

# OHS Risk Control Procedure

## Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) One of the key health and safety principles of the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#) is to ensure that those persons who manage or control things that create health and safety risks in the workplace are responsible for eliminating those risks. Where they can't be eliminated, they are responsible for reducing those risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

(2) What is 'reasonably practicable' in a given situation is determined objectively. In determining what is 'reasonably practicable', account must be taken of:

- a. the probability of a person being exposed to harm;
- b. the potential seriousness of injury or harm;
- c. what is known, or ought to be known, about the risk (people responsible for health and safety are required to inform themselves of current and relevant information) and how to eliminate it; and
- d. the availability, suitability and cost of eliminating or reducing the risk.

(3) A risk based approach to health and safety ensures the proper identification and evaluation of workplace hazards and enables those hazards either be eliminated, or controlled by suitable control measures.

(4) In order for La Trobe to comply with its legislative obligations to eliminate or control risks, it is essential that there be a systematic process of identifying and evaluating workplace risks. Completing and documenting risk assessments ensures workplace risks are properly assessed and provides a foundation to review and update assessments either periodically or in line with changes to the workplace.

(5) Managing risks in the workplace involves a number of key steps. These include hazard identification, assessing the risks associated with those hazards, and eliminating or controlling the risks. There are a number of tools to assist managers and supervisors in identifying, assessing and controlling risks in the workplace. La Trobe Health, Safety and Environment has published a range of guidelines to assist staff in assessing and controlling workplace risks.

## Section 2 - Scope

(6) Refer to the [Health and Safety Policy](#).

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(7) Refer to the [Health and Safety Policy](#).

## Section 4 - Procedure

## Responsibilities

(8) Heads of Schools, Divisional Directors and Leadership Teams are responsible for:

- a. Identifying and documenting hazards within their areas of responsibility
- b. Maintaining a Risk Register of those hazards
- c. Developing Risk Control Plans in consultation with Health and Safety Representatives and employees
- d. Updating area Safety Management Plans in relation to hazards

## Hazard Identification

(9) Hazard Identification is the process of identifying all situations or events that could give rise to the potential of injury or illness. Hazard identification and risk assessment must also accompany any proposal for the introduction of new equipment or processes or the modification of equipment or processes. Hazards can be grouped as physical, chemical, ergonomic, biological, or psychological

(10) Hazards can be identified through the following methods:

- a. Direct observation and reports from employees.
- b. Previous incidents
- c. Industry information
- d. Health and Safety Committees
- e. Hazard Identification checklists such as manual handling risk identification plant, planned OHS inspections, workstation
- f. Consultants report
- g. Material Safety Data Sheets

## Risk Assessment

(11) Where a hazard has been identified, or when there have been significant changes to the way work is undertaken or modifications to plant or equipment, a risk assessment must be undertaken to determine the likelihood of injury or illness being caused by the hazard.

(12) The risk assessment will need to take into account the potential consequence of an adverse event occurring and the likelihood of the event occurring with that consequence. When assessing the risk associated with any hazard, the following matters are relevant:

- a. The persons exposed to the hazard
- b. How often people are near the hazard
- c. Previous incidents relating to the hazard
- d. Legal requirements relating to the specific hazards
- e. The context of the hazards (which may increase the likelihood of injury or illness occurring)

## Assessment Process

(13) Risk analysis involves a consideration of the potential events (in the context of health and safety this includes injury, illness or property damage) that may arise and the consequences of those events. This requires a systematic approach to assessing hazards and provides an objective measure of the hazard and allows hazards to be prioritised. The Risk Rating Matrix can be used to assign a risk each hazard.

(14) The Consequence is the physical outcome of the hazard, including injury or illness to people and damage to

equipment.

| CONSEQUENCE  | EXAMPLE  |
|--------------|--|
| Catastrophic | Numerous fatalities, irrecoverable property damage and productivity            |
| Major        | Approximately one single fatality, major property damage if hazard is realised |
| Moderate     | Serious non-fatal injury, permanent disability                                 |
| Medium       | Disabling but not permanent injury   |
| Minimal      | Minor abrasions, bruises, cuts, first aid type injury.                         |

(15) The Likelihood can be described as follows:

| LIKELIHOOD     | EXAMPLE   |
|----------------|---|
| Almost certain | Has happened, or could occur soon   |
| Likely         | Could easily happen   |
| Possible       | Could happen, and has either occurred before or could occur within a year or so |
| Unlikely       | Has not been known to occur after many years of exposure                        |
| Rare           | Exceptionally unlikely, even in the longer term                                 |

## Risk Rating Matrix

|                | Consequence |             |             |             |              |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Likelihood     | Minimal     | Medium      | Moderate    | Major       | Catastrophic |
| Rare           | Low         | Low         | Medium      | Significant | Significant  |
| Unlikely       | Low         | Low         | Medium      | Significant | High         |
| Possible       | Low         | Medium      | Significant | High        | High         |
| Likely         | Medium      | Medium      | Significant | High        | Extreme      |
| Almost certain | Medium      | Significant | High        | Extreme     | Extreme      |

## Control of Risks

### Risk Prioritisation Chart

| DESCRIPTION           | ACTION  |
|-----------------------|---|
| HIGH to EXTREME       | A high or extreme risk requires immediate action to control the hazard as detailed in the hierarchy of controls, or the activity involving the hazard must cease.   |
| MEDIUM to SIGNIFICANT | A medium or significant risk should be immediately controlled in the first instance. If this is not possible, temporary controls should be implemented and a planned approach be taken to control the hazard. |

| DESCRIPTION | ACTION  |
|-------------|---|
| LOW         | A risk identified as low may be considered as acceptable and further reduction may not be necessary. However, if the risk can be resolved quickly and efficiently, control measures should be implemented and recorded. |

(16) Risk control requires actions to be taken to eliminate or reduce the likelihood that exposure to a hazard will result in injury or disease. When determining control solutions consultation shall occur between competent persons undertaking the risk management process, employees affected health and safety representatives and the zone health and safety committee when required.

(17) When planning how hazards are to be controlled and risks reduced the following controls should be considered. This series of steps is called the hierarchy of risk control. Controls that act directly on the source of risk should be applied in the first instance where practicable, and only those methods that act on people be applied as a last resort. In many circumstances control solutions will incorporate a combination of controls.

- a. Eliminate the risk from the workplace
- b. Substitute the risk with something with a lower risk
- c. Isolate the source of the risk
- d. Use an engineering control
- e. Change the work practices
- f. Provide training
- g. Provide protective gear

(18) Some risks require immediate action, whereas others may take longer to put into place, in which case a Risk Control Plan should be developed. The Risk Control Plan should contain:

- a. A description of the hazards
- b. Risk controls already in place
- c. Short term actions to control the risk
- d. Longer term actions required
- e. The person with responsibility
- f. The date for completion

(19) Review of the control measures must be undertaken by the area manager to ensure that control measures are adequate.

(20) If practicable, there must be consultation with the relevant health and safety representative(s) when identifying, assessing and controlling risks. Consulting directly with employees and drawing on their experience and knowledge is more effective in reducing risk.

## Safe Operating Procedures

(21) Where a risk has been identified, a safe operating procedure should be developed, promulgated and be regularly updated. The Safe Operating Procedure should contain a description of the hazard or risk, and the procedures necessary to ensure the tasks can be performed safely.

(22) It is important that employees are provided with the necessary information, instruction, training and skills to perform their work in a manner that is safe and without risks to health. It enables them to:

- a. Follow health and safety procedures;
- b. Use risk controls set in place for their protection;
- c. Have an appreciation of the nature of the hazard; the risks associated with their use; and the reason why risk controls are used.

## **Documents and Record Keeping**

(23) A Risk Register is to be developed as part of the School, professional or administrative area Safety Management Plan. Each risk assessment must be fully documented and control plans developed. The risk assessment must be completed by the risk assessment team and be approved by the appropriate person responsible for the area. Schools and Divisions are responsible for the hazards and their controls and are required to maintain all records of assessments for at least 5 years. (In some cases, legislative requirements will determine the minimum time to retain records)

## **Section 5 - Definitions**

(24) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Hazard: A source of potential harm to people or a situation with potential to cause injury or loss to plant, property or equipment.
- b. Hazard identification: Is the process of identifying all situations or events that could give rise injury, illness or damage to plant or property.
- c. Risk: A function of the probability of an adverse event occurring and the potential consequence of that event.
- d. Risk Assessment: A systematic approach to assessing hazards which provides an objective measure of the hazard and allows hazards to be prioritised and compared.
- e. Hazard and Risk Control: Is the process of implementing measures to reduce the risk associated with a hazard.
- f. Hierarchy of Control: Is the established priority order for the types of measures to be used to control risks.

## Status and Details

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
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