



## Safe Work Method Statement

*a basic explanation*

### What is a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)?

A SWMS is an explanation of all steps that need to be completed on a job, all steps. From arriving on-site, unloading the vehicle, checking the workplace, carrying out the job, clearing the workplace, loading the vehicle and leaving site. Its purpose is to show that the people who are carrying out the work have thought through the whole process, assessed any risks involved and taken suitable measures to minimise the risk to themselves, other people and properties.

SWMS is also known as a Safe Operating Procedure or Job Safety Analysis.

### Who must complete a SWMS?

Anybody who:

- Build or constructs anything on-site
- Uses plant or machinery (forklift, boomlift, scissor lift, crane, tilt tray etc.)
- Manually handles weights over 25kg
- Requires welding, grinding or other 'hot work'
- Uses equipment that makes excessive noise (jackhammers, compressors etc.)
- Carries out work in a confined space
- Any job that requires dangerous substances or chemicals, in which case a MSDS (materials safety data sheet) must also be supplied.

### Who writes the SWMS?

Usually the work supervisor or contractor. However, it is important that this is done in consultation with those who actually carry out the job. This will give a more complete insight into the various steps involved in the job and the hazards that may be encountered while performing the job. This will also encourage ownership and commitment to the safe working methods by those doing the job.

A valid SWMS must be on the organisation's letterhead, showing the name and registered office address of the organisation. In addition, each SWMS must carry the signature of a senior management representative of the organisation and the date it was signed.

### At the very least SWMS must include:

- a description of the work to be undertaken,
- foreseeable hazards associated with the work
- the step by step sequence in doing the work
- the safety controls that will be used to minimise these hazards,
- all precautions to be taken to protect health and safety,
- identification of all health and safety law, standards or codes applicable to the work,

For major works, the following details need to be added:

- the names and qualifications of those who will supervise the work and inspect and approve work area, work methods, protective measures, plant, equipment and power tools, a description of what training is given to people doing the work,
- identification of plant and equipment needed on site to do the job eg ladders, scaffolds, electrical leads, welding machines etc.,
- details of the inspection and maintenance checks that will be, or have been, carried out on the equipment listed.

The WorkCover Authority's Guidelines for writing work method statements in plain English (1998) also sets out a SWMS form which is acceptable under current legislation. Major contractors should refer to this WorkCover guide for assistance in the production of SWMS.

# Safe Work Method Statement

Company name & details:	Statement prepared by: Position: Date:
Description of job:	Signature:
Work site:	Commencement date:

Critical steps in this job	Potential Hazards	Safety controls

Use as many pages as required to describe the complete job

## **Contractor staff / personnel details – All staff to sign after reading the statement**

Name	Position	Signature

### OH&S Officer use only

Date received		Event Name	
Approved by		Event date	
Signature		MSDS required / supplied	

# Safe Work Method Statement

<b>Company name &amp; details:</b>	Statement prepared by: Position: Date:
Description of job:	Signature:
Work site:	Commencement date:

Critical steps in this job	Potential Hazards	Safety controls
Loading & unloading of staging equipment.	Equipment may fall on persons if load is not correctly secured using straps and/or rope.	Experienced truck driver is to ensure that all loads are securely tied down.
Loading.	Potential for back injury if incorrect lifting techniques are used.	Apply safe lifting techniques (keep back straight and bend knees). Use forklifts where practicable.
Loading with forklift.	Equipment may fall and cause injury to persons working near by.	Only experienced and ticketed drivers are to operate forklifts.
Pushing trolleys or case from loading dock to where needed	Incorrect manual handling causes back problems Unable to control trolley or case if too heavy Trolley rolls over feet	Apply correct manual handling techniques when pushing or pulling trolleys or cases Ensure sufficient people to control the trolley or case Keep feet clear from wheels Wear steel cap boots if suitable
Assemble equipment on-site	Incorrect assembly may cause the equipment to collapse or malfunction	Follow manufacturer instructions and carry out checks.

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