

**Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2006

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question No:** AQIS01

**Division/Agency:** Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service

**Topic:** Serious Personal Injuries and the Dangerous Occurrences

**Hansard Page:** 64 (31/10/06)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

Can you give us on notice a list of the so-called serious personal injuries and the dangerous occurrences? I note that 2005-06 was a particularly bad one for injuries within AQIS.

**Answer:**

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) actively encourages staff to report any occupational health and safety incident as this enables the organisation to assess the risk and implement appropriate measures to manage the risk associated with particular activities.

Comcare define a Serious Personal Injury (SPI) as an injury to or disease in a person for which the person needed:

- emergency treatment by a registered medical practitioner, or
- treatment in a hospital as a casualty, without being admitted to the hospital, or
- admission to a hospital.

A Dangerous Occurrence (DO) defines an occurrence that could have caused any of the above. AQIS uses these definitions when categorising occupation health and safety incidents.

Table One sets out the details of SPI and DO for the Financial Year 2005-06.

**Table One: Serious Personal Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Description of incident</b>	<b>Description of injury and treatment provided</b>	<b>Description of corrective action</b>
8 Jul 2005	DO	South Queensland	Forklift driver commenced removal of container whilst AQIS employee was conducting inspection under the container.	No injury	Referred to wharf supervisor. Forklift driver placed on probation for non-compliance with Work Instructions.
15 Jul 2005	DO	Western Australia	AQIS employee felt light headed whilst undertaking inspection at Quarantine Approved Premise.	No injury	Monitor of air in the area identified high levels of Carbon Dioxide. Use of machine restricted and Safe Working Procedure implemented for all personnel.

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<b>Date</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Description of incident</b>	<b>Description of injury and treatment provided</b>	<b>Description of corrective action</b>
19 Jul 2005	DO	South Queensland	Near miss with Forklift in bond store whilst AQIS employee was conducting inspection of personal effects.	No injury	Client notified. All AQIS inspections ceased at premise until correct traffic flow, painted lines and Work Instruction for drivers was implemented.
20 Jul 2005	DO	Western Australia	AQIS employee tripped over air trolley handle left lying on the ground by air crew employees.	Sprained ankle.	Airport Corporation and relevant airline notified.
25 Jul 2005	DO	New South Wales	AQIS employee involved in single car accident	Severe bruising.	Advanced driving course completed.
19 Sep 2005	DO	Western Australia	AQIS employee involved in heated exchange with third party premise employee whilst undertaking inspection. Premise employee assaulted AQIS employee.	AQIS employee suffered no initial injury but later required access to the Employee Assistance Scheme	Client contacted immediately. Action taken against Client employee. AQIS employee participated Dealing with Difficult Clients training program.

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21 Sep 2005	DO	Victoria	AQIS employee was potentially exposed to asbestos at Client site being refurbished.	No injury or illness	State safety authority notified. Investigation revealed no exposure had occurred.
28 Sep 2005	DO	Far North	AQIS employee exposed to fumes from mixing chemicals.	Oxygen administered. Doctor confirmed no ongoing effects.	All chemicals labelled. Regular audits of chemical storage scheduled. Reminder provided to employees on chemical safety.
13 Oct 2005	DO	Victoria And Tasmania	AQIS employee at wharf experienced nose, eye and throat irritation.	Irritation to eyes, nose and throat.	Contractors instructed to wet-down earthworks.
23 Oct 2005	DO	Northern Territory	Device lifting AQIS employee broke down.	No injury	Investigated in consultation with client – procedural changes endorsed.
10 Nov 2005	DO	Northern Territory	Forklift driver approached container to prepare to lift whilst AQIS employees still carrying out inspection	No injury	Client reviewed and implemented procedural changes.
11 Nov 2005	DO	South Queensland	Two AQIS employees were driving AQIS vehicle airside and drove onto the main runway by mistake.	No injury	Refresher airside driving training commenced by Client for all AQIS employee driving airside.
11 Nov 2005	DO	South Queensland	AQIS employee hit head on inspection stand wharf when conducting inspection of containers.	No injury	Instruction to all AQIS employees to wear appropriate head protection when conducting inspections.
30 Nov 2005	DO	Victoria	Truck at inspection point veered toward AQIS employee at low speed.	No injury	Changes to the environment and procedure implemented.
24 Jan 2006	DO	Western Australia	AQIS employee driving on unsealed (gravel) hit a rock on the road and the vehicle slid into embankment	No injury	Review of type of vehicles used, satellite telephone to be purchased, Safe Driving Guidelines re-issued.
28 Feb 2006	DO	South Australia	AQIS employee inspecting a coffee machine came into contact with asbestos	Referred to doctor for examination and testing. No exposure identified.	State Environmental Protection Authority advised. Awareness training provided for employees.

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2 Mar 2006	DO	Northern Territory	Crane passed over inspection area above AQIS employee.	No injury	Investigated in consultation with client
9 Mar 2006	DO	South Queensland	AQIS employee identified suspected explosive device on x-ray of parcel.	No injury	Emergency plan activated. All personnel evacuated from the building.
10 Mar 2006	DO	South Australia	AQIS employee inhaled gas when compressor at Avian Facility failed and standby compressor also faulty causing seals to leak.	Referred to doctor and consultant. Episodes of low grade headaches which disappeared after three weeks.	A new standby compressor was purchased and testing of seals was completed.
10 Mar 2006	DO	Western Australia	AQIS employee was potentially exposed to Sodium hypochlorite fumes whilst undertaking an approved premise inspection (live fish).	No Injury	Consultation with premise owner regarding chemical concentrations (footbath). Information sheet distributed to staff.
14 Mar 2006	DO	New South Wales	Two AQIS employees at airport received static discharges when they touched metal sections of one X-Ray machine.	No injury	Back-up battery supply for X-Ray machine replaced as suspected source of low level discharge.
18 Jun 2006	DO	Northern Territory	AQIS employee fell on board Quarantine Vessel	Bruising and swelling to knees, shoulder, and wrist	Coxswain advised of need to ensure all employees are fully educated on boat manoeuvrings.
29 Jun 2006	DO	South Australia	AQIS employees exposed to unidentified powder within the Airport International terminal.	Wash down shower provided for AQIS employees. Powder found to be Danthron (a laxative component). No injury	Review of emergency procedures and corrective actions implemented. Refresher training provided on relevant Work Instructions.
6 Jul 2005	DO	New South Wales	Side of beef fell from retain point on chain.	No injury	Changes to work practices implemented.
6 Sep 2005	DO	South Queensland	Truck moved forward during external container inspection at the exit gate on the wharf.	No injury	Client management implemented stop signs with written instruction to all drivers not to move on until instructed by AQIS employee.

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23 Jun 2006	DO	South Queensland	Incoming passenger seized at the airport with 39 live snakes found on their person.	No injury	AQIS employee who is an experienced reptile handler was called to safely contain the reptiles.
20 Jul 2005	DO	Victoria	Child caught hand in X-ray machine conveyer at airport.	Slight graze to arm	National X-ray machine safety audit conducted and improvements made at all sites.
7 Aug 2005	DO	Far North	Arriving passenger fainted at airport inspection bench.	Passenger struck head on floor as a result of fainting. Taken in Ambulance to hospital	First aid provided and ambulance called.
13 Sep 2005	DO	Far North	Pilot of flight between Yam and Horn Islands became ill during flight	Nausea, possibly from insecticide exposure. Pilot treated at Horn Island Health Clinic	Removal of any non-approved insecticides. Provided refresher training in Standard Operating Procedure

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1 Jul 2005	SPI	Western Australia	Alleged assault by another AQIS employee	Psychological Injury requiring counselling and restricted duties	Police investigation conducted in addition to internal AQIS investigation.
18 Jul 2005	SPI	South Queensland	AQIS employee spilt chlorine down the front of their gumboot.	Cellulitis left lower leg	Officers encouraged to take care when handling chemicals.
21 Jul 2005	SPI	South Queensland	Prolonged and repetitive bending whilst conducting personal effects inspections.	Back injury requiring physiotherapy	Boxes to be raised onto inspection bench by agent to prevent prolonged bending.
27 Jul 2005	SPI	South Queensland	Using knife when conducting meat inspections.	Rotator cuff injury to shoulder	Review of knife safety instructions.
14 Aug 2005	SPI	South Queensland	Prolonged inspections of incoming passengers baggage	Ganglion on right wrist which required surgery	Manual Handling Risk Assessment completed for site.
6 Oct 2005	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employee fell on International Foreign Fishing Vessel.	Sutures to shin.	Procedures adjusted to reduce necessity to board old International Foreign Fishing Vessels.
10 Oct 2005	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employee tripped and fell on an International Foreign Fishing Vessel.	Bruising and soft tissue damage to back, elbows and knees.	Procedures adjusted to ensure sufficient time to inspect vessels.
26 Oct 2005	SPI	Western Australia	AQIS employee lifted a container	Low back strain requiring rest and physiotherapy.	Manual Handling Risk Assessment completed for site. Lifters and trolleys made available for lifting and moving heavy objects.
3 Nov 2005	SPI	New South Wales	AQIS employee cut finger by 'whizzer' knife	Cut finger	Company employees to handle own equipment
3 Nov 2005	SPI	Western Australia	AQIS employee's hand slipped whilst undertaking meat inspection.	Laceration to finger requiring sutures and dressings	Process reviewed and instruction on knife handling techniques provided. Use of mesh gloves reviewed.

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9 Nov 2005	SPI	Western Australia	AQIS employee jumped onto deck of ship and injured back.	Lower back strain.	Berth operator notified of requirement to provide safe access for AQIS employees undertaking inspections.
19 Nov 2005	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employee sustained injury from foreign object in foot	Localised soft tissue injury.	AQIS employee reminded on use of correct footwear.
26 Nov 2005	SPI	South Queensland	Injury during knife usage whilst conducting meat inspections.	Cut to wrist requiring sutures.	Review of AQIS knife safety instructions.
31 Dec 2005	SPI	South Queensland	AQIS employee fell from chair.	Back pain requiring physiotherapy	Faulty wheel identified on chair. Audit conducted of office furniture. Damaged and faulty equipment replaced.
4 Mar 2006	SPI	South Queensland	Repetitive knife usage	Tendonitis right shoulder. AQIS employee had corrective surgery to shoulder	Review of AQIS knife safety instructions.
5 Mar 2006	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employees involved in single vehicle rollover.	Hospitalisation of one AQIS employee for neck and shoulder injuries	Relevant procedure and policy reviewed.
5 Mar 2006	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employees involved in single vehicle rollover	AQIS employee transferred to Hospital for review - No injury	Relevant procedure and policy reviewed
16 Mar 2006	SPI	Western Australia	AQIS employee accidentally closed kennel door on finger whilst working at Quarantine Station.	Serious injury to finger requiring dressings and antibiotics.	All door latches reviewed and no defect detected.
27 Mar 2006	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employee suffered heat stress.	Fluid replacement therapy for several hours in Hospital Emergency.	Employee advised on Northern Territory Heat Plan and provided educational aids on working in heat.
30 Mar 2006	SPI	South Queensland	Using knife whilst conducting meat inspections.	Cut to thumb requiring sutures	Review of AQIS knife safety instructions.
5 Apr 2006	SPI	South Queensland	Using knife whilst conducting meat inspection.	Cut to thumb requiring sutures	Review of AQIS knife safety instructions.
11 Apr 2006	SPI	Western Australia	AQIS employee processing passenger at airport sustained splinter injury from wooden frame.	Infection to right thumb, requiring treatment with antibiotics.	Safety Alert distributed throughout the Region.

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10 May 2006	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employee suffered damaged fingers on board vessel.	Soft tissue damage requiring suturing to two fingers.	Employees reminded of potential hazards onboard Naval ships.
25 May 2006	SPI	South Queensland	AQIS employee using a knife while conducting meat inspections	Cut to thumb requiring sutures	Review of AQIS knife safety instructions.
7 Jun 2006	SPI	Northern Territory	AQIS employee suffered a scratch from a bat	Scratch to head. Employee already vaccinated, but received post-exposure booster.	AQIS employee reminded on use of Personal Protective Equipment
19 Jun 2006	SPI	South Queensland	AQIS employee tripped over mat at inspection bench at airport.	Injury to right knee requiring physiotherapy	Investigation revealed no hazard identified.
14 Jan 2006	SPI	New South Wales	Child passenger at airport inserted his arm in-between rollers on X-Ray machine.	First Aid treatment provided by AQIS of pressure bandaging. Followed up by physician.	Perspex shielding on passengers' side of conveyor belt rollers extended to exclude any opening for passengers to place their arms.



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**Question No:** AQIS02

**Division/Agency:** The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) and Biosecurity Australia

**Topic:** IRA - quarantine requirements

**Hansard Page:** 76 (31/10/06)

**Senator O'Brien asked:**

In section 2.1, in the last sentence in that paragraph it states:

'AQIS may take into account existing approvals granted by the relevant overseas veterinary authorities'.

Does that mean that construction standards, hygiene standards and transportation standards other than those applying in Australia might be acceptable?

**Answer:**

Construction standards, hygiene standards and transportation standards other than those applying in Australia may be considered if they deliver an equivalent outcome to standards in Australia.