

ADVICE SHEET 3

Safe work procedures

Why do you need safe work procedures?

...because some work tasks carry risks.

Sometimes the risks associated with a work task may be obvious, such as using dangerous machinery or chemicals. Other times the risks are not so obvious, such as unloading goods or packing boxes in a warehouse.

Safe work procedures make workers aware of risks in their work tasks and tell them how to avoid injury or illness while doing those tasks.

Safe work procedures briefly document the risks associated with a work task and list the appropriate risk control measures into a sequence of steps for doing the task safely. Most effective when developed in consultation with your workers, safe work procedures are a useful tool when training and supervising your workers, and when responding to incident reports and changes in the workplace.

WHERE YOU TICKED IN THE RED ZONE...

...your workers are unlikely to have documented instructions to help them do their jobs safely.

Ticks in the RED zone indicate that you must take action immediately to identify tasks that may expose your workers to safety risks. Together, develop simple procedures to ensure tasks are done safely.

Identify tasks that require safe work procedures

Develop safe work procedures for tasks that are likely to harm your workers if risks are not addressed. Many tasks are unlikely to expose workers to risks, so documented safe work procedures are unnecessary.

Speak with your workers about the tasks they perform, identify the tasks that could place them at risk, consider the aspects of each task, and determine the likely consequences if the risks are not managed. This is known as **risk assessment**.

Prioritise the tasks that require safe work procedures

In consultation with your workers, develop safe work procedures for the tasks that present the greatest risk and pose the most serious consequences, and work gradually through those with less risk.

<p>NSW legislation requires risks to be eliminated or minimised so far as reasonably practicable:</p> <p>Substitution – replace the hazardous substance, machine, process or task with a safer alternative.</p> <p>Isolation – use barriers or guards to isolate a hazard; remote control systems to operate machinery; and fume cabinets to store chemicals.</p> <p>Engineering – modify tools and equipment; erect enclosures around equipment; place guards around moving parts.</p> <p>Administration – develop and implement safe work procedures and introduce training for hazardous tasks.</p> <p>Personal protective equipment – safety glasses, footwear and hearing protection may be useful, but as a control measure they are a last resort.</p>	<p>Develop safe work procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve your workers – they are more likely to follow a safe work procedure if they have been involved in its development, and they will often know the best and safest way to perform a task. Involve those most experienced in performing the tasks. • Identify the elements in each task and the associated risks – a production line might involve lifting objects onto a bench, shaping with an electrical grinder, cleaning with solvents and stacking on a pallet. Identify the hazards and risks that each activity poses to those performing the task. • Are there risks of manual handling injuries from lifting and stacking? Does the grinder have moving parts that could cause injury? Are there dangerous fumes from the solvents? Ask your workers about the risks, check the operator’s manual before using the grinder, read the solvent’s safety data sheet. • Control the risks – once the hazards and their associated risks have been identified and assessed, decide how to control them. Determine the most effective way of minimising the risk of harm. Is a mechanical lifting device a better alternative to manual handling and lifting? Is personal protective equipment, such as goggles and gloves, available? Is a less hazardous solvent available? Can moving parts on the grinder be enclosed? Read the safety data sheet and the operator’s manual for advice on appropriate control measures. List all the control measures and determine the best option. • Document safe work procedures – the easier your safe work procedures are to understand, the more likely your workers will follow them. List all the control measures as a series of steps. • Distribute safe work procedures for review – have experienced workers review the procedures and make amendments as necessary.
	<p>Implement safe work procedures through training</p> <p>Proper implementation of safe work procedures involves training and supervision. Workers must be trained to do their tasks safely and follow safe work procedures. Simply reading the documented procedure is not enough. When a worker fails to follow the safe work procedures, such as not using personal protective equipment when required, treat it like any other breach of discipline. In the first instance, this may require counselling and further training.</p> <p>Review your procedures</p> <p>Review your safe work procedures when there is a change to the workplace, or after an injury or near miss. Do a regular review to ensure procedures are current and effective. Involve your workers in this review.</p>
<p>WHERE YOU TICKED IN THE ORANGE ZONE...</p>	<p>...you’re on the right track, but you must do more to address the risks in your workplace.</p> <p>Ticks in the ORANGE zone indicate that you have started to address the risks associated with work tasks, but you must look more closely at the tasks, identify any hazards you may have overlooked, and ensure that your procedures are appropriate and enable workers to do their jobs safely. You may need to take the following action.</p>
<p>If you’ve not documented your procedures, see the RED zone section for advice on how to do it.</p>	<p>Review work tasks</p> <p>Have you done a thorough inspection of the workplace and a complete review of all work tasks? Perhaps you have overlooked risks associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transporting substances • lifting and moving products • working at heights • slips, trips and falls • housekeeping • electrical equipment. <p>Talk to your workers. Involve them in identifying the hazards associated with their work. Develop and implement safe work procedures for those tasks that pose the greatest risk.</p>

	<p>Plan your approach</p> <p>Sometimes, business pressures or uncertainty about what to do next may stall the development and implementation of safe work procedures.</p> <p>Ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have tasks been identified that present a hazard or risk? • Have tasks been prioritised? • Are workers involved in developing procedures? • Have workers been trained in the safe work procedures for the tasks they perform? <p>Plan the process carefully so you can develop safe work procedures gradually, within the constraints of your other business demands. A good plan helps overcome limitations in time and resources.</p>
	<p>Involve your workers</p> <p>Consult your workers when developing safe work procedures for the jobs they do – it will ensure the procedures are comprehensive, accurate and useful.</p> <p>Involve your workers in identifying the hazards and assessing the risks associated with their work, in developing suitable measures to control the risks, and in documenting and reviewing the procedures.</p>
	<p>Ensure procedures are up-to-date</p> <p>If workers don't always follow safe work procedures, review the procedures to ensure they provide appropriate safeguards and reflect current work processes, equipment and substances used in the task. Ensure procedures consider the different circumstances under which the task may be performed.</p> <p>If the procedures appear up-to-date and appropriate, is the problem related to training or supervision? Have your workers been trained and assessed against the procedures before commencing the task? Are they adequately supervised in accordance with the procedures? Do you and your supervisors always follow the procedures?</p> <p>For further information on training and supervision, see Advice Sheet 4 – Training and supervision.</p>
<p>WHERE YOU TICKED IN THE GREEN ZONE...</p>	<p>...your workers are using safe work procedures to help them do their jobs safely.</p> <p>Ticks in the GREEN zone indicate that you're effectively managing safety risks in your workplace through safe work procedures. But remember that changes in the workplace and work processes can make procedures obsolete. Review them periodically so they reflect existing conditions. Revise them, as appropriate.</p>
	<p>Could changes in technology make tasks safer? Are training and supervision still effective? Periodically, confirm that vulnerable workers, young people, people with disabilities and people with language difficulties are able to understand safe work procedures and use them effectively – and are properly represented during consultations about the procedures and other safety matters.</p>

Safe work procedure – workshop grinder

Safety risks from electricity, moving parts, metal fragments, noise, heat

Before operating

- Check the lead is tagged and in good condition.
- Check wheel for cracks or damage. Replace cracked or damaged wheel immediately.
- Only use wheels having maximum operating speed at least as high as 'no load RPM', as marked on the machine's nameplate.
- Only use flanges specified for the machine.
- Position the machine so the power cord always stays behind the machine during operation.
- Ensure personal protective equipment is available – eg safety goggles and ear protectors.

When operating

- Always wear safety goggles and ear protectors during operation.
- Ensure the wheel is not contacting the work piece before the switch is turned on.
- Before using the machine on an actual work piece, let it run for a while. Watch for vibration or wobbling that could indicate poor installation or a poorly balanced wheel.
- Use the specified surface of the wheel to perform the grinding.
- Do not touch the work piece immediately after operation – it may be hot and could burn your skin.

After use

- Check leads.
- Check wheel and replace if necessary.
- Place machine in tool cupboard.

Developed by:

Manager's name

Worker's name

Manager's signature

Worker's signature

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