

19 HIGH RISK WORK ACTIVITIES REQUIRING SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENTS (WA)

What are my legal obligations?

If you are a main contractor you have an obligation to make sure that, as far as practicable, each person identified by you as having day-to-day, on-site control of high-risk construction work done, or to be done at the site, gives you a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS).

To meet this obligation you will need to identify each person in charge of high-risk construction work and make sure that they give you a SWMS for that work. These persons also have an obligation to give you the required SWMS. But if you are unable to identify any of these persons undertaking the work, then you are obliged to prepare the necessary SWMS for this work.

Once prepared, you also have an obligation to make sure that the work is carried out in accordance with the SWMS and that the SWMS is kept up to date if the work changes for any reason.

When do I need a SWMS?

You will need to make sure that a SWMS has been prepared whenever any of the 'high-risk construction work' listed below is carried out. As far as practicable, the SWMS must be in place before the 'high-risk construction work starts.

The meaning of the term 'high-risk construction work' is:

- Construction work involving a risk of a person falling two metres or more;
- Construction work involving demolition;
- Construction work involving removing or disturbing asbestos;
- Construction work involving alteration to a structure that requires the structure to be temporarily supported to prevent its collapse;
- Construction work on or adjacent to roads or railways that are in use;
- Work on a construction site where there is movement of powered mobile plant;
- Construction work involving a confined space;
- Construction work involving excavation to a depth of more than 1.5 metres;
- The construction of tunnels;
- Construction work involving the use of explosives;
- Construction work on or near pressurised gas pipes (including distribution mains);
- Construction work on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines;
- Construction work on or near energised electrical installations and lines (whether overhead or underground);
- Construction work in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere;
- Construction work involving tilt-up or precast concrete;
- Construction work in an area where there are artificial extremes of temperature;
- Construction work in, over or adjacent to water or other liquids if there is a risk of drowning;
- Construction work on telecommunications towers;
- Construction work involving diving.

What needs to be in a SWMS?

The SWMS must be in writing and, as far as practicable, contain the following information:

- Each high-risk construction work activity that has hazards to which a person is likely to be exposed;
- The risk of injury or harm to a person resulting from any such hazards;
- The safety measures to be implemented to reduce the risk(s), including the control measures to be applied to the work activity or hazard(s);

- A description of the equipment used in the high-risk construction work activity; and
- Any qualifications and/or training required to enable people to do the work safely.

What happens if the SWMS is not being followed?

If the work is not carried out in accordance with the SWMS the main contractor must stop the work (when safe to do so) and make sure that it does not resume until the SWMS is complied with.

How long do I need to keep the SWMS?

All SWMS must be kept for a period of two years after all work to which it relates is completed.

Our Safety Team has a suite of SWMS to assist you with compliance, for more information please call **(08) 6241 6100** or email **whs@ecawa.org.au**.

References:

Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 [Part 3 (Division 12)]

Code of Practice for Persons working on or near energised electrical installations 2018