Guidance For Writing Safe Work Procedures (DS-PR09-WI05)

1. Purpose

The purpose of these guidance is to ensure that Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) are developed for all tasks and activities that pose a risk to the health and safety of staff, students and others in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.

### 2. What is a Safe Work Procedure (SWP)?

A SWP is a written document that provides step-by-step instructions on how to safely perform a task or activity which involves some risks to health and safety. It identifies the risks associated with a specific task or activity and incorporates the appropriate risk control measures into a detailed sequence of steps for doing the task or activity safely.

3. When do I need a Safe Work Procedure (SWP)?

SWPs may need to be developed as a risk control measure:

- When indicated from the outcomes of a risk assessment carried out in accordance with legislative requirements to identify hazards and manage risk to health and safety;
- When introducing new work practices;
- When introducing new equipment / technology; or
- Following on from a workplace inspection, either internal or external (i.e. Regulatory inspection).

A SWP is considered an administrative control, and should only be adopted once all other types of controls (i.e. elimination, substitution, isolation and engineering have been considered).
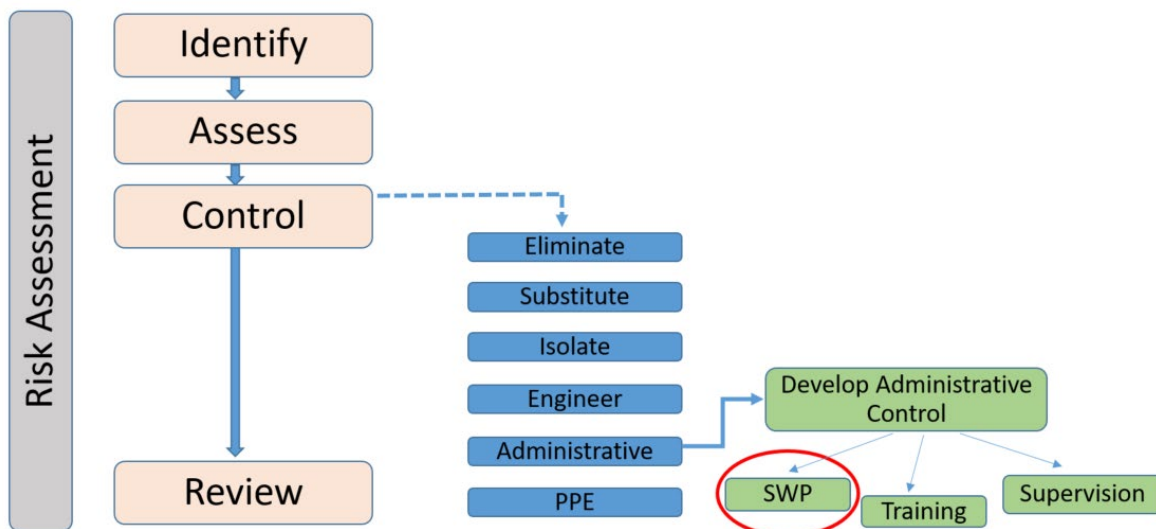
A SWP also assists in the training and induction of staff and students in the hazards of the task / activity to be performed, as well as providing them with the preferred way to safely perform the task / activity.

4. Responsibilities

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A comprehensive list of OHS responsibilities is provided on Deakin intranet pages.

The development and implementation (including training) of SWPs is the responsibility of the line manager or supervisor or academic-in-charge where students are involved. The Dean, Head of School, Director or unit head is responsible for maintaining a safe system of work that includes SWPs.

All staff, visitors and students are expected to familiarise themselves with and comply with the SWPs that exist in their area of work.

5. Development of Safe Work Procedures (SWP)

SWPs should be written by a staff member(s) and/or student(s) with sound hands on experience and knowledge of the task or activity being undertaken. Consulting with staff and/or students to gain their input will greatly enhance the usefulness of the procedures. For some tasks or activities it may be necessary to seek the expertise of other professionals such as mechanical or electrical engineers, health and safety professionals or other technical expert(s) as required. The manufacturer's user manual and any relevant Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) should be consulted for safety information to include in the SWP.

Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) should be consulted when developing the SWP. Please refer to List of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to determine who the HSR(s) are for your area. The manager or supervisor must sign off on the SWP after being satisfied that sufficient expertise has been sought in the development of the procedure.

5.1 Content of Safe Work Procedure (SWP)

A SWP should include the following:

- Title and reference number of SWP
- Details of location, creator of SWP, version number, issue date, review date, persons involved in the developments of the SWP and details of the associated risk assessment
- Description of the task or activity to be undertaken
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) to be worn while undertaking the task or activity
- Competency and training – list specific operator competency requirements e.g. area induction, qualifications, certificates, OHS training and supervision required to ensure the task or activity can be undertaken safely. Please include details of assessor competency required to confirm operator competency
- Tools and equipment – list all tools and equipment required for the task
- Chemicals and substances – list the chemicals and other substances required to complete the task. If the task/activity uses any hazardous chemicals the safe work procedure must reference the safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical.
- Energy isolation or permits – detail any isolation and/or permits required for the task or activity
- Identify the hazards associated with the task or activity
- Specific safety precautions to be considered before commencing the task or activity

- Emergency preparedness and response – list emergency response equipment and resources that must be in place prior to commencement of the task or activity
- Waste disposal – detail environmental, clean-up and waste disposal measures, this will require referring to any appropriate safety data sheets (SDSs)
- Supporting documentation – Some tasks/activities are governed by legislative requirements. These must be considered when developing a safe work procedure to ensure any legal requirements are included. Review legislative requirements including those from guidelines, legislation, codes of practice or Australian Standards. Include details of specific Deakin procedures referred to when developing the SWP e.g. Isolation, Permit procedures
- Procedure – clear step by step instructions for undertaking the task or activity in a safe manner
- SWP approver – manager or supervisor sign off and approval
- SWP Sign off – list all persons who have been authorised and deemed competent to complete this task or activity. This section must be signed and dated by the assessor / authoriser.

5.2 How to prepare a Safe Work Procedure (SWP)

Break down the task or activity into the basic steps to complete the work task and / or operate the item of plant / equipment. For example, what is done first, what is done next and so on. Record each step of the task or activity in the order of normal sequence, making sure you describe what is done, not how it is done. Documenting each step in the process could occur through a simulation of the task/activity, or through the observation of the task/activity actually being carried out. These methods produce the most effective SWPs.

For each step in the task or activity, list the potential hazards that are reasonably foreseeable. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Being struck by or contacted by anything
- Striking against or contacting anything
- Being caught in, on, under or between anything
- Falling from height or being exposed to falling objects
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Being exposed to welding rays, fumes, light, electricity or other forms of energy
- Being exposed to stored energy
- Being exposed to hazardous chemicals

Identify ways of eliminating and controlling the hazards: For each identified hazard, list the measures that need to be put in place to eliminate or control any likely risk occurring. Use the hierarchy of controls to generate a corrective action for each identified hazard.

5.3 Test the safe work procedure (SWP)

Observe staff and / or students following the SWP and adjust the procedure as necessary. Ensure that the documented SWP is tested to ensure it is accurate and reflects the actual job steps. This may include discussion or even doing the task according to the SWP.

5.4 Obtain approval

Before it can be used and accepted as the agreed way to perform the task or activity, the SWP should be reviewed, signed and dated by the relevant manager or supervisor. This person should be familiar and competent in the task/activity. Multiple approvers can be allocated as required.

5.5 Implementation

Once the SWP is completed and approved it must be then be implemented. If developed using the template, the finalised copy shall be placed in the relevant location for the area where it will then be available for use.

5.6 Review of safe work procedures (SWP)

Safe Work Procedures for current (in use) machinery and equipment, activities or tasks should be reviewed either:

- when a process change or modification takes place;
- when a new hazard is identified;
- when introducing new equipment / technology;
- after an associated near miss, injury or illness occurs with the task/activity;
- there is a change to legislation, standards or codes of practice;
- when the information in a document is found to be inadequate; or
- every three years.

Please note: SWPs for out-of-service machinery and equipment, processes or tasks should be reviewed before they return into general use.

6. References
6.1 Legislation

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)

6.2 Deakin University OHS Documents

OHS Risk Management Standard

OHS Responsibilities of Managers

Hazard Isolation Standard

Permit System Standard

7. Revision

Rev No.	Issue Date	Nature of Amendment	Page No(s)	Author	Department
1.0	10.08.2020	New Document	All	A Mullen	Health & Safety