



Who Needs Safe Work Procedures in Your Workplace?

What is a Safe Work Procedure (SWP)?

It is a written document setting out the logical sequence of steps that must be followed to safely perform a workplace activity. The name, Safe Work Procedure (SWP), is one of the names that may be given to a work procedure that is created and written after;

1. identifying and assessing the health and safety risks involved in a work activity, and then
2. identifying how to eliminate the risks or otherwise what reasonably practicable actions can be done to minimise those risks

Basically a SWP is the “how to do this work activity and remain safe and healthy”. As defined on page 16 of the *Code of Practice: How to Manage Health and Safety Risks*, a safe work procedure “describes the task, identifies the hazards, and documents how the task is to be performed to minimise the risks”.

Who needs SWPs in your Workplace?

1. **Workers** doing work activities that have risks need SWPs because;

- these procedures tell them "how to do their work activities and remain safe and healthy", and
- doing the work as set out in the SWP helps Workers satisfy their WHS duty of care to take ‘reasonable care’ for the health and safety of themselves and others and cooperate with reasonable policy and procedures of the PCBU (WHS Act section 28)

2. **The Supervisors** of those workers need SWPs because they know that;

- by making sure the workers they supervise follow those SWPs, they will be helping to keep those workers safe and healthy, and
- it will also help to satisfy the Supervisor's WHS duty of care. (WHS Act section 28)
- it will also help them to satisfy the PCBU’s duty of care and WHS responsibilities.

3. **The Managers** who manage those Supervisors, need those SWPs;

- because they help the Managers to take reasonable care for the health and safety of workers that the Managers have overall control and responsibility for. (WHS Act section 28)

- it will also help them to satisfy the PCBU's duty of care and WHS responsibilities

4. **The PCBU** needs those SWPs because the PCBU has a duty to do everything reasonably practicable to;

- have safe systems of work
- inform, instruct, train and supervise workers to protect them from risks (WHS Act section 19)

5. **The Officers** in your workplace need those SWPs being used in the workplace because;

- Officers have a duty to use due diligence to ensure the PCBU complies with their WHS legal duties and obligations. (WHS Act section 27)

6. **Your Health and Safety Committee and/or Health and Safety Reps** (HSRs) in your workplace need SWPs because;

- they are a stable and reliable reference point for them when they are doing workplace inspections and carrying out their role and helping to make a safe and healthy workplace.

7. **A SafeWork NSW Inspector** will ask for your safe work procedure if he needs to visit your workplace to investigate an incident because;

- he wants to check if everything reasonably practicable was done to prevent the incident.

Reference:

For further information on this topic we recommend the section Level 3 Control Measures on page 14, and Implementing Controls, on page 16 of the *SafeWork NSW Code of Practice; How to Manage Health and Safety Risks*