Demystifying SOPs:

Why Standard Operating Procedures Matter for Tribal Environmental Programs

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www.tribaltab.org

AKANA

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE for TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

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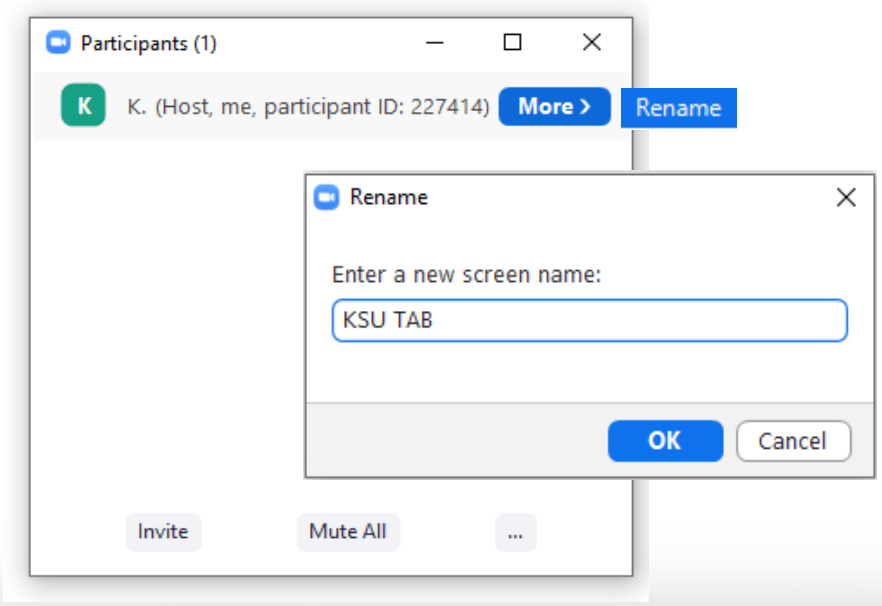
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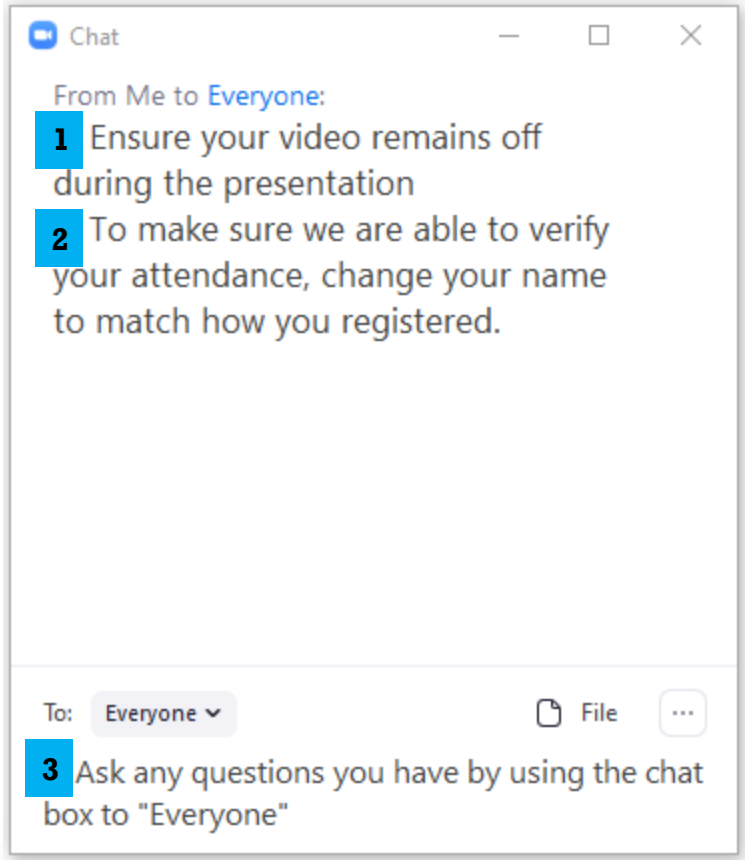


The presentation is being recorded and will be available on the website. The link has also been placed in the chat box.

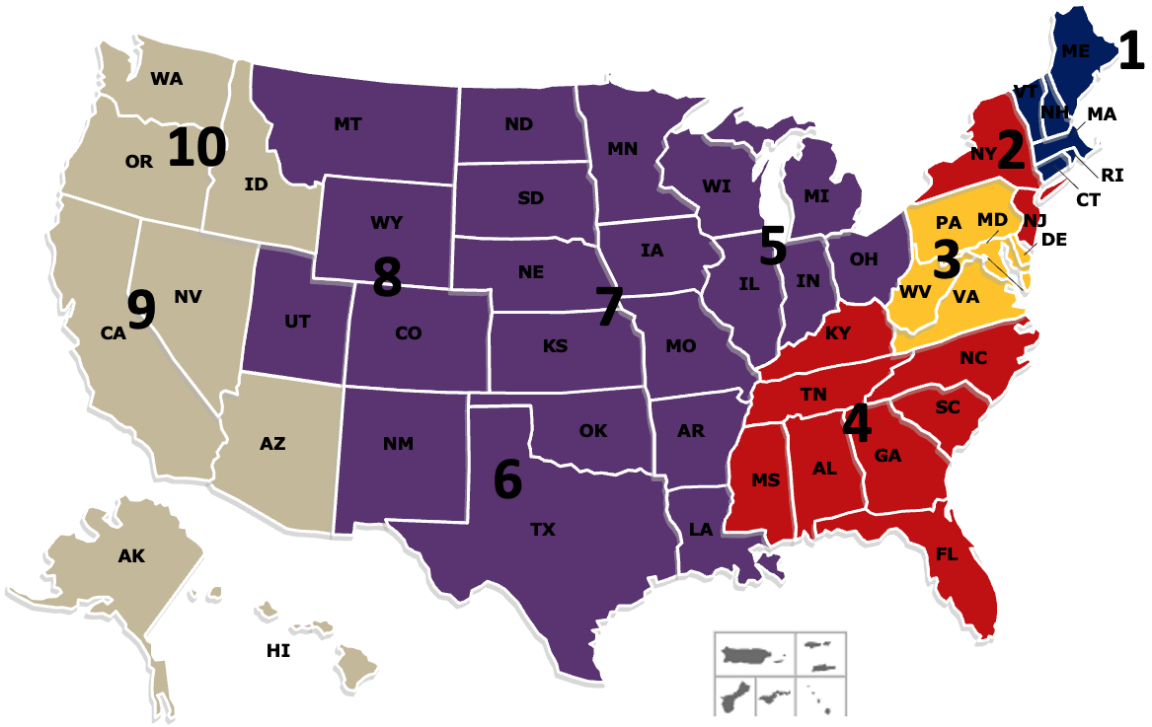
Using Zoom – The Basics







Technical Assistance to Brownfields (TAB)



What is TAB?

- A national program funded by U.S. EPA
- Dedicated TAB services provider for each EPA region & a dedicated TAB services provider for all federally recognized Tribes & Alaska Native villages
- Services provided are **FREE** and tailored to address specific community needs
- Assist communities and tribes with the brownfield assessment, cleanup and redevelopment process
- Planning, environmental and economic development expertise
- Webinars, workshop, e-tools (e.g., BiT, TAB EZ) and online resources
- And much, much more…

Who are the **TAB Service Providers?**

University of Connecticut – EPA Region 1

New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) – EPA Regions 2 & 4

Mid-Atlantic TAB – EPA Region 3

Kansas State University (KSU) – EPA Regions 5, 6, 7, & 8

Center for Creative Land Recycling (CCLR) – EPA Regions 9 & 10

KSU – ITEP – ANTHC – Tribal TAB

The Tribal Technical Assistance to Brownfields (Tribal TAB) program supports Indigenous communities in protecting and restoring sacred lands.

Who We Are

Tribal TAB is a collaborative partnership between KSU, ITEP, and ANTHC.

What We Do

The Tribal TAB network provides free technical assistance to all federally recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and other Tribal entities.



Contact Us

Tribal-TAB@ksu.edu

How We Can Assist

- Help identifying & prioritizing brownfields
- Tribal Response Program resources
- Tribal Brownfields Knowledge Circle
- Identify potential funding
- Brownfields for renewable energy & energy sovereignty
- Incorporate culture & tradition in brownfields efforts
- Planning & redevelopment visioning
- Review of technical documents
- And much, much more

Agenda

- SOPs – Do We Need Them?
- What is an SOP?
- Benefits of SOPs
- Organization Goals
- Elements of Effective SOPs
- Using a Template
- Writing and Implementing an SOP
- Programmatic SOPs
- Field Specific SOPs

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – Do We Need Them?

- https://youtu.be/FN2RM-CHkul?si=nuoWqu8ApHCLb0KC

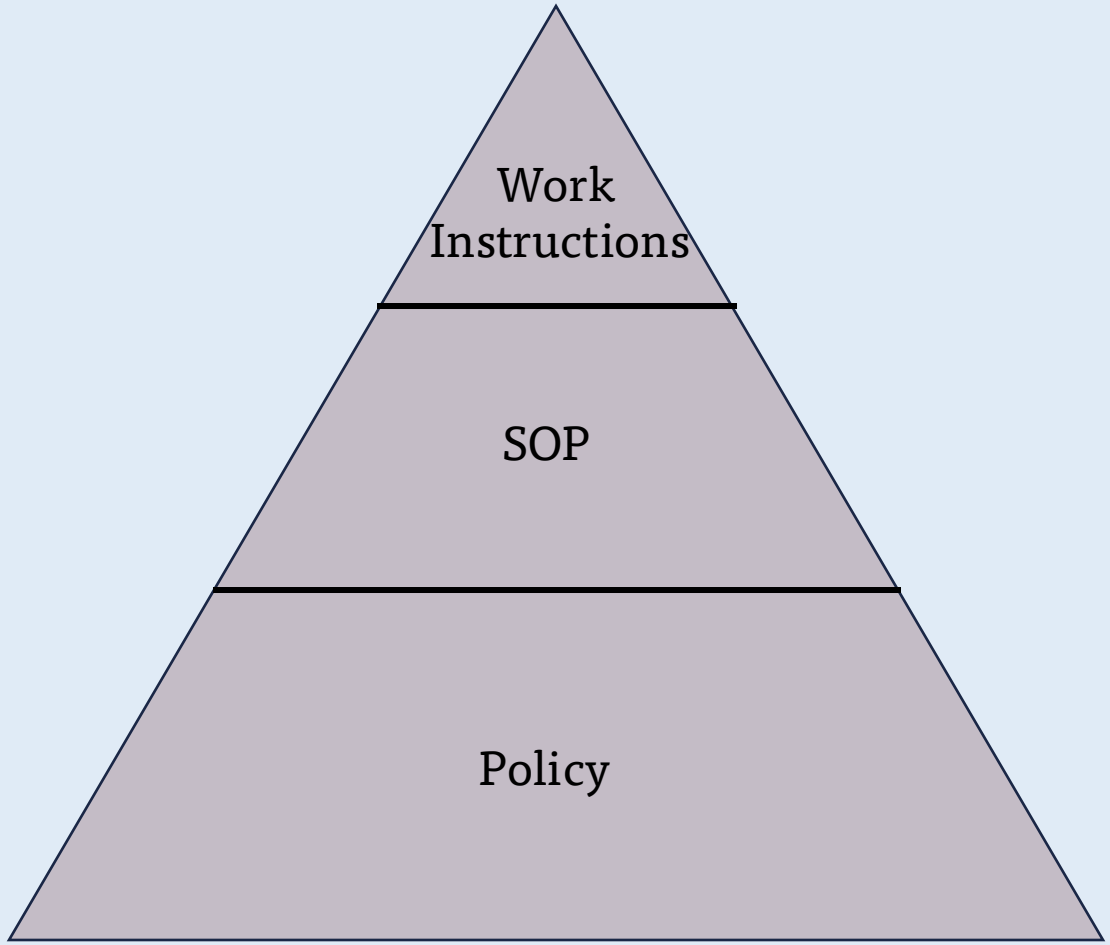






What is an SOP?

- An SOP is a response to a policy or a regulation.
- An SOP describes how to complete an activity to meet specific standards and requirements.
- An SOP can be a procedure or any document that describes how a process works.
- Work Instructions are more detailed

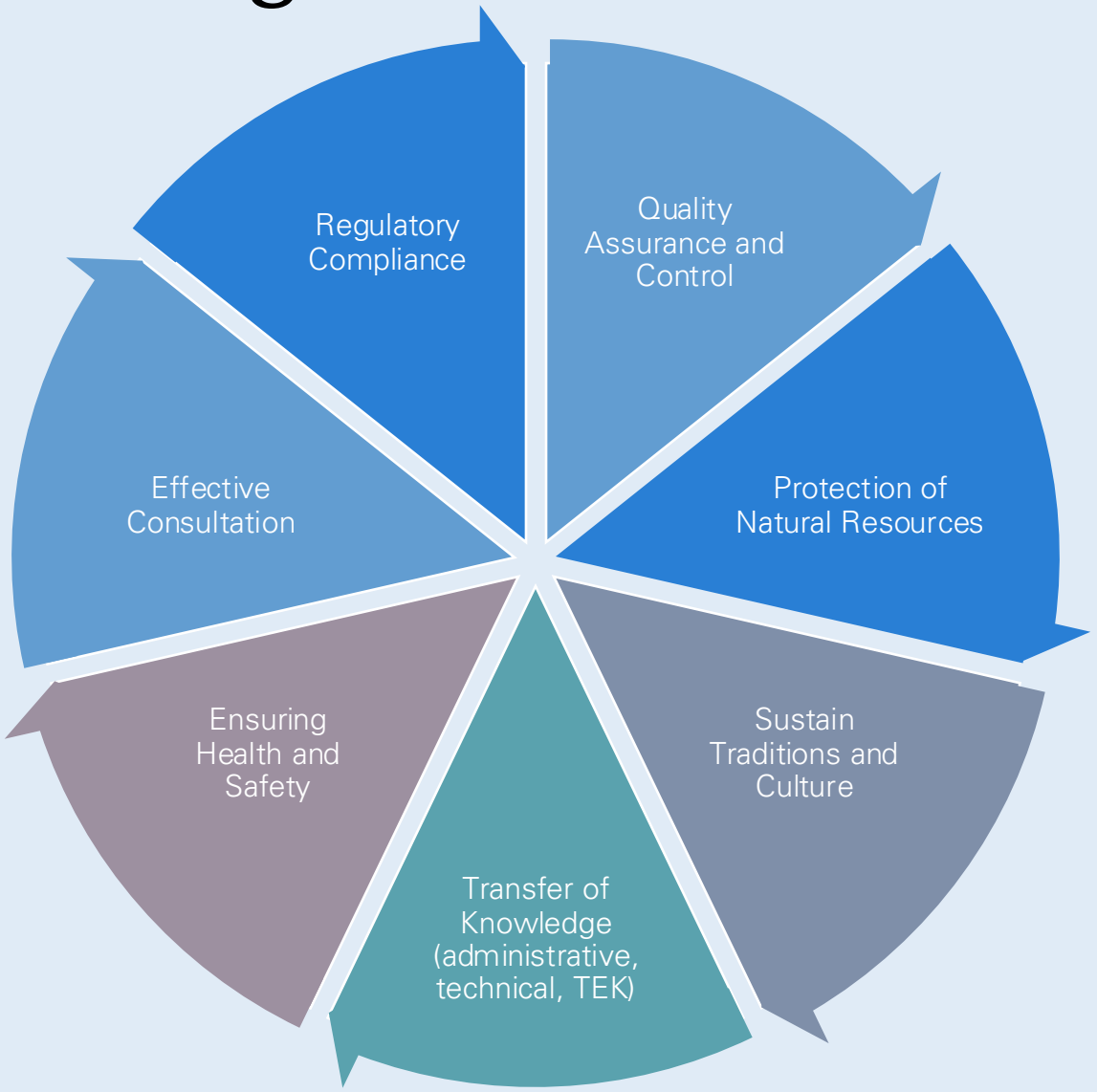


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Benefits of SOPs

- Minimizes variation and re-work.
- Reduces miscommunication and safety risks.
- Increases efficiency, consistency and accuracy in data collection.
- Documents expectations for all tasks.
- Ensure compliance with regulations and quality standards.
- Core component of training program.

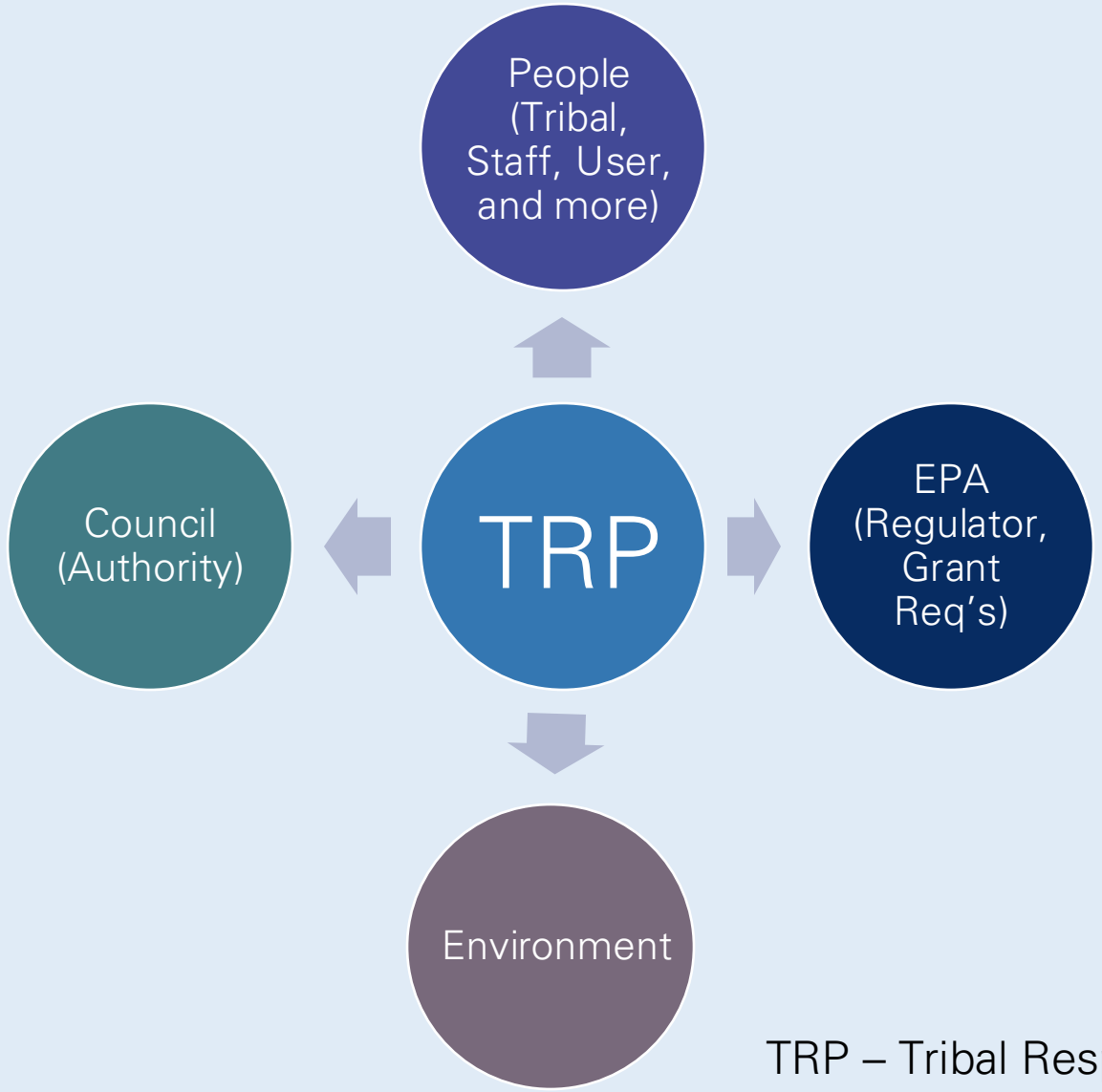
Organization Goals



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Organization Goals

- It's all About Relationships
- Results-Oriented
- The art of getting things done



TRP – Tribal Response Program Section 128(a)

Possible SOP Goals

- Accuracy
- Deliver Results
- Responsiveness
- Center of Knowledge
- Great Communicator
- Partnering
- Engagement
- Safely Perform Work
- Community Health
- Consistent Quality
- Strict Regulatory Compliance
- Protector of Natural Resources
- Adaptive to Change
- Mission Ready

Effective SOPs

SOPs work well when:

- Tasks are standard, routine, and require repeated instructions
- Results must be consistently reproduced
- Tasks fall under a specific regulation
- Actions must be traceable
- Staff understand and comply
- Quality standards must be met

SOPs fail when:

- They are too detailed or overly complex
- Feedback from employees using the SOP is ignored
- Difficult to find or access
- Employees are not trained
- When they are outdated
- Management does not enforce

Elements of an Effective SOP

- Written in a concise, step-by-step and easy-to read format.
- Contain sufficient detail to allow someone with limited experience or knowledge to reproduce the task when unsupervised.
- Includes visual tools such as process flowcharts and diagrams to aid understanding.
- Draft SOPs should be tested by a variety of staff before finalizing.
- Information must be current to be useful.

SOP's are like Recipes

- Who is going to make it?
- What are the ingredients?
- When must it be made?
- How do you make it?
- Why are you making it?



Elements of an Effective SOP – Who, What, and When?

- **Roles, Responsibilities, Resources, and Timing:**
  - Identify the roles/entities that are directly involved in the process
  - Identify resources needed to complete the procedure, such as equipment, specific training, or relevant documents
  - Discuss cautions or warnings related to the procedures or materials used in the process
  - Indicate when the procedure needs to be performed and how often

Elements of an Effective SOP – How?

- The Procedures:
  - Describe what needs to be done.
  - Identify each step in the process in the exact order that they must be performed.
  - If the process is complex, you may need to include sub-steps to provide additional detail or attach a detailed work instruction.
  - Include diagrams, images, or illustrations when appropriate.
  - Procedures must include safety measures (field)

Elements of an Effective SOP – Why?

- SOP Purpose or Goal:
  - Define the objectives: What is the purpose of the SOP, and what do you want to achieve?
  - Indicate the specific processes that require documentation based on their importance and risk factors
  - Indicate who is responsible for the SOP and who is the target audience

Elements of an Effective SOP – Suggested Format

- Title Page with a Title and Document Number
- Table of Contents
- Purpose
- Scope
- References
- Responsibilities
- Terms or Definitions
- Health and Safety
- Equipment or Tools
- Timing and Frequency
- Procedures
- Quality Control
- Records and Deviations
- Revision History
- Original and Version Date
- Approval and Verification Signature
- Attachments: Forms, Diagrams, Flowcharts, etc.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE			
TITLE:	*"WRITE CLEAR TITLE HERE"*		**VERSION 00**
APPROVED BY: "SIGNATURE"		**EFFECTIVE DATE:**	*"PLACE DATE HERE"*
"PERSON NAME"		**REVISION DATE:**	*"PLACE DATE HERE"*
"OFFICIAL TITLE"		**SOP NUMBER**	*"PLACE SOP NUMBER HERE"*

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to [*what the procedure accomplishes and why it matters for consistency, safety, compliance, resource protection, or training*].

SCOPE (application)

These procedures apply to [*staff/contractors/program*] when [*activity, location, or media*]. They support [*Tribal policy, QAPP, HASP, TAS requirement, or CERCLA 128(a) element*]. They do not apply to [*exclusions*].

REFERENCES

Insert applicable regulatory codes and/or policies such as:

- Tribal policies, codes, or resolutions
- QAPP/HASP/Sampling Plan Sections
- Methods or Regulations
- Related SOPs

RESPONSIBILITIES

[*Role*] is responsible for [*approval/training/equipment*].

[*Role*] is responsible for [*performing the work*].

Contractors must follow this SOP or an equivalent approval in writing before work starts.

DEFINITIONS (TERMS)

Define only terms that have special meaning in this procedure.

HEALTH AND SAFETY (*if Programmatic, mark N/A or delete*)

Personnel must follow the site-specific Health and Safety Plan (HASP) or job hazard analysis.

Specific concerns for this procedure: [*list here, or "none beyond the HASP"*].

Stop-work authority: [*who can stop work and how*].

If there is a specific health and safety concern, highlight it here and reference HASP.

EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is necessary for [list tools, calibrants, containers, PPE, and forms]. Follow the site-specific sampling or work plan for locations and frequencies.

TIMING AND FREQUENCY

When the procedure is performed and how often [*e.g., site visit; before each sampling event; annually*].

PROCEDURES

Numbered steps in the exact order of work. If there are hazardous steps, place warnings immediately before the step and use bold lettering.

1. *First step*
2. *Second step*
3. *Third step*

LEVEL 2 HEADING

Optional subgroup.

Level 3 Heading

Optional sub-subgroup.

QUALITY CONTROL (*Use or mark N/A or delete*)

Duplicates, blanks, calibration checks, and what to do if a check fails.

RECORDS (*Use or mark N/A or delete*)

Identify all forms that must be completed, where records are stored, and how long records are kept.

DEVIATIONS (*Use or mark N/A or delete*)

How an authorized change is requested, approved, and documented.

FORMS, WORK INSTRUCTIONS, AND ATTACHMENTS

List field sheets, diagrams, flowcharts, and illustrations attached to this SOP.

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Description of Change	Author
00		Original Issue	

Writing and Implementing an SOP

- Determine the SOP format – simple checklist, written procedure, visual guide, and organizational requirements
- Ensure you have the right staff helping to develop the SOP: those who routinely perform the process, subject matter experts, and experienced SOP writers
- Include all steps in the process, but remember that if you write it down, you will be expected to follow it.
- **Test the SOP, and revise based on the results of testing**
- Train staff on the SOP and distribute to relevant groups
- Plan for updates and revisions to the SOP (annual review)

Writing Rules

- If you write it, you must be able to do it.
- Write to the person doing the task, not to a reviewer.
- Use one action per numbered step.
- Write it in plain English; Avoid vague phrasing.
- Minimize the use of jargon.
- Reference external standards; Don’t copy/paste into the SOP
- Test the draft with multiple staff members who did not write it.

Suggested Brownfields SOPs

Programmatic:

- Preparing a Health & Safety Plan
- Preparing a QAPP
- Completing an Eligibility Worksheet
- Developing a Site Inventory
- Preparing a Property Profile
- Entering Data into ACRES
- Tribal Member Engagement
- Public Notices

Field Specific:

- Site Inspections or Monitoring
- Collecting Soil Samples
- Collecting Groundwater or Surface Water Samples
- Collecting Soil Vapor Samples
- Field Equipment Calibration
- Sample Custody and Handling

Programmatic SOPs

Meet Requirements of the TRP128(a) Grants

- The Four Elements
- Public Record Requirement

Organizational Responsiveness

- SOPs are the baseline
- Operational Effectiveness – identify, adapt, improve
- Accountability and Transparency – audits, reporting, evaluating

Performance Measures

- What do we measure?
- Metrics for Safety, Resource Protection, Responsiveness, Budget Management, and others.

Field Specific SOPs

Written set of instructions that describe in detail how to safely perform work involving hazardous substances.

- Working around hazardous substances or potentially hazardous substances
- Working with hazardous equipment (drill rigs and excavators)
- Ensure consistent quality
- Integrity of results (defensible)
  - Completeness
  - Precision
  - Accuracy
  - Representativeness
- Ability to replicate results
- Always incorporate safety



SOPs Require Commitment

- If you write it, you must do it
- Test it – make sure it works
- Know your audience
- Know your customer
- Train your staff
- Prepare for staffing changes
- Review and Revise (annually)

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Let's Connect!

Scan to get in touch with a Tribal TAB team member or to join our mailing list

SCAN ME!

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