



New Zealand Safety Council

Kia Ora,

Our second September newsletter includes an update on:

- NZSC Update
- **Unlocking Occupational Hygiene: Empowering H&S Professionals to Navigate Health Risks** Webinar to be delivered by Miriska Gerber On Friday September 19th at 12-12.30pm - [Link](#)
- Lithium-Ion Battery safety update
- How to speak with the New Zealand Safety Council

NZSC Update

Kia ora Colleagues!

August has been a busy month for most, we at the NZSC have been no different.

In late May our board held a strategy meeting to reaffirm our mission and objectives, thank you to Carew Hatherley and the IQM Group for facilitating this. In June our AGM confirmed recommendations arising from the strategy day and made personnel changes to both the board and trustees (which can be seen on the webpage). Minor changes to the website now enable you to print your own certificates, regrettably this came at a cost and after some years our membership fee has risen. To offset this general increase the RSP fee will include NZSC membership from January 2026, and we now provide 12 months complimentary membership for a graduate of any Level 6 program. Our objective is to continue to provide an effective and efficient professional body that enables HASANZ registration, provides professional support and opportunity for continued professional development.

We also provide a voice to HASANZ, INSHPO and seek to positively influence policy and practice nationally. An example of this is, it is now free for a RSP to be HASANZ registered. This year we have held several free webinars on a variety of topics, and there are more to come. If there is a topic you would like to see in the future, or would like to present one, let us know. As we head into September, we will represent you at the HASANZ AGM and at various Working Groups, we will continue with the webinar series and engage where we can.

Over the next year we intend to increase our membership, increase the number of RSPs on the register and continue our effective national engagement to improve national health

ask, if you are an RSP not yet on the HASANZ register consider joining, champion NZSC when you can and suggest membership to colleagues, and if there is something you would like to see happen, please reach out.

Finally, thank you so much to our board and trustees. You make it work.

This update has been written by Peter Bullock (NZSC Board Chair).

Unlocking Occupational Hygiene: Empowering H&S

Friday September 19th at 12-12.30pm



UNLOCKING OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE: EMPOWERING H&S PROFESSIONALS TO NAVIGATE HEALTH RISKS

WEBINAR TO BE DELIVERED BY
MIRISKA GERBER

SEPTEMBER 19TH 12-12:30PM

By Miriska Gerber

Certified Occupational Hygienist

M.Sc. Occupational Hygiene (COH®, ROH®)

MInstD, MAIOH, MNZOHS, MSAIOH, HASANZ Registered

Health and Safety (H&S) professionals play a crucial role in safeguarding workplace environments, yet navigating the complexities of occupational hygiene can be challenging.

With the WorkSafe data showing that in New Zealand a worker is 15 times more likely to die from a work-related disease or illness than from a workplace accident, we need to overcome these challenges. So how can all the H&S professionals work together to reduce that number?

This talk seeks to address this challenge by offering a high-level session tailored to all H&S professionals aiming to enhance their understanding of Occupational Hygiene.

Through practical examples, attendees will gain insights into identifying potential health hazards and making informed decisions. The talk will highlight important aspects to look out for when performing a risk assessment, alongside actionable recommendations to mitigate health risks.

Furthermore, the talk will address the common challenge faced by H&S professionals -not knowing when to call on

Lithium-Ion Battery Safety

Many modern devices are powered by lightweight, high-energy lithium-ion (li-ion) batteries. These power our phones, laptops, tools, e-bikes, e-scooters, vapes and even cars. If not used correctly, these devices can overheat, catch fire, or explode.

It's important to know the risks and how to manage them. Research shows that most people do not associate their everyday lithium-ion powered items with fire, let alone the know right actions to take to prevent a battery fire.

WHAT CAUSES LITHIUM-ION BATTERY FIRES?

Lithium-ion batteries can catch fire for several reasons:

- Overcharging or using incorrect chargers
- Overheating or exposure to extreme temperatures
- Physical damage like drops or punctures, short-circuits, malfunctions, or manufacturing defects.

When these batteries fail, they can:

- Emit toxic, flammable, and explosive gas
- Cause intense, self-sustaining fires that are difficult to extinguish.

HOW CAN I PREVENT DEVICE OR BATTERY FIRES?

- Only buy genuine devices and equipment
- Only buy devices and equipment from trustworthy manufacturers and retailers
- Only use the correct and approved chargers for your device
- Avoid leaving devices charging unattended or overnight
- Disconnect fully charged batteries and devices
- Never charge devices on flammable surfaces
- Never charge your devices in bed, or on flammable material or surfaces
- Avoid exposing devices to heat, moisture, or direct sunlight
- Discard damaged devices showing signs of swelling, leakage or overheating
- Installing approved smoke or heat alarms in charging areas will help give an early warning of extreme battery overheating or fire.

WHAT IF MY DEVICE OR BATTERY IS DAMAGED?

- Batteries or devices that show any signs of damage should be disposed of carefully (see below), as they are at higher risk of fire
- Never throw batteries in your regular waste or recycling bins.

Damaged batteries and battery-powered devices include:

- Batteries and/or devices that have been involved in or exposed to fire
- Overheated batteries that may have been emitting vapours or smoke

Take care when handling damaged batteries or devices:

- Wear protective gloves and eyewear
- Keep damaged batteries outdoors, in well-ventilated areas
- Maintain a distance of at least 3 meters from buildings and flammable material
- Immerse small, damaged batteries or devices in water to prevent further ignition
- If safe to, disconnect removable batteries from damaged devices
- Place leaking or damaged (but not overheated) batteries in a clear plastic bag for disposal
- Only dispose of damaged batteries and devices at approved e-waste recycling facilities.

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY DEVICE OR BATTERY IS SMOKING, OR ON FIRE?

Warning signs to look out for in a device or battery include:

- Strong odours, discolouration, blistering, bulging, or swelling of the casing
- Leaking fluid
- Heating up or feeling unusually warm to touch, popping, hissing or crackling sounds, smoke and fumes.

If your device or battery begins to smoke or emit flames:

- Evacuate the area and close doors (if safe) to slow the spread of fire
- Ensure no one goes back inside the building for any reason as battery gases, vapour and smoke are highly toxic and flammable and must not be inhaled
- Call 111 and wait in a safe location for firefighters to arrive
- If anyone has been exposed to battery fluids, debris, smoke, vapours, or flames, seek urgent medical assistance
- Burns should immediately be treated with cool running water for at least 20 minutes
- Burns larger than a \$2 coin may require emergency care.

For more information please visit www.fireandemergency.nz

As we see there is a potential fire and explosion hazard associated with Li-ion batteries, and management advice for the technology is evolving. Where possible, consider separating battery charge places from living spaces, and in workplaces include Li-ion batteries in hazard assessments. Online advice is available from FENZ, Martitime NZ, local insurers (<https://www.nzi.co.nz>) or international insurers (<https://www.hdi.global>). Common advice includes fire and current protection that may be as simple as a signed, dry, frost free concrete floor with alarms and use of Lipo charge bags.

How to speak with the New Zealand Safety Council

The New Zealand Safety Council Trust (AK1225133) is a Registered Charitable Trust and was established in 2002 to promote Best Practice in Health & Safety Management and Environmental Protection in all aspects of New Zealand life.

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