

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure that safe work instructions are developed for all techniques, processes (tasks), machinery and equipment where there exists a risk of harm to any persons, property or the environment in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (2004) and associated regulations.

Safe work instructions highlight the hazards and risks in a process or task and provide information necessary to assist all staff and students to perform activities safely. These instructions also assist in the training and orientation of new staff and students to reduce the risk of the tasks to be performed, as well as providing them with the rules and procedures necessary to ensure that they can perform their work in a safe manner.

2. SCOPE

These guidelines apply to 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 under the control of the staff and students at the Australian campuses of Monash University and Monash controlled entities.

3. ABBREVIATIONS

OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety branch
SWI	Safe work instructions

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 HEAD OF ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT

Head of academic/administrative unit is used to denote the head of the area that is undertaking the activity. For academic areas, this term includes head of faculty, school, department, institute or centre. For administrative areas, the term includes head of division, branch, centre or unit.

4.2 MONASH CONTROLLED ENTITY

Monash controlled entities (eg companies) include entities where Monash can control decision making, directly or indirectly, in relation to the financial and operating policies so as to enable the entity to operate with it in pursuing the objectives of Monash University.

For the remainder of this document, a Monash controlled entity will be referred to as a controlled entity.

4.3 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(s) of harm to staff, students, property or the environment.

4.4 SUPERVISOR

Supervisors are those who are responsible for overseeing:

- the work program of other staff;
- the study program of honours and postgraduate students; and
- undergraduate students in lectures, tutorial and practical classes and on field trips.

The supervisor of staff or students has a particular responsibility for safeguarding the occupational health and safety of those in their charge. The supervisor can delegate the supervision or training of a staff member or student to a suitably qualified and/or

experienced person, as appropriate for the task. The supervisor is, however, responsible for ensuring that the staff member or student has received appropriate training and has gained sufficient competence to undertake the task.

4.5 ZONE

A zone is a group of people who work in a faculty, division, school, etc or a building or a group of buildings located in the same area. A zone can extend to an entire campus.

5. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

A comprehensive list of OHS responsibilities is provided in the document *Occupational health and safety management at Monash University: Structure, functions, roles and responsibilities*. The 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/controlled entity to ensure that the *Guidelines for the development of safe work instructions* are implemented in their unit/entity.

5.2 ZONE/ OHS&E COMMITTEES

It is the responsibility of zone/ OHS&E committees to:

- provide advice and feedback to heads of units on actions needed to comply with these guidelines; and
- monitor the effectiveness of safe work instructions developed.

5.3 SUPERVISORS

It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that safe work instructions are developed 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 AND STUDENTS

All staff and students on the Australian campuses of Monash University are expected to familiarise themselves with and comply with the safe work instructions 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/chemical/process must be completed before developing safe work instructions to identify the hazards, associated levels of risk and suitable risk controls.
- *OHS Risk Management at Monash University* describes the risk management process at Monash University.

6.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS:

- Safe work instructions 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 safe work instructions.
- As far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety representative of the area must be consulted during development of safe work instructions.

6.3 **FORMAT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS**

- The use of tables, visual diagrams, charts and flow diagrams within the safe work instruction may be helpful in providing a concise and effective reference and training document.
- An example of the format that may be used in safe work instructions is attached to these guidelines

6.4 **PRIORITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS:**

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

The priorities for the preparation of instructions should be:

- Safe work instructions should be prepared firstly for all existing high hazard processes, tasks or machinery and equipment currently in use followed by lower hazard tasks and finally all other processes.
- A higher priority should be placed on the tasks that are carried out by students and/or the tasks carried out most frequently.
- All new processes, tasks or machinery and equipment should have safe work instructions prepared 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 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 a register within the work area or included in the safety manual of the work area. The register must 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 either:

- when a process change or modification takes place; and/or
- when the information in document is found to be inadequate; or
- 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. EXAMPLE OF SAFE WORK INSTRUCTIONS FORMAT

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, eg, 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: