Your "Getting Started" Occupational Health & Safety System assessment package

By Gerry Faehrmann

Helping You Create
a Safe System of Work
For Your Contractor Business

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The "Getting Started" OSH package is only a guide to what may be required by law wherever you live in the world.

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Creating a Safe System of Work

As part of your successful relationship with your customers (including your Commercial Customers and Large Residential Sites) you will need to provide your customers the following items:

- Safety Policy, or OHS policy, or OSH policy
- Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment
- Hazard Controls implemented
- Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS), also known as Job Safety Analysis (JSA), or Safe System Of Work Plan (SSWP), or Safe Work Procedures (SWP)
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) supply a copy of completed PPE Issue Record
- Material Safety Data Sheets
- First Aid supply photo and recent receipt of First Aid Kit
- Electrical Safety, Test & Tag provide a copy of your register/receipt from a qualified electrician
- Certificate of Currency of Public Liability Insurance cover
- Certificate of Currency of Workers' Compensation Insurance cover

Under your obligations to the OHS Act and Regulations (in Australia - and any where else in the world depending on the prevailing legal requirements), you will need to consider seriously how you and your staff, your employees, your contractors, etc will work in earning your income SAFELY and IN A SAFE MANNER. It is important to remember that under law all facets of your daily work methods must be recorded to satisfy all legal requirements.

On completion of the assessment processes you will be on the way to being a Safe Working Contractor in accordance with the AS/NZS:4801:2001

What is AS/NZS:4801:2001? This refers to the Australian & New Zealand JOINT Standard of OHS (Occupational Health and Safety) design, reporting and compliance. This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee SF-001, Occupational Health and Safety Management to supersede both AS 4801:2000 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems-Specification with guidance for use) and NZS 4801(Int):1999 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems-Specification with guidance for use).

Broadly, the terms "hazard/risk assessment" and "control of hazards/risks" are used in the same spirit in different countries to describe similar elements of OH&S management.

Around the world, the OHS requirements are similar in spirit, however, you will need to seek professional counsel to ensure you and your business comply with the local legal regulations.

In regards to Laws specific to the NSW, Australia work environment:

- New work health and safety (WHS) laws, that is, The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (WHS Act), replaced the occupational health and safety (OHS) laws in NSW on 1 January 2012.
- http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/newlegislation2012/WHSlawandpolicy/Pages/WorkHealthandSafetyAct2011.aspx for more information.
- These new laws will provide greater consistency, certainty and clarity across Australia making it easier to understand your workplace health and safety duties. Businesses and volunteer organisations that operate over several states will be able to initiate nationwide safety policies and procedures.

Your Safety Policy

Your Occupational Safety and Health Policy will form the Cover Page(s) of your folder of OHS information. All you need to do is fill in the TEMPLATE below with your company name or business name in the brackets below. The Policy document states your commitment to the safety of all people you interact with in the course of your work.

Occupational Health & Safety Policy

[Your Company Name]'s Policy in the area of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare is to provide a safe and healthy place to work for all staff, employees, contractors and members of the public. [Your Company Name] is also committed to the protection of the environment.

Occupational Health & Safety Program

In order to implement the general provisions of this policy, [Your Company Name] will set up and monitor a program of activities relating to OHS and including:

- Implementation of an OHS management system
- OHS training and education
- Safety rules and procedures
- Changes to work methods
- Reporting and recording incidents, injuries and illness

Policy improvement

The management of [Your Company Name] will monitor and continually improve their OHS system every 12 months or as required.

Signed by Manager or Director of [Your Company Name]: Dated:

In the following TEMPLATE document, you can use this as a support document following your Safety Policy cover page:

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)

Every worker, contractor and company representative must understand fully the implications and instructions given in the enclosed Safe Work Method Statement(s).

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) are also known as:

- •Safe Work Instructions (SWI)
- Job Safety Instructions (JSI)
- Job Safety Analysis (JSA)
- •Safe System Of Work Plan (SSWP)
- •Safe Work Procedures (SWP)

Under the Occupational Health and Safety laws we are all obliged to submit a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) as part of our site safety planning.

The purpose and structure of the Safe Work Method Statement is to:

- 1. Outline a safe method of work for a specific job or task
- 2. Provide an induction document that workers must read and understand prior to starting a job at a customer's site
- 3. Meet the legal requirements of Hazard Identification and Risk Control
- 4. Outline the programme of work, materials, time, staffing etc to anticipate problems, hazards and risks to workers
- 5. Use as a quality assurance tool

As a representative of our organization, you will be relied upon to bring to our attention any new hazards that present themselves in the course of our work and service delivery. Of course, a separate SWMS is required for specific significant jobs or tasks.

Should you not be able to or not willing to comply with the onerous Government requirements, then we reserve the right to terminate the relationship between you and our organization.

Signed by representative of [Your Company Name]:

Dated:

If anything, the above template re "Safe Work Method Statements" illustrates to your customers your knowledge of Safety Systems.

OH&S covers all workplaces and describes the general requirements to ensure health and safety in the workplace. It is designed to reduce the number of injuries and illnesses in the workplace.

The main objectives of OH&S are to:

- 1. Secure and promote the health, safety and welfare of all persons in any workplace
- 2. Protect people against risks to health and safety arising out of work activities
- 3. Promote a safe and healthy work environment
- 4. Ensure that risks to health and safety are identified, assessed and controlled

OH&S obliges all employers whether they are self-employed, or if they employ large numbers of staff. Employers must ensure the health, safety and welfare of all persons in the work place, including employees, visitors, clients and all others.

Clear guidelines that will ensure employers are committed to everybody's health and safety are as follows:

- 1. Talk about your safety program to all employees, contractors, clients and so on. Most employees will know the potential hazards that are involved in the tasks that they do throughout their working day. Also, ask for their input
- 2. **Provide training** to all staff, making sure they have the information and instructions to enable them to work safely. Training should include specific type training such as manual handling, hazard training, first aid and emergency procedures for their workplace
- 3. **Spot the hazard.** A hazard is anything with the potential to harm life, health or property. Once hazards are identified, you can

assess the risks. Hazards may arise from the use of tools or equipment, (are all the guards on your lawn mowers, brushcutters, equipment etc in place and working?)

- 4. Make changes by **controlling the risks.** This may be done by removing the hazard altogether, re-designing the equipment or work practice, enclosing or isolating the hazard through effective guards, providing training and supervision, supplying all necessary personal protective equipment
- 5. **Keep promoting, maintaining and improving work place safety** programs. This includes reviewing your policies and procedures regularly, providing ongoing communication with any staff and regularly reviewing any accident reports.

A few obvious Hazards involved in the lawn & garden industry are:

- 1. Manual handling. Have you trained yourself and your staff on how to lift correctly? 40% of all workplace injuries are directly caused by a manual-handling incident. Instructing your staff on correct lifting techniques can reduce this problem
- 2. Flying objects. Are all the guards in place on all your equipment? Manufactures must produce equipment that is covered by Australian Standards. They put guards on to ensure the operator and others are as safe as possible. Do not remove or tamper with safety guards! Ask all children and clients to stay indoors whilst you are mowing
- 3. Exposure to natural elements. We all know how hot lawn mowing is! You must protect yourself and any employees against this hazard. Slip on a hat, Slop on some sun-cream, Slap on a good shirt to block out the UV rays

Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment

A Hazard is anything that may cause harm.

A Risk is a chance, small or large, that someone will be harmed by a hazard. Therefore, a Risk assessment is a careful examination of hazards in your work place that could harm yourself or others including workers, customers and the public.

Check list of "How To Assess The Risks In Your Workplace":

Step 1 - Identify the hazards: Look at the things in your work place may cause harm to you or others as a result of your work activity or task. Ways to identify hazards in work place include incident statistics, observation, employee consultation, accident reports, incident reports, first aid book, work place inspections, etc

Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed and how: Look at who or what maybe affected by the work activity, and how they may be affected. The "Who" may include, members of the public, students, cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance staff, anyone.

Step 3 - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions: If you find a hazard that may be a risk to yourself or others, you will need to decide what steps are to be taken to eliminate or reduce those risks. You need to consider whether the risks are Low Risk or High Risk. If there is NO risk present, then you do not need to take action. Matrix of Harm (from Death, to long term illness, to medical attention, First Aid Required) versus Likelihood of anything Bad happening.

Step 4 - Record your findings and implement them: record all your findings and results - use KISS rule, Keep It Simple Stupid!

Step 5 - Review your assessment and update if necessary: For each potential workplace hazard identified, there should be a Risk Class such as one of the following.

Class 1 High Risk: Does the hazard have the potential to kill or permanently disable you?

Class 2 Medium Risk: Does the hazard have the potential to cause a serious injury, or illness, which will temporarily disable you?

Class 3 Low Risk: Does the hazard have the potential to cause a minor injury which would not disable you?

The next TEMPLATE forms the basis of your Risk Assessment table:

OHS Risk Assessment Form By [Your Company Name] Dated:

Spreadsheet with Column Headings across the page with columns titled: [Specific Tasks] [What are potential Hazards?] [Is The Risk Low/Medium/High?] [What can be done to prevent accidents?]

Five (5) Hazard Controls Implemented

In broad terms, there is a total of 5 Hazard Controls that can be implemented (in order of practicality below) to remove or reduce risks to people in your work environment. These are:

- 1. ELIMINATE or Remove hazard completely
- 2. SUBSTITUTE or Remove or separate people from hazard
- 3. ENGINEER CONTROLS Use engineered controls
- 4. ADMINISTRATIVE Change work practices
- 5. PPE Provide Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

If possible, the first control that you apply is to eliminate the hazard completely!

Then you work your way down the order of 1- 5 controls until you are able to implement the control in a practical sense.

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS), otherwise known as Job Safety Analysis (JSA), Safe Work Instructions, Standard Operating Procedures or Safe Operating Procedures; are the instructions for tasks such as processes, operating instructions for machinery or instructions for performing specific work operations SAFELY.

The main objective of a SMWS is to identify hazards associated with the work processes, and ensure controls are put in place before work is carried out.

A SWMS is a statement that lists the step-by-step procedures of a specific work activity or task, to document a safe work method. This process then involves the identification and assessment of hazards (anything that may cause a high degree of harm) and recording procedures to minimize the risk to health and safety.

As discussed above, the term "high degree of harm" refers to a hazard that could kill, cause permanent disability, long term illness or serious injury that could temporarily disable you. Any hazards that are classed Medium or High Risk have the potential to cause a "high degree of harm".

So, when assessing hazards you should ask, "whilst performing this job or task, what could cause injury or sickness now or in the future as a result of continual exposure?". So depending on the task, you should consider the following:

- noise, sunburn, high or low temperatures
- electricity or gas
- slips, trips or falls from height
- moving or falling objects
- what could go wrong doing this job
- how suitable are the things being used for the task

- how do people use equipment and materials, is there a safer way
- how could people be affected or hurt by noise, fumes, equipment, machinery or tools etc

The SWMS needs to provide the following:

- 1. Your Company Name
- 2. Description of the Work activity/job/task being performed
- 3. Date of SWMS development
- 4. The name and signature of the person who developed the SWMS
- 5. The Job steps involved in the Task performed
- 6. The controls that will be put in place to eliminate or minimise the potential hazards identified

Controls to eliminate hazards should be applied in the following priority order:

- 1. Remove hazard completely eg. Remove risk of electrocution by using power tools rated below 32 volts
- 2. Separate people from the hazard eg. use barriers & signs, enclose noisy machinery, place guards on power tools
- 3. Use an engineered control eg. use a machine to lift heavy objects, use scaffolding instead of ladders, use earth leakage device (safety switch) on power tools
- 4. Change work practices eg. training manual handling & lifting techniques, SWMS monitor/review/improve
- 5. Provide PPE for eyes, ears, head, respiratory, hands, skin, feet protection

Ongoing use of SWMS:

- 1. The SWMS will be reviewed and signed by principal contractor/worker who is doing the work
- 2. The worker must be properly qualified to do the work
- 3. Signing the SWMS implies the workers performing the task have read and understood the SWMS, and will follow procedures and controls listed when carrying out the work

Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) can also include extra information that demonstrates your commitment to a Safe work environment.

This information will include:

- 1. Personal Qualifications and Experience you will need to list all the details of qualifications and experience you and your workers will need for the job. Include: trade certificates, WorkCover certificates, demolition licences for contractor. Experience may cover previous work done in the area that may not require certificates or licences.
- 2. Personnel, Duties and responsibilities: Give details of the duties and specific responsibilities of supervisors and other personnel. For example, describe such things as daily safety check of the work area by a leading hand. You may even show on a separate sheet a flow chart showing the structure of your organization and include the responsibilities of each person in that flow chart.
- 3. Training required to complete work: Make sure all workers and supervisors are trained in all procedures needed to complete the job safely. This is very important when you start a new or changed work method.
- 4. Engineering Details, Certificates and WorkCover Approvals: Give details that might be required for demolition, precast panel erection, structural steel erection. Certificates may be needed for formwork false work, machinery on suspended slabs, point loading on suspended slabs and WorkCover approval of machine-felling for demolition work.
- 5. Codes of Practice and Legislation: Are relevant codes of practice available on site? Is the work method equal to or better than any applicable codes of practice for the job to be done? Do procedures agree with relevant legislation?
- 6. Plant & Equipment: List all plant and equipment that you use on the job, eg. ladders, scaffold, trestles, grinders, electrical leads and equipment, formwork materials, shoring materials, oxy set, welding machines, fire extinguishers, mowers, brushcutters, vehicles, blowers, hedge trimmers
- 7. Maintenance Checks: Maintenance checks should be carried out regularly daily, weekly, monthly, annually. Electrical testing and tagging, maintenance on all moving machinery like mowers, hedge trimmers and whipper snippers / brushcutters
- 8. Read and Signed by all workers on site

Any SWMS will generally include any information in the following Template:

A Generic SWMS spreadsheet form will have the following columns of information:
[Item No.] [Job/Task description] [Potential Hazards] [Controls to make job safe]

Then the following information at the bottom of the sheet: [Company Info etc] [Date Reviewed] [Signed off by Manager] [Read and Signed by all workers]

Note: A new SWMS should be developed when you come across a new "site specific" hazard.

Personal Protection Equipment

You will need to provide Personal Protection Equipment to all your staff and workers.

A PPE Issue Record should be included in your Safety Policy Folder or Handout. This record will show the list of PPE required for the protection of eyes, ears, respiratory, hands, skin, feet and so on.

The PPE Issue Record will include:

- Sunglasses and/or Protective Glasses for protection of eyes from moving machinery and other products used in your work
- Ear Muffs for protection of ears from loud noises
- Dust masks or Breathing apparatus for respiratory protection
- Gloves for hands
- Full body clothing or protective clothing for skin protection
- Sun screen lotion (30+) for body parts that are exposed to the sun
- Boots for feet protection, steel capped boots may be required for certain work sites
- First Aid Kit

First Aid Kit

A First Aid Kit needs to be available with each work team and vehicle.

You will need to supply a **photo and/or receipt of purchase** of your First Aid kit for each Team/vehicle in your employment.

Suitable First Aid Kits would be similar to those offered at http://www.alscofirstaid.com.au/our-full-range_new.html - have a look at their "Car First Aid Kit" – this a portable First Aid Kit.

Generally, 1 First Aid Kit is required for Low to High Risk Workplaces where there are less than 25 workers.

The inventory of the First Aid Kit should include:

- 1. basic first aid notes
- 2. disposable gloves
- 3. resuscitation mask
- 4. individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings
- 5. sterile eye pads (packet) & sterile coverings for serious wounds
- 6. triangular bandages & safety pins
- 7. small, medium and large sterile unmedicated wound dressings
- 8. non-aller genic tape & rubber thread or crepe bandage
- 9. scissors & tweezers
- 10. suitable book for recording details of first aid provided
- 11. sterile saline solution
- 12. plastic bags for disposal
- 13. band aids & bandages

MSDS - Material Safety Data Sheets

"A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is a document that contains information on the potential health effects of exposure to chemicals, or other potentially dangerous substances, and on safe working procedures users should adhere to when handling chemical products."

Source: www.translinknet.be/translation/msds/definition.html

You will need a plastic folder with copies of all MSDSs of pesticides used in your work. MSDSs will include those for general lawn and garden spraying such as:

- 1. Roundup, or the generic Glyphosate
- 2. Herbicides
- 3. Fertilisers
- 4. Insecticides

It is generally accepted that if you use the above products that are specifically registered for home owner use and purchased from a retail outlet like Bunnings or Home Hardware then you do not need the MSDS.

However, in Australia at least, professional contractors using the above professional products (those products REGISTERED for commercial or professional use) need to be licenced with the equivalent of the Chemcert licence - for more information refer to www.ChemCert.com.au

Electrical Safety

Electrical Safety, Testing and Tagging - this is important when using power tools, that is, maybe for landscapers and builders - you will need to find out more on this yourself.

Insurance Cover for Public Liability

Insurance Cover for Public Liability is a big requirement for any big contract or any job bigger than a home owner's lawn.

At a minimum, you must cover yourself for \$5 million.

Generally, most contractors looking after larger commercial sites maintain a Public Liability (PL) policy that covers them for \$10 million.

You need to seek advice from your insurance broker, accountant etc regarding the level of insurance that is good for you. The level of insurance cover will determine what type of jobs you will be able to take on.

In Australia, you are required to carry \$10 million PL insurance for any commercial or large strata contracts. Usually, this is asked of you when tendering for the larger contracts.

Usually, you must provide a Certificate of Currency for this type of insurance cover. If you don't, the corporate customer will be onto you.

Insurance Cover for your workers

Insurance Cover for your workers with Workers Compensation insurance is a big requirement for any big contract or any job bigger than a home owner's lawn.

Once again, you need to seek advice in regard to what insurance is required when you employ workers and contractors.

Usually, you must provide a Certificate of Currency for this type of insurance cover. If you don't, the corporate customer will be onto you.

"Safety Policy Plus" templates package

We will be making available at www.YourLawnAndGarden.com a collection of a real-life Safe Work Method Statements including TEMPLATES for the following:

- 1. Manual Handling http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/formspublications/publications/Documents/man_handling_risk_assessment_machinery_equipment_5320.pdf have a look at this website for good information
- 2. Weed and Feed Lawn Care for Residential/Homeowner sites
- 3. Weed and Feed Lawn Care for Large sites
- 4. Vehicle Stocking with fertilizers and chemicals
- 5. Works Depot or Garage for Storage place of herbicides, insecticides and fertilizers
- 6. Lawn mowing
- 7. Gardening
- 8. Tree work
- 9. Garden spraying
- 10. Paving

If you want to create your own comprehensive Safety Policy (with all the SWMS templates above, Risk Assessment Form templates, PPE templates, First Aid requirements, Safety Management Plan template, MSDSs) **IN A HURRY**, then watch out for our "Safety Policy Plus" templates package.

When this is ready, you can grab it for \$7.

All you have to do is "cut and paste" the information onto your own LETTERHEAD and away you go.

You must provide MSDSs for any chemicals you use on your jobs. As part of the "Safety Policy Plus" templates package, we

will include the MSDSs for Roundup, Javelin broadleaf weed herbicide and Links Hi N controlled release granular fertilizer.

The "Safety Policy Plus" package will include the following TEMPLATES of information submitted by <u>LawnGreen</u> for various customer sites it has managed in the past:

- 1. OHS Safety policy cover page, Pages No. 1 & 2
- 2. Safe Work Method Statements (SWMSs) for over 10 different Job Processes or Tasks around 10 pages of detailed info for SWMSs
- 3. PPE Personal Protection Equipment register
- 4. First Aid Kit register
- 5. Certificate of Currency for Public Liability insurance
- 6. Certificate of Currency for Workers' Compensation insurance
- 7. Generic Safety Management Plan this maybe required by some customers
- 8. Generic Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)
- 9. Risk Assessment Template
- 10. Material Safety Data Sheets for Roundup, Javelin herbicide and Links Hi N controlled release granular fertilizer

This documentation is mostly redundant in our Lawn Green business as we are now only involved the professional Weed & Feed Lawn Care market.

All the documents you get in the new "Safety Policy Plus" template package include extensive wording needed to fill out your own SWMSs.

Copyright, Disclaimers And Legal Stuff

You have just read Version 1.0 of The "Getting Started" Occupational Health & Safety System assessment package, published in March 2012.

The Report will be changed, or added to, from time to time. If you are on our email database, we will let you know of Content changes and additions made to the Report.

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The Report contains information of a general nature that must not be construed as legal advice, taxation advice nor as financial advice.

I urge everyone that reads this document to make their own legal, taxation & financial enquiries. You need to seek your own professional counsel to ensure you and your business are compliant with the prevailing authorities.

To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation of your country or province. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

Financial Advice

The Report does not make any actual or implied promises with forecasts for profits or sales.

Lawn Care Referrals

If you are a contractor and have Customers that need the services of Lawn Green, then please contact us:

- 1. Via www.LawnGreen.com.au and fill out the "Free Quote Request" Quote Box, or
- 2. Simply telephone Lawn Green at 1300 55 74 72 and we can follow up the Referral by calling the Customer directly, or
- 3. Refer your customers to www.LawnGreen.com.au where they can get a Free Copy of "The 5 Secrets To A Great Looking Lawn" Report

Internet and Contact Details

www.LawnGreen.com.au - for Greener Weed Free Lawns

<u>www.YourLawnAndGarden.com</u> - "The Place Where Successful Contractors Meet"

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