

CONFUSED ABOUT WORKPLACE SAFETY?

A WORKERS GUIDE TO COMMONLY USED
SAFETY FORMS

SAFETYCULTURE

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Introduction

For all businesses, no matter the industry or size, workplace safety is important. In 2015, 195 Australian workers did not return home from work, and whilst worker fatalities have decreased since records started in 2003, even one death is one too many. Managing and promoting a safe work environment allows people to return home safe to their loved ones at the end of the work day, and that is something that you can't put a price on. The value of a life is priceless.

There is no argument that safety is everyone's responsibility and yes, it really is more than just safety glasses and hard hats. As a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), business operators have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of workers, including other relevant persons such as volunteers, visitors and contractors.

What does this mean for your business?

More paperwork we hear you say!

It's okay we get it, running a business is no small feat. You're busy trying to make a living, working on the tools, all whilst running a business. So when you're faced with the added prospect of having to develop your own health and safety compliance documentation, it raises a lot of questions. What do I need? When should I be using this tool? How do I write that document? Where do I start?

For a large percentage of our clients who are mostly small to medium business operators, these are commonly asked questions. Thankfully, there's no need to start from scratch with our pre-written documents.

Among the many types of safety documents that businesses can use to manage workplace safety, there are 5 commonly requested tools that SafetyCulture sells on a regular basis. In this ebook, we will help make sense of the tool options including: Safe Work Method Statements, Job Safety Analysis sheets, Risk Assessment Forms, Take 5 Checklists and Toolbox Talks. Read on to discover what these tools are and when to use them.

Safe Work Method Statements

What is a Safe Work Method Statement?

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) are a common term for a type of safety procedure that generally contains the following information:

- Identifies the task that is high-risk.
- Lists the hazards relating to the task and the risks (chance of an incident and severity) to health and safety.
- Describes the measures to be employed to control the risks.
- Describes how the control measures will be implemented, monitored, and reviewed.



When should a SWMS be developed?

In Australia, it is a legislative requirement that a person conducting a business prepare a SWMS for any high-risk construction work. Work that is considered high-risk construction include:

- asbestos, explosives or diving work
- building or demolition work involving tilt-up or pre-cast concrete
- confined spaces
- demolition
- pressurised gas distribution mains or piping chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines energised electrical installations or services
- structure or building involving structural alterations or repairs that require temporary support to prevent collapse
- work carried out adjacent to a road, railway or shipping lane, traffic corridor
- work in an area that may have contaminated or flammable atmosphere
- working around mobile plant / machinery
- working at depths greater than 1.5 metres, including tunnels or mines
- working at heights where there is a risk of falling more than two metres, including work on telecommunications towers
- working in areas where there is risk of being exposed to artificial extreme temperatures
- working in or near water or other liquid that involves risk of drowning

So why did my principal contractor request that I supply a SWMS for the plastering or turf laying job I just did?



Safe work method statements have become such a common and valuable tool that many Principal Contractors (PC), local government bodies and other parties accepting tenders for contracts, request work method statements to be included in a contractor's safety systems.

Why you may ask? Simply put, it demonstrates to the PC that you as a contractor have taken into consideration the hazards and controls related to the job. It also provides evidence of your workers receiving appropriate health and safety training and instruction to carry out the job safely prior to works commencing.

Preparing Your SWMS

It is an important aspect of any SWMS that it reflect the site-specific circumstances of the job site it will be used in. When preparing a safe work method statement the following should be taken into account:

- The work that is high-risk construction work
- Hazards that relate to each step of the task
- Measures to be implemented to control the risks
- How the control measures are to be implemented, monitored, and reviewed



HIGH RISK CONSTRUCTION WORK
CONTROL MEASURES **HAZARDS** **IMPLEMENTED**
MONITORED
REVIEWED

Other details that should also be included in your swms:

- Your company and principal contractor information
- Address where work will be carried out
- Date SWMS was prepared
- Date SWMS provided to Principal Contractor
- SWMS review date (if any)

The Number 1 Secret to Creating Site-Specific SWMS

Health and safety applies to everyone in the business and it is everyone's responsibility to maintain a safe work environment. An important aspect of providing a safe work environment is effectively consulting with workers.



Consultation processes promote a work environment that provides everyone with the opportunity to participate in discussions to identify hazards and risks, safety concerns and controls. By involving and encouraging worker input and utilising the combined knowledge and experience of everyone in the workplace - more informed decisions can be made. In turn, this makes a safe work environment more achievable.

Not only is consultation the key to developing site-specific SWMS, it is also a legal requirement. Consultation must be conducted, so far as it is reasonably practicable, with workers and other duty holders. So there you have it - the number one secret to creating site-specific SWMS is to ensure you consult your workers.

Remember the development of a work method statement is not enough, works need to be carried out in accordance with the SWMS for them to be effective.

Top

FIVE

Tips For Creating Site Specific SWMS

- 1 Include your company details, principal contractor information and address where work will be carried out
- 2 Do consult with workers and health and safety representatives the content of the SWMS
- 3 Identify work that is high-risk construction work
- 4 Ensure the SWMS is made site-specific
 - Add site-specific hazards and control measures, including those for high-risk construction work
- 5 Define person/s responsible to implement control measures and follow monitoring and review procedures

From No to Yes

Getting Your SWMS Approved by Principal Contractors

As mentioned, there is often a requirement that contractors supply principal contractor's with safety compliance documents such as safe work method statements.

So why do principal contractors request this information? Besides being able to meet health and safety compliance requirements for the site. The provision of a SWMS document allows principal contractors to confirm that the contractors they are engaging to complete works are taking into consideration site hazards. And that necessary control measures have been put in place to ensure the health and safety of everyone on site.

How do I know if my SWMS will meet requirements set out by a principal contractor?

No principal contractor is the same. We have seen many principal contractor SWMS review checklists shared with us by our customers. And while no two are the same, there are several requirements that constantly appear on these SWMS review checklists.

So what are these requirements?

Check out our SWMS Review Checklist on the next page to find out!





SWMS REVIEW: CHECKLIST ADVICE TO CONTRACTORS

Use this checklist as a step-by-step reminder of what you need to include in your SWMS:

- Name of company, address, ABN and the date
- Name, address and ABN of the principal contractor
- Evidence the SWMS was developed in consultation with workers or their health and safety representative
- SWMS identifies high risk construction work
- List of minimum PPE requirements for the activity
- Includes a clear description and location of the work to be undertaken
- Activity broken down into sequence of steps/tasks required to complete the work activity
- Relevant hazards are identified for each step/task
- Risks are assessed for each hazard using a matrix that contains both likelihood and consequence
- Control measures are identified for all specified hazards in accordance with the hierarchy of controls
- Includes names of person/s responsible for ensuring controls are in place and monitored
- Contains details of emergency procedures
- Evidence of competencies, permits and/or licences
- References applicable legislation, codes of practice and Australian standards
- Workers sign off sheet to verify that workers have been provided with appropriate training in the content of the SWMS

Job Safety Analysis (JSA)

A Job Safety Analysis (JSA) is a task-oriented risk assessment that can assist in monitoring changing conditions. A JSA should be completed upon arrival to site each day, with the purpose of identifying site-specific hazards that weren't present the day before. Undertaking a JSA prompts those involved in the work task / activity to consider their work environment carefully and assess the risks of the job prior to starting work.

A JSA can also assist in the continued development of your SWMS. As new hazards are identified, risks which are new or different may emerge, deeming control measures identified no longer effective. In this case a review of your SWMS should take place to factor in additional hazards, control measures and risk ratings.

Job Safety Analysis **FIVE** steps

1. Document the activity
2. Identify the hazards
3. Document the control measures
4. Identify who is responsible
5. Monitor and review

Remember

A job safety analysis should be prepared by all employees involved in the activity.

Risk Assessment Forms

A risk assessment form is a tool used in the planning stage of a project. Completed prior to the commencement of any works a risk assessment can assist in the development of a site-specific safe work method statement.

A risk assessment form is used to identify hazards, assess risk, and reduce risk by establishing safety control measures (preventative measures) to prevent harm to life, health, property, or the environment.

FOUR

step process for managing risks



1

Identify the hazards

This step should be done in consultation with workers to ensure that all aspects and views are covered. The combined knowledge and experience that consultation processes provide ensures that all factors of the job have been considered.

2

Assess the risks

- Determine the likelihood the effect will occur
- Determine the risk score
- What actions should be taken to control the risks

3

Manage the risks

Using the hierarchy of control duty holders should work towards elimination of the risk. Where elimination is “not practicable” the next phase in the hierarchy of controls should be implemented.

4

Monitor & Review

Ensure the control measures are implemented and monitored effectively.

Take 5 Checklists:

Am I Safe To Work?

Techniques such as the Take 5 risk management process are intended to identify any health, safety and environmental hazards present at the specific time and location of where the work activity is to be undertaken.

In its most basic form the Take 5 forces us to ask “Am I safe to work?” by narrowing our focus on the task at hand, ticking off items on a checklist before we engage in the activity. By taking just five minutes to conduct a Take 5 safety check, it can often make the task much faster, easier and safer to complete.

STOP

Think about the potential dangers associated with the job.

LOOK

Identify the hazards.

ASSESS the risk

Consider any possible threat of damage or injury.

MANAGE controls

Implement suitable control measures to reduce risk. Ensure other persons on site who are affected by the same matter are informed about the hazard.

SAFELY

Complete the task.



WHEN TO USE A

TAKE 5 CHECKLIST

It is recommended that a Take 5 be used before starting any work task or when there is a change in the work conditions or environment.

Toolbox Talks

Designed to engage employees, toolbox talks are used to heighten employee awareness of workplace hazards, encouraging them to keep safety in mind constantly. Taking on the format of an informal group discussion that focuses on a particular safety issue, toolbox talks assist in highlighting issues by bringing them to the forefront of workers minds.

By highlighting specific safety issues, regular communication in the form of toolbox talks provide an ideal setting for business operators to discuss incidents, current and emerging hazards and risks, learnings, challenges and successes related to the specific topic being highlighted.

Toolbox Talk Safety Meeting Goals

- Making workers more aware of safety at work
- Bringing together management and workers
- Encourage an interest in safety
- Educating workers in safe work practices
- Accessing a wider range of viewpoints
- Developing preventive measures not reactive ones
- Sharing incidents and workplace procedural changes



Toolbox Talks: Frequency and Length?

Toolbox talks should be held regularly in order to be effective, however there is no hard and fast rule around how frequently or how long these types of safety briefings should be held.

We have put together some guidelines based around best practices:

- Businesses with lower risks, may conduct monthly or quarterly toolbox talks that last 10 - 15 minutes
- Principal contractors and subcontractors on construction sites, may hold 2 - 5 minute toolbox talks daily or weekly

TIP

Frequency will depend on the size and nature of your business so try and find a frequency that best engages workers and gets your safety message across.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF AN EFFECTIVE TOOLBOX TALK

- Follow an agenda
- Keep it **short and succinct**
- Use resources other than paper handouts for e.g. re-enactments and video
- **Toolbox attendance registers** make everyone accountable for attendance and participation
- Anyone can conduct a toolbox talk, however we recommend you select those who are experienced with the issue or task
- Holding toolbox talks in the morning before work commences ensures **everyone is aware of any current and emerging hazards**

About SafetyCulture

Making Safety A Way of Life in The Workplace

Founded in 2004, SafetyCulture is one of Australia's leading providers of Occupational Health and Safety services.

Our mission is to make Safety a way of life in the workplace. We aim to do this by creating simple and useable systems that will be used by workers.

With a Quality Management System, Safe Operating Procedures, Health & Safety Management Systems and over 300 Safe Work Method Statements available, our comprehensive library of safety compliance documents caters to a wide range of industries from construction, hospitality, cleaning and landscaping plus more.

Over 30,000 Australian & New Zealand businesses have relied on SafetyCulture for their safety document needs. Our safety solutions assist you with legislative compliance, meeting tender requirements and the needs of your clients. Our generic pre-filled, fully customisable templates designed to save your business the time, money and resources of producing them yourself.

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