



Information sheet: Safe Operating Procedures

Purpose

This information sheet should provide guidance to staff in deciding if a Safe Operating Procedure is required in accordance with the [Hazard Management](#) HSW Handbook chapter.

<p>Q1</p>	<p>What is a Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) and what information is included?</p> <p>A SOP is a document which sets out the step by step process to carry out a task safely.</p> <p>It should be written with enough detail to ensure that someone with limited experience or knowledge of the procedure can complete the activity in a safe manner when unsupervised. Therefore it should be concise, easy to follow and in a logical sequence of steps.</p> <p>The information included on the SOP should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • name/identify the task; • include a photograph(s) where this would assist; • include the name of the Risk Assessment it relates to, for further reference, if required; • identify the hazards the operator needs to be aware of; • list the operational steps from start to finish, including any pre-operational checks, actions when the task is complete (e.g. any waste management requirements); • list any Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required to complete the task; • describe any emergency procedures (if relevant); • include the name(s) of the people involved in drafting the SOP. <p>A SOP is a valuable tool when the task is completed the same way every time.</p> <p>A Safe Operating Procedure template is available in the HSW Handbook in the Hazard Management chapter (Appendix E).</p>
<p>Q2</p>	<p>Do all tasks require a Safe Operating Procedure (SOP)?</p> <p>No. A SOP is only required when a person completing a risk assessment has identified that a task has the potential to cause a serious injury/illness and a SOP would assist the operator to complete the task safely. (i.e. It is used as a safety control measure or in conjunction with other safety control measures.)</p> <p>The SOP is an effective safety measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the operator needs to follow specific steps from beginning to end in order to complete the task safely; and • when the task is completed in the same way every time.
<p>Q3</p>	<p>Do I need to complete a Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) for the item of equipment/chemical or is it just completed for the activity?</p> <p>The SOP is written for a “task activity”. It is not until the item of equipment or chemical is used that the operator is placed at risk. A SOP could incorporate the operation of multiple items of equipment and/or chemicals in order to complete one task. Each stage of the task therefore needs to be considered and included in the SOP if this is the case.</p>
<p>Q4</p>	<p>What factors should I consider in deciding if a Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) is required?</p> <p>Refer to the Hazard Management – Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) decision tool (on page 3).</p>
<p>Q5</p>	<p>Who should complete the Safe Operating Procedure (SOP)?</p> <p>It should be completed by the supervisor or person in control of the area and/or any other workers who are proficient in the activity. (i.e. that have a good working knowledge of the process and task.)</p>

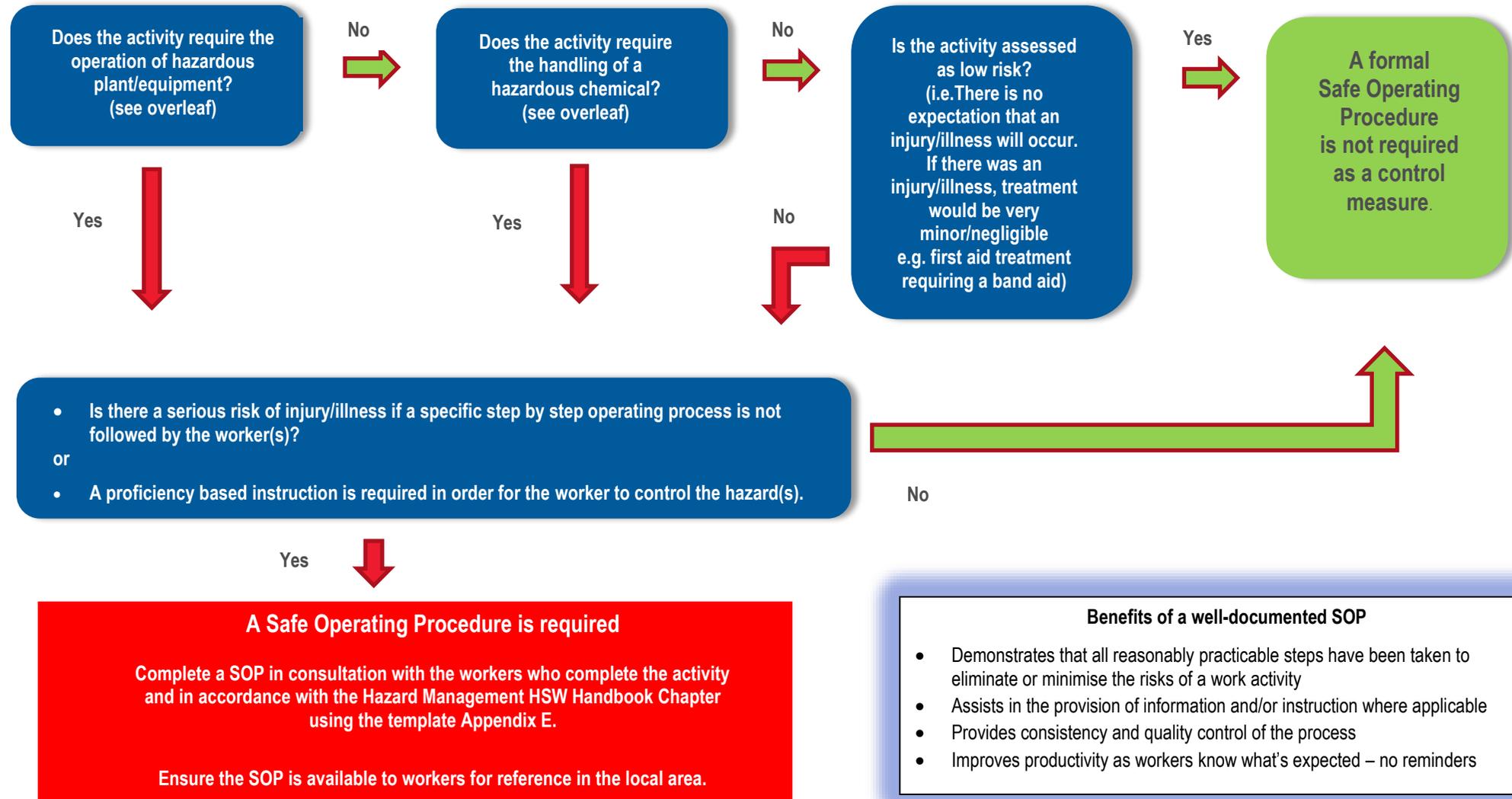
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<p>Q6</p>	<p>How would I find out if there is an existing Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) for an activity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During your induction to your area of work. Your supervisor or the person in control of the area would provide you with information on the hazards of the tasks to be performed and the preferred way to safely perform the task before you commence the activity; or • The SOP could be displayed in your area of work e.g. adjacent to the item of equipment you are about to use; or • You could ask your supervisor or person in control of the area if one has been completed.
<p>Q7</p>	<p>What level of information and/or instruction is required when there is a Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) documented for the activity?</p> <p>It will depend on the level of risk.</p> <p>If the task is considered to be low risk and doesn't require a level of proficiency (see note) before you complete the task on your own, then you would be provided with the information on the SOP during your induction to the area of work or when you first complete the task i.e. as general information.</p> <p>If however, if there is a higher level of skill and/or risk associated with the task, then you would receive a higher level of instruction and for you do demonstrate that you are proficient (i.e. have a proficiency) in the task before completing the task without supervision.</p> <p>A Safe Operating Procedure may be used as a tool during the proficiency assessment process.</p> <p>Note: Proficiency (in a University context), is the achievement of a level of demonstrable knowledge, ability or skill acquired through instruction, which enables the operator to complete a high risk activity safely and without supervision. It will generally have a practical component to enable the trainee to observe the process from beginning to end, and then demonstrate back to their trainer/assessor that they are proficient/skilled to undertake the task or operate the equipment without supervision. It may also include emergency procedures where relevant.</p> <p>This type of training is required prior to workers undertaking an activity where proficiency training has been identified as a control measure on the risk assessment. A proficiency template may be based on the Safe Operating Procedure or could be via a log book or series of supervised training sessions/courses.</p> <p>(For further information on proficiencies and requirements, refer to the Provision of information, instruction and training HSW Handbook chapter.)</p>
<p>Q8</p>	<p>Where do I go for further information on Safe Operating Procedures (SOP) and/or the SOP template?</p> <p>The HSW Handbook Hazard Management Your local Faculty/Branch HSW Team</p>

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HAZARD MANAGEMENT – SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) DECISION TOOL

Supervisors or person in control of the activity/area:



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Hazardous chemical	Hazardous plant/equipment
<p>A substance, mixture or article that satisfies the criteria for a hazard class in the Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), including a classification referred to in Schedule 6 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA), but does not include a substance, mixture or article that satisfies the criteria solely for one of the following hazard classes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) acute toxicity – oral – cat 5 (b) acute toxicity – dermal – cat 5 (c) acute toxicity – inhalation – cat 5 (d) skin corrosion/irritation – cat 3 (e) serious eye damage/irritation (f) aspiration hazard – cat 2 (g) flammable gas – cat 2 (h) acute hazard to the aquatic environment (i) chronic hazard to the aquatic environment – cat 1 – 4 (j) hazardous to the ozone layer. 	<p>Any plant/equipment used for a work/task related activity that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has the potential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to entangle, crush, cut/stab/puncture, trap, shear, tear or strike (i.e. safe-guarding is required); • for a pinch point to trap any part of the body or catch loose clothing, hair etc (e.g. conveyor, gears, loaders and other moving equipment); • for a worker to come into contact with fluids under high pressure; • to cause a serious burn/injury; • to expose the worker to live electrical conductors; • to expose the worker to gases/vapours/liquids/dusts/other substances triggered by the operation; • to explode or implode; • to exceed safe noise levels; • for the worker to adopt poor posture (see definition for a Hazardous manual activity); • to overturn, collide with another person or thing (e.g. moving powered plant); • lifts or suspends a load; • is an industrial robot or other remotely or automatically energised plant at the workplace; • involves non-ionising radiation or high level magnetic fields; • requires registration in accordance with Schedule 5 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA). <p>Refer to the HSW Handbook chapter Plant/Equipment Safety Management for additional information.</p>

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