



OHS Management Systems

(A “Design Guide”)

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Why Have an OHS Management System?

The purpose of an OHS management system is to create an environment in which hazards are **systematically identified, assessed for risk, controlled** and the effectiveness of controls reviewed.

OHS management systems do not give 100% assurance that work related injuries will be avoided, but a **systematic approach** to hazard management is more likely to reduce injury and near-misses than an **ad-hoc approach**.

Systematic Vs Ad-Hoc Hazard Management

A systematic approach to hazard management requires employers to formalise processes to identify, report, assess and control hazards and to review the effectiveness of controls¹.

One size does not fit all! Many factors will influence the complexity of an organisation's OHS management system, such as:

- size of the organisation
- number of worksites
- range of tasks/activities undertaken in the organisation
- the degree of risk to the health and safety of people in the workplace

Table 1 - Overview of Approaches to Hazard Management

	<u>Systematic Approach</u>	<u>Ad-Hoc Approach</u>
Hazard Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazards identified proactively (i.e. before injury occurs) • OHS on regular staff/team meeting agenda • Worksite inspections, using relevant checklists / tools • Review of near-miss and accident reports and safety audit data • Hazards documented and reported formally when observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazards identified as a result of an injury or near-miss • Hazards identified by new staff coming in to a work area (i.e. "fresh eyes") • Informal discussion about observed hazards within the immediate work area • No formal reporting of hazards
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Likelihood</u> and <u>consequences</u> of injury are assessed, using a formal risk assessment matrix or tool • Risk assessment is quantified and prioritises time, energy and resources dedicated to management of identified hazards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of hazards (if any) will be informal and yield varied perceptions of risk • Identified hazards not prioritised or viewed in the context of the workplace as whole
Control Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More focus on processes, equipment, environment and other systemic factors • Less reliant on individuals being vigilant or adapting behaviour to avoid injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be considered or implemented • Individuals warned to "<i>be more careful</i>" or "<i>watch out for</i>" potential hazards
Review Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control strategies are reviewed for effectiveness at a pre-determined interval • System policies, procedures and activities subject to programmed review / audit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review not undertaken, unless prompted by further incident or injury; or outside intervention (e.g. legal consequences)

¹ The *Hierarchy of Controls* describes (in preferred order) the types of controls that can be applied to hazards. These are; elimination of the hazard, substitution of the hazardous item/procedure/activity, isolation of the hazard, implement engineering or administrative controls (such as training or warning signs) or the use of protective personal equipment (PPE).

How Does an OHS Management System Work?

An OHS management system should at least incorporate the elements identified below. As the system becomes more “experienced”, review activities will promote continuous improvement of the system itself.

Leadership Commitment

Management need to “*walk the talk*”. A commitment to health and safety in the workplace should be openly communicated and formalised through an OHS policy document(s), or similar statement.

Management should ensure that;

- as far as is practical, a consultative and collaborative environment is fostered within the workplace. Depending on the size of the organisation, this may include one or more OHS committees.
- relevant processes are in place to proactively identify and manage workplace hazards
- the OHS management system is regularly reviewed and improved where required

Planning

Planning should determine strategies, priorities, responsibilities and timeframes for hazard management and development of the OHS management system. Care should be taken to set realistic goals and to focus on higher risks within the workplace and management system.

Implementation

This is where the “rubber meets the road” and plans are put into effect. Implementation of strategy might highlight weaknesses in the planning activity. It is absolutely acceptable to modify plans on the basis of new information or experience.

Monitoring

Keeping track of progress and outcomes is critical. An effective OHS management system will undertake measurement and evaluation whilst strategy is being implemented. This activity may lead to an earlier review of planned activity, or confirm the agreed directions.

Monitoring may also be in the form of internal audit. For example:

- are all teams implementing policies and procedures as required?
- have all identified hazards been risk-assessed; and if so, are the controls appropriate to the “risk rating”?

System Improvement

Over a longer period (for example - one year, or the life of the organisation’s OHS plan) the system itself should be reviewed for effectiveness. Injury and incident data will be relevant; but just as relevant will be the performance of the system itself. Improvements might relate to a wide range of issues. For example, how do you know that:

- policies and procedures are being implemented?
- relevant training is provided to employees?
- internal audit activity is effectively undertaken?
- data collected from various sources is useful?
- employees demonstrate an understanding of their OHS responsibilities?
- resources applied to workplace safety are sufficient to meet the planning goals?

A considered and consultative exploration of such questions will help focus activity and resources on the most important aspects of workplace safety.

APPENDIX 1 - Potential Workplace Hazards

The potential hazards listed below are not exhaustive, but may help in identifying hazards in your workplace.

- driving
- use of machinery (i.e. “plant”)
- hazardous substances
- contagious illness and disease
- lifting, moving, holding, restraining and other physical activity
- violence and aggression
- heat and UV
- working in isolation
- working in confined spaces
- working at heights
- effects of alcohol and drugs on safety
- contractors introducing hazards
- fire and other emergency events
- poor storage facilities and practices
- workplace conflict
- risks arising from individual health factors
- language barriers
-(*time to brainstorm!*)

APPENDIX 2 - Making A Start

Keep it simple!

OHS Policy

Draft an OHS Policy or commitment statement for your workplace. Involve employees and/or employee representatives in this process. Think about:

- the organisational intent and underpinning principles, with regard to workplace health and safety
- who is covered by the policy
- terms or concepts that should be clearly defined
- what the policy will “look like” in practice
- how success of the policy will be assessed or measured
- other legislation, documents, policies etc to which the OHS policy relates
- expressing realistic management commitment to workplace health and safety
- the timeframe for review of the policy

Planning

You may not have much in the way of formal data about hazards in your workplace, but you and employees will have collective intuition and insight.

For example, it is almost certain there will be manual handling risks. These can be found in almost every workplace from offices to construction sites. However, there may be other equally, or more pressing priorities.

What do previous incidents and injuries tell you? Don't ignore the apparently minor ones, because they may have a serious underlying cause with the potential for great harm.

Pick several priorities, remembering they should be within the available resources to manage, and incorporate these into an OHS plan. Priorities should also reflect “system” development - e.g. ongoing hazard identification strategies,

The plan should identify;

- the key result (i.e. priority) areas
- strategy/activity
- performance indicators
- timelines
- responsible person(s)
- resources needed

Implementation

Execute the plan.

Monitoring

The performance indicators in the OHS plan will suggest the type of data to be collected. This could include incident and injury data, findings from audit activities, worksite inspection findings, testing regimes (e.g. electrical testing and tagging, fire equipment testing, emergency evacuations etc).

Data should be reported to management and the OHS committee regularly.

System Improvement

Opportunities to review the system should be scheduled (e.g. annually) in consultation with employees. However, you should be alert to improvement opportunities as they arise during the life of the OHS plan and its implementation.

APPENDIX 3 - Sample OHS Policy

Commitment

[Organisation name] affirms its' commitment to ensuring the exercise of duty of care to employees, contractors, visitors and volunteers in the workplace, and to meeting OHS obligations under relevant legislation and regulation.

[Organisation name] also affirms a commitment to continuously improving OHS performance and the OHS management system, in consultation with employees and employee representatives.

Principles

This policy is based on the following principles;

- duty of care to all employees, contractors, visitors and volunteers
- consultation, in good faith, with all stakeholders
- legislative compliance

Scope

All [organisation name] employees are covered by this policy, and required to meet their responsibilities under the policy.

Definitions

[include key terms that may not be well understood, or may require precise definitions]

Duty of care The employer's obligation to ensure the health and safety of persons in the workplace.

Hazard management A proactive approach to identifying, assessing and controlling risks to the health and safety of persons in the workplace.

OHS Committee² A committee of management and employee representatives that assist with the overview of the OHS management system, as described in the committee's Terms of Reference.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the overall policy and strategy for [organisation name], in consultation with employees and employee representatives.

The OHS Committee² will assist the Chief Executive Officer in monitoring the effectiveness of the OHS management system, consistent with their Terms of Reference.

Managers/Supervisors will ensure that all employees, contractors, visitors and volunteers are informed about their OHS responsibilities in the workplace and monitor observance of requirements.

All employees will observe the requirements of the OHS policy and related policies and procedures. Employees are expected to actively contribute to consultation processes related to OHS matters.

Operation of this OHS Policy

- Managers of work groups will ensure that hazard identification and management is a regular agenda item at regular meetings.
- Worksite inspections will be undertaken for each worksite on a 6 monthly basis, using the [name of worksite inspection checklist or tool].

² Where relevant

- All hazards, incidents and injuries will be reported by employees, using the relevant report forms. The number and nature of reports will be reported at each OHS Committee meeting. The identity of employees will not be reported to the OHS committee.
- The need for corrective actions arising from reported hazards, incidents, injuries and worksite inspections will be assessed, and appropriate corrective actions implemented.
- Where appropriate, training strategies and Standard Operating Procedures will be developed to mitigate specific hazards.

Performance Indicators

Indicator OHS is a standing agenda item at all work group meetings.

Target 100% of work group meeting agendas will include OHS.

Measurement Internal audit of work group meeting agendas and minutes.

Indicator Worksite safety inspections will be undertaken every 6 months.

Target 100% of work groups will undertake 2 worksite safety inspections annually.

Measurement Internal audit of worksite safety inspection documentation.

References

- [Cite relevant legislation, regulation, codes of practice]
- [Cite relevant hazard, incident and injury report forms]
- [Organisation name] Risk Assessment Tool

Document Control

Date of issue: [date]

Review date: [date]

Version: [number]

Endorsement

_____/_____/20__

[Name]

Chief Executive Officer

[Organisation name]

_____/_____/20__

[Name]

Chair, OHS Committee³

[Organisation name]

³ Where relevant. May be countersigned by other employee representative, or under CEO signature alone.

APPENDIX 4 - Sample OHS Plan

[Organisation name] OHS Plan for 20__ to 20__

Key Result Area 1 - Leadership Commitment

Aim - To develop a collaborative approach to health and safety in the workplace.

Strategy	Resources	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsibility
1.1 - Implement an OHS Committee to facilitate consultation and collaboration on health and safety in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 X 2 hour meetings annually 4 employee and 3 management reps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 meetings per year held Standard agenda items agreed Minutes made accessible to employees 	[Date]	Chief Exec

Key Result Area 2 - Hazard Management

Aim - To proactively identify and manage hazards in the workplace.

Strategy	Resources	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsibility
2.1 - All work group meetings to agenda OHS as a standing item, with a particular focus on hazard identification and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within current resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All meeting agendas to include OHS as a standing item OHS decisions and discussions noted in minutes. 	Fortnightly	Manager/supervisor
2.2 - All work sites will undertake a safety inspection twice yearly, using [name of form/tool]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within current resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspection documentation completed and retained within workgroup. 	Twice yearly between April - June and October - December.	Manager/supervisor and nominated employee or employee rep
2.3 - Corrective action plans will be implemented for all hazards assessed as “moderate” risk or higher; and progress of corrective actions reported to the OHS Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource requirements detailed in each corrective action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OHS Committee minutes will record and monitor corrective actions for hazards rated “moderate” or higher risk. 	As required and reported to OHS Committee quarterly.	Manager/supervisor, in consultation with work group employees

Key Result Area 3 - Injury Management

Aim - To effectively facilitate return to work of injured employees.

Strategy	Resources	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsibility
3.1 - In consultation with case manager and rehabilitation personnel, manager/supervisor to maintain weekly contact with injured worker about progress and workplace issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within current resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diary or file notes of contacts retained by manager/supervisor 	Weekly, until injured worker returns to work	Manager/supervisor
3.2 - In consultation with case manager and rehabilitation personnel, manager/supervisor to identify alternate duties for injured workers where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within current resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate duty recommendations from rehabilitation and case management personnel recorded in personnel file, with manager/supervisor actions. 	As required, within 2 days of recommendation being made.	Manager/supervisor

Key Result Area 4 - Monitoring and Review

Aim - To identify OHS performance against plan and improve the OHS management system

Strategy	Resources	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsibility
4.1 - Internal audit program will be implemented to measure progress against OHS plan and compliance with key legislative requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary costs for audit activity (approx \$XXX) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits undertaken according to internal audit program and findings minuted in OHS Committee meeting minutes. 	As per Internal Audit Program	OHS Committee, in consultation with Chief Executive Officer
4.2 - OHS Committee will report annually on all decisions made, and this information made accessible to all employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within current resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report of OHS Committee decisions published on intranet and staff notice boards 	Annual	OHS Committee, in consultation with Chief Executive Officer
4.3 - OHS will review progress against this plan annually and review strategies in light of system data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within current resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OHS Committee minutes will record amendments to OHS plan and rationale for amendments. 	Annual	OHS Committee, in consultation with Chief Executive Officer