

ohsrm Meeting Guide

OHS risk management (ohsrm) is to be included as a standing item on the agenda of management meetings held by academic and administrative units. The typical issues to be discussed and resolved under this agenda item are described below. It is likely that only some of these issues will be relevant for discussion at any particular meeting.

Action Plan

Set and monitor ohsrm goals for the Unit. Some examples of typical targets are:

- Follow the ohsrm Steps and control the risks associated with one workplace hazard or hazardous job each month.
- Develop a local induction program for new staff and students within 4 months.
- Each month, document a safe work procedure for a hazardous job.
- Label all hazardous substance containers correctly within 3 months.
- Conduct a walk-through OHS inspection of each work area once every 6 months.
- Run an emergency evacuation drill once every year.
- Provide relevant OHS training to all new staff, honours and post-graduate students within one month of their commencement date.

The meetings can be used to allocate responsibilities and resources for various Action Plan goals and monitor progress toward achievement of these goals. The meeting minutes or notes will provide records of this commitment and progress.

Incidents

Any work related incidents that have occurred since the previous meeting should be reviewed. The factors that contributed to the incident and the introduction of suitable risk controls measures that will prevent any recurrence should be confirmed. The possibility of similar incidents occurring elsewhere within the Unit or Department should also be considered and addressed.

Incidents that have occurred elsewhere are sometimes publicised via OHS Newsletters etc. Each management Unit should consider the relevance of these incidents to their own operations and ensure that any related risks are effectively managed locally.

Purchases

New equipment and materials may have hazardous characteristics or present some risk of injury. Where a choice is being made between comparable products, ensure the safety aspects are considered. Preference should be given to purchasing the products that are safer, have better ergonomic design, are less toxic and environmentally friendly etc.

The staff or students who will use new equipment should be consulted during the pre-purchase risk assessment. The new equipment or materials may introduce sufficient change to warrant new safe work procedures, training etc.

When purchasing equipment and materials that are large or difficult to handle, ensure that the materials will be delivered directly to the desired location so that they will not have to be moved again by staff or students.

Waste disposal options for hazardous and radioactive substances should be confirmed prior to purchase. Only minimum practical volumes and radioactivity levels should be purchased.

New projects

A risk assessment should be undertaken for any proposed project prior to commencement. Projects may be research related, to do with new administrative or computer systems, buildings works etc. The risk assessment can be documented using the ohsrm PART B form. Projects should only proceed when sufficient risk control measures have been agreed and built into the project.

Refurbishment and renovation

There are many OHS issues to consider in planning for building renovations. Some of these include: ergonomic aspects of furniture design, lighting, floor surfaces (for comfort and avoidance of slip and trip hazards), emergency egress routes, access to storage, provision of amenities etc. Project working groups must consult directly with the end-users of the area to be refurbished in order to understand and effectively manage the foreseen risks.

Injury management

Where workers have been injured, the relevant supervisors and managers must participate in the development of a return to work program. The accommodation of these injured workers during their rehabilitation must be addressed in consultation with the worker and injury management consultants. This may involve restricted or modified duties, or physical changes to the workplace.

Whilst the details of a workers injuries and their return to work plan are not to be subject to public discussion, the management meetings may confirm that an injured worker is being supported in returning to work, as required by legislation.

Independent reports

OHS reports may occasionally be received from OHS Committees, OHS Auditors etc. The findings and recommendations of these reports should be reviewed and appropriately addressed.

ohsrm Reports from supervisors and line managers

In larger Units it may be impractical to review the management of all risks due to the volume of issues. In this case the Managers of each sub-Unit may be required to present a summary report on progress with OHS risk management in their area(s) of responsibility.

Revised: January 2008