

## Importing plant & equipment

### 1. Summary of the issue

There has been an increase in UniSafe reports raising safety concerns regarding non-compliant plant and equipment being purchased and imported from overseas for use in university laboratories.

When HSW have been reviewing the equipment, the following common issues have been identified:

- the procurement processes did not include consultation with relevant stakeholders/operators
- the operational manuals were in a foreign language
- labelling on the equipment including control panels was in a foreign language
- emergency Stop buttons were not compliant with Australian Standards
- moving parts were inadequately guarded and guarding in general is not compliant
- plant risk assessments had not been completed.

In these instances, the equipment was tagged out as it was not safe to use. The review of the imported equipment to gain compliance in most instances was that the cost and effort to bring it up to operation was not feasible. See example below where a concrete mixer was purchased and tagged out due to compliance issues.



### 2. Contributing factors

- Local areas are purchasing plant/equipment without referring to the University [Plant/Equipment safety management procedure](#) and without completing the required [plant/equipment acquisition, installation and commissioning checklist](#).
- Lack of consultation with technical team members and others who are to be operating the plant/equipment and supervising other users in the shared faculty lab set ups.
- Lack of consideration of purchasing plant/equipment outside of Australia and the potential for non-compliance for Australian Standards and legislation.

### 3. Recommended actions to mitigate the risk of a recurrence

It is recommended that prior to any purchase of plant and equipment the area is to ensure that:

- Purchasers and users follow the requirements of the Plant/Equipment Safety Management procedure and complete [the plant/equipment acquisition, installation and commissioning checklist](#).
- Staff understand their Work Health and Safety legal obligations as an importer of plant, please see section 3 and Appendix A of the [Plant & Equipment Safety Management Procedure](#).
- Staff ensure that the manufacturer provides all necessary supporting documentation (in English) prior to progressing purchase.
- Purchasers and users consider the potential for noncompliance issues relating to Australian Standards when purchasing outside Australia. Refer to the HSW [Plant & Equipment Safety Management web page](#) for a list of applicable codes of practice or speak with the [HSW Team](#).
- Purchasers and users consider the modifications needed to comply with Australian standards and the financial implications and legal responsibilities of becoming a plant designer.

### 4. Positive Learnings

- Staff are proactively reporting these issues and recognising the potential safety issues. Please refer to the [Plant & Equipment Safety Management Procedure](#) section 3 and Appendix A.
- The plant/equipment is being tagged out to prevent it from being used.

### 5. References

[Plant & Equipment Safety Management Procedure](#)

[Plant/equipment acquisition, hiring, installation and commissioning checklist](#)

[Plant & equipment FAQ](#)

[HSW Staff Intranet | Human Resources | University of Adelaide](#) – Enforceable Undertaking

The University has recently finalised an Enforceable Undertaking from an incident in November 2019 where a staff member came into contact with an unguarded pump (the guard had been removed) which resulted in a significant injury with the amputation of two fingers, and an overall cost to the University of over \$500k.

[UniSafe | Human Resources | University of Adelaide](#)

To access information on the HSW Services provided by the HSW Advisory team see the HR Service catalogue.

### 6. More information

For HSW advice send your requests to [HSW Team](#).