Staff Responsibilities – Supervisors

The HS336 Health and Safety (HS) Responsibility, Authority and Accountability Procedure outlines the individual responsibilities and accountabilities for various levels of staff. Staff should read this document to familiarise themselves of their own responsibilities. Below is an extract.

Supervisors
Supervisors are responsible for implementing the HSMS within their area of responsibility and taking steps to ensure that hazards are identified, eliminated or minimised as far as is reasonably practicable. They have authority to make decisions and act on any matter of health and safety management within their area of responsibility.

Depending on the area of responsibility, supervisors can have all or some of the following responsibilities:

General
- Provide adequate supervision commensurate with the level of risk and competency of workers.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed and regularly reviewed for tasks/projects/activities that pose a health and safety risk.
- Ensure that risks are controlled so far as is reasonably practicable and in accordance with the hierarchy of control.
- Ensure workers report health and safety Hazards and Incidents.
- Investigate all hazards or incidents reported in their area of responsibility and take corrective action.
- Assess the risks for all new equipment (or other items that could pose a health and safety risk) before it is introduced to the workplace.
- Consult on health and safety matters with all workers including prior to proposed changes in the workplace.
- Ensure Safe Working Procedures (SWPs) have been written and communicated for all equipment and processes that pose health and safety risk.
- Enforce the safety requirements in the local area (for example wearing of PPCE).
- Adhere to any legal notifications, licences or other legislative requirements.
- Ensure that any approvals, licenses, certifications etc required are in place.
- Monitor that any licenses, notifications to regulators etc. are being complied with as relevant in the local area.
- Ensure that any legislative changes or changes to Australian standards are reflected in local documents.
- Ensure that where contractors are engaged directly by the local area that their health and safety responsibilities are documented.
- Communicate the emergency procedures to all workers.
- Ensure an appropriate number of floor wardens and first aid officers have been selected for the local area.
- Ensure appropriate emergency equipment is available in the local area as appropriate to the risk (for example first aid, chemical spill kits etc.) and that training is provided in emergency response.
- Ensure engineering controls are tested for their effectiveness.
- Conduct inspections of the workplace in their area of responsibility at a frequency based on risk but at least quarterly.
- Conduct at least annual audits of the systems used to manage chemical, biological and radiation risks.

Documents and Records
- Ensure the Health and Safety Document Control Procedure is followed and only the latest version of risk assessment and SWPs are being used.
• Ensure all health and safety records including workplace inspections, training records, maintenance records for equipment; audit reports etc. are easily accessible.
• Maintain all records according to UNSW Records & Archives policies and procedures or related legislation (for example health records, GMO application assessments are kept for 8 years).

Training
• Identify and document tasks which require the worker to have specific skills/competencies and/or specific medical requirements.
• Induct all staff and post graduate students (as applicable) and enforce access requirements (i.e. no induction no access to certain areas).
• Provide job specific health and safety training, for example training on safe working procedures.
• Ensure competency is demonstrated prior to staff or students conducting certain higher risk tasks.
• Ensure staff and students receive refresher training as required.

Hazardous manual tasks
• Identify and risk manage all hazardous manual tasks this includes lifting/pushing/pulling and repetitive tasks (e.g. computer use, pipetting etc.)
• Ensure risks are controlled through mechanical aids, task modification and ergonomic furniture.
• Ensure workers who undertake hazardous manual tasks attend relevant training

Electrical hazards
• Ensure all portable plug-in electrical equipment is inspected, tested and tagged at the required intervals.

Plant and Equipment
• Ensure that risk management forms and SWPs are available for each plant and equipment that could pose health and safety risk.
• Pre/post purchasing checklist.
• Maintain a plant register/Inspection testing and monitoring schedule to assist keep track of inspection and maintenance schedules for equipment.

Hazardous substances
• Ensure all chemicals are listed on the laboratory chemical register.
• Ensure up-to-date (i.e. within 5 years) SDS is readily available for each chemical.
• Ensure all chemicals are labelled as per the UNSW Guideline for Labelling of Hazardous Substances.
• Ensure there is a documented risk assessment for all activities involving hazardous substances or dangerous goods.
• Ensure dangerous goods are stored in dangerous goods cabinets as necessary and segregation of incompatible dangerous goods occurs.
• Ensure spill kits (including appropriate personal protective equipment such as chemically resistant gloves, goggles and respirator with cartridges) and first aid facilities are readily available.
• Establish the need for health surveillance and implement where required.

Biological Hazards
• Ensure all biological hazards are listed in the laboratory biohazard register.
• Ensure that all biological hazards are used in the appropriate physical containment facility (e.g. PC1 or PC2) based on their Risk Group.
• Establish the need for immunisation and provide where appropriate.
• Ensure that any process that might create aerosols that could contain human pathogens or genetically modified micro-organisms is carried out in a Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC) that is tested annually.
Accountability
Supervisors are accountable to their direct line manager or the School, Centre or Divisional Unit Head through:
- Regular reporting to the Head of School.
- Participation in workplace inspections.
- Submission of risk management documentation.
- Job descriptions.