HOW TO WRITE AN
HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY AND ENVIROMENTAL MANUAL

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CENTRE FOR
LOCAL
BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT

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WHAT IS AN HSSE MANUAL?

A Health, Safety, Security and Environmental (HSSE) Manual is a collection of information, **instructions, policies**, and **procedures** intended to **ensure safe operations** and **safe conduct in the workplace.**

A good HSSE Manual is fundamental to good HSSE management, as it is what employees will consult to ensure that they are complying with regulations and company policy.

The following discusses some of the first steps to begin

- **planning your HSSE Manual,**
- **how to research it, and**
- **how to write it.**

PLANNING AND DEVELOPING YOUR HSSE MANUAL

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail". Benjamin Franklin.

The first step in planning and developing your HSSE Manual is to develop your HSSE policy. This policy will establish your HSSE goals, approach, and framework for safety culture. The following section describes how to develop your HSSE policy.

Develop a HSSE Policy

The HSSE Policy may be a combined policy statement or a separate policy statement for Health and Safety or Security or Environment.

The policy should define the organization's senior leadership's

- Mission,
- Vision,
- Values, and
- Expectations. (must be clearly defined or don't proceed; until, you have done so.)

Use terminology that says what you mean and that is not open to interpretation. This will provide the basis for establishing the foundation of your organization's safety culture.

The HSSE policy should provide an overview of the value of protecting the

- company employees,
- company assets,
- environment and
- the public.

The policy statement should begin with a message from the company's most senior executive, typically the President or Chief Executive Officer, stating:

■ The company's commitment to providing a safe workplace and the necessary resources to achieve it and that organization's priority is their people.

The HSSE policy should:

■ Explain the manual is not all encompassing, but its application will protect the organization's

    people

    environment

    assets

    reputation

■ Request employees to follow and stop to seek clarification on the organization's HSSE management expectations, if in doubt;

■ State that employees are expected to advise management and provide ideas about necessary HSSE improvements, particularly when they are needed to protect the organization's People – Environment-Assets-Reputation (PEAR);

■ State that the organization's management will listen, review, and make changes, if justified, based on employees' suggested HSSE improvements;

■ Declare that the organization's employees and their contractors will:

    Do the work right or not at all.

    Do the work safely or not at all.

    Stop Work or pause when work is unsafe or perceived to be and make it safe before proceeding.

Prioritize what the HSSE manual should cover

■ Identify the most critical safety issues at your business which is what will be the focus of your manual.

■ Senior Management needs to consider the following in the development of an HSSE Policy:

    What is Management's commitment to HSSE?

How important is it to Management to ensure a safe working environment?

What is the purpose of the policy?

What are Management's HSSE expectations of employees and contractors?

How does Management want to be perceived by employees, contractors, clients, and the public?

How will Management train employees?

Is the Safety Committee included in the writing?

How will Management provide information about potential job hazards, appropriate protection, and individual rights and responsibilities.

Will Management commit to investigating incidents?

Will Management commit to complying Guyanese HSSE laws and regulations? Compliance can lead to a reduction of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities, while protecting the environment.

Involve management and employees in preparing the manual

To help ensure employee acceptance and compliance with the HSSE manual, it is highly recommended that Upper/Executive Management:

- Inform employees of the need for the manual;
- Employees help define its content;
- Have supervisors and employees review drafts to confirm its relevance;
- Encourage supervisors and employees input and buy-in to the manual content.

Determine HSSE Responsibilities

Define the HSSE job responsibilities for everyone in the company for example:

- Company executives – e.g. President/CEO;

- Employees;
- New employees.

A best practice is to include HSSE responsibilities and accountabilities in all employees' job descriptions and explain these HSSE responsibilities in new employee inductions.

Determine your basic HSSE Rules

Establish HSSE basic rules for your company, then write, train, and communicate to everyone in the company on these rules. These are the HSSE Rules that everyone must follow because not following will eventually lead to injury or worse, environmental damage, or a security mishap. Rules are the best way to execute work safely, effectively, and efficiently.

NOTE: These rules should be ones that every company employee should follow. Additional HSSE rules are required for different job functions and scopes of work that not everyone is qualified to conduct.

If employees, contractors, or visitors to your controlled areas of operation they must

- Know and nderstand the basic HSSE rules;
- Be able to remember them;
- Recognize that the rule applies to the situation they are in.
- Choose to comply with the rule.

When developing these basic HSSE rules, consider the following (10) ten most common reasons employees can be injured or can lead to incidents involving the environment, the health of people, and security:

- Rushing to do a job.
- Not paying attention.
- Not recognizing a hazard.
- Complacency.
- Not trained.

- "Always have done it this way."
- Person tired?
- Poor housekeeping.
- Not wearing Personal Protective Equipment.
- Taking shortcuts.
- Not following procedures.

To develop your company's basic HSSE Rules, use the following steps:

STEP 1

Organize a committee consisting for management and employees to ask the following questions:

- What are the HSSE rules that everyone must know to work in Guyana?
- What near misses or incidents causing injuries, environmental damage, damaged health, or security breaches have occurred within the company that could have been avoided, if an HSSE rule had been known or followed?
- What hazards in the company's operation could expose employees, workers, the environment, or general public to harm?
- Of these identified hazards - are they controlled so there is no chance of harm?
- Are there rules for their hazard control?
- Should there be rules for these controls to ensure they are known and in place at all times?
- How are incidents reported to management?

STEP 2

Collect the responses, discuss, and come to a consensus on what HSSE basic rules are needed. Ask the committee the following:

- Will the rule/or rules be difficult to follow?
- If difficult, then how can it or they be written to ensure compliance?

STEP 3

Write the rules in positive terms and avoid the use of "DON'T" whenever possible. A positive tone when communicating with people whether in writing or speaking helps to increase acceptance and compliance.

If you remember "Knowing is not the same as understanding" when writing the rules and implementing into your HSSE Management System you will need to make certain that you explain the intent of the rule (understand), the behavior you expect from personnel in respect to the rule, and the consequences for them should they choose not to comply.

Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

SOPs are typically developed for work tasks that involve exposure hazards or that have complex work steps. SOPs are useful for training new employees and refresher training periodically. Depending on the number of your service lines, you may choose to develop a standalone manual of Company SOPs.

Refer to IOGP 577: Fabrication site construction safety recommended practice –
Hazardous activities for some examples.

RESEARCHING APPLICABLE INDUSTRY STANDARDS OR REGULATIONS TO USE/REFERENCE

Follow applicable government regulations for HSSE manual content.

Identify which Guyanese regulations apply to your business for example,

- Guyana's Occupational Safety and Health Law of 1997 requires Safety and Health Committees or Safety & Health Representatives depending on company size and their environmental conditions.
- Guyana's Environmental Protection Act of 1996 and regulations of 2000 stipulate conditions under which you must obtain permits and discharge limits;
- Permits are required for certain type of work check if your business scope of work requires a permit (s).

Reference the appropriate industry standards.
Consult your industry's standards for standard operating procedures and safe work practices
for example,

- International Oil and Gas Producers (IOGP) and
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO)
- American Petroleum Institute (API)
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)

These are a small sampling of the standards that can provide a starting point for deciding what standards apply to your business to assist in establishing effective HSSE work practices.

WRITING THE MANUAL – STYLE AND FORMAT

Write for the people who will read the HSSE Manual regularly.

The manual should be written so they can easily understand and follow it for example,

- Use short sentences and short paragraphs with simple words.
- Avoid jargon.
- Use any necessary technical terms correctly, defining them in context where possible, and with simple, clear definitions otherwise.
- Explain acronyms. You can either have an introductory section listing all acronyms with their definitions or introduce them in the text with the full term followed by its acronym in parentheses and using the acronym thereafter.
- Explain symbols. As with acronyms, you can have an introductory section or explain the symbols as they appear throughout the manual

Format the text according to the type of information presented.

- Use blocks of text to present general information and explanations.
- Use bulleted lists to present information that can be broken into individual points.
- Use numbered lists for step-by-step procedures, with the steps in the order they should be followed.

Lay out the manual to be easily read and understood.

An example of how to help the reader focus on the most important concepts should be consistent throughout the manual.

- Provide enough margins and white space between text blocks.
- Use headings and subheadings to introduce topics, identify subtopics, and group text blocks.

- Include a table of contents and index depending if size of the manual is large.
- Place drawings and the text that relates to them on the same page when possible.
- Use a readable font style and point size. For printed body text, 11- to 12-point size is best, with a somewhat larger point size for headings. Subheadings can be the same point size as the body text, but set off in boldface, italics, or both.
- Use black text on a white paper for the best contrast between text and background. Shaded text boxes may be appropriate for callouts and sidebars as long as there is still sufficient contrast between the text and background.
- Use a standard page layout that contains the company name, date prepared, revision date, author(s) on various manual sections and first page approval signature by the President or CEO.
- HSSE Manuals should be reviewed annually, at a minimum, as company procedures, international standards, or government regulations change.

EXAMPLE OF HSSE MANUAL TABLE OF CONTENTS (TOC)

NOTE: This example is not intended to suggest that all sections included are applicable for all businesses or that every possible topic is covered. Please use this example as a guide. Your HSSE Manual should only address topics applicable to your business.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose
2. Scope
3. Definitions
4. General Information
5. Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities & Accountabilities
6. Employee Responsibilities & Accountabilities
7. HSSE Policy Statement

2.0 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

1. Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1997
2. Safe Work Practices (e.g. IOGP 577 – lifting, dropped objects, electrical safety, etc.)
3. Job Safety Analysis (JSA)
4. Vector Control
5. Food Safety Awareness
6. Personal Hygiene
7. Driving Safety
8. Fire Protection Plan
9. Incident Reporting
10. Employee TRAINING

3.0. EMERGENCY PREPARENESS

1. Evacuation and Emergency Action Organization
   a. On-site Personnel List by position with contact numbers

  b. Emergency Response Personnel Contact Numbers

  c. Site Map

  d. Emergency Evacuation Plan

   i. Evacuation Routes

   ii. Rally Points/ Assembly Points

   iii. Notification

2. First Aid/Medical Emergencies

  a. Protocol by Severity

  b. First Aid Kit

  c. Notification

3. Fire

  a. Fire extinguisher Use •

  b. Notification

4. Severe Weather

  a. Bad Weather Close, Call-in, Reopen Procedure

5. Emergency Preparedness Personnel Training

4.0 SECURITY

1. Secure Building Entrances
2. Secure Facilities
3. Office Visitor Sign-in Policy
4. Journey Management (Business Travel Risk Control)
5. PC/Laptop Security Protocol

5.0 ENVIRONMENT

1. Regulation and Reporting Requirements
2. Monitoring
3. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
4. Office Generated Waste
5. Hazardous Material Management Plan
6. Waste Management Plan

  a. Solid Waste

  b. Hazardous Waste

7. Training
8. Incident Reporting Procedures