

Information for Industry/Business Owners in Western Australia



Volatile substance use in Western Australia

Some communities in Western Australia can experience issues with the misuse of volatile substances, particularly among young people. Inhaling or 'sniffing' these substances is very dangerous and can be fatal.

What is volatile substance use?

Volatile substance use is when someone deliberately inhales the gas, fumes or vapour from a volatile substance product to get a 'high' or feel intoxicated.

It's also called *inhalant use* or *solvent use*.

What products are volatile substances?

There are hundreds of products that can be inhaled for the purpose of intoxication. Most volatile substance products are everyday items sold in shops or online and are found in or around homes, businesses and industrial sites.

Common products that may be misused include:

- **aerosols** – most aerosol products such as spray paints, automotive and cleaning products
- **solvents** – petrol, glues/adhesives, other products for cleaning/degreasing, paint thinning/stripping
- **gases** – butane/propane gas canisters used in camping stoves, cigarette lighters, cigarette lighter refill cans, soldering irons and flame torches, and acetylene used for welding.

How can you help reduce access to volatile substances?

As a business that uses volatile substances, you may unintentionally make these products accessible to people who misuse them to get high. Businesses can play a role in preventing volatile substance misuse by reducing access.

Volatile substances used for the purpose of intoxication are often stolen from industrial worksites, from the back of work vehicles and rubbish tips or other disposal sites.

It is important that these substances are accounted for, stored and transported securely, and disposed of in a responsible manner.

A *Volatile Substances Code of Conduct* has been developed by the Mental Health Commission, endorsed by the Western Australia Police Force, to assist you with the use, storage, transport and disposal of volatile substances.

Volatile Substances Code of Conduct

To assist in reducing access to volatile substances, this business will use, store, transport and dispose of all volatile substance products in the following ways:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Use | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All volatile substance products to be used in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.• Where practicable, use non-solvent based products and aerosols with alternative propellants.• Use Low Aromatic Fuel (LAF), where available. If you usually use unleaded fuel, top up your tank with LAF when you arrive in a community/town.• Use diesel-powered equipment where LAF is not available.• Ensure accurate inventory of products is undertaken on worksites and in work vehicles. If anything is missing, please report it to the police. |
| Store | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All volatile substance products and petrol-powered equipment to be securely stored i.e. not visible or obtainable by the general public.• Ensure these products are accessible by authorised personnel only. |
| Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When not at a secure worksite, all volatile substance products to be securely transported and not visible to the general public.• Ensure vehicle is locked, especially when unattended. |
| Disposal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All volatile substance products to be disposed of at secure sites not accessible to the general public.• Contact your local shire for further information and disposal options. |
| Review | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Storage, transportation and disposal practices of all volatile substance products to be reviewed annually. |

What else can you do?

The following steps provide a guide for the responsible management of volatile substances:

1. **Identify products** that may be misused and review how they are used, stored, transported and disposed of in accordance with the Volatile Substances Code of Conduct.
2. **Develop a volatile substance use policy** for safe use, storage, transportation, disposal and inventory practices related to volatile substances.
3. **Train staff** to ensure they understand their responsibilities in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
4. **Display signs** to show your support for the responsible storage of volatile substances (see signs available shown below).
5. **Get involved** by supporting local community efforts to address volatile substance misuse and stay informed (see contacts below for your local VSU Central Coordinating Agency).
6. **Report** incidents of theft or people using volatile substances at: vsureport.mhc.wa.gov.au

Benefits of the responsible management of volatile substances

Adopting and implementing the responsible management of volatile substances can benefit your business by:

- improving your business standing in the community by being socially responsible and community minded;
- reducing interruptions to business continuity and productivity;
- minimising the risk of death or injury of a person intoxicated by volatile substances on your worksite;
- reducing theft of products and associated insurance claims;
- deterring intoxicated people from entering your premises or damaging your property;
- improving compliance with occupational health and safety standards.

Responding to an emergency

Volatile substance use poses significant risks and carries high potential for harm, such as serious injury or death. Sudden death may occur at any time – even the first time a person uses.

When intoxicated on volatile substances, people are at risk of harming themselves or others.

In an emergency:

- call for your designated first aid officer
- if someone is unconscious, lay the person on their side and clear their airway
- call for an ambulance (Triple Zero / 000).

? Further information



For more information about volatile substance use, visit the Mental Health Commission's VSU website vsu.mhc.wa.gov.au or scan the QR code

The **Alcohol and Drug Support Line (ADSL)**, a 24-hour drug and alcohol counselling and information service 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (for country callers toll free)

Your local **Central Coordinating Agency** for volatile substance use issues:

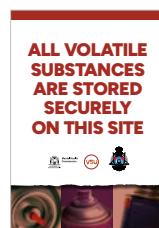
For police assistance

Police: **131 444**

For emergencies

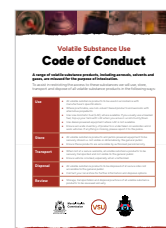
Ambulance or Police: **000 (Triple Zero)**

Posters for display around your business premises:



VSU storage site poster

[Click here to download](#)



VSU code of conduct poster

[Click here to download](#)



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