



Occupational Health and Safety

It is important that Practices ensure they provide a safe working environment for GPs and staff. Occupational health and safety is governed by state/territory and federal legislation, which may vary from state to state.

RACGP Standards

4.1.2 *Our Practice implements strategies to ensure the occupational health and safety of our GP(s) and staff.*

Assessment Methods

- Direct observation of Practice equipment

The Surveyors will observe whether Practice equipment, office furniture and the environment in general, is appropriate and in good condition.

- Interviews with practitioners and staff

The GPs and staff should be able to explain during the survey visit what strategies the Practice adopts to promote the health and wellbeing of their staff.

Meeting the standards

Staff shall be able to confirm that at least one person in addition to the Doctor is available to support the Doctor during the advertised consulting hours. Ideally the Practice should also have a documented Occupational Health and Safety policy which include information on appropriate staff numbers, staff immunisations and manual handling.

There is a variety of information and resources available to assist the Practice in maintaining a safe and functional workplace. Useful website addresses are provided on Page 55 of the RACGP Standards for General Practices 3rd Edition to assist Practices who wish to seek further information on a range of different occupational health and safety issues.

There are many ways that Practices can support the health of their staff such as:

- Appropriate office furniture
- Strategies to reduce the pressure associated with working in a busy General Practice environment.
- Scheduling regular breaks for GPs to reduce fatigue and enhance patient care.
- Debriefing staff after traumatic experiences – either clinical or related to negative feedback.

Best practice:

- Full compliance with all appropriate legislation
- Documented Occupational Health and Safety policies
- Staff awareness of all practice support available