



Mining & Quarrying
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH &
SAFETY COMMITTEE

Work Health and Safety Policies Guide

Promoting Work Health and Safety in the Workplace

The South Australian Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Promoting Work Health and Safety in the Workplace

This workplace industry safety resource is developed and fully funded by the Mining and Quarrying Occupational Health and Safety Committee (MAQOHSC).

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Work Health and Safety Policies Guide

AIM

This Guidance Material has been developed to provide you with an understanding of the requirements to develop and implement a Work Health and Safety Policy.

1. What is a Work Health and Safety Policy?

The Gage dictionary defines "Policy" as "a plan of action; a course or method of action that has been deliberately chosen and that guides or influences future decisions". By stating principles and rules, a Work Health and Safety Policy guides actions. A policy statement indicates the degree of an organisations commitment to health and safety.

Put simply, a Work Health and Safety Policy is a statement of commitment to health and safety at the workplace.

2. Why should I have a Work Health and Safety Policy?

It is a legislative requirement for all mines and quarries to have a documented Safety Management System. A Work Health and Safety Policy is the foundation of a Safety Management System.

Regulation 622 (1a) of the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* (SA) states:

1) The Safety Management System document for a mine must set out the following:

- a) the mine operator's health and safety policy, including broad aims in relation to the safe operation of the mine.**

Aside from the legislative requirement, a Work Health and Safety Policy developed in consultation with workers can be a valuable asset to the organisation, as it reflects the culture and goals of everyone who works there.

3. Developing a Work Health and Safety Policy

To develop a useful and effective Work Health and Safety Policy, it is essential that there is consultation and discussion with workers. Just like all the other things related to health and safety, it is up to you how effective and useful the policy will be.

In addition, there is a legislative requirement for the Mine Operator to consult with workers.

Regulation 675R (a) of the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* (SA) states:

For the purposes of section 49(f) of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA), the mine operator of a mine must consult with workers at the mine in relation to the following:

(a) the development, implementation and review of the Safety Management System for the mine.

A poorly developed policy can alienate workers, whereas one developed in consultation with workers, can help improve the overall commitment to making the workplace safe.

Sit down and discuss with your workers or their representative, why you have a Work Health and Safety Policy and what it includes (it is not just to meet the letter of the law!). Then give the employees some examples (such as the MAQOHSC Work Health and Safety Policy Template) and ask what they think needs to be included in the Work Health and Safety Policy for the workplace.

By using some of their words in the final document they will have some ownership, and this will help everyone work together as a team to develop and maintain a healthy and safe place to work in.

Remember, a Work Health and Safety Policy developed by management without workers input or ownership, may be seen as “just another piece of paper” by the people who really need to be involved.

4. What should be included in a Work Health and Safety Policy?

A Work Health and Safety Policy should clearly state the organisations Work Health and Safety objectives and demonstrate a commitment to improving Work Health and Safety Performance.

The Work Health and Safety Policy should:

- Be appropriate to the nature and scale of the organisations risks;
- Include a brief overview of the organisations location and operations;
- Include a commitment to comply with relevant Work Health and Safety legislation and with other requirements placed upon the organisation, such as Approved Programs for Environment Protection and Rehabilitation (PEPR) or Mining and Rehabilitation Programs (MARP);
- Include a commitment to establish measurable objectives and targets to ensure continued Work Health and Safety improvement;
- Detail the responsibilities of Officers, Management, Supervisors, Workers and others in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace;
- State the importance of consultation and co-operation between management and workers for all Work Health and Safety matters;
- Be dated with date of implementation and date of scheduled review; and
- Be signed by the most senior person within the organisation. e.g. Chief Executive Officer.

The Work Health and Safety Policy must be:

- Documented, implemented, maintained and communicated to all workers;
- Be available to interested parties; and
- Be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

5. How do I communicate the Work Health and Safety Policy?

Once completed, the Work Health and Safety Policy needs to be made available to everyone on site, including contractors and visitors, so that they know there is a commitment to a safe and healthy workplace.

Part of a successful policy is ensuring that all workers are aware of it. If the workplaces plan for implementing the policy is a good one, employees will be reminded in their day-to-day activities, in safety meetings, and during the induction and training process.

A responsibility to adhere to the Work Health and Safety Policy may be part of the workers' position descriptions. Each worker, on commencing employment, may be given a copy of the policy and informed that it is a condition of employment to adhere to the policy.

The workplace can reinforce its commitment to the Work Health and Safety Policy by posting signs at the workplace, by writing articles about the policy in company newsletters, by referring to it in job manuals and so forth.

Each workplace will undoubtedly have its own way of keeping its workers informed. The important thing is to have a plan and to follow through on it.

Ways in which the Work Health and Safety Policy and responsibilities can be communicated include:

- Induction training;
- Policy and procedure manuals;
- Health and Safety Committees;
- Position descriptions;
- Notice board notices and reminders;
- Safety talks and meetings;
- Visitor inductions; and
- Ensuring the Work Health and Safety Policy is prominently displayed in a public area.

6. Reviewing the Work Health and Safety Policy

As stated in section 4, the Work Health and Safety Policy must be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

In addition, Regulation 625 of the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012* (SA), states:

- 1) *The mine operator of a mine must ensure that the Safety Management System for the mine is reviewed at least once every 3 years and as necessary revised to ensure it remains effective.***

2) In addition, if a risk control measure is revised under Regulation 38 or 618, the mine operator must ensure that the Safety Management System for the mine is reviewed and as necessary revised in relation to all aspects of risk control addressed by the revised control measure.

As the Work Health and Safety Policy is an integral part of the Safety Management System, Regulation 625 applies. Whilst the Regulation states that the Work Health and Safety Policy must be reviewed at least once every three years, this is a minimum requirement and it is a recommendation that the Work Health and Safety Policy be review on a more frequent basis.

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

MAQOHSC Work Health and Safety Specialists are available to provide further advice and assistance on all Work Health and Safety matters.

MAQOHSC Work Health and Safety Specialists are able to be contacted via our website at www.maqohsc.sa.gov.au or email maqohsc@sa.gov.au.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Work Health and Safety Legislation, Codes of Practice, fact sheets, Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) information and guides can be found at the following websites:

SafeWork SA – www.safework.sa.gov.au or call 1300 365 255

Safe Work Australia – www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au or call 1300 551 832

REFERENCES

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)

Work Health and Safety Management Systems in Mining, Draft Code of Practice (Safe Work Australia)

AS/NZS 4804:2001 - Occupational health and Safety Management Systems - General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques

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