

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 4th Edition Standards

4.1.2 *Our practice implements strategies to ensure the occupational health and safety of our GPs and other members of the practice team.*

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 GPs and practice 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 its staff.

Meeting the Standards

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

There is a variety of information and resources available to assist practices in maintaining a safe and functional workplace. Useful website addresses are provided on page 92 of the *RACGP Standards for General Practices* (4th 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 and staff 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