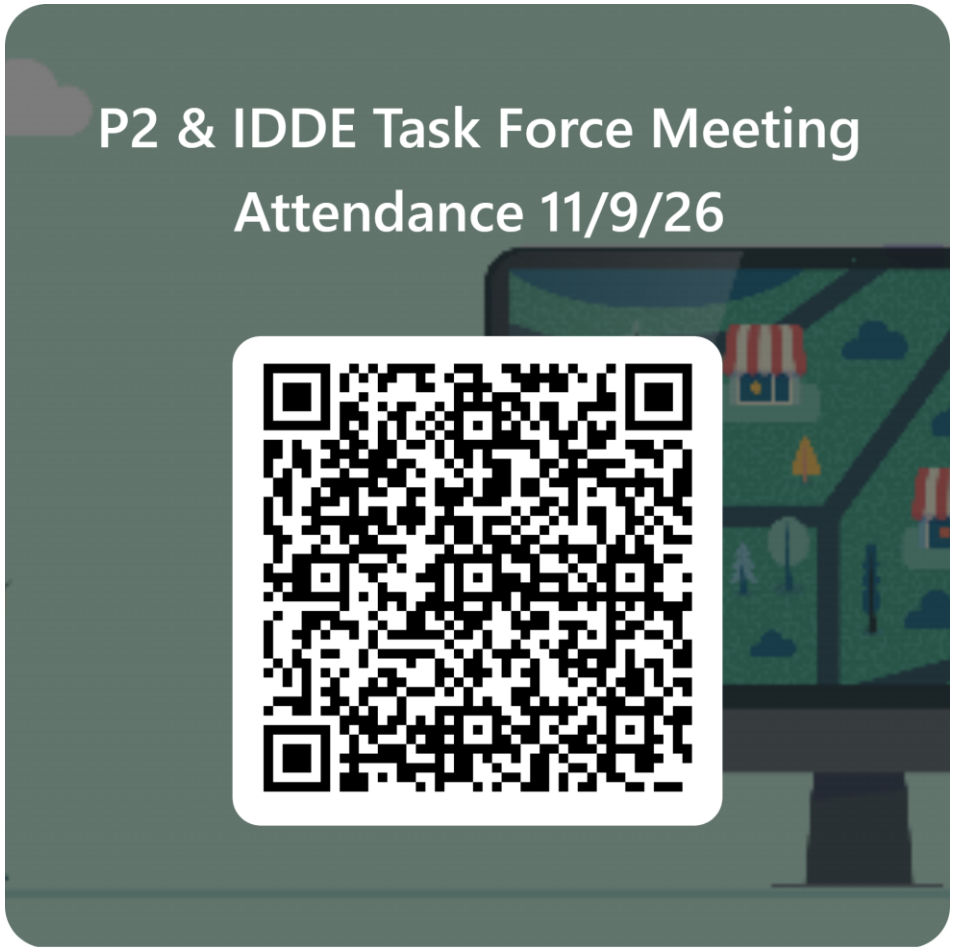
Meeting Attendance

- Follow the link below or scan the QR code to record your attendance:

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=vH5eL7Aivk-TTKq9204psSVs8YpvM0JMvzoqOSXjaRRUQlkzOUtKRERUMkhQRkNOVlVCVExVT1hONi4u





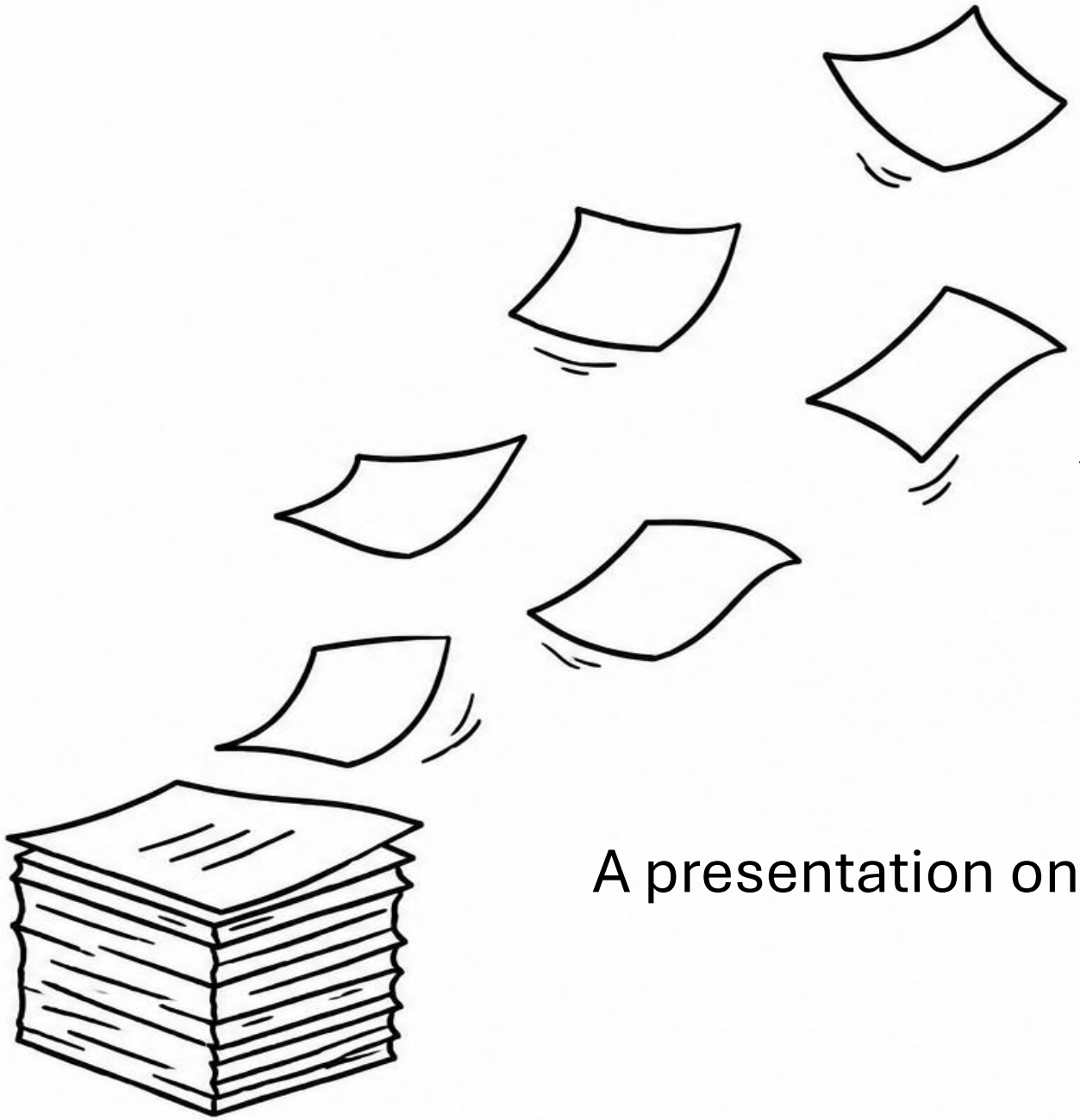
Pollution Prevention & Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination

November 9, 2026

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Call for Committee Representative
- SOP Presentation
- Request for Feedback
- Solicitation of SOPs
- Upcoming Events, Conferences, and NCTCOG Meetings.
- Roundtable Discussion



You, Me, and **SOPs**

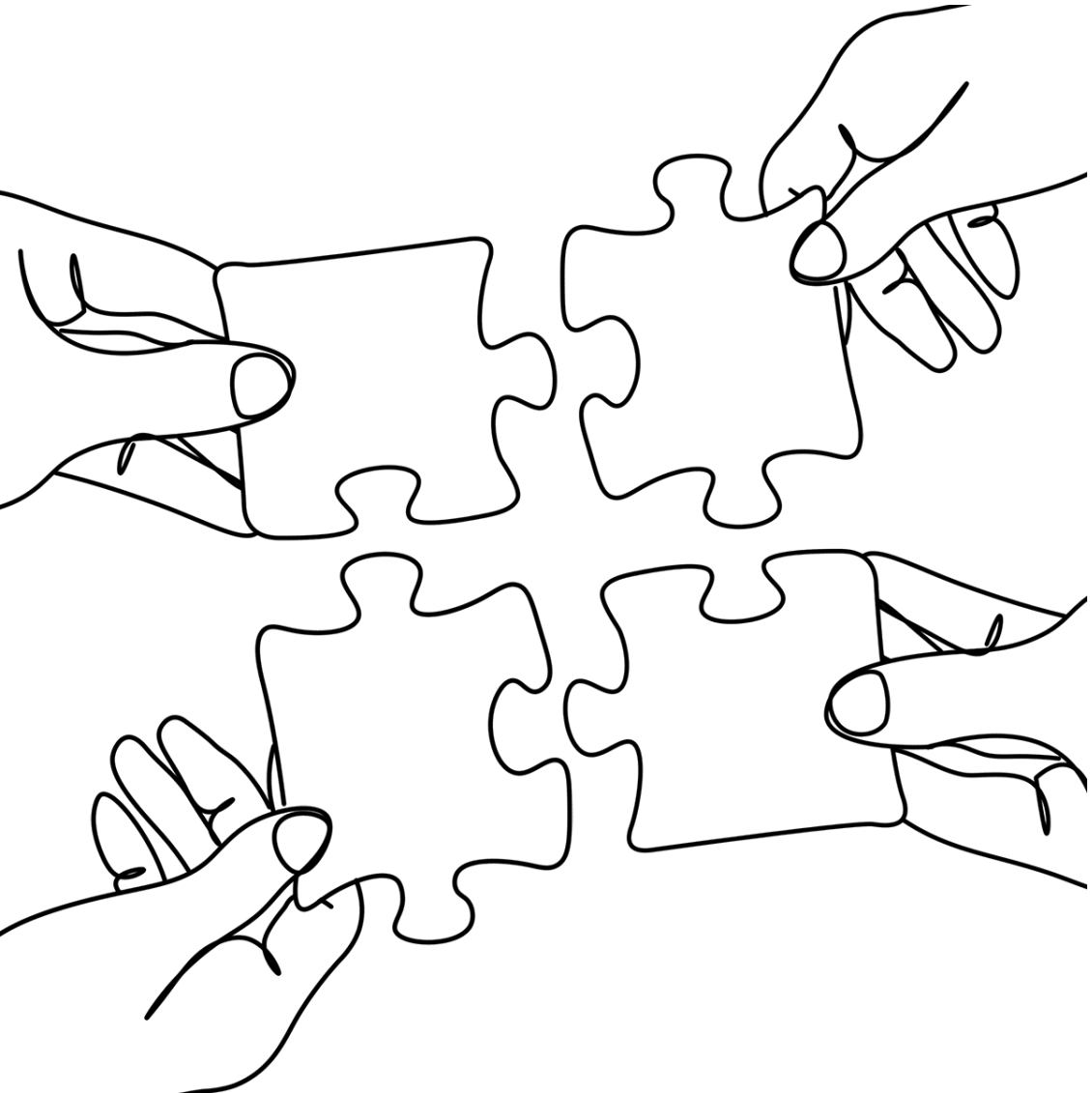
A presentation on Standard Operating Procedures

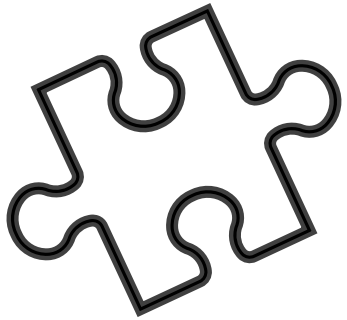
What are Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

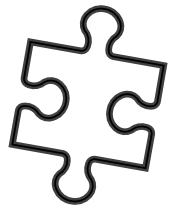
- An SOP is a formalized, step-by-step document that defines a standardized operational process by outlining *who* performs each step, *when* it occurs, *under what conditions* it's performed, and *any requirements necessary* to ensure consistent execution of tasks.

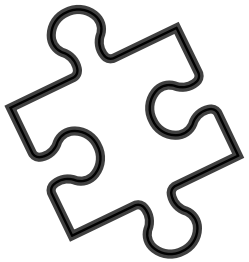
- **THE CORE FOCUS:** Standardizing **methods** for consistent **results**.

To understand the part,









We must first understand the **whole**.

BITE-SIZE PIECES:

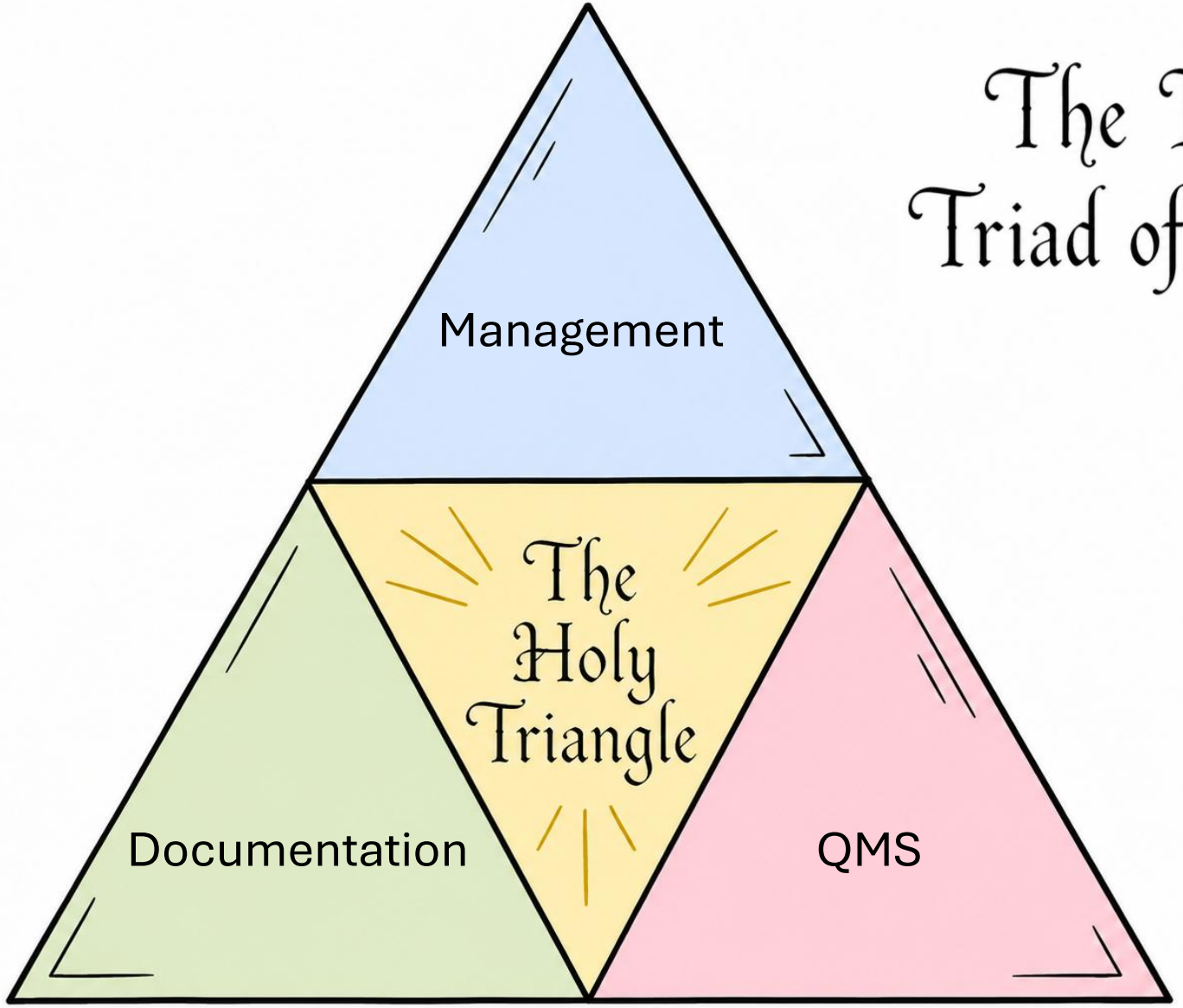
operational processes

conditions and requirements

tasks

The Isomorphic Triad of Governance

PEOPLE

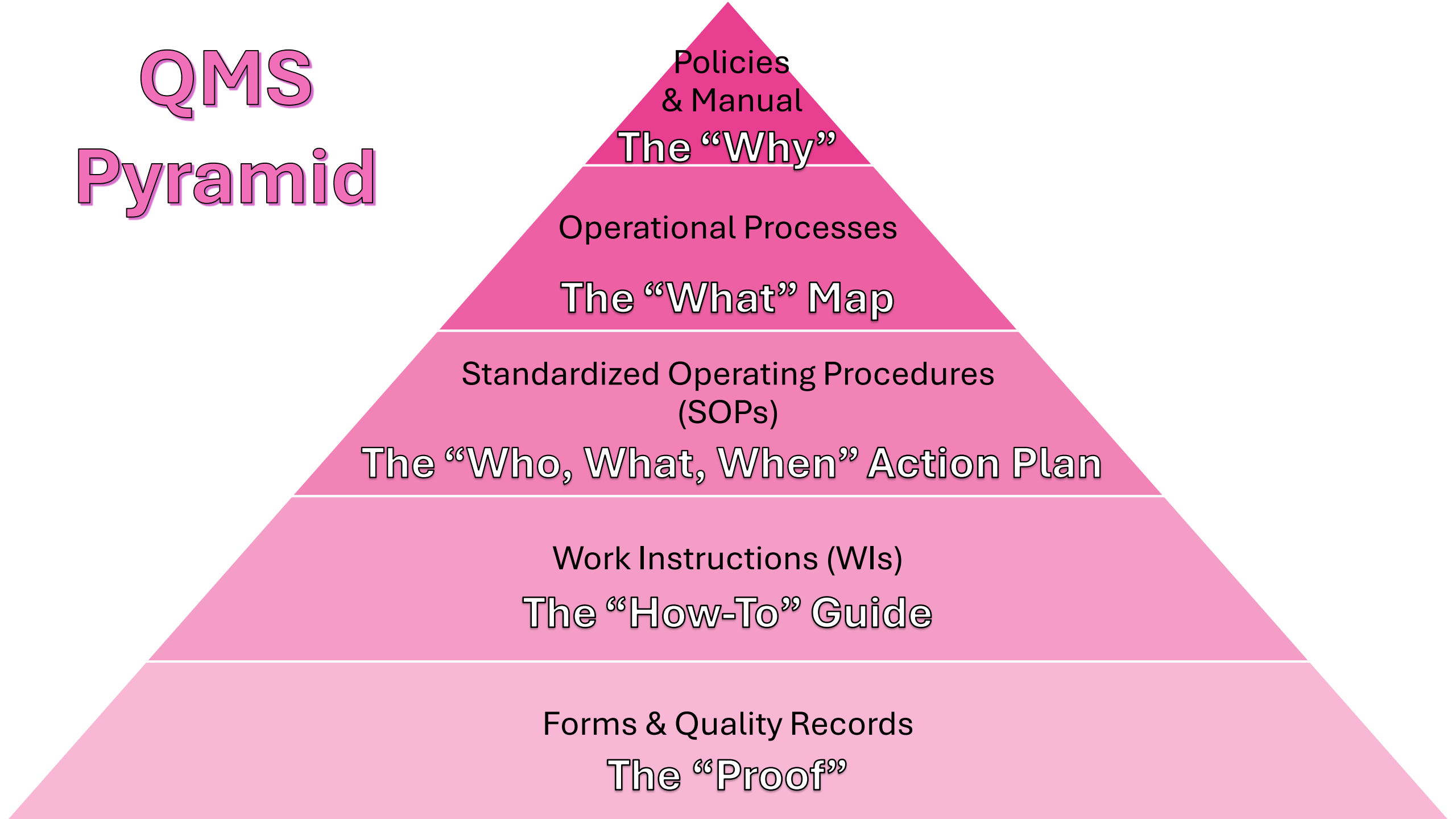


EXECUTION

STRATEGY

Feature	Management Pyramid	Documentation Pyramid	Quality Management System Pyramid
Primary Focus	People, roles, and decision authority	Knowledge storage and information detail	Regulatory compliance and quality assurance
Top (Peak)	Executive Leadership	Strategic Vision and Company Mission	Quality Manual and Core Policies
Middle	Tactical / Departmental Managers	Core Guidelines, Manuals, & Knowledge Bases	SOPs & Work Instructions
Bottom (Base)	Operational / Frontline Staff	Raw Data, System Outputs, & Activity Log Files	Completed Quality Records, Forms, & Checklists
Driving Metric	Performance, revenue, and growth	Accessibility, discoverability, and data clarity	Continuous improvements and audit readiness

QMS Pyramid

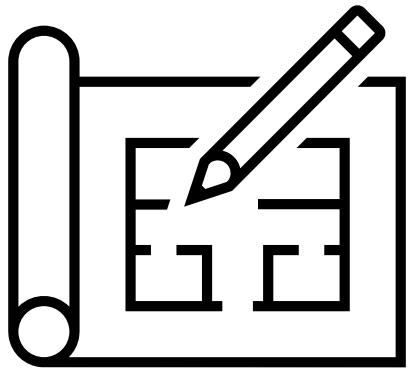

Policies
& Manual
The "Why"
Operational Processes
The "What" Map
Standardized Operating Procedures
(SOPs)
The "Who, What, When" Action Plan
Work Instructions (WIs)
The "How-To" Guide
Forms & Quality Records
The "Proof"

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Many people ***incorrectly use 'SOP' as a catch-all term*** for various operational documents.

Understanding the distinct layers of the **QMS pyramid** and their associated technical terms is critical, as it gives writers the **exact blueprint** needed to:

- correctly frame the scope,
- organize the workflow,
- and draft clear, actionable procedures.



Let’s look a little closer…

- **LEVEL 1: POLICIES & QUALITY MANUAL | RULES AND EXPECTATIONS**

The “Why”

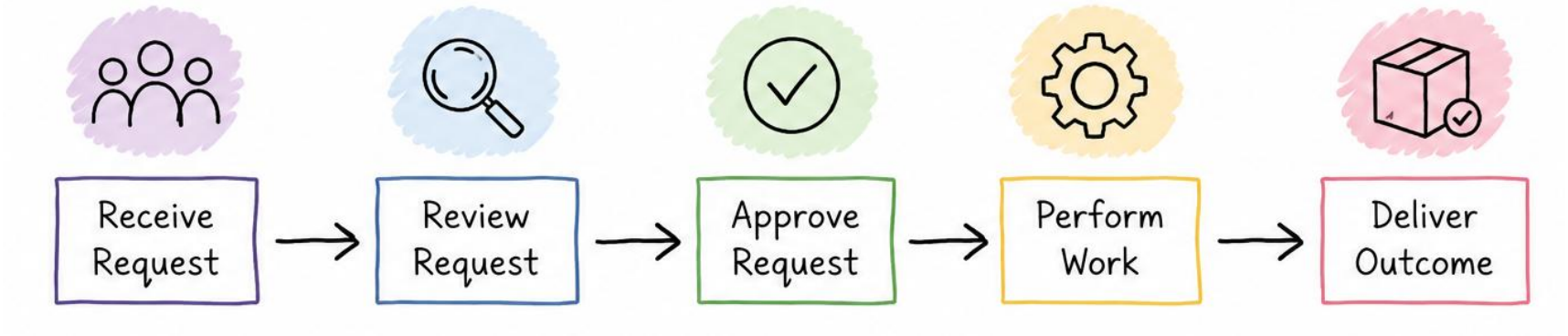
POLICIES	What are they?	Core principles and guidelines establishing the “why.”
	Don’t confuse them:	**Policy = Requirement** **Procedure = Implementation**
MANUALS	What are they?	A comprehensive collection of an organization's policies and quality management framework.
	Don’t confuse them:	**Manual = The central reference** **Procedure = One documented method**

Let’s look a little closer…

The “What”

🗺️ LEVEL 2: PROCESSES | OPERATIONS AND WORKFLOWS

PROCESSES	What are they?	Operational maps that define what work happens, in what sequence, to achieve a desired outcome.
	Don’t confuse them:	**Process = Workflow** **Procedure = Execution**



Let’s look a little closer…

🔧 **LEVEL 3: PROCEDURES | STANDARDIZED METHODS**

PROCEDURES

What are they? Standardized methods that assign responsibilities, sequence actions, and ensure work is performed consistently.

The “Who, What, When”

Let’s look a little closer…

The “How-To”

📝 Level 4: Work Instructions (WIs) | TASKS AND DETAILS

Work Instructions	What are they?	Detailed, task-specific instructions that explain exactly how to perform an individual activity consistently and correctly.
	Don’t confuse them:	**Work Instructions = Step-by-Step** **Procedure = Overall Method**

Let’s look a little closer…

LEVEL 5: FORMS & QUALITY RECORDS | DATA AND EVIDENCE

The “Proof”

FORMS & RECORDS	What are they?	Standardized documents that capture and preserve information as evidence of activities performed, results achieved, and requirements met.
	Don’t confuse them:	**Forms & Records = Documents the work** **Procedure = Directs the work**



The Road Trip Metaphor

Policy	Rules of the road (speed limits, rights-of-way, etc.)
Manual	*All* the things you need for a Road Trip—the Rules of the Road; the Driver's Handbook; an Atlas (or your phone)
Process	A trip from Point A to Point B (EX: from Dallas, TX to Santa Fe, NM)
Procedure	The planned route ("take interstate ## south to highway ##")
WI	GPS turn-by-turn directions
Forms & Records	Photos and memories captured along the way / Metadata

Let's Rewind & Revisit

- An SOP is a formalized, step-by-step document that defines a standardized operational process by outlining *who* performs each step, *when* it occurs, *under what conditions* it is performed, and *any requirements necessary* to ensure consistent execution of tasks.

- **THE CORE FOCUS:** Standardizing **methods** for consistent **results**.

Setting the Ground Rules–
TECHNICAL WRITING STANDARDS



Technical/Business documents like SOPs demand *objective*, *precise*, and *actionable language* to eliminate ambiguity and ensure compliance.

THE RULES

- **Point-of-View:** Third-Person & Imperative

  Eliminate *I, we, and you*. Use direct commands and explicit job titles.

- **Grammatical Voice:** Active Voice

  Put the responsible role before the action verb. In other words: the subject does the action, instead of ~~*the action being done by the subject.*~~

- **Step Structure:** Imperative-First Syntax

  Strip out conversational filler words (*next, then, you will want to…*). Start with a verb

- **Word Choice:** Precise Language and Measurable Metrics

  Avoid vague or subjective language (*quickly, carefully, periodically*). Be exact– specific actions, defined criteria, and measurable expectations.

TECHNICAL WRITING STANDARDS *(CONT.)*

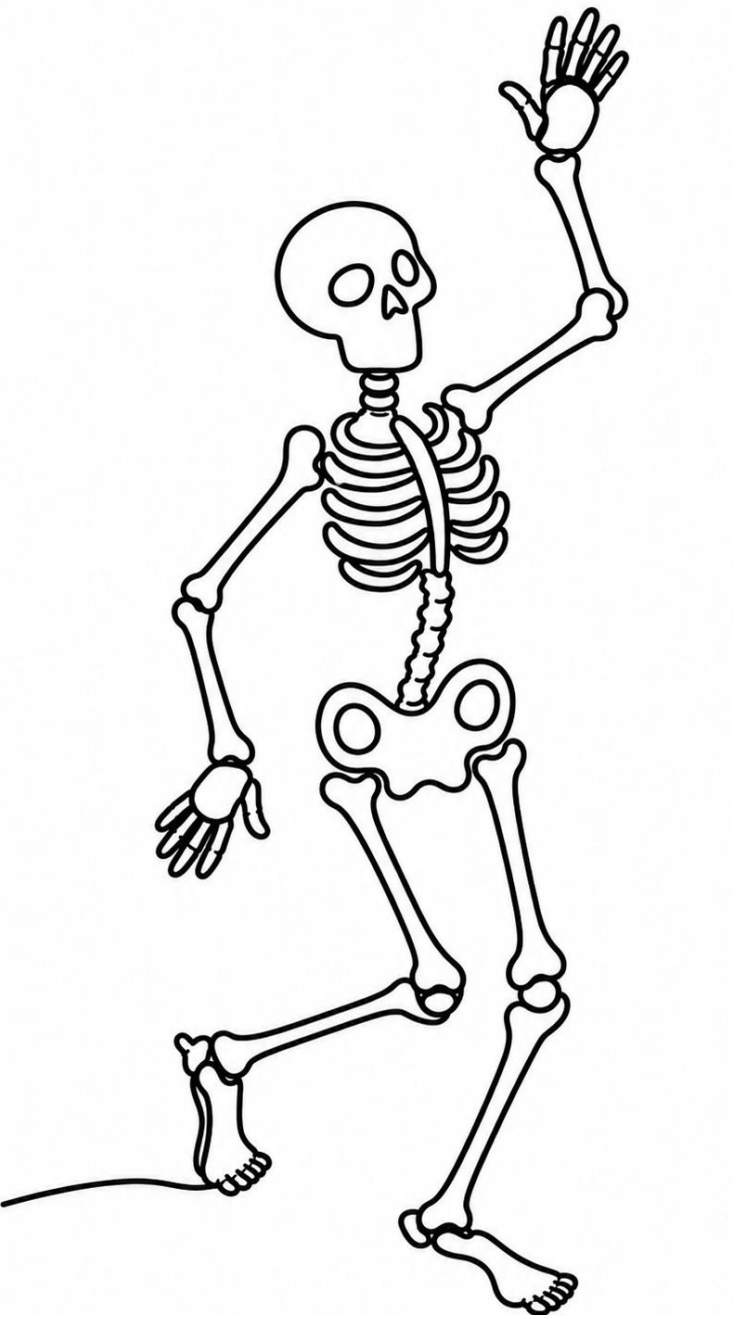
EXAMPLES

➢ **Point-of-View:** Third-Person & Imperative	✗ *Incorrect:* **You** should login and submit **your** report…
	✓ *Correct:* The **Environmental Planner** logs in and submits the report…
➢ **Grammatical Voice:** Active Voice Only	✗ *Incorrect (passive):* The form is signed **by the Project Manager**…
	✓ *Correct (active):* **The Project Manager** signs the form…
➢ **Step Structure:** Imperative-First Syntax	✗ *Incorrect:* **Next**, click the save button…
	✓ *Correct:* **Click** the save button…
➢ **Word Choice:** Precise Language & Measurable metrics	✗ *Incorrect:* Review project documentation **promptly** and **carefully** for **environmental concerns**…
	✓ *Correct:* Review project documentation within **five business days of receipt** and verify compliance with **all applicable environmental review criteria** before approval…

BEFORE YOU WRITE…

Know what you're standardizing–

- **What needs to be standardized, and why?**
  - Identify the process/activity being standardized and the operational need driving it.
- **What happens from start to finish?**
  - Plot out the procedure from beginning to end, capturing all actions required for completion.
  - *Then*, determine what falls within the SOP and what falls outside of it. In other words, define what is—***and isn't***—covered by the SOP.
- **Who's involved?**
  - Identify the people (positions/roles) who perform, oversee, approve, or are affected by the procedure.
- **What existing guidance and requirements apply?**
  - Gather all policies, regulations, forms, connected SOPs, or related documentation/forms.



The Anatomy of an SOP

1. **Background**
   - *Why does the SOP exist?*
2. **Goal & Scope**
   - *What should the SOP accomplish—and what does it cover?*
3. **Applicability Criteria**
   - *When, and to whom, does it apply?*
4. **Responsibilities**
   - *Who is responsible for what?*
5. **Prerequisites**
   - *What needs to be in place first?*
6. **Procedures**
   - *What needs to happen, and how is it carried out?*

1. Background

Sets the context for the SOP by explaining why it is needed and what prompted its development.

Why does this SOP exist?

What to Include:

- The operational need or issue being addressed
- Any policy, regulatory, or other requirement driving the SOP
- Relevant circumstances or conditions
- Brief history or context, when necessary

1. Background – Bad vs. Good Example

✕ Too Vague–

Project documentation needs to be reviewed to make sure required environmental information is complete. This SOP was developed to establish a standard review process.

✓ Better–

Environmental project documentation is reviewed by multiple staff to verify that required information is complete before projects advance. **Variations in how these reviews are conducted can result in inconsistent documentation and additional follow-up.** This SOP was developed to establish a consistent review approach and reduce those discrepancies.

2. Goal and Scope

Defines what the SOP is intended to accomplish (*i.e., the purpose*) and establishes the boundaries of what it covers.

GOAL = What should it accomplish?

SCOPE = What does it cover?

What to Include:

- The intended outcome or objective
- What successful implementation should achieve
- Activities or work covered by the SOP
- Locations, assets, or situations covered, when applicable
- Relevant exclusions or limitations

2. Goal and Scope – Bad VS. Good Example

✗ **Too Vague–**

The goal of this SOP is to provide guidance for reviewing environmental project documentation. This SOP applies to environmental project reviews.

✓ **Better–**

The purpose of this SOP is to establish a consistent method for reviewing environmental project documentation to ensure required information is complete before the review advances. This SOP applies to environmental documentation submitted for projects requiring staff review and excludes projects determined to be exempt from environmental review requirements.

3. Applicability Criteria

Defines the specific conditions or circumstances that determine when and to whom the SOP applies.

When, and to whom, does it apply?

What to Include:

- Who or what is subject to the SOP
- Conditions that trigger its use
- Applicable thresholds or criteria
- Relevant regulatory or jurisdictional triggers

3. Applicability Criteria – Bad vs. Good Example

✗ **Too Vague–**

This SOP applies to Environmental Planners when reviewing projects that may require environmental review.

✓ **Better–**

This SOP applies to Environmental Planners conducting environmental reviews **for federally funded projects when the proposed action requires review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).**

4. Responsibilities

Identifies the roles involved in the procedure and defines what each is responsible for.

Who is responsible for what?

What to Include:

- Roles or positions involved in the procedure
- Key responsibilities assigned to each role
- Oversight and approval responsibilities
- Documentation and communication responsibilities

4. Responsibilities – Bad VS. Good Example

✗ Too Vague–

The Environmental Planning team is responsible for reviewing project documentation and coordinating with others as needed.

✓ Better–

- **Environmental Planner:** Reviews submitted environmental project documentation for completeness, documents review findings and communicates identified deficiencies to the applicant.
- **Program Manager:** Provides procedural oversight, resolves issues requiring escalation, and approves the completed review.

5. Prerequisite

Identifies any requirements or conditions that must be met before the procedure can begin.

What needs to be in place first?

What to Include:

- Required training or qualifications
- Required approvals, permits, or notifications
- Necessary equipment, tools, or system access
- Any preliminary assessments or conditions that must be completed

5. Prerequisite – Bad vs. Good Example

✗ **Too Vague–**

Staff should have the necessary training and materials before beginning the review.

✓ **Better–**

Before beginning the environmental review, the Environmental Planner must have completed the **required environmental review training** and **have access to the project file, applicable review checklist, and current GIS data.**

6. Procedure/s

Defines the sequence of actions, responsibilities, and decision points required to carry out the procedure consistently.

What needs to happen, and how is it carried out?

What to Include:

- Actions *in the order they are performed*
- The role responsible for each action
- Required timing, conditions, or triggers
- Decision points and resulting actions
- Tools or methods required, when applicable
- Safety considerations, when applicable
- Required documentation or records

6. Procedure/s – Bad VS. Good Example

✗ **Too Vague–**

The Environmental Planner should review the project documentation carefully and coordinate with the applicant as needed. Once everything looks good, the review can be completed.

✓ **Better–**

1. The Environmental Planner reviews the submitted environmental project documentation for completeness within five business days of receipt.
2. If required documentation is missing, the Environmental Planner documents the deficiency and notifies the applicant.
3. Upon receipt of the missing documentation, the Environmental Planner resumes the review.
4. The Environmental Planner records the completed review in the project tracking system.

Before you Put a Bow on It

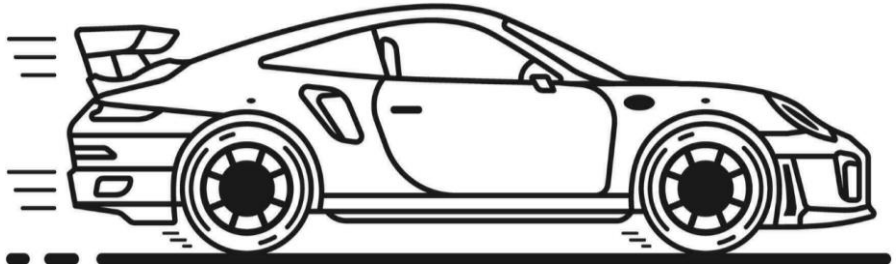
Review and Proofread–

- **Could someone unfamiliar with the procedure follow it?**
  - Does it provide enough information without relying on institutional knowledge?
- **Is every responsibility clear?**
  - Can the reader tell who is responsible for each action?
- **Is the language specific and measurable?**
  - Have vague terms been eliminated, *or defined*?
    - If using inexact language, is it defined elsewhere in the SOP?
- **Are the steps in the correct order?**
  - Does the procedure reflect the sequence of actions from start to finish?
- **Are decision points accounted for?**
  - Does the SOP explain what happens when the procedure doesn't follow the "normal" path?
- **Are all referenced forms, records, systems, and documents identified?**
  - Can the person performing the procedure actually find what they need?

SOP Test Drive

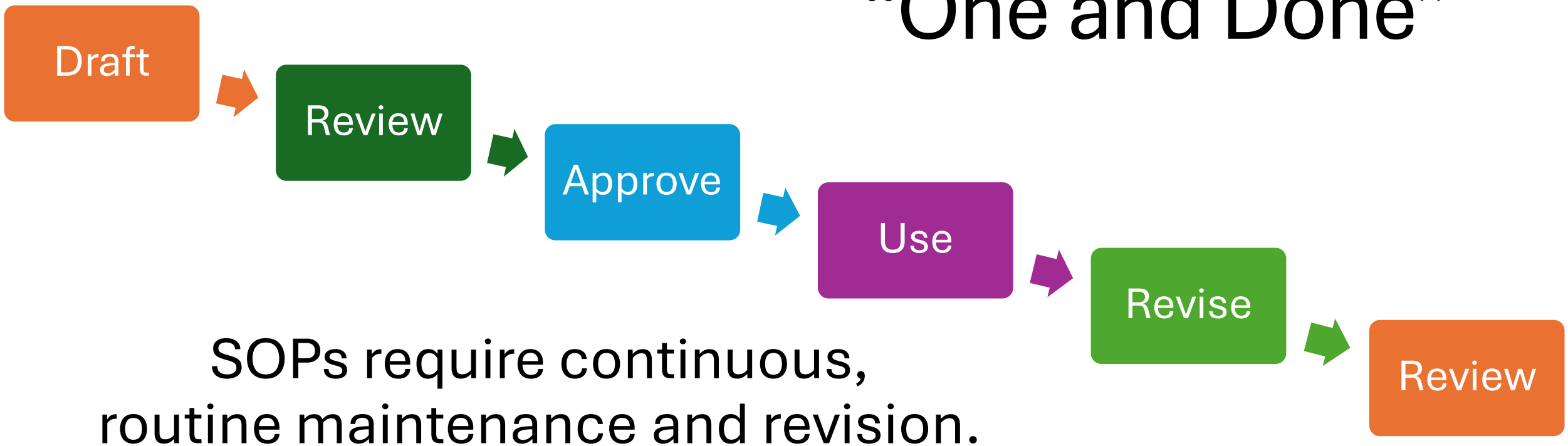
- Have someone who did not write the SOP walk through the procedure using only the document.
- **THEN ASK:**
  - Where did they hesitate?
  - What questions did they have?
  - What did they interpret differently than intended?
  - Did they refer to sources not cited in the SOP?

If they had to ask, consider whether the SOP needs to answer it…



Remember–

An SOP isn't "One and Done"



SOPs require continuous,
routine maintenance and revision.
Make sure to establish a
Maintenance Cycle for your document.

Wrapping Up…



We've gone over:

- The definition of "Standard Operating Procedures"
- The Holy Triangle (*The Isomorphic Triad of Governance*) and the Quality Management System
  - Detailed all levels of the QMS Pyramid to gain a better understanding of where and how SOPs function in the system.
- Indicated where in the I:drive to find the SOP template *(with and without guidance)*
- Set some ground rules/expectations for writing SOPs
- Dissected the Anatomy of SOPs
  - Including section-by-section "how-tos" with examples
- Discussed how to review, proofread, test, and maintain SOPs

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Conferences

Texas Regional Stormwater Conference:

- January 14, 2027, New Braunfels, TX

Sediments Conference

- January 25 – 28, 2027, Austin, TX

Water for Texas Conference

- January 25 – 27, 2027, Austin, TX

IECA Annual Conference and Expo

- February 21 – 27, 2027, Reno, NV

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Upcoming NCTCOG Meetings

Resource Conservation Council:

- November 10, 2026, Microsoft Teams, @10:00 AM

Texas Water Development Board Financial Assistance Workshop:

- November 16, 2026, NCTCOG Offices, @1:30 PM

Regional Codes Coordinating Committee Meeting:

- November 17, 2026, Microsoft Teams, @9:30 AM

Public Works Council Meeting:

- November 19, 2026, Microsoft Teams, @9:30 AM

Subscribe to our mailing list

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Upcoming NCTCOG Meetings

Trinity River COMMON VISION Flood Management Task Force Meeting:

- November 20, 2026, Microsoft Teams, @9:30 AM

NCTCOG Workshop: Sustainability Taboo:

- December 2, 2026, NCTCOG Offices, @10:00 AM

SPROW Meeting:

- December 9, 2026, Microsoft Teams, @10:00 AM

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Next Task Force Meeting



2027

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: NCTCOG Offices

North Central Texas Council of Governments

Roundtable Discussion

Now, It's YOUR Turn...

North Central Texas Council of Governments

CONTACT

Keeara Brown – C+PCTF, P2+IDDE, RSWMCC, Stormwater Monitoring
Environment & Development Planner III
North Central Texas Council of Governments
kbrown@nctcog.org
817.608.2352

Joy Douglas – PETF
Environment & Development Planner
North Central Texas Council of Governments
jdouglas@nctcog.org
817.422.5876

Katie Hunter – iSWM
Environment & Development Planner II
North Central Texas Council of Governments
khunter@nctcog.org
817.695.9102

Christi Upton
Water Resources Program Manager
North Central Texas Council of Governments
cupton@nctcog.org
817.704.2529

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nctcog.org/envir

Stormwater@nctcog.org

Meeting Attendance

- Follow the link below or scan the QR code to record your attendance:

https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=vH5eL7Aivk-TTKq9204psSVs8YpvM0JMvzoqOSXjaRRUQlkzOUtKRERUMkhQRkNOVlVCVExVT1hONi4u

