

Monash University Guidelines

Guidelines Title	Development of Safe Work Instructions Guidelines
Parent Policy/Procedure	OHS Policy
Date Effective	September 2018
Review Date	September 2021
Guidelines Owner	Manager, OH&S
Category	Operational
Version Number	6
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Scope	These guidelines apply to staff, students, visitors and contractors of Monash University in Australia.
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.

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1. Abbreviations

OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OH&S	Monash Occupational Health & Safety
S.A.R.A.H.	Safety and Risk Analysis Hub
SWI	Safe Work Instruction

2. Definitions

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

Safe Work Instruction (SWI): Written instruction(s) 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.

3. General Recommendations for Safe Work Instructions (SWIs)

3.1 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.
- Where the risk assessment is in S.A.R.A.H, the SWI should be attached to the related risk assessment.

3.2 Development of SWIs

- SWIs are to be written by a staff member or student with sound, hands on experience and knowledge of the tasks to be conducted;
- It is preferable to include the experience and knowledge of several staff members or students to enhance the effectiveness of the instructions. Additional guidance can be sought from the local Safety Officer, OHS Consultant or subject matter expert.
- The manufacturer's user manual provided with the equipment/machinery and the risk assessment are good resources for safety information to include in SWIs;

3.3 Format of SWIs

- The use of tables, photographs, diagrams and charts within the SWI may be helpful.
- An example SWI template can be found in Section 5: Tools.

3.4 Priorities for the Development of SWIs

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 for all existing high risk processes, tasks or machinery and equipment in use, followed by lower risk tasks and processes.

Consideration should also be given to:

- The frequency of the task;
- The person using the equipment, e.g. undergraduate students; and
- All new processes, tasks or machinery and equipment before they are put into general use.

3.5 SWIs should include:

- Reference to the risk assessment, including safety controls for identified hazards and authorisations required to undertake the technique/process or use of equipment/machinery. For example:
 - OHS induction and specific training requirements, qualifications and certificates;
 - Specific operator competency requirements; or
 - Names of personnel who can approve competency has been achieved.
- Precautions to be undertaken before commencing the task;
- Personal protective equipment to be worn while undertaking the task;
- Emergency procedures specific to the task, such as power isolation procedure, spill containment, first aid response and After hours emergency response;
- Specific restrictions or requirements if the work is to be conducted After hours. After hours work may require additional authorisation from your supervisor and Safety Officer;
- Clear instructions for undertaking the task;
- Instructions to ensure that the area is left safe for others to use, such as clean up and shut down procedures; and
- Correct waste disposal guidelines.

3.6 SWIs should be:

- Attached to the related risk assessment in S.A.R.A.H, where appropriate. Safe Work Instructions attached to S.A.R.A.H do not require a supervisor's signature;
- Where Safe Work Instructions are not linked or attached to an approved risk assessment in S.A.R.A.H; they must 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 in the safety manual of the work area. The register should be readily available in each area where the tasks are carried out; and
- Used as an integral part of the training process, but not as a replacement for training programs.

3.7 Review of SWIs

- SWIs 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; or
 - At least every 3 years.
- SWIs for out-of-service machinery and equipment, processes or tasks should be reviewed before they return into general use.

4. Responsibility for Implementation

A comprehensive list of OHS responsibilities is provided in the document [OHS Roles, Committees and Responsibilities 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 academic/administrative unit to ensure that the Guidelines for the development of Safe Work Instructions 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 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.
- **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.

5. Tools

The following tool is associated with these guidelines.

[Safe Work Instructions template](#)

6. Records

For OHS Records document retention please refer to:

[Monash University OHS Records Management Procedure.](#)

Status	Revised
Approval Body	Monash University OHS Committee
Legislation Mandating Compliance	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)
Related Policies	OHS Policy
Related Documents	<p>Australian and International Standards</p> <p>AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems – specifications with guidance for use.</p> <p>OHSAS 18001:2007 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems – requirements.</p> <p>Other</p> <p>NSW WorkCover: Writing work method statements in plain English</p> <p>Monash University OHS Documents</p> <p>OHS Roles, Responsibilities and Committees procedure</p> <p>OHS Risk Management procedure</p> <p>Risk Management Program</p>

7. Document History

Version	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 found 4. Added Tools section 5. Added Compliance section

Version	Date of Issue	Changes made to document
5.1	August 2017	1. Updated logos in header
6	September 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Updated Hyperlinks 2. Updated Section 3 - Rephrased and improved flow of information. 3. Updated Section 3.3 – Corrected the location of the example SWI template from section 6 to section 5. 4. Updated Section 3.5 - Aligned the SWI template information more closely to this section and also added after hours considerations. 5. Updated Section 3.6 to reference attaching the SWI to the related risk assessment in SARAH and clarified the requirement for sign off on risk assessments not entered into SARAH. 6. Updated Tools section. 7. Updated the Safe Work instruction template