**Purpose**

To outline the activities required to ensure a consistent, planned, systematic appraisal of the workplace to identify hazards and/or review established controls.

Workplace inspections ensure that the University is able to:

- identify hazardous conditions and review hazard control measures
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of health and safety practices and procedures
- improve health and safety practices and procedures
- measure Occupation Health and Safety (OHS) compliance
- check new facilities, equipment, processes
- collect information that identifies potential new safety initiatives
- maintain interest in health and safety through consultation
- display management commitment to health and safety
- empower staff to ensure a safe work environment.

Managers, in consultation with their staff and the OHS representatives, are responsible for developing and implementing a system of workplace inspections, consistent with the work area’s risk profile.

Workplace inspections involve the following steps:

- identifying the hazards
- assessing and rating the risks
- controlling the risks (using the Hierarchy of Control)
- implementing the risk controls
- monitoring and reviewing the risk controls
- documenting the results

Property has specific responsibility for inspecting building infrastructure, essential services, grounds and walkways, plant and equipment and security.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Hazard:** a situation with the potential to cause harm to life, health or property and is the primary cause of health and safety problems in a workplace.

**High risk:** areas that by the nature of the work undertaken, the equipment or substances used or the environment increase the risk potential. These areas are typically workshops, laboratories, farms, sheds, storage locations, and animal facilities.

**Inspection:** the process of observing a work environment, work practice,
equipment used, work posture or reported hazard. This may be done with or without an inspection checklist. An inspection may be generic or be specific to a particular risk, task or part of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS).

**Low risk:** areas that by the nature of the work undertaken, the equipment used or the environment reduce the risk potential. Typically these are office spaces, tutorial and common teaching areas, write up rooms, music rooms and other administration areas.

**Monitoring:** work environment monitoring or biological monitoring of individual employee’s occupational health / exposure.

**Testing:** the use of standardised tests to check equipment, plant operation process control, performance and effectiveness, for example, fumec upboard face velocity test.

This procedure requires actions by the following:
- Central OHS Committee
- Executive Dean
- Head of Office
- Inspection Team
- OHS Committee Workgroup

This procedure covers the following topics:
- Determine the workplace to be inspected
- Prepare the team
- Inspect the workplace
- Identify risks
- Assess and rate a risk
- Report
- Identify and implement risk controls
- Monitor and review risk controls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central OHS Committee</th>
<th>DETERMINE THE WORKPLACE TO BE INSPECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Determine the workplace to be inspected and nominate an OHS Committee Workgroup.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inspections will need to be undertaken:
- where equipment or layout of any work area is altered and increases risk
- if a new plant or work process is introduced
- prior to commencement of work

The aim should be to complete a minimum of two inspections a year.

Individual work areas may elect to increase the number of inspections if there is an identified need or increased risk profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OHS Committee Workgroup</th>
<th>PREPARE THE TEAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notify the Inspection Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contact the supervisor of the area to be inspected and arrange a date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and time for the inspection. Request the presence of the supervisor or management representative and a staff member familiar with the area.

**Form an Inspection Team**

Form an inspection team which includes the following:
- a staff member(s) familiar with the work area
- a management representative or their delegate
- an OHS representative
- a delegate from the Health and Safety Unit.

At least one of the inspection team must be trained in the University process for *workplace inspections*.

Larger faculties or departments may establish more than one inspection team to better utilise human resources and ensure all inspections are completed.

**Obtain Checklists**

A range of [Workplace Inspections Checklists](#) is available to assist in the inspection process. The checklists are based on the hazard register for each area and have been reviewed by staff in the relevant area. They also assist in recording information and triggering questions during the inspection.

**INSPECT THE WORKPLACE**

Consider the following factors when inspecting:

- **Workplace Design** (i.e. the physical workplace, both internal and external environment)
  - Is the area suited to the work being carried out?
  - Does it provide adequate space for occupants?
  - Ensure the design meets relevant legislative requirements.
  - Does it comply with Building Code of Australia (BCA)?
  - Does it comply with the OHS Act and Regulations?

- **Systems of Work**
  - Are Policies and Procedures available?
  - Are Safe Operating Procedures written and accessible?
  - Is important information available to workers re hazards eg Hazard Register, Material Safety Data Sheets?

- **Environment**
  - Do levels of noise and lighting meet legislative requirements?
  - Are ventilation and thermal conditions acceptable?
  - Does desk/bench design meet ergonomic requirements?
  - Is storage space available and safely utilised?
  - Are floor surfaces safe and clear of obstructions?
  - Are amenities such as toilets and kitchenette clean?
  - Do seasonal factors impact on activities?

- **Behaviour**
  - Are systems effective?
  - Do staff have the knowledge and awareness of safety systems?
  - Is there evidence of non-compliance, short cuts, and periods of high workload?
  - Is there a need for training and education programmes
arising from exposure to an identified hazard(s)?

IDENTIFY RISKS
As you carry out a safety inspection of the area, identify any hazards in the workplace. This involves:
- an inspection of the workplace
- consultation with staff
- a review of incidents and accidents, including near misses, that have occurred in the area
- conducting safety audits
- monitoring employee health and the work environment
- observing work practices

ASSESS AND RATE A RISK
Once a risk has been identified, assess and rate it according to three criteria:
- its likelihood to cause harm (Risk Likelihood Matrix)
- its potential consequences (Risk Consequences Matrix)
- the risk level (Risk Assessment Matrix).

You should do the following:
- evaluate the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring and the likely severity of that injury or illness, using the Risk Likelihood and Risk Consequences Matrices
- identify the factors that may be contributing to the risk
- where available, review health and safety information that is relevant to the particular hazard (such as Codes of Practice, WorkCover guidelines and Material Safety Data Sheets)
- determine the overall risk level using the Risk Assessment Matrix, which is used to prioritise the risk and determine the speed at which controls need to be implemented

Use the following Risk Likelihood Matrix to assign each risk a rating which determines the likelihood of it occurring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Likelihood Matrix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost Certain (5)</td>
<td>Expected to occur in most circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely (4)</td>
<td>Probably will occur in most circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible (3)</td>
<td>Might happen at some time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely (2)</td>
<td>Could happen, but rarely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare (1)</td>
<td>Has never occurred before.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use the following Risk Consequences Matrix to assign each risk a rating which determines the consequences of the risk occurring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Consequence Matrix</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catastrophic (5)</td>
<td>Multiple fatalities; irreversible effects; Loss $10m to $100m; Extensive Environmental damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major (4)</td>
<td>Fatality; Serious irreversible disabilities; Medium term Environmental damage; Loss $1m to $10m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate (3)</td>
<td>Moderate irreversible disability; Moderate environmental damage; Loss $100k to $1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor (2)</td>
<td>Minor injuries &amp; hospitalisations; Short term Environmental damage; Loss $10k to $100k.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insignificant (1)</td>
<td>No medical treatment; No Environmental damage; Loss less than $10k.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the Risk Likelihood and Risk Consequences Matrices in the Risk Assessment Matrix to determine the overall Risk Level of very Low, Low, Medium, High or Critical.

| RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX | Likelihood | |
|------------------------|------------|
|                        | Rare       | Unlikely | Possibly | Likely | Almost Certain |
| Consequence            |            |          |          |        |               |
| Catastrophic           | medium     | high     | critical | critical | critical |
| Major                  | low        | medium   | high     | critical | critical |
| Medium                 | low        | low      | medium   | high    | critical |
| Minor                  | very low   | low      | low      | medium  | high    |
| Insignificant          | very low   | very low | low      | low     | medium  |

Use the following Risk Level Matrix to determine the time frame for remediation actions to occur.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level Matrix</th>
<th>Required action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Critical          | **Action required immediately:**  
The proposed task or process activity must not proceed. Steps must be taken to lower the risk level to as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of risk controls. |
| High              | **Action required today:**  
The proposed activity can only proceed, provided that:  
- the risk level has been reduced to as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of risk controls;  
- the risk controls must include those identified in legislation, Australian Standards, Codes of Practice etc.  
- the risk assessment has been reviewed and approved by the Supervisor;  
- a Safe Working Procedure or Safe Work Method has been prepared.  
- The supervisor must review and document the effectiveness of the implemented risk controls. |
| Medium            | **Action required this week:**  
The proposed task or process can proceed, provided that:  
- the risk level has been reduced to as low as reasonably practicable using the hierarchy of risk controls;  
- the risk assessment has been reviewed and approved by the Supervisor;  
- a Safe Working Procedure or Safe Work Method has been prepared. |
| Low/Very Low      | **Action required this month:**  
Managed by local documented routine procedures which must include application of the hierarchy of controls. |

**Team Leader, Inspection Team**

**REPORT**
Document the outcomes of your risk assessments on the Risk Assessment Form

Prepare a Workplace Safety Inspection Summary Report to the Executive Dean/Head of Office for action. Provide a copy of the report to the Central OHS Committee.

**Document the results**
Document all assessments on the Risk Register Form and forward this, along with copies of any completed Checklists and/or notes to the following people:
- Executive Dean
- Head of Department
- Health & Safety Unit
- OHS Representative
- Central OHS Committee

**Executive Dean/Head of Office**

**IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT RISK CONTROLS**
Take action to eliminate or control the risks documented in the Workplace Safety Inspection Summary Report.
While the most effective action is to eliminate risks, this is not always possible. In these instances control measures are implemented according to the hierarchy of control contained in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 (NSW).

Controls should be developed in consultation with staff who undertake the tasks or activities. It is important that controls do not excessively regulate or complicate the work process.

Following the identification of risk controls, the manager of an area is responsible for implementing the controls and liaising with relevant University departments where necessary.

The hierarchy of control is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control measure</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elimination</td>
<td>• Redesigning a job to remove an unsafe work practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>• Substituting a heavy piece of equipment for a lighter piece of equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td>• Using electronic swipe cards to restrict access to work areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering means</td>
<td>• Installing ramps to provide safer access to buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative means</td>
<td>• Providing training on the use of equipment or work practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment</td>
<td>• Providing gloves etc to prevent exposure to blood and body substances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Central OHS Committee**

**MONITOR AND REVIEW RISK CONTROLS**

Once controls have been implemented, you should monitor and review them in order to maintain the validity of that assessment and to ensure that they remain effective and do not create additional risks.

You will need to re-evaluate assessments and control measures if:

- there is evidence that the risk assessment or control measure is no longer valid
- an injury or incident occurs resulting from exposure to the hazard
- there are changes to the work environment, equipment or work practices which may make the assessment or control measure ineffective or out-of-date

Monitoring should occur on a regular basis such as weekly, monthly or quarterly while a review should occur at the end of a specified time.
period by which point a risk assessment or a control measure would be expected to have demonstrated its effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Officer</th>
<th>Manager, Health &amp; Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved</td>
<td>tbd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval Authority</td>
<td>Manager, Health &amp; Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Commencement</td>
<td>tbd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amendment Dates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date for Next Review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, Forms and Templates</td>
<td>Risk Management Policy / Procedure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure No</td>
<td>OHS 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
<td>Workplace Inspections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>