

## RISK INFORMATION – SCHOOLS MANAGING CONTRACTORS

The risk topics outlined in this paper provide input to the establishment of effective management of contractors.

Schools and other organisations employ contractors for a number of different purposes to access specific skills not available within the permanent workforce. Use of contractors can expose your school to the following types of risks:

- Injury to staff or third parties at the school
- Damage to property or equipment
- Injury to the contractors themselves
- Damage to or loss of contractor property
- Completion of faulty or sub-standard work

When employing contractors, separate responsibilities attach to the school and to the contractor. These responsibilities are outlined in the following table (source: Vero presentation *“Contractor Management & Yard Supervision”*):

School responsibilities	Contractor Responsibilities
School to provide a safe work environment	Contractor to ensure that their staff and sub-contractors have the required Health, Safety and Environment training for tasks they are undertaking
School to ensure contractor suitability for the task to be undertaken	To employ safe tools and systems of work on the job.
Review contractor competencies and licences	To comply with relevant standards and legislative requirements
Induct contractors to the site / Conduct refresher training for continuing contractors	To conduct work to a high standard and in a safe and professional manner
Inform contractors of site specific hazards	To supervise young and less experienced workers
Inform contractor of school WHS / OHS policies , including: emergency evacuation / accident reporting / first aid	To communicate regularly
Inform contractors of school “Permit to Work” system and “Lock” and “Tag” protocols	To provide Working with Children checks and copies of licences and competencies

The information provided is of a general nature only and may not identify all matters that need to be included in the design of effective controls for the subject area. Professional advice should be obtained on individual circumstances.

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Review contractor suitability by asking them to provide information relevant to the proposed assignment, including:

- Evidence of competence to complete the task (including referrals to previously completed similar assignments)
- Details of qualifications and/or registrations
- Evidence (Certificates of Currency) of current public and products liability insurance, professional indemnity insurance and workers' compensation insurance
- Safe Work procedures for work; proposed WHS/OHS inspections
- Methods of assessing safety of sub-contractors
- Details of any hazards with equipment to be used or activities to be undertaken
- Safety measures to be employed
- Quality standards to be adopted including statutory certifications for completed work
- Price

Once contractor due diligence work has been undertaken and a contractor has been selected, the following should be completed as part of the formal contractor appointment process:

- Establish contract or service agreement with the contractor – obtain legal assistance during this step
- The contract / agreement should include suitable indemnity or “hold harmless” clauses (obtain legal assistance)
- The contract/agreement should clearly establish the scope of work to be undertaken
- Document expectations in relation to safety and reporting hazards and work quality
- Where there is an expectation of repeat contractor use consider the establishment of a preferred supplier list (adjust in the light of contract performance)

Prior to work commencing all Contractor personnel should receive site induction training. Refresher induction should be considered for longer duration contracts. Matters to be considered as part of induction:

- Make sure that training is carried out by a suitable person (not the office junior)
- Provide attendees with a copy of the school contractor handbook (for content refer below) and highlight key topics in the manual
- Keep a record of personnel who have attended induction training - signed by attendees

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- Communicate details of WHS/OHS procedures, building features, process hazards, protection systems and other hazards in the areas in which they will be working or navigating while getting to work
- Expectations in relation to attendance and sign-in protocols

The following is a list of topics for inclusion in the school's Contractor Handbook:

- Communications and consultation arrangements
- Drugs, alcohol and smoking
- Arrival on-site – report to / security / sign-in protocols
- Harassment free workplace
- Safety and security of tools and equipment
- Injury / near miss and hazard reporting
- Permit to work systems – heights, confined space, hot work
- Working with children requirements where children are present or may be present
- Health and safety information relevant to the facility
- Identification, assessment, control and monitoring of foreseeable risks
- Site security and public safety
- Personal protective equipment
- Manual handling
- Restricted access
- Site OHS / WHS policies and procedures
- Evacuation procedures
- Vehicle access and traffic control
- Working alone
- Asbestos register
- Air quality
- Dangerous goods and hazardous substances
- Electrical safety (including “tag” requirements)
- Fire protection and isolation
- First aid officers and equipment
- Housekeeping
- Isolation procedures
- Plant and equipment

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Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) are to be completed by contractors prior to commencing any high risk construction work, with copies provided to the school.

- Specific to contractor tasks while working at your site
- Should cover Set-up and Pack-up tasks
- The school should review and retain SWMSs
- SafeWork and WorkSafe sites provide guidance to the completion and use of SWMS

Ensure that there is a functional process for identification of on-site contractor staff together with a record of their approximate location when on-site. Elements of such a process will include:

- Contractor identification via “visitor” tags or similar
- Sign-in / sign-out processes in case of emergency
- School access to records where they are maintained by the contractor

Set-up work area and issue Permits to Work (hot work, working at heights, confined space entry)

- Consider specific hazards relating to equipment, vehicles; be prepared to cordon off areas where hazards are heightened during the contract period.
- Where specific hazardous work is to be performed institute a “Permit to Work” system to authorise work to proceed. Examples of such work includes: working at heights, hot work, confined space entry. A permit system enables a systematic approach to be taken to identifying risks of particular types of jobs and identification of precautions to be undertaken

Commence work – monitor performance and Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) issues

- Monitor HSE practices of the contractor and any subcontractors
- Document and communicate any issues or concerns to the contractor
- Ensure issues are rectified
- Repost any accidents, incidents and near misses
- Feedback any information in relation to preferred suppliers

Retain copies of records pertinent to each contract, including:

- Contract / service agreement
- Induction materials and attendance registers
- Insurance Certificates of Currency
- WHS / OHS obligations and requirements
- Permit to Work forms

## **RISK INFORMATION – SCHOOLS MANAGING CONTRACTORS**

- Safe Work Method Statement forms
- Council permissions
- Competency records – registrations, licences, certificates, academic records

### **References**

Vero Risk Information – *“Property: Contractor Management”*

Gabrielle Hutton, Vero Insurance Limited, *“Contractor Management & Yard Supervision”*,  
June 2013

ABIS News, Camping Special Edition, *“Contractors & Responsibilities”*, August 2013