

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

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1. PURPOSE

These guidelines outline the requirements for the development of safe work instructions for all techniques, processes (tasks), machinery and equipment, where there exists a risk of harm to any persons, property or the environment.

2. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to staff, students, visitors and contractors of Monash University.

3. ABBREVIATIONS

OHS	Occupational health and safety
OH&S	Monash Occupational Health & Safety unit
S.A.R.A.H.	Safety and Risk Analysis Hub
SWI	Safe Work Instructions

4. DEFINITIONS

A comprehensive list of definitions is provided in the [Definitions Tool](#). Definitions specific to these guidelines are as follows.

4.1 SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

Safe work instructions are written instructions for tasks that outline the preferred method of undertaking a task, whilst emphasising ways to reduce any risk of harm to persons, property or the environment.

5. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

A comprehensive list of OHS responsibilities is provided in the document [OHS Roles, Committees and Responsibilities Procedure](#). The specific responsibilities with respect to developing safe work instructions are summarised below.

5.1 HEADS OF ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATION UNITS

It is the responsibility of the Head of academic/administrative unit to ensure that the *Guidelines for the development of Safe Work Instructions* are implemented in their area.

5.2 LOCAL OHS COMMITTEES

It is the responsibility of local OHS committees to provide advice and feedback to heads of academic/administrative units on actions needed to comply with these guidelines.

5.3 SUPERVISORS

It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that Safe Work Instructions (SWIs) are developed and implemented for all techniques, processes (tasks), machinery and equipment, where there exists a risk of harm to any persons, property or the environment, in their areas of responsibility.

5.4 STAFF, STUDENTS, VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS

All staff, students, visitors and contractors of Monash University are expected to familiarise themselves with and comply with the SWIs that exist in their area of work; including signs, manuals, faculty and departmental/school safety manuals, practical class manuals and general safety instructions.

6. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

6.1 RISK MANAGEMENT

- A risk assessment of the task/machinery/equipment /process should be completed before developing SWIs to identify the hazards, associated levels of risk and suitable risk controls;
- The [OHS Risk Management Procedure](#) describes the risk management process at Monash University;
- Once completed, the SWI should be filed with the Risk Assessment, or linked via a reference number system by utilising the respective functions in S.A.R.A.H.

6.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

- SWIs should be written by a staff member or student with sound, hands on experience and knowledge of the tasks;
- It is preferable to include the experience and knowledge of several staff members or students to enhance the effectiveness of the instructions;
- The manufacturer's user manual provided with the equipment/machinery is a good resource for safety information to include in SWIs;
- As far as is reasonably practicable, the Health and Safety Representative of the area must be consulted during the development of SWIs.

6.3 FORMAT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

- The use of tables, visual diagrams, charts and flow diagrams within the SWI may be helpful in providing a concise and effective reference and training document. An example of the content to be included can be found in Section 9 of these guidelines.
- An example template that may be used can be found in the Tools section of these guidelines.

6.4 PRIORITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

It is recognised that, in some areas, the preparation of SWIs for all tasks will take some time.

The preparation of SWIs should be prioritised by:

- Firstly preparing SWIs for all existing high hazard processes, tasks or machinery and equipment currently in use, followed by lower hazard tasks and finally all other processes;
- Placing a higher priority on the tasks that are carried out by students and/or the tasks carried out most frequently;
- Preparing SWIs for all new processes, tasks or machinery and equipment before they are put into general use.

6.5 SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD INCLUDE

- Referral to the risk assessment, including specific information regarding the hazards and associated risks of the task;
- Precautions to be undertaken before commencing the task;
- The environment where the task should be undertaken;
- Personal protective equipment to be worn while undertaking the task;
- Emergency procedures specific to task and reference personnel;
- Clear instructions for undertaking the task described in a safe manner;
- Specific instructions regarding ways of reducing the risks of the task;
- Instructions to ensure that the area is left safe for others to use;
- Correct waste disposal guidelines.

6.6 SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS SHOULD BE

- Reviewed, signed and dated by the area supervisor and Safety Officer;
- Displayed prominently in close proximity to the location of the machinery and equipment or where the task is to be performed;
- Listed in an electronic or physical register within the work area or included in the safety manual of the work area. The register should be readily available in each area where the tasks are carried out;
- Used as an integral part of the training process, but not as a replacement for training programs.

6.7 REVIEW OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

- 6.7.1 Safe Work Instructions for current (in use) machinery and equipment, processes or tasks should be reviewed:
- when a process change or modification takes place;
 - when the information in a document is found to be inadequate;
 - if an incident takes place;
 - at least every 3 years.
- 6.7.2 Safe Work Instructions for out-of-service machinery and equipment, processes or tasks should be reviewed before they return into general use.

7. TOOLS

The following tool is associated with these guidelines.

Safe Work Instructions template

8. COMPLIANCE

These guidelines are written to meet the requirements of:

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems – specifications with guidance for use.

OHSAS 18001:2007 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems – requirements.

9. REFERENCES

9.1 MONASH UNIVERSITY OHS DOCUMENTS

OHS Roles, Committees and Responsibilities procedure
OHS Risk Management procedure
Risk Management Program

9.2 OTHER

NSW WorkCover: [Writing work method statements in plain English](#)

10. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version number	Date of Issue	Changes made to document
4	August 2012	Guidelines for the development of Safe Work Instructions, v.4
4.1	July 2015	Updated hyperlinks throughout to new OH&S website.
5	August 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Updated Definitions section. Added hyperlink to Definitions tool for general definitions.2. Updated section 6 with regard to the maintenance of a local SWI register and cross-reference to risk assessments using S.A.R.A.H.3. Updated section 6.3 to outline where examples of content and SWI formats can be found4. Added Tools section5. Added Compliance section

11. EXAMPLE OF CONTENT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS FOR [TITLE OF EQUIPMENT/MACHINERY/TECHNIQUE/PROCESS]

1. Authorisation

For example:

- Authorisation required to undertake technique/process or use equipment/machinery
- Procedures and personnel that provide authorisation
- Training/supervision required for task
- Reference personnel

2. Hazards & risks associated with equipment/machinery/technique/process

For example:

Hazardous chemicals/radiation/biological materials, sharps to be used, high voltage, swarf produced, speed of operation, possibility of infection/allergy

3. Before you start work:

For example:

- Location of further information about the hazards, eg material safety data sheets, radiation safety manual, laboratory safety manual risk assessment documentation;
- Preparation of area, materials, person required before commencing task

4. The environment where the task is to be undertaken:

For example:

Fume cupboard, glove box, local exhaust ventilation, bio-safety cabinet, radiation laboratory

5. Personal protective equipment to be used:

For example:

Safety glasses/goggles/face shield, protective shoes/rubber boots/waders, gloves, laboratory coat/back-opening gown, safety helmet/hair fasteners/net, ear plugs/muffs, respiratory protection

6. Emergency procedures

For example:

For chemical spill, power outage, explosion

7. After hours access procedures

For example:

Specific requirements to perform activities after hours, e.g. prohibit activity, two people in room, buddy system, etc.

8. Step by step procedures for task

For example:

Process walk through - may itemise individual tasks

Use of flow diagrams, charts or other visual diagrams can be helpful

9. Clean-up procedures

For example:

Swarf removal, decontamination of glassware, cleaning of benches, storage of used materials, carcass removal.

10. Waste disposal procedures

For example:

For chemical/biohazardous/radioactive waste, broken glassware, wood dust, rags

PREPARED BY:

SIGNED:

DATE: