

Safe operating procedures and equipment maintenance records for schools officers

This fact sheet highlights the importance for safe operating procedures (SOPs) and equipment maintenance records (EMRs) for staff working within the role of schools officer (grounds and facilities) or other areas within the school where equipment is used. Procedures and processes have already been implemented for cleaning equipment. Enquiries related to the use and maintenance of equipment should be directed to your Regional Health and Safety Consultant.

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 2013](#) (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.

Do I need to use these SOPs and EMRs?

The development of SOP and 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.

Safe operating procedures (SOPs)

These documents are provided in a word format. Select from the list at the following website:

<https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/equipment-machinery-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 are available at the following website: <https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/equipment-machinery-resources>

Useful SOP, EMR and Plant & Equipment (P&ERA) Documents for Schools Officers

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
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 or process.
3. **Edit** documents as required – changes may be necessary to reflect local circumstances.
4. **Print** documents – SOPs should be laminated, then signed and dated with permanent marker to indicate that 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.



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 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 (e.g. 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 provides evidence of your compliance with obligations under Workplace Health and Safety legislation.

Further information

- [Creating Healthier Workplaces website – Health and Safety](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Managing risks of plant in the workplace Code of practice 2013](#)
- [DoE safety and hazard alerts \(angle grinder, router, chainsaw\)](#)
- For more information, contact the [Organisational Health Unit – Health and Safety team](#).