**Standard Operating Procedure**

What is SOP?

SOP stands for Standard Operating Procedure, a set of step-by-step instructions for performing a specific task within an organisation or a routine activity. SOP should be followed the same way every day to ensure that the organisation remains consistent in compliance with industry regulations and business standards. We can use lots of AI tools for writing SOP and chat GPT is one of them and we can use lots of templates for writing SOP.

**How to write a standard operating procedure:**

The following are the six main steps involved in creating an SOP:

***Step 1:*** Define the task's goal and why it needs an SOP. Employees in decision-making roles and other stakeholders define the task's goal and explain why that goal needs an SOP.

***Step 2:*** Determine the SOP format. The author decides on the SOP format. Some organizations might have premade templates.

***Step 3:*** Decide on the delivery medium. Once a format has been chosen, the author decides whether to make the SOP available as a written hard copy or online and stored in a database.

***Step 4:*** Identify task dependencies. The task of the SOP in question may rely on other procedures within the organization. The author should identify these dependencies and decide how to incorporate them into the new SOP. Another option to consider is incorporating the new procedures into an existing SOP.

***Step 5:*** Identify the audience. The author determines who the audience is for this SOP to ensure it's written appropriately. For example, an SOP written for employees with previous knowledge is different from one written for new employees.

***Step 6:*** Write the SOP. Once all these decisions have been made, the author writes the SOP. These instructions use present verb tense and an active voice. If the organization has a style guide, then the author should adhere to it. It's important to allow anyone who will be using the SOP to review it throughout the writing process to ensure all necessary steps are included.

***Step 7:*** Test and gather feedback. Once the draft is written, it must be reviewed, edited and tested multiple times, with feedback collected. This process repeats until the SOP has buy-in from all stakeholders. At this point, it is distributed to every person who will use it as part of their job. The target audience should try out a draft SOP to ensure it works as intended. If these employees have difficulty understanding or following the SOP, it might need to be updated.

***Step 8***: Implement the process. The SOP is made official once all issues are addressed, and its intended audience can use it without issues.

***Step 9:*** Update regularly. SOP creation and enforcement are iterative processes. Once the detailed instructions are written, the SOP process should be analyzed and updated every six to 12 months to guarantee it remains relevant to the regulatory standards and compliance requirements of the organization. All changes must be recorded, and versions tracked.

***Step 10.*** Provide ongoing training. Regularly scheduled continuous learning sessions will ensure employees become familiar with new versions of the procedures.

**Steps for writing SOP:**

1. **Title and Purpose**
2. **Scope**
3. **Responsibilities**
4. **Materials and Equipment**
5. **Procedure Steps**
6. **Safety and Compliance Requirements**
7. **Troubleshooting**
8. **Quality Control and Verification**
9. **Documentation and Record-Keeping**
10. **References**

**The structure followed for writing a SOP:**

1. **Title page**
2. **Table of Contents**
3. **Step by Step procedures**

**Usage of SOP:**

1. Helping employees that they can perform defined schedule very strictly.
2. Assisting in training employees.
3. Guaranteeing regulatory compliance standards are met.
4. Enhancing business standards in between an organization
5. Avoid manufactures issues
6. Incorporating safety standards in routine operations.

**Notes:**

SOPs are still needed even when other published instructions or methods of describing procedures are available. An SOP often describes a procedure in more detail than the published content and might explain any differences between the SOP and the published method. The SOP will only succeed if employees follow it. Management, specifically the direct supervisor, should monitor the use of the standard operating procedure to ensure it is being properly employed and maintained.