Operational Policy

Work Health and Safety

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1. Summary

- NSW State Archives and Records Authority (SARA) has legislative responsibilities to protect workers and other people from hazards and to provide a safe and healthy work environment.

- It uses risk assessment and management processes to identify potential hazards and to remove or mitigate them, and these are translated into a working set of policies and procedures.

- Officers and workers have clear roles to play in identifying, planning for, and preventing potential work health and safety risks and for monitoring and reviewing performance.

- SARA will actively communicate new WHS initiatives or solutions, train workers on their rights and responsibilities, and ensure ample opportunity for all workers to raise issues or be consulted on safety in the workplace.

2. Introduction

NSW State Archives and Records (SARA) has a moral and legal responsibility to provide a safe and healthy work environment for workers and other people.
This document sets out the relevant definitions, principles, policies, and procedures used by SARA to protect the health and safety of its workforce.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to:

- outline the health and safety management system used across all sections of SARA;

- establish a process for the development, review, evaluation, and improvement of all work health and safety policies, procedures and systems;

- define and communicate health, safety, and injury management roles and responsibilities; and

- foster a culture that empowers and requires everyone to be responsible and accountable for health, safety, and injury management.

4. Scope and application

This policy applies to all workers, officers, and other people (as defined below) who carry out work for SARA in any capacity or are undertaking a business activity at a Departmental workplace.

5. Definitions

Audit	the process of checking compliance against a standard such as the occupational health and safety improvement standard.
	Audits are conducted to determine the effectiveness of management systems and to identify opportunities for improvement.

Competent	describes a person who has acquired, through training, qualification, experience, or a combination of these, the knowledge and skills required to perform a particular task.
Consequence	an outcome or impact of an event, whether positive or negative.
Contractor	a third party company or sole trader/partnership engaged to perform work at a Planning and Environment worksite. Note: where a third party is not performing physical work (e.g. trainer or consultant) and is continually in the presence of a Departmental representative; this person may be considered a visitor rather than a contractor.
Control	a control is implemented to reduce the risk associated with a hazard by removing or reducing the likelihood of injury. The control process must follow the Hierarchy of Controls which is prescribed by legislation. It is important to ensure that control measures do not introduce new hazards, and that ongoing effectiveness of the control/s is monitored.
NSW State Archives and Records (SARA)	includes all divisions and offices of NSW State Archives and Records (SARA)
Hazard	anything that has the potential to cause injury, illness or disease to people, damage to the environment, property, plant, or equipment, including work practices and procedures.
Hazard identification	the process of identifying all situations or events that could give rise to the potential for injury, illness or damage to plant or property.
HSR	health and safety representative
Inspection	observation of a work environment to identify WHS risks
Likelihood	the description used to identify the probability or chance of an event occurring. It can also be used to describe the level of exposure to a hazard.
Near miss	an incident that does not result in physical injury to people or damage to property, however, had it occurred, would have had real potential to cause an injury or death.
Notifiable incident	the death of a person, or serious injury or illness of a person, or dangerous incident arising out of work carried out by business or undertaking or a workplace.
Officer	any person at SARA who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of the organisation on WHS issues. As such, this may include the Executive Directors or Directors.
Other people	all other persons that may be at SARA that are not workers, including: • visitors; • clients; and • the general public.
Records	include: • copies of completed Notification of a Safety Hazard Reports and/or • Incident Reports; and

	• minutes of meetings held to resolve a WHS issue.
Risk	the likelihood and consequence of a hazard actually causing an injury, illness or disease or damage/loss to plant or property.
Risk assessment	the process of determining the likelihood of a hazard causing injury, illness or damage under the circumstances of its use.
Treatment	the kind of treatment that would be required for a serious injury or illness and includes 'medical treatment' (by a registered medical practitioner), treatment by a paramedic, or treatment by a registered nurse.
WHS	work health and safety
WHS management system	a collective term used to describe all WHS related documents, databases, activities, processes, and resources for developing, implementing, achieving, reviewing, and maintaining the commitments stated in our policy and manage risks associated with the organisation.
Work health and safety (WHS) issue	a situation, activity, behaviour or item that poses a health and safety risk to a person.
Worker	a person is a worker if they carry out work in any capacity, including as: • a member of staff, including any secondee from another Department or agency; • a contractor or subcontractor; • an employee of a contractor or subcontractor; • an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking; • an outworker; • an apprentice or trainee; • a student gaining work experience; or • a volunteer.
Workplace	any location where work is carried out by SARA, including anywhere a worker goes, or is likely to go, while at work.

6.   Policy statement

SARA is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all workers, visitors, clients, and the general public in its operations.

It achieves this by providing:

• a safe and healthy work environment with adequate workplace facilities;

• safe systems of work;

• risk management procedures;

• incident reporting and management;

• emergency management plans;

- return to work programs;

7. Procedures, Directives and Guidelines

The NSW State Archives and Records Authority WHS policy, procedures, directives and guidelines can be found on the SARA [intranet](#).

This important information is for ensuring a healthy workplace that supports wellbeing, and that provides a framework for governance and risk management within SARA.

The WHS procedures, directives and guidelines outline obligations that workers, managers, and others have in relation to specific aspects of WHS at work, such as first aid.

The administration of the WHS Management System is the responsibility of the Director, Human Resources.

8. Reporting and investigating incidents

The people responsible for the implementation and management of incident notification and reporting are those with appropriate management authority over workplaces.
All incidents must be reported to the appropriate manager who will ensure an incident report is completed.

Incident investigation reports must be provided within 24 hours of the incident occurring to:

- the officer responsible for the area in which the incident occurred;
- the WHS Committee (if established) that supports the work area in which the incident occurred;
- the manager responsible for WHS; and
- a HSR.

As a minimum any work-related accident, significant near miss, or incident that results in medical expenses and/or time off work, should be investigated in the following way:

1. the manager, with the assistance of the injured worker/s, completes the Notification of Incident Illness and Injury Form immediately or as soon as practical after the incident has occurred or been reported;
2. the Form is sent to Human Resources where it will be recorded on the Incident Illness and Injury Register;
3. if the incident resulted in injury or illness to worker/s requiring time loss or medical treatment, the Injury Management Officer lodges insurer;
4. the manager:
   a. determines if further investigation is required to ensure all possible causes are identified;
   b. conducts an investigation of the incident, at a level commensurate with the actual or potential injury sustained; and
   c. develops, in consultation with workers, a program to take preventative action as identified by the investigation.

The following should also happen in the event of all accidents causing death, serious injury, or serious work-related illnesses, or critical incidents (to workers or other people):

5. the manager of the injured worker must:
    a. seek medical treatment immediately then notify the HR manager or the manager responsible for WHS;
    b. take measures to ensure that plant involved in the incident is not used, moved, or interfered with until advised otherwise by the manager responsible for WHS; and
    c. take measures to ensure that no person disturbs an area at the premises that is within four (4) metres from the location of the incident until advised otherwise by the manager responsible for WHS;
6. the HR manager or the manager responsible for WHS must notify SafeWork NSW of the accident immediately and no later than 24 hours after the accident and provide advice to the manager and worker/s regarding further action required by SARA;
7. the SafeWork NSW Inspector may carry out an investigation;
8. the manager of the injured worker/s must complete the Care NSW (icare) Incident Report Form and forward to icare within five (5) days, sending a copy to the Human Resources Department; and
9. the HR Department must retain a copy of the completed form for record.

Records must be kept to track actions relating to hazards and incidents.

All records of incidents reports and investigations will be kept with Human Resources and all medical and confidential details will be secured in relevant personnel files.

9.   Risk management

Officers and workers are required to:

- recognise foreseeable hazards using the processes described in the Risk Management Procedure; and

- collaborate on risk assessment and hazard control as necessary.

SARA identifies, assesses, and controls health and safety hazards through the use of risk management processes, supported by appropriate internal and external expertise and resources, and informed by its workers.

Risk assessment is carried out by:

- **identifying hazards,** through inspections and reports;

- **assessing the risks**, determining the likely consequences, and prioritising responses and resources;

- **eliminating or,** if that is not possible, **controlling the risks**; and

- **monitoring and reviewing** control measures to ensure that they are still required and/or meet acceptable standards.

SARA maintains a register of identified risks in the workplace to workers, visitors, and others to help it protect health and safety.

Risk management is performed using a hierarchy of control measures, which identifies controls from most to least effective, namely to:

1. eliminate or physically remove the hazard;

2. substitute or replace the hazard;

3. isolate or separate the people from the hazard;

4. introduce engineering solutions to control the hazard;

5. introduce administrative processes or safe work practices to control the hazard; or

6. protect the worker with personal protective equipment.

10. Planning, monitoring, and review

SARA draws upon its risk assessment processes to establish and monitor WHS Plans, objectives, and targets.

10.1 Planning

Action plans are prepared by officers and relevant workers in consultation with WHS Committees to manage risk at the:

- corporate level;

- divisional level; and

- local level.

These plans include strategies to eliminate or control hazards where most appropriate, depending on the breadth or significance of the issues, and cover:

- the priority of different risks;

- the actions required to deal with each;

- the resources required to implement each action;

- assigned responsibilities for responding to the risk;

- timeframes for each action to be completed; and

- performance indicators to allow progress to be measured.

Each office is also required to have a plan for emergencies and unforeseen events (see the **Emergency Management Procedure**).

10.2 Monitoring and review

Management (regional, divisional, area, and unit managers) and supervisors (team leaders and first line supervisors) play a significant role in monitoring WHS performance, ensuring appropriate audits have taken place, and addressing any issues arising.

They are supported in this role by the Human Resources team, WHS Committees, and by the workers themselves.

10.2.1 Reporting

SARA monitors performance and collects data at many levels, including:

- incidents/injuries/near misses/notifiable incidents;

- workers compensation (injuries, time lost, costs, return to work, etc.);

- compliance with policies and procedures;

- performance against WHS plans and strategies; and

- compliance with legislation.

Reports are prepared regularly to provide officers and the WHS committee with:

- information about overall WHS performance;

- information about WHS and injury management performance; and

- data on accidents/incidents, time lost, and workers compensation claims;

SARA's Annual Report also includes details and analysis of all workplace related incidents and outcomes. This informs key stakeholders of SARA's progress against the WHS Act, including:

- areas of improvement;

- work-related injuries;

- illnesses; and

- prosecutions.

10.2.2 WHS system reviews

The WHS Committee reviews various aspects of the WHS system in collaboration with SARA, including:

- ongoing performance;

- the status of improvement actions; and

- other relevant information as it becomes available, such as audit reports, survey results, injury/incident data, legislation changes, and emergency debriefs.

It provides support to HR on the annual WHS Management System review, and gives feedback to the Audit and Risk Committee about performance and issues requiring consideration and/or action.

10.2.3 System audits

Audits are conducted regularly using internal and external resources and service providers in consultation with officers.

Consideration is given in these audits to factors such as accident rates, the level of exposure to risk, and Public Sector requirements.

Any areas falling below an objective standard are required to develop and implement an improvement strategy/plan to address the situation with a time frame commensurate with the level of risk posed.

10.2.4 Workplace inspections

Workplace inspections are carried out by a Health and Safety Representative, WHS Committee member, or workers regularly, in order to:

- check specific conditions (e.g. building, fixtures, fittings, safety systems, equipment, etc.) and actual performance to confirm if acceptable WHS conditions are being achieved;

- monitor and evaluate the performance and compliance against organisational policies, procedures, and other predetermined requirements;

- check effectiveness of control measures, particularly those that have been recently introduced as a result of corrective actions from incident investigations or workplace inspections; and

- identify hazards and workplace practices which have the potential to cause injury, incident, or damage.

Outcomes of inspections need to be documented and all hazards rectified immediately or scheduled to be fixed.

10.3 Performance targets

The Human Resources team establishes objectives and targets to facilitate the ongoing measurement and monitoring of SARAs performance, based on the WHS Strategy.

It considers the following criteria when establishing these objectives and targets:

- policy commitments and organisational values;

- significant hazards, risks and environmental aspects;

- technological options and feasibility;

- financial, operational, and business requirements;

- legal requirements;

- the views of interested parties;

- WHS performance; and

- the results of consultation with workers or their Health and Safety Representatives

These objectives are reviewed and revised at least annually against:

- performance measures;

- changes to legislation;

- injury/incident trends;

- conformance with the WHS Management System;

- changes to the organisations activities, processes or services; and

- audit results.

11. Responsibilities

Officers have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of those who work under their direction.

SARA has a duty to provide and maintain, as far as practicable, a working environment and conditions that are safe and without risk to health.

11.1 Officers

To show commitment to the WHS strategy and policies, officers will:

- acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge about WHS matters;

- demonstrate leadership in WHS management by supporting the implementation of this policy;

- integrate WHS and injury management into all existing and future management systems used in SARA;

- authorise the establishment of a WHS committee

- ensure that there are appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety from work carried out in the course of business;

- monitor WHS performance through reporting, review, and audit;

- consult with employees and other workers when proposing changes that may affect health or safety, undertaking risk management activities, or making decisions about WHS procedures; and

- ensure training and information, on-the-job instruction and a level of supervision is provided to achieve the policy's objectives.

11.2 Workers

All workers while at work, regardless of the position they hold, must:

- comply with their obligations under the legislation and WHS policies;

- take reasonable care to protect their own health and safety, and that of others under their supervision at work, including ensuring that workers are not bullied or subjected to violence;

- ensure that their work area is kept in safe manner e.g. not leaving boxes in walkways or in such a manner that they may topple over;

- comply with any reasonable WHS instruction or direction by a workplace manager; report and record all incidents, injuries or near misses (including incidents of violence or bullying) and hazards that may cause injury or illness (including damage or facilities or plant requiring maintenance);

- use all provided personal protective clothing or equipment (PPE) in accordance with directions, and report when any PPE requires repair or replacement;

- participate in any training or in-service seminars arranged by SARA to support the objectives of this policy.

- request further training if unsure of the safe use of equipment, policy, or procedures; engage with officers in consultation on any WHS issues or information; and

- co-operate in any return to work plan developed for injured workers.

11.3 Contractors

There are particular requirements for managing WHS risk in relation to contractors so that they carry out works in a safe, hygienic, environmentally responsible, and competent manner.

SARA managers these requirements to ensure they are met and are in line with policy, when Contractors are on site.

12. Injury management

SARA will provide injured workers with suitable duties in line with current medical advice; with the ultimate goal of returning them to normal duties.

Return-to-Work Plans are developed by managers and Human Resources in consultation with injured workers and these will be monitored to ensure that they are effective.

13. Communicating WHS policies and procedures

13.1 Communication strategies

Officers, HR, and health and safety representatives (HSR), communicate about WHS with the organisation and its workers in a variety of ways, including:

- formal meetings;

- newsletters;

- WHS Hazard Alerts, which raise the awareness of specific or topical hazards and risks;

- performance reporting; and

- other communications (e.g. intranet, email, signage, etc.).

These agreed approaches are established to provide workers with information about:

- WHS policy and any changes to it;

- potential hazards and risks;

- objectives, targets, and improvement plans;

- WHS performance (e.g. waste reduction, incident statistics);

- legal compliance requirements;

- responsibilities for corrective and/or preventive actions taken in response to non-conformances;

- emergency response requirements; and

- sources for further information, such as contact person(s) or intranet sites.

SARA also communicates with external parties in its efforts to manage WHS effectively, through informal discussions, involvement in community events, websites, press releases, advertisements, and periodic newsletters.

Such communication includes, but is not limited to:

- enquiries and complaints;

- communications with regulatory authorities;

- communications with the media;

- advocacy roles; and

- other communications (e.g. annual reports, newsletters, websites).

Records must be kept for a minimum of five (5) years, including (but not limited to):

- copies of internal WHS communications;

- meeting minutes;

- newsletters; and

- WHS performance reports.

13.2 Training

SARA has a responsibility to provide health, safety and injury management training, information and guidance to all of its workers, particularly those who perform specific WHS functions, such as First Aid Officers, Fire Wardens, Return to Work Co-coordinators, and Health & Safety Committee Members/Representatives.

To achieve this, managers and supervisors should:

- identify training needs in their area of responsibility;

- participate in training programs and encourage workers to attend;

- record and report locally about training and forward records to HR; and

- ensure compliance with policy and procedures, including the communication of safe systems of work, procedures, and hazards to workers.

The planning and delivery of training for workers is coordinated and overseen by SARA, which is inclusive of induction training provided for new employers in the form of a video tutorial and further supporting documents online.

SARA should also conduct or coordinate:

- induction training for new workers so that they are familiar with the workplace and any specific procedures in their immediate work area;

- site specific induction training; and

- task specific training, including for incident investigations.

13.3 Consultation

The best way to ensure a safe and healthy workplace is for officers and workers to work together to identify and solve work health and safety problems.
The Department is required by legislation to consult with workers who work for the business on matters relating to work health and safety.

It achieves this by organising regular consultative processes with workers and their representatives and through the use of appropriate work health and safety management systems.

Consultation should be carried out with workers in every business area in order to remain compliant with applicable regulatory requirements.

Consultation is required when:

1. identifying hazards and assessing risks to health and safety;

2. making decisions about ways to eliminate or minimise those risks;

3. making decisions about the adequacy of facilities for the welfare of workers;

4.   proposing changes that may affect the health or safety of workers;

5.   developing procedures; and

6.   negotiations have occurred to establish work groups, elect health and safety representatives, or form health and safety committees.

Records covering the outcomes of any discussions should be maintained where practical in order to demonstrate compliance and kept for a minimum of five (5) years.

13.4 Issues management

SARA has measures in place to resolve issues that are raised with officers.
These are outlined in the [Grievance Management policy](#).
Issues that cannot be resolved in consultation with an immediate supervisor will be escalated by reporting to the following people/groups in the order below:

- a health and safety representative (HSR);

- Human Resources (HR) (consultation);

- the WHS Committee;

- an external party/expert (consultation); and finally

- SafeWork NSW (consultation).

All parties should make reasonable efforts to achieve a timely, final and effective resolution of the issue in accordance with this procedure.

Appendix 1: Related legislation, policies and procedures

SARA endeavours to comply with all relevant legislation requirements, including:

- [Work Health Safety Act 2011](#) (the WHS Act); and

- [Work Health Safety Regulations 2011](#) (the WHS Regulations).

Related SARA Policies, Procedures, Directives and Guidelines:

Internal:

- Guidelines for Working With Distressing Material

- [Footwear Directive](#)

- [Issue Resolution and Grievance Management](#)

- [Prevention and Management of Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace](#)