TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-FUM · Fumigants Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: Workers and supervisors who open or empty shipping containers, work with stored grain, or work near pest control and fumigation · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026

For anyone who opens shipping containers or works with stored grain or pest control: why fumigants are so dangerous, the warning signs, and never opening or entering a fumigated space without clearance.

Fumigants are toxic gases used to kill pests in goods, grain, buildings and soil. Workers can meet them when they open or empty shipping containers, which may have been fumigated or may hold gases given off by the goods; when they work in or near grain silos, sheds and ships' holds; and near buildings and goods under pest control. Many fumigants cannot be seen or smelt, gas can stay trapped in goods and packaging and be released later, and some symptoms only appear hours after exposure.

This talk covers what fumigants are, where workers meet them, why they are so dangerous, the warning signs and labels to look for, and the one rule: never open or enter a fumigated container, silo, hold or building without clearance from a competent person. It covers what to do if a space may not be clear, and reporting symptoms. It is awareness, not fumigation, gas testing or container ventilation training: fumigation is licensed work for trained, licensed fumigators.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain what fumigants are, and where workers meet them: shipping containers, grain storage and pest control
- Explain why fumigants are so dangerous: toxic, often invisible and odourless, released from goods later, with symptoms that can be delayed
- Recognise the warning signs: fumigation labels and notices, sealed vents, residues and unknown smells
- Follow the rule: never open or enter a fumigated container, silo, hold or building without clearance from a competent person
- Act when a space may not be clear: close it, move away, keep others out and report it
- Recognise the signs of exposure, get medical help, and report symptoms even if they come on later

What it covers

Module	Covers
Why it matters	What fumigants are; Where you meet them; Why they are so dangerous
Controls that work	Check before you open; Clearance by a competent person; Ventilation and gas testing
Your part	Never open or enter without clearance; If in doubt, keep it shut; Report it

© 2026 Orana Skills Centre. All rights reserved.

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.

Activities

- Is it clear: workers find the fumigant risk in four jobs, from opening an imported container to sweeping out a grain silo, and decide what has to happen first
- What would you do: workers decide what to do in four situations, from a container with a fumigation label but no clearance to a workmate who feels sick hours after emptying a container

What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

Questions

Does it teach fumigation or container gas testing? No. Fumigation is licensed work for trained, licensed fumigators, and gas testing and ventilating containers need training and equipment. The talk teaches every worker to recognise the warning signs and never to open or enter a fumigated space without clearance from a competent person. It quotes no gas levels, clearance levels or ventilation times: check them with your fumigator, your procedure and your regulator.

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026 · Orana Skills Centre. © 2026 Orana Skills Centre. All rights reserved.

© 2026 Orana Skills Centre. All rights reserved.

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.

TOOLBOX TALK

Fumigants Awareness

The gas you cannot see: fumigants in containers, grain and buildings

20–30 minutes · Workers and supervisors who open or empty shipping containers, work with stored grain, or work near pest control and fumigation

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

FUM

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.

What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ What fumigants are, and where you meet them
- ✓ Why they are so dangerous
- ✓ The warning signs and clearance
- ✓ What to do if it may not be clear

This talk is not

- ✕ Fumigation training or a licence
- ✕ Gas testing or ventilation training
- ✕ Confined space entry training
- ✕ Our procedure: **[Our container and fumigation procedure]**

Awareness only. Fumigation is licensed work, and gas testing and confined space entry need specific training.

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.

Where you meet fumigants

Fumigants are toxic gases used to kill pests.

- Imported shipping containers and their goods
- Gases given off by some goods and packaging
- Grain silos, bins, sheds and ships' holds
- Buildings and goods under pest control
- Soil and greenhouse treatment on farms

A composite example

- A worker opens an imported container and starts emptying it straight away. There is a faded label on the door.
- That evening he has a headache, feels sick and is short of breath.

Any container could hold gas. Check before you open.

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.

Duties under health and safety laws

The business must

- Identify where fumigants may be
- Have containers checked and cleared
- Use licensed fumigators
- Plan for emergencies

You must

- Follow the procedure
- Never open or enter without clearance
- Act on warning signs
- Report symptoms and near misses

Most health and safety laws give these duties. Check the law where you work (in Australia, WHS or OHS laws).

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.

The order of controls for fumigants

1. **Elimination** Pest control methods that need no fumigant, where they work
2. **Substitution** A less hazardous treatment, chosen by the fumigator
3. **Isolation** Keep it shut and keep people away until cleared
4. **Engineering** Ventilation of containers and spaces by competent people
5. **Administrative** Labels, paperwork, gas testing, clearance, procedures
6. **PPE** Breathing apparatus for trained people only

HIGHER ORDER

Higher order controls remove or control the hazard at the source, or put a barrier between people and the hazard.

LOWER ORDER

Lower order controls rely on people to do a thing or wear a thing, every time, tired, distracted or rushed.

Behaviours are not on the hierarchy, but behaviours and culture decide whether every control on it actually works.

A dust mask does nothing against fumigant gas.

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.

TOOLBOX TALK · HAZ-FUM

Fumigants Awareness

Participant handout · keep this

Fumigants are toxic gases you may not see or smell. Never open or enter a fumigated space without clearance. Keep this page.

The order of controls

1. Pest control without fumigants, where it works
2. A less hazardous treatment
3. Keep it shut; keep people away until cleared
4. Ventilation by competent people
5. Labels, paperwork, gas testing, clearance
6. Masks do not filter fumigant gases

The signs

- Headache, dizziness, nausea, short of breath
- Signs that start hours later

Never

- Open or enter without clearance
- Go in after a collapsed worker

Before you open

- ☐ Is there a fumigation label, notice or paperwork?
- ☐ Has a competent person cleared it, in writing?
- ☐ Are vents sealed, or are there residues or odd smells?
- ☐ Am I standing back and to the side when it opens?
- ☐ Do I know who to tell, and what to do if I feel unwell?

If in doubt

- Keep it shut; move away; tell someone
- Unwell: fresh air; call your local emergency number (000 in Australia) if serious

Who and where

- **[Our container and fumigation procedure]**
- **[Container and fumigation clearance arrangements]**
- **[Who to report to here]**

Never open or enter a fumigated space without clearance. If in doubt, keep it shut and ask.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It is not fumigation, gas testing, container ventilation or confined space entry training.

© 2026 Orana Skills Centre. All rights reserved.

SAMPLE · HAZ-FUM Fumigants Awareness v1.0 · The full package contains the complete materials.