What is Risk Management?

It is about identifying hazards, assessing them and controlling the risk of the hazards. When identifying hazards consider where, how and who is carrying out work. The level of risk is assessed and used to prioritise implementation of risk control measures. The risk control measures are:

- Eliminate the hazard(s)
- Substitute for something less hazardous
- Isolate the hazard from people
- Engineering control e.g. plant guarding, work in fume cupboard
- Administrative controls e.g. training, safe work procedures, signage
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) e.g. coveralls, lab coat, hearing protection

This list is called the “hierarchy of control”.

What is a Risk Management Form?

A risk management form (RMF) is used to document your process of identifying hazards, assessing them and how they are controlled. The hierarchy of control (as outlined above) must be used. The RMF is needed when there is a risk involved in a task. The best person to identify risks is the person responsible for the work (i.e. manager), in consultation with the person(s) performing the work.

What is a Safe Work Procedure?

The “hierarchy of control” list above includes a safe work procedure (SWP) as an Administrative control. Therefore a SWP is just one of many control measure options for managing a risk. A SWP is generally required when clear written instruction is required to perform a task safely. It should outline the step-by-step instructions from start to finish and be specific to the task.

How do I document a RMF or SWP?

Faculties and school with laboratories or workshops have access to a system called “SafeSys” (released in 2014). This allows the electronic creation of RMFs and SWPs, they can also be electronically signed-off by staff and students. Once documents are due for review they should be written within SafeSys. All other areas of UNSW are still using HS017 Risk Management Form and/or following the Office Safety Toolkit. Low-risk office areas do not need to complete a specific Risk Management Form for their area, so long as the Office Safety Toolkit is communicated and followed by all workers in the area.

References:

How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks, WorkCover
HS329 Risk Management Procedure, UNSW
HS017 Risk Management Form, UNSW
HS026 Safe Work Procedure, UNSW