

HRP14: Workplace Environment and Facilities Management

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

- (1) This Procedure aims to ensure Southern Cross University (SCU) management, employees, students, and others know the risks associated with workplace environment and facilities management in the workplace and relevant management strategies for the risk mitigation process.
- (2) All employees, students, and others must follow this Procedure.
- (3) This Procedure applies to all SCU Work Units and sites.

Section 2 - Definitions

Archibus.	Software system to request maintenance and repairs to the university infrastructure and facilities.
Assistance.	Support and aid provided to employees.
Emergency Services.	Public organisations and agencies that provide immediate aid and support during emergencies and disasters.
Hazard.	A situation or thing that has the potential to harm a person. Hazards at work may include noisy machinery, a moving forklift, chemicals, electricity, working at heights, a repetitive job, bullying and violence at the workplace.
Remote.	Remote or isolated work is work that is isolated from the assistance of other people because of the location, time or nature of the work being done, Assistance from other people includes rescue, medical assistance and emergency services.
Risk.	The possibility harm (death, injury or illness) might occur when exposed to a hazard.
RiskWare.	Electronic database for the reporting of all incidents and near misses. RiskWare includes the investigation of incidents against systemic causes, the assignment of corrective actions, and regulatory and performance reporting.

Section 3 - General Principles

Risk Management Process

- (4) SCU will follow the risk management process outlined in [WHSMPO2: Hazard Identification, Risk and Opportunity Management Procedure](#). This process includes:
- Hazard identification.
 - Risk assessment.
 - Risk Control.
 - Review of control measures.

Consultation

(5) Consultation is critical for effective risk management and is outlined in [WHSMP07: Consultation, Communication and Participation](#).

Part A - Hazard Identification

SCU Facilities

(6) The SCU facilities and working environment is designed to prompt safe, healthy and ergonomic practices. They should be clean, safe, accessible and in good working order.

(7) The usage of SCU workplaces and facilities is scheduled and is subject to facility use, operating hours, and end-user requirements.

Remote and Isolated Work - Definition

(8) Remote or isolated work means work that is isolated from the assistance of other people because of location, time, or the nature of the work.

Part B - Risk Assessment

Air Quality Exposure Assessment

(9) Employees must not be exposed to a substance or mixture e.g. hazardous chemical in an airborne concentration that exceeds exposure standards.

(10) Where there is a risk of airborne contaminants exceeding the workplace exposure levels, monitoring must be conducted, and results recorded and kept for 30 years.

Noise Risk Assessment

(11) A noise risk assessment should be carried out when employees and others may be exposed to excessive noise levels. Contact the SCU WHS team for assistance with this assessment.

(12) The aim of a noise risk assessment is to:

- a. Identify whether the noise under investigation is excessive or not.
- b. Establish the noise characteristics and the daily duration of exposure.
- c. Identify all persons likely to be exposed to excessive noise.
- d. Identify all items of plant and equipment likely to cause excessive noise.
- e. Obtain information on work practices and associated noise sources.
- f. Identify what higher order controls can be put in place to reduce noise level exposure.
- g. Check the effectiveness of measures taken to reduce noise level exposure.
- h. Choose appropriate personal hearing protectors for those employees and other persons exposed to risks from excessive noise.
- i. Define designated hearing protection areas at work.

(13) Noise assessments should be repeated at least every five years or whenever there is a change of plant, work processes, building structure or duration of work arrangements.

(14) Noise assessment records should be kept at the workplace and made available for inspection by employees.

Remote and isolated work - assessing the risks

(15) Risks that arise from remote and/or isolated work must be assessed and include 'safe systems of work' including means of communication.

(16) All employees must have access to assistance whilst at work, which includes rescue, medical, and access to emergency services.

Part C - Risk Control

Housekeeping

(17) In maintaining a safe work environment, protocols must be adhered to:

- a. Spills on floors should be cleaned up immediately.
- b. If spills are unable to be immediately addressed, then the floor area shall be flagged or cordoned off using appropriate bollards/barricades or signage until the spill is managed, walkways should be kept clear of obstructions, emergency exits and access to emergency equipment e.g. fire extinguishers and hose reels etc. shall be kept clear at all times.
- c. All work materials and equipment are stored neatly to prevent damage.
- d. Waste regularly removed and appropriately disposed of. Waste to appropriately separated to ensure no contamination and pests.
- e. Tools and equipment, extension leads, etc., shall be used and stored appropriately during work to eliminate trip hazards.
- f. Continuous sightings or evidence of pests and vermin should be reported to Property Services via Archibus.

Work Areas - lay out and space

(18) The layout of work areas should be designed to provide sufficient clear space between furniture, fixtures, and fittings so that employees can move about freely without the risk of strain or injury and evacuate quickly in case of an emergency.

(19) In determining how much space is needed, the following should be considered:

- a. The physical actions needed to perform the task.
- b. The need to move around while working.
- c. Whether the task is to be performed from a sitting or standing position.
- d. Access to workstations.
- e. The equipment to be handled and the personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be worn to perform the work. This should also take into account the length of time the space is used, whether there are any hazardous substances used in the space and the amount of ventilation.

Workstations - ergonomics

(20) Workstations should be designed so that employees can carry out their work in a comfortable, upright position with shoulders relaxed and upper arms close to the body. For tasks conducted in a seated position, seating should:

- a. Provide good body support.
- b. Provide foot support, preferably with both feet flat on the floor, otherwise a footrest should be provided.
- c. Allows space for leg clearance and freedom of movement.
- d. Minimise eye strain and take the location of bright lighting into account.

Floors and other surfaces

(21) Floors must be inspected regularly and maintained to eliminate or minimise slip and trip hazards. Common hazards include trailing cables, uneven edges, broken surfaces, gratings or covers, loose mats or carpet tiles. Floor surfaces should be suitable to the work area. Floor surfaces should have enough grip to prevent slipping, especially in areas that may become wet or contaminated, e.g. mould. The floor should be strong enough to support loads placed on them.

Lighting - provision and controls

(22) Sufficient lighting must be provided, whether it is from a natural or artificial source, to allow safe movement around the workplace and to allow employees to perform their jobs without having to adopt awkward postures or strain their eyes to see.

(23) When considering the type and level of lighting needed in the workplace, the following factors should be taken into account:

- a. The nature of the work activity.
- b. The nature of hazards and risks in the workplace.
- c. The work environment.
- d. The level of natural light, including transitions or changes throughout the day.
- e. Current level of artificial lighting.
- f. Glare.
- g. Contrast.
- h. Reflections.

(24) Measures to prevent low or excessive levels of lighting, glare, or reflections include:

- a. Providing extra lighting, such as a lamp on a movable arm.
- b. Changing the position of existing lights.
- c. Changing the location of the workstation.
- d. Increasing or decreasing the number of lights.
- e. Changing the type of lighting used for example, from white light to blue light.
- f. Changing the diffusers or reflectors on existing lights.
- g. Using screens, visors, shields, hoods, curtains, blinds or external louvres to reduce reflections, shadows and glare.

Air Quality - ventilation controls

(25) Workplaces are to be ventilated, which includes:

- a. Workplaces should be adequately ventilated with fresh, clean air drawn from outside and uncontaminated by discharge from flues or other outlets and be circulated through the workplace.
- b. Inside buildings may have natural ventilation, mechanical ventilation, or air-conditioning.
- c. Air conditioning and other ventilation systems should be regularly serviced and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. For locations where high-risk chemicals are being used, fume cupboards will be installed to provide a safe working environment.

(26) Air quality should provide a comfortable environment in relation to air temperature, air movement, and prevent the excessive accumulation of odours. And further, reduce the levels of respiratory by-products, especially carbon

dioxide, and other indoor contaminants that may arise from work activities.

Facilities Drinking Water

(27) An adequate supply of clean drinking water must be provided free of charge.

(28) Water should be positioned where it can be easily accessed, close to where hot or strenuous work is being undertaken, separate from toilet or washing facilities and at or below 24 degrees Celsius. Water must also be supplied in a hygienic manner so that employees do not drink directly from a shared container, e.g. drinking fountain, disposable or washable containers, for mobile or remote employees either access to public drinking water, bottled water, or containers.

Facilities Toilets

(29) Access to clean toilets must be provided for all employees. Generally, separate toilets should be provided in workplaces where both male and female employees are employed. The number and specification of toilets for workplaces within buildings is set out in the National Construction Code of Australia. Toilets must be accessible for all employees, including employees with a disability.

Facilities - Hand washing

(30) Hand washing facilities must be provided to enable employees to maintain good standards of personal hygiene. For mobile or remote work-employees should have alternative hand hygiene facilities.

(31) Hand washing facilities should:

- a. Be accessible at all times to work areas, eating areas and the toilets.
- b. Be separate from troughs or sinks used in connection with the work process.
- c. Contain both hot and cold water taps or temperature mixers.
- d. Be protected from the weather.
- e. Be supplied with non-irritating soap, preferably from a soap dispenser.
- f. Contain hygienic hand drying facilities, such as automatic air dryers or paper towels.

(32) Where a business engages in activities such as food preparation or health care, there are also duties under health legislation in relation to hand washing facilities.

Facilities - Dining

(33) Employees should be provided with access to hygienic dining facilities for eating their meals and for preparing and storing food. A separate dining room should be provided if 10 or more employees usually eat at the workplace at the same time.

(34) Dining facilities should be supplied with:

- a. Adequate numbers of tables and seats to accommodate each employee likely to use the dining room at one time.
- b. A sink with hot and cold water, washing utensils and detergent.
- c. An appliance for boiling water.
- d. Food warming appliances.
- e. Clean storage, including a refrigerator.
- f. Vermin-proof rubbish bins, that should be emptied daily.

Facilities Change Rooms

(35) If it is a requirement for employees to change in and out of clothing due to the nature of their work, access to private changing areas with secure storage for personnel belongings should be provided. The door should also be capable of being locked.

Facilities Personal storage

(36) Where reasonably practicable accessible and secure storage should be provided at the workplace for personal items belonging to the employee. The storage should be separate from that provided for personal protective equipment in cases where contamination is possible.

Facilities - Showers and decontamination

(37) Where dirty, hot or hazardous work is undertaken, showering facilities should be provided. Showers should have:

- a. A floor area of not less than 1.8 m².
- b. A slip resistant surface that is capable of being sanitised.
- c. Partitions between each shower that are at least 1650mm high and no more than 300mm above the floor.
- d. An adjacent dressing area for each shower containing a seat and hooks.
- e. A lockable door enclosing the shower and dressing cubicle.

(38) Where the substances or materials handled are contaminants, decontamination facilities, e.g. safety showers, are to be available.

Outdoor work

(39) Outdoor employees should have access to shelter to eat meals and take breaks and to protect themselves in adverse weather conditions.

(40) They should be provided with protection against ultraviolet exposure, e.g. reorganising outdoor work so that employees carry out alternative tasks or work in shade when the sun is most intense (10.00 am – 2.00 pm and 11 am-3 pm during daylight saving time.) and be provided with personal protective clothing as per HRP15: Personal Protective Equipment .

Noise - audiometric testing (control/verification)

(41) Audiometric testing is required for employees who are frequently required to use PPE to protect them from the risk of hearing loss associated with noise that exceeds the exposure standard.

Remote and isolated work - controls and references

(42) (Remote or isolated work includes fieldwork. Fieldwork is any work, study or research authorised by SCU and undertaken by employees, students, contractors, visitors or other approved participants at a location off campus and outside of urban areas.

(43) Refer to [HRP20: Lone and Isolated Work](#) and the SCU Critical Risk Framework.

Part D - Review of Control Measures

Workplace inspections (verification & continuous improvement)

(43) A Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) inspection is designed to identify and eliminate or control workplace hazards. Inspections carried out on a regular basis are the key to preventing accidents and injury in work areas.

Inspections of high-risk work areas such as laboratories, workshops, plant rooms, chemical storage facilities, and art studios are to be carried out every 3 months. Low risk areas such as lecture theatres, offices, kitchens, and toilet facilities are to be carried out annually.

(44) What to consider when conducting a workplace inspection:

- a. The work premises.
- b. Work practices and work systems.
- c. Hazardous substances, e.g. handling, storage, transport and disposal.
- d. Manual handling.
- e. Layout and design of the workplace, e.g. lighting and workstation design.
- f. Biological organisms, products or substances.
- g. Physical environment including electrical, fire/explosion, slipping and tripping, contact with moving objects, exposure to noise, heat, cold, vibration or radiation hazards.

(45) Safety Support Officers should record any potential hazards on the checklist and the corrective actions required in RiskWare. Any hazards identified must be eliminated or controlled in accordance with WHSMP02: Hazard Identification, Risk and Opportunity Management Procedure.

Section 4 - Roles and Responsibilities

(46) (59) Refer to [WHSMP13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement](#).

Section 5 - Records of Documentation

(47) All relevant documentation will be recorded and kept in accordance with WHS Legislation and other legislative obligations, including:

- a. Workplace Inspections Checklists (WIC).
- b. Hazard identification forms utilised to support the WIC process.
- c. Risk assessments undertaken as a result of the WIC.
- d. Training evidence/licences.

Section 6 - Revision and approval history

(48) This procedure will be reviewed as per nominated review dates or because of other events, such as:

- a. Internal and external audit outcomes.
- b. Legislative changes.
- c. Outcomes from management reviews.
- d. Incidents.

Section 7 - References

Work Health and Safety Act (in the applicable jurisdiction that SCU operates)

Work Health and Safety Regulation (in the applicable jurisdiction that SCU operates)

Section 8 - Related Documents

[WHSMP15: Audit and Assurance](#)

[WHSMP02: Hazard Identification, Risk and Opportunity Management](#)

[WHSMP13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement](#)

[HRP11: Hazardous Chemical Management](#)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	29th October 2025
Review Date	29th October 2028
Approval Authority	Vice President (People and Culture)
Approval Date	29th October 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Kim Franks Vice President (People and Culture)
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