

# Safe Work Method Statements

Matt McLean – Senior Advisor

# What is a SWMS

A SWMS is a safety planning tool that identifies the hazards and risks of High Risk Construction Work and documents the control measures necessary to manage those risks.

# Why do we need a SWMS

## Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012

### 299. Safe work method statement required for high risk construction work

A person conducting a business or undertaking that includes the carrying out of high risk construction work must, before high risk construction work commences, ensure that a safe work method statement for the proposed work

# Key Concepts

There are three key concepts for creating a  
SWMS

# Key Concepts

## HAZARD

Something in, or that may be in, the work environment that has the potential to cause harm (injury, illness, including psychological illness, or death) to a person

# Key Concepts

## **RISK**

The chance (or likelihood) that a hazard will cause harm to a person

## Key Concepts

# CONTROL MEASURE

A thing, work process or system of work that control the WHS hazard or risk

# What needs to be included in a SWMS

As a minimum, the SWMS must

Identify work that is HRCW

State the hazards and risks to health and safety from that work

Clearly detail the measures selected to control those risks

Describe how the risk control measures will be implemented

# What needs to be included in a SWMS

Date and location the HRCW is to be performed

Person/s responsible for ensuring selected risk controls are installed and maintained

Names of workers consulted in the documents preparation  
(this should include their signature)

# How to prepare a SWMS

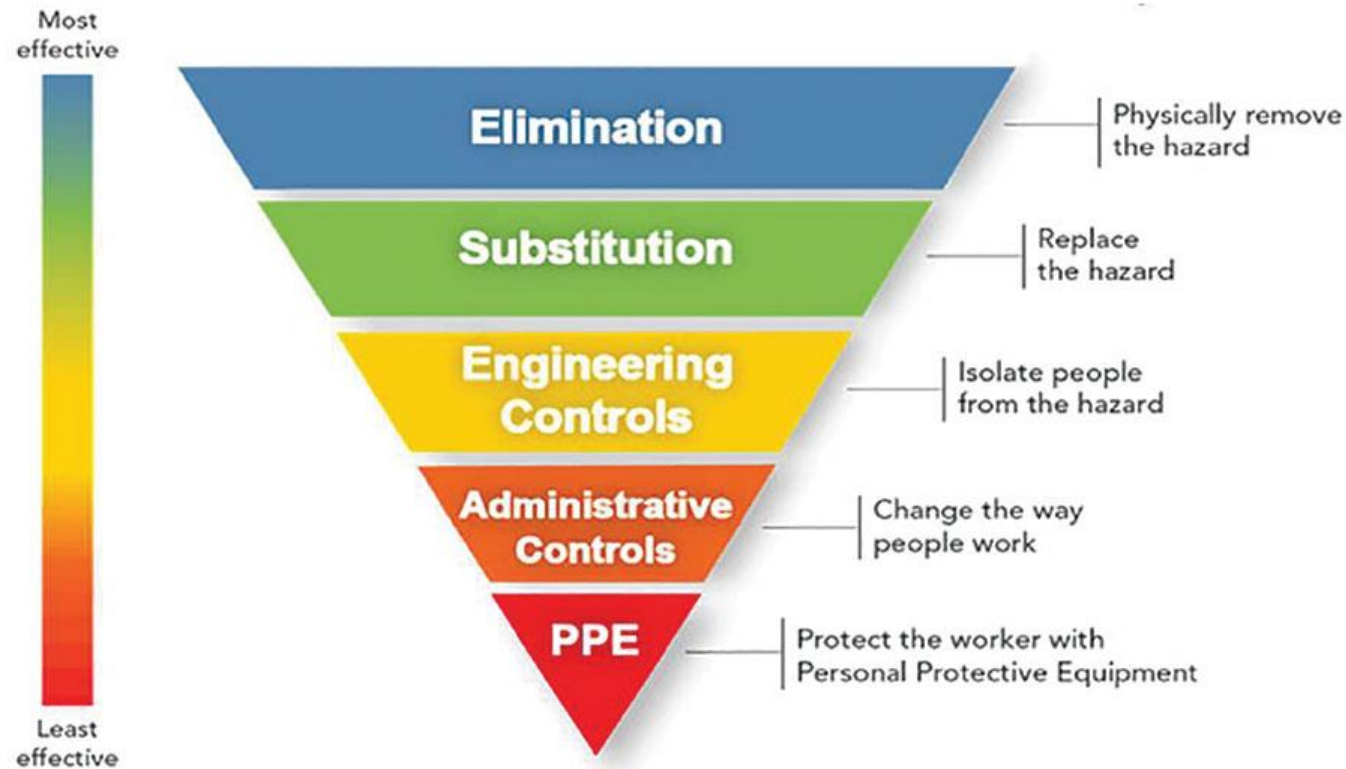
Assemble the relevant workers, their HRSs and supervisors, ideally at the location of proposed works

Review the proposed works and consider any site specific factors with the potential to impact the works

Ensure all proposed HRCW activities are identified and hazards and risks are listed

Select the risk control measures, and describe them alongside each of the hazards and risks that are listed

# Selecting Risk Control Measures



# Example

A contractor wins a job to restore a building facade; it is known there will be a risk of persons falling more than two metres (HRCW) so a SWMS will be required.

The contractor consults with workers while developing the SWMS, and the group identifies;

# Example

Part of the work can be completed from the ground using paint scraper and roller poles, therefore partially **eliminating** the risk of falls

However, a risk still remains – Where poles can't be used, scaffold will be used in preference to ladders, further reducing the risk of falls by **substituting** a more effective **engineering** control

Risk of fall if scaffold is misused – Signage, training workers at tool box meetings, appropriate supervision (**administrative controls**)

# Content of SWMS

The content of a SWMS should provide clear direction on the control measures to be implemented.

There should be no statements that require a decision to be made by supervisors or workers.

# Content of SWMS

For example, the statement 'use appropriate PPE' does not detail the control measures.

The control measures should be clearly specified.

# Who Must Prepare SWMS

The duty to prepare a SWMS before commencing HRCW rests with the employer of the employees (or self employed person) intending to undertake the HRCW

# Multiple Employers on Site

Often there will be multiple employers to whom that duty applies (builder and sub contractor)

Generally the sub-contractor is normally best positioned to understand and control the hazards and risks associated with the of HRCW they are engaged to perform

# Example

A builder and a bricklaying sub-contractor need to ensure a SWMS is prepared because their planned works involve temporary propping to prevent structural collapse (HRCW)

The Bricklaying contractor prepares the SWMS because they are most familiar with the activity, hazards, risks and potential controls

The builder then reviews the SWMS to make sure it is adequate before allowing the HRCW to commence

# Non - HRCW

SWMS only require hazards and risks that are directly related to the prescribed HRCW

Duty holders may still choose to address non-HRCW hazards and risks within a SWMS. But this should not compromise the intended focus on HRCW activities

If too much additional information is presented, the document may stop being effective.

# Generic SWMS

Pre-prepared SWMS is acceptable only if

It is reviewed and made site specific

Prior to each new activity, the SWMS must be reviewed and revised to ensure it applies to the high risk construction work and the actual workplace.

Ensure to record revision information, consultation details (workers, signatures, date)

# SWMS on Electronic Device

SWMS in an electronic format (smart phone, tablet etc) may be acceptable if the persons doing the work have ready access to the document for reference.

Consideration should be given to the formats capacity for revision (if required), and how appropriate worker consultation in the SWMS preparation process might be demonstrated

# Duties in relation to SWMS

Duty holders must ensure that once a SWMS has been developed and implemented, the HRCW to which it relates is performed in accordance with that SWMS

# Duties in relation to SWMS

If a duty holder becomes aware that there is a non-compliance with the SWMS, they must stop the HRCW immediately, or as soon as it is safe to do so, and not allow it to resume until the SWMS is complied with or reviewed and revised as necessary.

# Duties in relation to SWMS

The SWMS must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised whenever the HRCW changes or if there is an indication that control measures are not adequately controlling the risks, including after any incident that occurs during HRCW

# Duties in relation to SWMS

A copy of the SWMS must be retained for the duration of the HRCW

If a notifiable incident occurs, SWMS must be kept for two years

# Duties in relation to SWMS

The SWMS should be kept available at the location of the HRCW, where it can be readily referenced by affected persons, or reviewed and revised as necessary

# High Risk Construction Work

Risk of a person falling more than 2 meters

Working on a telecommunications tower

Involves demolition of an element of a structure that is load bearing or otherwise related to the physical integrity of the structure

Involves or likely to involve disturbance of asbestos

Structural alterations or repairs that require temporary support to prevent collapse

# High Risk Construction Work

In or near a confined space

In or near shaft or trench with excavated depth > 1.5 meters

In or near a tunnel

On or near pressurised gas distribution mains

Involves use of explosives

# High Risk Construction Work

On or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines

On or near energised electrical installations or services

In an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere

Involves tilt-up or precast concrete

On, in or adjacent to road, railway, shipping lane or other traffic corridor that is in use by traffic or pedestrians

# High Risk Construction Work

In an area in which there are artificial extremes of temperature

In or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning

Involves diving work

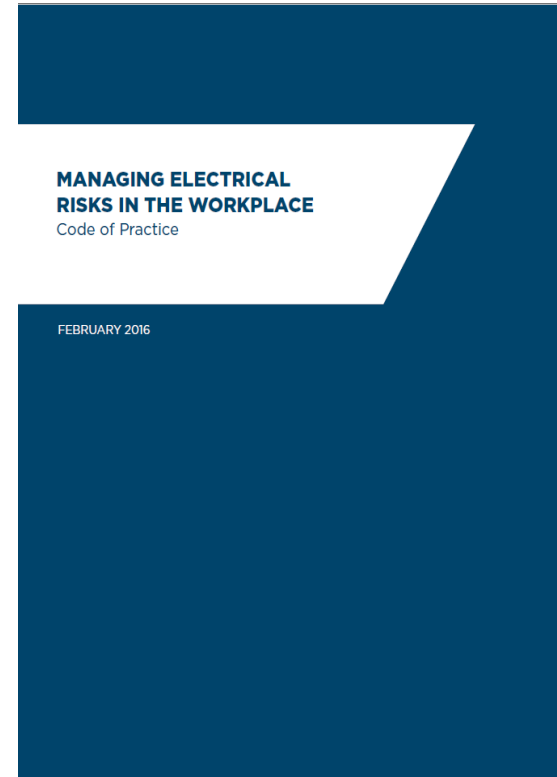
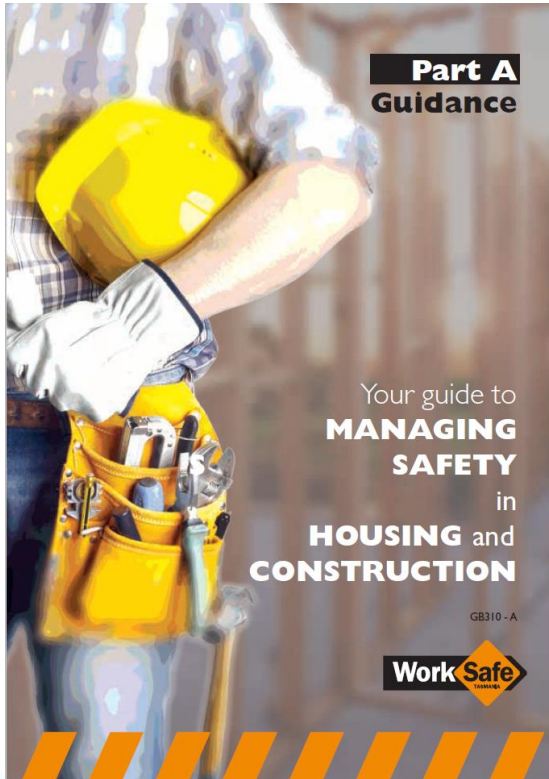
Identify each task in order	Hazards Identified	Risks to Health & Safety	Describe Control Measures	Who is Responsible for Implementing & Monitoring
Use of Ladder	Fall from Ladder Falling Objects	Serious Injury Injury to others	Industrial rated ladder, in good working order  On firm, stable and level ground  Correct height for task  Exclusion zone for "others"	Management & Workers
Remove leaf matter from gutter	Sharp gutter edges	Cuts and abrasions	Use of riggers gloves	Management & Workers

# Resources

The screenshot displays the WorkSafe Tasmania website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Tasmanian Government logo and the WorkSafe Tasmania logo. A search bar contains the word "construction". Below the navigation bar, there is a horizontal menu with tabs for Safety, Compensation, Licensing, Laws, and Resources. A large banner for "Workplace Issues magazine" is featured, with the text "Subscribe to Workplace Issues magazine" and "Free practical WHS info". Below the banner, there are several sections: "Popular" with links to Public Holidays, Codes of Practice, Find an asbestos removalist/assessor, and Licensing fees; "News" with links to Workers comp laws review for post-traumatic stress, Review of the Regulator, and Public consultation: Our strategic plan; "Events" with links to 2018 WorkSafe Awards: Entries now closed and Improve workplace wellbeing with Ritualize; and "Small business". On the right side, there are buttons for "Lodge a complaint" and "Report an incident" with the helpline number 1300 366 322. A social media widget for WorkSafe Tasmania is also visible, showing a Facebook post about HSR training.

[www.worksafetasmania.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafetasmania.tas.gov.au)

# Resources

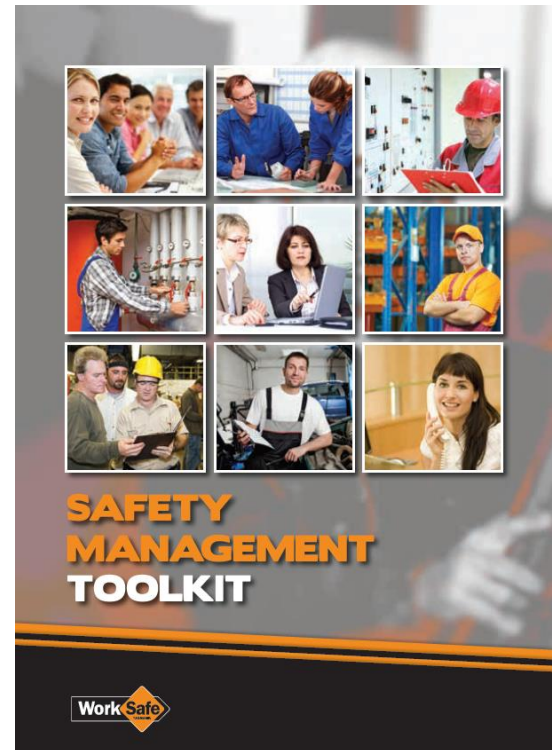


# Resources

WorkSafe Advisory Service

[www.worksafetasmania.tas.gov.au](http://www.worksafetasmania.tas.gov.au)

1300 366 322





Tasmanian  
Government