



AFP National Guideline on managing occupational health and safety risks

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1. Disclosure and compliance

This document is classified **UNCLASSIFIED** and is intended for internal AFP use.

Disclosing any content must comply with Commonwealth law and the [AFP National Guideline on disclosure of information](#).

Compliance

This instrument is part of the AFP's professional standards framework. The [AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards \(CO2\)](#) outlines the expectations for appointees to adhere to the requirements of the framework. Inappropriate departures from the provisions of this instrument may constitute a breach of AFP professional standards and be dealt with under Part V of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth).

2. Acronyms

AFP	Australian Federal Police
OHS	occupational health and safety
PPE	personal protective equipment

3. Definitions

Employee – Means an appointee as defined in s. 4 of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth).

Control of risks – The process of eliminating or minimising risks. (AS/NZS 4804:2001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems Standard, section 3.4). This may be an object, work process or system of work.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) – Means items or personal equipment worn for protection (e.g. earmuffs, gloves, helmet, overalls, boots etc.).

Risk – In relation to any potential injury or harm, the likelihood and consequence of that injury or harm occurring. (AS/NZS 4804:2001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems Standard, s. 3.18).

Safety – A state in which the risk of harm (to persons) or damage is limited to an acceptable level (AS/NZS 4804:2001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems Standard, s. 3.19).

4. Authority

This guideline was issued by the National Manager Human Resources using power under s. 37(1) of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth) as delegated by the Commissioner under s. 69C of the Act.

5. Introduction

This National Guideline outlines the processes and procedures to be applied as occupational health and safety (OHS) risk management practices to AFP business at all levels. It must be used in conjunction with the [AFP National Guideline on Risk Management](#).

This guideline applies to all AFP business activities and to all AFP employees who have duties to manage OHS risks at work.

6. Policy

The application of these processes and procedures are expected to prevent or minimise the occurrence of workplace injuries and diseases.

Risk management, in the occupational health and safety context, refers to a systematic process by which management policies, procedures and practices are applied to identify the workplace hazards, assess the risks associated with those hazards, determine the appropriate control measures and monitor and review the risk management process for efficacy in providing a safe and healthy workplace.

7. Roles and responsibilities

The [National Guideline to AFP health and safety management arrangements 2007-2012](#) assigns roles and responsibilities to individuals to manage health and safety in the workplace.

The AFP has produced governance and guidance documents for specific occupational health and safety (OHS) subjects. This is available under [Health and Safety](#) on the AFPHUB. Where guidance is available it must be taken into account.

OHS risks will be managed systematically in accordance with the:

- [Occupational Health and Safety \(Safety Standards\) Regulations 1994](#) (Cth)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice 2008](#) (Cth)
- [AFP National Guideline on Risk Management](#)
- [National Guideline to AFP health and safety management arrangements 2007 – 2012](#).

Exceptions

However, there are some exceptions. For example, s. 8 of the *Occupational Health & Safety Act 1991* (Cth) provides that the AFP does not need to take any action or refrain from taking any action that may prejudice an ongoing or future covert or otherwise dangerous police operation. If unsure about whether or not the immunity applies to a planned operation, contact AFP Legal for advice.

All planned police operations for dangerous, covert or emergency operations must consider OHS risks and treatment.

8. Consultation

Communication and consultation is integral to every step of the occupational health and safety risk management process. Employees, employee representatives and health and safety committees will be consulted where appropriate. Consultation will involve appropriately informing staff and inviting and considering their responses.

Consultation is required when:

- identifying hazards
- assessing the risk
- determining and implementing control measures (i.e. treatments)
- developing policy and procedures

- deciding on training requirements
- supervising and monitoring risk control measures.

9. Risk management process

The statutory obligations for the management of occupational health and safety (OHS) risks are outlined in the [Occupational Health and Safety \(Safety Standards\) Regulations 1994](#) (Cth) and the [Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice 2008](#) (Cth).

The principles and methods used within the AFP for risk management are defined in the [AFP National Guideline on Risk Management](#). OHS risks must be managed in accordance with that guideline. The guideline provides a risk assessment register to be used for this purpose.

The requirements set out in the AFP National Guideline on Risk Management and Part 1 of the Occupational Health and Safety (Safety Standards) Regulations 1994 do not limit the operation of any other OHS regulation, OHS code of practice or OHS guidance that expressly provides for the control of risks to the health and safety of a person at work. That is, where additional information on the assessment of OHS risk in relation to a particular subject matter is available, it must be taken into account. [OHS guidance documents](#) are available on various subjects on the AFPHUB for this purpose.

10. Identifying and assessing OHS risks

Identifying and assessing all occupational health and safety (OHS) risks associated with AFP business activities will occur in accordance with the requirements of the [AFP National Guideline on Risk Management](#).

Risk identification will take into account the situation, events or combination of circumstances that could cause injury or illness, the nature of potential injury or illness and past incidents, injuries and illnesses.

The process will include considering:

- how work is organised, managed and carried out, and any changes that occur in this
- designing workplaces, work systems, materials, plant and equipment
- how hazardous substances and dangerous goods are handled, transported, stored and disposed of
- fabricating, installing, commissioning, handling and disposing of materials, plant, equipment and workplaces
- purchasing goods and services
- contracting and subcontracting plant, equipment, services and labour, including contract specification and responsibilities to and by contractors
- inspecting, maintaining, testing, repairing and replacing plant and equipment.

OHS risk identification and assessment must be included in the development of all major investigation plans and standard tactical plans and must be undertaken before:

- introducing new plant or substances
- introducing new work practice or procedures
- seconding employees to other jurisdictions
- changing a workplace, activity or work system that may increase health and safety risks.

All risks must be assessed and have treatment (i.e. control) priorities assigned, based on the established level of risk.

11. Treating OHS risks

Action to treat (i.e. control) an occupational health and safety (OHS) risk must be taken in a structured way using the following hierarchy of controls in the order that it is provided below.

1. Eliminate the risk at source. If this is not possible then:
2. Minimise the risk by:
 - substituting with something safer
 - modifying the plant or system of work
 - isolating people from the hazardous aspects of plant or systems
 - using engineering methods to control the risk at its source.

If minimising does not control the risk then:

3. Apply administrative controls (including safe work practices, training, etc.).
4. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE).

In treating OHS risk often many treatments will be applicable – from minimisation controls to administrative controls – and possibly even PPE.

12. Information, training and supervision

The AFP must, where reasonable and practicable to do so, provide health and safety information, training and supervision to employees. These are important parts of ensuring safe systems of work and should consider the functions of staff and provide them with an understanding of potential health effects and the skills and knowledge to enable them to work safely.

Managers at all levels (including Coordinators and team leaders) are responsible for ensuring, where appropriate, that information, training and supervision is provided to manage occupational health and safety (OHS) risks (e.g. workplace induction training, confined spaces training, forklift training etc.).

In providing information and training, it is essential to address the intent of legislation so that employees understand that, in some instances, the prevention of OHS risk depends on them doing a particular work activity in a particular way.

13. Supervision

Where reasonable and practicable to do so, supervision must be provided to ensure that persons are not exposed to risks, that agreed safe work practices are followed and that reasonable care is taken to control occupational health and safety risks.

Supervision by a competent person is important, especially if the people being supervised are undergoing training or are unfamiliar with the work environment or system of work.

14. Safety instruction compliance

Employees must comply, so far as they are reasonably able, with the safe work practices and operating procedures given by the AFP, where those practices and procedures are for their own health and safety or for the health and safety of other persons.

15. Further advice

Any queries relevant to the content of this National Guideline or any occupational health and safety (OHS) risks and their management should be directed to the area [OHS Advisor](#).

16. References

Legislation

- [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991](#) (Cth)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Code of Practice 2008](#) (Cth)
- [Occupational Health and Safety \(Safety Standards\) Regulations 1994](#) (Cth).

AFP instruments

- [National Guideline to AFP Health and Safety Management Arrangements 2007 – 2012](#)
- [AFP National Guideline on Risk Management](#).

Other sources

- AS/NZS 4804:2001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems Standard
- [Occupational health and safety guidance documents](#).