

# Explanatory Notes for Health and Safety Plans

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The annual Health and Safety Plan for Faculties and Other Areas (FOA) should be drawn up before 30 November of the preceding year. The plan should be reviewed every three months at management meetings and updated periodically. A copy of the proposed Plan should be sent by the 30 November to the Vice-Chancellor through the Manager, Occupational Health and Safety.

The Health and Safety Plan should cover 12 areas:

1. Responsibilities & Accountabilities
  2. Inspections of the Workplace
  3. Emergency Management
  4. Training
  5. Performance Review
  6. Risk Assessments
  7. Consultation and Issue Management
  8. Safe Systems of Work
  9. Regulatory and Standards Compliance
  10. Work Environment
  11. Staff Health and Wellbeing
  12. Contract Management
- OHS Manual Links

These areas are covered in more detail below. The details and content for each FOA will vary depending upon its operations and the particular risks it faces.

The [University OHS Manual](#) and [OHS website](#) will assist in the development of the Plan.

One way for a FOA to document its Plan is through a series of tables covering the above 12 areas. An [OHS Plan outline](#) is provided on the OHS website.

## 1. Responsibilities & Accountabilities

A requirement of the OHS Act is to appoint a Senior Management OHS Representative to represent the organisation with staff on OHS issues. Appointing a Management representative will assist in the prompt local resolution of health and safety matters (see [OHS Consultation](#) on the OHS website).

Each FOA also needs a nominated person to manage their OHS Plan and to coordinate the Plan across the FOA. If warranted this may be a formal position. For most small, low risk areas this will probably be the Senior Management OHS Representative.

Given the decentralised operations of most FOAs, the FOA Management should ensure each work area has some local contact person.

Again under the OHS Act, staff in each geographical area have the right to come together as a "Designated Work Group" and elect DWG OHS Representatives. Managers should know whom their local OHS representatives are, as they are required under law to consult with them on OHS matters (see [OHS Consultation](#) on the OHS website).

## 2. Inspections of the Workplace

In order to demonstrate personal commitment to health and safety, as well as show due diligence, each manager/supervisor should carry out regular workplace inspections. These inspections should be carried out by the manager/supervisor together with an employee representative (H&S Representative if possible). The number of inspections per year will depend upon the risks in that workplace. In general:

Offices	2 times per year
Workshops	6 times per year
Laboratories	3 times per year
Plant rooms	2 times per year

Warehousing	4 times per year
Chemical stores	3 times per year

[Checklists](#) can be found on the OHS website. The OHS Unit (Human Resources Services) can provide further advice

### 3. Emergency Management

In each multi-storey building, the Emergency Control Organisation is headed by the Chief Warden. Managers have a responsibility to ensure that their staff are protected by an Emergency Control Organisation. In particular if they are the major occupier (the Faculty /Division with the most people in the building) they must ensure that a Chief Warden has been nominated. Refer to the [Local Emergency Preparations Procedure](#).

Given the number of wardens and the movement of staff across the organisation, it is impossible to centrally manage and keep current warden lists etc. Therefore local management of wardens is essential. In general a senior manager in each building / campus (see 1 above) should be given the task of ensuring an Emergency Control Organisation is maintained for each building the FOA occupies. Each building has a "major occupier" who is responsible for maintaining the emergency arrangements for that building. This includes ensuring:

- The nomination of a Chief Warden
- Sufficient wardens for the building
- The nomination of a suitable evacuation drill date and time and necessary arrangements with the University Fire Safety Officer

Faculties and Schools have the responsibility to ensure that the Student Emergency statement is read out to all students at the start of each semester.

Similarly managers should know who are first aiders and that there is sufficient assistance available.

Some FOAs may need to develop specific contingency or emergency management plans. These would supplement the University's overall emergency management system.

### 4. Training

Ensuring that staff are adequately trained for their work is an important part of a manager's responsibility under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. In particular:

- H&S training should be incorporated into the induction program for new staff including casuals and contractors
- Managers and supervisors should be aware of their responsibilities for OHS
- Special training is required to operate some equipment and to carry out certain work. For example: contract management, forklift operation, herbicide use
- The same responsibility to induct and train staff applies to casual or temporary staff
- A system is maintained to document training programs and ensuring they are kept up to date
- A system to record attendance at training

H&S Representative training and First Aider training can be organised through OHS Unit(Human Resources Services)

Assistance and advice on training can be obtained from OHS Unit(Human Resources Services).

Refresher or awareness training can be incorporated into team briefings. There is a range of training materials and videos available from the [Library](#) and the internet.

### 5. Performance Review

To prevent accidents from re-occurring they must be reported and investigated. The line manager of the person who has been injured has a responsibility to ensure accidents are reported and investigated: see [Accident and Hazard Reporting](#). In particular:

- All injuries leading to WorkCover claims are investigated and reported on by the relevant manager
- All serious accidents and near misses are investigated and reported on by the relevant manager

Hazard reporting is an essential part of any accident prevention program. Individual managers must take responsibility for resolving or mitigating hazards that are brought to their attention.

Current performance data can be obtained from the OHS Unit (Human Resources Services). In addition periodic Health and Safety Reports are produced by Human Resources Services. Human Resources Services also provides health and

safety performance data as part of regular human resources reports to your FOA. Managers should consult these reports to see how their area is progressing and what issues may be emerging across the University. Managers should also distribute reports to their managers for their information and comment.

New OHS issues emerge from time to time. These can be identified through performance reports, by observation during inspections or by consulting with staff. Where such issues are identified, they should be noted in the OHS Plan and appropriate control strategies put in place.

### 6. Risk Assessments

Note the following legal requirement:

Prior to the introduction of any plant, substances, processes or work practices in the workplace, it is essential for the hazard identification process to be carried out to identify whether there is any potential for injury, illness or disease associated with such introduction. Carrying out hazard identification for all existing plant, substances, processes and work practices in your workplace may require some effort. If you have a large workplace, it is a good idea to split it into several discrete areas for the hazard identification process, and to tackle one area at a time. In order to minimise the time involved, it is better to perform hazard identification on all sources of hazards in a particular area of the workplace instead of doing each hazard source (e.g. plant, hazardous substances etc) at a time. (Victorian WorkCover Authority)

Formal OHS risk assessments are carried out where ever staff carry out potentially hazardous work. Specific statutory requirements must be met as regards Manual Handling (including Ergonomics), Dangerous Goods, Hazardous Substances, Plant, Noise, Lead and Confined Spaces. In particular

- ❑ Each Faculty must have a system for assessing the risks involved in [Research Projects](#)
- ❑ [Risk assessments under the Dangerous Goods Act](#) must be carried out on storage areas and the chemicals they hold.
- ❑ [Risk assessments for Hazardous Substances](#) under the OHS Regulations must be carried out on all hazardous substances brought into the workplace.
- ❑ New tasks that involve [manual handling](#) should be assessed to minimise the risks of injury. This may lead to job redesign, the use of lifting/moving aids and equipment or the need for training on lifting technique.
- ❑ [New plant should be assessed](#) for compliance with the Plant Regulations. Existing plant should be periodically reviewed to ensure ongoing compliance and to ensure protective measures such as guards are in place and in good condition
- ❑ Where [security and personal safety](#) is an issue in the workplace a risk assessment should be carried out to identify appropriate control measures. Assistance can be sought from Facilities Management Services Division

Each FOA must have a system for recording risk assessments (register). Even if a formal risk assessment is not needed, a note should be made on the register that the task/material/process has been assessed.

### 7. Consultation and Issue Management

FOA Management are required under law to [consult with staff and their representatives](#) on issues affecting H&S. This includes consultation on new or refurbished workplaces and staff facilities.

FOAs may want to formalise consultation and communication with staff on an ongoing basis through mechanisms such as team meetings, workgroup meetings or local OHS representatives.

Each FOA is required to maintain a H&S Issues Register as a record of how issues have been addressed and resolved. OHS items from the FOA Risk Register should also appear here if they are not already covered elsewhere.

### 8. Safe Systems of Work

Each FOA has a responsibility to ensure that safe systems of work are in place. Safe Systems of Work should be developed based upon

- Control measures identified as part of Risk Assessments of hazardous work
- Specific legislative requirements and Codes of Practice
- Australian Standards
- Industry Best Practice and Benchmarking

Where appropriate the FOA must document its safe system of work in the form of Safe Operating Procedures. Hazardous tasks should be covered by written instructions either as part of a Safety Manual (e.g. Laboratory Manual) or in separate Procedures and Work Instructions. This is part of your local health and safety management system. These instructions need to be periodically reviewed and revised as required.

Some operations are particularly hazardous and require a process of internal authorisation before work can be carried out: for example welding (hot work), confined spaces, electrical work, work on roofs and trenching.

Maintenance on electrically operated plant or plant with moving parts should be controlled by lock out procedures. Where a Permit-to-Work system or a Plant Isolation system is in place a register of authorised personnel is required.

Where the FOA control areas where access is limited or controlled through permits then a register of these locations must also be kept.

When students are placed with employers for work experience the relevant Faculty or School has a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of the student is not put at risk. When The FOA engages work experience students, they must make sure that they are adequately supervised and can carry out their assigned duties. Field trips are potentially hazardous especially away from urban areas. FOAs must make adequate provision for supervision, first aid and emergencies. Further information can be found in the [OHS Manual](#) and on the [OHS website](#).

Where staff are at higher than normal risk from violence or threat, then clear [security procedures](#) should be developed.

### 9. Regulatory and Standards Compliance

Some University operations need permits or licences to operate. Each responsible manager needs to ensure that these are kept up to date or renewed as required, and are periodically reviewed for relevance to their current operations.

If you store dangerous goods, you will need to keep a register, periodically (6 monthly) check it and ensure, labelling and signage is up to date. Chemical storage areas should be periodically assessed for appropriate storage of materials, adequate segregation, proper labelling, good stock rotation, disposal of old or unstable materials and general housekeeping. Similarly if you use hazardous substances you will need to maintain a register and copies of material safety data sheets (less than 5 years old) for each substance. If you hold certain types of chemicals - poisons, radioactive sources and carcinogens, you must have permits and licences.

Under various standards and regulations the FOA may be required to carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of equipment or fittings. For example:

- Environment Protection Act (disposal of wastes, emissions)
- [Australian Standard 3760: Electrical Inspection](#)
- [Australian Standard 2243: Safety in Laboratories](#)

Electrical safety is an issue in all areas not only workshops and laboratories. Electrical work is covered in permits procedures. There is also a requirement to periodic test electrical equipment including office equipment for safety.

In general where a FOA has hazardous substances, plant or equipment, a regular schedule for inspections should be drawn up. The relevant legislation or standard will determine the frequency and details of the inspection.

### 10. Work Environment

Each FOA may face a number of specific work environment issues that affect its operations. The University has specific health and safety rules covering some of its general operations. These apply general legislative requirements to the specific University situation. Each responsible manager needs to ensure that these rules are being followed in their area.

There are some University buildings where the ambient temperature reaches a level at which employees comfort is significantly affected and where adverse health effects may become more likely. [University guidelines](#) apply for temperatures over 30 C. The guidelines encourage the development of contingency plans to minimise the disruption to operations on very hot days.

[Screen Based Equipment](#) (SBE) is used extensively across the University. Managers must assess the risks involved and where required, organise training on safe use of SBE and /or carry out individual work station assessments

Magnetic fields may be of concern where staff are located close to transformers or laboratory equipment that generate strong magnetic fields.

Some staff spend large amounts of the day outside. These staff should be aware of the risks from prolonged exposure to the sun, and should be provided with [adequate sun protection](#).

Work in many areas involves extensive travel between campuses. The safety aspects of this can be addressed by reducing the amount of travel through planning and use of technology and directly by driver training.

Where measures have been taken to provide a high level of workplace security, then local management must ensure that staff are adequately training and that physical systems are maintained and routinely tested.

### 11. Staff Health and Wellbeing

The University through its Health and Well Being Program takes a number of initiatives to improve and maintain the health and well being of employees. Each FOA should consider initiatives that can be taken locally. Information is available on [Managing Stress in the Workplace](#) and [Prevention of Workplace Bullying](#).

For both students and staff there are a number of learning and work activities where vaccination is strongly recommended. In order to provide a safe workplace these activities should be identified and appropriate vaccination strategy put in place. Reference should be made to the [Immunisation and Vaccination guidelines](#). FOAs may also pay for or subsidise more general vaccinations such as for influenza.

In terms of health and well being other initiatives may include:

- ❑ Team briefings every 2-3 months with e.g. guest speaker from another part of the University
- ❑ Floating gym membership that staff can use to "try"
- ❑ Lunch time seminars or get-togethers
- ❑ Get-togethers to acknowledge service or achievements of individuals or groups
- ❑ Organise a team and supporters for a community event (fun-runs, Relay for Life)
- ❑ Involvement in a planned giving program e.g. Lord Mayor's Fund, Geelong United Way
- ❑ Support / Involvement in a local school or charity organisation
- ❑ Organise and promote local Pilates/Yoga or relaxation sessions
- ❑ Regular informal get-togethers e.g. the last Friday of each month a get together at each workplace, funded by management or by a raffle. It is essential for managers to attend as staff will quickly draw conclusions from non-attendance.
- ❑ Team development activities such as training days
- ❑ Promotion of flexible working arrangements: flexi time and RDO provisions, 48/52, job share, flexible working times (for staff who have parenting responsibilities such as taking children to school)

### 12. Contract Management

The FOA may employ or control contractors in its activities. The University through its managers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act is liable for the safety of contractors. Further information is available in the [OHS Manual](#) and on the OHS website.

### OHS Manual Links

[Alcohol and drugs](#)  
[Biosafety](#)  
[Chemical Safety](#)  
[Children on University premises](#)  
[Compliance Statements](#)  
[Computer safety](#)  
[Consultation on OHS](#)  
[Contractor safety](#)  
[Dogs and other companion animals on University premises](#)  
[Emergencies](#)  
[Equipment](#)  
[Ergonomics](#)  
[Events on campus](#)  
[Falls prevention](#)  
[Field work](#)  
[File-keeping](#)  
[First Aid](#)  
[Health and Safety Plans](#)  
[Housekeeping – preventing slips and trips](#)  
[Incident reporting](#)  
[Indoor thermal comfort](#)  
[Injury reporting](#)  
[Issue Resolution on OHS matters](#)  
[Manual Handling](#)  
[Motor vehicle safety](#)  
[Noise](#)  
[Occupational violence prevention](#)  
[Off-Campus University Activities](#)  
[OHS Representatives](#)  
[Outdoor work and activities](#)  
[Placements](#)  
[Plans \(Health and Safety\)](#)  
[Plant \(Equipment\)](#)  
[Radiation](#)  
[Rehabilitation](#)  
[Representation on OHS Matters](#)  
[Responsibilities for OHS](#)  
[Safe Work Environment](#)  
[Smoking](#)  
[Stress](#)  
[Thermal comfort](#)  
[Vaccination](#)  
[Visitor safety](#)  
[Work experience](#)  
[WorkCover](#)  
[Workers' Compensation](#)  
[Workplace bullying prevention](#)