

Media Release

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ON THE SPOT FINES FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY BREACHES

Employers who put the health and safety of their workers at risk will soon face on the spot fines – to stamp out bad behaviour and help ensure every worker gets home safely.

The introduction of on the spot fines delivers on a 2018 election commitment from the Andrews Labor Government and provides an immediate alternative to prosecution, for those employers who do the wrong thing.

From 20 July 2021, WorkSafe inspectors will be able to issue infringement notices with penalties of up to \$1,817.40 for certain offences, such as working without a required license, registration, qualification, experience or supervision, or the use of equipment or substances that are not licensed or registered.

Infringements can also be applied to individuals or businesses failing to meet duties relating to the removal and storage of asbestos and failing to keep required records.

The infringement notice scheme will strengthen WorkSafe's compliance and enforcement capability and act as an additional deterrent for employers who are not taking the safety of their workers seriously.

WorkSafe and its inspectors and investigators will continue to provide guidance and information, issue improvement, non-disturbance, and prohibition notices, and prosecute safety breaches where appropriate.

Importantly, under the infringement notice scheme the obligations of employers do not change. Duty holders must continue to do everything that is reasonably practicable to provide a workplace that is free from risks to health and safety.

The ability to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute breaches of the OHS Act in the courts will continue to be part of WorkSafe's compliance and enforcement approach.

Fines will vary depending on the nature of the offence and range from \$363.48 for an individual, and between \$1,090.44 and \$1,817.40 for a corporation.

All fines will be processed through Fines Victoria with funds received from infringement notices to be allocated back to the WorkSafe scheme.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

"Adding on the spot fines to the range of compliance tools available to WorkSafe will provide a clear message to employers that putting their workers at risk will not be tolerated."

"This is about making sure every worker gets home safely – and making sure those who are doing the wrong thing face the consequences."