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## CASE STUDY

# The Warehouse Group

## Critical risk identification

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# The challenge

When the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 came into effect in early 2016, it highlighted a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) legal obligation of due diligence and primary duty of care to identify and manage critical risks within their workplace.

The Executive team and Board had always had a significant focus on health and safety. However, they now wanted to take a different approach to understand the top critical risks within the business and what control measures were required to keep employees, customers, clients, contractors, and visitors safe.

## Our approach

The 'deep dive' into critical risk and identification started. This didn't mean we ignored other risks. However, critical risks required a different management approach.

Through a mix of data and a clearly defined critical risk criteria, cross-functional teams included subject matter experts, stakeholders, distribution and fulfilment centres, property and infrastructure, retail, and online stores across all our brands helped identify and classify the eight critical risks for the group.



1. **Traffic Management** on sites
2. **Violent and Aggressive Behaviour** from customers
3. **Hazardous Substances** of product such as managing and storing perfume
4. **Working At Height** within stores and distribution centres
5. **Product Storage** on racking or stacking of products
6. **Machine Safety**, including conveyors, binders and compactors
7. **Light Vehicles** on public roads
8. **Asbestos** in buildings owned and leased

It was an open process to ensure we understood and captured all the potential causes of harm from across the business before prioritising them based on scope.

The Bowtie methodology was adopted as it clearly depicts the relationship between sources of risk, controls, escalation factors, events and consequences and provides a visual summary of all plausible accident scenarios that could exist around a specific hazard. The methodology is also aligned with better practice methodologies to support management decision-making and evaluation of risks.

Having a clearly defined critical risk criterion ensured that operational nuances drove what we needed to address. For example, the risk and degree of impairment amongst our employees and understanding if it could be drugs and alcohol or actually fatigue and emotional and physical factors that could cause harm and prevent them from performing their duties safely.



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# The impact

Significant improvements were immediately evident in the following four critical risks.

- 1. Traffic Management**  
The introduction of traffic management plans across the business, including driver safety and exclusion zones, resulted in a 50% reduction in incidents over a rolling 12-month period.
- 2. Violent and Aggressive Behaviour**  
Training and providing radios to stores resulted in a 60% reduction in escalated incidents.
- 3. Working At Height**  
Ensuring our ladders, man-ups and wave ladders met AS/NZ standards confirmed equipment was fit for purpose.
- 4. Product Storage**  
A racking review resulted in less damage to our racking, make it a low-risk activity. Changing to daily forklift inspections ensured our equipment was in optimal working condition.

Improvements were also evident for the following critical risks.

- 5. Machine Safety**  
Better machine safety awareness regarding compactors has resulted in lower near-miss incidents.
- 6. Light Vehicles**  
The Introduction of GPS monitoring to monitor speeding and braking effects provided insights into driver risk behaviour and opportunities to develop capability.
- 7. Hazardous Substances**  
Reporting alerts if the quantity of a particular class of product has reached regulatory levels at a workplace. Merchandising teams now understand safety risks needs to come before visual merchandising.
- 8. Asbestos**  
Once all sites were inspected and recorded, a clear regulatory map was created for everyone to follow, allowing for effective ongoing monitoring of our workplaces.

## Lessons learned

Using a methodology like Bow tie provided consistency through mapping and clarity of the scope by understanding if the top event is an injury, then how do we control it.

Introducing a change management programme to manage new systems and equipment within a workplace was paramount to everyone understanding the requirement for change and how they would benefit them and the workplace.



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# Opportunities with ShopCare

We would love to engage with other organisations that are keen to improve health, safety and wellbeing outcomes for their workers.

If you believe that your company could also benefit from a similar programme and would like to discuss it further, please email [info@shopcare.org.nz](mailto:info@shopcare.org.nz).

ShopCare thanks The Warehouse Group for their participation.



# Ngā mihi

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