



OHS Services Program

Employee Safety Wellbeing Inclusion Division

LABCON: November 2025

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Wurundjeri People as the Traditional Owners of the land, waterways, and skies. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our community today

Panel

Brendan Henderson – Manager, OHS Services SEVR

Peter Thlimenos – Manager, OHS Services NWVR

Deane Gray – Senior OHS Services Officer, SWVR

Joel Halperin – Senior OHS Services Officer, NEVR

Session overview



OHS Services program
overview – 30mins



Digital chemical
management within DE
– 30mins



Responses your
queries and Q&A –
30mins



Overview of the new Statewide OHS Services Program

The department's new Statewide Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Services Program is delivered by the Employee Safety, Wellbeing and Inclusion Division in People and Executive Services and provides comprehensive services to Victorian government schools with OHS management and Emergency Management (EM) tasks.

The program is aimed at:



Reducing schools OHS and EM administrative and compliance workload demands.



Providing consistent, quality, hands-on services by completing OHS and EM tasks.



Helping schools to reduce risks, effectively implement their OHS Management System and better understand OHS and EM responsibilities.



Implementing and embedding the eduSafe Plus system in schools to effectively manage OHS.



Overview of the enhanced OHS Services Program



- **Free services** for schools - to reduce OHS workload and improve safety management and emergency preparedness
- New Statewide OHS Services Team of **safety professionals** in ESWID
- **In person service**, completing tasks (e.g. creation and revision of safety and emergency management documents to meet requirements)
- **Schools can request services** to help with OHS and emergency management tasks **at any time**

Service Streams available to schools

- OHS professionals are regionally based to provide free services to schools at their point of need.
- Supports the implementation of school's OHS management system and builds capability in understanding OHS and Emergency Management duties
- Service delivery based on risks and available resources to reduce OHS workload for schools and improve safety management
- Schools with an upcoming OHS Assurance assessment will receive additional support by the OHS Services Team before and their assurance visit.

Schools can access services by contacting the dedicated team within their region or via the OHS Advisory Service.



10 service streams available to schools

Pre-OHS Assurance Assessment services and onsite attendance during the OHS Assurance Assessment

e.g. updating OHS risk registers, OHS signage and emergency evacuation plans, and first aid kits and related signage.

Day of OHS Assurance Assessment

e.g. attend the school on the day of the assessment and provide a positive support, walking through and having discussions with assessor, assisting with the resolution of high-risk non-conformance and escalations from the Assessor that pose an immediate safety risk.

Post-OHS Assurance Assessment services

e.g. creating and implementing an Action Plan to address any management actions, coordinating with other department support areas to respond to complex management issues identified during an OHS Assurance assessment.

Emergency Management planning administration services

e.g. reviewing and updating emergency management plans and communication tree, and or acting as an observer for school emergency drills.

Proactive services in non-OHS Assurance years

e.g. conducting up to two site visits per year to manage an emerging issue, engaging to support OHS consultation between school Principals and School Health and Safety Representatives and OHS Committees.

10 service streams available to schools

Responsive service to OHS requests and complex OHS matters

e.g. assisting new schools with the setup of OHS functions, assisting with updating of OHS or EM documentation, providing consistent support to schools managing complex OHS issues and WorkSafe engagements.

eduSafe plus services

e.g. supporting schools to actively use the OHS and workers' compensation functions, assisting with management and closure of reported incidents, hazards and near miss reports in eduSafe Plus, moving current OHS documentation into eduSafe Plus.

Referral pathway services

e.g. supporting schools to connect with services such as Employee Wellbeing Support Services and Conflict Resolution Services, coordinating and providing referrals to other department areas such as Provision and Planning and regional emergency management.

Delivery of targeted OHS Initiatives

e.g. leading the implementation and delivery of targeted initiatives such as asbestos detection or unanticipated support such as pandemic protection measures.

Other (non-OHS Services Program)

e.g support to manage workplace hazards or incidents, reviewing policies and procedures

We now help with emergency management tasks

Emergency
Management Plan
(EMP) review

Evacuation Diagram
& Area Map

Emergency response
drills

Incident Management
Team and
Communication Tree
Diagrams

Emergency kit –
Contents and review
date

EMP distribution list

Training records

Administrative
Support to annual EM
planning training
sessions for schools

Support to regional
Incident Management
Teams



The OHS Services Program offers service of **11 specific emergency management tasks** that can help reduce administrative workload for school leaders.

There are also established referral pathways to regional emergency management staff (MOEMs).

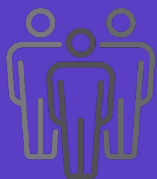
A significant investment to strengthen safety & wellbeing



We are building our service model to provide **more regular, consistent, quality, hands-on services** with completing OHS and emergency management tasks.



This is one of the department's initiatives to **free up school leaders to lead and teach** by providing on the ground services and building OHS and emergency management capability in schools.



The expanded OHS Services Team will increase the service to schools with **more OHS Service Officers on the ground.**

We are now able to provide more services to schools

**OHS services to
schools have
been
progressively
increasing since
2021, with full
implementation
in Term 1 2025**

From Term 1, 2025, the Statewide OHS Services Program offers flexible service delivery approach to **all schools** to provide OHS and Emergency Management support at their point of need:

- **Up to 8 days** of pre/post assurance services for schools with an upcoming or recent assurance assessment; and
- **Up to 4 days** of proactive services (for schools not receiving pre/post assurance support)
- **Reactive** support can be provided as the need arises (i.e. when incidents occur, or WorkSafe attend)

Service days include, desktop activities, travel time and time onsite.

Our OHS Service Officers are taking tasks from principals, and getting positive feedback about the quality and ease of the services provided



Our OHS Services Officers spent more than 6,025 hours completing more than 448 tasks for schools since October 2024.

Many of these tasks would previously have been undertaken by school leaders.

Administrative tasks completed for principals

Responsive tasks completed for principals

Completing or updating Plant and Equipment Register

Completing OHS Management Actions

Creating or updating Chemical Registers

Creating or updating Risk Registers

Support with WorkSafe engagement

Advice and support on high or complex risk hazards

Engagement with other parts of DE (i.e. VSBA)

97% of all principals surveyed **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that the services:

- ✓ **reduced their workload**
- ✓ improved **capability** and **confidence** in meeting OHS and Emergency Management obligations
- ✓ were **tailored** to their school's needs.



"This is a great program for help and support... OHS is constantly updating and requiring more school time to manage.
The **support is greatly appreciated.**"

"Sharon came out to us and helped us through our OHS audit, she was fantastic and **explained everything** and **I came away with a better understanding of my duties and school responsibilities**, instead of just going around in circles looking up policies."

"OHS team updated our non-compliant evacuation diagrams, **saving us both time and money.**"

"Support was offered and accepted which was a **huge benefit** as I could not have **achieved the outcome** along with my daily workload."

"The visit by Tony **increased my capability and confidence** to carry out my OHS/EM obligations and responsibilities".

Contact the Statewide OHS Services team for service



How to get in touch

Connect with ESWID OHS Services Team (Regionally Based)

North Eastern Victorian Region
NEVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

South Eastern Victoria Region
SEVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

North Western Victorian Region
NWVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

South Western Victoria Region
SWVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

OR

Contact the OHS Advisory Service
Phone: **1300 074 715**
(9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
Email: [**safety@education.vic.gov.au**](mailto:safety@education.vic.gov.au)



Scan the QR code
to learn more about
the OHS Services

Further details available on PAL

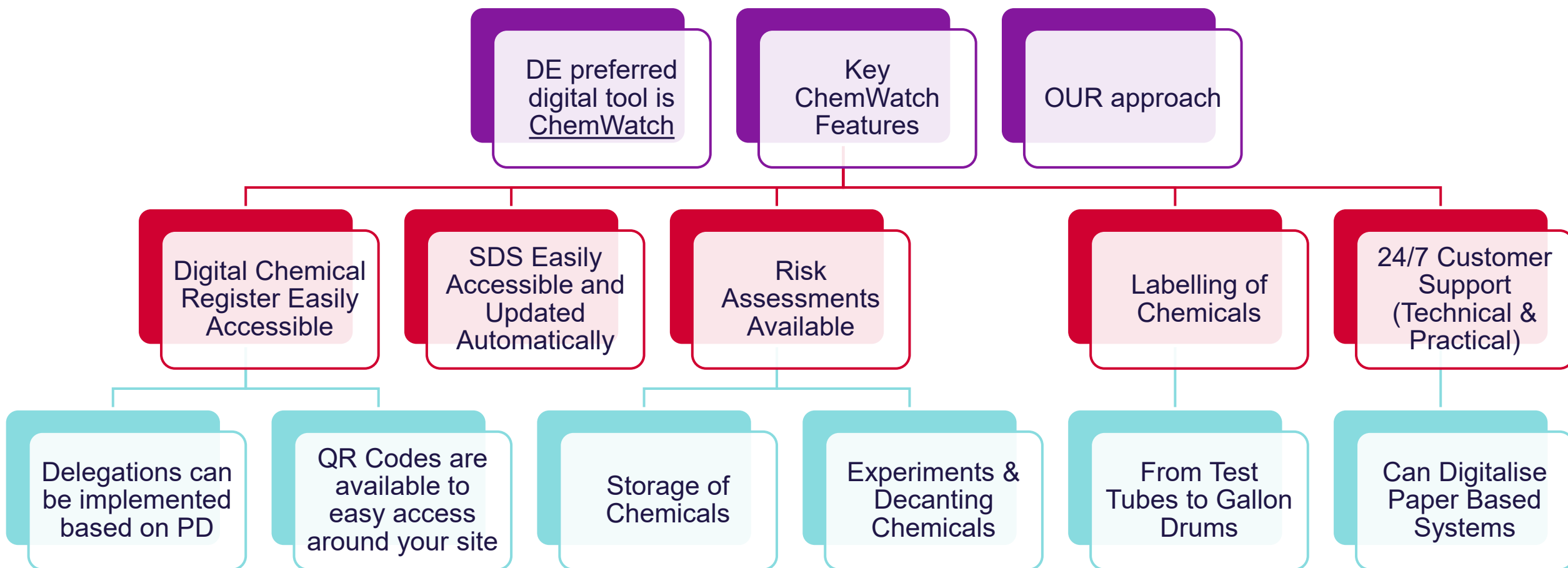


Questions

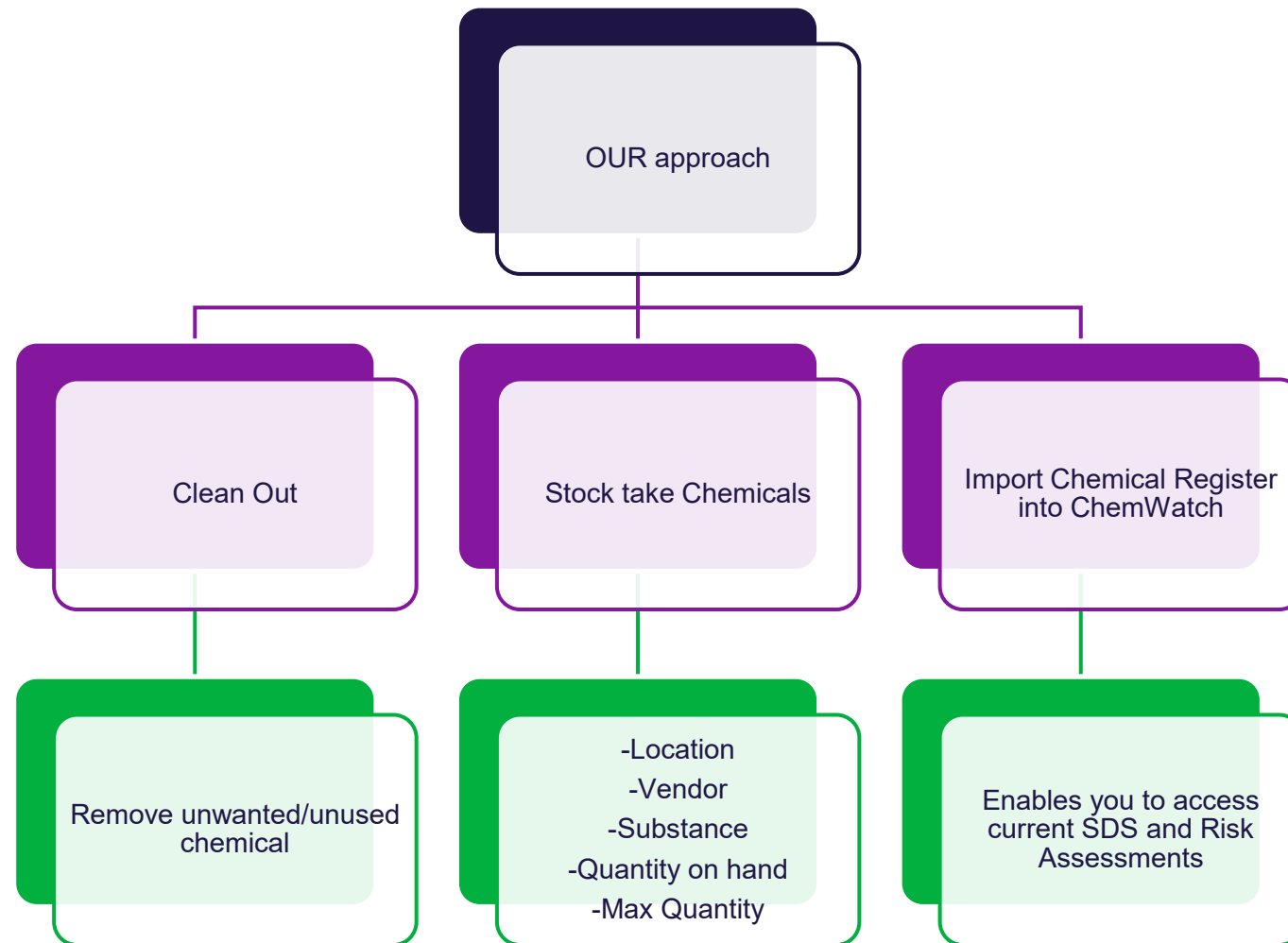


Digital Chemical Management overview

Chemical management overview



Chemical management overview





Responses to queries

Chemical storage

Question: Nitric Acid should really be stored separately to other Acids due to its nature.

Response

- Yes
- Treat (concentrated) nitric acid as both corrosive (Class 8) and a strong oxidiser (Class 5.1).
- Segregate it from organics, reducing agents, bases, and non-oxidising mineral acids (esp. Hydrochloric Acid) to prevent violent reactions and accidental “aqua regia” formation.



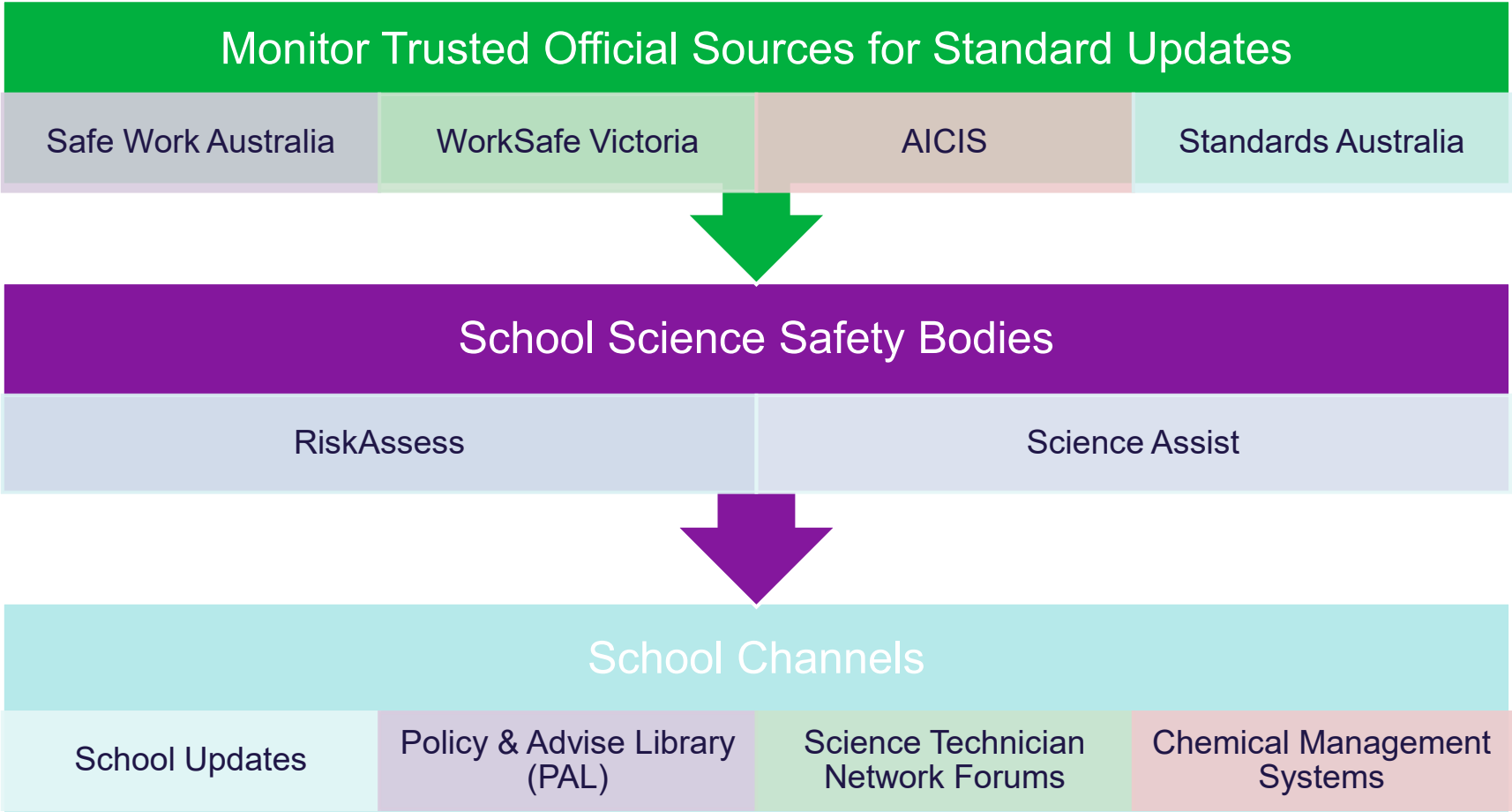
Chemical storage – Best practice setups for school labs

- Store corrosives in a compliant corrosives cabinet with internal segregation (separate, banded tray) or in a dedicated oxidiser/segregated section if quantities are small (“minor storage”).
- Follow the SDS and keep oxidisers away from incompatible acids and any organic materials.
- PAL points schools to SDS led storage, segregation and bunding, and to the department’s [Chemical Management procedure and Guidance Sheet 1](#) (Chemical Storage). Use these when setting up cabinets and labels.
- Technical standards
 - AS 4326 (oxidising agents), AS 3780 (corrosives)
 - AS/NZS 2243.10(storage of chemicals in labs)
 - Safe Work Australia Code of Practice – Managing risks of hazardous chemicals (segregation/incompatibilities)
 - Guidance sheet 6 should reference EPA waste tracker requirements.





Keeping abreast of changes



RiskAssess Updates

Waste disposal

Waste disposal - some are often left in the lurch with changes. I know when EPA started their current system many were trying to work out how to sign up and do the procedure properly.

What DE expects

- Use PAL: Chemical Management to identify the waste, follow the SDS disposal advice, and document in your OHS Risk Register and chemical inventory (incl. wastes awaiting collection).

EPA/Environmental obligations

- Identify the waste and whether it is priority or reportable priority waste (RPW) under EPA rules. Some lab wastes (e.g., certain solvent/acid wastes) will be RPW and must be tracked.
- If it's RPW, the school (as the generator) must use EPA's Waste Tracker and engage a permitted transporter and receiver. (Schools should work through an approved contractor who completes Waste Tracker consignments with the school's generator details.)
- Meet the General Environmental Duty: prevent harm as far as reasonably practicable (safe containers, secondary containment, labels, keep incompatible wastes segregated, spill ready).



Waste disposal

Practical how to for labs

- ✓ Keep clearly labelled, compatible waste bottles (e.g., inorganic acids, organic solvents, heavy metal wastes) with secondary containment and an up to date waste log (contents, start date). Follow SDS incompatibilities (e.g., keep oxidisers separate from organics).
- ✓ Arrange pickups via an EPA-permitted waste contractor; if they say the stream is RPW, they'll either onboard you to Waste Tracker or run it with your generator details. (Ask them explicitly about Waste Tracker consignment.)
- ✓ Document the process in your OHS Risk Register
- ✓ Where to refer (outside DE scope): For complex waste categorisation or bulk/legacy chemicals, schools should refer to EPA Victoria and/or an EPA permitted hazardous waste provider.
- ✓ OHS Services can support the safety side (segregation/labels/containers) but environmental compliance sits with EPA and the licensed waste contractor.



Microbiological waste disposal

Practical how to: Decontaminate at source, then dispose

- **Autoclave** microbiological waste (agar plates, contaminated disposables, cultures) at 121 °C, 15–20 min at ≥ 103 kPa, or per your autoclave's validated cycle
 - Confirm with biological indicators per your SWP. After successful sterilisation, bag and dispose as per waste contractor guidance (often general waste if rendered non-infectious and unrecognisable, otherwise clinical/hygiene stream).
 - Technical basis: AS/NZS 2243.3 (Microbiological safety and containment).
- **Chemical disinfection** (e.g., freshly made sodium hypochlorite) may be used where autoclaving isn't practicable follow your SWP and SDS and ensure appropriate contact time before disposal.
- **Sharps** → approved AS 4031 non-reusable sharps containers: dispose via a licensed waste contractor. DE's First Aid policy confirms sharps/contaminated waste handling pathways for schools.
- [DE prevention of infection control resource](#)



Risk assessments and Chemical based risk assessments

- Risk assessments
 - For tasks using substances, use the word doc (task based risk assessment)
 - Slight variations but still provide a risk rating
- DE Risk Management page
- Chemical based risk assessments
 - Suggest utilisation of Chemwatch to create and upkeep register
 - If not there yet, use the excel file
- DE Chemical Management resources



Safety Inspections in Laboratories

1. Purpose

- Outlines the requirements, responsibilities, and processes for conducting **safety inspections in school laboratories** to ensure a safe and compliant environment for all staff, students, and visitors.
- Regular laboratory inspections form part of the Department's **Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS)** and assist schools in meeting obligations under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)** and associated Department policies.

2. Scope

- All schools operating science laboratories, STEM facilities, or technical teaching spaces where chemicals, biological materials, or hazardous processes are used.
- Principals, Science Coordinators, Laboratory Technicians, Teachers, and OHS Management Nominees have responsibility for safe laboratory operations.





Safety Inspections in Laboratories

3. Key Requirements

Requirement	Description
Inspection Frequency	Laboratory inspections must be completed at least once per term and after any significant change (e.g., refurbishment, installation of new equipment, or staff change).
Inspection Tool	Schools must use the Laboratory Safety Inspection Checklist (template provided) aligned with Department policy and OHSMS.
Corrective Actions	Any hazards identified must be recorded in the school OHS Risk Register or EduSafe Plus , with assigned actions and completion dates.
Consultation	Findings must be discussed with the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) and relevant staff during OHS consultation meetings.
Record Keeping	Inspection records must be retained for a minimum of 7 years and available for OHS Assurance or WorkSafe verification.





Safety Inspections in Laboratories

4. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Principal	Ensures that laboratory safety inspections are scheduled, completed, and documented in accordance with Department policy. Approves corrective actions and ensures adequate resources.
Science Coordinator / Laboratory Technician	Leads the inspection process, completes the checklist, identifies hazards, and reports findings to the Principal or OHS Management Nominee.
OHS Management Nominee / OHS Committee	Monitors inspection completion, enters identified hazards into the OHS Risk Register, and follows up on outstanding actions.
HSR (Health and Safety Representative)	Participates in inspections and consultation, representing staff views on health and safety matters.
Teaching and Support Staff	Maintain safe laboratory practices and immediately report any hazards identified between scheduled inspections.



Safety Inspections in Laboratories

5. Inspection Process

1.Preparation

1. Review previous inspection reports and outstanding actions.
2. Gather relevant documents: SDS folder, Chemical Register, Risk Register, and Maintenance Logs.

2.Inspection

1. Use the approved **Laboratory Safety Inspection Checklist**
2. Observe, record, and photograph any hazards.
3. Consult with laboratory users to identify operational or behavioural risks.

3.Reporting

1. Record all findings, assign corrective actions, and communicate results to the Principal and OHS Committee.
2. Enter significant hazards into **EduSafe Plus** or the **OHS Risk Register**.

4.Follow-Up

1. Review action completion dates.
2. Re-inspect if required (particularly for chemical storage or emergency equipment issues).

5.Review

1. Table inspection outcomes in the **OHS Committee meeting** and retain documentation in the school's OHS file (digital or hard copy).





Safety Inspections in Laboratories

6. Areas of Inspection - Laboratory safety inspections must include, at minimum, the following areas:

Category	Examples
General Housekeeping	Cleanliness, trip hazards, waste management, spill kits.
Chemical Management	Up-to-date Chemical Register in ChemWatch, valid SDSs (<5 years), correct labelling, segregation of incompatible chemicals.
Equipment Safety	Electrical tagging, guards on machinery, fume cupboard testing (annual ESM certification).
Emergency Preparedness	Clear evacuation signage, accessible emergency showers, eyewash stations, fire extinguishers, spill kits, and first aid kits.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Availability, condition, and correct use of goggles, gloves, lab coats, and signage.
Storage and Security	Secure storage of hazardous substances and gas cylinders, restricted access, and adequate ventilation.
Work Practices	Supervision, student behaviour, manual handling, and hygiene protocols.



Safety Inspections in Laboratories

7. Record Management

- Completed inspection checklists and supporting evidence (photos, corrective action logs) must be saved in EduSafe Plus.
- Documentation must be **readily accessible for OHS Assurance, VSBA audit, or WorkSafe inspection.**
- Retention: **7 years minimum** from date of inspection.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

- An incident or near miss in a laboratory;
- A change to laboratory operations, curriculum, or building layout; or
- Updates to Department Policy / Procedure or WorkSafe requirements.



Safety Inspections in Laboratories

9. Related Department Policies and Guidance

- Science – Managing Risks in School Laboratories (PAL)
- OHS Consultation and Communication (PAL)
- Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods Management (PAL)
- OHS Planning and Review (PAL)
- [Chemical Management – ChemWatch Implementation Guide]



Emergency Training Requirements in Laboratories

1. Department Requirements

Key Requirements:

Schools must ensure that **laboratory staff are trained in the emergency procedures** relevant to their work area, including how to respond to chemical spills, fires, and personal exposure incidents.

Training must include awareness of:

- **Location and use** of emergency equipment (fire blanket, extinguisher, eyewash, shower, spill kit).
- **Evacuation procedures** and emergency roles as detailed in the school's **Emergency Management Plan (EMP)**.
- **Chemical spill response procedures**, particularly for low-level incidents managed internally before external support arrives.
- **Incident reporting** through **EduSafe Plus** and the school's communication process to the principal or OHS nominee.

Relevant PAL Policies:

Science – Managing Risks in School Laboratories

Emergency and Critical Incident Management Planning

First Aid and Infection Prevention (PAL)

OHS Induction and Training





Emergency Training Requirements in Laboratories

Summary – Department Expectation

Area	Expectation
Emergency Equipment Use	Laboratory staff must know the location and operation of emergency equipment (fire blanket, extinguisher, eyewash, spill kit).
Spill Response	Trained in managing minor spills safely and activating emergency response for major incidents.
Emergency Management Plan (EMP)	Familiar with the school's emergency roles, evacuation routes, and reporting process.
First Aid	Sufficient trained staff in first aid and CPR available in science areas. Laboratory technicians recommended to maintain current certification.
Refresher Training	Annual refresher on site-specific hazards, emergency response, and reporting processes.
Recordkeeping	Training records maintained in the school's OHS Training Register and available for OHS Assurance.



Emergency Training Requirements in Laboratories

Refresher and Site-Specific Training

- Laboratory technicians should receive refresher training at least **every 12 months** on local emergency equipment and evacuation procedures.
- Principals and OHS Management Nominees must ensure that:
 - New staff are inducted in **laboratory emergency equipment** (location and use).
 - Annual **emergency drills** include laboratory-specific considerations (chemical fire, spill, or containment).
 - Practical familiarisation with **fire blankets, extinguishers, eyewash stations**, and **spill kits** is part of the school's OHS training program.

Good Practice Examples

- Some schools have implemented short annual “science area refresher sessions” for staff — covering spill response, PPE checks, and emergency scenarios.
- Others link this training to their **first OHS Committee meeting of the year** or integrate it into the **OHS Induction for new staff**.
- Schools may also request support from their **OHS Advisory Service (1300 074 715)** or regional **OHS Services Officer** for refresher or tailored training sessions.



Building requirements for science

- Construction and design standards
- VSBA Building quality standards handbook
 - Caveat: It's aligned to current standards and other internal requirements, not what was built some years ago.....so handy for refurbishments and new builds, but probably won't aid previous points in time.



Safety and eyewash shower checks and servicing

Standards are a best practice approach, they are not a mandate

- Internal quality assurance
- Aligned to AS4775-2007, weekly visual and performance checks is seen as best practice. A check should include:
 - Obstruction check
 - Activation and flow check
 - Visual scan on plumbing
 - Record keeping
- Annual quality assurance
- Flow testing – standard alignment
 - Testing by a suitably qualified person (plumber)
 - Record keeping/signage

Safe Work Procedures













Department of Education

Safe Work Procedure

NOTE: DO NOT use this machine unless you have been trained in its safe use and operation.

Description of Work:	Using a Bunsen/Meker Burner
	<p>Potential Hazards: Fire hazard with the potential to cause harm through exposure to heat, explosions, sparks, fumes and flame.</p>
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Required <i>(Check the box for required PPE):</i>	
 Gloves <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 Face Masks <input type="checkbox"/>
 Eye Protection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 Welding Mask <input type="checkbox"/>
 Appropriate Footwear <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	 Hearing Protection <input type="checkbox"/>
 Protective Clothing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Safe Work Procedure Checklist:	
<p>1. PRE-Operation/Task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task (e.g. Drawings, instructions, specifications etc.) is clearly understood. Ensure the work area is clean and clear of grease, oil and any other flammable materials. Ensure all fittings are tight and the gas hose is in good condition. Ensure appropriate PPE is worn. Use the fume cupboard if undertaking experiments which produce fumes. 	

Heat & Burns

- Bunsen Burner
- Hot Plates
- Heating Mantles
- Liquid Nitrogen Storage
- Dry Ice Storage

Pressure / Vacuum

- Autoclaves
- Steam Sterilisers
- Pressure Reactors
- Gas Cylinders
- Compressed Air Systems
- Vacuum Pumps
- Filter Flasks (Under Vacuum)

Fire / Explosion

- Bunsen Burners
- Incinerators
- Glass Bead Sterilisers
- Alcohol Burners
- Flammable-Liquid Cabinets

Hazardous Chemicals / Fumes

- Chemical Fume Hood
- Chemical Storage Cabinets
- Pipettes/ Micropipettes
- pH Meters
- Chemical Waste Containers

Biohazard / Contamination

- Biological Safety Cabinets
- CO2 Incubators
- Laminar Flow Hoods
- Autoclaves
- Centrifuges
- Biosafety Waste Bins
- Cell Culture Instruments

Moving or High-Speed Parts

- Centrifuges
- Mixers / Vortexes
- Roller Mixers
- 3D Printers
- CNC Machines
- Laser Cutters

Laser / UV Radiation

- UV Sterilisation Lamps
- Fluorescent Microscopes
- UV Transilluminators
- Lasers (Class 2-4)

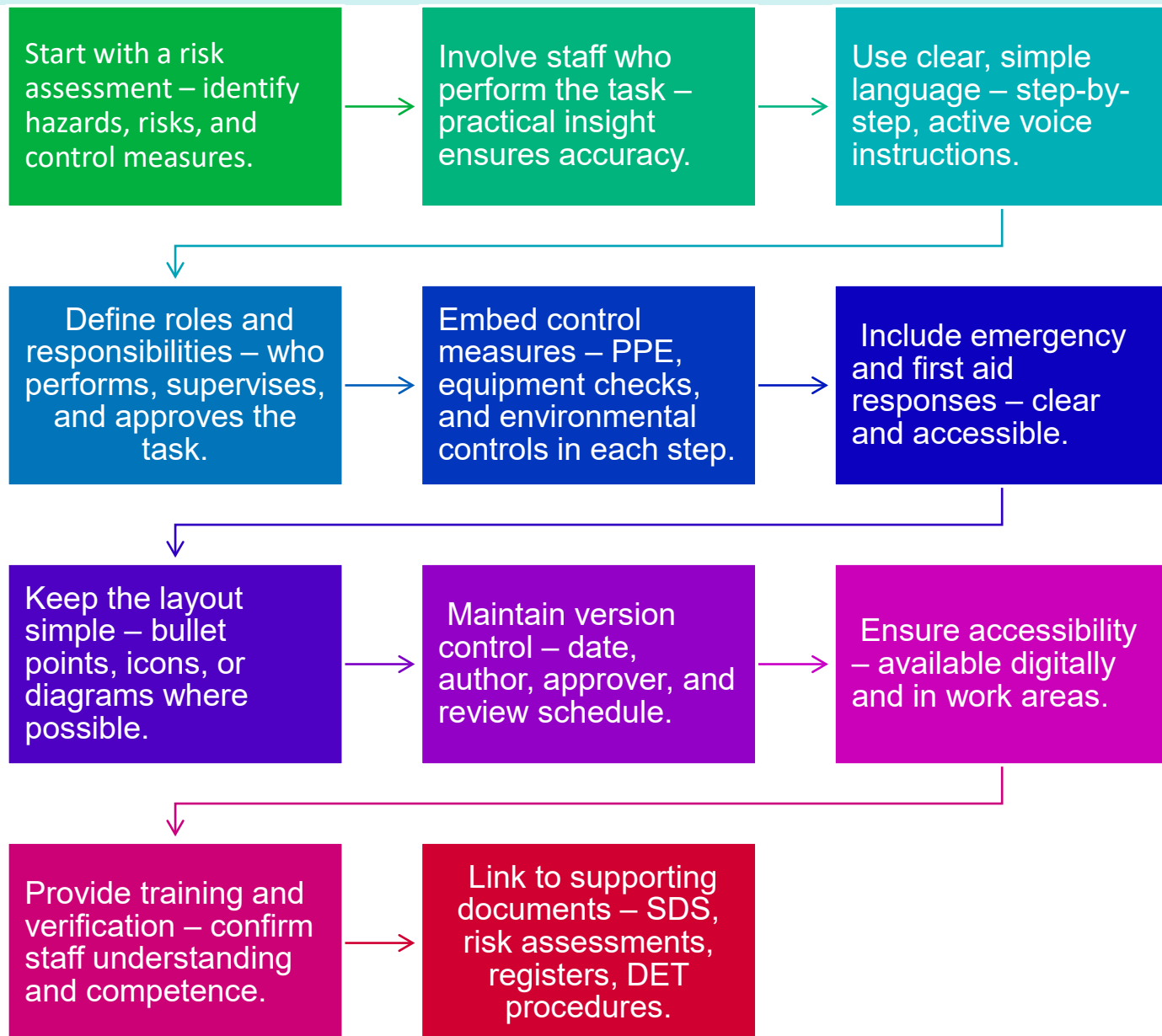
Sharps / Broken Glass

- Scalpels/ Knives
- Dissection Tools
- Glassware-Breakage
- Microtome Blades
- Sharps Disposal Bins
- Glass Disposal Bins

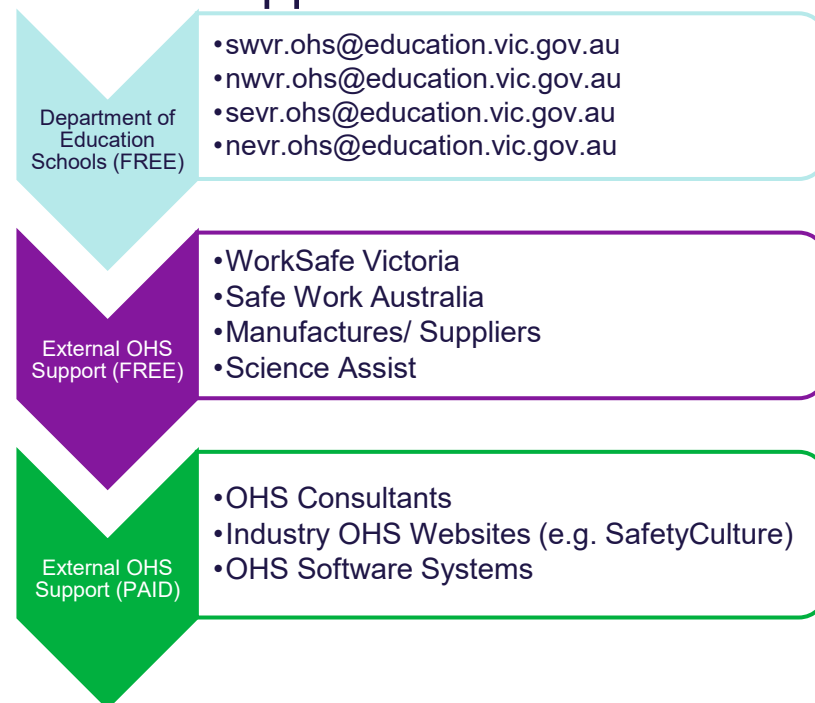
Electrical / Mechanical Hazards

- Microscopes
- Centrifuges
- Incubators
- Chillers
- Autoclaves
- Robotics

Safe work procedures



Supports Available



Standards access

- School staff can access the [Vic Gov Library Service](#)
- Standards can be searched and accessed once an account is setup





Thank you!

Questions

Contact the Statewide OHS Services team for service



How to get in touch

Connect with ESWID OHS Services Team (Regionally Based)

North Eastern Victorian Region
NEVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

South Eastern Victoria Region
SEVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

North Western Victorian Region
NWVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

South Western Victoria Region
SWVR.OHS@education.vic.gov.au

OR

Contact the OHS Advisory Service
Phone: **1300 074 715**
(9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)
Email: [**safety@education.vic.gov.au**](mailto:safety@education.vic.gov.au)



Scan the QR code
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Further details available on PAL