

SAFE WORK PRACTICE PROCEDURE[®]

DOCUMENT SUMMARY/KEY POINTS

This procedure:

- Provides steps on how to develop and review a safe work practice
- Identifies the responsibilities of all workers with regards to safe work practices.

NSW Health Policy Directives

- [Work Health and Safety: Better Practice Procedures: PD2018_013](#)

Related Information

- [SafeWork NSW – Code of Practice: How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks: August 2019](#)

CHANGE SUMMARY

- Document due for mandatory review
- Update of references
- Updated SWP template and guidelines

READ ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- All workers should be aware of this document.
- All managers should read and acknowledge this document.

This document reflects what is currently regarded as safe practice. However, as in any clinical situation, there may be factors which cannot be covered by a single set of guidelines. This document does not replace the need for the application of clinical judgement to each individual presentation.

Approved by:	SCHN Policy, Procedure and Guideline Committee	
Date Effective:	1 st June 2023	Review Period: 3 years
Team Leader:	Manager	Area/Dept: Work Health & Safety

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1 Background

SCHN recognises that it has a legal responsibility to ensure that safe work practices are developed for complex and/or high-risk tasks, which enable workers to carry out their job accurately, efficiently and safely. Safe work practices (SWP) should integrate safety, quality, clinical and other requirements into the one procedure.

Safe work practices should be used to:

- Minimise the risk of injury/illness.
- Provide individuals with training in safe, efficient procedures.
- Instruct new employees on their job as part of orientation/induction.
- Ensure practices comply with WHS legislation, standards, SCHN policies / procedures and NSW policy directive and guidelines.
- Maximise the ability of workers to carry out tasks accurately, efficiently and safely.
- Improve work methods.

A risk assessment is integrated into the SWP Template; however a separate detailed risk assessment is required if the task involves hazardous manual handling (See intranet for manual handling risk assessment form), high-risk tasks/equipment or as required to meet WHS Regulation 2017, requirements and/or chemicals (see ChemAlert). This ensures that all hazards and associated risks are identified and suitably controlled.

It is recognised that, in some areas, the preparation of safe work practices may take some time. The priorities for the preparation of safe work practice **must** be:

- All new tasks where there is a high to medium risk should have safe work practices prepared before they are put into general use.
- For existing processes, safe work practices for high-risk tasks should be prepared first, followed by medium and low risk tasks.
- A higher priority should be placed on the tasks that are carried out by new or inexperienced staff e.g., students/volunteers and/or tasks carried out most frequently.

Remember - Consultation Is Crucial: consult the experts in the task - that is the team members that regularly conduct the task as part of the job function. The more people involved the better the control and the more sustainable the outcome. For some processes or tasks, it may be necessary to seek the input of a person with mechanical, electrical, or other technical competence. You can also contact the SCHN WHS team for assistance if required.

2 Responsibilities

Workers will:

- Comply with SCHN WHS policies and procedures, and any measures put in place to protect their health and safety at work.
- Assist in the development and review of SWP's and contribute their knowledge and experience to the process.
- Participate in SWP training programs to ensure their understanding of health and safety requirements for the task/equipment or hazardous substance.
- Ensure they do not place themselves or others at risk when performing work procedures/tasks.

Managers will:

- Implement and comply with SCHN WHS policies and procedures.
- Identify hazards in consultation with workers, review high-risk work procedures or tasks, develop, implement, and regularly review SWP's.
- Maintain a register of department SWP's and associated risk assessments where required.
- Ensure that any high-risk plant/equipment or hazardous chemicals used by workers at work is safe and without risk to health when properly used.
- Ensure that task specific SWP's are assessed by a competent person who ensures workers achieve the required competency for carrying out the task and record training.
- Provide such information, instruction, training, and supervision as may be necessary to ensure workers' health and safety and maintain records.
- Review SWP's three yearly or, earlier if there have been changes to the procedure/task, after an incident that involved relevant SWP or as determined control measures from completed risk assessments.
- Maintain records of documented risk assessments including associated SWP's.
- Consult with workers to enable them to contribute to the making of decisions affecting their health and safety.

Directors will:

- Establish and maintain SCHN WHS policies and procedures to ensure WHS legislative compliance.

Chief Executive will:

- Ensure SCHN WHS policies and procedures are in place to achieve the Network's Health Safety and Wellbeing strategic objectives.

3 Procedure for Development of SWP

Step 1 - Observe Task

Observe the task in real time and in the real workplace, this gives a true indication of what risks the workers are exposed to. Managers should include workers during this process as a way of consulting on the agreed 'practices'.

Step 2 - Break Task into Steps

Each task is broken down into a series of ordered steps that must be taken to complete the task. These task steps will form the basis of the procedure or practice. To break the task into steps, each activity in the task must be observed and noted. The completed list must then be edited to include only those steps of significant value.

Step 3 - Identify Hazards or Loss Potential for Every Step

Each key step of the task identified must be assessed for potential hazards and/or loss potential. Safety is one of many areas (quality, clinical) that should be considered in this process to ensure there is only one procedure developed for the one task. Areas where hazards or loss may arise include people, equipment, materials, and environment.

Identify all plant, equipment, substances, tools, work locations and personnel required for the task or procedure. This includes safety equipment, signs, clothing, and emergency procedures.

Assess each procedure or task component to determine the nature and extent of any hazard and the degree of risk. Decide if an injury may be caused by the procedure or task as a whole or any of its components.

If the task involves Hazardous Manual Handling high-risk tasks/equipment or as required to meet WHS Regulation 2017 requirements or Hazardous Chemicals, then a separate risk assessment must be completed to mitigate risk. (Refer to the SCHN WHS intranet for relevant risk assessment templates).

Step 4 - Review Whether Each Step in the Task Is Being Performed In the Most Appropriate Manner

Once the nature of the task is defined and risks at each step identified, a review should be conducted to determine whether each significant step in the task is being performed in the most appropriate and efficient manner. This will assist in improving work methods.

Step 5 - Develop Controls

The manufacturer's user manual should be consulted for safety information to include in the SWP. Controls that will correct risks should be specified and incorporated into the procedure for each significant step. When developing controls consider requirements made under WHS Legislation, Codes of Practices, Australian Standards, Ministry of Health and SCHN Policy and Procedures.

Step 6 - Safety Rule Development

Key safety instructions may be highlighted as critical as a result of developing safe work practices. These critical safety instructions or safety rules should be displayed at the location the task that is being carried out.

This type of visual reminder will prompt the worker's memory and warn others that they should not be entering an area or carrying out a task without prior instruction. **Safety rules should not take the place of the safe work procedure, they merely accompany and highlight critical components of the safe work procedure for high-risk tasks.**

Step 7 - Writing the SWP

The following points should be considered when documenting the SWP:

- Include a statement outlining the name of the task.
- Include the date of development and a revision date.
- Include related risk assessment details.
- Insert the level of risk as per the completed risk matrix.
- Include step by step description of how to complete the task including controls.
- Ensure they are written in an active, positive language e.g., reinforcing 'what to do' not 'what not to do'.
- Explain why key steps must be done in a specific way.
- Ensure they are clear, concise, correct, and complete.
- Ensure the format is easy to read.
- Insert Images (only if relevant) to highlight the required PPE or other important information.

Step 8 - Test and Approve the SWP

Distribute the safe work procedure for review – have your experienced workers conduct the task for an agreed period of time using the SWP and look for uncontrolled risks. Review the safe work practices at the end of the agreed period and make amendments as appropriate. Once completed, the safe work procedure requires approval from the supervisor, manager of the department involved. Approval should be made on the safe work procedure form including the date.

Step 9 - Implement the SWP

Provide information and task specific training for workers and implement the new SWP in the department – this includes ongoing training as required (e.g., for new staff and refresher training for existing staff) and maintain departmental records of this training.

Training in high-risk tasks/hazardous manual handling tasks is required for relevant workers so that they achieve the required competency for carrying out the task safely and maintain departmental records of this training.

SWP's must be made available in the department and workers aware of location and acknowledgement of these SWP's. It is reasonable that high-risk task specific SWP's and/or Safety Rules are displayed near the plant/equipment or hazardous chemical.

SWP's and/or Safety Rules that provide information for general users of low-risk plant/equipment (e.g., microwave) should be displayed prominently in the workplace.

Step 10 - Update and Maintain the SWP

Safe work practices and safety rules should be updated:

- Every three years; or earlier
- When significant changes are made to the work process or materials; or
- In the event of an incident or loss situation; or
- If determined by risk assessment control measure strategies.

4 Audit

The compliance with this procedure will be audited through SCHN Internal WHS Audit review and Ministry of Health WHS Audit program every two years.

5 References

- WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation 2017
- [How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks – SafeWork NSW Code of Practice](#)
August 2019

6 Templates

The Safe Work Practice Template and Guidelines and Training Sign-off sheets can be found on the [SCHN WHS - SWP Intranet page](#).

- [Appendix 1](#) SWP Record
- [Appendix 2](#) SWP Template

Appendix 1: SWP Record

Work Health and Safety Safe Work Practice Record

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the safe work procedure for (*insert SWP task title*) _____
within the _____ Dept/Ward. (copy attached)
I understand that it is an expectation of my employment with SCHN that these safe work practices are followed. I am aware that I should report to my manager/supervisor any problems/situations, which prevent me working in accordance with this safe work practice.

Name	Signature	Date



Appendix 2: SWP Template

SAFE WORK PRACTICE TEMPLATE

Task:	NSW Health Risk Rating (Matrix):	SWP#
Department:	Equipment used:	
Facility:	Model Identification:	
Date Developed:	Staff consulted:	
Date Reviewed::	Manager Authorising Task:	
Next Review Date:		
Reference Documents (e.g. Instruction manual, SDS, CoP, Australian Std):		
POTENTIAL HAZARDS		HAZARD CONTROLS
1.		•
2.		•
3.		•
4.		•
SAFETY RULES:		
BASIC STEPS:		

* A SWP needs to be reviewed when there is a change in work practice or otherwise at least every 3 years.

Manager Authorising Safe Work Practice			
Manager Name	Position	Signature	Date