



MEDIA RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR RELEASES NEW CONTRACTING GUIDANCE

The Department of Labour has produced a new guide to assist principals of contracts to meet their obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (the Act). A principal to a contract is a company or person that has contracted services out to a contractor.

The guide was released today at the Safeguard Conference in Auckland.

The Department of Labour's Health and Safety Policy Manager, Jim Murphy says that the Department produced this guide because business practices have changed and increasingly large amounts of work is being contracted out.

"Under section 18 of the Act principals to contracts have a duty to take all practicable steps to make sure that the contractors they engage are not harmed while doing the work that they have been contracted to do. This responsibility extends to the employees of a contractor as well as the contractor's subcontractors.

"In recent years up to a third of prosecutions have been taken against principals under section 18 of the Act.

"The new guidance sets out a broad process for building health and safety into contract management, which can then be adapted to specific contractual situations or industries. Because it has a very broad application, it is principles-based and not industry-specific – although there are six brief case studies from a range of industries" Mr Murphy says.

The Department will use this guide as a basis to work collaboratively with local government and businesses that regularly contract services out to develop a consistency of practice when it comes to meeting the obligations under the Act.

"There is a wide range of diversity in work that is contracted and a well-managed contract not only benefits the principal but also the contractor.

"A well managed contract reduces the risk of accidents" Mr Murphy says.

To get a copy of the guidance document, go to -
<http://www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/contracting-guide.shtml>

ENDS

Please note that health and safety services, formerly referred to as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) should now be referred to as the Department of Labour.

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