

Health and Safety Procedure - Chemical Safety

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

(1) The University utilises a wide array of regulated chemical materials for research and teaching. Generally small quantities are used for these purposes. However, as there are inherent hazards and associated risks to people, University assets and the environment, there is a requirement for strict control and management.

(2) The purpose of this Procedure is to align regulatory requirements to guide the chemical management life cycle from procurement, handling, use and storage through to end of life disposal with the aim to:

- a. Clarify processes to prevent incidents and adverse environmental impacts
- b. Ensure compliance with relevant legislation
- c. Ensure the health and safety of staff, students, contractors and visitors

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to all La Trobe University staff and students who procure, handle, use, store and dispose of regulated chemical materials and, where applicable, contractors and visitors (such as visiting academics).

(4) Regulated chemical materials (including compounds) can be OR a combination of:

- a. Dangerous Good/High consequence Dangerous Good
- b. Hazardous substance
- c. Cytotoxic substance
- d. Carcinogenic material
- e. Controlled substances (drugs & scheduled poisons)
- f. Chemical of security concern

(5) This Procedure covers all regulated chemical material with the exception of ionising and non-ionising radiation (Class 7 Dangerous Good).

(6) Consumer products such as household cleaners and dishwashing liquids that are used in ways consistent with household use and are incidental to the work performed (such as in kitchenettes) are exempt from this Procedure.

Section 3 - Policy statement

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

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Responsibilities

Managers and Leaders (including supervisors)

(8) Managers and leaders, including supervisors are responsible for:

- a. Ensuring regulated chemicals are identified and documented within areas of responsibility.
- b. Ensuring risk assessment processes are undertaken and rigorously followed.
- c. Ensuring training and induction is undertaken and recorded.
- d. Ensuring permit or licencing requirements are sought, where required.
- e. Ensuring local area emergency processes are developed, exercised and periodically reviewed.
- f. Ensuring the periodic (assurance) review of chemical management documentation.

Health & Safety Team

(9) The Health and Safety Team are responsible for:

- a. Providing oversight and monitor this procedure
- b. Providing advice on hazards and risks to consider
- c. Providing advice on risk control measures and emergency preparedness
- d. Supporting assurance processes
- e. Supporting incident response, investigation and sharing the lessons learnt across the organisation

Direct Users

(10) Direct Users are responsible for:

- a. Participating in processes that generate safety documentation and/or ensure that the documents in use are current (risk assessment, safe work procedure, chemical manifest, Safety Data Sheets).
- b. Ensuring that any permit or licencing requirements are strictly adhered to.
- c. Following the documented processes to procure, handle, use, store and/or dispose of chemical materials.

All Staff and Students

(11) All staff and students are responsible for:

- a. Reporting all hazards and incidents in accordance with the [Health and Safety Procedure - Hazard and Incident Reporting](#)
- b. Stopping the work or activity if there is an immediate or perceived risk to health and safety
- c. Following instructions and direction from incident controllers in the event of an emergency

Contractors

(12) Contractors should refer to the Infrastructure and Operations contractor induction/guide which includes Handling Dangerous and Hazardous Substances procedure and other relevant documentation.

(13) Where a contractor is independent of the Infrastructure and Operations induction and management process, the host will ensure the chemical management processes detailed in this Procedure are strictly adhered to.

Part B - Chemical Management Guidelines

Chemical Risk Assessment

(14) Chemical Risk assessments are used to articulate the hazards and associated risks and to clarify the prevention risk controls and mitigation emergency processes. The details in a risk assessment will depend on the chemical properties and their application.

(15) Where a chemical material is being introduced to the University, a pre-purchase risk assessment will be completed prior to acquisition.

(16) Where multiple chemicals are used, a process/task risk assessment will also be completed and included with the documentation. Copies of all risk assessments will be readily available and easily accessible by the users.

Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and Database

(17) The University uses Chemwatch SDS database to store information about the regulated chemical materials, to manage the chemical registers and to undertake chemical risk assessments.

(18) When a chemical material is first acquired, an SDS will be obtained directly from the chemical manufacturer/supplier.

(19) All SDSs will be readily available, easily accessible and kept current (< 5 years).

Chemical Register

(20) Each area will have a register of the local chemical materials and will include:

- a. Chemical classification (specifying hazardous substances, dangerous goods, controlled substance)
- b. Location and specified storage conditions
- c. Quantity that is systematically updated as the materials are drawn into use

Part C - Procurement

(21) Prior to the acquisition of any regulated chemical material, an SDS will be obtained from the manufacturer or supplier and a detailed risk assessment will be completed. The risk assessment will identify and guide the development of the necessary risk controls for safe transport, handling, usage, storage and will inform consideration of eventual disposal, such as longer term storage and finance.

(22) Information about regulatory requirements and restrictions will be met prior to acquisition for:

- a. Industrial chemicals
- b. Agricultural & veterinary chemicals
- c. Controlled substances (drugs and poisons)

(23) Permits and licences; where required; will also be verified as there may be restrictions on acquisition.

Part D - Manufacture or Supply

(24) Researchers that are manufacturing or supplying manufactured chemical materials outside La Trobe University will meet all necessary regulatory requirements to ensure safety is maintained through the acquisition process. This includes the preparation and provision of an SDS that is in accordance with Victorian [Occupational Health and Safety](#)

Part E - Training

(25) Staff and students that are handling, using, storing and disposing of chemical materials will complete an adequate level of training and be provided technical guidance to ensure tasks involving chemical materials will be performed safely. The training provided will be a mix of knowledge and instruction commensurate to the inherent hazards and associated risks of the chemical material and in-line with individual levels of knowledge and skill (i.e. undergraduate students VS post-doctoral researchers).

(26) Relevant chemical information such as the chemical risk assessment, safe work procedure, chemical registers (where applicable) and SDSs will be included in the inductions and be available to support the tasks undertaken.

Part F - Storage and Handling

(27) Correct storage and handling of chemical materials is critical to minimise the risk associated with the inherent hazards. Risks controls will be implemented on the basis of the physical properties of the chemical material and will include:

- a. Access to the current SDS, chemical register and risk assessment
- b. Labelling that aligns with the Globally Harmonised System (GHS)
- c. Suitable training and emergency planning for all users

(28) All Dangerous goods will be stored in strict accordance with the Victorian [Dangerous Goods \(Storage and Handling\) Regulations 2012 \(Vic\)](#).

Part G - Signage and Placarding

(29) All signage and placarding will align with the requirements outlined in Victorian [Dangerous Goods \(Storage and Handling\) Regulations 2012 \(Vic\)](#).

(30) Signage and placarding will be displayed on main entrances and buildings.

(31) Dangerous goods storage areas will be correctly signed to indicate the class types of the materials present.

Part H - Health Surveillance

(32) Health surveillance or screening, where required, are detailed in the SDS for each regulated chemical material. These requirements will be documented as part of the chemical risk assessment and health surveillance/screening will be provided when:

- a. The chemical materials are listed in Schedule 3 of National Model Regulations for the control of Workplace Hazardous Substances (NOHSC:1005[1994]).
- b. Chemical materials which present adverse/severe health conditions and exposure is likely to have an adverse health effects as detailed in the Victorian [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017](#).

Part I - Waste Management

(33) The University maintains trade waste agreements with relevant water corporations. These agreements detail the acceptable and non-acceptable physical and chemical characteristics and other requirements related to the wastewater discharged from University facilities into the sewer system. Detailed information on specific acceptance

criteria is available from Infrastructure and Operations.

(34) As a guide:

- a. When acquired, chemical material will be sourced in minimum quantities to reduce waste.
- b. Where applicable, chemical materials will be disposed of through a licensed disposal company.
- c. Waste chemical materials will be appropriately labelled, segregated and stored whilst awaiting disposal.

Part J - Emergency Preparedness

(35) In the event of an emergency, University processes will be strictly adhered to. Leaders will also ensure local emergency procedures are developed that take into account the physical properties of the chemical materials in use including fire and explosion, environmental damage and the likely health effects, if exposure occurs.

Section 5 - Definitions

(36) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Carcinogen: is a chemical that has the potential to cause cancer.
- b. Chemical/chemical substance: is any element, compound, mixture consisting of matter (solid, liquid, gas).
- c. Chemicals of security concern: are chemicals that can be used to make explosives or toxic devices as listed in the [National Code of Practice for Chemicals of Security Concern 2016](#).
- d. Chemical Register: is a summary of chemical information including physical and acute toxicity hazards that are used, handled or stored within a workplace.
- e. Chemical risk assessment: is a document outlining the consequence and likelihood of potential hazards of a chemical on the risks to health or the environment. Health hazards, exposure risks and controls are taken into account
- f. Controlled Substances (Drugs, Scheduled poisons): refers to pharmaceuticals and poisons that require licensing. Under the license/permit conditions there are restrictions on access, labelling and use, all of which are determined by the [Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Regulations 2006](#).
- g. Cytotoxic Substance: are chemicals known to be toxic to cells, many have been demonstrated to be carcinogens (cancer causing), mutagens (causing genetic mutation), teratogens (effects the embryo/unborn child).
- h. Dangerous Goods (DG): are substances classified on the basis of immediate chemical or physical effect such as fire, explosion, spontaneous combustion, oxidation, corrosion and poisoning that can harm people, the environment and property. Dangerous Goods can be solids, liquids, gas, mixtures or pure substances defined in the [Dangerous Goods Act 1985](#) and listed under the [Australian Dangerous Goods Code](#).
- i. Hazardous Substance: is a chemical with the potential to cause harm to a person's health and are listed on the HSIS (Hazardous Substances Information System). The criteria for a hazardous substance is set out in the Approved Criteria for Classifying Hazardous Substances. ([Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 \[Vic\]](#))
- j. Risk control: is the allocation of resources or methods to eliminate or to minimise, as far as is reasonably practicable, the risk to safety or health from a hazard.
- k. Safety Data Sheet (SDS): is documentation from the manufacturer or importer of the chemical outlining the hazards and risks of a chemical and how to transport, use, dispose and store. An SDS assists users to identify, assess and control risks associated with the use of the chemical. The SDS must be current and less than 5 years old.

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