well that counts, not the social or ethnic group that the worker comes from.



## Learning activity

How would EEO principles apply to each of these situations?

1. Jenny Smithson, who prepares estimates and quotations for customers, is told that she is paid less than her male colleague, who does the same job, because she is a woman.
2. Hans Strauss tells his workmate that even though he's been with the company for 12 years and is one of their best operators, he isn't going to apply for the supervisor's job. This is because he thinks that the company wouldn't promote someone with a German accent to a management position.
3. Anwar Malik is worried that he's going to be put off because his boss has been saying a lot of anti-Muslim things lately, and is starting to get personal with his comments.

## Task 1: Your place in the industry

Name one example of each of the following types of rules or regulations that apply to your day-to-day work. Beside each one, describe how it affects the way you carry out your job.

Act of Parliament

Safety Regulation

Environmental Regulation

Code of Practice

Standard

Company Policy

Workplace Procedure

You will find a hard-copy template for this Task in your Workbook and an electronic version on the accompanying CD. Once you have filled in your answers, send your completed assignment to your trainer for marking.

## Section 2: Good planning

### Your job

People who plan their day and use their time effectively are more productive than those who don't. They are also less hassled at the end of the day, and as a result, tend to enjoy their work more. Good planning lets you establish exactly what you need to do, what steps you'll need to follow to do it, and what sequence you should do the steps in.

Good planning also reduces uncertainty, because it lets you anticipate the things that might go wrong and make allowances for them before they occur. And it gives you a model to work to, so that you can monitor your performance and assess how you're progressing.

In this section, we'll look at different types of planning that you may undertake for a range of workplace tasks. We'll also look at how you can plan for your own development as a skilled worker in the industry.



A team leader organises the next job with his leading hand, and checks that they both agree on the plan of action to take.

### Here's your job



1. Have a look at the Task for this section to preview the questions you'll need to answer at the end.
2. Work through each of the lessons for more detailed information on the concepts covered, and complete the learning activity at the end of each topic.
3. Complete the Task.

## The PDCA cycle

Having a plan doesn't always mean you'll achieve everything you set out to do. A plan in itself is not a guarantee of certainty. Lots of things can happen to affect the course of action you need to take – suppliers may not deliver goods on time, people may phone in sick, a job may take longer than you'd allowed for.

That is why your plans need to be flexible, and easy to modify if things aren't going the way you expected them to. A flexible plan lets you adjust quickly to the changing conditions and still move towards the goal you have set.

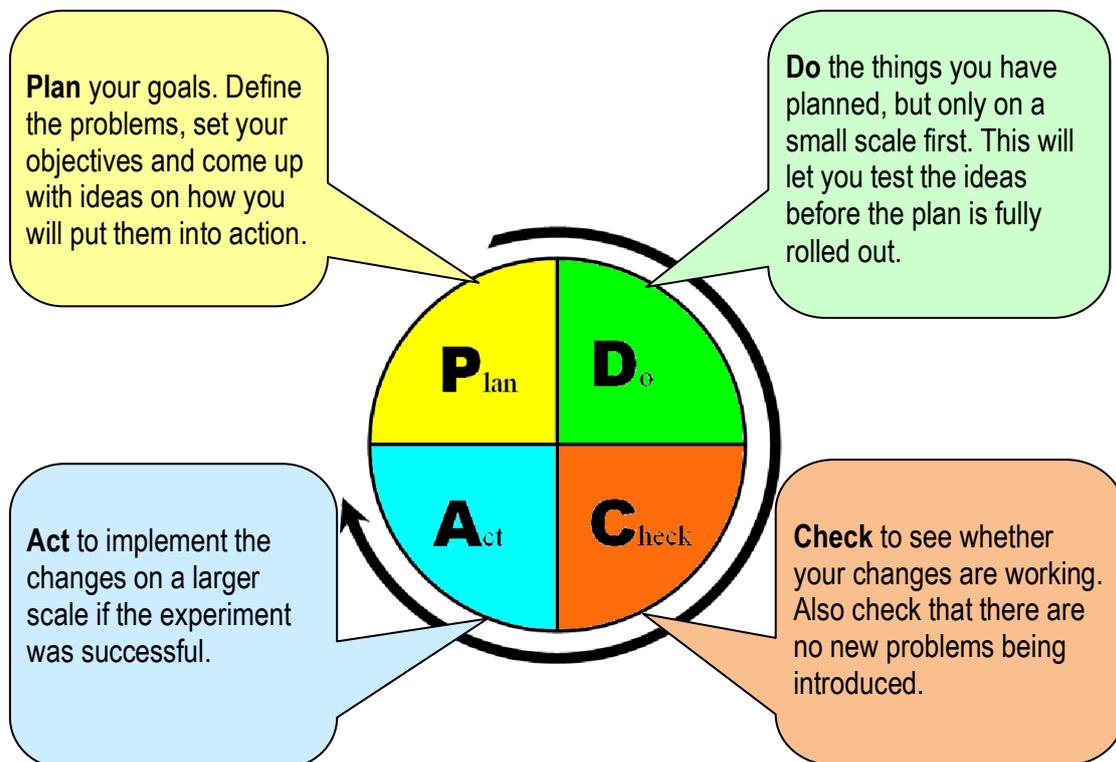
One method of setting goals and working towards them while coping with unexpected changes along the way is to use the PDCA Cycle. The four stages are: Plan – Do – Check – Act.

The diagram below outlines the steps in each stage of the PDCA cycle



When you're working with machinery, the only thing you can be sure of is that it could break down at any time.

This operator is patiently waiting while the field mechanic fixes a fault in the hydraulic system.



Once you have completed the cycle, go back to the Plan stage and work through the next problem or goal. If the experiment was not successful, skip the Act stage and go straight back to the Plan stage to come up with some new ideas for solving the problem.



## Learning activity

Below is a scenario showing how the PDCA cycle can be applied to a workplace problem. Read through the scenario and think about the steps that Linda has taken to deal with the issue. Do you agree with the approach she has taken? Are there any improvements you could suggest, or additional measures that you would take if you were faced with the same problem?

### Scenario

Linda is a dispatch controller, and coordinates the company's delivery trucks and the contractors who deliver customers' orders. She's finding that the drivers aren't completing the delivery dockets and other records properly, and she's constantly chasing them up for missing bits of information.

Linda thinks that the documents themselves might be the problem, so she decides to overhaul all of the forms that make up the system. Below are the first five steps she takes, following the PDCA cycle.

#### 1. Plan

Linda examines the documents that make up the record keeping system. She concludes that the forms are too complicated, and that drivers are sometimes confused about what they're being asked to fill in. She decides to revise all forms.

#### 2. Do

Linda rewrites the 'Daily pre-start checklist'. She decides to leave the other order forms for later, to let the drivers get used to the new format on this one first.

#### 3. Check

Linda looks closely as this new form goes into circulation, to see whether the drivers are filling it out properly and providing all the information she needs. She realises that in a couple of places she's oversimplified it, so she re-drafts the parts that need fixing.

#### 4. Act

Linda rewrites several other forms in the same style as the new 'Daily pre-start checklist', and puts them into circulation.

#### 5. Plan

Now that the drivers have got used to the new layout and are filling the forms out correctly, Linda organises a meeting with the 'customer orders' section of the business to discuss ways they can simplify the design of their delivery dockets, and any other forms that are part of the record keeping system for despatches.

## Drawing up a plan

Some people have trouble getting started on a plan because they're not sure how to systematically work through all the things they need to think about.

Below are some simple steps for drawing up a plan. If the task you intend to carry out is a very simple one, you might go through these steps in your head. However, as the task becomes more complex, you'll find that it's much safer to write down the steps and document the different aspects of your plan.

In cases where the task involves other people, it's generally a good idea to include them in the planning process as well.



A supervisor checks the details of his plan with the leading hand, just to make sure he has covered everything, and ensure that the goals are realistic.

### Steps

1. Decide what has to be done and when you need to do it by.
2. Work out what equipment you'll need, the materials required, and whether anyone else will need to be involved.
3. Think about all the things that might stop you from getting the job done.
4. Think through the most practical course of action for undertaking the job, making allowances for the problems you need to look out for.
5. Draw up a set of steps, showing the order they need to be done in.
6. Check to make sure you haven't missed out any steps, and haven't put any in the wrong order.
7. Start the plan and monitor its progress. If anything doesn't go according to plan, be flexible and make adjustments as you go to keep the overall plan on track.



### Learning activity

To complete the Task for this section, you will need to develop a plan of action for a workplace job, and then follow through the plan and monitor its success. In preparation for this Task, have a think about the sort of activity that might be suitable.

Draft up an outline for a plan by following Steps 1-6 shown above.

## The importance of feedback

How do you know when you're doing a good job? How do other people know that you've understood them? The answer is – through feedback.

Feedback is the process of responding to other people when they are communicating with you, or after they have given you information. It can be verbal – such as through asking questions or making comments – or it can be non-verbal – such as by nodding or smiling, or using other body language signals.

Giving and receiving feedback is an important part of working with others in a team. It keeps communication channels open so that everyone understands how they are performing and whether any problems need to be addressed.

Here's some tips for receiving feedback and making the most of what you are being told:

- nod to indicate you have understood what the other person is saying
- ask questions if you don't understand something
- use the feedback you're given to help you to evaluate your performance
- don't be offended if the feedback is negative – try to see the issues from the other person's point of view, and think about what they are saying in an objective way.



One way of providing feedback is to explain in your own words what you have just been asked to do – so that you can check with your boss that you've understood the instructions correctly.



### Learning activity

The more receptive you are to feedback, the more inclined people will be to help you with advice and little hints along the way.

Below are a range of responses you could give to the feedback that you're being offered. Some of these responses are likely to encourage people to continue offering constructive comments in the future. The other responses are more likely to turn them off from wanting to help with further advice.

Rate these responses as 'good' or 'bad', depending on the message they're likely to give the person providing the feedback.

1. Maintaining a lot of eye contact and nodding.

Good  Bad

2. Looking at your watch and fidgeting.

Good  Bad

3. Waiting for the other person to finish making their point, even if you want to butt in and disagree.

Good  Bad

4. Folding your arms and looking into the distance.

Good  Bad

## Professional development

Most people like to have goals. Goals give you something to strive for, and something to be proud of once you've achieved them. In your personal life, goals might include saving up for a holiday, paying off your house, restoring an old car or winning the finals in your weekend sport. At work, goals could include completing a training course, getting a promotion or developing a new set of skills.

Having goals allows you to coordinate your activities so that your efforts push you forward in a particular direction. It also allows other people to see clearly the direction you're going in, so they can help you to achieve your targets.

There are various ways you can develop your skills at work. This process is called professional development, and includes the actions listed below.

### 1. Show a willingness to learn new skills

When your supervisor or manager sees that you're keen to learn, they will be more inclined to give you extra responsibilities, training in new skills, and guidance on how to further your career.

### 2. Nominate yourself for training courses offered at work

Some companies bring in training organisations to provide on-site training in a variety of skills. Make yourself available for any courses that you're offered, and ask to attend others if you think you've been left out.

### 3. Enrol yourself in an external course

Be proactive, and look for courses or qualifications that are relevant to the work you're doing or work you want to do. TAFE colleges, community colleges and industry training organisations are all good sources of information. If your employer agrees that the course is important to your professional development, they may pay the fees or help you in other ways.

### 4. Participate in committees and meetings

Put yourself forward as a participant for any committees or meetings that you think are worthwhile. Safety committees, enterprise consultative committees and social clubs are examples of groups that rely on employees to express an interest to be involved.

### 5. Volunteer for a new job or project



Everyone's a winner! The boss is happy, the employee is happy, and his workmates are happy.

This worker is receiving a statement of attainment from his boss for a course he's just completed, while his workmates proudly look on.

Choose a job that you would like to do, even if you don't yet have all the skills required, and volunteer to take it on. Tell the person in charge that you'd like to gain any extra skills or knowledge needed to do the job properly, and ask whether they can give you a 'mentor'.

## 6. Read journals and magazines

There are various industry journals that provide information on developments in the industry, events and conferences, and other points of interest. Your employer may already subscribe to some of the journals. If you like one in particular, there's no reason why you shouldn't subscribe to it yourself.



### Learning activity

This exercise will help you to identify the areas of your job that you're best at, and the areas that you may wish to improve your skills in. It will also help you to determine the direction you want to take in your career, and how to get yourself moving in that direction.

You may need to talk to your supervisor or manager before you can fully answer the questions below. But don't be shy about asking for advice – every company likes to see its employees taking an interest in their own professional development, and planning their future in the industry.

Also speak to your trainer about opportunities for undertaking more advanced training. By answering the questions below, you will be able to give your trainer a better idea of where your interests lie.

### Questions

1. What are the responsibilities of your job?
2. What skills do you need to carry out these responsibilities?
3. Which areas do you think could be improved by further training?
4. What job would you like to be doing in five year's time?
5. What new skills will you need to have in order to be able to do that job?

Once you've answered these questions for yourself, talk to your trainer or the company's management about how to undertake the training you'll need and achieve formal accreditations for your skills. If the company agrees with your plans for the future, you may find that they support you in various ways as you work towards these goals.

## Task 2: Good planning

Choose a workplace task that you need a plan of action for. Answer the following questions before, during and after you undertake the task.

### Before you start

1. What is the goal? That is, what do you need to do?
2. When does it need to be done by?
3. What materials and equipment will you need?
4. Will you need any help? If so, who do you need to ask, and what do you need to ask them?
5. What might go wrong? How can you avoid these problems?

### Forming the plan

6. What steps will you need to follow to carry out the task? Write down the numbered steps, and check over your list to make sure you have covered everything.

Now that your plan is ready to put into action, go ahead and carry out the task. Answer the following questions once you have completed the task.

### Evaluating the plan

7. Did you achieve your objective?
8. Did you complete the job within the timeframe you had allowed?
9. Did any of the steps not go according to plan? If not, describe what went wrong.
10. Did you need to report any problems to your supervisor or manager? If so, what process did you follow, and were the problems addressed?
11. Did you have to make any adjustments to the plan? If so, describe what they were, and whether they succeeded in getting the plan back on track.
12. Looking back, is there anything you would have planned differently?

You will find a hard-copy template for this Task in your Workbook and an electronic version on the accompanying CD. Once you have filled in your answers, send your completed assignment to your trainer for marking.

# Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Act of Parliament</b>	A law written and passed by the government.
<b>Anti-discrimination</b>	Being allowed to treat people differently because of their religion, ethnicity, race, sex etc.
<b>Australian Standard</b>	Document setting out the specifications of products or processes, used to ensure consistency between different producers.
<b>Award</b>	Document setting out the terms and conditions of employment approved by government for a particular sector of the workforce.
<b>Code of practice</b>	Work procedures for a set of tasks, approved by WorkCover, to ensure that a job is done properly and safely.
<b>Legislation</b>	Law passed by government and enforced by the courts.
<b>Policy</b>	Statement of a principle that the company believes is important.
<b>Procedure</b>	A company-approved method of doing a task.
<b>Regulation</b>	Legally binding steps that must be taken in order to satisfy the requirements of an Act.