

Occupational Health and Safety Officer		Australia
ASCO Code: 2543-11		July 2007
Labour market rating	Recruitment Difficulty	
Comment: Recruitment difficulties relate to specific industry experience		

Employer and industry comments/current labour market

The Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) defines the tasks for occupational health and safety (OH&S) officers as implementing and evaluating policies and programs to ensure safe and healthy working conditions and assisting injured staff through the workers' compensation and rehabilitation process. A survey of employers who had recently advertised for OH&S officers was undertaken for this report. Over half of the vacancies surveyed for this report were in the manufacturing and mining industries.

About half the surveyed vacancies were filled within six weeks of advertising. However, almost all vacancies attracted suitable applicants and most vacancies were eventually filled, with administrative delays the main reason for vacancy filling being protracted. The few vacancies that remained unfilled were in remote locations (such as the west coast of Tasmania or the Northern Territory) or required very specific experience.

Employers in New South Wales and Victoria had the most difficulty filling vacancies with less than one third of vacancies in these States being filled. Employers in Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory filled more than 75 per cent of their vacancies. Employers in Western Australia commented that relatively high pay rates resulting from the mining boom made Western Australia an attractive employment option.

Nationally, on average, there were about 15 applicants for each vacancy surveyed with three applicants per vacancy considered by employers to be suitable. Of those applicants considered by employers to be unsuitable, the main reasons offered were lack of qualifications and experience in a specific industry required by the employer, particularly in mining and manufacturing. Many applicants also lacked adequate knowledge of Australian OH&S legislation knowledge, which employers considered essential to work in Australia.

Employers who experienced difficulty recruiting OH&S officers suggested other factors were mainly applicants' inexperience and reluctance to relocate to more remote areas. A few contacts suggested that suitable applicants demand higher salaries as there is a shortage of OH&S officers experienced in particular industries.

Labour market outlook

There is no evidence to suggest there will be significant changes in labour market over the next six months.