



# OHS COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

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## 1 Introduction

The University recognises that communication and dissemination of information relating to OHS is an important part of the strategy to eliminate and prevent occupational injury and illnesses. Employees require accurate health and safety information to perform their work safely, and should be informed about health and safety activities and issues.

The transfer of OHS information is important to:

- alert others of incidents and associated corrective actions that may arise;
- provide new or updated OHS legislation or associated requirements; and,
- provide details of changes to the workplace, the system or method of work, the plant or chemicals used.

## 2 Scope

This document applies to the communication of OHS information across the organisation.

## 3 Responsibilities

### 3.1 Employees

Employees have a responsibility to follow requirements as communicated to them, for example requirements contained in safe work procedures and workplace signage. Employees should report to their supervisor instances where they or other persons, for example employees/visitors, have difficulty understanding health and safety information.

### 3.2 Deans, Directors, Managers and Heads of Units

Deans, Directors, Managers and Heads of Schools are responsible for;

- ensuring staff, students, contractors and visitors are adequately provided with occupational health and safety information that takes into account their communication requirements;
- identification and assessment of health and safety information needs, taking into account requirements for non English speaking, people who are illiterate or with disabilities.

### 3.3 OHS Unit

The OHS Unit is responsible for ensuring;

- mechanisms are in place for alerting of new and changed legislative requirements;
- interpretation of health and safety information and dissemination of relevant information to the University.

Additional responsibilities can be found in the [OHS Roles and Responsibilities](#) document.

## 4 Communication

### 4.1 Accessing Information

Employees, students, contractors and others can access relevant health and safety information through;

- Accessing online resources such as the [UOW OHS internet site](#) or [WorkCover NSW online](#);

- Discussions with supervisors, peers, OHS or Workplace Advisory Committee representatives;
- Contacting the OHS Unit;
- Attending meetings;
- Reading communications.

## 4.2 Forms of Communication

Health and safety information is accessible through a number of areas such as OHS resources or consultation mechanisms including:

- UOW OHS internet site;
- UOW OHS intranet site for staff;
- OHS performance measures in the UOW Performance Indicators System;
- OHS Committee Minutes;
- Workplace Advisory Committee Minutes;
- Hazard and incident reports in SafetyNet;
- Internal and External OHS Training Programs such as inductions;
- Material Safety Data Sheets via Chem Alert Online.
- Fire and emergency evacuation information;
- Contractor Safety Induction Guide.

Health and safety information may also be made available:

- on workplace noticeboards;
- posters displayed around the workplace;
- through meetings such as toolbox talks;
- by email such as safety alert;
- in newsletters;
- on safety signage.

## 4.3 Information Dissemination

OHS information is disseminated via the University OHS Committee and Workplace Advisory Committees for OHS.

At the local level, the dissemination of relevant health and safety information is determined by organisational need. Relevant information which may be disseminated at the local level includes:

- changes to the workplace, the system or method of work, the plant or chemicals used;
- incidents and associated corrective actions that may arise;
- new or updated OHS legislation or associated requirements.

OHS Information is disseminated to contractors and labour hire services via the OHS Induction Guide and local OHS induction meeting where appropriate. For more information please refer to the Contractor Safety Guidelines.

## 4.4 Language and Literacy

Language and literacy of employees/students must be taken into account including non-English speaking, people who are illiterate or with disabilities. Where employees may have difficulty understanding or reading English, the information needs to be translated or directly explained to individuals.

If there is a need for translation of health and safety information, interpreter services may be used. To obtain access to interpreter services please contact [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS\) National](#).

## 4.5 Safety Alerts

Communication of hazards, incidents and details from investigation findings can be communicated to the organisation through a safety alert. The need for a safety alert is determined by an assessment of risk from relevant information including the type, nature and scale of incident, the impact to the organisation, potential for reoccurrence and specific audience to be targeted.

Any personal or private information is to be removed or blocked from the Safety Alert.

An example of a safety alert can be found in Appendix 1: Safety Alert Example.

## 4.6 Induction

An induction is a mechanism to communicate health and safety requirements at the commencement of being at the workplace. Staff, students, contractors and visitors should attend an induction to ensure they are familiar with University health and safety requirements. The type of induction will depend on the level of work being undertaken as defined by the OHS training guidelines.

A general induction should include;

- a tour of the workplace;
- roles and responsibilities;
- emergency procedures;
- general workplace hazards and safety signs;
- workplace hazard/incident reporting;
- introductions to fellow employees in their work area;
- specific occupational health and safety instructions relevant to the area (e.g. personal protective equipment, safety signage, safe work procedures);
- consultation mechanisms.

## 5 Related Documents.

- NSW OHS Act 2000
- NSW OHS Regulation 2001
- [Risk Management Guidelines](#)
- [OHS Training Guidelines](#)
- OHS Consultation Arrangement

## 6 Program Evaluation

In order to ensure that these guidelines continue to be effective and applicable to the University, they will be reviewed regularly by the OHS Unit in consultation with the OHS Committee. Conditions which might warrant a review of the guidelines include:

- reported hazards or injuries;
- non-conforming systems;
- OHS Committee concern.

Following the completion of any review, the program will be revised/updated in order to correct any deficiencies. These changes will be communicated via the OHS Committee.

## 7 Version Control Table

Version Control	Date Released	Approved By	Amendment
1	Draft	Manager OHS	New document created



UOW ADMINISTRATION  
OHS Unit

## HAZARD ALERT

**To:** All Supervisors and Employees Who Use Forklifts  
**From:** Daniel Leo, OHS Coordinator  
**Date:** Tuesday, 12 August 2008  
**Subject:** Working at Heights/Forklift safety

*There are safer ways to work at heights than from a raised forklift!*

Would you  
stand up  
here?



## What is the issue?

The incident occurred when the injured fell from a height of 1.8m. The injured was required to work on electrical equipment which is located 4 metres from the ground. To reach the height, the injured was lifted on a pallet by a forklift. At 1.8m the pallet collapsed and the person fell between the forklift tines to the ground. The person was transported to the hospital by ambulance.

## Why is it an issue?

- A contractor sustained an injury which could have been prevented. Fortunately this person was not seriously injured although there was a real possibility of a serious injury.
- This is an extremely unsafe practice and is unlawful according to the OHS Act and Regulation. Fines for both the Contractor, University and forklift driver could have been issued by WorkCover.

## Why did it occur?

- The contractor and University did not have a safe system of work in place for working at heights.
- Incorrect use of a forklift.
- There was no risk assessment or safe work procedure for the task.

## How to prevent this type of incident!

Take these steps:

1. Conduct a risk assessment for any work involving heights and put in place appropriate control measures e.g. fall barriers or protection.
2. Complete a safe work procedure and train employees in its use.
3. Ensure forklift drivers are aware of the current rules of safe forklift operation and have an up to date licence for use.
4. Ensure there is a safe work procedure for operation of a forklift.
5. Ensure any lifting devices comply with legislative requirements.

## Summary

No one should work from a raised pallet as there are other safe methods to work at heights.

Forklift drivers are required to obey the rules and conditions of their licence and training.

## Need more information?

Contact the OHS Unit

Web: [staff.uow.edu.au/ohs/](http://staff.uow.edu.au/ohs/)  
Phone: 4221 3931