

How to complete a workplace inspection or spot check - Guidelines

Scope and Purpose

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

These guidelines provide a practical approach about how to conduct a workplace inspection or a spot check.

Abbreviations

OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
HSR	Health and Safety Representatives
HSW	Health, Safety and Wellbeing
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
S.A.R.A.H.+	Safety and Risk Analysis Hub
UV	Ultraviolet

Definitions

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

How to complete an inspection or spot check

1.1 Workplace inspections

Workplace inspections are a regular systematic physical check of the work area to identify any hazards and safety issues. Safety issues can arise due to changes in the workplace, new activities, or poor work practices, so regular monitoring of the workplace is required.

Inspections involve walking around the work area and looking at the work environment "from floor to ceiling" to:

- Identify potential hazards
- Check that OHS requirements are being met
- Check that safety measures (controls) are in place

Inspections are also an opportunity to talk to local staff about safety in their area.

Workplace inspections are carried out at least once per year in all Monash University-controlled areas. For higher risk areas, inspections are required at least twice per year (see the [OHS Management of Work Areas procedure](#)).

Safety Officers can coordinate inspections for their work areas, and can delegate them to local staff where appropriate. Inspection teams can also include local staff, managers and specialty safety officers. HSRs should also be invited to participate in workplace inspections.

Special care should be taken to plan inspections of areas where access is restricted to authorised persons only, such as laboratories, workshops, studios, backstage of performance theatres, warehousing areas etc. These areas should only be inspected by experienced staff who are authorised to enter the area, or they accompanied by authorised person/s. Participation or advice may be sought from subject matter experts, such as colleagues or OHS Consultants/Advisors, so that inspections are as effective as possible.

1.2 *Spot checks*

Spot checks are an opportunity to focus on a specific issue or compliance requirement. For example, you may want to check on a specific type of equipment, or check that electrical testing and tagging has been done, or check that all decanted chemicals are labelled correctly.

Spot checks should be performed by experienced staff, Safety Officers and Operational Managers who are authorised to enter the area. HSRs should also be invited to participate in Spot Checks.

1.3 *Recording findings and actions*

Findings and actions that arise from workplace inspections and spot checks must be recorded in SARA+. This can be done on the go if you are using the [Riskware App](#) or after the inspection is completed. Refer to the [Quick Guide Submitting A Workplace Inspection Report in SARA+](#) for detailed instructions.

What to look for during your inspection

2. *General office and indoor work environment*

2.1 *OHS noticeboards*

OHS noticeboards should be prominently displayed in each workplace, and display up-to-date versions of important OHS documents:

- [OHS Policy](#)
- [OHS Issue Resolution poster](#)
- [“If you are injured at work” poster](#)
- [Immediate Incident Management poster](#)
- Building & Floor Warden and First Aider contact details
- Safety Officer and HSR contact details (as applicable)

2.2 *Work environment and housekeeping*

- Lighting levels are sufficient and without excessive glare, and light fittings are in working order
- Temperature and ventilation are comfortable
- Work area is free from excessive noise or nuisance noise
- Area is tidy and free from tripping hazards
- Furniture is in good condition and is fit for purpose.
- Desks, benches and chairs are an appropriate height for tasks
- Amenities are clean and tidy, and free of drips/leaks (including toilets, showers and kitchen areas, as applicable)
- Electrical equipment is tested and tagged and in good working order
- There are no double-adapters or panel heaters, and extension cords are kept away from thoroughfares
- Heavy items are stored below shoulder height, and trolleys are available and in good working order to transport heavy items
- Storage areas and photocopy/mail rooms are tidy and sufficiently ventilated
- Heavy or awkward items are stored below shoulder height and shelves are not overloaded
- Trolleys and stepladders are available (if needed), labelled with safe use instructions, e.g. weight limits, and in safe working order
- Rubbish is regularly collected.
- Stairs are in good condition, including handrails, steps and any non-slip strips

2.3 *Emergency preparedness*

Check the following:

- [Immediate Incident Management poster](#) or local emergency procedures are displayed and in-date
- Evacuation diagrams are accurate, including any recent changes to the area
- Emergency exit signs clearly visible and illuminated
- Emergency evacuation routes are clear of obstructions, and no materials are being stored in emergency exit stairs
- Assembly areas are accessible
- Signage for fire extinguishers/blankets, first aid kits and defibrillators is suitable and clearly displayed
- Fire extinguishers and/or fire blankets present and serviced within the last 6 months
- First aid kits have been checked and restocked in the last 6 months
- Defibrillator/s are checked monthly (where available)
- Duress alarms have been tested (as appropriate)

3. *Authorised access areas – laboratories, clinics, workshops, studios, backstage theatres, warehouse areas etc.*

3.1 *General requirements:*

- Lighting levels are sufficient and without excessive glare, and light fittings are in working order.
- Temperature and ventilation are comfortable.
- The noise level is not excessive.
- Work surfaces are free from clutter.
- Thoroughfares and under benches are clear from tripping hazards and are accessible for cleaning.
- Benches, chairs and other surfaces are in good condition and can be easily cleaned.
- Items are stored off the ground for cleaning, where appropriate.
- Electrical equipment is tested and tagged and is in good working condition.
- There are no double adapters in use, power boards are fitted with overload protections and are not overloaded.
- Storage areas are tidy and heavy items are stored above knee height and below shoulder height.
- Trolleys are available and are in good working order.
- Step ladders are available (if needed), labelled with safe use instructions, e.g. weight limits, and are in safe working order.
- Access to the area is restricted to authorised workers only and entries and exits are free of clutter.
- Appropriate signage is displayed at all access points, including hazards and local contact information, and is up-to-date.
- Food, drink and personal belongings (jackets etc.) are not stored in the work area.
- Rubbish is regularly collected.

As applicable:

- Hand washing facilities are available and in working order
- Safety showers and eye wash stations are readily accessible, tested weekly by local staff, and serviced every 6 months
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided and is in good condition (e.g. insulated gloves/mitts for handling hot/cold equipment, hand protection and eye, respiratory protection for chemicals and biologicals, eye protection for lasers and UV, lab coats).

3.2 *Equipment and plant:*

This can be any electrical equipment, including for centrifuging, heating/cooling, tools, temperature-controlled environments, plant and lasers. Powered and hand-tools for cutting, drilling, grinding, etc.

- Equipment servicing, maintenance and/or use logs are up-to-date
- Safety signage is in place to inform about any hazards present
- Electrical safety - away from water or ignition sources, tested & tagged, cords and power points are in good condition

- Machinery has appropriate guarding or interlocks in place
- There is sufficient clearance around the equipment and access is restricted and/or barriers around the equipment are in place (as appropriate)
- Specific PPE is available for the work being conducted (e.g. dust masks, eye protection)

3.3 *Class III or IV lasers*

- Warning signs are clearly displayed
- Protective housing is in place and access to the beam is restricted
- Remote interlock, master switch / beam stops or other fail-safe devices are in place
- Wavelength-specific eye protection is available for laser operators

3.4 *Temperature controlled walk-in rooms*

- This can include cold rooms, warm rooms and freezers.
- Rooms are regularly maintained and are in good condition, including walking surfaces.
- All lights are working
- Emergency door release mechanism and alarms are in good working condition.

4. *Chemical Management*

4.1 *General requirements for storage, handling and waste management*

- The following posters are displayed where chemicals are stored or used, and are in-date:
 - [Dangerous Goods and Combustible Liquids Segregation Chart](#)
 - [Chemical Storage poster](#)
 - [Chemical Waste Management poster](#)
- Chemicals are stored in dedicated storage areas and are stored according to the above requirements, including avoiding storing in cabinet bunds
- Containers of decanted chemicals or chemical mixtures are appropriately labelled
- Chemical waste containers are labelled, stored appropriately and disposed of regularly
- Empty containers are clean and have labels removed/defaced
- Local Chemwatch chemical register (manifest) is accurate and SDSs are available for the chemicals being stored.
- Fume cupboards are tidy and serviced within the last 12 months
- Equipment is available for the safe transport of chemicals and chemical waste (e.g. trolleys, carrier baskets)
- Appropriate PPE is available for the types of chemicals present, and being used correctly by workers in the area/s
- Chemical spill kit in good condition and fully stocked
- Chemical reactions that are unattended are clearly signed

4.2 *Gases and cryogenics (liquid nitrogen, dry ice)*

- The [Gas Storage and Segregation poster](#) is displayed where gases are stored or in use
- Cylinders, dewars and dry ice supply containers are easily accessible, and stored away from combustible materials
- Areas where gases and cryogenics are used and stored are adequately ventilated.
- Appropriate PPE is available for use of liquid nitrogen (cryogenic gloves and apron, face shield) and in good condition
- Containers for transport of liquid nitrogen are appropriate cryogenic dewars, and are in good condition
- Trolleys used to transport liquid nitrogen vessels are in good condition
- Only in-use (connected to a regulator) gas cylinders are present in the work area and cylinders are in-date (check tag)
- The number of cylinders is kept to a minimum.
- Empty gas cylinders are separated from full, labelled and are removed.
- Gas cylinders are segregated according to compatibility.

- Appropriate regulators and gas lines connections are used and are in good condition
- Gas cylinders are secured to prevent accidentally tipping
- Gas cylinder trolley is available (if applicable)
- Gas or oxygen monitors are present (if applicable), have been serviced in the last 6 months and an emergency response plan is displayed and in-date.

4.3 *Scheduled poisons and cytotoxic drugs*

- The [Purchase and Storage of Scheduled Poisons poster](#) is displayed where these drugs are used and/or stored
- Schedule 4Ds, 8 and 9 poisons are stored in dedicated safes and log books are accurate
- Other scheduled poisons are stored in a lockable containers that cannot be easily removed from premises.
- Cytotoxic sharps and cytotoxic soft waste containers are in use (if required) and are not over-full

5. *Biological management*

For PC2 laboratories, the workplace inspection can be conducted together with the annual OREI / OGTR inspection and only record findings that aren't included in the OREI inspection.

- Biosafety cabinets and laminar flow hoods are clean, free of clutter, and have been serviced in the last 12 months
- Centrifuges are well maintained and have aerosol-containment (e.g. bucket lids)
- Autoclaves are well-maintained, including having in-tact seals, correct water levels, and have been serviced as needed
- Biological samples appropriately contained to prevent spills (including for transport) and labelled appropriately
- Disinfectant hand soap or other hand sanitiser is available for hand hygiene
- Disinfectants for cleaning/decontamination are correctly labelled and in-date
- Biological sharps waste and soft waste are segregated correctly, soft waste is double-bagged, and bins are regularly emptied
- A biological spill kit available, and any consumables replaced (if applicable)

6. *Radiation management*

6.1 *General requirements*

- The Radiation Management Plan and any other governing documents (e.g. Lab manual) are readily accessible where radiation is in use, and in-date
- Personal dosimeters are in use and are changed over regularly (if applicable)

6.2 *Sealed sources and/or X-rays*

- Appropriate signage for radiation apparatus and locations is in place (e.g. door signs)
- Servicing, maintenance and calibration logs for radiation apparatus are in place and up-to-date (if applicable)

6.3 *Radioisotopes*

- Hot labs and facilities for handling radioisotopes (e.g. fume cupboards) are labelled for isotope use
- Radioisotope stocks are stored securely
- Shielding equipment (e.g. perspex shields) are in place, if required
- A radioisotope spill procedure is displayed and in-date
- A radioisotope spill kit is available, and any consumables restocked
- Contamination monitors (e.g. Geiger counters) are working correctly and are calibrated regularly
- Radioisotope waste is labelled and stored appropriately, and disposed of in a timely manner

6.4 *UV radiation*

- Appropriate shielding and/or interlocks are in place

- Appropriate PPE is available (e.g. skin and eye protection)

7. Outdoor areas

Outdoor work areas may include car parks, walkways, courtyards and outdoor stairs that are within your work area or is used for your work activities. Another time you may want to inspect an outdoor area if prior to running an outdoor event.

Things to check for can include:

- Fire exits, stairs and pathways are clear, adequately lit and safe to use, including for trolleys and transport of materials
- Evacuation assembly areas are accessible and clear of obstructions
- Traffic is managed appropriately, and any restrictions are observed by vehicles (e.g. at pedestrian crossings)

Responsibility for Implementation

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

- **Heads of Academic/Administration Units:** It is the responsibility of the Head of the academic/administrative unit to ensure that these guidelines are implemented in their area.
- **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.
- **Supervisors:** It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that workplace inspections are undertaken in their areas of responsibility.
 - Safety are responsible for coordinating workplace inspections in their area and monitor completion of actions that arise from workplace inspections.
 - **Staff, Students, Visitors and Contractors:** All staff, students, visitors and contractors of Monash University are expected to reasonably comply with instructions and guidance provided by persons undertaking workplace inspection activities.

Tools

The following tools are associated with these guidelines.

- [Authorised Access Areas Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Hazard Specific Checklist](#)
- [Indoor Areas Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Outdoor Areas Inspection Checklist](#)

Legislation and Related Documents

Legislation Mandating Compliance

- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

Australian and International Standards

- ISO 45001: 2018 OHS Management Systems - Requirements with guidance for use.

Monash HSW documents

- [OHS Roles, Responsibilities and Committees Procedure](#)
- [OHS Management of Work Areas procedure](#)
- [Quick Guide Submitting A Workplace Inspection Report in SARAH+](#)

Document History

Version	Date of Issue	Changes made to document
1.0	Nov 2024	How to complete a workplace inspection or spot check Guidelines v.1.0