

# Safe Work Procedures

## Hazards/Issues

When workers are exposed to an uncontrolled risk, safe work procedures (SWPs) are required. Uncontrolled risk exists where the risk of injury to workers performing a job task cannot be reasonably eliminated by effective work design, work processes or equipment.

SWPs are:

- Based on information gathered by a risk assessment.
- Developed in consultation with the safety and health committee or representative.
- Approved by management.
- Understood by workers through training.
- Readily available for workers to reference.

Supervisors are responsible to ensure:

- Workers perform tasks safely, consistent with training and SWPs.

## Formatting SWPs

There is no single required format for SWPs. However, SWPs should include the following information:

1. Name or description of the work task.
  2. Department.
  3. Management approval.
  4. Date of creation.
  5. Date of review or revision.
  6. Any hazards that may cause harm to a worker.
  7. Equipment/devices, personal protective equipment (PPE), or other considerations necessary to perform the task safely
  8. Required training and/or relevant documentation needed to perform the task.
  9. Common signs and symptoms of a musculoskeletal injury (MSI), if MSI risk is present
- Note:** Injuries affecting the muscles, ligaments and joints (MSIs) account for a large percentage of workplace injuries.
10. A statement indicating that workers must be trained on the SWPs and employers must ensure that workers follow the procedures.
  11. Steps to perform the task safely.

(see next page)



**Sample SWP**

The following is intended to serve as a **sample template** for developing SWPs.

**Safe Work Procedure job title or task:** (1)

<b>Department / Area:</b> (2)	<b>Approved by:</b> (3)	<b>Date created:</b> (4)	<b>Review / Revision date:</b> (5)
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<b>Potential hazards:</b> Fill in those that apply	<b>Personal protective equipment / Devices required / other safety considerations</b>
<p><b>H M L risk for injury</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Awkward / sustained postures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Forceful exertions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Repetitive motions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Vibration (6)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Skin compression</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Sharp points/edges</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Pinch points</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Material falling</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Surfaces causing falls</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Working at heights</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Moving machinery</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Biological pathogens</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme heat / cold</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Noise</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Combustibles / flammables</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>	<p>(7)</p> <hr/> <p><b>Training / Reference information</b></p> <p>(8)</p>

(9) Common signs and symptoms of a musculoskeletal injury (MSI) can include pain, burning, swelling, stiffness, numbness/tingling, and/or loss of movement or strength in a body part. Report these to your supervisor.

**(10) Employers must ensure that workers are trained and follow this safe work procedure**  
**Steps to perform this task safely:**

(11)



## Filling out SWPs

1. Name or description of the work task.
2. Department or area where the work task is performed.
3. Authority approving the SWP. A senior person in management should approve the SWP to acknowledge the employer's commitment to safety.
4. Date SWP was created.
5. Date the SWP was reviewed or revised. Review SWPs at least every 3 years to ensure they are accurate and effective. SWPs must be updated when changes to the task or equipment are introduced. If a SWP has been reviewed and no changes are required, enter the date of review. Workers and management must be made aware of any changes to the SWP and workers retrained, as necessary.
6. Document the hazards for the task by identifying those hazards that could cause harm to a worker (see below: hazard descriptions).  
**Note:** It may be helpful to describe the cause(s) of each hazard in this box. For example: Forceful exertion - **lifting pallets** or Noise - **impact chisel on metal**. You may add to the list of hazards, or delete hazards that do not apply.  
  
It is important to estimate the level of risk for injury by selecting the H "High", M "Medium" or L "Low" box listed before each hazard.
7. Note any personal protective equipment (PPE) or other equipment that must be used to perform the task safely. Other considerations (e.g. requiring assistance from another worker, removing jewelry, containing loose hair/clothing, or specifying a safe body position/movement) may also be noted in this section.
8. List any training, documentation, videos, or competency tests required to perform this task. Training must be provided in a way that workers can understand and apply. Reference or support information may also be listed in this section, including: manuals, policies, related SWPs, CSA standards, or legislative references.
9. List common signs and symptoms of a musculoskeletal injury (MSI). This informs workers what they might see or feel if a task may lead to or aggravate a MSI. If a task has no risks for developing a MSI, this section may be deleted.
10. Include a statement about requirements for employers to train workers on the SWP and ensure workers follow it. Spot-check observations by supervisors will help ensure that workers are following SWPs.
11. Summarize the steps to perform the task safely. Pictures may help to make the steps more clear. Describe how to eliminate or control hazards that could lead to injuries. Be specific when describing safe body positions or movements; instructions such as, "always lift safely" do not describe **how** to perform a task safely.

## Hazard descriptions

**Note:** This list does not include all hazards that may be associated with a job. A job task may expose workers to more than one hazard at a time.

**Electrical:** Electrical energy that could be transferred to a worker through contact with a power source, carrier or conductor.

**Sharp points or edges:** Surfaces, tools or materials adjacent to or used by a worker which are able to cause punctures or cuts (e.g. blades, needles).

**Pinch points:** Equipment, devices or practices that could catch, squeeze, or crush part of a worker's body (e.g. rollers, moving machinery).

**Material falling:** Goods or other materials that could fall into or onto a worker due to insufficient bracing, shoring or securing.



**Surfaces causing falls:** Uneven, broken, cluttered or slippery surfaces that could cause a worker to lose their balance and trip, slip or fall.

**Working at heights:** Working above the ground (e.g. on ladders, platforms, or roofs etc.) where a worker is at risk of injury from falls.

**Moving machinery:** Equipment being used by a worker or in operation nearby that could trap, catch, hit, cut or crush the whole or part of a worker's body.

**Awkward or sustained posture:** A working or static position which increases stress on the joints or soft tissues of the body (e.g. twisting, over-reaching, bending at the waist, prolonged sitting) can lead to or aggravate a MSI.

**Forceful exertion:** Performing a task requiring much physical effort (e.g. moving a heavy object or forceful gripping) can overload body tissues, and lead to or aggravate a MSI.

**Repetitive motions:** Performing the same action(s) for an extended period with little or no rest for the muscles being used (e.g. working the same station on an assembly line). Over time, repetitive movements can fatigue muscles, increasing the risk for a MSI.

**Vibration:** The direct transfer of shaking or rapid back and forth movement from a machine or tool to the body. Vibration can occur from hand-arm (e.g. using a vibrating hand tool) or through whole body vibration (e.g. vibrating equipment causing the whole body to move) can lead to or aggravate a MSI.

**Skin compression:** External pressure against the outside of the body, at high force or for prolonged periods of time (i.e., using your hand as a hammer, resting knees on a concrete floor for long periods, or the edge of a workstation pressing into the body). Mechanical compression can damage soft tissues of the body, leading to or aggravating a MSI.

**Chemicals:** Exposure to gases, liquids, solids, aerosols, vapors, dusts, fumes, mists or smokes that can cause an injury to a worker.

**Biological pathogens:** Exposure to bacteria, fungi, viruses, dusts or moulds, blood or body fluids that can cause ill effects or injury to a worker.

**Noise:** Exposure to sounds at excessive levels that could lead to noise induced hearing loss.

**Combustibles or flammables:** Substances naturally more susceptible to fire or explosion.

**Psycho-social:** Hazards affecting mental well-being (e.g. harassment, risk of violence).

**Reference to legal requirements under workplace safety and health legislation:**

- Safe work procedures: *Workplace Safety and Health Regulation*, M.R. 217/2006 Part 2.1
- Content of program: *Workplace Safety and Health Act* W210, Part 7.4 (5)

**Additional workplace safety and health information available at: [safemanitoba.com](http://safemanitoba.com)**

- SAFE Work bulletin #249 part 1 – *Job hazard analysis*
- Safe work procedure (SWP) templates
- Sample: Safe work procedures (SWPs)

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