

Health safety and wellbeing auditing guidelines - Workplace health and safety audit

1. Introduction / background

USC is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors. In fulfilling this commitment and the legislative requirement to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy workplace, USC has a duty to identify hazards and manage the risks associated with these hazards.

Regular workplace inspections or audits represent a systematic and effective mechanism for identifying workplace hazards and assessing risks and thereafter implementing control measures to eliminate or minimise these risks.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to ensure that USC provides and maintains a healthy and safe work and study environment through the:

- systematic and effective identification of workplace hazards
- assessment of the risks associated with the identified hazards
- implementing of control measures to eliminate or minimise risk
- monitoring these control measures to ensure effectiveness

3. Scope

This guideline applies to all USC work areas.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Cost Centre Managers

It is the responsibility of Cost Centre Managers to ensure the effective implementation of these guidelines in the areas under their responsibility or control, by:

- ensuring workplace audits are conducted annually and corrective actions are developed and implemented where practicable and monitored thereafter
- ensuring that adequate resources are available for the undertaking of the workplace audits and the implementation of corrective actions
- ensuring that, after implementation of corrective actions, any residual risks assessed as 'Medium' or higher are recorded on the work area risk register

4.2 Work area managers

The manager of a particular work area is responsible for the implementation of this guideline within their work area. They must:

- ensure that local procedures are developed in response to these guidelines
- ensure that workplace audits are conducted in their work area in accordance with these guidelines
- ensure that an appropriate audit team is available to conduct the audit
- ensure that they (or their delegated representative) participate in the analysis of audit results and development of an action plan
- assign responsibility for the implementation of controls and the expected completion date of control implementation
- ensure the implementation of controls in accordance with the action plan
- ensure the review of effectiveness of all implemented controls
- ensure that workers are consulted with respect to workplace hazards and their controls
- report any residual risks that are assessed as 'Medium' or higher to their Cost Centre Manager
- maintain records of workplace audits and their associated action plans and send copies of these completed documents to hsw@usc.edu.au

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Human Resources

4.3 HR HSW

The HR HSW team are responsible for:

- providing training and education for USC personnel who are to conduct workplace audits
- providing guidance and advice on hazards and control measures, as required

4.4 Audit team

It is the responsibility of the Audit team to:

- conduct workplace audits on an annual basis and as required (eg. substantial changes to work area design)
- report audit findings to the work area manager and appropriate personnel as required by local procedures
- assist work area manager and key responsible people to analyse findings and determine suitable controls and document these in the action plan

5. Procedure

The Health and Safety Audits for USC workplaces have been divided into two parts, both parts are to be completed annually and as required (eg following substantial changes to a work area). Ideally both parts should be conducted by more than one person.

The audit templates that accompany this guideline are designed for general work areas (including office spaces and most of the teaching and study areas). Some specialist areas, such as laboratories and workshops may have developed specialised audit templates. Specialised templates can be used in these areas, but must still comply with this guideline. Contact hsw@usc.edu.au for further information.

5.1 Undertaking the audit

5.1.1 Health and Safety Audit Part 1 – Hazard Checklist

Part 1 is designed to identify physical or tangible hazards and consists of a checklist that can be completed by a walk through/inspection and observation of the work area by the audit team.

Using the hazard checklist as a guide, the audit team should systematically inspect the work area and record their findings directly onto the checklist.

5.1.2 Health and Safety Audit Part 2 – Systems Audit

This document supports the hazard identification checklist, by seeking to establish that health and safety systems are integrated into the workplace. This is completed by:

- reviewing records, including: induction and training records, documented risk assessments and previous audits
- observing work practices
- randomly selecting a cross section of the workers in the area and briefly interviewing them

5.2 Audit findings

Once both parts of the audit are complete and hazards have been identified, they should be analysed and an action plan formulated. The “analysis” of audit findings involves using the principles of risk management as a guide for assessing the level of risk associated with each hazard, agreeing on priorities and determining appropriate controls and time frames for completion and review.

The people involved in this process should include, but do not have to be limited to:

- the audit team
- work area manager
- HR (HSW) Consultant if required

5.3 Developing an action plan

As discussed above, when priorities have been determined, an action plan must be formulated to ensure that appropriate controls are implemented within an acceptable time frame. When determining controls the following points should be considered:

- Hazards that are deemed to be high priority (usually hazards with a risk rating of 'Medium' or higher) should be actioned quickly using high order controls where practicable.
- Any potential negative effects of control implementation should be considered prior to the implementation of controls (eg wearing ear plugs to reduce noise levels may potentially prevent personnel hearing emergency alarms/warnings)
- Personal protective equipment should NEVER be used in isolation of other controls.
- Where there is a Code of Practice relating to a hazard, this must be consulted when determining controls.

- A delegated member of the audit team should consult with the Cost Centre Manager regarding the implementation of controls that require expenditure beyond their level of authority.
- When the team cannot decide or agree on appropriate controls, HR HSW should be consulted.
- Responsibility for actioning an item cannot be delegated to a person from another department without the liaison and consent of that person.
- Estimated completion dates should be realistic and achievable.
- Any remaining/residual risks (where risks are not able to be adequately mitigated), should be reported to the Cost Centre Manager for consideration, and entry into the risk register if the residual risk is 'Medium' or higher.

The action plan must incorporate an appropriate time to review the controls, to ensure that they have effectively reduced the level of risk. This date should be set at an appropriate time after the implementation of the controls.

If the controls are found to be ineffective, or to be creating other hazards, the implementation of further controls may be necessary. This process should be documented and the updated information recorded and copies sent to hsw@usc.edu.au.

5.4 Record keeping

Work areas are required to capture their health and safety audits in an approved records management system, in accordance with the University's Information and Records Management - Procedures. For more information about information and records management, visit MyUSC (staff-only service) or contact records@usc.edu.au

Work areas are required to provide HR HSW with copies of all completed audits.

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