

## APESMA takes on health and safety

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The union representing employee pharmacists has pushed occupational health and safety (OH&S) in pharmacies to the fore with the launch a new campaign.



Pharmacists' Division of APESMA has kicked off its workplace safety campaign with a web-based survey to identify workplace safety practices in pharmacies.

According to APESMA president Dr Geoff March, OH&S and the adherence to OH&S standards was an ongoing issue of concern for the union.

He said health or safety hazards in pharmacies could include customers tripping because of uneven or torn carpets or staff members injuring their backs trying to lift boxes of stock that were too heavy.

"I don't think there is a problem with the actual standards but whether the employer or employee knows the implications and facts around OH&S is a moot point and something we are going to try to find out," Dr March told *Pharmacy News*.

"The requirements are there but it's whether the owners themselves or the managers understand those requirements and implement the necessary standards in the stores.

"There are some big organisations like National Pharmacies who have capacity to do a fair bit of work on this. They have HR people employed within the organisation and they probably look after OH&S as well. But perhaps the smaller groups or the independent pharmacies may not have the time or the inclination."

Dr March said employers and employees needed to know how to identify a hazard, assess its risk and how to control it.

"We'll analyse the survey results and then start educating of our members, and it would be useful for employers to also know about the problem," he said.

"They might actually want to review their current procedures. OH&S is a partnership issue. It's not employers alone that have to take all the responsibility.

"The employee also has an input into this and employees also have to take responsibility. It's just maybe a fact that neither party is clear on what their responsibilities are."

To complete the survey, [click here](#).

