

## Contents

<b>1. OBJECTIVE</b> .....	2
<b>2. BACKGROUND</b> .....	2
<b>3. PROCEDURE/IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	2
<b>3.1. Purpose of a Safe Work Method Statement</b> .....	2
<b>3.2. What should be in a SWMS?</b> .....	2
<b>3.3. Completing a SWMS?</b> .....	3
<b>3.4. Compliance with SWMS</b> .....	3
<b>4. Responsibilities</b> .....	4
<b>4.1. Senior Leader</b> .....	4
<b>4.2. Operational Leaders</b> .....	4
<b>5. Supporting Documents</b> .....	4

## 1. OBJECTIVE

This instruction is designed to assist in the assessment of health and safety risk and suggested controls associated with hazards identified while working throughout RMIT.

## 2. BACKGROUND

SWMS are to be used as a control measure identified when undertaking a Risk Assessment. SWMS do not replace the need to complete a Risk Assessment.

## 3. PROCEDURE/IMPLEMENTATION

### 3.1. Purpose of a Safe Work Method Statement

The primary purpose of a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) is to enable supervisors, staff, contractors and any other persons at the workplace to understand the requirements that have been established to carry out work in a safe and healthy manner.

It sets out the work activities in logical sequences and identifies hazards and describes control measures.

Any activity, no matter how simple or complex can be broken down into a series of basic steps that will permit a systematic analysis of each part of the activity for hazards and potential incidents. The description of the process should not be so broad that it leaves out activities with the potential to cause incidents and prevents proper identification of the hazards nor is it necessary to go into fine detail of the tasks.

The aim of a SWMS is to:

- Describe the activity or task to be undertaken
- Identify the resources, and skills associated with the task
- Assess and select control measures (as appropriate)
- Systematically plan the activity so it can be completed efficiently and effectively.

The SWMS must be able to be easily read by those who need to know what has been planned to manage the risks and implement the control measures. Also, they need to be able to ensure the work is being carried out in accordance with the SWMS.

Relevant persons may include:

- The supervisor of the work
- The individual carrying out the work
- The elected Health and Safety Representative of the Designated Work Group
- The principal contractor (if it is a construction project) or the person who has management and control over the high-risk construction work.

### 3.2. What should be in a SWMS?

When preparing a SWMS the following must be taken into account:

- Circumstances at the workplace that may affect the way in which the work is carried out
- On a construction project, the WHS management plan prepared by the principal contractor.
- Identification of work
- Specifying hazards relating to the work and risks to health and safety associated with those hazards

- Describing the measures to be implemented to control the risks
- Describing how the control measures are to be implemented, monitored and reviewed.

A SWMS may also include the names of staff that have been consulted on the content of the SWMS, the date the consultation occurred and the signature of each staff acknowledging their participation in this consultation and the opportunity to discuss the proposed measures.

The content of a SWMS should provide clear direction on the control measures to be implemented. There should be no statements that require a decision to be made by supervisors or staff. For example, the statement 'use appropriate PPE' does not detail the control measures. The control measures should be clearly specified.

Staff and their health and safety representatives should be consulted in the preparation of the SWMS. If there are no staff members engaged at the planning stage, consultation should occur with staff when the SWMS is first made available, for example, during induction training, or when it is reviewed such as during workplace-specific training or a health and safety meeting.

### 3.3. Completing a SWMS?

To complete a SWMS the following steps should be taken:

- Discuss with relevant staff, contractors and HSRs what work will be high-risk, the tasks, and associated hazards, risks and controls.
- In the 'Tasks' column, list the work tasks in sequence to how they will be carried out.
- In the 'Hazards' column, list the hazards and risks for each work task.
- After assessing the hazards identified; In the 'Risk Control Measures' column, select the hazard or risk and then work through the hierarchy of control to mitigate the level of risk. As per the Hierarchy of Control Instruction, choose a control measure (and how it is to be used) that is as close to Level 1 as is reasonably practicable.
- The hazard is to then be re-assessed following the implementation of the risk control measures.
- In the 'Responsibility' column, add the name of the person responsible for implementing the control measure identified.
- Add rows for the required number of tasks for the activity, and repeat steps
- Brief each staff member on this SWMS before commencing work. Ensure the staff member(s) knows that work is to stop immediately if the SWMS is not being followed.
- Observe work being carried out. If controls are not adequate, stop the work, review the SWMS, adjust as required and re-brief the staff member(s).
- The SWMS should be held on site for the duration of the work.

### 3.4. Compliance with SWMS

If the work is not being carried out in accordance with the SWMS, then the work must stop immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so. Work must not resume until the work can be carried out in accordance with the SWMS.

If work is stopped, the work and the SWMS should be reviewed to identify non-compliance and ensure the method in the SWMS is the most practical and safest way of doing the task. If another method is identified as being a safer option, the SWMS should be revised (with consultation) to take into account this change prior to work re-commencing.

## 4. Responsibilities

### 4.1. Senior Leader

- Ensure compliance with this process within their area of authority.
- Ensure consultation arrangements are followed while implementing this procedure.

### 4.2. Operational Leaders

- Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of those who participate in the activities under their control.
- Ensure all hazards associated with their activities are identified and adequately controlled by following this process

## 5. Supporting Documents

Lists the supporting and related Processes and Guidance Material, Legislative references, Australian and International Standards etc. that may be useful references for process users.

- HR - HSW-PR09 - HSW Risk Management
- HR - HSW-PR09-WI01 - HSW Risk Assessment Methodology
- HR – HSW-PR09-WI02 - HSW Risk Matrix
- HR - HSW-PR09-WI03 - HSW Risk Control
- HR - HSW-PR09-FR01 - SWMS Review Checklist Form
- HR - HSW-PR09-TM03 - SWMS Template