

Writing health and safety documents for your workplace

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These guidelines describe a five stage process to help you write health and safety documents for your workplace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Workbase, Godfrey Hirst, ACC, Crane Association of New Zealand, WorkZone Scaffolds Ltd, Downer NZ, RJ Learn and Develop Ltd, New Zealand Contractors' Federation, Impac Services, Grand Chancellor Hotels, Write Limited, Powerco, New Zealand Institute of Safety Management (NZISM), Ministry of Social Development, Electrical Contractors Association of New Zealand (ECANZ) and NZ Transport Agency.

THE STAGES COVER WRITING, REVIEWING AND SHARING A DOCUMENT:

Stage 1: What is the document for?

Stage 2: Who will read the document?

Stage 3: What are your main messages?

Stage 4: Does the document work?

**Stage 5: How will you share and use
the document?**

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01/

INTRODUCTION

IN THIS SECTION:

- 1.1 Using documents to build understanding
- 1.2 Common types of health and safety documents
- 1.3 Encourage workers to get involved

These guidelines will help you to write health and safety documents for your workplace.

Health and safety documents include forms, plans, policies, checklists, posters, signs and other material explaining to workers:

- > how to work safely and protect their health
- > how to manage workplace risks and hazards
- > what to do if something goes wrong.

Documents that everyone at your workplace can read and understand will be:

- > written using words that make sense to your workers
- > easy to use.

The information should:

- > encourage workers to use safe practices
- > show that health and safety is important
- > be clear about the risks and hazards at your workplace
- > explain how to control and manage these risks and hazards.

1.1 USING DOCUMENTS TO BUILD UNDERSTANDING

Health and safety documents help everybody to understand how your workplace should run. As well as providing information, they can explain who is responsible for doing what, when and why – and how to avoid accidents and exposure to health risks.

You can use documents to build understanding by:

- > involving workers in document development and review
- > encouraging workers to tell you when changes need to be made to documents
- > explaining unfamiliar language and procedures
- > referring to the relevant document when talking to workers about something they do – or do not do – at work

Explain to workers why it is important to keep a written record of workplace discussions (such as the minutes of a team meeting).

Everyone in your workplace needs to know what is in the documents that affect them. Tell workers about the type of documents used in your workplace and show them examples. Explain what each part of a document is saying.

Review and revise your documents regularly to make sure that information is clear and up to date.

Your workplace has written documents so that workers do not have to rely on their memory.

1.2 COMMON TYPES OF HEALTH AND SAFETY DOCUMENTS

TYPE OF DOCUMENT		DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
TABLE			
	ABOVE GROUND TANK	DRUMS	
Petrol	at least 20 m from any area of regular habitation or high intensity land use kept outside	at least 15 m from any area of regular habitation or high intensity land use kept outside or in a well-ventilated building	Displays information so that it is easy to read and compare. Usually laid out in rows and columns. Checklist, action list
Diesel	at least 20 m from any area of regular habitation or high intensity land use 6 m from farm sheds kept outside	at least 15 m from any area of regular habitation or high intensity land use 6 m from farm sheds kept outside or in a well-ventilated building	

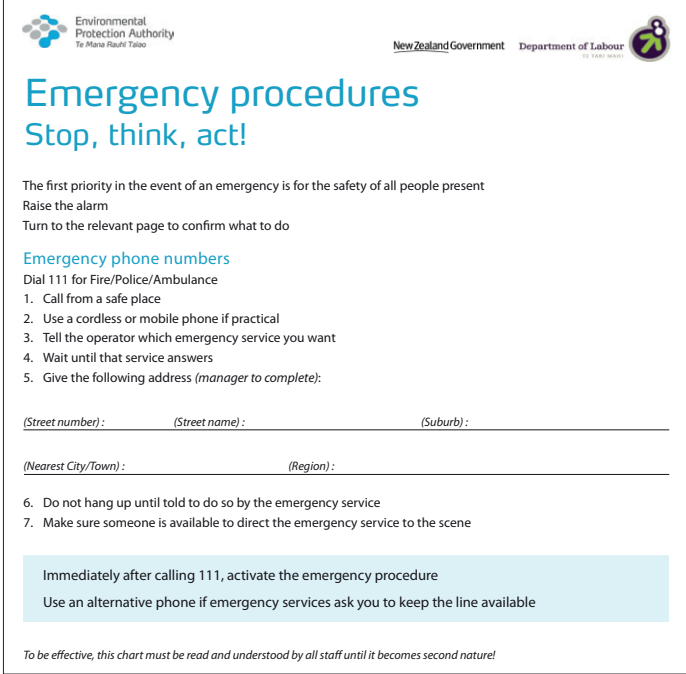
www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/all-guidance-items/above-ground-fuel-storage-on-farms

FLOWCHART		
<p>The flowchart 'AM I A MINING OPERATION?' starts with the question 'Is the mining operation wholly on or under the seabed on the seaward side of the mean high-water mark?'. If 'No', it leads to 'Not a mining operation'. If 'Yes', it asks 'Is the mining operation carried out above ground and associated with: the extraction of gold from river deposits of sand or gravel; or the extraction of iron sand from sand or gravel?'. If 'Yes', it is an 'Alluvial mining operation'. If 'No', it asks 'Is the activity carried out above ground for the purpose of: extracting any material, other than any coal or any mineral, from the earth; or processing any material, other than any coal or any mineral, at the place where the material is extracted? Or is the place a place where the above activity is carried out? (Whether or not the material is to be processed for commercial gain and whether or not explosives are used are not relevant.)'. If 'Yes', it is a 'Quarrying operation'. If 'No', it asks 'Is the place a place where material extracted or processed in a quarry is crushed or screened?'. If 'Yes', it is a 'Quarrying operation'. If 'No', it asks 'Is the activity of the operation only exporting for minerals?'. If 'Yes', it is a 'Quarrying operation'. If 'No', it asks 'Does the operation involve extraction of fill with the purpose of creating a tunnel or shaft or enlarging or extending any tunnel or shaft? Or is the place a place where this operation is carried out?'. If 'Yes', it is 'Not a mining operation'. If 'No', it asks 'Is the operation one in which: a. not more than 2 mine workers ordinarily work underground at the operation at any one time; and b. explosives are not used underground at the operation; and c. the operation relates to a tunnel or shaft that is, or is intended to be, not more than 15 metres long; and d. the concentration of methane is not likely to be more than 0.25% of the general body of air in any working area at the operation?'. If 'Yes', it is 'Not a mining operation'. If 'No', it is 'Not a mining operation'.</p>	Diagram or other illustration showing the decisions and activities involved as a process is worked through. Steps and sequences are shown.	Flowchart to identify the right guard for your machine

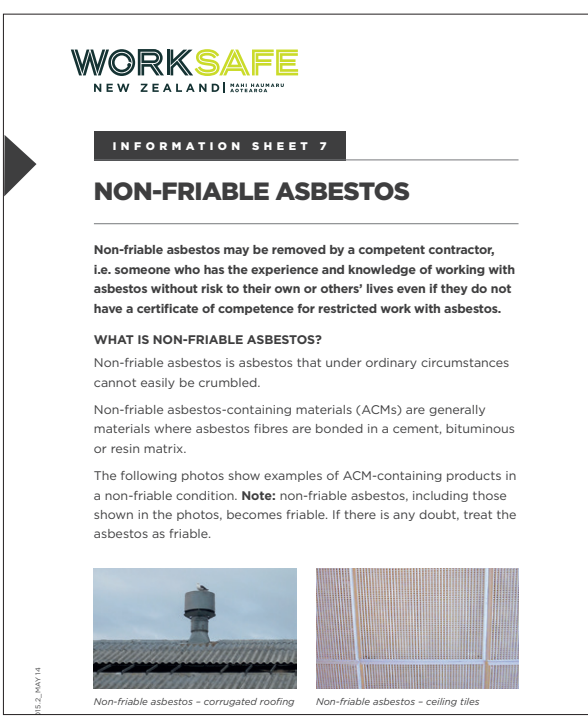
www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/guidance-by-industry/extractives/documents/am-i-a-mining-operation

POLICY																																										
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Employ people</th> <th>Get the basics right</th> <th>Make a safe workplace</th> <th>Manage staff</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Make a Safe Workplace Overview</td> <td colspan="3">Sample Health and Safety Policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manage health and Safety</td> <td colspan="3">Health and Safety Policy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Make a H&S plan</td> <td colspan="3">XYC Ltd is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all staff, and to providing the information, training and supervision needed to achieve this.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manage Hazards</td> <td colspan="3"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manage Staff Safety</td> <td colspan="3">XYC Ltd will take responsibility for health and safety procedures, however, employees need to be aware of their responsibilities and comply with the business' health and safety policy.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employee Responsibilities</td> <td colspan="3">Each employee is encouraged to play a vital and responsible role in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace through:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seven Steps for Training</td> <td colspan="3"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being involved in the workplace health and safety system. Sticking to correct procedures and equipment. Wearing protective clothing and equipment as and when required. Reporting any pain or discomfort as soon as possible. Ensuring all accidents and incidents are reported. Helping new employees, trainees and visitors to the workplace understand the right safety procedures and why they exist. Telling your manager immediately of any health and safety concerns. Keeping the work place tidy to minimise the risk of any trips </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sample Health and Safety Policy</td> <td colspan="3"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools & Templates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample health and safety clause for an employment agreement Sample employee training register [EXLS, 20kB] Template health and safety checklist for new employees [DOC 48kB] Hazard handler online tool More info <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and Supervision Small business guide to health and safety </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Investigate Incidents</td> <td colspan="3"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Employ people	Get the basics right	Make a safe workplace	Manage staff	Make a Safe Workplace Overview	Sample Health and Safety Policy			Manage health and Safety	Health and Safety Policy			Make a H&S plan	XYC Ltd is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace for all staff, and to providing the information, training and supervision needed to achieve this.			Manage Hazards				Manage Staff Safety	XYC Ltd will take responsibility for health and safety procedures, however, employees need to be aware of their responsibilities and comply with the business' health and safety policy.			Employee Responsibilities	Each employee is encouraged to play a vital and responsible role in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace through:			Seven Steps for Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being involved in the workplace health and safety system. Sticking to correct procedures and equipment. Wearing protective clothing and equipment as and when required. Reporting any pain or discomfort as soon as possible. Ensuring all accidents and incidents are reported. Helping new employees, trainees and visitors to the workplace understand the right safety procedures and why they exist. Telling your manager immediately of any health and safety concerns. Keeping the work place tidy to minimise the risk of any trips 			Sample Health and Safety Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tools & Templates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sample health and safety clause for an employment agreement Sample employee training register [EXLS, 20kB] Template health and safety checklist for new employees [DOC 48kB] Hazard handler online tool More info <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and Supervision Small business guide to health and safety 			Investigate Incidents				Statement that sets out an organisation's approach and intentions. Guides workplace actions by stating what is to be done, who is to do it, and how it is to be done.	Health and safety policy
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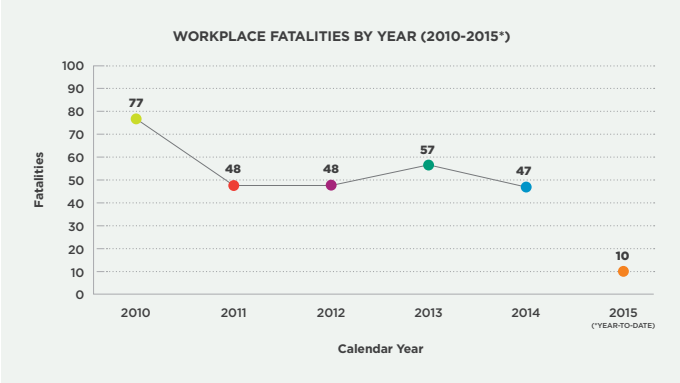
www.dol.govt.nz/infozone/businessessentials/safety/staff/draft-policy-health-and-safety.asp

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
<p>PROCEDURE</p> 	<p>Series of steps that must be done in order. Each step starts with a command/action word. For example, 'leave', 'walk', 'sound'.</p> <p>Often have a map or images – for example, a map showing an assembly area.</p>	<p>Evacuation procedure, emergency procedure</p>


www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/all-guidance-items/hsno/guidance-docs-epa/emergency-procedures-template-pdf/view

INFORMATION SHEET		
	<p>Describes or provides information about something.</p>	<p>Safety data sheet, information sheet about personal protective equipment to use when working with asbestos or other hazardous materials</p>

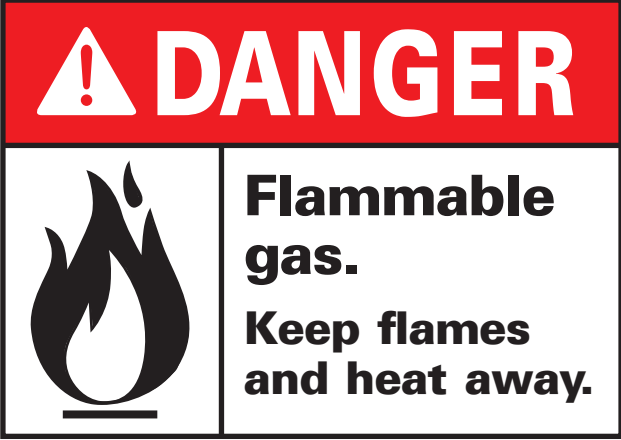
www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/all-guidance-items/asbestos-factsheets/non-friable-asbestos

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES														
<p>GRAPH</p>  <table border="1" data-bbox="229 416 911 797"> <caption>WORKPLACE FATALITIES BY YEAR (2010-2015*)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Calendar Year</th> <th>Fatalities</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2010</td> <td>77</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014</td> <td>47</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Calendar Year	Fatalities	2010	77	2011	48	2012	48	2013	57	2014	47	2015	10	<p>Diagram that uses lines, curves or bars to share information – such as trends or changes over time.</p>	<p>Graph showing injury rates or serious harm notifications over a five-year period</p>
Calendar Year	Fatalities															
2010	77															
2011	48															
2012	48															
2013	57															
2014	47															
2015	10															

www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/research/health-and-safety-data/workplace-fatalities-by-year

FORM		
	<p>A document that asks for information – the information is written in blank spaces on the form.</p>	<p>Accident or incident report form, accident investigation form, safe work method statement (SWMS)</p>

www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/notifications-forms/accident-serious-harm/Accident%20or%20Serious%20Harm%20Notification.pdf

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES
<p data-bbox="229 360 935 398">SIGN</p> 	<p data-bbox="946 412 1187 524">Provides information and instructions. Often has words and graphics.</p>	<p data-bbox="1209 412 1353 524">Danger sign, emergency exit sign, warning sign</p>

1.3 ENCOURAGE WORKERS TO GET INVOLVED

Everyone at your workplace can help to make sure that your workplace is healthy and safe.

Engage with workers by:

- > encouraging them to share their ideas
- > involving them in the development of health and safety documents.

Talk with workers about what they would like to see included in your health and safety documents.

Listen to their ideas about how health and safety issues affect how they organise, manage and carry out their work. Their suggestions will lead to better and safer ways of working.

02/

WRITING THE DOCUMENT

IN THIS SECTION:

- 2.1 Stage 1: What is the document for?
- 2.2 Stage 2: Who will read the document?
- 2.3 Stage 3: What are your main messages?

Every document needs a clear purpose. Ask yourself what the document is for.

2.1 STAGE 1: WHAT IS THE DOCUMENT FOR?

Most workplace health and safety documents will be an information document, an instruction document, or a form.

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
Information document	Tells about a specific topic. Explains how something works, special features, parts or components.	Document explaining quad bike features, operating instructions and potential hazards
Instruction document	Outlines steps or actions to be followed. The steps or actions are usually done in a specific order.	Procedure for cleaning a piece of equipment
Form	Asks for specific information.	Incident report form

Some health and safety documents are both information and instruction documents. They tell you about something and what to do. For example, Standard Operating Procedures:

- > tell you **about** the health and safety hazards and risks when operating a piece of equipment, and
- > tell you **what to do** to manage those hazards and risks.

Appendix 6.1 has guidelines for instruction documents.

Things to consider when you are planning your document:

- > How will you share the document with your workers?
- > Where will the document be used?
- > What is the best way to get your message across?
- > What sort of document would work best in your workplace?

2.2 STAGE 2: WHO WILL READ THE DOCUMENT?

Think about the workers who will read your document – write the document for them.

Some people at your workplace will find reading easy, others will not. Workers may have trouble reading and understanding a document that uses words they do not know. Encourage workers to tell you what they think the document should cover and how it should look.

Consider your workers' needs and abilities:

- > What do they already know about this topic?
- > How often and when will they use the document?
- > Is English their first language?
- > How well can they read?
- > Can they read numbers?
- > What everyday words can you use?
- > What other formats can you use for workers who have difficulty reading regular print? (See Appendix 6.2)
- > Are there other ways to get your message across? (See Stage 3)

2.3 STAGE 3: WHAT ARE YOUR MAIN MESSAGES?

Before you create a document you must be clear what it will cover.

- > What do workers need to know?
- > What do workers need to do?
- > What activities and tasks need to be included?
- > What are the risks and hazards involved?
- > What is the best way to let people know?

OTHER WAYS TO GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS

As well as (or instead of) words, consider using other ways to get your message across.

Flow charts to explain:

- > instructions
- > procedures
- > processes
- > production goals.

Diagrams, illustrations, line drawings to explain:

- > technology
- > procedures.



Photographs to show:

- > equipment
- > worksites.

Tables, charts, graphs to explain:

- > statistics
- > production data
- > figures.

Maps to explain:

- > emergency procedures
- > locations
- > area layouts.

WHERE CAN YOU GET INFORMATION TO PUT INTO YOUR DOCUMENTS?

There are many places that you can get information to put into your documents.

For example, you can:

- > read existing health and safety documents
- > talk to workers about the messages that you want to get across
- > walk around your workplace and watch what is happening
- > ask workers to explain what they are doing and why
- > talk to workplace 'experts'
- > talk with people who work in a similar workplace
- > look at guidance and standards documents for your industry
- > look at guidance and standards documents prepared by WorkSafe.

[WorkSafe information and guidance](#)

PUTTING A WRITTEN DOCUMENT TOGETHER

Most documents will need to have:

- > an **introduction** explaining:
 - why the document has been written - its purpose
 - who it has been written for

- > **key messages** – the main points your readers must understand, act on and remember
- > **instructions.**

WRITING IN PLAIN ENGLISH

Write the document in ‘plain English’ (plain language) to make it easy for workers to understand.

Writing in plain English means that you:

- > have a clear message
- > use short, simple sentences
- > use everyday words that workers will understand
- > explain technical and legal language
- > lay out and format information so that it is easy to read.

HOW TO WRITE IN PLAIN ENGLISH

1. KEEP SENTENCES SHORT AND CLEAR

Long and complex sentences are hard to read. A sentence should contain only one or two ideas.

2. USE EVERYDAY WORDS

Use everyday words to make your documents easy to understand. Workers, especially if English is not their first language, may not know common health and safety terms.

Use ...	Instead of ...
make sure	ensure
so	accordingly
immediately	without further delay
now	at this point in time

Appendix 6.3 has a list of everyday words that you can use instead of more complex words and phrases.

Appendix 6.4 has plain English explanations of key health and safety terms.

If you need to introduce a new industry term, or if there is no simple alternative word, explain the concept first in plain English. Then give the new term.

Example:

You must remove (eliminate) the hazard.

3. WRITE WORDS IN FULL

Write words in full to send a stronger message.

Use ...

do not

Instead of ...

don't

4. AVOID UNNECESSARY ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

An acronym is a word formed from the initials of words in a phrase or title. For example, PPE stands for personal protective equipment.

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase. For example, ‘mg’ means milligram.

If you use an acronym or abbreviation, explain it the first time you use it in the document.

Example:

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) recommends that ...

Try not to use an acronym or abbreviation unless you know that your workers already use and understand it.

5. WORDS AND NUMBERS

Use the words one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten for numbers up to ten. For numbers over ten, use figures (11, 12, 13 ...)

Example:

We use four methods to identify hazards ...

At least 14 days before you visit the site ...

6. ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

Try to use active rather than passive voice.

- > Active voice is more personal and direct and says who must do something.
 - For example: Workers must wear protective gloves.
- > Passive voice sounds more formal and uses more words. People often use passive voice to write about something that is to be done by someone.
 - For example: Protective gloves are to be worn by workers.

7. VERBS AND NOUNS

Try not to turn verbs into nouns. This makes words longer and uses passive voice. The document will seem formal and be harder to read.

Use ...	Instead of ...
Talk to supervisors before using backhoes on construction sites.	Utilisation of backhoes on construction sites must only be done in consultation with supervisors.

SHOULD YOU TRANSLATE A DOCUMENT INTO OTHER LANGUAGES?

Translating health and safety documents into other languages is not always easy. Some languages do not have technical words or workplace terms that match the words used in New Zealand workplaces.

Workers who do not have English as their first language may not be able to read in their first language. Perhaps you could share information using a document written in plain English with photos and illustrations that also explain the key messages. Ask a trainer or supervisor to go over the document with workers who do not have English as their first language.

If you decide to get a document translated use a qualified translator. Although another worker may speak the same language, this does not mean they are able to translate important health and safety documents.

Languages, including te reo Māori, can vary from region to region. This means that words with the same meaning may be spelled and pronounced in different ways. Before a translator works with your document, check which dialects (regional variations) your workers speak and read.

LAYOUT AND FORMAT

Plan the layout of the document.

Here are some questions to think about:

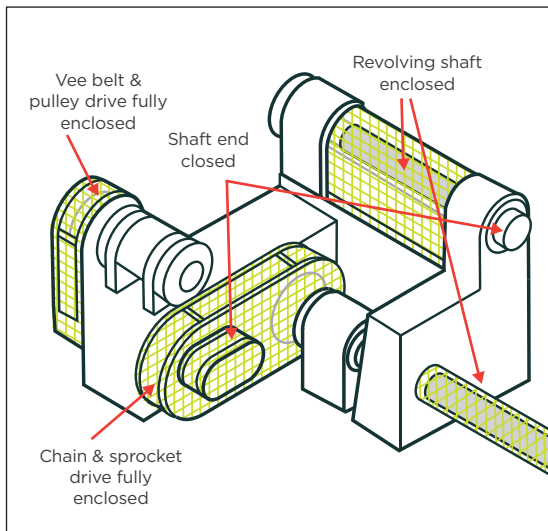
- > How long will the document be?
The shorter, the better.
- > How will you use headings and subheadings to organise the information?
- > How will the information be displayed?
- > Will you need photographs, images, or diagrams to explain key points?

Your document will be easier to read if it has:

- > plenty of white space
- > headings and subheadings to:
 - break up large chunks of information
 - help the reader to find information more easily
- > important headings in a large font, rather than underlined
- > short paragraphs with one main message
- > left hand justification (text aligned to the left margin)
- > a plain easy-to-read font such as Arial, Calibri or Verdana
- > the same font throughout the document
- > the same layout throughout the document

- > photos or illustrations that:
 - are relevant
 - are easy to understand
 - show images that your workers can relate to.

As an example, here is an illustration from WorkSafe's *Good Practice Guidelines for Safe Use of Machinery* (2014).



Your document will be harder to read if it has:

- > Coloured text.
 - It is harder to read than black and white
 - It may not show up well if the document is printed or photocopied in black and white
- > Lots of capital letters. Capital letters are okay for headings, but try not to use them in other places as they can LOOK LIKE SHOUTING.
- > Too many words in **bold** and *italics* - use **bold** and *italics* only to highlight information.

In Appendix 6.5, we have rewritten examples of several health and safety documents in plain English to show you what is possible.

The law requires you to keep some long documents at your workplace, such as safety data sheets.

- > Consider putting the most important information from long documents onto one page to make it easier for workers to read and understand.
- > Use diagrams and symbols as well as words.
- > Attach the one-page summary to the front of the longer document.

The WorkSafe website has health and safety templates that you can use as a guide.

For example, if a worker has been given First Aid, you can use WorkSafe's First Aid Register form to note who was injured, when, what happened and what treatment was given.

[WorkSafe health and safety templates](#)

03/

REVIEWING THE DOCUMENT

IN THIS SECTION:

- 3.1 Stage 4: Does the document work?

3.1 STAGE 4: DOES THE DOCUMENT WORK?

FIRST DRAFT

When you have written the first draft, ask for feedback. Invite workers to look at the document. Ask them to tell you how the draft can be improved.

Here are questions you might ask about the document:

- > Does it have the information you need?
 - Is the information easy to find?
 - Is anything missing?
 - Is there anything you do not need?
- > Can you understand the document?
 - If not, which parts are hard to understand?
 - Why are these parts hard to understand?
- > Is the document useful?
 - Why?
 - Why not?
- > What are the main points in this document?
 - What would you know how to do after reading the document?
- > Is the information in a logical order?
 - If not, how could it be improved?
- > Does the document make you want to read it?

Use the feedback to write another draft.

SECOND DRAFT

Tell workers how and where you have used the feedback they gave you. You may need to explain why some information has been included and other information has not.

If you have added new information, explain why. For example, you might have received more up-to-date information from manufacturers and suppliers.

TEST THE DOCUMENT

To find out how well the document works, you could:

1. ask people to read the document, and
2. watch workers as they follow the process or procedure the document describes, and
3. talk about whether or not the document worked well for them.

Appendix 6 suggests how to check whether workers understand your document.

Appendix 7 is a checklist you can use to make sure that your document is clear and does what it is designed to do.

You could test the document with:

- > frontline workers
- > supervisors
- > health and safety representatives
- > union representatives.

Add the names of people who gave you feedback if this will make workers more likely to trust the document. Ask permission to use their names.

Example:

Written by Huia Johnson, with information from Sam Nightingale and Bill Asiata.

FINAL DRAFT

- > Decide on the final layout, design and graphics.
- > Ask someone who has not seen the document to look for spelling mistakes and other errors.
- > Use the suggestions in Appendix 6.6 and Appendix 6.7 to check the document. Make changes based on the feedback that you get.
- > Follow your workplace's processes for quality assurance, document checking, version control and document approval.

HOW WILL YOU KNOW WHETHER THE NEW DOCUMENT IS EFFECTIVE?

You need to know whether the document is understood, being used and achieving its purpose.

Work out how you will know and record whether the new document is effective. For example, “Supervisors and managers have seen all workers using the new procedure”.

Look over the document with workers as part of your annual health and safety policy reviews.

You could:

- > watch workers as they read the document and do what the document tells them to do
- > then talk about whether or not the document worked well for them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN REVIEWING THE DOCUMENT

- > Has the document been shared with all workers?
- > Have workers been trained in the new policy, process or procedure?
- > Is the document being used the way that we expected it to be?
 - How is it being used?
 - If it is not being used, why not?
- > How have workers reacted to the document?
- > What effect has the document had on workers' behaviour?

If you are updating an existing document, first review it using the questions above. Find out about any changes that the updated document should mention. For example:

- > changes to your health and safety system – such as new hazards, controls or practices
- > changes to the law
- > changes to equipment or products

Note the date that changes were made, or the version number – or both.

- > For example:
Chainsaw Safety Policy, Version 3
Updated February 5, 2015

04/

SHARING THE DOCUMENT

IN THIS SECTION:

- 4.1 Stage 5: How will you share and use the document?

Think about how you will share and use the document at your workplace.

4.1 STAGE 5: HOW WILL YOU SHARE AND USE THE DOCUMENT?

WHO WILL YOU ASK TO INTRODUCE AND TALK ABOUT A NEW DOCUMENT TO WORKERS?

Consider:

- > supervisors
- > managers
- > trainers
- > other staff.

HOW AND WHEN WILL THE DOCUMENT BE USED?

For example:

- > on the job
- > during meetings and briefings
- > during training
- > as part of the induction package for new workers.

WILL YOU PRINT THE DOCUMENT?

You could:

- > add it to health and safety manuals and handbooks
- > display the document on notice-boards at your workplace
- > leave a copy of the document in your tea-room.

WILL YOU SHARE IT ON YOUR INTRANET?

KEEP THE DOCUMENT UPDATED

Make sure that the document is kept up to date. Decide how often you will review it – for example, every three or six months? Once a year?

05/

**WHERE CAN
YOU FIND MORE
INFORMATION?**

SECTION 5.0 // WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Get in touch with our Guidance and Standards team if you have any questions:
guidanceandstandards@worksafe.govt.nz 0800-030-040

FURTHER INFORMATION - NEW ZEALAND

Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)	<p>www.acc.co.nz</p> <p>ACC health and safety resources</p> <p>Includes <i>'How to implement safer workplace practices'</i> - ACC366</p>
Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)	<p>www.epa.govt.nz</p> <p>Government agency responsible for regulatory functions concerning New Zealand's environmental management, including hazardous substances and new organisms</p>
Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand	<p>www.mentalhealth.org.nz</p> <p>Campaigns and services that cover all aspects of mental health and wellbeing</p> <p>www.workingwell.co.nz</p> <p>Working Well programme: services to support and improve workplace mental health</p>
Office for Disability Issues, Ministry of Social Development	<p><i>'Make your communications more accessible'</i></p> <p>Advice for writers, communicators, designers and production houses on presenting information in a variety of ways to make it accessible to disabled people as well as to others</p>
WorkSafe New Zealand	<p>www.worksafe.govt.nz</p> <p>WorkSafe health and safety templates</p> <p><i>'What you need to know about health and safety'</i></p> <p>Covers six topics employers have asked for help with: health and safety, hiring new employees, pay, holidays and leave, performance management and ending employment relationships. Includes checklists and links to further information.</p>

HEALTH AND SAFETY WEBSITES IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Many countries have their own health and safety websites; here are a few examples. Each country has its own health and safety legislation – their law may differ from New Zealand law.

CanOSH (Canada)	CanOSH - links to workplace health and safety publications
Health and Safety Executive (United Kingdom's workplace health and safety regulator)	Topics and industries: specialist health and safety advice and guidance
Safe Work Australia (Australia)	Safe Work Australia: publications and resources
WorkSafe Victoria (now called the Victorian WorkCover Authority [VWA]) (Australia)	<p><i>'Communicating occupational health and safety across languages'</i></p> <p>A practical guide for employers. How to communicate occupational health and safety messages to workers who speak and read languages other than English.</p>

06/

APPENDICES

IN THIS SECTION:

- 6.1 Guidelines for instruction documents**
- 6.2 Other formats for workers not able to read regular print**
- 6.3 Simple ways to say things**
- 6.4 Plain English explanations of key health and safety terms**
- 6.5 Examples of 'before' and 'after' documents**
- 6.6 How to check workers understand your document**
- 6.7 Checklist for health and safety documents**

6.1 GUIDELINES FOR INSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS

Instruction documents tell people what to do and in what order:

- > Write out the procedure step by step. Watch how the steps are done in your workplace if you are not sure about the right order.
- > Start each step with an action word (verb) and give each step a number.

Example:

1. **Deliver** all ducting to the site.
2. **Store** in areas set aside by the builder.
3. **Clear** work area of all obstacles.
4. **Join** ductwork on floor in lengths less than nine metres.

- > Put steps in a logical order.
- > Put the main idea first.
- > If instructions are for a particular task, put the task first and then use bullet points for the steps.

Example:

When cutting, drilling or shaping fibre insulation:

- > **wear** protective clothing
- > **use** a suitable dust mask
- > **avoid** contact with your eyes

- > Use a similar structure throughout the document.
- > Put any extra information needed to make an instruction clear into a box, or use italics.

Example:

Safety Note: *Effective beam stops have a matte finish to stop reflection. Earth, wood, plywood, brick, mortar, concrete or plasterboard surfaces are suitable. Roughen the surface of metal beam stops.*

6.2 OTHER FORMATS FOR WORKERS NOT ABLE TO READ REGULAR PRINT

All workers should know what is in your health and safety documents. If workers have difficulty reading regular print, you can share information in other formats.

WHY SHOULD WE PROVIDE INFORMATION IN OTHER FORMATS?

Some workers may:

- > be blind or have low vision
- > have an intellectual or other learning disability
- > be unable to hold documents or turn pages because of a physical disability
- > have difficulty accessing information on the internet.

OTHER FORMATS FOR SHARING HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Ask workers about the best way for you to share information with them. Here are some other ways to consider.

AUDIO FILES

Workers who are unable to read print may be able to listen to digital audio files shared as MP3 files, burned onto a CD or DVD, or downloaded from a website. (But be aware that some workers may have difficulty watching or hearing audio-visual presentations.)

BRAILLE

Braille is used by people who are blind or have low vision. Everything that can be read in print can be produced in braille – including labels, forms, signs and documents.

Braille uses raised dots that stand for individual letters, combinations of letters, punctuation signs and other print symbols. Some people use computers that display text on a Braille device instead of on a monitor.

CAPTIONING

Captioning translates sound (such as speech and sound effects) into captions that appear on a screen. Captions make information accessible to people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

LARGE PRINT

Large print materials are one way to share written information with workers who have low vision (partial sight). Large print materials should be prepared with a font (print) size that is between 16 and 22 points.

NEW ZEALAND SIGN LANGUAGE

Written information is not a suitable or reliable way to communicate with all deaf people. New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is an official language of New Zealand, alongside English and Māori. Work with NZSL interpreters, or use NZSL DVDs, to share health and safety information.

POSTERS, PHOTOS AND SIGNS

Illustrations and photos can be an excellent way to get a message across – for example, posters or signs to warn workers about a trip hazard.

SCREEN READERS

Screen-reading software converts text that is displayed on a computer monitor to voice (using a speech-synthesiser) or to Braille.

SPECIALISED EQUIPMENT

Some disabled people use specialised equipment (sometimes called ‘assistive equipment’ or ‘assistive technology’) to communicate and to get information.

This equipment includes:

- > speech synthesisers and speech recognition software
- > screen readers, screen magnifiers, screen projectors
- > amplified or volume control telephones
- > hands-free data entry and response selection
- > word prediction software
- > keyboard controllers
- > book holders and page turners
- > standardised icons.

For more information:

Make your communications more accessible

Office for Disability Issues, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand

Making information accessible

Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, Ontario, Canada

6.3 SIMPLE WAYS TO SAY THINGS

COMPLEX WORDS AND PHRASES	WORDS TO USE INSTEAD
absence of	no
accomplish	do
accordingly, therefore	so
additional	extra; more
adhere to	follow
adjustments	changes
administer	manage
allocate	give; divide
apparent	clear; plain
appropriate	right; suitable; best fit
as applicable	when necessary
at a later time	later
at all times	always
at the present time	now
because of the fact that	because
by means of	by
calculate	work out
caustic	burning; corrosive
comfortably	easily
commence	start; begin
competence	know-how; skill; ability
competent	has the right mix of knowledge, skills and experience for the job; knows about the hazards and work practices needed to work with [this equipment or situation]
complete in all respects	complete
comply	meet [law or instructions]; you must [do this]; this must be followed/done
concepts	ideas
condemned	unusable; removed from use; not allowed to be used
consume	use; eat and drink
contain	has

COMPLEX WORDS AND PHRASES	WORDS TO USE INSTEAD
culture	beliefs; attitudes; behaviour; the way we do things around here
currently	now
designated place	chosen place; right place; [name of] place
despite the fact that	even though
described herein	shown
discontinue	stop; end
dispatch	send
due to the fact that	because; since
duration of	length of
egress	exit
eliminate	remove; replace (with)
encase	inside; within
enquire	ask
ensure	make sure
estimate	work out
examine	check
exclude	leave out
forbidden	must not; not allowed
for the purpose of	for
for this reason	because
fragments	pieces; bits
further down the track	later
good practice	doing [something] well; the way something should be done
giving rise to	causing
hinder	get in the way of; restrict
horseplay	mucking about; playing; fooling around
identical	same
immediately	at once
in accordance with	according to
in addition	and
in conjunction with	with

COMPLEX WORDS AND PHRASES	WORDS TO USE INSTEAD
in reference to	about
in the event that	if
inadequate	not (good/fast/safe) enough; incorrect; not suitable
incident	event; happening
indicate	show
inspect	look at; check
legislation	law; structure; rule
limbs	arms and legs; branches (of a tree)
litter	rubbish; leave/drop rubbish
maintenance	care; repairs; keeping it working; looking after
mindset	attitude
minimise	reduce; limit
multiple	many
not adversely affect	not harm/damage/hurt you
notification	alert; notice; report
notify	tell; let [someone] know what happened
observe	see; notice; obey
on a regular basis	regularly
operationalise	do
obstruct	get in the way; block
orifice	hole; opening
outcome	result
participate	involve; join in; take part
particle	bit; piece; dust
practicable	practical; doable; able to be done
prevent	stop; don't allow
prime consideration	most important thing
prohibit	ban; stop; make illegal
protection	safety measure
prior to	before

COMPLEX WORDS AND PHRASES	WORDS TO USE INSTEAD
portion	part
procedures	rules; ways
reason for	why
recognise	know; be aware of
rectify	fix
regarding	about
regulation	rule
relocate	move
repetitive	repeated; again and again
required to	must
rough handling	careless handling; moving something and not caring whether you damage it
shall	must
so as to	to
spillage	spill; leak; mess; waste
stationary	still; not moving; fixed in position
subsequent to	after
sustain	keep going
sustain an injury	injured
task to be performed	job
the nature of	the kind of
utilise	use
unauthorised	not allowed
undertaken	done
vandalised	tagged; broken/destroyed on purpose; defaced
visible	seen
whilst, while	at the same time; when
with a potential to	could; might
without further delay	right now; right away; immediately

WHERE DID THE LIST OF COMPLEX WORDS COME FROM?

Some of the words in the 'complex' columns came from the many plain English lists on the internet. Other words came from research carried out by Workbase (2013): *Complex health and safety paperwork and literacy skills gaps put employees at risk*.¹

Workbase found that unfamiliar words and formal language confused many employees. Some people could read basic information but did not know words such as 'maintenance', 'horseplay' and 'rough handling'. The report includes the complete list of words and terms that workers did not understand.

Workers who did not have strong reading and writing skills:

- > did not understand the purpose of health and safety documents
- > could not identify the important points in long or complex documents
- > could not accurately explain what the documents meant
- > would be unlikely to have the confidence or language skills to ask for an explanation when they did not understand something.

Making health and safety documents easier to understand will help our combined efforts to reduce New Zealand's unacceptably high rates of workplace fatalities, serious harm injuries and work-related disease and illness.

¹ Retrieved from <http://www.workbase.org.nz/media/60474/hslrs0813.pdf> 24/07/2014

6.4 PLAIN ENGLISH EXPLANATIONS OF KEY HEALTH AND SAFETY TERMS

KEY HEALTH AND SAFETY TERMS	THESE EXPLANATIONS OF KEY HEALTH AND SAFETY TERMS USE EVERYDAY LANGUAGE. THEY ARE NOT LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS AS DEFINED IN THE HEALTH AND SAFETY IN EMPLOYMENT ACT. USE THESE EXPLANATIONS TO HELP BUILD WORKER UNDERSTANDING.
Accident	An event that (a) causes any person to be harmed; or (b) in different circumstances, might have caused any person to be harmed.
All practicable steps	What is reasonably able to be done to control hazards. Takes into account things such as the likelihood and severity of any harm that might occur, and the availability and cost of ways to prevent harm.
Competent person	A person who is trained, qualified, experienced and skilled to do their job safely.
Contractor	Someone a person pays to do a job but who is not employed by that person.
Current state of knowledge	What is commonly known about something at this time.
Duty holder	A person who has a legal obligation in relation to health and safety.
Eliminate	Remove a hazard.
Enforcement tools	Prosecutions or infringement notices used to impose a penalty. Inspectors also use prohibition notices, improvement notices and written warnings to require improved safety standards.
Guarding	Using something (such as a screen) to stop someone being harmed by a machine.
Harm	Illness or injury, or both.
Hazard	Something that is an actual or potential cause of harm, including an object, activity or event.
Hazard controls	Actions that are done to eliminate, isolate and minimise known hazards to work activities.
Hazard identification and assessment	Finding hazards in a workplace that might harm people and then deciding what to do to manage the risk of harm.
Incident	An event which could have harmed someone. Also known as a 'near miss'.
Injury	Damage or hurt to someone.
Investigation	Gathers information about an accident or incident to find out why the accident or incident happened and how to stop it from happening again.
Isolate	Separate a hazard that cannot be eliminated. For example: remove a noisy machine to a place where no-one can hear it; remove non-necessary workers from a work zone when hazardous work is being done, such as chemical spraying.
Job safety analysis; safe work method statement; safe operating procedures	A step-by-step description of how to do a task, job or activity safely.

KEY HEALTH AND SAFETY TERMS	THESE EXPLANATIONS OF KEY HEALTH AND SAFETY TERMS USE EVERYDAY LANGUAGE. THEY ARE NOT LEGAL DESCRIPTIONS AS DEFINED IN THE HEALTH AND SAFETY IN EMPLOYMENT ACT. USE THESE EXPLANATIONS TO HELP BUILD WORKER UNDERSTANDING.
Machinery	Machines (including power tools or vehicles) that help you do a job.
Minimise	Reduce the risk of a hazard occurring when workers are exposed to it, if eliminating or isolating it is not possible. For example, wearing personal protective equipment reduces the risk of exposure to bloodborne viruses.
Near miss	An incident which did not result in injury, illness or damage, but potentially could have.
Notifiable event	An event in the workplace that WorkSafe must be notified about. This includes the death of a person, a notifiable injury or illness (requiring immediate treatment or hospitalisation) and a notifiable incident (exposing people to a serious risk to their health and safety).
Occupational health	Occupational health focuses on protecting workers' physical and mental health and ensuring their wellbeing in the workplace. Identifying, assessing and controlling health risks can prevent ill health caused by workplace conditions.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Safety gear (clothing or equipment) that you wear or use for protection from a potential hazard. For example, respirators, gloves, ear plugs, hard hats, safety glasses and safety shoes.
Principal	A person who engages contractors to do work.
Risk	The possibility that death, injury or illness might occur when exposed to a hazard.
Safety Data Sheet	Information about how a product could harm you and how to safely store, use and handle the product.
Serious harm	<p>An injury or an illness created by work-related activity that causes permanent or temporary severe loss of bodily function, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > amputation > burns requiring specialist attention > loss of consciousness – from lack of oxygen, or from absorbing, inhaling or eating/drinking a substance > damage to hearing or eyesight > poisoning > respiratory disease or cancer > death. <p>Any injury or illness that causes a person to be in hospital for 48 hours or more is also considered 'serious harm'.</p>
Significant hazard	A hazard that could cause serious harm – depending on how often and how much the worker is exposed to the hazard. Some harm may not be obvious until months or years after a worker has been exposed to the hazard.

6.5 EXAMPLES OF 'BEFORE' AND 'AFTER' DOCUMENTS

'BEFORE' EXAMPLE: EYE PROTECTION POLICY

Company logo here

EYE PROTECTION

Dust and other airborne particles and debris are a major cause of injury in our workplace. Serious injuries from foreign materials in the eye are very common and can lead to permanent damage or blindness.

RISKS INCLUDE:

Being struck in the eye by flying particles, debris or fragments.

Moving or stationary objects striking or piercing the eye.

People other than person working on a piece of equipment exposed to dust and particulates.

YOU MUST:

- > Always wear safety glasses to protect the eyes when using tools to sand, grind or clean.
- > Make sure the arms of the glasses fit comfortably over the ears and the frames should be as close to the face as possible and properly supported by the bridge of the nose.
- > Clean your safety glasses daily and avoid rough handling to prevent scratches.
- > If badly scratched, damaged or broken then see the Warehouse Manager at your earliest convenience for a replacement pair.

'AFTER' EXAMPLE: EYE PROTECTION POLICY

Company logo here

EYE PROTECTION (SAFETY GLASSES) POLICY

This policy tells you what you must do to protect your eyes in our workplace.

WHY IS EYE PROTECTION IMPORTANT?

Wearing eye protection keeps your eyes safe. In our workplace, 'eye protection' means 'safety glasses'.

Most eye injuries in our workplace are caused by things you cannot see, such as dust and very small pieces of grit. You can easily hurt your eyes. Sometimes the damage lasts for the rest of your life.

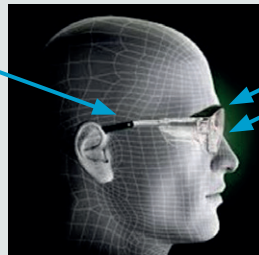
WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOT WEAR SAFETY GLASSES?

- > If you have a bad injury to your eyes, you could go blind in one eye or both.
- > You may not be able to see properly.
- > You may not be able to do your job.
- > Your eyes may get very sore and red.
- > You may need to take time off work.
- > An eye injury could make it hard for you to do things that you enjoy, such as playing sport, reading, or watching television.

WEARING SAFETY GLASSES AT WORK

- > You must always wear your safety glasses in the manufacturing area.
- > Make sure your safety glasses fit you properly.

The arms of your safety glasses should fit over your ears and not slide off.



Safety glasses must fit close to your face so dust, grit and other things can't get into your eyes.

- > If you wear glasses to help you see, make sure your safety glasses fit over your other glasses.
- > Look after your safety glasses. Clean your safety glasses at least once a day using cold water and a drop of dishwashing liquid. Dry with a clean soft cloth. Keep your safety glasses in a case.
- > If you need to take your safety glasses off (for cleaning, or to wipe your face) go to the lunch room or restroom.
- > Tell your supervisor right away if you lose your safety glasses or they get scratched or broken. Your supervisor will get you another pair.

REPORTING ACCIDENTS OR INCIDENTS

Always tell your supervisor about accidents or incidents. For example, if your safety glasses are hit by a piece of wood or metal, or if your eyes get sore even if you are wearing safety glasses.

Version:

Date updated: 21/12/2014

Approved by:

Next review: 21/06/2015

‘BEFORE’ EXAMPLE: HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

XYZ Ltd is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment for everyone who uses our premises as a place of work or visits our workplace on business. We will ensure provision of information, training and supervision. We will take responsibility for health and safety procedures with the expectation that employees are cognizant of their responsibilities and comply with the relevant policies.

Management will:

- > Set health and safety objectives and performance criteria for all employees
- > Set health and safety objectives for all work areas
- > Review health and safety objectives and performance on a regular basis
- > Ensure that all new employees, contractors and visitors to the workplace familiarise themselves with and understand our safety procedures
- > Encourage accurate/timely reporting of all workplace incidents and injuries
- > Investigate all reported incidents and injuries to identify all contributing factors and formulate plans for corrective action, where indicated
- > Encourage the early reporting of any pain or discomfort
- > Provide rehabilitation plans that ensure a safe, early and durable return to work
- > Identify all existing and new hazards and take all practical steps to eliminate, isolate or minimise the exposure to any significant hazards
- > Ensure that all employees are made aware of the hazards in their work areas and are adequately trained so they can carry out their duties in a safe manner
- > Encourage employee consultation and active participation in all health and safety matters
- > Facilitate the election of employee health and safety representatives
- > Ensure that all contractors and subcontractors are actively managing health and safety for themselves and their employees
- > Motivate participation in a system of continuous improvement, including annual reviews of policies, processes and procedures
- > Meet our obligations under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (as amended by the Amendment Act 2002), the Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995, codes of practice and any relevant standards or guidelines.

XYZ LTD EXPECTS EVERY EMPLOYEE TO SHARE OUR COMMITMENT TO WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Every manager, supervisor or foreperson is accountable to the employer for the health and safety of employees working under their direction. It is XYZ’s expectation that each employee will help maintain a safe and healthy workplace by observing our health and safety policy and following all safe work procedures, rules and instructions AND reporting all incidents, injuries and hazards to the appropriate person in a timely fashion.

The Health and Safety Committee includes representatives from senior management and union and elected health and safety representatives. The committee is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and planning health and safety policies, procedures, systems and practices.

Approved by: _____ CEO/General Manager Dated: _____

'AFTER' EXAMPLE: HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

At our workplace everyone must look after their own safety and the safety of other people.

This is what we will do to keep everyone safe and healthy at work, and to get better at being safe every year.

To keep healthy and safe, everyone at our workplace will:

- > Wear and use safety protection
- > Follow all instructions, rules, procedures and safe ways of working
- > Report any pain or discomfort
- > Report accidents and near misses
- > If injured, work with a manager to get better and come back to work

To keep people healthy and safe, managers will:

- > Work with workers to improve health and safety
- > Do everything possible to remove or reduce the risk of harm
- > Find out what caused incidents and injuries and prevent them from happening again
- > Make sure all accidents and near misses are written down in the Accident Register
- > Train everyone about hazards and risks so people can work safely
- > Make health and safety a key part of their job
- > Keep improving the health and safety system in our workplace
- > Help people who are injured to get better and come back to work
- > Make sure contractors and sub-contractors have safe ways of working

To keep people healthy and safe, managers need to:

- > Know about all the hazards and risks at work
- > Know about and follow all health and safety laws (legislation)
- > Know about safe ways to work
- > Have health and safety goals
- > Review our workplace's health and safety system and goals every year
- > Help us to get health and safety representatives elected

Our **Health and Safety Committee** includes workers, unions and managers. Everyone on the committee works together to improve health and safety in our workplace.

Approved by CEO/General Manager: _____

Date: _____

EXAMPLE OF HOW TO MAKE A LONG DOCUMENT SHORTER: SAFETY DATA SHEET

The law requires you to keep some long documents at your workplace, such as safety data sheets. You could also write a summary of the most important information from long documents – the things that all workers must know.

- > If you put the most important information onto one page it will be easier for workers to read and understand.
- > Use diagrams and symbols as well as words.
- > Make sure that the one-page summary is attached to the longer document.

Here is Page 1 (of 8 pages) of the nitric acid 98% safety data sheet. On the next page is a one-page summary of the most important information. The summary would be attached to the front of the full eight-page document.

Safety Data Sheet

Formerly
**ORICA
CHEMICALS**

1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE MATERIAL AND SUPPLIER

Product Name: NITRIC ACID 98%

Other name(s): White Fuming Nitric Acid; Fuming Nitric Acid, White; Nitric Acid 98.5%.

Recommended use of the chemical and restrictions on use: General chemical/ingredient.

Supplier: Chemicals Australia Operations Pty Ltd (New Zealand Branch)
NZBN: 9429041465226
Street Address: 166 Totara Street
 Mt Maunganui South
 New Zealand

Telephone Number: +64 9 368 2700
Facsimile: +64 9 368 2710
Emergency Telephone: 0 800 734 607 (ALL HOURS)





2. HAZARDS IDENTIFICATION

Classified as a Dangerous Good according to NZS 5433:2012 Transport of Dangerous Goods on Land.
 Classified as hazardous according to criteria in the HS (Minimum Degrees of Hazard) Regulations 2001.

SIGNAL WORD: DANGER

Subclasses:
 Subclass 5.1.1 Category C (Oxidising Substances that are solids or liquids; low hazard) - Oxidising Substances.
 Subclass 6.1 Category D - Substances which are acutely toxic.
 Subclass 6.9 Category B - Substances that are harmful to human target organs or systems.
 Subclass 8.1 Category A - Substances that are corrosive to metals.
 Subclass 8.2 Category A - Substances that are corrosive to dermal tissue.
 Subclass 8.3 Category A - Substances that are corrosive to ocular tissue.
 Subclass 9.1 Category D - Substances that are slightly harmful to the aquatic environment or are otherwise designed for biocidal action.

Approval number: HSR001515



Hazard Statement(s):
 H272 May intensify fire; oxidizer.
 H290 May be corrosive to metals.
 H314 Causes severe skin burns and eye damage.
 H332 Harmful if inhaled.
 H373 May cause damage to organs through prolonged or repeated exposure.

Product Name: NITRIC ACID 98%
Substance No: 000031051501

Page 1 of 8

Issued: 23/03/2015
Version: 6

YOU COULD ATTACH THIS SUMMARY PAGE TO THE FRONT OF THE SAFETY DATA SHEET.

Name:	Nitric Acid 98%
Use:	General chemical/ingredient
PPE to be worn:	
Eye/Face:	Wear chemical goggles, full face shield.
Hands:	Wear elbow-length watertight gloves.
Body:	Wear overalls, splash apron and rubber boots.
Breathing:	If there is a risk of breathing in (inhaling) nitric acid, wear an air-supplied mask.
HSNO CLASSIFICATION	
5.1C	Oxidising substances that are liquids or solids.
6.1D	Substances that are acutely toxic.
6.9B	Substances that are harmful to human target organs or systems.
8.1A	Substances that are corrosive to metals.
8.2A	Substances that are corrosive to skin.
8.3A	Substances that are corrosive to eyes.
9.1D	Substances that are slightly harmful to the aquatic environment.
Health Effects:	Exposure to nitric acid causes severe skin burns and eye damage. Harmful if breathed in (inhaled). Prolonged or repeated contact may cause damage to organs.
Spill/leak:	Clear area of all unprotected personnel. Increase ventilation. Advise local emergency services if nitric acid gets into sewers or waterways.
Eyes:	Hold eyelids apart and immediately flush eyes with lukewarm water for 15 minutes. Get help immediately from a medical professional such as a doctor or nurse. Continue to wash eyes with large amounts of water until medical help is available.
If eaten or drunk:	Immediately wash out mouth with large amounts of water. If swallowed, do NOT make person throw up (vomit). Give water to drink. Get help immediately from a medical professional such as a doctor or nurse.
Skin:	If spilt on large areas of skin or hair, immediately drench with running water and remove clothing. Continue to wash skin and hair with plenty of water and soap until the National Poisons Centre or a doctor says to stop. Cover skin burns with a clean, dry dressing until medical help is available.
Clean up:	Clean up immediately. Wear protective equipment to prevent skin and eye contact and breathing in fumes (vapours). Work upwind or increase fresh air. Contain: prevent runoff into drains and waterways by using absorbent (soil, sand or other inert material). Neutralise with lime or soda ash. Collect and seal in properly labelled containers or drums for disposal. Wash area down with excess water.

6.6 HOW TO CHECK WORKERS UNDERSTAND YOUR DOCUMENT

You want your document to be clear so that workers can understand it. When you give a document to a worker to check, say something like this:

Here is a new document. I'd like you to read it to check the document is clear. If you don't understand the document then I need your help please to show me where the document is not clear so I can fix it.

Here are a couple of other ways to check that people understand the document.

DEMONSTRATION

Ask a worker to show you the steps as they read through the document. If what they do does not match what you have written, the document is not clear. Talk to the person about their understanding of each step so you understand where and how you need to rewrite the document.

THINKING ALOUD

Ask a worker to read the document a short piece at a time. After they have read each piece get them to tell you what they think the document is saying. This is called 'thinking aloud'.

Say something like this:

Please read this part of the document and then tell me what you think it is saying. For example, this part is about pre-start checks for your forklift. When you get to that part I need you to say to me - this says I have to do these things ...

If what the worker tells you does not match what your document says then the document is not clear.

Explain to the person what you were trying to say in the document and ask them what they would say instead of what you have written.

6.7 CHECKLIST FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY DOCUMENTS

Use this checklist to make sure that your document is clear and does what it is designed to do.

If you answer 'no' to any question, write down what you need to change – or explain why no change is needed.

PURPOSE	Y	N
Is it clear what the document is for?		
IF NO: what can you change?		
YOUR READERS	Y	N
Is it clear who needs to read the document?		
Have you discussed with people who need to read the document:		
> what they like about the document?		
> what they do not like about the document?		
> what they would like in a new document?		
> who they would talk to about the document?		
IF NO: what can you change?		

CONTENT	Y	N
Is the document accurate in relation to:		
> your workplace health and safety system?		
> the Health and Safety in Employment Act?		
> the Regulations?		
> WorkSafe's Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs) & guidelines?		
> your workplace risks and hazards?		
> the activities and tasks at your workplace?		
IF NO: what can you change?		
THE DOCUMENT	Y	N
Have you made it clear which parts of the document are instructions and which parts are information?		
Have you used a verb (eg 'stop') at the beginning of each instruction?		
Have you used:		
> simple, everyday words – especially to explain technical terms?		
> examples to explain difficult ideas, processes or procedures?		
> explanations of abbreviations or acronyms (eg ACC)?		
> short sentences?		
> active voice?		
> short paragraphs with one main message?		
> bullets or simple tables for key points?		
> a clear logical order?		
> subheadings so readers can easily find what they need to know?		
> a plain font such as Arial, Calibri or Verdana?		
> different font sizes for headings and subheadings?		
> bold for emphasis (not underlining or block capitals)?		
> plenty of space between lines?		
> white space so document does not appear too cluttered?		
> relevant visuals such as clearly labelled photographs, diagrams, graphs or charts?		
> limited colour, especially if the document will be printed or photocopied in black and white?		
IF NO: what can you change?		

TESTING AND FEEDBACK	Y	N
Have you tested the document with:		
> people who will need to read and use it?		
> others interested in health and safety, such as the Health and Safety Committee?		
Have you asked managers to comment on the document?		
Have you included feedback in your latest version?		
IF NO: what can you change?		
QUALITY CONTROL	Y	N
Has more than one person checked the document for spelling mistakes and other errors?		
Have you followed your workplace's processes for:		
> quality assurance?		
> version control (to keep track of changes to the document)?		
> approval and sign-off?		
IF NO: what can you change?		
USING THE DOCUMENT	Y	N
Have you decided how you will:		
> introduce the document?		
> train workers to use the document?		
> find out whether workers understand the document?		
> know whether workers are using what they have learned from the document?		
IF NO: what can you change?		

OTHER COMMENTS

A large, empty, light gray rectangular area intended for writing other comments. It occupies the majority of the page below the header.

DISCLAIMER

WorkSafe New Zealand has made every effort to ensure the information contained in this publication is reliable, but makes no guarantee of its completeness. WorkSafe may change the contents of this guide at any time without notice.

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