

Workplace Hazards in Retail

This fact sheet is for school students undertaking workplacement programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, that cannot be appropriately managed, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Box cutters	Cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide appropriate cutters ◆ Provide safe storage for cutters ◆ Provide appropriate gloves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Work carefully; follow instructions and training ◆ Use gloves provided
Knives and deli slicers, powered cutting equipment	Cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Students must NOT use powered cutting equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Students must NOT use powered cutting equipment
Slippery floors	Slips or falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Provide non-slip shoes ◆ Provide bucket, mop, detergent for quick clean-up of spills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Wear non-slip shoes ◆ Clean up spills quickly
Cleaning products	<p>Skin contact may cause irritation or dermatitis.</p> <p>Vapours or fumes may cause headaches and/or respiratory problems.</p> <p>Long-term exposure may lead to 'chronic' (ongoing) health effects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use the least hazardous product for each job ◆ Ensure good ventilation ◆ Make sure safety information is on label <i>and</i> Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is provided ◆ Provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when provided – this could include rubber gloves, eye protection ◆ Read safety information on label <i>and</i> Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)
Contact with public	Abuse, assault, robbery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide adequate security ◆ Provide barriers where money is handled ◆ Provide adequate outside lighting ◆ Schedule at least two people per shift ◆ Arrange customer service <i>and</i> emergency response training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow procedures and instructions regarding security and contact with the public ◆ Report any concerns immediately
Standing for long periods	Back injuries, varicose veins, fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide floor mats ◆ Provide regular breaks ◆ Rotate jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Take breaks when scheduled
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions, checkout scanners)	Musculoskeletal disorders, including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Re-design checkout stands ◆ Rotate jobs ◆ Provide approved stepladder or step stool for stacking above shoulder height ◆ Schedule regular breaks ◆ Provide mechanical aids ◆ Store heavy items on lower shelves ◆ Use team lifting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow instructions and training ◆ Use mechanical aids, stepladders where provided ◆ Seek help when you think a team lift is required
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establish work place policy ◆ Provide staff briefings or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately

Note: This document is a guide only, as each workplace will have its own individual hazards.