

What is a Safe Work Procedure?

YOURSAFETY@IRP - TOOLBOX DISCUSSION

A Safe Work Procedure (SWP) is a written document that specifies best practice when performing a task and outlines the hazards, risks and associated controls measures to be used to ensure the task/activity is conducted in a way that minimises the risk of injury.

Other terms for an SWP you may have heard used in the workplace include:

- Safe Operating Procedures (SOP)
- Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)

These procedures assist in the training and orientation of employees and especially new workers to the hazards of the tasks to be performed, as well as providing them with the rules necessary to ensure that they can perform their work in a safe manner.

Safe Work Procedures can also be used as a tool to test for competency in the performance of the task.

One of the most important Safe Work Procedures in a workplace is an Isolation Procedure. An isolation procedure is a set of predetermined steps that should be followed to keep plant and its components from being set in motion or to prevent the release of stored energy, in order to protect person(s) during plant inspection, repair, maintenance or cleaning activities.

As part of this procedure, most workplaces use two types of isolation tags to prevent unauthorised people from operating plant and equipment. These are Personal Danger Tags/Locks and Out of Service Tags.



Out of Service Tags

An Out of Service tag is a notice that designates plant or equipment as out of operation for repairs and alteration, or for plant that is still being commissioned/installed.

Note: While an out of service tag is attached to the plant or equipment, it should NEVER be operated.

Prior to attaching an out of service tag, all required details on the tag should be clearly entered in the spaces provided, with emphasis given to the reason for placing the tag. Tags should be securely fixed and clearly visible.

Note: Only the person authorised to carry out the repairs or installation can determine when the equipment is safe to operate and can then remove the tag.



Personal Danger Tags/Locks

Personal Danger tags or locks are usually attached to an isolation point (i.e. electrical switch board, mains power switch) with the name and details of the person that attached the tag/lock (i.e. the person performing the maintenance work).

Note: Only the authorised person whose name appears on the tag can remove it.

It is your responsibility to follow all Safe Work Procedures that are in place at your work site. You must tell your supervisor if you don't understand the procedure or require further training to feel confident.

This is especially important for those tasks that are high risk. If there is no procedure in place for high risk tasks you are required to perform talk to your supervisor about developing one.

Talk to your site supervisor and your IRP consultant if you have any questions about Safe Work Procedures or general work site safety – Tel. 9477 7999