

SOP: Communication and Handover Protocols Between Shifts and Teams

This SOP defines **communication and handover protocols between shifts and teams**, focusing on clear, consistent information exchange to ensure continuity and operational efficiency. It covers standardized handover procedures, essential information to be communicated including ongoing tasks, issues, and safety concerns, the use of communication tools and documentation methods, roles and responsibilities during shift changes, and guidelines to minimize errors and miscommunication. The goal is to maintain seamless workflow, enhance team collaboration, and prevent disruptions or incidents caused by incomplete or unclear handovers.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures for effective communication and handover between shifts and teams, minimizing risks and operational disruptions.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all team members and supervisors involved in shift-based or multi-team operations.

3. Definitions

- **Handover:** The transfer of information, duties, and responsibilities from outgoing to incoming personnel.
- **Shift:** A defined period during which a team or member is responsible for operations.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Outgoing Shift Lead/Team Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare comprehensive handover notes/documentation• Communicate all ongoing tasks, issues, and safety concerns• Respond to incoming shift questions and clarify ambiguities
Incoming Shift Lead/Team Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review handover documentation before assuming duties• Ask clarifying questions regarding incomplete or unclear items• Confirm receipt and understanding of all information
Supervisor/Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure adherence to handover SOP• Provide guidance and training on handover procedures• Review and address recurring handover issues

5. Handover Procedure

1. **Preparation**
 - Complete handover checklist (see section 7).
 - Update all relevant documentation and logs.
2. **Face-to-Face Briefing**
 - Outgoing and incoming shifts meet to review key information and clarify uncertainties.
 - Priority given to critical issues, safety alerts, and unresolved tasks.
3. **Documentation**
 - Use standardized handover forms or digital platforms (e.g. shift logbooks, task management tools).
 - Ensure documents are complete, accurate, and signed/acknowledged by both parties.
4. **Confirmation**
 - Incoming team confirms understanding and assumes full responsibility.
 - Outstanding items are tracked for ongoing follow-up.

6. Communication Tools & Documentation Methods

- Standardized handover forms (physical or digital)
- Shift logbooks or team journals
- Task-tracking software (e.g., Trello, Asana, MS Teams, etc.)
- Email, instant messaging, or intranet for written summaries
- In-person or video conferencing for verbal briefings

7. Handover Checklist (Example)

- Ongoing and outstanding tasks
- Incidents and issues encountered during the shift
- Upcoming deadlines or critical events
- Staffing and personnel changes
- Safety and compliance concerns
- Pending approvals or escalations
- Key communications or decisions made

8. Guidelines to Minimize Errors & Miscommunication

- Encourage questions and active dialog during handover
- Use clear, unambiguous language-avoid jargon and abbreviations
- Verify understanding through read-back or confirmation protocols
- Document all relevant items; do not rely solely on memory
- Escalate unresolved or unclear issues to supervisors immediately

9. Review and Continuous Improvement

- Supervisors review handover documents regularly for completeness and accuracy
- Conduct periodic handover audits and team feedback sessions
- Revise SOP based on recurring issues, incidents, or process improvements

10. References & Related Documents

- Shift Handover Form Template
- Incident Reporting SOP
- Company Communication Policy