

# Work Health and Safety Guideline

for the South Australian public sector

[publicsector.sa.gov.au](http://publicsector.sa.gov.au)



**Government  
of South Australia**

Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Sector Employment

<b>Work Health and Safety guideline .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Introduction .....	3
Key terms.....	4
4 - Context of the sector .....	5
4.1 - Understanding the Public Sector and its context.....	5
4.2 - Understanding the needs and expectations of workers and other interested parties .....	7
4.3 - Determining the scope of the work health and safety system.....	10
4.4 - Safety Management Systems .....	10
5 – Leadership and worker participation.....	12
5.1 - Leadership and commitment.....	12
5.2 – Work health and safety policy .....	13
5.3 - Organisational roles, responsibilities, and authorities.....	13
5.4 – Consultation and participation of workers.....	15
6 - Planning.....	16
6.1 – Actions to address risks and opportunities .....	16
6.2 - WHS objectives and planning to achieve them .....	16
7 - Support.....	18
7.1 - Resources .....	18
7.2 – Competence .....	18
7.3 - Awareness.....	19
7.4 – Internal and external communication .....	19
7.5 – Documented information.....	19
8 - Operation.....	21
8.1 – Operational planning and control .....	21
8.2 – Emergency preparedness and response.....	22
9 – Performance evaluation .....	23
9.1 - Monitoring, measurement, analysis, and performance evaluation.....	23
9.2 – Internal audit.....	24
9.3 – Management review.....	24
10 - Improvement.....	25
10.1 – Incident non-conformity and corrective action .....	25
10.2 – Continual improvement.....	25

# Work Health and Safety guideline

This guideline supports agencies to develop, implement and maintain safety management systems (SMS) that align to the International Standard for Occupational Health and Safety management systems (ISO 45001:2018) which has been adopted as the work health and safety (WHS) standard for the public sector.

The guideline consolidates systems and resources specific to the SA public sector that:

- impose requirements on the sector relevant to how the standard is met, or
- support agencies or workers to meet the requirements of the standard.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In accordance with s 130 of the [Return to Work Act \(2014\)](#) (RTW Act), agencies or instrumentalities of the Crown are self-insured and must have a safety management system (SMS) that clearly designates overall responsibility for injury prevention, recovery and return to work and claims administration.

The International Standard for Occupational Health and Safety management systems ([ISO 45001:2018](#)) specifies requirements for a work health and safety<sup>1</sup> SMS, with guidance for its use, to enable an organisation to proactively improve its performance in preventing injury and ill-health.

ISO 45001:2018 is relevant to all public sector agencies regardless of their size, type and nature of work and has been adopted as the WHS standard for public sector (the 'WHS standard').

Aspects of agency's SMS may be implemented through internal resources, or through arrangements agreed with other organisations with specialist capabilities or resources.

The WHS standard does not provide specific criteria for WHS performance, nor is it prescriptive about the design of a system.

An agency's SMS should be specific to meeting its own needs in managing WHS risks to prevent injuries and ill health and improve its performance. A small entity with low risks may only need to implement a simple system, whereas a larger agency with high levels of risk may need something much more complex. Any system may be capable of conforming with the requirements of the standard, provided it can be shown to be appropriate to the agency and is effective.

This guideline is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

[Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy for the SA public sector \(2023 – 2032\)](#)

SAPS WHS Standard: [ISO 45001:\(2018\)](#)

[SAPS Injury Management Standards](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> ISO 45001:2018 refers to Occupational Health and Safety which in Australia is termed Work Health and Safety.

The application of the WHS standard by all agencies provides a consistent approach, facilitating the development of tools and resources to meet the common needs of the sector.

The standard is the basis of the Audit and Verification System (AVS) the audit program that provides assurance to ReturnToWorkSA (RTWSA) chief executives and others of the existence of effective safety management systems across the sector.

SA public sector leaders and managers responsible for the design and implementation of work health and safety systems and performance are the primary audience for this document. It should also be promoted to managers and workers to assist with their awareness and understanding of the SA public sector context and requirements and the breadth of systems and resources available that may be pertinent to their risk profile and business operations.

## KEY TERMS

Actuarial valuation	The valuation of outstanding workers compensation and additional compensation financial liabilities conducted annually for the public sector agencies, required by the RTW Act.
Agency	A public sector agency is defined in the Public Sector Act. It includes administrative units (departments and attached offices) and other agencies or instrumentalities of the Crown
Code of Ethics	Code of Ethics for the South Australian public sector
IMMG	Injury Management Managers Group – A forum convened by OCPSE for coordination and collaboration regarding claims management and return to work scheme issues that impact the whole of government; and to facilitate continuous improvement in the field of injury management.
Positive duty	The <a href="#">Work Health and Safety Act (2012 (SA))</a> (WHS Act) creates a positive duty on a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that workers and other persons are not exposed to risks to their physical or psychological safety. This includes risks from psychosocial hazards such as sexual and gender-based harassment. In addition to existing WHS duties, the <a href="#">Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</a> (SD Act) also includes a positive duty to prevent sexual harassment (and other related unlawful conduct). <sup>2</sup>
RTWSA	ReturnToWorkSA
OCPSE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment

<sup>2</sup> [Sexual and gender-based harassment - WHS duties | Safe Work Australia](#)

Safety management system (SMS)	Safety management system – a set of interrelated or interacting policies and objectives and processes to prevent injury and ill-health to workers and to provide safe and provide safe and healthy workplaces <sup>3</sup>
Senior leaders	A person or group of people who direct and control an organisation at the highest level <sup>4</sup> noting that if the scope of the safety management system covers only part of the organisation, then senior leaders refers to those who direct and control that part of the organisation. Those people considered ‘senior leaders’ may also be considered Officers for the purpose of the WHS Act and are most often executives and directors in South Australian public sector agencies but may also be Manager Administrative Services (MAS) employees and senior officers.
Worker	A person who carries out work for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) who may be engaged in one of many ways including as an employee, volunteer, contractor, subcontractor, apprentice, trainee or labour hire worker.
WHSMG	Work Health and Safety Managers Group – a forum convened by OCPSE is to provide coordination and collaboration regarding work health and safety (WHS) issues that impact the whole of government; to inform and contribute to the reform agenda for public sector WHS and to facilitate continuous improvement in WHS performance.

ISO 45001:2018 commences with sections 1 (Scope), 2 (Normative references) and 3 (Terms and definitions) which are not covered in this guideline.

The sections below map numerically to the relevant section of ISO 45001:2018.

## **4 - CONTEXT OF THE SECTOR**

### **4.1 - Understanding the Public Sector and its context**

#### **The SA public sector**

The South Australian Public Sector is made up of around 100 agencies, with a total of more than 118,000 employees engaged under various Acts. In addition, other workers as defined by the WHS Act including contractors, students and volunteers work within these agencies.

The Crown operates through government departments and agencies which differ in size and complexity. An agency may have responsibility for multiple businesses or undertakings.

---

<sup>3</sup> ISO 45001: 2018 Clause 3.10, 3.11

<sup>4</sup> Ibid Clause 3.12

Within the terms of the WHS Act, and in the case of proceedings under that Act, the Crown will be the PCBU, but the department or agency may be named in any proceedings or notices as the 'responsible agency'.<sup>5</sup>

### **Workers compensation, Self Insurance, external audit**

ReturnToWorkSA is the regulator of the RTW Act.

The Crown (and any agencies or instrumentalities of the Crown) are taken to be registered as self-insured for workers compensation under s 130 of the RTW Act unless they have been proclaimed by the Governor of South Australia not to be self-insured (s 131).

Agencies which have been proclaimed<sup>6</sup> must be registered as a normal employer with ReturnToWorkSA (RTWSA).

RTWSA, the regulator, calculates agencies' self-insured registration fees as a function of the self-insured fee rate, remuneration to employees and the safety risk of the work undertaken<sup>7</sup>.

RTWSA seeks assurance that public sector agencies have an effective safety management system that clearly designates overall responsibility for injury prevention, recovery and return to work and claims administration to the chief executive of the agency.

Through a partnership agreement between RTWSA and the Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, the AVS provides assurance of the existence and effectiveness of SMS across the sector and the effective management of hazards common to multiple agencies. The AVS is aligned to the SAPS WHS standard (ISO 45001:2018) and provides a maturity rating for agency systems and findings with ratings reported to RTWSA.

### **Inter-agency partnerships, relationships and service level agreements**

Larger entities most often provide work health and safety management and injury management activities in-house, however many smaller agencies have arrangements with other agencies for the delivery of these services.

Arrangements may be made between agencies within a portfolio, or between agencies and central or clustered service centres. Whilst such arrangements are made to ensure the efficient implementation of the SMS they do not alter the duties and liabilities of individual agencies under the *Work Health and Safety Act*.

Inter-agency partnerships, relationships and agreements should be documented through a service level agreement (SLA) or memorandum of administrative agreement (MOAA) and reviewed regularly to

---

<sup>5</sup> [Interpretive guideline - model Work Health and Safety Act - the meaning of 'person conducting a business or undertaking' \(safeworkaustralia.gov.au\)](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au) This advice is a general guideline only and should not be used as a substitute for seeking professional legal advice for your specific circumstances.

<sup>6</sup> - proclaimed agencies are Carclew Incorporated, Jam Factory Contemporary Craft and Deign Incorporated, Legal Services Commission of South Australia, Phylloxera and Grape Industry Board of South Australia, Renmark Irrigation Trust, Return to Work Corporation of South Australia, Royal Zoological Society of South Australia Incorporated, Dairy Authority of South Australia.

<sup>7</sup> This safety risk is expressed as a SAWIC code.

ensure that they are providing the required level of service to meet the operational requirements for the smaller agency's safety management system.

### **Enterprise Bargaining Agreements and Awards**

Industrial awards made by the South Australian Employment Tribunal and enterprise agreements agreed with employees and their associations and approved by the under the Fair Work Act 1994 contain employment conditions for public sector employees. These arrangements may create commitments relevant to workers' health, safety and wellbeing. Examples include the provision of mental health training, flexible work arrangements and additional compensation.

### **WHS and injury management systems and data**

OCPSE administers the contract and service support for the Self Insurers Management System (SIMS)<sup>8</sup> which is used to capture injured worker claim data. OCPSE extracts data from SIMS to report on performance for agencies and the sector.

OCPSE also administers the contract and service support for GovSAfety used for hazard and incident reporting by many agencies across the sector. Other agencies manage their own systems including IRMS (Department for Education), HIRM (SA Police) and Safety Learning System (SA Health). Safety performance reporting relies on data collected by these systems.

Developing data management capability to improve reporting and benchmarking across the sector is a key activity of the SWIM strategy.

## **4.2 - Understanding the needs and expectations of workers and other interested parties**

Understanding the needs and expectations of workers and other stakeholders is essential to the design of an effective safety management system. Needs and expectations are informed by or articulated through many methods including national and state legislation, South Australian public sector and agency strategies and plans and enterprise agreements.

### **Code of Ethics for Public Sector Employees**

The Code of Ethics for the South Australian Public Sector binds all public sector employees and is issued in accordance with the [Public Sector Act 2009](#) (PS Act). The Code establishes expectations for professional conduct and accountability for public sector leaders and employees in relation to all aspects of their employment including work health and safety.

*“Public sector employees will report to an appropriate authority workplace behaviour that a reasonable person would suspect violates any law, is a danger to public health or safety or to the environment or amounts to misconduct.”* [OCPSE-CodeofEthics-18042024.pdf \(publicsector.sa.gov.au\)](#)

*“Public sector employees will not at any time act in a manner that a reasonable person would view as bringing them, the agency in which they work, the public sector, or Government into disrepute; or that is otherwise improper or disgraceful.”* [OCPSE-CodeofEthics-18042024.pdf \(publicsector.sa.gov.au\)](#)

---

<sup>8</sup> Explain that SAPOL have their own instance

## Directions, Determinations and Guidelines

Directions by the Premier and Determinations and Guidelines of the Commissioner of Public Sector Employment cover a range of public sector matters, and many inform the expectations of workers and others, for how physical and psychosocial safety is managed.

For example:

- [Direction of the Premier of South Australia – Induction](#)
- [Direction of the Premier of South Australia – Performance Management and Development](#)
- [Direction of the Premier of South Australia – Flexibility for the Future](#)
- [Determination 3.1 – Hours of work, overtime and leave](#)
- [Determination 3.2 - Employment conditions, remuneration, allowances and reimbursements](#)
- [Determination 5 - Classification and remuneration](#)
- [Determination 8 - Working flexibly](#)
- [Preventing and Addressing Bullying in the Workplace Guideline](#)
- [Preventing and Addressing Harassment and Discrimination in the Workplace Guideline](#)
- [Mentally Healthy Workplaces Framework](#)

*“A new employee’s first contact with their working environment is important to establishing expectations for their performance and relationship with an organisation. Induction provides a positive approach to managing employees who are new to an organisation and/or role, improving the likelihood that the employee can perform well and achieve their potential. In the short-term, effective employee induction can support:*

- *Role clarity - ensuring the new employee understands their role and expectations*
- *Self-efficacy or self-confidence – improving the likelihood that a new employee will feel motivated and confident in doing the job well*
- *Social integration – maximising the opportunity for the new employee to feel socially comfortable and establish effective working relationships”* [20170830-Commissioners-Guideline-Induction-final.pdf \(publicsector.sa.gov.au\)](#)

## **Suicide Prevention Act 2021**

The [Suicide Prevention Act \(2021\)](#) requires certain state authorities identified in the [Suicide Prevention Regulations \(2022\)](#) to have a suicide prevention action plan to set out actions it will undertake to prevent suicide and its impacts on the South Australian community including its workers.

The first round of prescribed State authorities were gazetted on 8 September 2022 as:

- Attorney General’s Department
- Department for Education
- Department of Primary Industries and Regions
- Department for Child Protection
- Department for Health and Wellbeing
- South Australia Police (SAPOL)
- Department for Correctional Services

- Department of Human Services
- Department for Infrastructure and Transport (DIT)
- South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission (SAFECOM)

### SA Public Sector [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(2023-26\)](#)

The South Australian public sector is committed to reflecting the diverse community it serves, while creating an inclusive workplace for all its people. The strategy calls out the need to recognise diversity in a range of characteristics including (but not limited to) gender, LGBTIQ+, disability, indigeneity, cultural and linguistic diversity and age.

Agencies' safety systems should therefore consider the needs and expectations of workers and others with diverse experiences and abilities, paying heed to:

The [Sex Discrimination Act 1984 \(Cth\)](#) which has included a new positive legal obligation requiring an employer or a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)<sup>9</sup> to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate as far as possible:

- unlawful discrimination on the ground of a person's sex in a work context;
- unlawful sexual harassment or harassment on the ground of sex in connection with work;
- unlawful conduct creating a workplace environment that is hostile on the ground of sex;
- related acts of victimisation.

### Disability Employment in the South Australian public sector

The SA Public Sector Disability Employment Toolkit is an online resource to assist employees, especially those working in human resources, learning and development, and leadership positions, to improve employment outcomes for people with disability by providing accessible information and resources.

The [Disability Inclusion Act 2018 \(SA\)](#) which requires agencies to develop and implement their own Disability and Inclusion Plan aligned to their own context and needs, to build inclusive, accessible, safe and informed workplaces where everyone belongs.

### [South Australian public sector Anti-Racism Strategy 2023-2028](#)

This aims to make the public sector safer, more responsive, and more accountable by improving understanding and awareness of racism, creating a more inclusive public sector workplace culture, ensuring greater cultural safety for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse community members, and by making structural changes that address institutional and systemic racism.

Aboriginal employment initiatives such as the Aboriginal Employment Register are provided by OCPSE to support the government's commitment to the attraction, retention and development of Aboriginal people in the public sector.

---

<sup>9</sup> noting that a PCBU has the same meaning as under the WHS Act (SA)

### **South Australian public sector WHS Cultural Safety Framework**

which provides information about cultural safety, how to address workplace risks and ensure a culturally safe work environment. The accompanying guide sets out activities that will assist agencies to implement the framework.

### **AGFMA – Across Government Facilities Management Arrangements**

The [AGFMA arrangements](#) establish the contractual, operational and safety arrangements for the delivery of facilities management services across the South Australian public sector. Parties to the arrangements are participating agencies, DIT, Ventia – the facilities management service provider (FMSP), contractors and subcontractors. All parties share duties to workers and the other parties under the WHS Act<sup>10</sup>.

The AGFMA arrangement are coordinated by DIT, which has provided a WHS Framework and Guide to enable participating agencies to:

- identify and manage risk to the public and their workers, including direct employees, primary contractors and sub-contractors
- manage within the extent of their influence and control the overall risks associated with the ownership and operation of assets within its portfolio.

Agencies' safety systems are essential to the arrangements, including contractor safety procedures, induction and training for workers in the AGFMA.

DIT coordinate governance committees, such as the Facilities Management Governance Group (FMGG), which have responsibilities for overseeing the AGFMA WHS Strategy, performance and issues relating to the delivery of the arrangements.

Other national and state legislation, South Australian public sector and agency strategies and plans and enterprise agreements may also inform the needs and expectations of public sector workers and other interested parties.

### **4.3 - Determining the scope of the work health and safety system**

Agencies will consider its context and needs and expectations of workers and other parties to determine the scope of its safety management system.

For example, the SMS for an agency that is funded by external bodies and undertakes construction work through contractors would have a different scope compared to an agency with relatively low-risk operations delivered by employees who are subject to various Directions by the Premier and Determinations and Guidelines of the Commissioner of Public Sector Employment.

### **4.4 - Safety Management Systems**

Each agency is responsible to develop and implement a safety management system to protect its workers and others from injury or illness and to ensure continuous improvement. Reviews of the

---

<sup>10</sup> WHS Act s16

systems are to be implemented on a planned basis, and may also occur in response to unplanned events.

A system is likely to include policies and procedures, education and training systems and materials, procurement arrangements and systems for measuring safety performance that can be delivered through a range of mechanisms available across the sector.

Integrating WHS system requirements within other business processes can be considered as a way to embed the necessary practices into business as usual. This may apply to HR, procurement, asset management and other business processes.

## **5 – LEADERSHIP AND WORKER PARTICIPATION**

[ISO 45001:2018](#) emphasises that leadership and commitment from the organisation’s senior management, including awareness, responsiveness, active support and feedback, are critical for the success of the SMS and achievement of its intended outcomes. Executive and leaders have specific responsibilities they need to undertake personally or direct others to undertake.<sup>11</sup>

Effective leadership will develop a workplace culture that fosters positive individual and group values, attitudes, managerial practices, perceptions, competencies and patterns of activity to deliver the safety objectives of the organisation.

An important way senior leaders demonstrate leadership is by encouraging workers to report incidents, hazards, risks and opportunities and by protecting workers against reprisals, such as the threat of dismissal or disciplinary action, when they do so.<sup>12</sup> The confidence to speak openly without fear of repercussion (also known as psychological safety) is a pre-requisite for the identification and management of psychosocial hazards. Leaders who create psychological safety in their workplaces will achieve better management of psychosocial risk as well as greater engagement and community<sup>13</sup>.

The active participation of workers supports shared perceptions of the importance of safety and wellbeing and greater detection of safety opportunities builds confidence in the effectiveness of preventive and protective measures.

### **5.1 - Leadership and commitment**

#### **SWIM Strategy**

The [Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management \(SWIM\) Strategy for the SA Public Sector \(2023-2032\)](#) identifies commitment and leadership as a key enabler of improved safety performance. Through the life of the strategy, efforts will be focussed to:

- demonstrate commitment and leadership by senior leaders, through performance KPIs and the prioritisation of safety, wellbeing and injury management in workforce planning and initiatives.
- develop and implement tools and training for senior leaders to support their commitment and leadership in safety, wellbeing and injury management.

OCPSE will collaborate with agencies to codesign and implement these initiatives.

#### **Officers of the Crown or public authority and due diligence**

In a public agency, an Officer is a person who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole or a major part of a business or undertaking of the Crown or public authority.<sup>14</sup> A Minister of a State or the Commonwealth is not in that capacity an Officer for the purposes of the WHS Act.

---

<sup>11</sup> ISO 45001:2018 A.5.1

<sup>12</sup> ISO 45001:2018 A.5.1

<sup>13</sup> [The importance of psychological safety in the workplace | McKinsey](#)

<sup>14</sup> WHS Act s247, s252

Officers have a duty to exercise due diligence to ensure they meet their own WHS obligations. Furthermore, they have to be proactive in ensuring the PCBU complies with their duties under the WHS Act. They are responsible for actively fulfilling the duty and should not assume that someone else has taken care of health and safety outcomes.<sup>15</sup>

In accordance with s 27(5) of the WHS Act, leaders identified as Officers have duties to pro-actively ensure the use of appropriate resources, policies, procedures and health and safety practices in undertaking overall and daily business operations<sup>16</sup>. The visible and proactive application of these duties through engagement and consultation with workers demonstrates commitment and leadership in safety.

Performance reports provided to agencies by OCPSE assist Officers to meet their duties of due diligence, including understanding the hazards and risks associated with the work of their organisation and monitoring the effectiveness of the safety systems. The report can be used to engage with workers regarding safety and wellbeing performance and improvement. OCPSE provides agencies access to data from SIMS (injury management system) and Gov SAfety (WHS hazard and incident reporting system) and other systems to enable them to further analyse their safety performance (refer 9.1).

## 5.2 – Work health and safety policy

### SWIM Strategy

The [Safety Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy \(2023 -2032\)](#) acts as the overall Policy commitment for the sector and its agencies to align to address safety challenges and align to the national safety strategy.

The SWIM Strategy recognises enduring and emerging challenges to focus the sector's efforts to improving safety practice and outcomes. The strategy has identified a range of associated performance measures and will continue to increase and improve the performance information available to agencies through quarterly reports and information systems.

## 5.3 - Organisational roles, responsibilities, and authorities

### Code of Ethics for the South Australian public sector

The [Code of Ethics for the South Australian public sector](#) is the Code of Conduct for the purposes of the PS Act, and all public sector employees are bound by it regardless of the nature or level of employment; employment status; or the nature of the public sector organisation in which an employee works.

The Code identifies professional conduct standards which may bear on the role of a person in the design, maintenance or implementation of an agency's SMS. Standards relate to handling official information, the use of government/ public resources and reporting unethical behaviour, and other aspects of professional conduct.

### Public Sector Act (2009)

The PS Act provides the legal framework for the engagement of employees, assignment of duties, hours of duties, disciplinary action and a range of other arrangements that intersect with duties and

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid [Glossary | SafeWork SA](#)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/resources/glossary>

arrangements for managing safety. Examples may include fatigue, resources to support safe work and management of various psychosocial risks. Various powers and functions established by the PS Act may be delegated.

### **Public Sector employment determinations, Premier's directions**

Under s10 of the PS Act, the Premier may issue directions that bind agencies to actions that may bear upon the design or implementation of an agency's SMS. Premier's Directions relate to induction, performance management and development and flexible working arrangements.

Under s16 of the PS Act, the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment has made determinations relating to employment in the Public Service that may establish conditions of employment and/ or bear upon the design or implementation of an agency's SMS. These include:

- access to training for work health and safety representatives ([Determination 3.1: Employment Conditions – Hours of Work, Overtime and Leave](#))
- arrangements for providing suitable employment for work-injured employees ([Determination 1: Merit, Engagement, Assignment of Duties and Transfer of Non-Executive Employees](#))
- minimum qualification requirements for specific roles (Determination 5<sup>17</sup>: Classification and remuneration of non-executive employees)
- flexible working arrangements ([Determination 8: Working Flexibly](#)); consultation (Determination and guideline of the commissioner for public sector employment: employment relations).

### **South Australian Executive Service**

The [South Australian Executive Service](#) (SAES) provides the public sector with high-performing leaders who have a shared sense of purpose and direction and who will actively engage in the pursuit of the objects of the PS Act<sup>18</sup> and the achievement of agency goals and objectives.

Executives are responsible for making or contributing to decisions that affect the whole or a substantial part of their agency which means Executive employees will often be Officers under the WHS Act.

The [South Australian Executive Service Competency Framework](#)<sup>19</sup> forms the foundation of all aspects of the SAES and articulates the core behaviours required of SAES executives to achieve the highest level of performance in a South Australian public sector leadership role. These behaviours enable Officers to meet their leadership duties in relation to the safety, wellbeing and injury management and include:

- building and promoting a safe, healthy and respectful organisation, free of harassment and discrimination
- acting as a positive role model by proactively communicating the value and importance of capitalising on diversity for the organisation
- putting systems in place to establish and measure accountabilities.

---

<sup>17</sup> Applies to the Public Service and only some parts of the public sector

<sup>18</sup> [Executive Employment | Office of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment](#)

<sup>19</sup> [SAES-Competency-Framework.pdf \(publicsector.sa.gov.au\)](#)

- ensuring immediate organisational capabilities are adequate and appropriate to position the organisation for success.

#### 5.4 – Consultation and participation of workers

Systems shall exist and be used to ensure workers are consulted in the development, planning, implementation, performance evaluation and actions for improving the SMS.

Consultation with workers enables Officers to meet their duties of due diligence particularly through maintaining up to date knowledge of work health and safety matters, a current understanding of the hazards and risks arising from their department's operations and ensuring the business has available and uses appropriate resources to eliminate or minimise the risks to health and safety.

OCPSE facilitates forums of WHS and injury management professionals to consult on a range of sector-wide initiatives, for example the development of the [Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy for the SA public sector \(2023 – 2032\)](#). The Office facilitates communication and consultation with a range of sector stakeholders including organisational development and human resources professionals.

From time to time, OCPSE will coordinate consultation with public sector agencies regarding legislative or other changes that may impact the sector as a whole.

The [Gov SAfety](#) hazard and incident reporting system has been configured to include health and safety representatives where they are in place, to facilitate their contribution to investigating and addressing hazards and incidents in client agencies.

The [People Matter Employee Survey](#) (PMES) is a primary mechanism to consult with employees on the factors that impact their wellbeing, engagement and the psychological safety of their work. The survey (formerly known as the I Work for SA – My Voice survey) invites South Australian public sector employees to reflect on their workplace experiences and perspectives to enhance wellbeing, inclusion and performance initiatives. Since 2024 the survey, collects information about employees' experience of psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

## **6 - PLANNING**

### **6.1 – Actions to address risks and opportunities**

Effective planning enables an agency to schedule and manage resources to address hazards, risks and opportunities and meet their WHS objectives. An agency's SWIM plan and other plans will be unique to their context, hazards and risks and identified needs.

Consideration should be given to the plans and processes below to ensure that sector-wide initiatives or requirements are incorporated where necessary.

#### **SWIM strategy**

The [Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy for the SA public sector \(2023 – 2032\)](#) was developed following a comprehensive environmental scan and analysis of contemporary and emerging challenges and opportunities to identify improvement strategies for the coming decade. Three enablers of improved performance and areas of focus form the strategy to provide direction to agency action plans that move agencies, and the sector towards improved performance. The strategy includes key milestones and reviews.

#### **People Matter Employment Survey**

The PMES informs agencies and the sector of workforce experience and perspectives on wellbeing, psychosocial hazards in the workplace, inclusion and performance initiatives. Each agency is provided reports that include benchmarking against the sector as a whole and, where possible various sub-elements of the agency.

Agencies should participate in facilitated action planning to help identify actions and improvements. Sector-wide actions are driven by OCPSE. In recent iterations of the sector-wide survey, actions have included the development of Guidelines for the management of bullying and management of harassment and discrimination and the provision of a public sector healthy workplace advisor.

#### **Anti-Racism Action Plan**

Further to the [Anti-Racism Strategy 2023-2028](#) referred to above (4.2), how the public sector will fight racism is explained in the South Australian Public Sector's Anti-Racism Action Plan 2023-28 (the action plan). These are grouped under the five priorities identified in the strategy:

- enable employees to act
- embed anti-racism into leadership and decision-making
- strengthen inclusive and safe workplaces
- ensure communications reinforce commitment to anti-racism
- be accountable for anti-racism.

### **6.2 - WHS objectives and planning to achieve them**

Agencies are responsible to define objectives for their safety management systems, to ensure they remain effective, and that performance continues to improve. These objectives reflect the hazards and

risks pertinent to each agency. Where sector-wide systems and processes exist (e.g. hazard and incident reporting systems, PMES, objectives may be set to support agencies.

Three SAPS primary performance measures established through the [Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy for the SA public sector \(2023 – 2032\)](#) are adopted from [the Australian WHS Strategy \(2023-2033\)](#) and provide objectives. OCPSE will continue to report on these and other measures to enable agencies to monitor their progress.

AUSTRALIAN WHS STRATEGY MEASURE AND TARGET	SAPS MEASURES
A reduction in the number of worker fatalities caused by traumatic injuries of at least 30 per cent by 2032	Workplace traumatic fatalities
A reduction in the frequency rate of serious claims resulting in one or more weeks off work of at least 20 per cent by 2032	Incidence rate of significant injuries
A reduction of the overall incidence of work-related injury or illness among workers to below 3.5 per cent by 2032	Number of new claims made

Gov SAfety and other hazard and incident reporting and investigation systems in the sector require various stages of the system workflow are completed within specific timeframes e.g.: reporting hazard or incidents within 24 hours, completing investigations within 10 days of a report being lodged, completing corrective actions before a due date nominated by the investigator. Gov SAfety provides reports enabling workers and management to monitor performance against these objectives.

The [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy](#) identifies a range of measures and targets. Primary amongst these is to implement a sector wide employment target for people living with a disability of 3% to be achieved by the end of 2026. Other targets include increasing employee confidence to share their disability status in HR recording systems and increased engagement of employees living with a disability, as measured by the PMES. The strategy identifies the intention to identify diversity, equity and inclusion measure in chief executive performance agreements.

The I work for SA – Your Voice survey conducted in 2021 informed an action plan that identified the following objectives for the sector:

- Leaders are able to give clear direction and guide employees through change
- Employees have more support and resources to manage their wellbeing (tailored approach for front line roles)
- The Sector has a respectful and inclusive culture.

Key measures of success are an improvement in measures for bullying and harassment, reported work life balance and employees feeling they have adequate tools and resources to do their jobs.

The PMES conducted in March 2024 will enable the sector and agencies review their progress against these objectives.

## **7 - SUPPORT**

The effective implementation of a SMS requires various supports including the provision of adequate resources, competent personnel, documented information and communication with internal and external stakeholders.

### **7.1 - Resources**

Agencies are responsible to ensure adequate resources are available and applied to ensuring the establishment, implementation, maintenance and improvement of the safety management system. Resources may include personnel, technology systems, infrastructure or funding. Most safety management systems are designed centrally within an agency, and implemented by operational staff who are responsible for conducting the core operational responsibilities of the agency and who are primarily exposed to hazards.

Safety performance across a number of measures can provide information about the adequacy or effectiveness of resource allocation.

### **7.2 – Competence**

#### **South Australian Executive Service Competency Framework**

The framework articulates the performance criteria for each executive level so that the behaviours and levels of performance required to demonstrate competence are consistent, measurable and widely understood. The framework enables the SAES to measure performance and manage succession more easily, building executive strength and talent for the future.

The use of the SAES Competency Framework for all executive recruitment, performance assessment, development and succession planning will ensure that the public sector continues to have a pool of highly capable and developed leaders ready to take up new roles to meet future demands. (Refer 5.3 above for further information about the SA Executive Service.)

### **Executive induction and training through SALA**

The South Australian Learning Academy (SALA), a unit within OCPSE, provides varied training content to the SA public sector, including induction and development opportunities to the Sector for Executives. Training includes generalised WHS content on WHS legislation, due diligence and contemporary strategies and initiatives to ensure participants acquire relevant knowledge and can access sector-based resources to meet the responsibilities of their roles including supporting mental health of their workforce. Induction includes information on the authorities delegated to Executives.

SALA and the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) provides similar learning material to through the Managers Essentials and other courses to build managers' awareness and capability to lead, facilitate and participate in SWIM systems.

## Commissioner's Determination 5<sup>20</sup>: Classification and Remuneration

The [determination](#) details the classification and remuneration arrangements, including minimum qualification requirements for public sector employees across various streams including competence for various levels of classification.

As a commitment of the SAPS Diversity Equity and Inclusion Strategy (2023-26), OCPSE will evaluate and recommend a range of training providers and resources that may assist agencies to promote the principles of diversity, inclusion and anti-racism and the prevention of bullying and harassment.

### 7.3 - Awareness

Workers are to be made aware of various aspects of the safety management system to ensure they understand its objectives, how and why they exist, are implemented. Workers are to be aware of hazards and risks relevant to them and how they are to be expected to act to protect themselves and others.

A key principle of the [Mentally Healthy Workplace Framework](#) is that building a common awareness and understanding of mental health and mental illness reduces stigma, helps people to recognise signs of mental illness in themselves and others and gives people the skills to respond appropriately. A [toolkit](#) is provided to guide leaders, managers and employees and includes advice for education programs on mental health, suicide prevention and intervening effectively following illness or suicide.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** providers can deliver or support agencies' awareness programs in several ways. SAPS agencies have the option to engage EAP services through an agreement with a number of providers. Further details of the agreement and services available through the agreement can be from Procurement Services SA [here](#) (internal access only).

### 7.4 – Internal and external communication

Agencies are responsible for internal communication with workers and other stakeholders in relation to their SMS. Agencies may be responsible to lead or coordinate safety arrangements across multiple agencies or the sector as a whole and may communicate to this wider audience. Examples of this include delivery of on-line training to all staff in relation to hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic or notification of a safety warning or emergency.

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet (DPC) manages the whole of government email process, ensuring messages are relevant, consistently formatted and meet relevant policy criteria. Further information is available on the [DPC intranet](#) (internal access only) or from agency communications personnel.

### 7.5 – Documented information

An agency will determine the documentation required within its SMS, based on a range of criteria including the need to demonstrate fulfillment of legal and other requirements and the nature and complexity of activities undertaken and how they interact.

---

<sup>20</sup> Applies to the Public Service and only some parts of the public sector

The [State Records Act, \(1997\)](#) defines and provides detailed requirements for the creation, storage, retention and disposal of records. [General Disposal Schedule 30](#) approved by the State Records Council sets out retention requirements for records relating to various functions, activities or processes including work health and safety, accidents and incidents and inspections. Various 'employee management' activities are also referenced including training and performance management.

## **8 - OPERATION**

### **8.1 – Operational planning and control**

An agency will plan, implement and maintain processes to ensure the requirements of the SMS are implemented.

Agency plans should be informed by the risks and opportunities relevant to the agency, implementation of the [Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management Strategy for the SA public sector \(2023 – 2032\)](#) and the performance against measures arising from this strategy and other objectives determined by the agency.

Various cross-sector arrangements, processes or initiatives establish WHS requirements and/ or provide tools that should be considered when formulating agency plans. These include but are not limited to:

- [AGFMA](#) – requires that participating agencies have a documented process for hazard identification and risk assessment, planning and implementation and control of hazards and risks at all designated locations/sites<sup>21</sup>. Processes are also required to ensure the consultation, cooperation and coordination between the parties that are subject to the AGFMA arrangements.
- [PMES](#) – feedback received through this survey informs OCPSE and agencies of what is working well, what needs to be improved and the identification of psychosocial hazards. This information is used to make strategic decisions and informs new initiatives, priorities and programs within agencies and across the whole of sector.
- [Mentally Healthy Workplace Framework](#) and toolkit provide example tools which can be used by agencies to identify and document actions by the agency, teams and employees for each of the key principles (raise awareness, build the positives, prevent harm and manage risk, intervene early and support recovery)<sup>22</sup>.
- [Office accommodation guidelines](#) - The Government of South Australia is a major owner and lessee of office accommodation, which can represent a significant component of an agency's overall cost of delivering services. Strategically planned and delivered office accommodation can result in considerable savings to government enabling greater focus on core services and programs. Having appropriate office accommodation (including site selection, design and fit out) supports responsibilities and strategies including work health and safety requirements, and technology integration.<sup>23</sup> The guidelines address factors that impact safety including workplace design, access, security and environmental considerations.

### **Change Management**

Careful planning of temporary or permanent change is essential to ensure impacts on WHS risks and performance are understood and addressed. Good change management leads to significant improvements in workers' engagement with safety requirements. The opposite can also be true, with the potential that ambiguity or uncertainty may create increased safety risk and threaten effective business outcomes.

Designed for broad business application beyond safety, the [Change Management toolkit](#) is designed for agencies to assess the need and impact of change, and help determine an organisation's change readiness, including the commitment and capability of its leadership.

---

<sup>21</sup> AGFMA WHS Framework p13

<sup>22</sup> Mentally Healthy Workplaces Toolkit p 60 - 63

<sup>23</sup> Premier and Cabinet Circular PC018 – Government Office Accommodation Framework

## **Procurement and management of contracts**

Planning, sourcing and contract management for services and goods in the SA public sector is to be undertaken in accordance with the South Australian Government Procurement Framework administered by Procurement Services SA. Each agency is responsible for its own procurement within delegated authorities. Safety requirements for goods and services should be identified throughout the procurement process and documented in any specification and agreement.

The [Standard Goods and Services Agreement template](#) includes standard terms and conditions in relation to work health and safety. Any amendment to these must be consulted with the Crown Solicitor's Office.

## **8.2 – Emergency preparedness and response**

### **State Emergency Management Committee**

Through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, The State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) is responsible for the [State Emergency Management Plan \(SEMP\)](#), which sets out the state's comprehensive emergency management arrangements.

It outlines a coordinated approach to building resilience and reducing vulnerability across all aspects of the community including state and local government, business, the non-government sector and individuals. It includes a clear set of principles defining the responsibilities of government agencies and participating organisations in emergency management activities.

The SEMP is supported by a series of strategies, guidelines and frameworks.

Various agencies are responsible for delivery of SEMP supporting plans that include hazard risk reduction plans, capability plans, control agency plans, functional support group plans, zone emergency management plans and operations manuals.

Agencies should also the hazards and plans relevant to their operations and workplaces and their roles in implementing them including training, testing and communicating relevant information to stakeholders.

## **9 – PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

### **9.1 - Monitoring, measurement, analysis, and performance evaluation**

As indicated elsewhere in this guideline, OCPSE has leveraged the SWIM strategy to report quarterly to agencies on a range of performance measures. These measures were determined in consultation with agencies and, where possible, align to the Australian WHS Strategy.

The number and purpose of measures will be augmented over time as more data becomes available and capacity for and interest in additional priorities emerge.

Quarterly reports by OCPSE also include information on the status of actions arising from Audit and Verification System (AVS) audits and reviews.

Various information systems that operate across some or all agencies collect data that can assist agencies to monitor, measure and report the implementation and performance of its SMS.

Subsequent to Cabinet approval in 2018, OCPSE established and manages a panel of vendors for Human Resource Management (HRM) Systems for all agencies and entities within the South Australian government. Cabinet has mandated that agencies procure HRM systems from this panel unless specifically exempted in writing by the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment.

Panel suppliers offer HRM systems covering recruitment, learning and development, performance management, talent management, work health and safety, and injury management. All the vendors and their systems available on the Panel have been pre-qualified as satisfying the South Australian Government's minimum functional and non-functional requirements for the various HRM systems.

Data captured in systems that operate across all or a large number of agencies and enable monitoring, measurement and evaluation of safety plans and programs include but are not limited to:

- Injury management data for all agencies is held in SIMS and includes the status of all claims, costs and return to work activity. SIMS data is used in quarterly SWIM performance reports provided to agencies by OCPSE. The data is accessible by agencies for additional analysis and reporting on SWIM processes and outcomes.
- WHS hazard and incident management system from GovSAfety. The Department for Education, SA Health networks and SA Police currently use alternative WHS systems.
- Training content and completion – a range of systems are used across the sector. MyCareer is a system that OCPSE procured from the panel to implement a shared HR solution on behalf of an agency or cluster of agencies. The myCareer system is a Cornerstone system, which once implemented will offer the full suite of modules (recruitment, Learning, Performance and Talent Management).
- Recruitment – undertaken using I Work for SA jobs Board
- Performance Management – multiple systems are across the sector including MyCareer (refer above)
- Payroll data - (CHRIS21, Valeo)

The following sector-wide processes capture data that assist agencies to measure and monitor and evaluate their SWIM performance.

- [People Matter Employee Survey \(PMES\)](#) – conducted every two years by OCPSE, the PMES anonymously surveys all employees working for the South Australian public sector. The PMES seeks insights to the current employee experience across individual agencies and the whole of the public sector. Topics addressed by the survey encompass inclusion and belonging,

wellbeing, perceptions of leadership capability and psychosocial risks. Sector responses will be analysed and reported in relation to these key topics and will inform and support the development of action plans to improve wellbeing, inclusion, engagement, and performance.

- [Public Sector Employment Review](#) - a sector-wide agency survey that allows agencies to respond to a range of questions about how they have implemented core policies on workforce performance, culture and integrity.
- Agency Information Collection - the Agency Information Collection (AIC) allows respondents to provide statistical information that demonstrates the agency's compliance with Premier's Determinations, Commissioner for Public Sector Employment's Determinations and the principles and objects of the PS Act.
- [AGFMA](#) – the facilities management service provider (Ventia) can provide a range of data arising from the arrangement that may inform agencies of their safety performance.

OCPSE also manages an **Enterprise Data Warehouse** – a central repository for integrating data from disparate sources within the South Australian public sector, including payroll systems (CHRIS21, Valeo, and others), injury management data (SIMS), and other operational data critical to public sector management.

These integrated data sets facilitate a comprehensive view of the sector's performance to support decision-making and strategic planning.

## 9.2 – Internal audit

Agency internal audit programs and outcomes are reviewed within the Verified Self-Assessment process completed by larger agencies at least every 5 years. Quarterly reports by OCPSE also provide information on the status of actions arising from AVS audits and reviews.

## 9.3 – Management review

Various mechanisms exist within the SA public sector to enable the review of the suitability of safety management arrangements.

In South Australia, agencies and instrumentalities of the Crown are deemed to be registered as self-insured employers. A regulatory function of RTWSA is to oversee the performance of the Crown, as a self-insured employer, relevant to work health and safety systems. RTWSA also regulate injury management systems and operations.

Through a partnership arrangement between RTWSA and OCPSE, the AVS program was established to provide assurance to RTWSA that effective safety management arrangements are implemented across public sector agencies. OCPSE contribute to the planning of RTWSA regulatory program and report progress and outcomes of the AVS program to RTWSA.

Progress, outcomes and issues arising from the AVS program are reported within the agencies by OCPSE to the Senior Leadership Committee (SLC), Workforce Transformation and HR Council. Matters may include SWIM performance and outcomes of AVS engagements and significant risks relevant to the sector or multiple agencies.

## **10 - IMPROVEMENT**

### **10.1 – Incident non-conformity and corrective action**

Gov SAfety and other hazard and incident reporting systems enable the creation, monitoring and completion of corrective actions. Agencies are responsible for procedures to ensure relevant events are recorded by their workers. Agencies are to consider their internal processes to record and communicate WHS risks and escalate for management review.

Where findings of AVS engagements, particularly risk based reviews (RBRs) may apply to all or many agencies, OCPSE will seek to facilitate actions centrally as means to drive consistency across the sector and reduce the duplication of effort.

### **10.2 – Continual improvement**

The [Safety, Wellbeing and Injury Management \(SWIM\) Strategy for the South Australian public sector \(2023-2032\)](#) responds to contemporary challenges and opportunities to enhance safety, wellbeing and injury management outcomes. The strategy objectives will be enabled through:

- Enhancing demonstrated commitment and leadership in safety, wellbeing and injury management
- Implementing contemporary and innovative approaches to deliver safe and healthy workplaces
- Innovative and strategic use of data.

Early actions in the implementation of the strategy include:

- revising induction and training to [SA Executive Stream \(SAES\)](#) cohort on due diligence, safety leadership and emerging risks and opportunities
- developing the capability of the sector to manage psychosocial hazards in the workplace in accordance with legislation
- developing a SWIM data plan to improve the quality and availability of data to support the measurement, evaluation and improvement of safety performance.

Agencies are to consider aligning their planning system documentation to the SWIM strategy to facilitate reporting against measures and outcomes arising from the strategy.

**Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Sector Employment**

**Street Address**

Ground Floor, State  
Administration Centre,  
200 Victoria Square  
(Tarndanyangga),  
Adelaide SA 5000

**Mailing address**

GPO Box 464,  
Adelaide SA 5001

**E** [publicsector@sa.gov.au](mailto:publicsector@sa.gov.au)

**T** 1800 317 333

**W** [publicsector.sa.gov.au](http://publicsector.sa.gov.au)



**Government  
of South Australia**

Office of the Commissioner  
for Public Sector Employment