What’s the Difference between Guidelines & Standard Operating Procedures? – Ask The Expert



QUESTION

What’s the difference between guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs)’

ANSWER

Generally speaking, guidelines are general and generic while SOPs are tailored to particular operations, equipment, conditions, etc.:

SOPs explain how to accomplish a repeatable work process or operation safely and compliantly that are written for the workers who perform the process to follow step by step similar to a recipe in a cookbook.

Guidelines are broad recommendations that set out general principles that are subject to interpretation and that apply to many situations and not limited to a specific process or operation the way SOPs are.