

# HAZCOM

## HAZARD COMMUNICATION

### Grates in Walkway Areas

#### Background

On 1 December 2011 a tragic incident occurred at Melbourne Water's Eastern Treatment Plant (ETP) involving the death of a laboratory technician.

The technician had been carrying out routine field sampling works but failed to return to the on-site laboratory. The CFA and Victoria Police handled the search.

Melbourne Water is conducting an internal "root cause" investigation into this tragic incident and is continuing to help WorkSafe Victoria with its investigation.

While the cause of the incident is not known at this stage, Melbourne Water has decided to issue this HAZCOM based on an improvement notice issued to Melbourne Water by WorkSafe Victoria on 1 December 2011 (the WorkSafe notice).

#### Hazard Identified by WorkSafe

The WorkSafe notice states that:

- The technician appears to have fallen through a gap in a galvanised grate on a walkway over a channel containing aerated return activated sludge.
- The gap in the walkway appeared to be from a dislodged section of grate measuring approximately 1m by 1m, which was not permanently fixed and therefore able to be removed or dislodged.
- By not permanently securing the grates, employees can be exposed to the risk of serious injury or death.
- Compliance may be achieved, but is not limited to, welding the grates in place.

#### Melbourne Water Response

Melbourne Water is undertaking an urgent safety risk assessment of all walkway areas at ETP, including safety risks associated with grates, hatches, points of access and safety railings.



This process will enable Melbourne Water to:

- Identify the engineering solution(s) it will utilise to comply with the WorkSafe notice.
- Appropriately address the risks identified in the WorkSafe notice.

Melbourne Water will also be extending this risk assessment approach to other relevant Melbourne Water sites.

### Recommendation

Organisations should carefully review the contents of this HAZCOM and consider taking appropriate action based on the implications for their businesses.

### Updates

Melbourne Water will communicate the actions it takes in response to the WorkSafe notice.

If you have any questions in relation to this HAZCOM, please call Paul Pretto, General Manager Asset Planning, on 03 9235 7209.

