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# Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Guidelines

## 1.0 Introduction

The University of Western Australia recognises that written standard operating procedures (SOP) are essential to ensure a safe work environment and are an important part of an overall occupational safety and health program.

SOP provide:

- information necessary to assist all staff and students to perform tasks safely
- assistance in the training and orientation of new staff and students in the hazards of the tasks to be performed
- provide the rules and procedures necessary to ensure all UWA personnel perform their work in a safe manner.

SOP should be developed for all techniques, processes, equipment and machinery where there exists a risk to harm to any UWA personnel.

## 2.0 Definition

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are written instructions for tasks that outline the preferred method of undertaking a task whilst emphasising ways to minimise any risk(s) of harm. Other similar phrases used are: safe work instructions, safe operating procedures and standard working procedures.

## 3.0 Legislation

- To ensure, as far as practicable, the health and safety of staff and students undertaking their work and study at UWA
- To ensure that consistently high health and safety standards are achieved and maintained in the work and study undertaken at UWA
- To provide clear guidelines as to the requirements for the provision of standard operating procedures at UWA.

## 4.0 Responsibilities

The responsibility for implementation of these guidelines rests with the Heads of Schools and Centre. It is expected that the local School / Centre OHS committees will provide advice and feedback to the Heads of Schools and Centre on actions needed to comply with these guidelines. These groups will be able to seek advice from the Safety and Health Office.

All staff and students at UWA are expected to familiarise themselves with and comply with the standard operating procedures that exist in their area of work, including general safety instructions to be found in departmental safety manuals.

## 5.0 Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

### 5.1 Development of standard operating procedures:

- Standard operating procedures should be written by staff or student with sound, hands on experience and knowledge of the tasks
- Inclusion of the experience of several staff or students will enhance the usefulness of the instructions
- As far as practicable, the safety and health representative of the area should be consulted in the development.

## **5.2 Priorities for the development of standard operating procedures:**

- It is recognised that, in some areas, the preparation of standard operating procedures for all tasks will take some time.

The priorities for the preparation of the SOPs should be:

- All new tasks should have SOPs prepared before they are put into general use
- For existing processes, SOPs for high hazard tasks in use should be prepared first, lower hazard tasks in use next and then SOPs should be prepared for all other processes
- A higher priority should be placed on the tasks that are carried out by students and/or the tasks carried out most frequently

## **5.3 Standard Operating Procedures should include in accordance with Job Task Analysis:**

- Specific information regarding the hazards\* and associated risks of the task
- Precautions to be undertaken before commencing the task
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) to be worn while undertaking the task
- The environment where the task should be undertaken
- Clear step-by-step instructions for undertaking the task described in a safe manner
- Specific instructions regarding ways of minimising the risks of the task
- Instructions to ensure that the area is left safe for others to use
- Correct transport, clean-up and waste disposal guidelines (if applicable)

\*Note: Workplace hazards can be divided into six groups:

- Physical - eg. noise, electricity, heat and cold
- Ergonomic - eg. height of workbench, weight and dimensions of object and reach for objects
- Chemical - eg. toxic gases, noxious fumes and corrosive liquids
- Biological - eg. syringes containing potentially infected blood
- Radiation - eg. X-ray machines, high-powered lasers, radioactive materials
- Psychological - eg. stress from using equipment without proper training

## **5.4 Review:**

When complete, Standard Operating Procedures should be reviewed, signed and dated by the Heads of Schools / Centre and the School Safety Officer as following:

- After any incident or injury
- When training new staff
- If adopted by new work group
- If equipment, substances or processes change or
- Within 3 years of date of issue

## **5.5 Displayed:**

Standard Operating Procedures should be displayed prominently or readily available in the areas in which they are to be used:

- Equipment / machinery:
  - SOPs for each piece of equipment / machinery should be displayed prominently close to the location of the equipment / machinery
  - SOPs that are displayed prominently should be printed using the Appendix 1
  - The manufacturer's user manual provided with the equipment / machinery is a good resource for safety information to include in SOPs

- SOPs for techniques / processes should be included in a hardcopy and on the local website which should be readily available in each area where the techniques / processes are performed.

**5.6 Enforcement:**

All UWA personnel shall always follow SOPs accordingly.

**6.0 Contact Information: telephone, e-mail address**

For assistance and further information with implementing these guidelines please contact the below:

- Safety and Health Office: phone: 9380 3938, email: sho@admin.uwa.edu.au
- web site: <http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/>

**7.0 References and Links (related policies/documents)**

This guideline has been developed in reference to the following documents:

- *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (amended March 1999)*
  - UWA Personal Protective Equipment Guidelines  
[http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/personal\\_protective\\_equipment\\_guidelines](http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/personal_protective_equipment_guidelines)
  - UWA Safety Risk Management Procedures  
[http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/safety\\_risk\\_management\\_procedures](http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/safety_risk_management_procedures)
- [Appendix 1](#): Proforma for development of a Standard Operating Procedure

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**APPENDIX 1: Proforma for development of a Standard Operating Procedure**

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)</b>
<b>Task:</b>	<b>Date Issued:</b>
<b>Equipment Used:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<b>Hazards:</b> (eg. physical, ergonomic, biological, chemical, radiation, psychological)*  1 .....  2 .....  3 .....  4 .....  5 .....	<b>Risk Assessment:</b> ("High", "Medium" or "Low") 1 ..... 2 ..... 3 ..... 4 ..... 5 .....
<b>Safety Pre-requisites:</b> (eg: Lock-out Tags, Secure Access, Trained/Licensed Operator, Written Work Order, Close Supervision, Warning Signs, Personal Protective Equipment) 1 .....  2 .....  3 .....  4 .....  5 .....	<b>Prepared by:</b> (insert names of Supervisor, Health & Safety Rep and any other person involved) ..... ..... ..... .....

\*UWA Safety Risk Management Procedures. Will provide information on hazards and rating - [http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/safety\\_risk\\_management\\_procedures](http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/policies/safety_risk_management_procedures)

**Note:** This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) must be reviewed:

- a) after any incident or injury
- b) when training new staff
- c) if adopted by new work group
- d) if equipment, substances or processes change or
- e) within 3 years of date of issue

Department:	Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
<p><b>Procedure - Preparation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Key Points:</b> <i>(Warning, Key Check-point, Emergency/First Aid information (etc))</i></p>
<p><b>Procedure - Operation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Key Points:</b> <i>(Warning, Key Check-point, Emergency/First Aid information (etc))</i></p>
<p><b>Procedure - Transport / Clean-up / Disposal:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Key Points:</b> <i>(Warning, Key Check-point, Emergency/First Aid information (etc))</i></p>