

WORKING SAFELY WITH YOUR CONTRACTORS

Organisations commonly engage contractors for a wide spectrum of specialised or non-routine work activities, ranging from maintenance, repairs, installations, to services. Often, there will be several contractors performing multiple work activities on-site at any one time. As the web of interactions between contractors and employees becomes increasingly complex, managing safety and health at the workplace can get a little tricky.

Proper contractor management process is thus essential to ensure that contractors do not create unnecessary risks for themselves or others. An ineffective contractor management process may expose persons at or near the workplace to risks which may cause serious injuries or fatalities.

To assist companies, the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council developed the [*WSH Guidelines on Contractor Management*](#) to provide them with a systematic approach to adopt in their contractor management process.

A Case Example

At the Petrochemical Corporation of Singapore (PCS), contractors are regarded as not just service providers; but rather, partners who should be accorded the same safety, health, and security provisions as their own employees.

The PCS contractors have a registered trade association formed, and the key office bearers of this association participate in PCS's WSH Policy Steering Committee meetings. Their involvement in the steering committee provides contractors with first-hand information of PCS's direction on WSH matters. In return, the company receives timely and regular feedback from its contractors on the areas needed for improvement as well.

Through regular engagements with its contractor association, PCS effectively empowers contractors to take on a more active role in WSH matters. Also, having contractor representatives on the steering committee facilitates for bilateral communication. Through these implementations, the commitment of PCS to further strengthen the partnership with its contractors is evident.

While contracted work requires proper management to minimise risk and meet safety and health standards, all parties must collaborate to ensure that the safety and health system is effective. Preventing an incident can not only save time, money, but most importantly, lives.