

Task Factor

Design and Effectiveness of Procedures



Procedure: a written description of the steps, identified through proper analysis, which you need to follow, to safely perform a task or to carry out an activity (series of tasks).

A procedure may be on paper or be presented electronically, including diagrams, flowcharts, checklists etc. to make the content easier to understand.

Safety Critical Procedure: describes a procedure for a task which if carried out incorrectly or not at all could lead to injury, fatality, serious damage to plant or environment or loss of containment.

Learning more about design and effectiveness of procedures.

If the answer to any of the questions below is 'no', then you need to take action

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|-----|--|--------------------------|
| 1. | Do the existing procedures cover the scope of expected activities? | ☐ |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance tasks. • Plant start up and shutdown. • Plant operation. • Abnormal or emergency tasks. • Troubleshooting. • Training and competence arrangements. | |
| 2. | Is there a formal process of risk assessment in place to determine which tasks or safety critical operations need clear procedures (additional sources of information may include Seveso scenario assessments, incident/accident root cause analyses, job hazard assessments or analyses, HAZOPs)? | ☐ |
| 3. | Where a hazard review or layer of protection analysis references operator actions based on procedure, is this actually reflected in that procedure (and is the consequence highlighted or cross referenced to the process safety document)? | ☐ |
| 4. | Are procedures for identical tasks or operations across sites or plants consistent? | ☐ |
| 5. | Are task performers involved in the identification and writing of new or revised procedures? | ☐ |
| 6. | Do the procedures clearly identify responsibilities for tasks, especially where duties are shared? | ☐ |
| 7. | Is there a procedure which describes how the work of contractors or temporary staff is managed? | ☐ |
| 8. | Are the procedures reviewed periodically, after any incident and as part of changes? | ☐ |
| 9. | Is there a document control process for procedures? | ☐ |
| | This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - who is authorised as competent to approve procedures, - management of change process for change of procedures, and - revision control. | |
| 10. | Are the formats (layout, structure and presentation) of the procedures (checklists, instructions, flow sheets etc.) appropriate for ease of understanding and application? | ☐ |

- for routine operation,
- for safety critical operation
- for emergency and upset conditions.

11.	Are new or revised procedures validated in the field to match how the task should be carried out?	☐
12.	Are task performers informed of or trained in new or changed procedures?	☐
13.	Is there an ongoing monitoring system to ensure compliance to procedures?	☐
14.	Are procedures easily accessible to task performers?	☐
15.	Is the language used appropriate to the audience?	☐
16.	Are procedures written so that the steps and sequence can be unambiguously understood and followed easily?	☐
17.	Do the procedures include key safety information?	☐
18.	Is the readability (layout, font type, size etc.) of safety critical or emergency procedures considered?	☐

What can we do about it?

Management Responsibility

Management should make sure they are familiar with good practice for designing procedures.

Management should periodically monitor and check that procedures are being used properly, actively encourage initiatives to improve existing procedures, be open to feedback from operators on any issues and address comments promptly. This may involve amendments to procedures or training materials, or changes to work practices.

If people are not following procedures, find out why. They may have discovered a better method of doing the work; on the other hand, their method may involve more risk. An assessment should be made in the field with task performers to properly understand the risk and benefits of the differences, before agreeing and document the practice to be followed.

Ensure there is a formal system for suggesting changes to procedures.

Have Effective Procedures

Procedures, especially operating and maintenance procedures are important for the prevention of incidents and occupational ill health. They are a key element of a safety management system.

As well as being technically accurate, procedures need to be well-written, usable and up to date. Poorly written procedures can be a reason for people to develop alternative practices. Effectively written procedures are vital in maintaining consistency and in ensuring that everyone has the same information.

Remember that in addition to written procedures there may also be established, complementary but undocumented work practices that need to be considered.

Procedures ideally need to:

- be accurate and complete;
- be clear and concise with an appropriate level of detail;
- be current and valid;
- be supported by training;
- be readily accessible to the task performer;
- be consistent with hazards and precaution identified in risk assessment or other documents;
- state necessary additional precautions that need to be taken by task performer to mitigate task hazards;