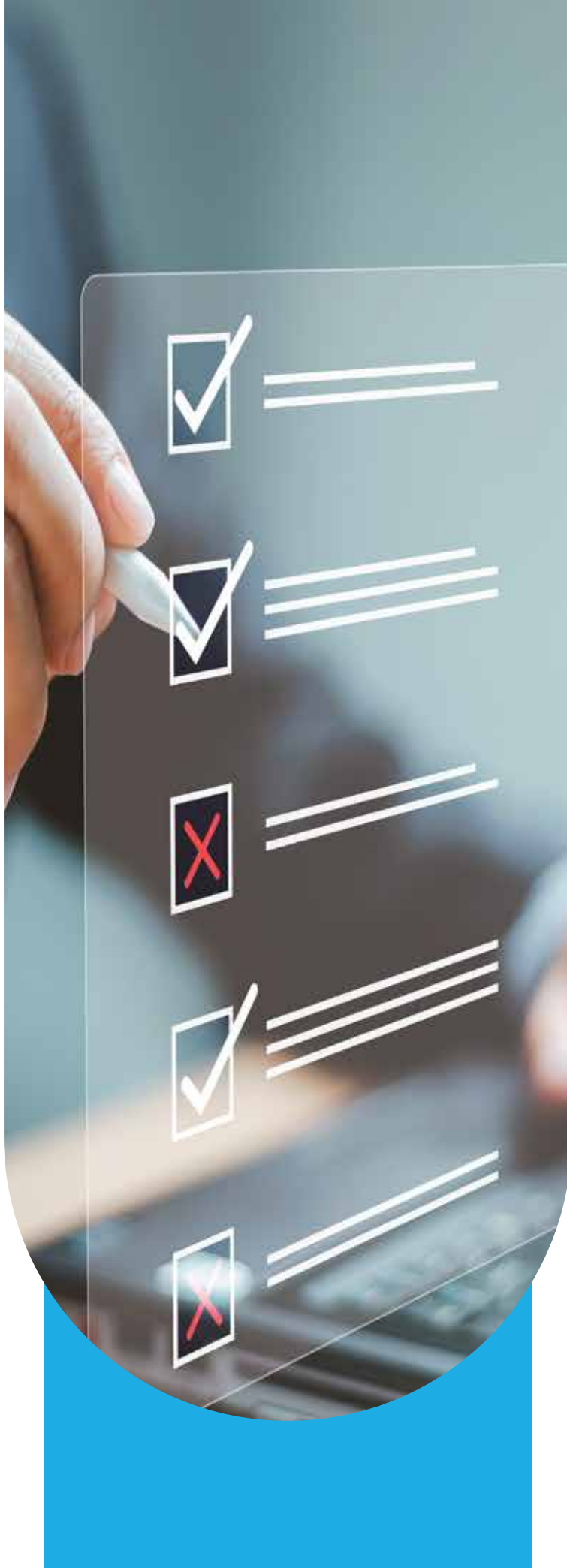




# **Chronosoft's Guide to SOPs in Risk & Incident Management**



---

**Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** are essential to effective risk management and resilience in any industry, providing clear guidelines that ensure consistency, safety, and efficiency in high-pressure situations. SOPs act as the backbone of incident response, detailing specific actions and protocols for anyone who is handling an incident. From medical emergencies to security breaches, SOPs help all staff understand and execute the necessary steps with accuracy and confidence. This guide will cover the two types of SOPs, and provide recommendations on best practices for ensuring their accessibility and management in any environment.

# Prescriptive SOPs: Step-by-Step Guidance for Defined Incidents

Prescriptive SOPs are clearly defined step-by-step procedures built to provide clear instructions for common incidents. These SOPs leave very little room for interpretation to ensure that staff members know exactly what actions to take in specific scenarios. Prescriptive SOPs are particularly useful for incidents where timing, precision, and consistency are critical, like fire evacuations, medical emergencies, or security breaches.

For example, a prescriptive SOP for a fire evacuation might include these steps:

1. **Activate the Alarm:** Notify all attendees of the fire threat by activating the venue's alarm system.
2. **Direct Patrons to Exits:** Have staff guide attendees toward the nearest emergency exits in an orderly fashion, avoiding congestion points and maintaining crowd control.
3. **Assist Vulnerable Patrons:** Ensure that any individuals with accessibility needs are assisted to the exits.
4. **Confirm Evacuation Completion:** Conduct a final sweep to confirm that all areas are cleared, ensuring no patrons or staff are left behind.
5. **Report to Incident Command:** Once the evacuation is complete, report the incident to your command centre with a summary of the evacuation status.

Key benefits of prescriptive SOPs include:

- **Consistency:** By providing step-by-step instructions, prescriptive SOPs ensure that all team members follow a consistent process, reducing the risk of errors and helping SOP developers better identify inefficiencies.
- **Clarity:** In emergencies, clarity is crucial. Prescriptive SOPs remove ambiguity, ensuring that actions are precise and appropriate for the situation.
- **Training Support:** Prescriptive SOPs are useful for training staff, as they provide a clear framework for handling specific situations. Stakeholders can practice these procedures in drills, helping them build familiarity and confidence.

# Descriptive SOPs: Flexible Guidelines for Unpredictable Situations

While prescriptive SOPs excel in situations where predefined responses are possible, **descriptive** SOPs are more suitable for when an incident requires flexibility, adaptability, and discretion. Descriptive SOPs provide general guidance rather than specific steps, allowing staff to adapt their responses based on the circumstances. These SOPs are especially valuable for dynamic or unpredictable situations, such as crowd control issues, cyber attacks, or first aid needs that do not follow a predictable pattern.

For instance, a descriptive SOP for a public security incident may include guidelines like:

- **Assess the Situation:** Identify any immediate threats or risks and determine whether intervention is required.
- **Gather Information:** Communicate with team members to obtain information on the nature of the incident and those involved.
- **Determine a Course of Action:** Based on the available information, decide on the best approach for resolution, such as de-escalation or escorting individuals from the venue.
- **Coordinate with Emergency Services if Needed:** If the incident escalates or presents a serious risk, engage with emergency responders or request additional support.
- **Document Actions Taken:** Record the incident and all actions taken, ensuring that details are accurate and comprehensive.

The benefits of descriptive SOPs include:

- **Flexibility:** Descriptive SOPs give staff the discretion to adjust their actions to the unique aspects of each incident, making them ideal for situations that do not fit a rigid set of steps.
- **Empowerment:** Staff are empowered to use their judgement, which is particularly useful for seasoned personnel who have experience in handling various types of incidents.
- **Adaptability:** Descriptive SOPs are versatile, allowing staff to apply broad principles across a range of scenarios and respond to evolving situations.

# Accessibility and Management of SOPs

For SOPs to be effective, they must be easily accessible, well-organised, properly distributed to stakeholders, and regularly updated to reflect current best practices and location-specific requirements. Ensuring that SOPs are readily available to all relevant personnel improves response times, enhances staff confidence, and supports compliance with safety standards. The following best practices support effective accessibility and management of SOPs in event environments:

## 1. Utilising Digital Platforms

Digital platforms enable rapid access to SOP documentation, allowing team members to retrieve necessary procedures almost instantly. Cloud-based solutions like Google Drive, Dropbox, and OneDrive, or dedicated management platforms like our own Chronosoft allow SOPs to be stored centrally and accessed via any device. Digital access is particularly advantageous in large spaces like mine sites or stadiums where team members may be spread across multiple areas.

- **Centralised Access:** Store all SOPs in a centralised digital location that is easily accessible to all who need to know them.
- **Version Control:** Digital platforms support version control, ensuring that staff are always using the most up-to-date procedures.

## 2. Implementing QR Codes for Quick Reference

QR codes can be strategically placed in control rooms, staff areas, heavy equipment, and high-traffic zones, allowing team members to access relevant SOPs with a quick scan. This method is highly efficient for accessing protocols that may be needed suddenly, such as emergency evacuation procedures or medical response guidelines.

- **Incident-Specific Placement:** QR codes for SOPs can be placed in areas relevant to specific incidents, such as near entrances for crowd control SOPs or in medical tents for first aid SOPs.
- **Instant Access Without Delay:** Staff can scan QR codes to retrieve procedures immediately, eliminating the need to search through physical or digital files during an emergency.

### 3. Maintaining Paper Checklists for Backup

While digital platforms are the preferred method for SOP access, having printed checklists can be a valuable backup in case of technical difficulties or power outages. Paper copies of key SOPs can be stored in the control room and distributed to team leaders.

- **Portable Access for Staff:** Printed checklists are easy to carry and can be referenced on the go, making them ideal for field teams.
- **Durability in Challenging Conditions:** Paper copies are resilient to technical issues, providing a reliable fallback if digital access becomes temporarily unavailable.
- **More Effort for the Same Data:** While paper is a useful fallback, digital SOPs allow for more efficient reporting and analysis.

### 4. Encouraging Collaboration and Progress Tracking

Collaborative tools like Trello or shared spreadsheets allow multiple team members to work through tasks in real time. Teams can use these tools to check off each SOP step as it is completed, ensuring accountability and transparency throughout the incident response process.

- **Real-Time Task Tracking:** Track each step of the SOP in real-time, ensuring all actions are completed and recorded.
- **Visibility Across Teams:** Collaborative tools allow all team members to monitor incident progress, fostering a unified and coordinated approach.

By adhering to these accessibility and management practices, event organisers can ensure that SOPs are available, reliable, and easy to use, supporting consistent and effective incident management across all teams.



# | Conclusion

Standard Operating Procedures are integral to effective risk management, providing structure and guidance that support both predictable and dynamic situations. By ensuring that SOPs are easily accessible—whether through digital platforms, QR codes, or printed checklists—managers can create a well-prepared environment where incident response is seamless, timely, and coordinated, while proving that the company is effectively trained and prepared in case of investigations. Proper management and accessibility of SOPs contribute to a safer, more organised workplace, reinforcing a high standard of operational excellence and stakeholder safety.

If you need to level up your SOP management system, Chronosoft does all of this and more according to your needs. Check us out at [chronosoft.com.au](https://www.chronosoft.com.au) to learn more about how we can help your business.

