

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

PROVISION OF OHS INFORMATION

1 PURPOSE

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 requires employers to “provide information to employees of the employer (in such other languages as appropriate) concerning health and safety at the workplace.

The effective provision of health and safety information will assist in removing or reducing the risk of injury and illness. All employees/ students require information, advice assistance and training in order to understand the health and safety hazards and risks associated with their work, and be able to contribute to a safe and healthy work environment.

The purpose of the procedure is to provide practical guidance on meeting the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, with respect to the provision of OHS information.

2 DEFINITIONS

Induction

Formal introduction to a new job.

Translation

Includes the provision of translators as well as translation of written materials.

Safety signs

A safety sign is one which gives a particular message to those who may be exposed to hazards associated with the work environment. This may be to prevent accidents, signify health hazards, indicate the location of safety and fire protection equipment, or for giving guidance and instruction in an emergency.

3 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. Dean, Head of School/College or Divisional Manager

The Dean, Head of Division and all Managers are responsible for;

- a) Ensuring that all staff and students are adequately provided with occupational health and safety information that takes into account their communication requirements.
- b) Identification and assessment of health and safety information needs, taking into account requirements for non english speaking or people with disabilities and developing a management plan for information provision. The plan should be reviewed in line with operational and legislative changes.

The management plan should consider;

- An outline of the occupational health and safety procedures required to be followed.
- Allocation of appropriate resources including translation of health and safety material for non english speaking employees, students and people with disabilities where applicable.

- The training and induction needs of employees
- c) An appropriate induction/orientation program specific to the University area is provided for new or transferred staff and students.
- d) Assurance that signs which have a health and safety message are displayed in appropriate locations.

3.2 Employees

Employees are responsible for following safe work practices and should report to their manager instances where they or other employees/students have difficulty understanding health and safety information.

4. DESCRIPTION

4.1 Induction.

All staff, students including residential students/staff should be provided with an induction program. The induction /orientation program should include

- A tour of the work/accommodation area
- An explanation of local amenities
- Introductions to fellow employees in their work area or residents assistants (colleges)
- A description of general workplace/accommodation hazards and safety signs.
- Specific occupational health and safety instructions relevant to the area. This may include, incident reporting, issue resolution, personal protective equipment (as required), safety signage, areas identified as restricted access, workstation set up and operation of equipment and plant.
- Reference to the area Health and Safety Representative, first aiders in the relevant designated work group.
- Details of emergency procedures including fire alarms, fire equipment, evacuation processes, first aid procedures.

It is recommended that written information be included in the induction process.

The special needs of new / transferred staff should be considered prior to commencement.

Where written information is being provided as part of the consultation it could be either translated into major languages or accompanied by a summary in plain English or presented in a way that gives people an opportunity to have it explained or clarified in their own language.

4.2 Training

Occupational Health and Safety training should be tailored to the specific needs, including language needs, of the group to be trained. This applies to induction training, on-the job training and ongoing training.

4.3 Communication

Communication of occupational health and safety information must be in a manner that is clear and unambiguous. To ensure that there is a clear understanding of the OHS information, feedback should be encouraged and sought.

4.3.1 Forms of communication

Employees and managers of areas should use a variety of methods to communicate occupational health and safety to employees/ students.

These could include

- Staff meetings
- Notice boards
- Web pages
- Electronic format
- Newsletters and other forms of communication

4.3.2 Safety Signs

Safety signs should be clear, consistent and conform to Australian Standard guidelines. Picture signs are preferred however written signs are acceptable as long as simple language is used.

Safety signs do not replace or reduce the need for proper and continuing prevention measures. Education and training are an essential part of any sign system.

The four categories of pictorial signs, distinguished by colour and shape of the symbol

Description	Meaning
Circle: White background with red borders and cross bar; black symbol	Stop and Prohibition signs
Triangle: Yellow background with black border; black symbol	Caution(warning)signs
Rectangle: Green background white symbol	Emergency-related information signs
Circle: Blue background white symbol	Protective equipment.

4. REFERENCES

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

OHS Code of Practice- Provision of Occupational health and Safety Information in Languages other than English. Oct 1992.

Australian Standard: AS1319 Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment.

5. CROSS REFERENCES

La Trobe University OHS Policy

6. DOCUMENTATION

Nil

This procedure as endorsed by the Executive Occupational Health and Safety Committee at its meeting on 1 December 2003.

Editorial Changes: July 2005