

Health and Safety Procedure - Chemical Safety

Section 1 - Key Information

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Policy Type and Approval Body | Administrative - Vice-Chancellor |
| Accountable Executive - Policy | Chief Operating Officer |
| Responsible Manager - Policy | Senior Manager, Health and Safety |
| Review Date | 23 August 2025 |

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) La Trobe University utilises a wide array of regulated chemical materials for research, teaching and general operations. The inherent hazards and risks associated with this use requires strict control and management that is aligned with regulatory requirements.

(2) The purpose of this Procedure is to align and guide the chemical management life cycle that applies across the University for how chemical materials are procured, managed, handled, controlled, and stored 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 3 - Scope

(3) This Procedure applies to:

- a. all 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 either 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 does not apply to:

- a. Ionising and non-ionising radiation (Class 7 Dangerous Good)
- b. 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).

Section 4 - Key Decisions

| Key decisions | Role |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Introducing a new known high risk regulated chemical material to the area or a previously banned regulated chemical material to the University | Escalation to HoD / Dean / PVC |

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(6) This procedure forms part of the [Health and Safety Policy](#) suite which governs its application.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Responsibilities

Managers and Leaders (including laboratory supervisors)

(7) Managers and leaders, including laboratory supervisors are responsible for ensuring:

- a. Regulated chemicals are identified and documented within their areas of responsibility;
- b. Risk assessment processes are undertaken and risk controls are rigorously followed;
- c. An adequate level of training and induction is undertaken and recorded;
- d. Permit or licensing requirements are sought, where required;
- e. Local area emergency processes are developed, exercised and periodically reviewed; and
- f. The periodic (assurance) review of chemical management documentation.

Health and Safety Team

(8) The Health and Safety are responsible for:

- a. Providing oversight and monitoring this Procedure;
- b. Providing advice on hazards and risks to consider;
- c. Providing advice on risk control measures and emergency preparedness;
- d. Providing advice and oversight with permit / licensing requirements;
- e. Supporting assurance processes; and
- f. Supporting incident response, investigation and sharing the lessons learnt across the organisation.

Direct Chemical Users

(9) Direct Chemical Users are responsible for:

- a. Participating in training and induction before activity commences.
- b. Participating in processes that generate safety documentation and/or ensure that the documents in use are

- current (risk assessment, safe work procedure, chemical register, Safety Data Sheets);
- c. Ensuring that any permit or licensing requirements are strictly adhered to; and
- d. Following the documented risk control processes to procure, handle, use, store and/or dispose of chemical materials.

All Staff and Students

(10) 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; and
- c. Following instructions and direction from incident controllers in the event of an emergency.

Contractors

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

(12) 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

Chemical Risk Assessment

(13) It is the responsibility of all users to undertake Chemical Risk Assessments. 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. The Chemical Risk Assessment Template and supporting documentation can be found on the [Health and Safety \(Intranet\)](#).

(14) Where a new chemical material is being introduced to the University, a pre-purchase risk assessment will need to be completed prior to the acquisition in accordance with the [Health and Safety Procedure - Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control](#).

(15) Where a chemical or multiple chemicals are used, a process/task risk assessment will also need to be completed and included with the documentation.

(16) Copies of all risk assessments will be readily available and easily accessible by the users, locally.

Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and Database

(17) University staff can access the Chemwatch SDS database via the Chemical Safety ([Intranet](#)) page to:

- a. store information about the regulated chemical materials;
- b. manage the chemical registers;
- c. 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) via the Chemical Safety ([Intranet](#)).

Chemical Register

(20) Each area will have a register of the local regulated 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 risk assessment will be completed by either the purchaser or manager. 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) Regulatory requirements and restrictions will be addressed prior to acquisition for:

- a. Industrial chemicals
- b. Agricultural & veterinary chemicals
- c. Controlled substances (drugs and poisons)
- d. Precursor chemicals that require an end user declaration
- e. Chemicals of security concern

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

Part D - Manufacture or Supply

(24) Researchers that are manufacturing or supplying manufactured chemical materials outside the University will meet all necessary regulatory requirements to ensure safety is maintained throughout the acquisition process. This includes the preparation and provision of known information constituting an SDS that is in accordance with [Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017](#).

Part E - Training

(25) Staff and students that are handling, using, storing and disposing of chemical materials will complete an adequate level of training. Technical guidance will also be provided to ensure tasks involving chemical materials will be performed safely.

(26) 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).

(27) Relevant chemical information such as the chemical risk assessment, safe work procedures, chemical registers (where applicable) and SDSs will be included in the induction process.

Part F - Storage and Handling

(28) The correct storage and handling of chemical materials is critical to minimise the risks associated with the inherent hazards. Risk 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

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

Part G - Signage and Placarding

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

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

(32) Storage areas of dangerous goods will be correctly signed to indicate the class types of the materials present.

Part H - Health Surveillance

(33) Health surveillance or screening, where required, are detailed in the SDS for each regulated chemical material. Health surveillance/screening will be provided when the chemical materials in use are:

- a. Listed in Schedule 14 of the [Model Work Health and Safety Regulations 2019](#).
- b. Sufficiently probable through exposure to present adverse or severe health conditions and adverse health effects as detailed in the Victorian [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017](#).

Part I - Waste Management

(34) 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](#).

(35) 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

(36) In the event of an emergency, University processes will be strictly adhered to that of a Code Yellow.

(37) Managers and leaders will also ensure local emergency procedures are developed, taking into account:

- a. the physical properties of the chemical materials in use including fire and explosion;
- b. environmental damage; and
- c. the likely health effects, if exposure occurs.

Section 7 - Definitions

(38) 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 information on chemicals that are used, handled or stored within a workplace including a description of all physical and toxicity hazards.
- 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 2017.
- 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.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(39) This Policy is made under the [La Trobe University Act 2009](#).

(40) Associated information includes:

- a. [Health and Safety \(intranet\)](#)

Status and Details

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| Status | Current |
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"student" - Student is defined in the La Trobe University Act 2009 as: (a) a person enrolled at the University in a course leading to a degree or other award; or (b) a person who is designated as a student or is of a class of persons designated as students by the Council.

"staff" - Staff means any person employed by the University as per the definition in the La Trobe University Act 2009 (Vic).