

HSW MANAGEMENT OF WORK AREAS STANDARD

SCOPE

This Standard relates to all work areas under the management and control of Monash University in Australia and applies to affected workers; including staff, students, contractors and visitors.

This Standard sets out the requirements to safely control potentially hazardous work areas including hazards arising as a result of making changes to a work area.

1. Management of Work Areas

It is the responsibility of the Operational Manager to ensure that:

- Work areas that they control are appropriately signed to warn of present danger;
- Work areas that they control are provided with suitable systems to:
 - Restrict access to the work area;
 - Ensure workers are adequately trained and instructed on how to perform work safely.
- Risks to health and safety that arise as a result of use of a work area are eliminated or otherwise minimised so far as is reasonably practicable;
- Monitoring of risks is effectively managed and specific controls put in place to manage high risk activities, or as a result of an incident or near miss, are effective.
- Any changes made are managed in accordance with section 3 – Managing physical changes to a work area.

1.1 Signage

Operational Managers must determine and display appropriate signage at all points of access to a work area. Signage must include details of the process for gaining access to the work area where appropriate (e.g. contact information of the relevant Operational Manager).

Information on regulatory signage requirements is available in the [Regulatory and Hazard Signage Guidelines](#).

For guidance on Monash University internal signage requirements contact Buildings and Property.

1.2 Systems to manage access control

1.2.1 Access control to Work Areas

No worker may enter a restricted access area unsupervised without first receiving access from the relevant Operational Manager. Access may be limited to particular:

- Locations within or sections of the work area (e.g. a specific room or region);
- Time period (e.g. only during regular business hours);
- Activities (e.g. only to install a piece of equipment or perform a specific test); and/or
- Individuals or Groups of workers (e.g. Contractors from a particular company).

Workers must not provide access to any other person unless specifically directed to do so by an appropriate authority (e.g. the relevant Operational Manager, Security guard working under the instruction of Monash Security, senior manager, or a person performing duties as an emergency responder).

The Operational Manager must ensure that requirements before gaining approval to access a workplace (such as receiving a local area HSW induction) are provided to the worker in advance, so far as is reasonably practicable. Some requirements may be waived if access is required as part of an incident or emergency.

The Operational Manager must ensure that an adequate control system is in place and communicated to workers so as to restrict access. The appropriateness of an access control system will relate to the level of risk of the work area and the degree to which supervision can be provided to workers. Access control systems include access:

- Only via the operational manager or their delegate;
- Via the provision of a swipe card;
- Via the installation of a lock and issuing of keys; or
- Signage indicating who can enter (this is the weakest form of control).

1.2.2 Induction

The Operational Manager must ensure that local area inductions are provided to any workers (including contractors) entering a work area to perform unsupervised work in accordance with the [HSW Induction and Training Standard](#).

In the case of contractors, the Operational Manager, typically also their Contractor Responsible Person (CRP), must ensure that the requirements of the [HSW Contractor Management Standard](#) are adhered to.

Where multiple parties share management or control of a workplace, agreement must be reached on which person will ensure local inductions are completed.

Local HSW Induction must include, where appropriate, information regarding:

- Identifying the level of risk of each work area;
- How to correctly interpret signage; and
- How to identify specific hazards that may arise as a result of plant, equipment, materials, processes or specific regions.

1.3 Risk Management

The Operational Manager must ensure that all risks that arise through the use of the work area are managed in accordance with the [HSW Risk Management Standard](#).

Specifically, that the following risks are managed when appropriate to the work location:

- Conducting work after-hours; in accordance with the [After-Hours Standard](#).
- Disruption to an established Emergency Response Plan (albeit temporary); in accordance with the [Emergency Management Standard](#).
- Disruption to emergency communications equipment; in accordance with the [Provision of Emergency Communication Systems Standard](#).
- Fall from height risk; in accordance with the [Working From Heights Risk Management Standard](#).
- Confined spaces; in accordance with the [Confined Space Risk Management Standard](#).
- Earthworks; in accordance with the [Earthworks Risk Management Standard](#).
- Ionising Radioactive sources; in accordance with the [Using Ionising Radiation Standard](#).
- Hazardous chemicals and substances; in accordance with the [Using Chemicals Standard](#).
- Biological hazards; in accordance with the [Using Biologicals and Animals Standard](#).
- Presence of asbestos containing materials; in accordance with the [HSW Asbestos Management Standard](#).
- Occupational noise; in accordance with the [Noise Management Standard](#).
- The operation of drones; in accordance with the [Drone Safety Management Standard](#).

1.4 Essential Services and Life Safety Measures

1.4.1 Identification of essential services and life safety measures

Operational Managers must ensure that suitable essential services and life safety measures are installed and maintained in good working order to ensure a safe working environment. It is the responsibility of the Operational Manager to determine the:

- Suitability of existing life safety measures and essential services and identify if additional measures are required.
- Most appropriate means of monitoring essential services and life safety measures and ensure that the person or organisation determined to perform monitoring is aware of these procedural requirements. For Monash-owned buildings this monitoring is typically performed by Buildings and Property.
 - When determining the means of monitoring, consideration must be given to the:
 - The National Construction Code (NCC) Series;
 - The requirements specified by the HSWMS (e.g. safety showers in accordance with the [Using Chemicals Standard](#)); and
 - Relevant industry standards.
 - Records of monitoring must be retained by the person or organisation in control of the monitoring and be made available upon request. Monitoring records must include the:
 - Asset being tested;
 - Nominated testing routine;
 - Date tested;
 - The findings of the testing; and,
 - Person and organisation performing the testing.

1.4.2 Non-conformity identified during monitoring

Any non-conformity identified through monitoring of essential services and life safety measures must be communicated, in a timely fashion, to any impacted Operational Managers and receipt of this information acknowledged.

1.5 **Workplace Inspections**

Inspections are a regular and thorough visual check of the workplace to identify any health or safety hazards that need to be managed more effectively. This includes hazards arising from changes to the workplace, such as refurbishments or new activities, and hazards arising from poor safety practices.

1.5.1 Frequency of inspections

The frequency of inspections depends on the level of HSW risk present:

Type of work area	Level of risk	Frequency of inspection
Areas with minimal risks • Indoor premises for office work, teaching or accommodation • Outdoor general-purpose areas, e.g. walkways, gardens	Low	At least once per year
Areas with increased risk due to the types of activities and materials present • Laboratories, workshops, clinical spaces, animal facilities and chemical storage areas • Stores and loading docks • Plant rooms • Roof access outside safe zones and safety equipment • Work in areas that may disturb asbestos-containing materials	Medium	At least once per semester
Areas that present an immediate risk to health and safety • High risk radioactive materials or chemicals • Tunnels	High	As determined by the Operational Manager

Heads of Units must ensure that areas under their control are inspected according to the above schedule.

Safety Officers are responsible for coordinating workplace inspections with local Operational Managers and staff. This includes overseeing who participates in inspections; ensuring they have appropriate training, experience and information; inspections are effective; and findings and actions are recorded.

It is recommended that two or more staff share the work of conducting inspections in their area.

Where a Designated Work Group (DWG) exists, elected HSRs must be invited to each HSW Workplace Inspection or Spot Check.

1.5.2 Conducting inspections

Refer to the [Audits, Inspections and Monitoring webpage](#) for information to assist with conducting inspections. The Workplace Inspection Form or a locally developed checklist can be used to conduct workplace inspections.

Before commencing an inspection, local safety information such as previous inspection findings, hazard and incident reports, risk assessments and safety alerts) should be reviewed to identify any specific control measures that should be checked during the inspection, to see if they are effective and are being maintained.

During the inspection, observations and photographic evidence of any hazards should be recorded. These findings and any required HSW actions must be recorded using the SARAH Workplace Inspections Form, either during the inspection or soon afterwards.

Completion of inspections and corrective actions must be monitored by the Head of Academic/Administrative Unit, Safety Officer/s and HSW Committee.

1.5.3 HSW Spot Checks

A HSW Spot Check is a one-off inspection to assess a specific HSW issue.

This could include:

- Inspecting a particular type of hazard, e.g. chemicals or cleaning products

- Inspecting a specific area, e.g. a storage area
- Checking that a process is being followed e.g. checking induction records
- Reviewing whether safe work instructions are being followed correctly, e.g. by observing how work is conducted

The spot check determines which work practices are consistent with documented HSW risk management practices, standards and legislative requirements. The HSW Spot Check is not part of the regular inspection schedule. The same competency requirements apply as for conducting scheduled inspections. Staff may need to notify relevant Operational Managers before undertaking HSW Spot Checks, e.g. for restricted access areas.

All HSW Spot Checks must be recorded using the SARAH Checklists and Inspections module.

1.5.4 Competency

Inspections and Spot Checks must be conducted by experienced local staff or Safety Officers. Staff who are unfamiliar with conducting inspections should work with more experienced staff members or their HSW Consultant/Advisor to familiarise themselves with this process. Staff from other areas can be invited to assist with inspections, e.g. to provide an independent viewpoint or share their expertise.

Medium risk areas must be inspected by staff who have additionally completed the HSW induction and training requirements for admittance into these areas (e.g. laboratory/workshop/studio induction, relevant safety modules in myDevelopment), or be accompanied by someone who has. They also need to have experience in the types of activities being conducted, including storage, handling and disposal of any hazardous materials present.

High risk areas can only be inspected by Operational Managers.

2. Managing Physical Changes to a Work Area

Any person responsible for managing physical changes to a work area is responsible for ensuring that:

- Impacted workers are provided with communication on the nature and details of the proposed change; in accordance with the [HSW Engagement Standard](#);
- Adequate consultation, in accordance with the HSW Engagement Standard, is held to listen and respond to worker concerns.
- For any changes with an anticipated duration of more than 24 hours, and that may increase or maintain an inherent level of risk greater than low risk ensure:
 - B&P has been notified via a work order request for short term or minor changes; and
 - SISfm has been updated to accurately reflect these changes before the changes are made effective.

These changes typically arise as a result of:

- New spaces that are, or are being, constructed;
- Renovations and other modifications to a work area that have, or will have, changed the risks to workers utilising that space; or
- Temporary changes to space to facilitate an event or function.

When there is a change to a work area, including when a Laboratory, Studio or Workshop space is vacated, the work area must be cleared of all hazards and left in a safe, decontaminated state, and the risk of potential exposure to biological, chemical or radiation hazards is minimised. This may include completion of the [Vacation of Laboratories, Studios, Workshops Checklist](#).

Operational Managers must monitor changes to a work area to ensure that risks to the health and safety of workers are eliminated or otherwise minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

2.1 Transferring control of a work area

Where change to a work area is required, the Operational Manager may hold collaborative discussions, in accordance with the [HSW Engagement Standard](#), to determine who should be in control throughout the duration of works. For high and very high-risk changes, a chain of custody must be established.

In the event that control of a work area shall be transferred, Operational Managers must transfer that control to a:

- Project Manager that is:
 - Appointed by the Director of Projects, B&P; or
 - Appointed by the appropriate organisation in such cases where the work area is part of a building, which is only partially or not owned by Monash University.
- Monash University appointed Principal Contractor in accordance with the [HSW Contractor Management Standard](#).
- Additional care must be taken to ensure that risks will be managed by the third party's own HSW requirements. This is typically appropriate for:
 - Closed sites (where there is no principal contractor).
 - Event spaces (such as the use of a catering firm).

The Operational Manager managing change to a work area, and, the Operational Manager that will take control of the work area, must ensure that appropriate consultation is conducted with workers to ensure that the risks to their health and safety are eliminated or otherwise minimised so far as reasonably practicable in accordance with the [HSW Engagement Standard](#) and the [HSW Risk Management Standard](#).

3. Responsibility for Implementation

A comprehensive list of HSW responsibilities are provided in the [HSW Roles and Responsibilities Standard](#).

4. Tools

The following tool is associated with this standard:

[Vacation of Laboratory/Studio/Workshop Checklist](#)

5. Abbreviations and definitions

HSW	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
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Definitions specific to this standard are provided below.

Key word	Definition	Typical Examples
Essential Services	Services as described by a qualified building surveyor, by whomsoever rendered, that the interruption of which would endanger the life, health or personal safety of any person.	● Fire doors and fire isolated stairwells ● Smoke and Heat Alarm System ● Sprinklers ● Exit signs (egress) ● Emergency Lighting ● Fire curtains
Life Safety Measures	Services as determined by the Group Manager, Health Safety & Wellbeing, by whomsoever rendered, that the interruption of which would endanger the life, health or personal safety of any person.	● Safety Showers and Eyewash Stations ● Duress alarms ● Power Isolation/RCDs
Hazardous Work Areas	Spaces that pose a high risk to health and safety due to the type of equipment, substances or processes they contain. These areas are described by their Inherent Level of Risk .	● Laboratories ● Workshops ● Animal facilities ● Stores and loading docks

GOVERNANCE

Parent policy	HS&W Policy
Supporting documents	Monash University HSW documents All Monash University policies and standards can be found on the Monash HSW Website HSW Management System - Health Safety & Wellbeing
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated documents	Australian and International Standards ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems
Related legislation	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic)
Endorsement	Monash University OHS Committee

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1.0	2026	Administrative changes due to: • Conversion of Procedure to a HSW Standard • Transition Procedure out of University Policy Bank on to HSW website