

HRP05: Physical Safety and Security

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this Procedure is to ensure Southern Cross University (SCU) management, employees, students and others are aware of the risks associated with physical safety and security in the workplace and relevant management strategies and to provide advice on 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

CCTV	Close circuit television.
Competent Person	A person who has acquired through training, qualification, or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.
CPTED	Crime prevention through environmental design.
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.
Reasonably Practical	Reasonably practicable means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, considering and weighing up all relevant matters, including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring. 2. The degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk. 3. What the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk. 4. The availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk. 5. After assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.
Risk	The possibility of harm (death, injury, or illness) might occur when exposed to a hazard.
RiskWare	Electronic database for reporting all incidents and near misses. RiskWare includes the investigation of incidents against systemic causes, the assignment of corrective actions, and regulatory and performance reporting.
Workplace	Any place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking includes where an employee goes or is likely to be while at work. This may include offices, factories, shops, construction sites, vehicles, ships, aircraft, or other mobile structures on land or water.
Work-related violence	Work-related violence is any incident where a person is abused, threatened, or assaulted at work.

Section 3 - General Principles

Background

(4) Aggression and violence in the workplace form part of SCU's risk profile in relation to physical safety and security. Acts of aggression and violence may be a by-product of interactions with SCU staff or services (e.g., frustration at administrative delays) or intentional and planned acts that threaten staff, student, and/or visitor safety and security (e.g., presence of an armed offender). Although safety and security overlap in many ways, they are distinct domains of managing risk and may require different strategies to eliminate or successfully reduce the risks involved so far as is reasonably practicable.

(5) Physical safety and security may also involve acts of sexual harassment or assault. For example, inappropriate touching, hugging or kissing, actual or attempted rape or sexual assault, and insults, taunts, or unwelcome and inappropriate jokes all represent a risk to physical safety and security at SCU.

(6) An important consideration is the legal implications of workplace violence and aggression; sexual harassment or assault go beyond WHS. Such incidents must be reviewed to identify whether the involvement of police or other law enforcement agencies is warranted.

Consultation

(7) SCU acknowledges that all employees and students are entitled to a physically safe and secure work environment. Consultation will occur with employees at phases of a risk assessment to identify and implement controls to support the reduction of work-related violence.

Information, Instruction, and Training

(8) SCU will ensure that the comprehensive risk assessment accurately demonstrates a risk mitigation-based approach to providing the physical safety of all staff.

(9) Where identified, all employees will undergo training tailored to prevention, early intervention, and de-escalation principles.

(10) De-escalation training is an administrative control, so it must be used in conjunction with other higher-order controls such as physical screens or barriers between staff and customers (where appropriate) or virtual or phone-based communication for challenging conversations.

(11) Effective de-escalation requires a holistic approach that covers physical violence and aggression. Such training should include, as a minimum,:

- a. The types and causes of workplace violence, aggression, and other safety and security events.
- b. The potential triggers or situations in which such safety issues are more likely.
- c. Measures to prevent triggers from occurring in the first place.
- d. Laws and regulations that cover physical safety and security.
- e. How can incidents be reported after the event, and what should be expected from SCU?
- f. Support services are available to staff who have experienced physical safety or security events.

(12) When higher-level interventions are required, a graduated response will apply. All security staff must have completed appropriate training and a security operations license.

Risk Assessment

(13) Regular risk assessments are conducted to identify potential hazards and risks across all areas of the University as per WHSMP02: Hazard Identification, Risk and Opportunity Management Procedure.

(14) Risks are prioritised based on severity and the likelihood of occurrence, with mitigation strategies and action plans developed accordingly. These assessments will be developed in consultation with affected employees. A physical safety and security risk assessment is required to identify high-risk exposure points and controls. When assessing the risk of work-related violence, the following reports and analysis shall be considered:

- a. Incident reports, hazard reports, and incidents involving employees and others.
- b. Workers' compensation claims.
- c. Security activity and reports.
- d. Community violence profile from the relevant state Police Service, including the rate of callouts.
- e. Audit and assurance data.
- f. Employee consultation.

(15) Workplace inspections assist in identifying potential contributing risk factors, including:

- a. Environmental design factors.
- b. Working in isolation, either remotely in the community or within a SCU facility.
- c. Work procedures and practices involving tenant relationships.
- d. Protection strategies when violence occurs or seems imminent.
- e. Employee and supervisor information, training, awareness, post-incident response, record keeping, and evaluation.
- f. Current controls in place.

(16) Refer to HRP14: Workplace Environment and Facilities Procedure for the Workplace Inspection Checklist

Managing the Risk of Physical Safety and Security Events

(17) Where workers are deemed likely (through risk assessment) to experience workplace violence and aggression, SCU will adopt a systematic risk management approach by implementing appropriate control measures. These control measures will act on two pathways: preventative (i.e., eliminating or reducing the risk of exposure to physical safety and security hazards) and mitigative (i.e., reducing the severity of the exposure to physical safety and security hazards).

(18) Control measures should follow the hierarchy of controls, prioritising higher-order measures such as elimination, isolation, substitution, engineering, and addressing any residual risk through administrative and protective equipment.

Risk controls

Hierarchy of Controls Level	Example Preventative Controls.	Example Mitigative Controls
Elimination	Refusing to serve or interact with customers or students who display physical violence.	N/A
Substitution	Transfer the customer or student to an area with additional security or support. Ensure a two-up buddy system in responding to threats of physical violence.	
Isolation	Engage with challenging conversations over the phone or virtual calls.	

Engineering	To warn students or customers about potential aggression or violence, provide proactive case notes for students or customers.	
Administration	Provide de-escalation training.	Provide training in emergency response.
Protective equipment		Provide a personal duress device.

Incident Reporting and Response

(19) If an employee is affected by a violent or aggressive act, this will be reported to the Supervisor and entered into RiskWare as per WHSMP17: Incident Management, Reporting and Investigation Procedure. SCU will provide immediate and ongoing support for employees affected by workplace violence, including counselling and debriefing sessions.

(20) Consideration must be made to whether the incident warrants investigation by external law enforcement agencies, such as if it is reasonably suspected that a crime has occurred.

Monitoring and Review

(21) SCU will regularly monitor and review all control measures relating to this procedure to ensure their effectiveness as per [WHSMP15: Audit and Assurance](#).

Campus and Work Unit Security

(22) A dedicated security team is responsible for patrolling the premises, monitoring CCTV cameras, and responding to security incidents. Access control measures, including secure entry points and identification card systems, are implemented where necessary through risk assessment.

(23) There is an internal approval system covering control of access to SCU buildings. The system includes:

- a. measures to identify people approved to access the workplace (via a Head of Work Unit approval form)
- b. measures to prohibit unapproved people from entering the workplace and at certain times (specified via Work Unit)
- c. measures to communicate the access conditions/restrictions to people (via Gallagher)

High Risk Persons Database

(24) SCU maintains a high-risk persons database. The database contains all relevant information to identify the expected high-risk person and the location and potential risk to SCU employees. Property Services works with stakeholders across SCU to ensure the database is maintained and current.

Emergency Preparedness

(25) No one can predict when an emergency will occur. Emergencies may arise due to a fire, explosion, chemical spill, medical emergency, natural disaster, bomb threat, or violence. SCU has a pre-prepared plan to respond to an emergency before it happens and ensure that the people present will remain safe. Refer to the SCU Emergency and Crisis Management Plan (Lismore and Gold Coast, the Coffs Harbour Education Campus (CHEC) Emergency Management Plan and Procedures Reference Manual, National Marine Science Centre Emergency and Crisis Management Procedures and WHSMP05: First Aid, Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedure for further details and responsibilities of all employees.

(26) All areas identified as a high risk for security incidents and events must have continuity plans in place to respond to a failure of the security system.

Building Safety

(27) All buildings comply with relevant duress alarms, building codes, regulations, and standards for structural integrity, fire safety, and accessibility. Regular workplace inspections and building infrastructure maintenance, including electrical, plumbing, and fire, are conducted. Clear signage, diagrams, drills for emergency exits, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and other safety equipment are provided.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

(28) During a major refurbishment or new construction, SCU will assess all existing buildings to ensure the fundamentals of CPTED have been applied to create facilities that deter crime and enhance safety for all its occupants.

(29) The layout and design of buildings and outdoor spaces prioritise visibility, ensuring that areas are well-lit and free from blind spots where criminal or unwanted activity could occur unnoticed. Access control measures, such as secure entry points, are implemented to regulate movement and prevent unauthorised individuals from entering facilities.

(30) Landscaping and architectural elements promote natural surveillance, with clear sightlines and open-end spaces that discourage concealment. Additionally, SCU emphasises the importance of community engagement and ownership of space, encouraging employees, students, and visitors to actively participate in maintaining a safe and welcoming environment. By integrating CPTED principles into its planning and design processes, SCU aims to foster a sense of security and empowerment among its community, ultimately reducing crime risk.

Safety Management Through Work Design

(31) Safety management through work design is crucial for transforming the workplace environment at SCU to benefit its employees and others at SCU facilities. Through effective work design, SCU aims to enhance worker health and safety, improve job satisfaction and performance, and ultimately drive business success through higher worker productivity and innovation. This encompasses various systems and processes involved in the work, such as information technology, business management, products and services, supply chains, and human interactions.

(32) Ten principles support health and safety at work and business productivity. Adopting the 10 principles of good work design supports health and safety while boosting business productivity. Good work design is pivotal as it enhances health and well-being and ensures workers' highest level of protection.

- a. Principle 1: Good work design gives the highest level of protection so far as is reasonably practicable.
- b. Principle 2: Good work design enhances health and well-being.
- c. Principle 3: Good work design enhances business success and productivity.
- d. Principle 4: Good work design addresses physical, biomechanical, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics of work, together with the needs and capabilities of the people involved
- e. Principle 5: Good work design considers the business needs, context, and work environment.
- f. Principle 6: Good work design is applied along the supply chain and across the operational lifecycle.
- g. Principle 7: Engage decision-makers and leaders.
- h. Principle 8: Actively involve the people who do the work, including those in the supply chain and networks.
- i. Principle 9: Identify hazards, assess and control risks, and seek continuous improvement.
- j. Principle 10: Learn from experts, evidence, and experience.

Why good work design is important

(33) Good work design enhances health and well-being. Good work design enhances business success and productivity. Good work design gives the highest level of protection.

What to consider in good work design

(34) Good work design considers the business's needs, context, and environment. Good work design addresses the physical, biomechanical, cognitive, and psychosocial characteristics of work, together with the needs and capabilities of the people involved. Good work design is applied along the supply chain and operational lifestyle.

How to design good work

(35) Actively involve the people who do the work, including those in the supply chain and networks. Engage decision-makers and leaders. Identify hazards, assess and control risks, and seek continuous improvement. Learn from experts, evidence, and experience.

(36) Overall, good work design is a collaborative and consultative process where workers are actively involved in understanding the risks and difficulties they face in relation to physical safety and security. Then, workers are included in the work redesign, including trialling and testing new work processes and equipment. Measurement and evaluation of changes to risk and productivity are recommended to provide evidence of improvement.

(37) Examples of how to apply good work design to reduce the risk of physical safety and security hazards are shown below.

Work Design Element	Example Redesign Strategies.
Lack of social support from peers or leaders	Consider a two-up approach when staff must work alone, or there is a high likelihood of physical safety/security risks occurring.
Excessive information processing requirements or complexity	Consider how to upskill or train the worker to reduce the job's difficulty or split the job between other staff. Explore the use of technology to alleviate on-the-spot complex decision-making.
Inability to resolve customer or student problems/complaints due to low autonomy	Re-evaluate workers' delegations and decision-making authority to ensure that issues can be rectified locally if appropriate.
Highly specialised knowledge and/or skills that make it difficult to replace staff when sick or away	Rotate jobs across staff to build collective knowledge and skills.
High psychological demands (e.g., emotional labour or having to 'put on a smile' for staff and customers)	Ensure staff take regular breaks and have access to colleague and supervisor support to offset the demands of customer service roles.

Section 4 - Role and Responsibilities

(38) Refer to [WHS13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement](#).

Section 5 - Records of Documentation

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

- a. In-situ risk assessments. Workplace Inspections Checklists. Training evidence/licences

Section 6 - Revision and approval history

(40) 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)

Violence in the Workplace Guide NSW July 2023

Violence and Aggression Guide QLD October 2022

Preventing and responding to occupational violence QLD August 202

Section 8 - Related Documents

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

[WHSMP05: First Aid, Emergency Preparedness and Response Procedures](#)

[WHSMP13: Responsibility and Accountability Statement](#)

[WHSMP15: Audit and Assurance](#)

[WHSMP17: Incident Management, Reporting and Investigation](#)

SCU Emergency and Crisis Management Plan (Lismore and Gold Coast)

Coffs Harbour Education Campus (CHEC) Emergency Management Plan and Procedures Reference Manual

National Marine Science Centre Emergency and Crisis Management Procedures

Principles of Good Work Design: A work health and safety handbook. (Safe Work Australia)

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	9th December 2024
Review Date	9th December 2027
Approval Authority	Vice President (People and Culture)
Approval Date	9th December 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Kim Franks Vice President (People and Culture)
Head of Work Unit	Brendan Pearce Director, Workplace Relations
Enquiries Contact	Shaun Brown Manager, Workplace Health and Safety