

CLEAR STEPS
TO
OH&S
FOR TREE WORKS



Contents

Book 2 Other Elements of an OH&S System

CHAPTER	PAGE
Other Elements of an OH&S System	3
Recording Systems and Paper Work Guides	4
Holding Meetings and Ensuring Actions	6
Writing a Procedure or Method of Work Statement	7
Guide to Working with Noise and Vibration	8
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	9
Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances (DG&HS)	10
First Aid, Fire Safety and Incidents Guide	12
Reviewing all Elements	13
Answers to Typical Questions	14

Book 3 Tree Work Operation Guides

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Proudly produced and distributed by the Queensland Arboricultural Association



Funded by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Department of Employment and Industrial Relations 2007



With design, production and assistance provided by ArborSafe Australia Pty Ltd. Tel: 03 9589 4986

Introduction to Book 2

Once you have established the basics of your OH&S system from the items covered in Book 1, you may see the need for further improvement or increased detail in parts of your system and forms.

In your review process of your OH&S you will identify changes required to make the system more streamlined and relevant to your safety needs. Feel free to adjust any of the items supplied here in hard copy form or on the CD as you see necessary.

Other Elements of an OH&S System

On the following pages we have included some other elements that may be of assistance as you grow with your OH&S system.

These elements include:

- Recording Systems and Paper Work Guides**
- Holding Meetings and Ensuring Actions**
- Writing a Procedure or Work Method Statement**
- Guide to Working with Noise and Vibration**
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
- Overview Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances**
 - Overview and Assessment Explanation
 - Template Assessment Form
 - Template DG&HS Register
- First Aid, Fire Safety and Incidents Guide**
- Reviewing all Elements**
 - System reviews
 - Task reviews
 - Staff reviews

Recording Systems and Paper Work Guides

One of the requirements of OH&S is for you to document your assessments and record most aspects of your OH&S implementation and administration. Fear of paperwork and extra administration is often stated as the biggest road block to the implementation of OH&S. But once embraced, instead of being feared, you can soon see how systems like these can improve both the professionalism, profitability and management of your business.

Following are some simple tips and examples to demonstrate how recording systems and the forms associated with your OH&S can be made easy and efficient. They are by no means the only systems you should apply and in many cases you will have existing systems that you can simply slot your OH&S recording into. As a general rule do what works for you and your staff, is easy to understand and what gets used - not lays idle.

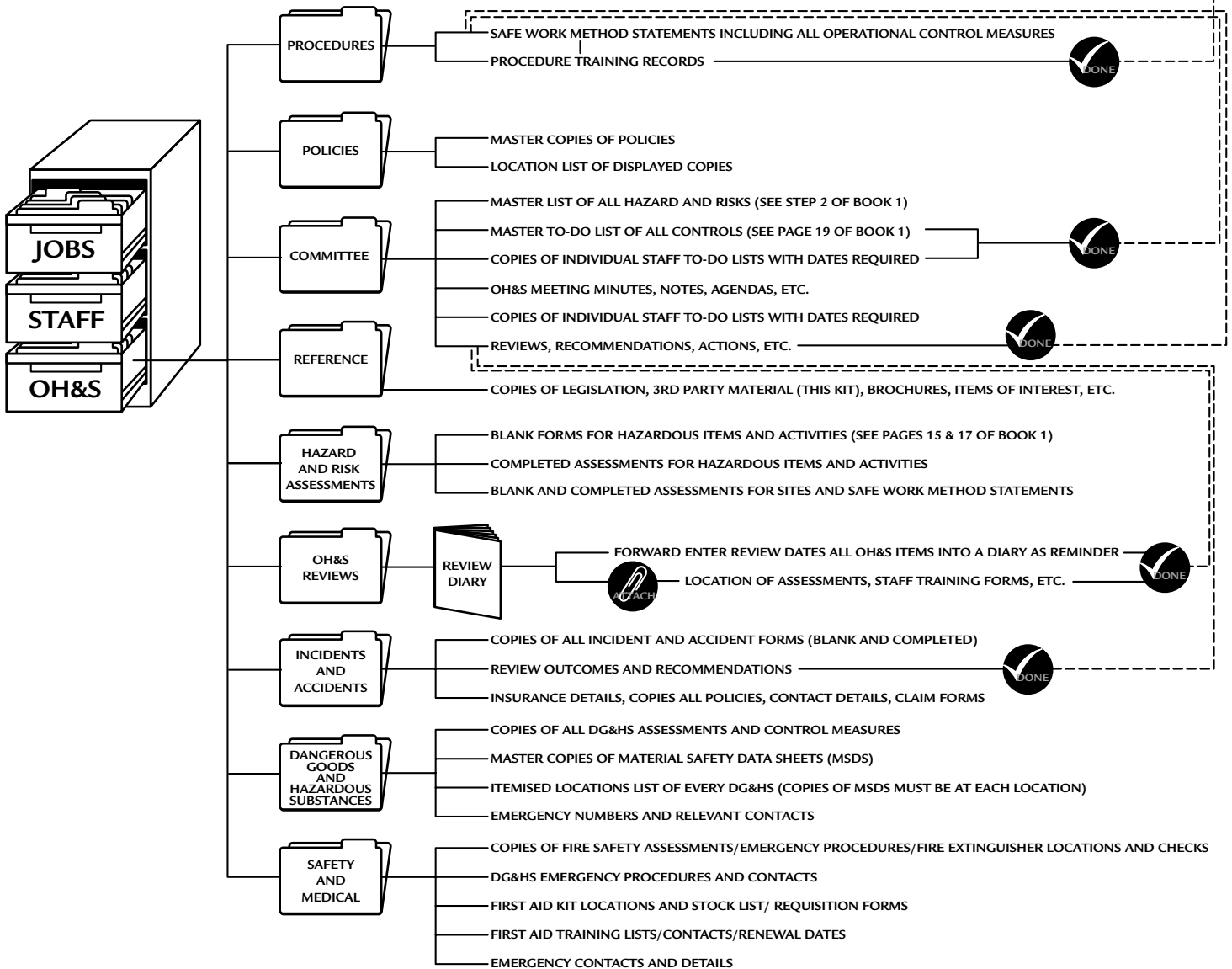
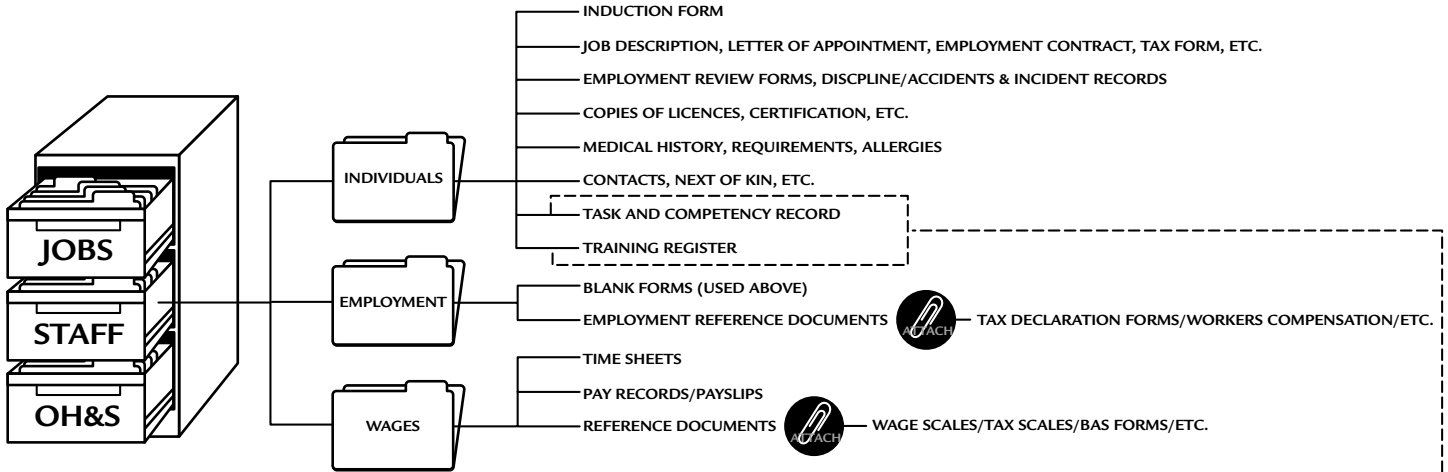
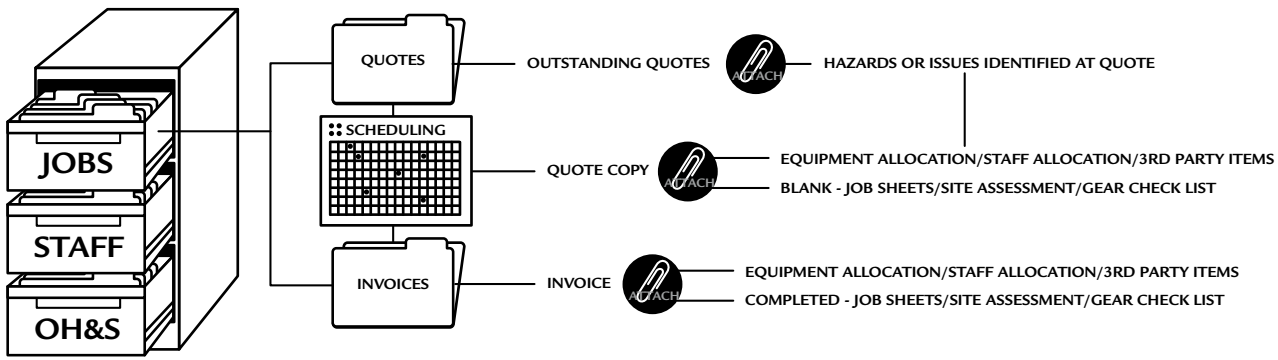
Paper Work Guide

In business you are beset with paperwork, so efficiency in paperwork completion, processing and storage is essential. Paperwork and forms should take into account the process being recorded as well as the literacy and understanding of the user. Try to ensure your forms are simple yet thorough enough for the items they cover. Try to group forms to one recording action or document. Allow time to train staff in their use and time to fill them out. Often record taking is seen by owners, managers and staff as “down-time”. However, if seen and used as “evaluation-time” you can discover how this can enhance your business in terms of efficiency through less mistakes, equipment breakdowns and poor work standards. The filing guide opposite can give you some ideas of forms and records that might be useful.

Filing Systems

Filing systems are essential to record keeping and document retrieval. The filing diagram opposite is intended as a guide to both simple record keeping and the flow of the document process. Adapt it to your existing filing system in a manner that best works for you. Remember a good filing system should deliver you and your staff an “everything at your finger tips” approach to business that is both efficient and essential at the time of accidents or emergencies.





Holding Meetings and Ensuring Actions

Holding a meeting can be as simple as you and couple of staff standing outside discussing a simple work issue. The aspects that are often overlooked when holding even the simplest of meetings is recording them and ensuring understanding and action in relation to the items discussed. This is important for legal reasons as well as a practical perspective. It ensures efficiency and accountability and reduces the likelihood of meetings being purely for talk and not action.

Below is a guide to meetings, both formal and informal, to ensure these discussions result in good value for you and your business.

All efficient meetings should include the following:

1. Name a time for the meeting and how long it will go for.
2. Clearly define the purpose/s (Agenda).
3. Involve specific individuals or groups (Attendees).
4. Discuss or examine set issues (Agenda Items).
5. Agree to outcomes (Resolutions).
6. Define actions and responsible persons.
7. Set time frames for results or further meetings.
8. Record items 1 to 7 (Minutes).

Informal meetings

These can take place outside as a team get together, one-on-one time, or tool box sessions. Even informal meetings should include the eight points above. However, recording may simply be someone writing down the points briefly in a diary. At informal meetings it is essential to make sure everyone is focused on the meeting itself and not distracted, or have a belief that it is boring or not important “to them”. To avoid this, ask individuals for their input to ensure they are focused. Ask those responsible for the actions and outcomes to acknowledge their understanding and acceptance and record key elements in the meeting notes (e.g. simple points in a diary).

Formal Meetings

These often take place over more serious issues. For formal meetings it is good to circulate an Agenda prior to the meeting so those involved know what is to be discussed. An Agenda is simply a list of topics or items being discussed (as in point 2 above). Circulate the Agenda to Attendees for their input prior to the meeting. They may wish to add items, or prepare material to present or discuss. At the meeting appoint a person responsible for taking notes and recording the meeting (as in point 8 above). This person should broadly record the discussion and the parties involved for each Agenda Item. They should also record the Resolutions and persons responsible for outcomes, along with action dates (as in points 5, 6 and 7 above). Then if required, the parties should agree to future meeting dates to review outcomes or examine other issues. This date and proposed location should also be recorded in the Minutes (along with a draft Agenda of what is to be discussed or resolved). Any previous Minutes should be the starting point of subsequent meetings.

Writing a Procedure or Work Method Statement

To ensure that Control Measures applicable to work tasks are implemented, it is a good practice to write up a Procedure (Work Method Statement) for each task that involves exposure to a Risk (e.g. Chainsaw Operation). You can then use this procedure document to train each staff member exposed to the Risk. Many of you will have verbally trained your staff with on-the-job training. Having your procedures written down ensures that everyone gets the same training and nothing is forgotten. It is also a document that clearly shows that all items were covered.

Hazardous Items - Procedures or Work Methods Statements

A good starting point for a Procedure that involves Hazardous Items (e.g. Chipper Operation) is the manufacturer's operations or user manual. Often copying parts of these will cover all your agreed Control Measures but you need to cross reference them to your assessments on each item to ensure all hazards are adequately controlled.

Hazardous Activities - Procedures or Work Methods Statements

A good starting point for a Procedure that involves a Hazardous Activity (e.g. Tree Climbing) is your assessment. Your recommended controls will guide you through all the key points that need to be included in your Procedure. Write a draft procedure by simply writing down all your Control Measures in a time sequence (e.g. this control comes at task set-up, this one next, etc.). Review this draft in practice on-site. Note any operational aspects that you wish to include that may not be safety related but make the task more efficient, or professional. Collate these notes with the draft procedure to finalise into one document.

A work procedure should be in time sequence and point form, with clear directions on who should do what when. This is especially important if there is a specific order in which things need to be performed. For example:

Maintenance of climbing equipment

1. Climbers are responsible for storing their climbing equipment including PPE securely.
2. No equipment is to be used by any worker other than the person to whom it has been issued.
3. All gear must be checked on site prior to use to ensure it is in a safe and serviceable condition.
4. Faults must be reported immediately.
5. Gear showing signs of damage or excessive wear must not be used.
6. Etc., etc.

Involve crew members in developing your procedures. Consultation with workers and safety representatives is the best way to guarantee that procedures will be understood and followed.

***Tip: The benefits of procedures are clear work methods that you and workers agree to. They help identify problems individual workers may be experiencing. They ensure tasks are performed in a set manner, or to a standard that delivers consistent outcomes for your clients, as well as improving equipment use and safety. They raise the professional standards of your business and thereby improve both client and staff satisfaction.**

Guide to Working with Noise and Vibration

What is noise?

Noise is unwanted sound that may damage a person’s hearing. The amount of damage caused by noise depends on the total amount of noise received over time. This means as noise becomes louder it causes damage in less time.

What is excessive noise?

As a simple guide, employees must not be exposed to noise which exceeds 85dB(A) over an 8 hour period or which exceeds a peak level of 140 dB(C).

ALLOWABLE NOISE EXPOSURE		SOME EXAMPLES OF NOISE RANGE				
NOISE LEVEL	EXPOSURE	LOW REVS/LOAD	CHAINSAW	FRONT END LOADER	CHIPPER	NOISE LEVEL
85 dB(A)	8 hours					85 dB(A)
88 dB(A)	4 hours					88 dB(A)
91 dB(A)	2 hours					91 dB(A)
94 dB(A)	1 hours					94 dB(A)
97 dB(A)	30 min.					97 dB(A)
100 dB(A)	10 min.					100 dB(A)
120 dB(A)	Less than 5 sec.					120 dB(A)

Hearing tests (audiometric testing).

The hearing of workers exposed to chainsaws, chippers and other noisy plant should be monitored through regular hearing examinations (even if they wear ear muffs). Testing is an important part of managing the risks from noise exposure at the workplace. Any changes in a person’s hearing levels should be investigated as to their cause(s) and the need for corrective action.

Vibration can also cause health problems.

Frequent or prolonged exposure to vibration can result in muscle or body pains, damage to internal organs and fingers. Exposure to sustained hand-arm vibration can occur when using a chainsaw or other hand operated plant. Body vibration can also be sustained when operating plant such as loaders or trucks. A management process should be used to control exposure to frequent or prolonged vibration.

Noise and Vibration Assessment and Management.

Noise and vibration should be assessed as part of your Hazardous Items and Hazardous Activities assessments. How you measure and manage them will come from your assessments. For example, PPE is often selected as the primary way of managing noise. However you should examine other ways of eliminating or reducing your workers’ exposure to noise and vibration. Look for lower noise and vibration ratings on new equipment purchases. Examine noise and vibration reducing components at service intervals. Implement job rotation, rest periods and/or vary the pattern of work to break up periods of continuous exposure. Implement exclusion zones to reduce unnecessary exposure and duration of exposure. Importantly, discuss noise and vibration issues with your workers to seek the best methods of control, then review them regularly.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Important Note

PPE is the last line of protection against a Hazard. As such, it is the least preferred method of control. You should always work to control hazards by the following order of preference:

1. Elimination, **2.** Substitution, **3.** Isolation, **4.** Engineering.

Then if these cannot be done:

5. Administration, and finally ... **6.** Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

When to use Personal Protective Equipment.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is any equipment which a person uses to protect them from a risk of illness or injury. Examples are steel capped boots, ear muffs and head protection. Workers must use PPE if directed by employers and should be trained in the use, care and maintenance of PPE. They should also be trained to identify workplace situations in which PPE should be used.

Head and eye protection.

All people engaged in amenity tree work should wear appropriate head and eye protection for the hazards present at the time of the task. You should ensure that all PPE items come with certification of compliance with Australian Standards.

Hearing protection.

When using any machinery or powered tools such as chainsaws, woodchippers and stump grinders hearing protection should be worn. These can be either ear muffs, ear plugs, or both.

Protective clothing.

Leg protection such as cut-resistant trousers or chaps should be worn for most tree work activities and high visibility clothing should also be worn. All people engaged in tree work should wear steel capped boots with non-slip tread and preferably with ankle support. A variety of gloves should be available for specific tasks (e.g. cut proof for changing chipper blades, pig skin for debris handling).

Sun and heat protection.

Sun protection includes high SPF sunscreen, long sleeved shirts and brimmed hats. Products such as cool vests should be examined for workers exposed to longer durations of high heat.

Cold and wet weather protection.

Warm wool jumpers, vests and hats help retain body heat in cold conditions. Lightweight rain jackets protect against the rain and wind chill. Woollen or thermal blankets can be used to reduce chill and raise body heat during rest periods.

Recording and Maintenance of PPE.

Every employee that is required to use PPE as part of their work should have the issue of PPE documented. You should consider creating a register of your PPE which records what items have been issued, to whom and when. The register can also include dates for review of all PPE items to ensure they are present, undamaged and can perform the required functions. Training should also be provided on the correct fitting, use and applications for PPE, along with any maintenance or inspections required to ensure they operate effectively. Most training and maintenance requirements are outlined in the literature supplied with each item by the manufacturer.

Dangerous Goods & Hazardous Substances (DG&HS)

Dangerous Goods (DG's)

Dangerous Goods are substances that may be corrosive, flammable, explosive, spontaneously combustible, toxic, oxidising, or water-reactive. They may be solids, liquids or gases. These goods can be deadly and can cause serious damage to people, property and the environment. Therefore, it's important that they are stored and handled safely. Dangerous Goods can be identified by a coloured diamond on their label.

Hazardous Substances (HS's)

Hazardous Substances are substances that have the potential to harm human health. They may be solids, liquids or gases (they may be single substances or mixtures). When used in the workplace, these substances often generate vapours, fumes, dusts and mists. A wide range of products and industrial or agricultural chemicals are classified as hazardous.

***Tip:** Some items may be both Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances (e.g. petrol). To manage DG&HS, the first step is to obtain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) – these can be obtained from either the manufacturer or supplier. The labels on the products and chemicals you use may also assist with information. MSDS's provide information on safety risks and how to manage them. You need to maintain a register listing of all the DG&HS you use together with MSDS's. You must also perform a Risk Assessment (see opposite) for each DG&HS.

Below is an example DG&HS Register and opposite is a DG&HS Assessment (blank forms for both are on the CD).

DANGEROUS GOODS & HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES (DG&HS) REGISTER			
PRODUCT NAME Unleaded Petrol	LOCATED WHERE Fuel Cabinet		
MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET (MSDS) @ LOCATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	USED FOR Plant and Hand Held Plant		
DG <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and/or HS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (SEE MSDS)	QUANTITY IN STOCK 80 litres DATE 12/2/07		
PRODUCT NAME Coopex Dusting Powder	LOCATED WHERE Shipping Container		
MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET (MSDS) @ LOCATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	USED FOR Insecticide		
DG <input type="checkbox"/> and/or HS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (SEE MSDS)	QUANTITY IN STOCK 2Kg DATE 1/2/07		
PRODUCT NAME Engine Enamel	LOCATED WHERE Shipping Container		
MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET (MSDS) @ LOCATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	USED FOR Painting		
DG <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and/or HS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (SEE MSDS)	QUANTITY IN STOCK 500ml x 6 DATE 1/2/07		
PRODUCT NAME Oil	LOCATED WHERE Shipping Container		
MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET (MSDS) @ LOCATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	USED FOR Plant and Hand Held Plant		
DG <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and/or HS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (SEE MSDS)	QUANTITY IN STOCK 4litre x 4 DATE 8/2/07		
PRODUCT NAME Battery Terminal Protector	LOCATED WHERE Shipping Container		
MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET (MSDS) @ LOCATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	USED FOR Corrosion Inhibitor		
DG <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> and/or HS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (SEE MSDS)	QUANTITY IN STOCK 500ml DATE 8/2/07		

First Aid, Fire Safety and Incidents Guide

First Aid

To ensure adequate first aid provisions, employers must identify their potential problems, assess their requirements and consult with employees in the process. Below are some questions that will help you in planning the best response to your first aid needs.

1. What are your potential workplace injuries, illnesses, and most likely causes of injuries?
2. What are the best first aid responses for these potential injuries, illnesses and safety issues that may arise from the causes? (e.g. burns first aid items also highlight need for fire extinguishers)
3. How close are your work sites to medical facilities?
4. How many trained first aiders are needed, and what are their specific training requirements?
5. What is required of first aid kits, including contents, locations, information and auditing?
6. What is your procedure and training requirements for all accidents requiring first aid?

***Tip: Typical first aid kits should include:** Sterile adhesive plastic dressing strips, adhesive dressing tape, plastic bags for amputated fingers etc., sterile dressings, sterile eye pads, sterile saline eyewash solution, sterile gauze bandages (various sizes), disposable gloves, rescue blanket, safety pins, scissors, resuscitation mask, splinter forceps, antiseptic, triangular bandages, wound dressings, first aid reference guide, emergency numbers - include other items appropriate for hazards at your workplace.

Fire Safety

Fires are known to occur from equipment sparks igniting dry grass and debris. Sawdust and mulch build up around motors of vehicles and equipment is another fire hazard. To assess other fire safety needs you will need to review all your Hazard and Risk Assessments, particularly those for Dangerous Goods. Understanding the types of fires and possible locations allows you to plan your best fire responses. Place fire extinguishers suited to particular fire types at the locations where there is a risk they may occur. Train your staff in their use, as well as evacuation procedures and fire drills. Check extinguishers, drills, alarms and your on-site fire signals regularly to ensure they function in the manner required and adjust as necessary. Map and record extinguisher locations, staff fire training, operation checks and fire procedures.

What to do in an emergency

1. Dial 000 and ask for Ambulance. If it is a fatality, dial 000 and ask for Police. If overhead power lines have fallen down notify the relevant electricity company or Police.
2. Administer first aid if required. Do not touch anyone who is receiving an electric shock. Turn off power, or free the person with a non-metallic item. Nothing should be touched or moved unless it is to administer first aid, or there is further risk of property damage.
3. Contact Workplace Health and Safety Queensland on 1300 369 915. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland can provide approval to touch the scene. An inspector or police officer may need to investigate the scene of a serious workplace incident.

Reviewing all Elements

Periodically re-assess Your Current Health and Safety Status (questionnaire page 7 of Book 1). Reviews are important for effective safety management. You must also assess any new hazards and risks. After you have implemented your OH&S system you need to find out whether the changes have been effective. Set dates for this, choosing time frames appropriate to the risks involved. (This could be anywhere between a week and five years).

As a guide you should also review the following:

- **Your Policies**
- **Your Master Hazard List (look for new hazards present in your workplaces)**
- **Your Hazard and Risk Assessments**
- **Assessments of the Level of Risk**
- **All Control Measures**
- **Implementation of all your Control Measures**
- **Staff induction, skills assessment, competency and training**
- **Recording Systems**
 - Staff files
 - Forms, usage, process, filing systems
 - Safety meeting minutes and worker concerns
 - Work Procedures and Work Method Statements
 - Incident reports
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), usage, allocation and audits**
- **Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances**
 - Your Hazard and Risk Assessments
 - Assessments of the Level of Risk
 - Control Measures and implementation
- **First Aid training, kit audits and kit locations**
- **Fire alarms, extinguisher locations, signals, evacuation, fire training and emergency procedures**
- **Operations**
 - Tree and site assessments
 - Work Hazard check lists
 - Working Near Power Lines regulations
 - Work site preparation methods and equipment usage
 - Climbing, rigging and ladder use and training
 - Emergency on-site procedures, communication equipment and Aerial Rescue training
 - Manual Handling exposure and training
 - Vehicle and Pedestrian Traffic Management
- **Issues, events and contacts made in relation to health and safety since your last system review**

Once you have reviewed all the aspects of your system, seek to improve your safety and the operational use of your OH&S system by refining each element for better outcomes.

Answers to Typical Questions

Q. I'm an owner operator and don't employ anyone – do OH&S laws apply to me?

A. Yes. Regardless of the size of your business you are required to comply with all Qld OH&S laws.

Q. When I hire sub-contractors, aren't they responsible for all their own OH&S?

A. No. Contractors are required to comply with OH&S laws. However you are responsible for your work sites and need to ensure they ARE compliant. It is a good practice to induct and train any sub-contractors you use in YOUR Control Measures for the Hazards and Risks present on your work sites.

Q. How many times do I have to do the Hazard Assessments?

A. You are required to perform Hazard Assessments each time you encounter a new hazard.

For new Hazardous Items (e.g. when you buy a new chipper) you are required to perform a Hazard Assessment as there may be new hazards that come with this new purchase. After the assessment is completed and the Control Measures are implemented, you don't need to perform this assessment again unless the chipper is modified or used in a different way.

For new Hazardous Activities (e.g. each new tree felling operation on a different site) you are required to perform a Hazard Assessment as there may be new hazards that come with this new site.

For Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances (DG&HS's) you are required to perform a Hazard Assessment with each new DG or HS purchased or used. After the assessment is completed and the Control Measures are implemented, you need to perform this assessment again every five years, or if the DG or HS is used, stored or transported in a different way.

You should periodically review ALL your assessments to ensure the best levels of workplace safety.

Q. I have Safety Procedures in place – do I need all this other stuff?

A. You are required to have all the elements outlined in this kit as parts of a complete OH&S system. Procedures are an important element but will not provide a safe workplace on their own.

Q. How many Policies am I required to have?

A. There is no specific number of Policies required under the law. However, you may choose to develop a range of Policies that suit your management, staff, business and operational needs.

Q. How much supervision am I required to provide for workers?

A. You are required to provide sufficient supervision to ensure safe work methods are understood and followed. The amount of supervision will depend on individual worker and/or work group skills, competency and training.

Q. Am I required to purchase and do all the things my staff come up with in regard to safety?

A. You should encourage workers to discuss health and safety issues. The results of these discussions may be good practical suggestions for safety actions or purchases. You should evaluate all safety suggestions as to whether they would provide a safer and practical outcome. If they do, you should try to implement them. If not, explain the reasoning behind the decision. *Remember many purchases of safer items can be made when old items are due for re-order or replacement.*

Answers to Typical Questions

Q. My opinion of the level of Risk on my assessments seems to be different to that of others?

A. Your assessment of the level of risk is YOUR assessment, there is no absolute right answer. Look at the Hazard and the likelihood of an incident occurring, then estimate the severity of the consequences should it occur. It is this likelihood and consequence that determines the level of Risk.
E.g. Highly Likely + High Consequence (death) = Extreme Risk.

Possible + Low Consequence (skin rash) = Low Risk.

Highly Unlikely + Moderate Consequence (laceration) = Low Risk

Q. Is it right that I have a lot of the same Control Measures when I review my Master to-do-list?

A. Yes. You will find that many of your Control Measures involve the same methods. For example hearing protection may be a Control Measure for chainsaws, blowers and chippers. The key is to ensure that workers operating only a blower know they must wear ear muffs - even though this Control Measure is repeated for chainsaws and chippers.

Q. How do I know everyone is trained correctly?

A. Use the Induction process and Staff Competency Record (Pages 21 & 23 of Book 1) to identify the roles, responsibilities and skills required to perform the tasks asked of workers. Then keep a Training Register (Page 25 of Book 1) to record all on-the-job and external training. These processes will identify skills, further training required and history. They will also record that you evaluated them.

Q. What types of incidents must I report?

A. The employer and Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) should be notified of any incident requiring medical assistance at the site. Contact WHSQ on 1300 369 915. An inspector or police officer may need to investigate the scene of a serious workplace incident. ***Remember you must record even minor incidents – you can use the Incident Report Form (on the CD).***

Q. How often should I review my OH&S system and procedures?

A. OH&S review should be a regular part of your business. This can be as simple as regularly discussing OH&S issues with workers and making sure everyone knows they have a role in alerting you to safety issues. Scheduling formal reviews of elements of the system should be done at a frequency that ensures on-going safety.

Q. Why does OH&S have to involve me making so many notes and filling out forms?

A. Forms, notes and meeting minutes can record events, assessments, actions and agreements. They are helpful business tools necessary for accountability and proof of actions. Apart from any legal benefits they also help with systemising staff, equipment, client and job management.

Q. When are staff responsible for safety?

A. Everyone is responsible for safety in the workplace at all times. An employer's role is to provide the facilities, tools, training and supervision. It is the employee's responsibility to utilise these provisions to perform their work tasks safely.