

USING SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs) & EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE RECORDS (EMRs) IN YOUR SCHOOL

This fact sheet focuses on the implementation and ongoing use of **Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs)** and **Equipment Maintenance Records (EMRs)** in the Industrial Technology & Design and Agricultural Studies curriculum areas. The information provided is also relevant to Schools Officers (Grounds & Facilities) or other areas within the school where equipment is used. Procedures and processes have already been implemented for cleaning equipment. Enquires related to the use and maintenance of school cleaning equipment should be directed to your School Cleaning Advisor (SCA).

Why do schools need SOPs & EMRs for each piece of equipment?

The *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* outlines obligations to manage risks. These obligations extend to managing risks associated with equipment use in schools. The *Plant Code of Practice 2005* (part of the framework of health and safety legislation), provides more detailed information on how to address specific issues related to the use of equipment. Within the Code, aspects of record keeping are outlined which require documents such as SOPs and EMRs to be maintained and retained for the life of the equipment. SOPs and EMRs are important documents that are often requested by auditors and investigation officers in the event of a serious injury or incident involving the use of equipment.

Developing SOPs & EMRs

The development of SOP & EMR documents is a time consuming task that can often be placed on the 'to do list - when we have time'. A number of schools may have already been down this path and have completed this process. These generic documents are **not** intended as a replacement for well-established documents and processes that some schools may already be using. However they are intended to provide baseline information for schools to review current processes or assist in developing new procedures.

SOPs : safe operating procedures (see sample right) – these documents are provided in a word format. Select from the list at the following website:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/hazards/equip-resources.html>

EMRs : equipment maintenance reports (see samples below) – several pages are provided for each piece of equipment; a random and end of semester checklist and a maintenance record form. Available at the following website:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/hazards/equip-resources.html>



Random Equipment Checklist



End of Semester Checklist



Maintenance Record

Implementing your SOPs & EMRs.

- Access** a generic SOP or EMR (word document) at the website link provided above.
- Review** content of documents – there are benefits in using a number of staff in this discussion or process.
- Edit** documents as required - changes may be necessary to reflect local circumstances.
- Print** documents – SOPs should be laminated, then signed and dated with permanent pen to indicate that the information reflects your school's situation. EMRs should be kept in a secure place and accessed as needed.
- Induct** all relevant staff in the use of these documents and develop processes for the on-going instruction of staff eg included in staff handbook for new and casual staff.
- Carry-out** checks as scheduled on checklists and record any maintenance to equipment as soon as possible after maintenance work is completed.



Health & Safety Fact Sheet

Using your SOPs.

SOPs are useful documents that provide students and staff with a consistent and structured approach for the use of equipment. The format and content of the SOPs allow them to be utilised by staff as the initial 'introduction' to the use of a piece of equipment with students. This could also provide opportunity for the teacher to provide a demonstration of the correct operation of the equipment. How you practically use your SOPs will depend on your local circumstances and individual school preference. The format on the website is designed as a poster style.

Below are two suggested approaches for the use of the SOPs:

- I. **Poster format:** print and laminate the SOP's (signed and dated), display close to the equipment where it can be viewed readily by students and supervising staff (eg pinned/stuck onto the wall directly beside equipment – see sample right).
- II. **Hand-out:** make copies of the SOPs for the equipment students will be using during the year and provide them as class-sets or as an individual booklet for each student.



Using your EMRs.

Many schools may have already developed forms and procedures for managing equipment and machinery. As stated above, the EMRs provided should not be considered as a mandatory system but as a baseline of information for the establishment or review of your school system. The use of these documents also provides a standardised system that will benefit new, relocated and relieving staff throughout the state.

The timelines provided in the generic checklists could be altered to suit local circumstances at your school. It is important that visual checks be undertaken prior to the use of a piece of equipment. The two checklists provided **do not** replace the need for this visual check before every use of the equipment.

Reviewing your SOPs and EMRs.

Review the SOPs at regular intervals (eg yearly) or when circumstances involving that piece of equipment changes. When needed, wording should be modified to reflect any changed circumstances. After this review process SOPs should be re-signed and dated to indicate a review process has occurred. This will maintain your documents as active and useful resources in your school.

It is also important to review EMRs to ensure that checks are carried-out as per the scheduled timeframes and that maintenance work is documented. The ability to show that SOPs and EMRs are maintained and reviewed regularly provide evidence of your compliance with obligations under Workplace Health and Safety legislation.

School contributions of SOPs & EMRs.

The list of SOPs and EMRs will not necessarily include every piece of equipment that your school maybe using. It is expected that additional SOPs and EMRs will be added to this list on an on-going basis. Schools are encouraged to contribute draft SOPs and EMRs (using the format of the SOPs and EMRs provided) to the Organisational Health Unit in Central Office. Any contributions will be reviewed and added to the current documents as soon as possible. Sharing documents is a positive way to provide consistent and relevant resources to schools and also shares the workload across the state.

If you would like to contribute any draft SOPs or EMRs please contact Phil Cooper by email at: philip.cooper@deta.qld.gov.au

More Information.

Creating Healthier Workplaces – Equipment and Machinery Resources :
<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/hazards/equip-resources.html>

Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 - Plant Code of Practice 2005 :
<http://www.dir.qld.gov.au/workplace/law/codes/plant/index.htm>

South Australian Department of Education – Machinery Resources :
<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/ohsw/> (select '*Machine Guarding*' from left side menu)

Education Queensland – Safety Alerts (angle grinder, router, chainsaw) :
<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/alerts.html>

Contact the Organisational Health Unit – Health and Safety Team :
<http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html>