

(Effective December 27, 2024)

WAC 296-67-327 Operating procedures. (1) The employer must develop, implement, and maintain effective written operating procedures. The operating procedures must provide clear instructions for safely performing activities involved in each process. The operating procedures must be consistent with the PSI and, at a minimum, must address the following:

(a) Steps for each operating phase or mode of operation:

(i) Start up;

(ii) Normal operations;

(iii) Temporary operations;

(iv) Emergency operations;

(v) Emergency shutdown, including the conditions under which emergency shutdown is required, provisions granting the authority of the qualified operator to partially or completely shut down the operation or process, and the assignment of responsibilities to qualified operators in order to ensure that emergency shutdown is executed in a safe and timely manner;

(vi) Normal shutdown;

(vii) Start up following a turnaround, or planned or unplanned shutdown, or after an emergency shutdown; and

(viii) Any other operating condition not described in (a) of this subsection.

(b) Operating limits:

(i) Consequences of deviations; and

(ii) Steps to correct or avoid deviations.

(c) Safety and health considerations:

(i) Properties of, and hazards presented by, the chemicals and materials used in the process;

(ii) Precautions necessary to prevent exposure, including passive, active and procedural safeguards, personal protective equipment, engineering controls, and administrative controls;

(iii) Protective measures to be taken if physical contact or airborne exposure occurs;

(iv) Safety procedures for opening and decontaminating process equipment;

(v) Verification of the composition and properties of raw materials and control of highly hazardous chemical inventory levels; and

(vi) Any special or unique hazards.

(d) Safety systems and their functions.

(2) Operating procedures must be readily accessible to all affected employees, including the employees of contractors and maintenance employees who are performing work related to the procedure, and whose job tasks expose them to process safety hazards.

(3) Operating procedures must be reviewed and updated as often as necessary to ensure that they reflect current, safe operating practices. The operating procedures must include any changes that result from alterations in process chemicals, technology, personnel, process equipment or other changes to the facility. Changes to operating procedures must be managed pursuant to the requirements of WAC 296-67-355 Management of change.

(4) The employer must annually certify and document that written operating procedures are current and accurate.

(5) The operating procedures must include emergency procedures for each process, including any responses to the overpressurizing or overheating of equipment or piping, and the handling of leaks, spills,

releases and discharges of highly hazardous chemicals or materials. These operating procedures must provide that only qualified operators may initiate these operations, and that prior to allowing employees in the vicinity of a leak, release or discharge, the employer must, at a minimum, do one of the following:

(a) Define the conditions for handling leaks, spills, or discharges of highly hazardous chemicals or materials that provide a level of protection that is functionally equivalent to, or safer than, shutting down or isolating the process;

(b) Isolate any vessel, piping, and equipment where a leak, spill, or discharge is occurring; or

(c) Shut down and depressurize all process operations where a leak, release, or discharge is occurring.

(6) The employer must develop, implement, and maintain effective written safe work practices applicable to all affected employees, including maintenance employees and the employees of contractors who are performing work related to the procedure, and whose job tasks expose them to process safety hazards. Safe work practices must be established for specific activities that include, but are not limited to:

(a) Opening and decontaminating process equipment or piping;

(b) Tasks requiring lock-out/tag-out procedures;

(c) Confined space entry;

(d) Handling, controlling and stopping leaks, spills, releases and discharges of highly hazardous chemicals or materials;

(e) Control over entry into hazardous work areas by maintenance, contractor, laboratory or other support personnel.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060, and chapter 49.17 RCW. WSR 24-02-037, § 296-67-327, filed 12/27/23, effective 12/27/24.]