

# OHS Checklist

## Objectives

### Introduction

The objective is to develop the skills and knowledge relating to the following defined occupational health and safety (OH&S) policies and procedures. Procedures relate to the work being undertaken in order to ensure own safety and that of others in the workplace, within the scope of responsibilities.

### This competency in practice

This competency applies to operators whose work involves the use of working policies and procedures to maintain a safe work environment for themselves and others. The key factors are following directions provided and being involved in a consultative process with occupational health and safety representatives and committee members. It includes:

- Identifying hazards in the workplace
- Accurately following safe workplace procedures
- Raising occupational health and safety issues
- Contributing to the consultative process within the scope of responsibilities and competencies.
- Completing hazard, accident or incident reports as required by procedures

### What will be covered in this workbook?

- Follow workplace procedures for hazard identification, risk assessment and control
- Raise occupational health and safety issues
- Complete any required safety documentation

### Follow workplace procedures for hazard identification, risk assessment and control

At the completion of this topic, you will be able to identify hazards in the work area and report to designated personnel according to workplace procedures.

To many people Occupational Health and Safety is a dry subject full of rules and regulations that either restrict or hinder the ease of work, but to others who have been affected by workplace accidents it is one of the most important sets of guidelines any company has.

It is a fact that accidents in the workplace are an unfortunate part of life. Every year a large number of employees are injured whilst at work or develop an illness that is directly

related to their jobs.

When we think of workplace accidents we don't think about the injuries that can occur within a normal office environment, we just automatically assume that they are related to heavy machinery, such as production lines, fork lifts etc. Although accidents do occur in this line of work, it doesn't mean that they don't occur within an office; hence we need to take care in all workplaces.

It is impossible to prevent all accidents in the workplace; people actions and their unpredictability are out of our control. What we all have the power to do is to understand how to maintain workplace safety and help reduce the number of workplace incidents through our behaviour. By implementing an effective occupational health and safety program we are headed on the right track to minimising workplace accidents.

### **Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures**

Each organisation needs to have OHS policies and procedures, with most organisations providing a manual for their employees. These manuals should cover all the relevant areas of safety in the workplace. The list below is not definitive, but should help you to understand what information needs to be contained within an **OHS manual**.

- ❖ Workstation safety
- ❖ OHS personnel / representatives
- ❖ OHS legislation
- ❖ Code of Practice
- ❖ Workplace hazards
- ❖ Risk Prevention
- ❖ Fire exits
- ❖ Building layouts
- ❖ Emergencies
- ❖ Emergency contact numbers
- ❖ First aid officers
- ❖ First aid equipment
- ❖ Incident reporting
- ❖ Providing feedback

Employees of all organisations should know who their relevant first aid officers and OHS representative are. These individuals will provide assistance on locating OHS procedure

manuals and will be able to ensure employees are aware of the potential problems within the workplace. These manuals may be stored in hard copy, in electronic copy and should be kept up to date with any change in the legislation.

### **Workplace Hazards and Risk Assessment**



So what is a **hazard** or a **risk**? We can define it as something that *could* potentially cause harm or damage, for example an electrical

hazard. Hazards in the workplace have the potential to cause minor injuries, serious injuries, illness or in some cases death.

A **hazard** is something with the potential to cause harm.

A **risk** is the likelihood that damage or injury will occur because of the *hazard*.

It is important for all staff in the workplace to be able to correctly identify and report any potential hazards to the appropriate personnel according to the workplace safety procedures. Who is the best person to locate a hazard in the workplace? You are, as individual employees you have the duty of providing the relevant parties with information that could reduce accidents in the workplace.

Take a look at your office or factory now; can you see any potential hazards? Are there any loose cables from electrical equipment? Are there too many devices connected to one power point or are you 'piggy backing' power supplies? What about your desk, do you have a drink next to your workstation?

All this information on workplace safety is very well but how are we going to communicate it in the workplace? Some examples of how to effectively communicate OHS information are listed below:

- Team meetings
- Inductions
- Company newsletters
- E-mails
- Company Intranet
- OHS Notice boards

All employees must work together to ensure the effects from hazards are avoided by making the workplace safer. How do we achieve this?

- Able to identify hazards
- Assessing potential hazards
- Being aware of the effects of each hazard
- Controlling hazards
- Reporting hazards to appropriate personnel

### **Hazard Identification**

This is the process of identifying all situations or events that could give rise to the potential of injury or illness. It generally involves consideration of the type of injury or illness possible (for example strained muscles from prolonged repetitive tasks), and the situations and events that could give rise to the potential for the injury or illness. Some hazards may not be obvious such as lung cancer or asbestosis caused by inhaling asbestos.

**Let's look at some potential hazards:**



Chemical hazards such as:

- ◆ Corrosive chemical liquids
- ◆ Gases, fumes or vapours
- ◆ Poisons
- ◆ Reactive chemicals that can cause fire or explosions
- ◆ Poor storage or handling facilities for chemicals

Electrical hazards such as:

- Damaged cable, wiring or conduit
- Damaged extension leads
- Damp or humid conditions
- Loose connections
- Static electricity
- Unqualified staff completing electrical work



Burn hazards such as:

- ✓ Hot metal surfaces
- ✓ Sparks from grinders or welders
- ✓ Steam leaks

### Typical hazards in the workplace

Take a look at each hazard closely and work out how serious a danger each one presents, discuss the implications with your trainer, mentor and workmates.

- **Blocked Exits** – Exits in the workplace should always be kept clear in case an emergency takes place. For example a blocked fire exit can be lethal.
- **Boxes / Obstructions on Floors** – Many times when new equipment or deliveries are made, the stock is placed on the floor and can cause a lot of inconvenience. Boxes can block through ways or cause employees to trip.
- **Loose Cables** – Like boxes a loose exposed cable can cause employees to trip and can also lead to electrical equipment being damaged.
- **Poor Lighting** – Poor lighting can also cause employees to injure themselves because they may not be able to see where they are going. It can also cause vision disturbances or headaches.
- **Spillages** – Spillages in the workplace that are not properly signed can cause employees to slip and injure themselves.
- **Noise** – Excessive noise in the workplace can cause employees not to hear warnings, hence injuring themselves unnecessarily.

- **Ergonomically Unsuitable Workstations** – Employees sitting at an ergonomically unsuitable workstation can develop lower back problems, RSI or other illnesses such as headaches.
- **Manual Handling** – Properly lifting equipment will ensure that back problems do not occur.
- **Machinery** – Machinery can also be hazardous; we need to ensure that it is properly maintained and that people are aware of moving parts.
- **Hazardous Substances** – Hazardous substances can include many things, including commonly used products such as laser printer toner and cleaning fluids. When using any of these products you need to ensure that you take the proper precautions and always read the safety information.
- **Bullying** – Although it doesn't sound like a hazard at first, many employees are at risk from bullying or harassment in the workplace. It can reduce an employee's quality of work life and lead to negative physical and emotional implications. Like any other hazard, precautions need to be made to ensure this doesn't happen.

### **Reporting Hazards**

If a hazard is identified in the workplace, it must be reported to the designated personnel so that corrective action may be taken. The responsible personnel would be the OH&S representative, manager or a team leader.

Many hazards are readily identifiable and therefore corrective action may be completed rapidly. Some hazards may not be so easy to detect and often appear unexpectedly, they may be hidden from site:

Example

An increased in relative humidity in a contained environment may cause moisture build up in a local electrical cabinet. The possible hazard is that the internal parts of the cabinet may be emersed in moisture, this may put staff at risk when they access the cabinet- water is conductible and moisture is water...thus a subsequent possibility of electrocution. Looking for hazards should therefore be a daily responsibility of all staff.

By increasing ones own awareness in this area will build knowledge.

### **Who do we report hazards to?**

Hazards must be reported to the following designated personnel:

- Direct supervisor
- Foreman
- OH&S representatives
- Team leader or shift supervisor
- Safety officers

Staff must understand that no matter how small and insignificant they feel a hazard may be, it is not up to them to decide whether to report the hazard or not. All potential hazards should be reported to the designated personnel.

In some instances a risk assessment may then be completed by the OH&S representative and members of the OH&S committee and company representative. A risk assessment may indicate that the risk is minimal and that no action is required, or on the other hand the assessment may highlight that the risk requires immediate action. Appendix C shows a

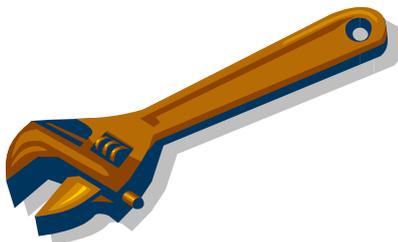
safety action plan (or risk assessment), this plan may be used to help to identify & formalise hazards in the Workplace, *Courtesy of Worksafe Victoria.*

Examples of hazards requiring immediate action:

1. Incident involving forklift which has caused a pedestrian to be injured
2. Biological containment leak
3. Steam leak
4. Fire, smoke



## Controlling Risks



Controlling hazards is essential to ensure that employees are in a low risk and safe work environment. There are many steps we can take to control risks in the workplace, such as:

- Eliminating the risk
  - Reducing / Minimising the risk
- Regular consultation

Eliminating the risk from the workplace can be easy depending on what the risk actually is. For example, on page 10 we listed boxes or obstructions on the floor as being a risk; these can be easily eliminated by providing more storage space for equipment. Similarly other risks like blocked exits, manual handling, poor lighting, can also be eliminated by carrying out easy and simple tasks / checks.

In many workplaces it can be difficult to fully eliminate risks but the risks can be minimised or reduced to ensure that accidents rarely occur. For example, if we have a look at the list of hazards again, we can see spillages, equipment and hazardous substances. It is unlikely that these will ever be eliminated but we can help reduce accidents from these by providing signage when spillages occur, regular maintenance of equipment and effective user training and assessment.

We can also purchase less toxic substances and ensure that employees read and understand the safety information in the material safety data sheets before using them.

By having regular consultations with fellow workers, OH&S representatives and management, we are helping to control the risks in the workplace. Employees are the ones who are doing the actual work tasks so they are the experts in their particular area. Therefore if we regularly consult and listen to employees regarding potential problems we will be taking the appropriate steps to ensure risks are either eliminated or minimised.

## Risk Assessment

When personnel are assessing risks in the workplace they must be able to establish if the risk is harmful to people and equipment. Safety awareness in the workplace will help protect colleagues and others.

And so how do we control risks in the workplace? The next table lists typical procedures used for controlling hazards and risk in the workplace. These systems are formalised and documented and become part of the company culture.

## Control Risk in the Workplace

Safe Work Systems	In relation to:
Emergency procedures	Fire, explosions, first aid, accidents, evacuation
Housekeeping	Inspections
Material safety data sheet	Chemical characteristics, safety data and precautions
OH&S guidelines	Requirements and legislation
Personal protective equipment	Clothing, foot, hand, head, mouth and respiratory
Protection devices	Machinery guards, interlocks, fail-safe devices
Safety procedures	Safety rules, company policies
Safe work systems	Lock out procedures, isolation procedures, scaffolding, high voltage
Standard operating procedures	Equipment operation, process parameters, routine tasks
Work permit systems	Hot work, cold work, vessel entry

## Following Safe Workplace Procedures

Personnel should be aware of the correct procedures to be followed in the instance that a fire, emergency or accident occurs.

The most important aspect in all emergencies is to protect life; the second action is to raise the alarm so that the incident is acknowledged by the appropriate personnel.

The person on the scene should then take appropriate action such as:

- ◆ Give assistance to injured personnel
- ◆ Alert others of the danger
- ◆ Evacuate personnel from the danger area
- ◆ Protect their own safety

If safe to do so, the next step is to try to reduce the escalation or spread of the incident, i.e. shut off the supply of gas.

Very important factors that may save your life:

1. "Don't be heroes" the grave yard is full of them
2. Size up the risk to your own safety before you go head first into a situation that you may not come out of
3. Don't try to save a piece of equipment and risk your own life doing it
4. Don't attempt to do anything that you are not trained to do

## Emergency Alarms

Most factories and offices have an emergency alarm which will sound in case of emergencies such as:

- Fires
- Explosions
- Bomb threats
- Gas leaks
- Liquid leaks and spills
- Major accidents

The emergency alarm is used to alert all staff, contractors, and visitors of an emergency which has occurred. An emergency response team such as safety wardens will then take whatever procedural steps are necessary with relation to the particular incident.

The standard procedures should be as per indicated below in order:

1. Stop work
2. Leave workstation in safe condition
3. Proceed in an orderly manner to the designated muster point, (as directed by safety wardens or as per previous documented procedure)
4. Report to safety warden, (staff, contractors and visitors will then be counted and verified)

After the emergency has passed, staff, contractors and visitors will be given further direction by safety wardens.

### **Logical Plan of Action**

Extreme caution must be used to prevent small incidents rapidly becoming large incidents and therefore a logical plan of action must be formulated before attempting such a task.

Remember to:

- I. Protect
- II. Raise the alarm
- III. Limit the impact or spread

# OH&S Checklist

Example of an OH&S Checklist

Workplace/section: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing checklist: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Compliant</b>	<b>If not, Action Required (inc finalization date)</b>	<b>Date Action Completed – Now Compliant</b>
Working at heights	Fall from height & break limbs	NO	Not to use current ladder as it is faulty with crack in frame. New ladder must be purchased and removal damaged ladder by 03/06/06	Rectified 03/06/06
Electricity	Electrocution from faulty electrical lead	NO	Not to use current electrical lead as it has frayed cable. Removed and cut up and placed in rubbish bin. New electrical lead must be purchased and then tested and tagged by electrician prior to use, must be provided by 06/06/06	Rectified 06/06/06

For the purpose of this exercise, please fill in the following OH&S Checklist

# OH&S Checklist

Example of an OH&S Checklist

Workplace/section: \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing checklist: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Compliant</b>	<b>If not, Action Required (inc finalization date)</b>	<b>Date Action Completed – Now Compliant</b>