

# W.H.I.P.

## Workplace Health Improvement Practice

### Fitness Ball is not suitable as a chair

21<sup>st</sup> August 2013

WHS Act 2012

WHS Regulations 2012

Managing the Work Environment & Facilities: Code of Practice 2012

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

To eliminate the use of fitness balls (also known as a 'Swiss', 'exercise' or 'physio' ball) as a substitute for a chair in the workplace.



#### **BACKGROUND:**

An incident occurred where a worker brought a fitness ball to work and used this instead of an approved chair. The fitness ball burst resulting in the worker falling to the ground.

#### **PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS:**

- Worksites to prevent use of fitness balls unless it has been approved by a qualified health practitioner.
- Many tasks are best done in a seated position, for example screen-based work. For tasks undertaken in a seated position, workers should be provided with seating that:
  - ✓ provides good body support, especially for the lower back
  - ✓ provides foot support, preferably with both feet flat on the floor, otherwise a footrest should be provided
  - ✓ allows adequate space for leg clearance and freedom of movement.
- Chairs should be fully adjustable to accommodate different sized workers (with seat height, back rest height and back rest tilt adjustments) and should not tip or slip – a five-point base is the most stable. Castors should be used on carpet and glides or braked castors on hard surfaces  
( AS 4438 -- 1997:Height adjustable swivel chairs / AS 4438 - 1997: Amendment 1: 1999 Height Adjustment Swivel Chairs)

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe VIC at

<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/forms-and-publications/forms-and-publications/fitness-ball-is-not-suitable-as-a-chair>

**FOR ENQUIRIES OR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT YOUR WHS CONSULTANT**