Safe operating procedures and equipment maintenance records for schools officers

Why do we need SOPs and EMRs for each piece of equipment?

The _Work Health and Safety Act 2011_ (Qld) outlines duties to manage risks. These duties extend to managing risks associated with equipment use in schools. The Managing risks of plant in the workplace Code of Practice 2021 (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 an incident involving the use of equipment.

Do I need to use these SOPs and EMRs?

It is not mandatory to use the SOPs and EMRs provided on the department's website. These are generic documents and not intended to replace well-established documents and processes that some schools may already be using. The SOPs and EMRs are designed to provide baseline information so local information and manufacturer's instructions can be added. They can also be used to review any existing resources or to assist in developing new documents.

Safe operating procedures (SOPs)

SOPs are provided in word format. Review for your local circumstances and use manufacturer's instructions for the particular piece of plant. Select from the list at the following website: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/equipment-machinery-resources

Review SOPs at regular intervals (e.g. yearly) or when circumstances involving a piece of equipment change. Amend text as required and, after the 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.

Equipment maintenance reports (EMRs)

Several pages are provided for each piece of equipment; a regular and end of semester checklist and a maintenance record form. EMRs are available at: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/equipment-machinery-resources

The timelines provided in the generic checklists should be amended to include any manufacturer's instructions regarding service and maintenance. It is important that visual checks be undertaken prior to the use of a piece of equipment. The checklists provided **do not** replace the need for this visual check before every use of the equipment.

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 provides evidence of your compliance with obligations under health and safety legislation.

Useful SOP, EMR and Plant & Equipment (P&ERA) documents

Equipment	Links
Angle grinder – portable	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-angle-grinder.DOCX
	P&ERA: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/pera-angle-grinders.DOCX
Brush cutter/line trimmer	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-brushcutter.DOCX
	EMR: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/emr-brushcutter.DOCX
Chainsaw (petrol)	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-chainsaw-petrol.DOCX
	EMR: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/emr-chainsaw-petrol.DOCX
Chipper/shredder	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-chipper-shredder.DOCX
Compressed gas cylinders	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-gas-cylinders.doc
Golf Buggy	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-golf-buggy.DOCX
Ladders	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/ladder-operating-procedure.pdf
Pedestal/bench grinder	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-grinder.DOCX
	EMR: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/emr-grinder.DOCX
	P&ERA: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/pera-grinder-pedestal.DOCX
Portable BBQ	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/portable-bbq-use.DOC
Power blower (petrol)	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-power-blower.DOCX
Ride-on mower	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-ride-on-mower.DOCX
	EMR: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/emr-ride-on-mower.DOCX
Slasher (tractor operated)	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-rotary-slasher.DOCX
Walk-behind mower	SOP: https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/sop-walk-behind-mower.DOCX

Implementing your SOPs and EMRs

1. **Access** the generic SOP or EMR (word document) at the website link provided above.

2. **Review** content of documents – there are benefits in using a number of staff in this discussion.

3. **Edit** documents as required – changes may be necessary to reflect local circumstances.

4. **Print** documents – SOPs can be signed, dated and laminated to demonstrate the information reflects your school's situation. EMRs should be kept in a secure place and accessed as needed.

5. **Inform** all relevant staff in the use of these documents and develop processes for the ongoing instruction of staff e.g. included in staff handbook for new and casual staff.

6. **Carry-out** checks as scheduled on checklists and record any maintenance to equipment as soon as possible after maintenance work is completed.

Further information

- Creating Healthier Workplaces website – Health and Safety
- DoE safety and hazard alerts (angle grinder, router, chainsaw)