

# Development of Safe Work Instructions Guidelines

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## Scope and Purpose

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

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

## 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

## Definitions

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

**Safe Work Instruction (SWI):** Written instruction(s) for tasks that outline the method of undertaking a task, whilst emphasising ways to reduce any risk of harm to persons, property or the environment.

## General Recommendations for SWIs

### 1. *Risk Management*

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The SWI should be attached to the related risk assessment and submitted together with the risk assessment for approval.

### 2. *Format of SWIs*

- 2.1 The use of tables, photographs, diagrams and charts within the SWI may be helpful.
- 2.2 An example SWI template can be found under “Tools”.

### 3. *Development of SWIs*

- 3.1 SWIs are written by the person who is performing the tasks to be conducted. SWIs for shared equipment and processes may be developed by the shared facility subject matter expert/s in consultation with the users, where possible.
- 3.2 It is recommended that SWIs are developed in consultation with subject matter experts, technical staff, the local Safety officer or OHS Consultant/Advisor. Where employees are completing the activity, the Health & Safety Representative should also be consulted.
- 3.3 Other resources such as the manufacturer's User Manual provided with the equipment/machinery and any other relevant OHS procedures and guidance material should also be consulted, where appropriate.

### 4. *SWIs should include:*

- 4.1 Reference to the risk assessment, including safety controls for 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 that competency has been achieved.
- 4.2 Precautions to be undertaken before commencing the task.
- 4.3 Personal protective equipment to be worn while undertaking the task.
- 4.4 Emergency procedures specific to the task, such as a power isolation procedure, spill containment, First Aid and emergency response.
- 4.5 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.
- 4.6 Clear instructions for undertaking the task.
- 4.7 Instructions to ensure that the area is left safe for others to use, such as clean up and shut down procedures; and
- 4.8 Correct waste disposal guidelines.

### 5. *SWIs should be:*

- 5.1 Attached to the related risk assessment in S.A.R.A.H, where appropriate. SWIs attached to the risk assessment in S.A.R.A.H do not require a supervisor's signature.
- 5.2 Where SWIs 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.
- 5.3 Displayed prominently in close proximity to the location of the machinery and equipment or where the task is to be performed.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Used as an integral part of the training process, but not as a replacement for training programs.

### 6. *Review of SWIs*

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 SWIs for out-of-service machinery and equipment, processes or tasks should be reviewed before they are returned into general use.

## 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 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.

## Tools

The following tool is associated with these guidelines.

[Safe Work Instructions template](#)

## 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 OHS documents

- [OHS Roles, Responsibilities and Committees Procedure](#)
- [OHS Risk Management Procedure](#)
- [Risk Management Guidance Material](#)

## 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"> <li>1. Updated Definitions section. Added hyperlink to Definitions tool for general definitions.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>3. Updated section 6.3 to outline where examples of content and SWI formats can be found</li> <li>4. Added Tools section</li> <li>5. Added Compliance section</li> </ol>
5.1	August 2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Updated logos in header</li> </ol>
6	September 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Updated Hyperlinks</li> <li>2. Updated Section 3 - Rephrased and improved flow of information.</li> <li>3. Updated Section 3.3 – Corrected the location of the example SWI template from section 6 to section 5.</li> <li>4. Updated Section 3.5 - Aligned the SWI template information more closely to this section and also added after hours considerations.</li> <li>5. Updated Section 3.6 to reference attaching the SWI to the related risk assessment in SARA.H and clarified the requirement for sign off on risk assessments not entered into SARA.H.</li> <li>6. Updated Tools section.</li> <li>7. Updated the Safe Work instruction template</li> </ol>
6.1	April 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Updated certification logo in header</li> <li>2. Updated hyperlinks</li> </ol>
6.2	November 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Applied new format</li> <li>2. Updated definition of Safe work Instruction</li> <li>3. Section 3.4 – Added the requirement to attach SWI's to the risk assessment before approval. Reworked and consolidated information.</li> <li>4. Updated all website links</li> <li>5. Removed section on prioritisation for development of Safe Work Instructions.</li> <li>6. Updated related documents</li> </ol>