

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION OF SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENTS

When conducting workplace activities, appropriate communications is vital to ensure the information we are sending out is understood and being adhered to.

This is important when communicating information contained within a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) as it contains vital safety information. This should never be treated as a "tick and flick" exercise and needs to be taken with all seriousness.

Steps to ensure proper and effective communication of SWMS need to include the following:

1

Ensure the SWMS being communicated is correct for the current work environment. Whilst most companies have generic SWMS created for specific jobs, each one needs to be reviewed and updated for the current environment addressing what is necessary to ensure the job is conducted safely.

2

Consultation is very important in communicating an effect SWMS. Consultation is also a requirement under Section 47 of the Work Health Safety Act SA (2012), which specifies consultation must occur with workers affected by the procedures and decisions made regarding their health and safety.

3

All employees, contractors and apprentices must be given the opportunity to read and provide feedback if they are asked to sign off on any work relating to a SWMS. Just because they have signed off on a generic one at induction does not cover off any SWMS written for a specific job, as each one is unique. They must be given the opportunity to read each SWMS individually prior to signing them.

4

When someone signs off on a SWMS, they are signing a legal document stating they understand what the job entails and the controls in place. They must understand what they are doing in relation to the work undertaken. When starting a new job (and at toolbox meetings) it's good practise to follow up with workers to ensure everyone understands any high risk activities in the SWMS and any relevant controls in place.

We are striving to make worksites safe for everyone. If you have any queries regarding the requirements for SWMS, communication and consultation, please don't hesitate to contact our WHS Advisor on (08) 8348 1200 or safety@peer.com.au.