



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

**UOW SAFE@WORK**

# DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE WORK PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

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# 1 Introduction

A safe work procedure (SWP) is an integral part of the risk management process as it outlines the hazards, risks and associated controls measures to be applied to ensure the task/activity is conducted in a way to reduce the risk of injury.

## 2 Scope

This guideline applies to the development of any safe work procedure used for any work activity at, or on behalf of, the University of Wollongong.

## 3 Definitions

Job step	One part of the systematic sequence of the activity/task.
Hazard	A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause injury or disease to people, damage to the environment, property, plant or equipment.
Risk	The likelihood that a hazard will result in injury, illness, loss or damage to people, to the environment, property, plant or equipment and the potential consequences of that injury, illness, loss or damage.
Risk control	Risk control is a method to manage the risk to a level as low as reasonably practicable.
Work	Any activity or process undertaken for or on behalf of the University of Wollongong.
Workers	All persons who work for or on behalf of the University of Wollongong, e.g. employees, contractors, students and volunteers.

## 4 Responsibilities

### 4.1 Heads of Schools and Managers of Units

Heads of School and Managers of Units have the responsibility for ensuring that safe work procedures are implemented, as appropriate, for their area of control.

### 4.2 WHS Unit

The WHS Unit is responsible for the creation and maintenance of these guidelines, associated tools/forms and providing training in the development of safe work procedures.

The WHS Unit is also responsible for auditing the development and use of safe work procedures in accordance with the [WHS Auditing Guidelines](#).

### 4.3 Workers

All workers who undertake activities which involve WHS risk are expected to familiarise themselves and comply with the safe work procedures that exist in their area of work.

# 5 Safe Work Procedures

A safe work procedure (SWP), which may also be referred to as a job safety analysis (JSA), job hazard analysis (JHA) or safe work method statement (SWMS), is a procedure, which describes how work is to be carried out in a safe and standardised process. SWPs outline the hazards, risks and associated controls measures to be applied to ensure the task/activity is conducted in a way to reduce the risk of injury.

SWPs provide information to assist workers to perform tasks safely. They include:

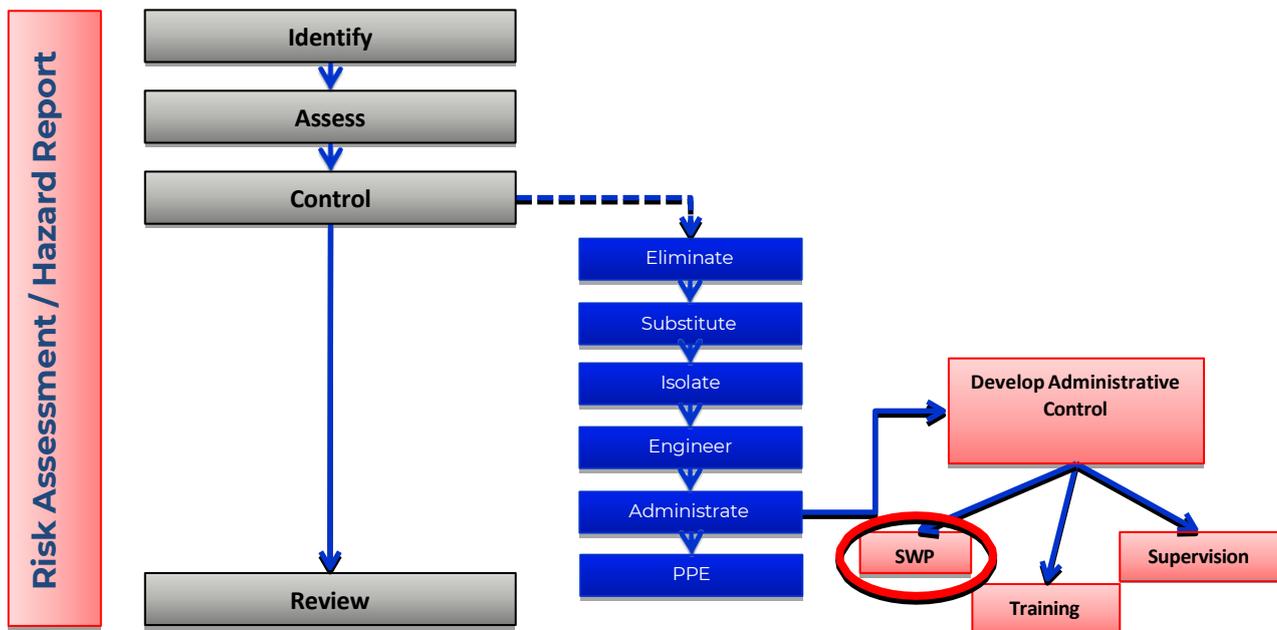
- describing how the work is carried out
- identifying the work activities assessed as having safety or environmental risks
- stating what the safety and environmental risks are
- describing the control measures that will be applied to the work activities
- describing how measures will be implemented to undertake the work in a safe and environmentally sound manner
- outlines the legislation, standards and codes to be complied with and
- describing the equipment used in the work, the qualifications of the personnel undertaking the work and the training required to undertake the work in a safe manner.

SWPs relate specifically to keeping the person undertaking them safe. Other common documents such as Standard Operating Procedures relate to using equipment correctly in order not to damage it – it does not necessarily relate to the safety of the operator.



**It is NOT a Risk Assessment, Standard Operating Procedure or Safe Operating Procedure.**

The implementation of a SWP relies on the individual undertaking the task to follow the requirements as set out in the document. Therefore, 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.



These procedures also assist in the training and orientation of new workers in the hazards of the tasks to be performed, as well as providing them with the preferred way to safely perform the task/activity. SWPs may also be used in assessing the level of understanding with regards to on-the-job training.

## 6 Developing Safe Work Procedures

A safe work procedure should be developed after being identified as a:

- corrective action in an incident/hazard report, or
- risk control measure in a risk assessment.

Some specific examples where this may be the case includes:

- if there was an incident in the past involving that job
- new jobs where a risk assessment determines the need
- work on energised electrical installation
- demolition work
- removal of asbestos
- when undertaking work on roofs.

Further information can be found in the [Risk Management Guidelines](#) and [Incident Management and Reporting Guidelines](#).



**The development of safe work procedures shall be in the SafetyNet database wherever possible or, where access to SafetyNet is not possible, using the [Safe Work Procedure Template](#).**

The [SafetyNet User Guide](#) can be used to assist in completing SWPs on SafetyNet. The same information applies to completing SWPs on the template.

### 6.1 Choose development team

Safe work procedures should be developed with multiple developers to produce quality information covering all aspects of the task/activity. Having two or more in a development team will ensure that the hazards and controls are appropriately identified.



**Having a development team demonstrates consultation.**

Persons conducting the SWP must be familiar with the process and understand hazard identification and methods of control. It is important that workers that actually perform the task participate in the SWP development process. The number of persons involved in the SWP development process will vary based on the complexity of the task, number of locations, and availability of people.

Team members may be made up of workers, subject matter experts, supervisors, managers, safety specialists, trainers, engineers etc. Whenever possible, a minimum of three people should be involved with a SWP development. It is important that development team members be trained and understand how and why SWPs are conducted. The supervisor is responsible for selecting team members and ensuring those workers are properly trained and understand how to conduct SWPs.

### 6.2 Development

The following steps should be followed to ensure a sound safe work procedure is developed:

i. **Observe the task/activities:**

Although the development team might have knowledge/understanding of the task/activity it is important to observe the task/activity being performed the preferred way to ensure safest method is documented.

Gather information about the task/activity. Witness what actually occurs and how the task is done. Focus on the actions being performed rather than the equipment being used.

ii. **Review associated legislative requirements:**

Some task/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.

If the task/activity uses any hazardous chemicals the safe work procedure must reference the safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical.

iii. **Record the sequence of basic job steps:**

Assemble those involved in the activity and then write down the steps that make up the task/activity. The development should be in consultation with workers or their representatives. 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.

- Planning and preparation
- Performing the task
- Completion of task

iv. **Record potential hazards of each step:**

Next to each step identify what may have potential to cause injury or disease (to those doing the work or to anyone else nearby), damage to the environment, property, plant or equipment. This may include:

- developing a list of the tasks, events and processes involved in activities that have risks requiring control
- identifying all negative outcomes arising from each step
- identifying all possible causes of the negative outcomes.



**The SWP is only effective if all hazards are identified.**

v. **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.

## 6.3 Test the procedure

Observe workers following the safe work procedure 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.

## 6.4 Obtain approval

Before it can be used, ensure that the SWP is approved by appropriate areas before being accepted as the agreed way to perform the activity/task. This person should be familiar and competent in the task/activity. Multiple approvers can be allocated as required.

## 6.5 Implementation

Once the SWP is completed and approved it must be then be implemented, each time the task is performed.

If developed in SafetyNet, the safe work procedure will be classified as 'APPROVED' which identifies it as available for use.

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.



**For the SWP to be effective it must be implemented, every time.**

## 6.6 Monitor and review

Make sure the activity is supervised to ensure the documented process is being followed. The safe work procedure should be reviewed whenever:

- the task/activity changes
- when a new hazard is identified
- after an associated near miss, injury or illness occurs with the task/activity
- there is a change to legislation, standards or codes of practice
- at a minimum of 5 years (SafetyNet will automatically return electronic SWPs to the developer after 5 years to initiate the review process).

# 7 Accessibility and Display

Safe work procedures should be readily available in the areas in which they are to be used.

If SWPs are physically displayed or kept in hard copy for easy access, extreme care must be taken to ensure that these versions have not been superseded when revisions have been conducted.

# 8 Records Management

Electronic safe work procedures stored in SafetyNet can be uniquely identified as each document contains the following:

- Document identifier: The reference number shall be displayed in the format 'UOWXXXXX', where X is the document number e.g. UOW00001
- Date of Creation: the date the document was first approved
- Date of Last Update: the date the document was last approved.

Safe work procedures completed on the template shall be retained locally for future reference and maintained in accordance with the requirements of the [WHS Document Control Guidelines](#) and [WHS Records Handling Guidelines](#).

## 9 Program Evaluation

In order to ensure that these guidelines continue to be effective and applicable to the University, the program will be reviewed in accordance with the [WHS Document Control Guidelines](#). However, more frequent reviews may be required as per system reviews.

Following completion of any review, the program will be revised and updated in order to correct any deficiencies. Any changes to the program will be consulted through the WHS Committee.

## 10 Related Documents

- [Risk Management Guidelines](#)
- [SafetyNet User Guide](#)
- [Safe Work Procedure Form](#) (SafetyNet)
- [Safe Work Procedure Template](#) (hard copy)
- [WHS Document Control Guidelines](#)

## 11 Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Approved By	Amendment
1	April 2003	Manager OHS	Document created.
2	January 2004	Manager OHS	Inclusion of legislative requirements referencing.
3	April 2004	Manager OHS	Scheduled review Minor changes only.
4	March 2006	Manager OHS	Scheduled review – minor changes only.
5	October 2006	Manager OHS	Scheduled review – minor changes only.
6	August 2008	Manager OHS	Scheduled review. Addition of SafetyNet references as appropriate.
7	April 2010	Manager OHS	Minor review no scheduled changes.
8	August 2010	Manager OHS	Document updated to incorporate the Personnel name change to Human Resources Division
9	January 2011	Manager OHS	Addition of information regarding development of safe work procedure required from either incident/hazard report or risk assessment. Requirements included for referencing an MSDS when a task/activity uses a hazardous substance or dangerous good.
10	March 2012	Manager OHS	Re-brand.
11	March 2013	Manager WHS	Legislative update.
12	May 2016	Manager WHS	Scheduled review, no significant changes. Updated links.
13	July 2016	Manager WHS	Rebrand.
14	September 2016	Manager WHS	Updated following feedback from SI Audit. Updated “closed” status to “approved”. Incorporated information from <a href="#">Safe Work Procedures Training Participant Manual</a> . Removed Appendix 1 and 2.
15	August 2023	WHS Manager	Scheduled review, rebrand, no other changes.