Safe Workplace Design

Purpose
This procedure outlines the design requirements for the prevention of adverse health and safety issues and/or outcomes related to the design, construction, fit out, provision of working space for employees and maintenance of new or refurbished buildings, owned or leased by the University. This approach recognises the importance of ensuring that designers consider the future impact of a building on those who will interact with a structure throughout its entire life. It is intended that design solutions will be identified for all reasonably foreseeable hazards that may occur as a structure is built, commissioned, used, maintained, repaired, refurbished or modified, decommissioned, demolished or dismantled and disposed or recycled. This approach ensures the integration of a risk management process in all design phases including pre-design, conceptual, design and schematic design as well as the final design development phase. This is applicable to all University workplaces.

Definitions
CHAIR – Construction Hazard Analysis Implications Review – these are meetings designed to address hazards at the design stage of a building project. Usually conducted by a Principal Contractor.

Contractor - a person or organisation engaged to carry out work for the University in a contract for service arrangement at University workplaces.

Contract Supervisor - is the nominated University employee who has responsibility for overseeing building and/or infrastructure related contracts and/or projects.

Safe Design – the integration of control measures early in the design process to eliminate or minimise the risks to health and safety throughout the life of a structure being designed.

Working Space - is the free floor area kept available for an employee’s use at work (3m²). It includes the place where they must stand or sit to do their work and the area immediately next to this. This does not include space taken up by furniture, fittings, equipment or passage ways used by other people to move around the workplace. (a legislative requirement)

Roles and Responsibilities
Contract Supervisors are responsible for:

- implementing this procedure in their area of responsibility and accountability
- ensuring that design for safety is considered by design consultants and contractors
- ensuring the induction of contractors or their nominated representative in accordance with the WHS Procedure – Contractor Management
- ensure the management of contractors in accordance with WHS Procedure – Contractor Management
- advising relevant Line Manager/s whenever building works which may impact employees are going to be conducted
- ensuring that feedback from staff consultation is received from the relevant Line Manager
- incorporating staff feedback into any design considerations.
- ensuring that minimum working space requirements are met for employees when building or altering/refurbishing a workspace. (see definition)
Contractors are responsible for:

- not placing themselves or others at risk of injury
- carrying out work in accordance with the University Safety in Design Principles
- working in accordance with relevant University WHS procedures and statutory requirements.
- providing WHS information to the University that is relevant to a contract when requested
- developing site-specific procedures relevant to site hazards and work activities at a construction site

Line Managers are responsible for:

- implementing this procedure in their area of responsibility and accountability and ensuring that implementation evidence is maintained.
- consulting with employees on any proposed changes to their workplace
- ensuring that employees are consulted when considering the layout and fit out of new or refurbished workplaces.
- ensuring that the health and safety of employees is considered and managed during the design, construction and fit out of buildings.
- ensuring that all staff consultation feedback is communicated to the relevant Contract Supervisor.
- ensuring that employees are made aware of construction and or refurbishment activities that may directly affect their workplace or work activities.

University employees are responsible for:

- not placing themselves or others at risk of illness or injury
- participating in consultation related to proposed changes to their workplace
- completing an incident report via the online Hazard & Incident Reporting & Investigation system for all incidents including near misses relating to construction activities affecting them.

Safety and Wellbeing is responsible for:

- communicating the requirements of this Procedure
- conducting internal evaluations against the requirements of this Procedure
- reviewing and revising this Procedure as required.

Procedure

1. Determine Initial Design Criteria

Contract Supervisors must ensure that the management of hazards with respect to building design, construction and/or refurbishment should be to where possible eliminate them at the design stage. The University Safety in Design Principles must be used as a reference for the design and construction of all new and refurbished buildings and applied as a minimum standard. This approach will minimise the possibility of new and/or refurbished building/infrastructure related WHS risks being introduced into the University. The UniSA Space Management Guidelines must also be referred to as a basis for determining space requirements.

Further detailed information regarding this safe design approach must also be sought from the Safe Design of Structures Code of Practice.

2. Facilitate Employee Consultation Process

Contract Supervisors must ensure that all relevant legislative and University requirements are met, including consultation with all key stakeholders when new or refurbished buildings are being proposed. Building programs must allow sufficient time for consultation with all relevant parties affected in the design. Senior Health & Safety consultants must also be invited to participate during relevant consultation processes as required in accordance with the WHS Consultation Procedure.

Relevant Line Managers must advise employees of all construction and refurbishment projects that may affect their health and safety. Line Managers should also liaise closely with Contract Supervisors to ensure that employees are fully consulted to ensure that all health and safety requirements are incorporated into the design, layout and fit out of new and refurbished
buildings, including minimum working space requirements for employees. (see definition above). This includes the selection of required furniture. To ensure that all required ergonomic considerations are included regarding office based work further details can be obtained from the Ergonomics for Screen Based Workstations Procedure.

To support this consultation process, further information and assistance is also available from the relevant Divisional Senior Health & Safety Consultant or the Safety & Wellbeing Consultants.

3. Check and Confirm Safety In Design Considerations

In order to ensure a robust review of building design criteria, Contract Supervisors must facilitate Construction Hazard Analysis Implications Review (CHAIR) meetings for major projects to assist designers and other key stakeholders to come together to reduce construction, maintenance, repair and demolition safety risks associated with the design. For more minor projects, Contract Supervisors must apply an appropriate alternative process to ensure that all necessary safety in design aspects are considered and actioned.

Where CHAIR meetings are required they should be conducted as follows:

CHAIR 1: Performed at the conceptual stage of the design, which is the best opportunity, to make fundamental changes where required, even though much of the design may still need to be determined.

CHAIR 2: Focuses on construction and demolition issues and is performed just prior to construction, when the full detailed design is known.

CHAIR 3: Focuses on maintenance and repair issues and is performed at the same time as the CHAIR 2 study.

Generally such meetings would be facilitated by the relevant Principal Consultant for the project (external contactor). Results of CHAIR meetings or equivalent must be used to influence the design of new and refurbished buildings. Further information regarding the conduct of CHAIR meetings can be found in CHAIR Safety in Design Tool, WorkCover NSW 2001.

Performance Measures

- CHAIR meetings or similar processes are conducted for 100% of new and refurbished building projects.
- Employees are consulted with respect to the design, fit out and furniture selection for 100% of new and refurbished building projects

Documents/Forms

Further advice on managing risks in university workplaces, including supporting documents and training courses are available on the Safety & Wellbeing website.

- WHS Procedure – Consultation
- WHS Procedure – Contractor Management
- WHS Procedure Document Control and Record Management
- WHS Guideline – Ergonomics for Screen Based Workstations
- Safety in Design Principles 2013
- UniSA Space Management Guidelines

References

CHAIR Safety in Design Tool, WorkCover NSW 2001
Safe Design of Structures Code of Practice 2012

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NB: This Procedure has been developed in accordance with the requirements of all relevant legislation.