

Safety Approval for Research Proposals

Policy

Health and safety issues must be considered in the planning and design of research work. Adding on safety measures later in the project rarely ever works, can be highly expensive or can ultimately be so difficult to implement that the research work needs to be terminated. Such

serious developments need to be avoided so this formal procedure should be followed to ensure all potential hazards are considered and a risk assessment completed, if necessary, on application for funding.

Responsibilities

Department Heads must:

- ensure that the risk assessment of each proposal has been carried out and that due diligence has been carried out by the PI;
- in cases where the Head needs expert assistance to determine if the risk assessment is adequate and the conclusions are sound, contact the Safety Office in the first instance.

Principle Investigators must:

- undertake the risk assessment and ensure the procedure is followed to identify any and all risks likely to be introduced by the research project.
 - in cases of difficulty or doubt refer to the Safety Office for advice.
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Prepared by: Safety Office	Approved by: Safety, Health & Environment Committee	Issue Date: Oct. 2006
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Guidance:

In planning research work, the principal investigator (PI) must,

- (a) assess the existing facilities, equipment, ventilation, and space to ensure they are adequate and suitable for the proposed research work.
- (b) ensure that their staff, students and other users of the laboratory or facility will be adequately informed of the potential hazards and trained, instructed and supervised in managing the risks and taking action in the event of an emergency.

The formal terminology for such an exercise is a risk assessment.

At the risk assessment stage, the PI may conclude that the risks associated with research are the same or are similar to the risks currently being managed in the department. In such cases

adherence to the University or Departmental codes of practice or guidelines (which are in themselves generic risk assessments) should offer adequate safeguards. In such a case the Head can give Safety Approval.

Where hazards are not addressed by existing codes or guidelines, a more in-depth assessment specific to the research proposals must be carried out and passed to the Department Head who can review the proposals and pass to the Director of Safety for safety approval if appropriate. Once prepared (irrespective of the success of the proposal) the risk assessment will be a very useful document and as such should be incorporated into the departmental safety policy document for future reference.

To assist PIs and Department Heads in working through the Safety Approval procedure the following guidance is offered to ensure that the correct issues are addressed:

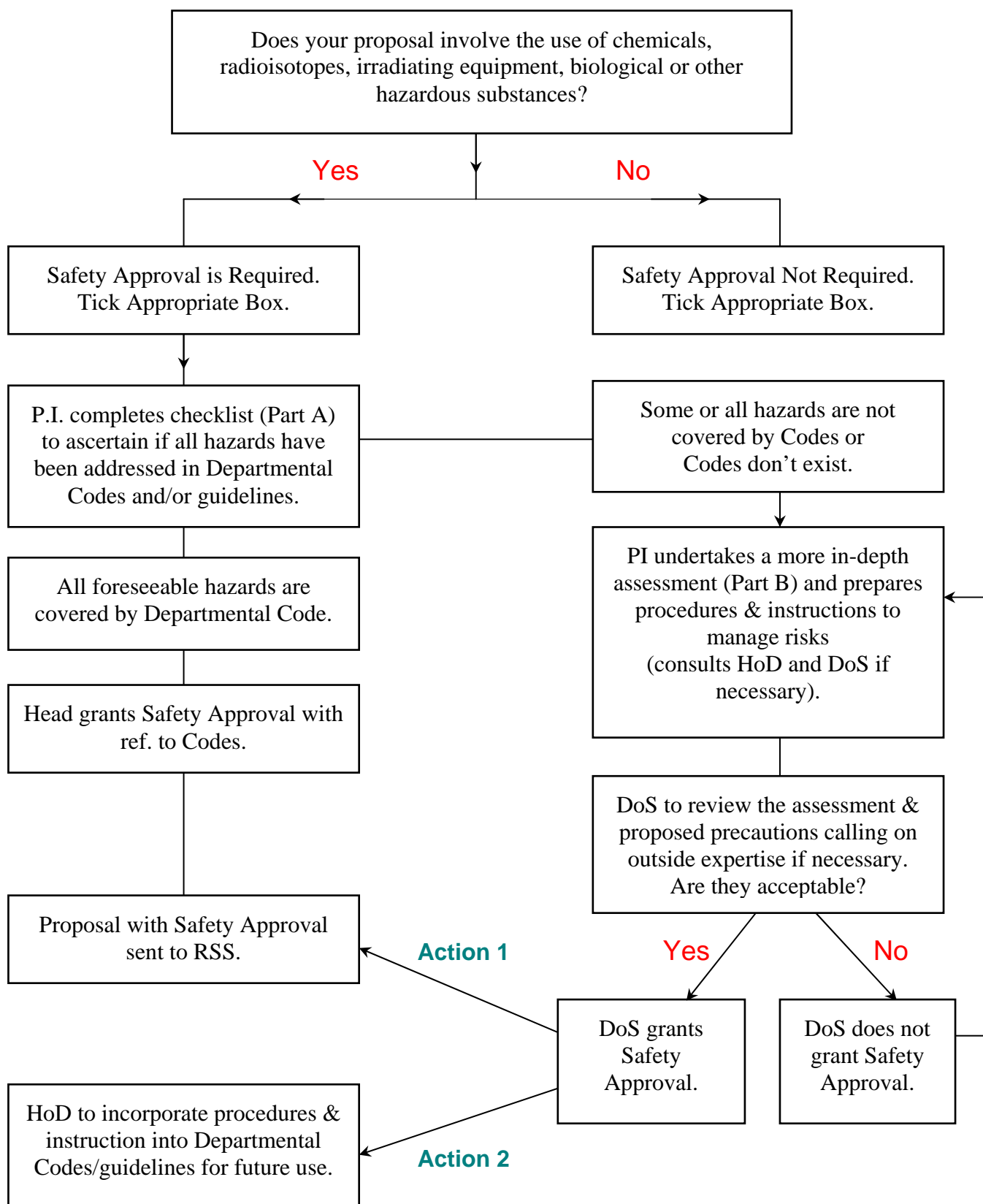
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Risk Assessment Procedure for Research Proposals

- STEP 1** Identify category of hazards introduced by research proposal e.g.
- biological (including genetic manipulation)
 - chemical (poisonous, flammable, corrosives, carcinogens, etc.)
 - radiation (ionising & non ionizing, especially lasers)
- If any of these hazards are included Safety Approval is necessary.
- STEP 2** Complete *relevant* checklist of Part A of the Safety Approval Form to confirm or otherwise that the hazards in the research proposals are already addressed in University or departmental codes.
- STEP 3** If the hazards have been previously addressed the proposal can be passed to the HoD for Safety Approval.
- If the hazards have not, a more in-depth assessment must be carried out.
- STEP 4** Perform assessment by completing Part B of the Safety Approval Form.
- If you require help and assistance the Director of Safety will be happy to assist.
- STEP 5** On completion of risk assessment, pass through the Head to Director of Safety for Approval. DoS may wish to discuss with PI details before approval granted.

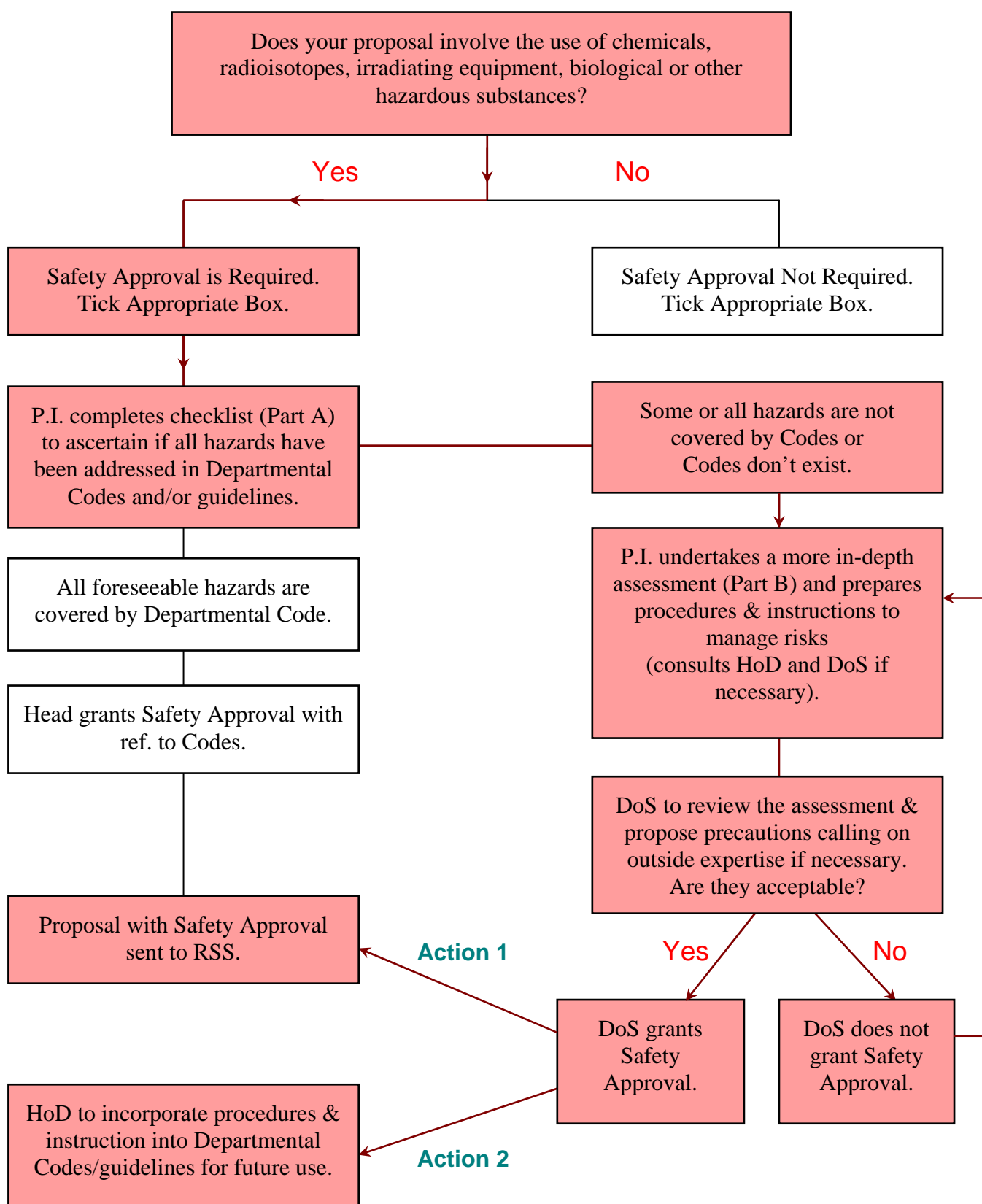
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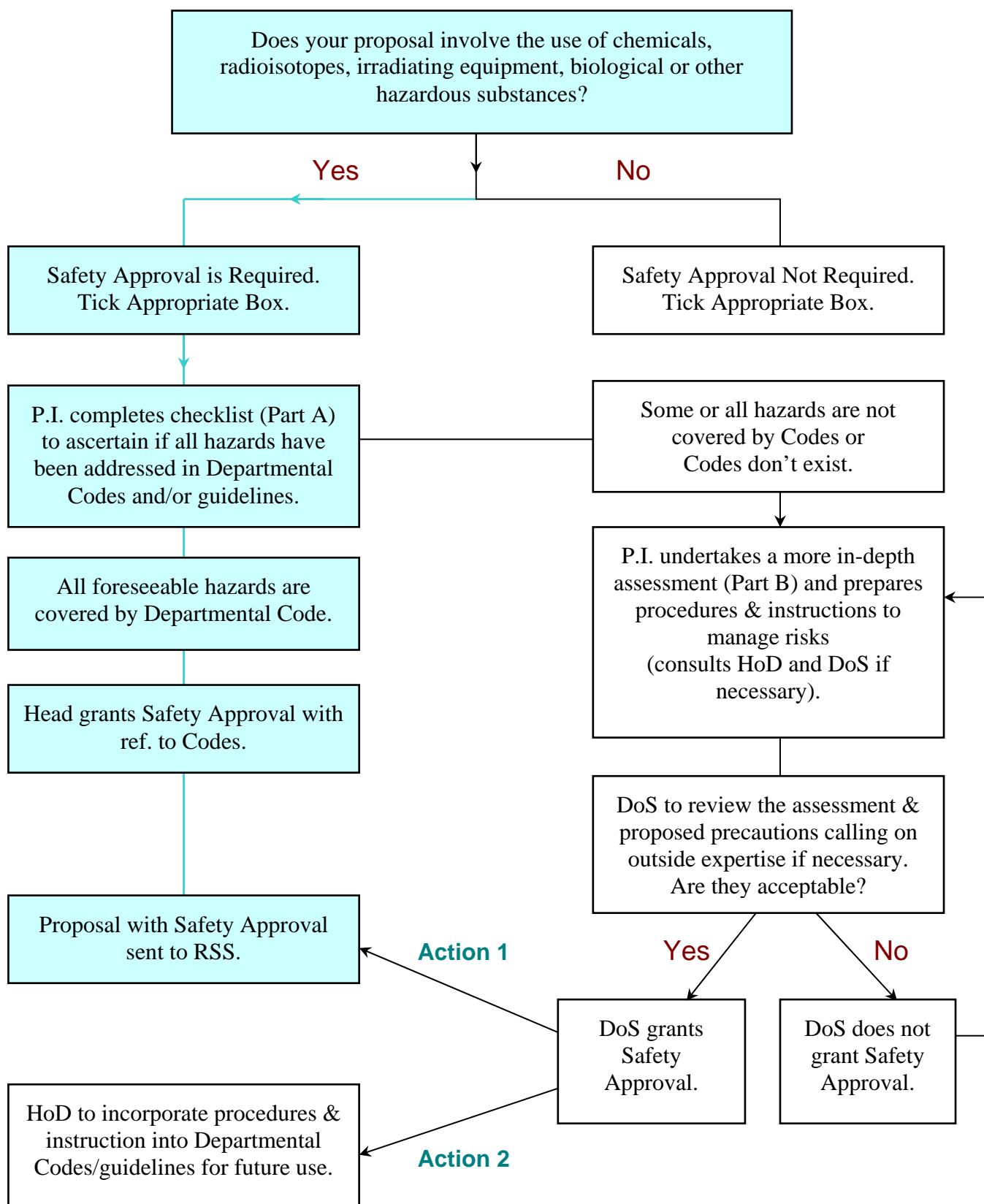
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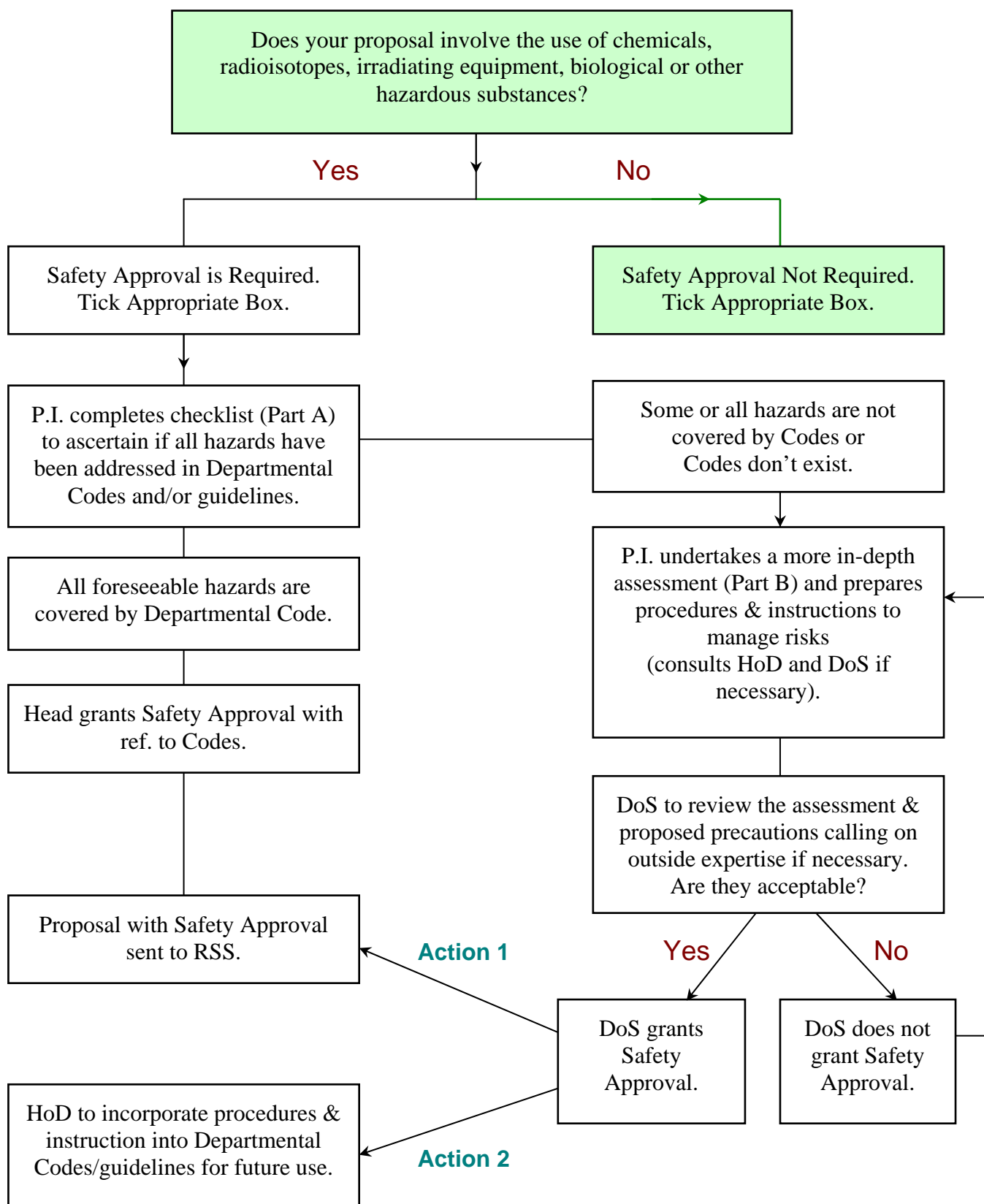
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