



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

UOW SAFE@WORK

WORKPLACE SAFETY INSPECTION GUIDELINES

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1 Introduction

Workplace safety inspections are a planned systematic approach to identify hazards in the work area. This is the first step in risk management. Once the hazard has been identified it can be controlled by removing it or using other methods to control the risk to prevent an injury occurring.

Workplace safety inspections may take several forms including:

- routine inspections of the workplace
- routine inspections of particular activities, processes or areas
- specific inspections in response to health and safety issues
- as a result or part of incident investigations
- follow up inspections after implementing measures to improve health and safety.

2 Scope

This document outlines the requirements for workplace safety inspections including responsibilities, frequency and processes.

The purpose is to provide a system by which workplaces can be systematically inspected, hazards identified and controls implemented to prevent injury/illness.

3 Definitions

Hazard	A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause injury or disease to people, damage to the environment, property, plant or equipment.
Risk	The likelihood that a hazard will result in injury, illness, loss or damage to people, to the environment, property, plant or equipment and the potential consequences of that injury, illness, loss or damage.
Risk Control	Risk control is a method to manage the risk to an acceptable level. There is a hierarchy of control measures that needs to be followed, with the primary emphasis on controlling the hazards at the source.
Inspection Team	Two or more people responsible carrying out the workplace inspection.
Inspection Coordinator	Person who coordinates the workplace safety inspection activities.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Faculty/Divisional Management

Management in Faculties and Divisions have the responsibility for ensuring workplace safety inspections are performed regularly as required by the level of risk associated with the area. Management also have the responsibility to ensure required risk controls are implemented and the required records are maintained.

4.2 Inspection Coordinator

The inspection coordinator is responsible for planning the workplace safety inspection activities. This includes scheduling the activities, monitoring the progress and reporting on progress.

4.3 Inspection Team(s)

Inspection teams conduct the workplace safety inspection and report findings as set out in this document and to ensure hazards are controlled in accordance with risk control priorities as per the [Risk Management Guidelines](#).

4.4 WHS Unit

The WHS Unit is responsible for the development of workplace inspection processes and related documentation such as inspection checklists. The WHS Unit systematically verifies the implementation of the Workplace Safety Inspection processes through WHS Internal Verification Audits as per the [WHS Auditing Guidelines](#).

5 Workplace Safety Inspections

5.1 Inspection Frequency

The frequency of workplace safety inspections is determined by the level of risk associated with the workplace; this may include the physical working environment, the type of activities that are performed or previous history of reported incidents.

A risk assessment should be conducted by the Faculty/Division or School/Unit in control of the workplace to determine the risk and the frequency of inspections required. Where a local risk assessment has not been completed, the period between inspections should not exceed those identified in the table below:

Risk	Work environment	Frequency
High/Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laboratories (chemical, electronic, mechanical, laser, radiation, biological) ▪ Workshops ▪ Studios e.g art studio ▪ Chemical and gas storage locations ▪ Animal facilities ▪ Performance venues 	6 months
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data and communication spaces ▪ Student residence common areas 	12 months

Work environments not listed shall have inspection frequencies determined by the local area.

Common Teaching Areas (CTA's) are inspected at the start of each semester. Furniture inspections are undertaken by Facilities Management Division (FMD) and audio visual equipment is inspected by Information Management and Technology Services (IMTS). If any issues in these areas are identified outside of these inspections, they can be reported to the FMD Service Centre on x3217 or fm-service-centre@uow.edu.au, or IMTS via the [Self-Service Portal](#).

An inspection schedule should be developed to ensure the systematic delivery of inspections for the calendar year. This schedule may be prepared by the inspection coordinator or Safe@Work Committee. This schedule should be communicated to persons in the workplace, those involved in inspections, Safe@Work Committee as well as the supervisors of the area.

Safe@Work Committees monitor inspection activities in accordance with the [Safe@Work Committee Terms of Reference](#).

5.2 Inspection Team

It is recommended that those conducting workplace safety inspections have training and understanding in risk management principles and have knowledge and/or experience of the workplace and hazards that may be present.

The inspection team should comprise of at least two people from the following:

- a staff member familiar with the work area
- a Safe@Work Committee member
- a WHS Committee Representative
- a person external to the area
- another staff member

In addition, the supervisor of the area should be present during the inspection.

The inspection team should be provided with the inspection schedule and discuss the areas to inspect, time allocated for inspection, the nominated person to document the findings and who is responsible to implement risk controls.

5.3 Employee Involvement

Employees have valuable on-the-job experience and can have skills in identifying the hazards associated with particular tasks. This information is valuable during inspections and it is recommend that employees are involved in the inspection process or have the opportunity to provide information to the inspection team by being present during inspections.

The inspection team should seek involvement from employees who undertake the tasks in the inspection area and discuss any issues identified to verify the hazard exists and the risk control is appropriate to implement.

5.4 Workplace Inspection Checklists

Workplace specific safety inspection checklists are available to use to assist in the identification of hazards:

- [Laboratory Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Workshop Inspection Checklist](#)
- [General Inspection Checklist](#)
- [Accommodation Inspection Checklist](#)

The checklist allows a standardised approach and is a tool to prompt the inspection team of particular hazards with an area. The checklist is not an exhaustive list and hence any additional hazard should be noted at the end of the checklist.

Local areas can modify the checklists to include additional hazards for their unit so long as they are maintained in accordance with the [WHS Document Control Guidelines](#) and [WHS Records Handling Guidelines](#).

5.5 Conducting the Inspection

The inspection team should be familiar with previous inspection findings to ensure that risk controls have been implemented and that the hazards are not recurring.

Where a hazard presents an immediate risk to health and safety the inspection team should attempt to make the area safe and notify the area supervisor. Refer to the [Risk Management Guidelines](#) for further information.

5.6 Reporting and Risk Control Process

Once hazards are identified solutions are to be implemented to ensure the hazard is controlled in accordance with the [Risk Management Guidelines](#).

Any hazards identified throughout the inspection require a risk control assigned to an appropriate person. This is required to be recorded through the online hazard reporting system, [SafetyNet](#).

Faculty / Division Management should follow-up to verify that the risk control has commenced or is completed and review the risk to ensure that it has been eliminated or controlled.

5.7 Inspection Summary Reports

A [Workplace Safety Inspection Summary Report](#) outlining findings from inspections shall be provided to Faculty/Division Management as soon as practicable after the inspection(s) has been completed as well as the Safe@Work Committee for discussion at their next scheduled meeting. The [Workplace Safety Inspection Summary Report](#) should also be communicated to other positions having responsibility for the area.

A Summary Report should detail, but not limited to, the following:

- date of the inspection
- location/s of the area inspected
- details of any hazard that had a high level of risk
- the total number of hazards identified for each risk level (high, medium, low)
- reference numbers of corrective actions entered into SafetyNet.

Information on reported hazards can be found from the [SafetyNet](#) search function for UOW staff.

5.8 Record Keeping

Record keeping is an important part of monitoring and review. Systematic records will help to identify hazards and review the effectiveness of risk controls. Records of inspection are required to be maintained so that management, employee and contractors can view the inspection results. Records are to be maintained in accordance with the [WHS Document Control Guidelines](#) and [WHS Records Handling Guidelines](#).

6 Program Evaluation

In order to ensure that these guidelines continue to be effective and applicable to the University, the program will be reviewed triennially. However, more frequent reviews may be required as per legislative changes, risk controls or continuous improvement. Following completion of any review, these guidelines will be revised in order to correct any deficiencies. Any changes will be completed through consultation with the Central WHS Committee.

7 Related Documents

- [Risk Management Guidelines](#)
- [WHS Document Control Guidelines](#)
- [WHS Records Handling Guidelines](#)
- Inspection Checklists (on [Workplace Safety Inspections internet page](#)):
 - [Laboratory Inspection Checklist](#)
 - [Workshop Inspection Checklist](#)
 - [General Inspection Checklist](#)
 - [Accommodation Inspection Checklist](#)
- [WHS Committee Constitution](#)
- [Terms of Reference for Safe@Work Committees](#)

8 Reference Documents

- [NSW Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [NSW Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017](#)

9 Version Control Table

Version Control	Release Date	Approved By	Amendment
1	September 2009	Manager OHS	Document created.
2	August 2010	Manager OHS	Section 5.1 – clarification added to the campus involved in the biannual campus inspections.
3	March 2011	Manager OHS	Additional information provided on the inspection frequency and conducting the workplace safety inspections.
4	April 2011	Manager OHS	Changes to the risk assessment determining the frequency of inspections. Expanded those who may be part of the inspection team. Inclusion of the role of inspection coordinator. Further information regarding conducting the inspection.
5	August 2011	Manager OHS	Expanded detail regarding the process for submitting Inspection Summary Reports.
6	March 2012	Manager WHS	Rebrand
7	March 2013	Manager WHS	Updating change of Legislation
8	June 2014	Manager WHS	Scheduled review. Include inspection frequency table. Provide general reference to Faculty / Division Management.
9	July 2016	Manager WHS	Rebrand
10	November 2015	Manager WHS	Updated following HMDG Audit. Updated section 5.7. Clarified requirement to discuss at WAC. Reinforced the requirement to enter corrective actions into SafetyNet.
11	May 2016	Manager WHS	Updated section 5.7, rebrand and links updated.
12	July 2016	Manager WHS	Rebrand.
13	September 2016	Manager WHS	Remove extreme and negligible risk levels.
14	October 2019	Manager WHS	Included information on current inspections of Common Teaching Areas by FMD and IMTS.
15	February 2023	Manager WHS	Scheduled review. Update hyperlinks and name changes.

Appendix 1: Inspection Process Flow Chart

