



SWMS Customisation & Implementation Guide

As part of the process of implementing your SWMS, this guide will help walk you through the steps to customise your SWMS so that it is an appropriate fit for your business and its operations.

OVERVIEW

A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) is a document that sets out the high risk construction work activities to be carried out at a workplace, the hazards arising from these activities and the measures to be put in place to control the risks.

A SWMS must be site-specific and made available to workers, supervisors and any other persons at the workplace, so they can understand the hazards, risks and safety controls that must be used to keep both workers and others safe.

Managers, supervisors and workers should all be involved in developing a SWMS. Consulting workers is important so they understand the detail of the SWMS and what they are required to do to implement and maintain risk controls.

It is important for a SWMS to reflect the specific circumstances of the workplace in which it will operate, the relevant legislation and regulations, the work environment and the workers carrying out the work. Therefore it's important that you review and adapt where necessary the contents of the SWMS you have purchased, to ensure they are fit for the purpose you intend to use them for.

1. BUSINESS DETAILS & BRANDING

To edit and customise your SWMS, open the document using either MS Word or Google Docs.

1. Insert your business details (i.e. business name, ABN, contact details, etc),
2. Insert the project details (i.e. description of work activity, location, etc)
3. Insert relevant workers consulted on the development of the SWMS.
4. Insert persons details who is responsible for updating the SWMS – then sign & date.
5. Insert your business logo onto the top right hand corner of the document if desired (you will need to apply the logo to both the 1st and 2nd pages). If you don't have a logo please ignore.

2. IMPLEMENTING YOUR SWMS

It is important for a SWMS to reflect the specific circumstances of the workplace in which it will operate, the workplace where the high risk construction work is to be carried out, the work environment and the workers carrying out the work. A generic SWMS used at different workplaces may not meet the requirements of the work health and safety laws, unless it has first been reviewed to take into account the hazards and risks at the specific workplace and amended as necessary. We strongly recommend that you review the content of the SWMS to ensure it is fit for the purpose intended, and make any appropriate amendments to the document (this is why it is provided to you in a word document).

High risk construction work must be carried out in accordance with the SWMS. The person conducting a business or undertaking must put in place arrangements to ensure the SWMS is being complied with (i.e. workplace visits, etc). If work is not being carried out in accordance with the SWMS then it must stop immediately or as soon as it is safe to do so. In these cases the SWMS should be reviewed and if necessary revised to reflect the safest way to carry out the work that is reasonably practicable. Work must not resume until the work can be carried out in accordance with the SWMS. A person conducting a business or undertaking must also ensure a SWMS is reviewed and as necessary revised if the measures put in place to control risks to health and safety are revised.

3. PROVIDING INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTION

A person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure that all workers who will be involved in high risk construction work are provided with information and instruction so they:

- understand the hazards and the risks arising from the work;
- understand and implement the risk controls in a SWMS; and,
- know what to do if the work is not being conducted in accordance with the SWMS.
- For example, this information and instruction may be provided during general construction induction training, workplace specific or during a toolbox talk by principal contractor, contractor or subcontractor.

4. WHERE TO KEEP A SWMS

Ideally the SWMS should be kept at the workplace where the high risk construction work will be carried out, however if that is not possible then a SWMS should be kept at a location where it can be delivered to the workplace quickly. A SWMS can also be kept in electronic format.

The SWMS must be kept and be available for inspection until at least the high risk construction work is completed. Where a SWMS is revised, all versions should be kept.

If a notifiable incident occurs in relation to high risk construction work to which the SWMS relates, then the SWMS must be kept for at least two years from the occurrence of the notifiable incident. If the construction work at the workplace has ceased within that period then the person conducting a business or undertaking should keep the SWMS readily available for inspection.

5. REVIEWING A SWMS

A SWMS must be reviewed regularly to make sure it remains effective. A SWMS must be reviewed (and revised if necessary) if relevant control measures are revised.

The review process should be carried out in consultation with workers (including contractors and subcontractors) who may be affected by the operation of the SWMS and their health and safety representatives who represented that work group at the workplace.

When a SWMS has been revised, the person conducting a business or undertaking must ensure all:

- persons involved with the high risk construction work are advised that a revision has been made and how they can access the revised SWMS (for a construction project, the principal contractor should be given a copy of the revised SWMS);
- persons who will need to change a work procedure or system as a result of the review are advised of the changes in a way that will enable them to implement their duties consistently with the revised SWMS; and,
- workers that will be involved in the high risk construction work are provided with the relevant information and instruction that will assist them to understand and implement the revised SWMS.

***Disclaimer:** We cannot, and do not, give you legal or any other professional advice. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information we provide is comprehensive, accurate and clear, it may not cover your particular circumstances. Only you are aware of the purpose for which you intend to apply a product or service you order from us. For this reason we provided this to you on an "as is" basis, and it does not constitute legal or professional advice of any kind. If you do require personalised legal or professional advice we recommend that you consult a suitably qualified person.*

If you think you may have noticed any error or omission, please let us know as it is our policy to correct errors or omissions as soon as practically possible. Please contact us via the Everything OHS website.