

# Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)

## Fact Sheet

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA), people undertaking high risk construction work will have duties for ensuring that Safe Work Method Statements are prepared and accessible to persons who need it prior to works commencing.

A SWMS document must be periodically reviewed to ensure that at all times it accurately reflects the safe work method to safely perform a work related task.

### Overview

This fact sheet provides guidance for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) on the function, content and application of safe work method statements (SWMS). SWMS are required for high risk construction work activities defined in the WHS Regulations as per Appendix A below:

#### Appendix A – High Risk Construction Work Activities

1.	Involves a risk of a person falling more than 2 m	11.	Is carried out on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines
2.	Is carried out on a telecommunication tower	12.	Is carried out on or near energised electrical installations or services
3.	Involves demolition of an element of a structure that is load-bearing	13.	Is carried out in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere
4.	Involves demolition of an element of a structure that is related to the physical integrity of the structure	14.	Involves tilt-up or precast concrete
5.	Involves, or is likely to involve, disturbing asbestos	15.	Is carried out on, in or adjacent to a road, railway, shipping lane or other traffic corridor in use by traffic other than pedestrians
6.	Involves structural alteration or repair that requires temporary support to prevent collapse	16.	Is carried out in an area of a workplace where there is any movement of powered mobile plant
7.	Is carried out in or near a confined space	17.	Is carried out in areas with artificial extremes of temperature
8.	Is carried out in or near a shaft or trench deeper than 1.5 m or a tunnel	18.	Is carried out in or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning
9.	Involves the use of explosives	19.	Involves diving work
10.	Is carried out on or near pressurised gas mains or piping		

### What is a SWMS?

A SWMS is a document that sets out the high risk construction work activities to be carried out at a workplace, the hazards arising from these activities and the measures to be put in place to control the risks.

One SWMS can be used for work that involves multiple high risk construction work activities, e.g.: a work activity that requires using powered mobile plant, working at heights of more than 2 metres and working adjacent to a road used by traffic other than pedestrians.

A SWMS is different from other documents that focus on specific tasks or processes, such as a Job Safety Analysis or a Safe Operating Procedure. A SWMS is not intended to be a procedure – rather it is a tool to assist supervisors and workers to confirm and monitor the control measures required at the workplace.

### What information must be included in a SWMS?

A SWMS must:

- Identify the work that is high risk construction work
- Specify hazards relating to the high risk construction work and the risks to health and safety
- Describe the measures to be implemented to control the risks; and
- Describe how the control measures are to be implemented, monitored and reviewed
- Take into account all relevant matters, including circumstances at the workplace that may affect the way in which the high risk construction work is carried out
- Take into account the Work Health and Safety Management Plan that has been prepared for the workplace, if the high risk construction work is carried out in connection with a construction project; and
- Be set out and expressed in a way that is readily accessible and understandable by persons who use it.

A SWMS should be short and focus on describing the specific hazards identified for the high risk construction work to be undertaken and the control measures to be put in place so the work is carried out safely.

Please refer to the [Contractor SWMS Checklist](#) as a guide when completing your SWMS.

For further information on Safe Work Method Statements, please refer to the following links below:

<https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/business-industry/construction/overview#>

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/safe-work-method-statement-high-risk-construction-work-information-sheet>