



WHS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

WHS Management System Documentation

ABSTRACT

This document provides an outline of the types of documentation that may be expected in a proactive and systematic Work Health and Safety (WHS) management system

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Contents

WHS Management System Documentation	2
Registers	2
Policies, corporate and local procedures	2
“Commitment statement” / lead policy	2
Corporate Procedures.....	2
Local Procedures	4
Forms and checklists	4
Programs.....	4
System Monitoring and Reports.....	4
Guidance materials.....	5

WHS Management System Documentation

1. Registers
2. Policies, corporate and local procedures
3. Forms and checklists
4. Programs
5. System monitoring and reports
6. Guidance materials

Registers

E.g.;

- Hazard / risk register
- Incident register
- Plant register and maintenance schedules
- Chemical registers
- Confined space register
- Key contacts, E.g.;
 - Wardens
 - First Aiders
 - Workplace conduct contact officers
 - Health and safety representatives
- Certification / qualification / training registers
- Controlled document register

Policies, corporate and local procedures

“Commitment statement” / lead policy

This policy should address ensuring the health and safety of workers; legislative compliance; continuous improvement; reflecting the organisations’ mission, structures, other policies and procedures, activities, products, services and people; identifying responsibilities and accountabilities; communication of relevant information, injury management.

Corporate Procedures

Corporate procedures may not be helpful in small enterprises, which may rely more on local procedures.

However, where required, corporate procedures should address relevant identified hazards / risks in relation to the following hazard categories;

- Hazardous manual tasks
- Gravity
- Electricity
- Plant / Machinery
- Hazardous chemicals
- Extreme temperatures
- Noise
- Radiation
- Biological
- Psychosocial hazards

Specifically, corporate procedures may address a wide range of risks and compliance matters, such as;

- **Hazardous chemicals and dangerous goods**
 - Explosives

- Gases
- Flammable Liquids
- Flammable Solids
- Oxidizing Substances
- Horticultural Chemicals
- Toxic & Infectious Substances
- Radioactive Material
- Corrosives
- Miscellaneous Dangerous Goods (e.g. asbestos)
- **Environmental hazards**
 - Fire and other emergencies
 - Catastrophic fire danger (travel – related)
 - Communicable disease
 - Biological / needle stick hazards
 - Remote or isolated work
 - UV and inclement weather
 - Slippery or unstable walking surfaces
 - Safe design (e.g. ergonomic design of workspaces, facilities and tools)
 - Confined spaces
 - Noise
- **Plant and equipment hazards**
 - Driving vehicles
 - Forklifts
 - Traffic zone management
 - Lifts
 - Power tools
 - Lab equipment
 - Abrasive blasting
 - Pressure vessels
- **People / behavioural hazards**
 - Fatigue
 - Drugs and / or alcohol use
 - Failure to implement procedures
 - Occupational violence
 - Psychological injury
 - Lack of induction or training (e.g. contractors)
- **Other physical hazards**
 - Electricity
 - Working at height
 - Inadequate procedures / risk assessments
 - Hazardous manual tasks
 - Handling animals
 - Excavation
 - Demolition
 - Welding
 - Spray painting and powder coating
 - Occupational diving
- **Compliance matters**
 - First aid
 - Consultation
 - Issue resolution
 - Hazard management and notifiable incidents

Local Procedures

Local procedures address specific tasks / activities and may take several forms, such as;

- Safe / standard operating procedures (SOP)
- Job safety [environmental] analysis (JSA / JSEA)
- Safe work method statements (SWMS – specific to high risk construction)

Forms and checklists

Forms and checklists usually derive from corporate policies and enable workers to undertake specific functions. Examples may include;

- Workplace inspection checklists
- Procedure audit forms
- Risk assessment forms
- Hazard report forms
- Incident investigation forms etc.

Programs

Programs derive from procedures and are the “visible face” of WHS. Programs may include;

- Consultation and communication activities
- WHS Committee meetings
- Workplace inspections
- Internal / external audit
- Testing and tagging electrical equipment
- Emergency and other contingency testing procedures
- Maintenance of first aid kits and equipment
- Risk assessments
- Training and induction
- Equipment calibration
- Atmospheric testing and other occupational hygiene services
- Noise monitoring
- Health surveillance of workers
- Maintenance of registers
- Controlled document maintenance
- System reporting and review activities
- Climate surveys and other worker perception measures
- Employee assistance programs

System Monitoring and Reports

The nature of “programs”, as summarised above, lend themselves to relatively easy measuring, monitoring and reporting. These measures constitute “lead indicators” (i.e. proactive system activity) rather than “lag indicators” which measure instances of system failure.

Lag indicators (e.g. near-misses, injuries and death) can be measured, monitored and reported. Lag indicators, without rigorous analysis, can be unhelpful and misleading. They may be an alert that something in the system is not right.

Reporting to senior management (i.e. WHS “Officers” under the legislation) allows them to exercise the due diligence required of them under the WHS Act; Section 27 and to ensure appropriate review and improvement of the WHS management system.

Guidance materials

The Work Health and Safety legislation provides specific direction on some topics. However, the legislation is a “risk-based” design, which requires duty holders to make discretionary decisions about the management of various risk and compliance matters.

The use of discretion must be consistent with the principles outlined in Section 19 of the WHS Act and the WHS Regulations (32 to 38). Codes of Practice, though not mandatory, provide useful guidance on a range of matters.

Topics where, for example, discretion is required include;

- Management of remote and isolated worker risks
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Occupational violence
- Driving
- Fatigue
- Management of any identified hazards and risks not specifically addressed in the legislation
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Guidance materials are not controlled documents in the same way as other policy, procedures, forms, checklists and reports. However, if acquired from an external source, be aware that the external source may subject their guidance materials to updates within a controlled document framework.

Please note: *The information provided in this guidance material is not intended to be a comprehensive guide for any business or class of business. It is recommended that expert advice and guidance is sought in relation to developing a comprehensive and compliant WHS Management System.*