



OH&S management systems benchmarking process

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The MLA OH&S benchmarking package

Introduction

The OH&S benchmarking package was developed to provide you with a structured approach and standardised means to assessing your own OH&S standing.

It will also aid you to manage OH&S in your company successfully. Finally, the package helps MLA as an organisation to understand how well its members are performing in terms of health and safety. If we understand the strengths and weaknesses of our members, we can develop and implement any additional assistance measures to support you.

The ultimate goal for the application of the new tool is to make sure that no employees in the meat and livestock industry get hurt at work and they all go home healthy.

The tool consists of three items – the OH&S benchmarking guide, the element guidelines and the OH&S management system self-assessment tool

OH&S benchmarking guide

The OH&S benchmarking guide is the introduction to the OH&S management systems benchmarking process.

First, it provides you with an overview of the phases of the safety journey, and the roles you and your team need to play in it. Then, it makes a case for why good safety is also good for your company's bottom line. This is followed by a description of the actual benchmarking process as it will apply to your organisation. Finally, it challenges some commonly held misunderstandings about the management of health and safety.

Element guidelines

The element guidelines complement the benchmarking guide and the self-assessment tool by providing a simple standard for five key elements of the OH&S management system. Meeting the standard will put you among industry leaders in OH&S.

Each element guideline has two parts – a step-by-step guide to take a company from its existing policies and procedures to best practice, and case studies to give you a real-life perspective on how to approach these key elements.

OH&S management system self-assessment tool

This is the heart of the MLA OH&S benchmarking package. Its structure mirrors the elements of an OH&S management system, and it is a tool for you to evaluate your company's OH&S performance. There are three levels of achievement – bronze, silver, and gold. Ultimately, it should give you an indication of the progress of your organisation towards the development of a comprehensive and robust OH&S management system.

The tool also contains examples of evidence for many of the items, to help you to understand what your organisation is required to have in place to claim one of the three levels.

Finally, the self-assessment tool establishes references to the Australian Meat Industry OH&S Reference Guide for your convenience.

Bringing your OH&S management system to life

Travelling the safety journey

Safety in the workplace is a journey. The beginning of the journey can be likened to the bad old days, when society tolerated people being hurt at work and individuals had to look after themselves. The end state is a workplace free of incidents and injuries.

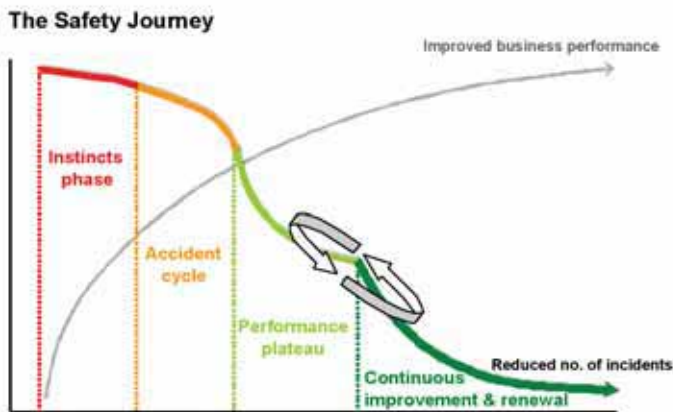


Figure 1: The safety journey

Organisations move through several phases along the safety journey as they progress towards achieving zero injuries, incidents and occupational illnesses in the workplace.

Understanding exactly where a company sits on its safety journey is fundamental. Safety performance and safety culture are directly related to safety effort, the behaviours of the people, the level of ownership and passion for safety at the top of the organisation, the sophistication of the safety management system and how well the system has been embedded in the organisation.

Four phases of the journey

1. Instincts

There is an over-reliance on luck and the common sense of individuals. There is little in the way of formalised safety systems.

2. Accident cycle

Safety activity is reactive and there is an acceptance that incidents and injuries just happen. Near misses are not acted upon and incident investigations are generally informal.

3. Performance plateau

Focus is primarily on compliance with legislation. The organisation struggles to improve its performance even with mature systems in place. Superficial incident investigations focus upon fault finding and allocation of blame. The safety manager is the owner of safety with OH&S committees often seen as leading safety initiatives. The organisation's focus is on physical workplace conditions rather than behaviours.

4. Continuous improvement

The focus is on initiatives that prevent injury. If incidents occur they are investigated and viewed as unacceptable, and an opportunity to learn and improve. A fully integrated and implemented SMS is in place.

There is visible, felt leadership and managers fully engage employees in safety activities. The organisation focuses on the behaviours of people as a key indicator of safety success.

These phases of the safety journey can also be closely aligned to the three ways that organisations treat safety-related information; pathological, bureaucratic and generative, as described in Table 2, Part 1.2 of the *MLA OH&S Reference Guide*.

The role you play along the journey

CEO/MD

As the head of the organisation, the CEO needs to:

- Lead and promote safety excellence as a core value
- Ensure safety issues are considered in the development of organisational strategies
- Participate in safety forums and activities as required
- Behave in a manner which is consistent with safety principles, regulations and standards
- Take primary responsibility for the implementation of safe work practices in accordance with legislation
- Monitor safety performance and ensure reports are submitted in accordance with organisational requirements
- Monitor currency of knowledge of OH&S legislation and responsibilities

Line manager

Line managers own safety and play a very important role in safety, influencing the overall success of any safety improvement activity. They are viewed by employees as the direct face of the organisation and therefore should reinforce the status of safety on a daily basis. They should:

- Lead and promote safety excellence
- Take responsibility for the implementation of safe work practices
- Ensure employees receive induction and training so that they have the necessary skills and licences to safely perform work
- Consult with the safety group on the implementation of new work practices and technology
- Take corrective action as required in order to minimise risk exposure
- Participate in audits and ensure remedial actions are taken as appropriate
- Monitor the completion of risk assessment processes to ensure that employees are aware of potential risks and that actions are taken to minimise exposure

Safety manager

It is the safety professional's role to take ownership for providing professional and technical support to the organisation. He or she plays a critical role as the custodian of the OH&S management system and should:

- Provide significant input into determining the strategic direction the journey should take
- Put in place the processes required to ensure the OH&S management system is robust and well-maintained
- Take responsibility for the maintenance of people engagement processes
- Ensure appropriate induction and training is available
- Act as an internal coach/counsellor to line managers
- Help bring focus to key elements, specifically in areas such as risk management and incident investigation
- Monitor and report on indicators and trends

Employee

The employee's key role in the journey is to take responsibility for their own health and safety and the health and safety of their peers. They should also ensure that they:

- Do not accept unsafe behaviour
- Contribute to the core value of safety excellence
- Are in a fit state to safely perform their role
- Follow procedures (don't take shortcuts)
- Seek training and actively participate in training as required to perform work safely
- Report hazards and participate in hazard and risk assessments
- Take action to ensure hazards are addressed
- Communicate safety issues in a timely manner
- Use and maintain equipment safely
- Wear and maintain PPE
- Maintain housekeeping
- Participate in incident investigations
- Participate in rehabilitation and return to work on suitable duties

Good safety is good business

Poor safety standards invariably lead to injuries and damage. While employers generally are insured for any direct associated losses, the cost of premiums particularly for workers compensation, increase significantly with increasing injury numbers and claims.

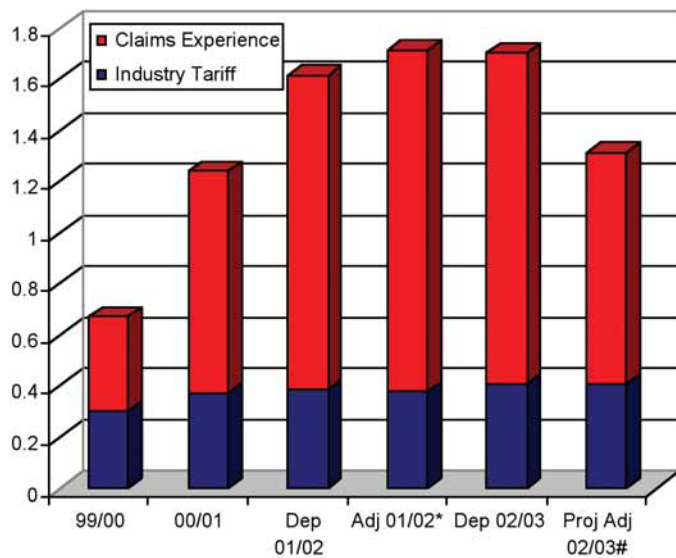


Figure 2: Example of workers compensation costs from the manufacturing industry, sourced from QBE Insurance.

There are also indirect costs of incidents, such as downtime, casual labour retraining, low morale, overtime, effects on corporate reputation. These are outlined further in Part 1.2 of the *MLA OH&S Reference Guide, Safety culture in the meat industry*.

The graph indicates how workers compensation premiums can be affected by a variable focus on OH&S. The largest component of the premium is the claims experience, which means it is critical that organisations focus on two areas:

- the prevention of injuries in the first instance, but also
- if injuries occur they must be effectively managed.

The robust management and strong leadership of OH&S can provide direct and indirect cost savings. Cost savings that directly impact the bottom line are achieved by working to reduce workers compensation premiums and minimise spending on medical bills, compensation and lawyers' fees. However, the indirect benefits of good safety performance are far greater and come in the form of organisational effectiveness, motivation and initiative.



The MLA OHSMS benchmarking process

The MLA OHSMS benchmarking process has been developed with reference to a number of existing independent audit tools, including those designed by Victorian WorkCover Authority and the Lloyd-Jones Meakin Group. The approach is also consistent with the general requirements of health and safety legislation and with 'AS/NZS 4801:2001, Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems – Specification with Guidance for Use'.

Using the self-assessment checklists provided will enable an organisation to:

- Measure the performance of current OH&S programs
- Implement a cycle of continual improvement
- Compare its OH&S system to a structured benchmark
- Gain recognition for the standards achieved by its management of OH&S

Participation in this process and achievement of each level of the benchmark provides you with confirmation that OH&S management systems and processes are in place and are effectively mitigating risks in the workplace. This can be valuable when renegotiating insurance premiums.

Three levels of benchmarking

The MLA OHSMS benchmarking process has three levels of achievement; bronze, silver and gold. The levels are additive; to achieve gold, there must first be full conformance with the silver level requirements.

Evidence of conformance may take several forms, but in all cases must be observable and verifiable. Evidence may include training records, incident investigation forms, hazard reports or meeting minutes. Some examples of evidence are listed in the supporting benchmark checklists.

Conducting the review

The self-assessment can be conducted individually. However, it is recommended that a small team is formed for the review that includes a manager, an

OH&S professional and an employee or OH&S representative.

This approach provides a cross-section of opinions and experience and will lead to a more accurate assessment of the company's status.

Achieving bronze level

Bronze level indicates that the organisation has critical elements of an OH&S management system in place and meets basic requirements for compliance with OH&S legislation. However, as legislative requirements change due to the operations of companies and across jurisdictions, this cannot be guaranteed.

Achieving silver level

Silver level indicates that the organisation has a comprehensive, robust OH&S management system that goes beyond basic OH&S legislative requirements. The systems and processes in place are well-implemented and used by employees to significantly reduce incidents and injuries.

Achieving gold level

Gold level indicates that the organisation has an OH&S management system that meets best practice levels and engages its people in safety. Organisations that have achieved gold status have incorporated a behavioural approach to safety that moves beyond a compliance-focus. Employees are actively involved in driving safety day-to-day and support each other in creating a safe workplace.

Using the MLA OH&S Reference Guide as support

The self-assessment checklists allow you to measure where your organisation is on the safety journey and the *MLA OH&S Reference Guide* provides useful information and tools that will help you to better manage the major hazards common to the meat industry. The contents of the guide should be reviewed and amended to fit the needs of your organisation.

The self-assessment checklists reference the sections of the guide that are relevant to each element.

Shatter the myths

The States have introduced legislation to place companies under pressure to provide a safe workplace. As the legislative environment is becoming harsher, companies are bolstering their occupational health and safety strategies.

One of the most common reactions to the tightening legislative environment has been for companies to tighten their internal controls. Employers are working hard to be able to prove to regulators, and if necessary, to courts, that they have OH&S management systems in place; employees and contractors are inducted, procedures are documented and readily available for employees, training courses have been held and attended, regular audits held, and so on.

However, there is also confusion in the workplace about safety in the workplace and what is required. Outlined below are some of the common misconceptions that exist about OH&S management systems, safety responsibilities and achieving good safety performance.

'I have an OHSMS manual, therefore I have a robust system and I am protected'

No

The manual is a support tool to help you, it provides direction to your system but it is not the system.

A robust OH&S management system comprises of standards, policies and procedures that take a risk management approach to safety. The system is regularly reviewed and upgraded to reflect the safe ways in which work is conducted. Importantly, employees and contractors are involved in health and safety activities.

'I have had an OH&S consultant on-site so now the work is done'

No

An OH&S consultant is a good source of information and can facilitate the set up of your OH&S systems. They can provide tools and training in how to make the system work. However, it is up to the managers and employees on your site to use and maintain the system to ensure it is adequate.

'I have achieved a PDS discount so I have everything covered'

No

Best practise safety performance is all about continual improvement. Having achieved a PDS discount does not mean there is nothing further to do.

'The OH&S manager is solely responsible for OH&S on-site'

No

Everyone on-site is responsible for safety and should be aware of, and involved in, safety activities. The senior and line managers are accountable for safety, and under legislation may be penalised for unsafe acts and/or incidents.

'We talk about safety and get things done; there is no need to write it all down.'

No

From a legal perspective, written documents are evidence of the existence of safety processes and systems. Also, recording minutes of safety meetings and documenting safe work procedures is a good way to track OH&S information and ensure that actions are taken.

'We do not have any unsafe conditions so we cannot hurt people.'

No

Creating a work environment without unsafe conditions is a big step towards reducing the number of incidents and injuries. However, it will not eliminate incidents.

Studies conducted by organisations such as DuPont have demonstrated that up to 96 percent of incidents are the result of at-risk behaviours. People are what keep people safe. Therefore, organisations have to focus on how workers are going about their work and ensure that they are not taking risks.

Element guidelines

OH&S policy development

An OH&S policy is an important tool for communicating your organisation’s commitment to the safety of employees and others in the workplace. The policy in itself does not ensure safety, however it is the ‘umbrella’ document that provides direction and guidance to all in the workplace regarding how health and safety standards will be established and maintained.

Listed below are the steps that should be followed to develop and implement an effective OH&S policy.

Step 1	Identify those people who have key responsibilities for OH&S in the workplace. This should be based upon a review of OH&S legislation, good industry safety practices and the size and scope of your operations.
Step 2	Senior management should develop a draft OH&S policy document.
Step 3	Consult with the OH&S committee and/or OH&S representative(s) to finalise the policy.
Step 4	Senior manager should date and sign the policy.
Step 5	Launch the policy via formal communication sessions to all employees. Also display copies in prominent locations.
Step 6	Include review of the policy in employee and contractor induction sessions.
Step 7	Make policy accessible for any relevant third parties.
Step 8	Senior management, in consultation with employees, should review the policy at least every two years. The review should ensure that the policy’s content continues to be relevant to the goals of the organisation, and – as a minimum – provides OH&S legislative compliance.

Case study

Meat & Greet Pty Ltd, a company that manufactures and home delivers smallgoods, had recently encountered several injuries within its factory, one of which was serious and required surgery to an employee for reconstruction of a fractured leg.

Bill Butcher, the owner and managing director, realised that safety had, to a large extent, been left to chance since the company was established five years earlier. It had some basic safety elements in place, such as an OH&S committee, however the effectiveness of these was questionable. The company's commitment to safety had also not been articulated.

Bill decided that management needed to go back to basics, and start by developing and communicating an OH&S policy that would provide a framework for the company's safety endeavours and simply but succinctly show employees, contractors, and regulators that the company was committed to establishing an effective system to manage safety.

To ensure that employees were consulted appropriately, Bill called a meeting of the OH&S committee to commence drafting a policy. Certain members of the committee were given responsibility for research and review to ensure that the policy met legislative and company requirements.

The policy was communicated to all employees through 'toolbox' sessions that were conducted by supervisors and OH&S committee representatives. A copy of the policy was also put up on the whiteboard in the factory's lunch room. Furthermore, copies of the new policy were sent out to Meat & Greet's key contractors as the policy made a clear statement about their safety as well.

Also, the company's person in charge of HR matters made herself a note to explain, and distribute a copy of the policy whenever she was running an induction session for new employees and contractors.

Last but not least, Bill scheduled in his own diary to review the policy in a year's time.

Effective OH&S planning

An OH&S plan helps your organisation set the direction for health and safety. It is important to establish specific objectives that will enable the organisation to achieve the intentions set out in their health and safety policy.

Listed below are the steps that should be followed to create an effective OH&S policy.

Step 1	Senior managers, with guidance from safety managers and/or OH&S professionals, and in collaboration with OH&S committee, should establish and agree upon objectives for the organisation, in line with the OH&S policy and legislative requirements. These objectives should be documented.
Step 2	For each objective, clear actions should be developed and assigned to people responsible for their implementation.
Step 3	In consultation with employees, set deadlines and measurable targets (eg KPIs) for each objective as these will help to track progress and ensure the plan is implemented.
Step 4	The risk management methodology should be included by documenting procedures for hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control.
Step 5	Communicate plan to all employees.
Step 6	Monitor progress towards achieving objectives by regularly reviewing plan and actions closed out and, if necessary, document and take corrective actions.
Step 7	In consultation with employees, update plan on an annual basis.
Step 8	Senior management should lead the process and keep the momentum.

Case study

Cattle and Chicken Pty Ltd, a family-run small producer of organic meat, was proud to have developed its own OH&S policy. The policy was short and simple and the company was happy with it as it had tailored it to its own needs.

It was only when someone almost got injured, that Jack T Bone, the company's founder and managing director, realised that he and his staff had not taken the next steps to actually 'walk the talk' and breathe life into the OH&S policy. Jack decided that it was time to change this.

On the next day, he called upon his company's OH&S representative and two of the operational staff (who had been with the company since its beginning). They all sat down to review the OH&S policy they had drawn up months ago. As all the policy's points were still valid and there was no need to change them, Jack used them as a basis for discussing with the other guys exactly what it was – in terms of OH&S – that they actually wanted to achieve. Since the OH&S policy was concise, and the guys knew well all the everyday key safety concerns, it was not that difficult to come up with a list of items.

On a piece of paper, Jack drew a simple table and then noted all the points they had come up with as

'objectives' in the left-hand column of the table. He then named the remaining columns 'action', 'when', 'who', and 'KPI'. In these columns they then noted concrete activities required to achieve the objectives and assigned to each activity deadlines and people responsible for taking the respective action. Where possible, they also added measurable targets, such as 'number of staff trained' or 'number of job safety analyses performed'. In doing all of this, Jack made sure they kept everything simple and achievable.

It took Jack and his mates only two hours to agree on everything and write it down. He then passed his scribbled notes to his wife, Joan, who was taking care of the company's papers, to transcribe them neatly, add the heading 'OH&S plan', and then have the document copied and distributed to each staff member. Joan also made sure that a copy of the plan was put on display in the main tool shed, where staff would usually have their breaks and also talk about anything that needed to be done.

Finally, Joan made herself a note in the diary to prompt Jack in exactly three months' time to review whether they were all progressing towards their objectives and, if necessary, to decide – together with staff – on any corrective actions.

Managing OH&S risk

Proper OH&S risk management helps your organisation to systematically reduce its exposure to risk by using a structured approach to hazard identification, risk assessment, and determination of controls. Key to effective and sustainable risk management is the ongoing review, assessment, and update of steps taken in the process.

Listed below are the steps that should be followed to successfully manage OH&S risk.

Step 1	Communicate to all employees the importance of hazard reporting and make sure all hazards are reported.
Step 2	In consultation with employees, develop procedures for systematic hazard reporting and capturing.
Step 3	Systematically identify and record all hazards, preferably in a dedicated hazard register.
Step 4	For each hazard identified, assess the corresponding risk(s), taking into consideration the underlying likelihood and consequences. Document the risk assessment.
Step 5	Prioritise the risks. Determine and implement effective control measures, preferably following the hierarchy of controls from top to bottom. Document the control measures.
Step 6	Train all personnel in risk management, eg by showing how to perform a job safety analysis or how to draw up a safe operating procedure.
Step 7	Together with employees, review risk assessments at least annually and/or when significant workplace changes occur (eg introduction of new plant/equipment). For the latter, try to implement a structured change management process.
Step 8	Senior management should regularly review the effectiveness of the risk management process.

Case study

Three Little Pigs Pty Ltd, a medium-sized pork meat producer, had developed its own OH&S policy and had soon followed it up with an OH&S plan, neatly linking the policy's general statements to concrete objectives in the plan.

One of the key objectives of the plan was to reduce the company's exposure to health and safety risks. This was to be handled by implementing a structured and systematic risk management process. Mr Chop, a member of the company's management, had been assigned the responsibility for kick-starting all related work.

First, Mr Chop announced his new task to everybody in the company. Then, he invited the OH&S committee chair, along with another committee member and one operational employee, to jointly develop a simple process to report and record hazards. Among others, they agreed to do this by systematically working their way through all work areas of the two production sites the company had.

The next day, Mr Chop and his team went to Site 2 and – following the natural work process flow – talked to every employee there, going through with them every single step of their job. In doing so, they all tried to identify all possible hazards. Next, they

discussed the risk(s) for each hazard identified, taking into consideration the related likelihood and consequences. Based on that, the team prioritised the risks and then brainstormed possible risk control measures. Of those measures, they then determined the most effective ones, following the hierarchy of controls from top to bottom.

The OH&S committee chair took detailed notes of everything they were observing and discussing throughout the day.

After the team returned to the company's main office, they realised how time-intensive the hazard identification had been to this point and that much more time would be needed to complete it all. Therefore, Mr Chop and his team scheduled one day for each of the following seven weeks to finish everything off.

The next step was to revisit the notes they had taken and use them as a basis for starting up a hazard register. In it, they recorded – one by one – all hazards observed, the corresponding risk(s) and the control measures identified. Mr Chop then monitored the timely implementation of the agreed control measures.

Measurement and monitoring

Having a system in place to measure and monitor OH&S performance helps your organisation to understand its current OH&S standing, to determine how well it has been managing OH&S, and to uncover any shortcomings in order to then be able to chart the path forward.

Listed below are the steps to thoroughly measure and examine OH&S performance.

Step 1	In consultation with employees, set health and safety performance lag indicators, such as fatalities, lost time injuries (LTIs), medical treatment cases (MTC), and first aid cases (FAIC).
Step 2	Make sure that the indicators are consistent with your organisation's OH&S objectives and targets.
Step 3	Systematically, consistently, and regularly keep track of all indicators by timely capturing all recordable cases/incidents.
Step 4	Together with employees, regularly review and analyse development of indicators over time, determining trends and underlying causes.
Step 5	If required, determine, record, and take action to improve performance.
Step 6	Repeat steps 1 to 5 for current indicators, such as number of training sessions held, job safety analyses performed, and safe operating procedures drawn up.
Step 7	Repeat steps 1 to 5 for lead indicators, such as near hits/misses.
Step 8	Senior management should proactively participate in the process of measurement, monitoring, and evaluation.

Case study

Capricorn Pty Ltd, a newly established goat meat producer, has had an OH&S policy from the very beginning of its operations and it has also started to gradually work its way through the actions necessary to achieve the objectives of its OH&S plan.

While looking into some of the items of the OH&S plan, Helen Horn, the company's newly hired HR manager, who was also doubling as OH&S advisor, noted that apparently nobody had yet thought of actually measuring Capricorn's OH&S performance and how to do this.

Helen felt that if the company was serious about its OH&S efforts, it had to consistently and regularly measure its standing. Capricorn needed these measures to understand whether all the activities it had undertaken to achieve its OH&S goals actually had resulted in improvements. Also, this would allow Capricorn to roughly compare itself with its competitors in terms of safety performance.

For a start, Helen did not want to overcomplicate things. So, she decided to keep it simple and begin with only a few standard performance indicators.

She knew it was more effective to track a few indicators than try to track too many and end up with a 'measurement madness'.

Helen then organised a meeting with the OH&S representative and some of the operational staff, and together they agreed on a set of five basic OH&S performance indicators. They paid attention that they had at least one indicator for each of the three indicator categories – lag, current, and lead. They also made sure that the indicators they chose were in line with the objectives from Capricorn's OH&S plan.

Next, the team assigned responsibility for keeping track of each indicator to the person in charge of implementing the activities being measured. This way, the burden of indicator monitoring was shared, and, at the same time, clear responsibilities were established.

Finally, Helen and her team agreed to meet quarterly to see how the indicators developed over time, identify trends and causes, and – if necessary – decide upon alternative actions to improve performance.

OH&S management system review, evaluation and improvement

Reviewing and evaluating the OH&S management system helps the top management of your organisation to improve the system's functionality, effectiveness, and efficiency. To improve safety performance and sustain good results, it is vital to perform system reviews and evaluations on a regular basis and promptly implement any corrective action required.

Listed below are features for a robust review and evaluation process for the OH&S management system.

Step 1	In consultation with employees, develop an OH&S audit and inspections program and an OH&S management system review procedure. Document all.
Step 2	Carry out audits and inspections in line with the program, involving employees. Conduct OH&S management system reviews on an annual basis. Give consideration to audit results and changing circumstances.
Step 3	Document the audits and inspections and retain related documents. As a result of the OH&S management system reviews, identify improvement opportunities and recommend appropriate action.
Step 4	Communicate audit results to all employees. Document the OH&S management system reviews and retain records.
Step 5	Communicate outcomes from the OH&S management system reviews to all employees and articulate your commitment to continuous improvement.
Step 6	Act upon audit and inspection findings and rectify identified shortcomings. Implement recommendations from the OH&S management system review.
Step 7	In consultation with employees, feed back results from the OH&S management system reviews into strategic OH&S planning.
Step 8	Senior managers should proactively participate in the entire process.

Case study

Silent Lamb Pty Ltd, a large-scale producer of lamb meat, had fully revamped its approach to OH&S three years ago. Dolly Doer, the new CEO, had made health and safety core values of the company and turned them into business drivers. From previous experience, she knew OH&S best practice also positively affected the bottom line.

Since Silent Lamb had embarked on its new OH&S journey, numerous initiatives had been started. Dolly felt it was now time to take a step back and critically review and evaluate the outcomes of the new approach.

She called a meeting with the company's OH&S manager, the site managers, and the OH&S committee. She shared her idea of setting up an OH&S audit and inspections program and an OH&S management system review procedure and suggested a timeframe.

The team then developed the program and procedure. It aligned them with the company's OH&S plan objectives and the safety management system's key elements. Time was taken to work on these documents as every OH&S item had to be covered. They developed questions to find out how each item was handled and managed. The questions were all systematically documented,

producing one of the major outcomes of the preparatory work – an extensive questionnaire, which was to be used as an audit tool.

Next, an audit schedule was developed and most employees were given responsibility for a small chunk of the overall work to be performed. Auditing was then performed in small mixed teams, always involving at least one person from outside the area of operation to ensure presence of a 'pair of fresh eyes'. People were asked to take meticulous notes for every item audited and to collect supporting evidence. These records were then summarised and collated.

Then, the team, which had prepared the audit, met again and used the audit results as a basis for a thorough and structured analysis and evaluation of the entire OH&S management system. Findings showed that significant progress had been made, but a few crucial shortcomings were also revealed. The team took this as an opportunity to focus on relevant improvement measures, schedule corrective actions and determine responsibilities, and readjust the overall OH&S strategy and approach.

To complete the process, the team communicated via the company safety newsletter the key audit and review results as well as the adjusted safety strategy to all employees.

OH&S management system self-assessment tool

This diagnostic tool will provide an indication of the progress of your organisation toward the development of a comprehensive and robust OH&S management system.

Levels are additive, ie to achieve gold level, there must first be full conformance with silver level.

Each check mark must be supported by evidence. Evidence may take several forms, but in all cases must be observable and verifiable. It may include training records, incident investigation forms, hazard reports,

etc. Some examples of evidence are listed opposite each element, but are not complete.

Sections of the *MLA OH&S Reference Guide* that are relevant to each element are listed.




The self-assessment can be conducted individually, however, a small-team approach which includes employee OH&S representatives is recommended. It provides a cross-section of opinions and experience which will provide the most accurate assessment of your company's status.




Company:




Date:




Person(s) conducting assessment:




Self assessment signed off:




ELEMENT	 BRONZE	 SILVER	 GOLD	EVIDENCE EXAMPLES	OH&S REFERENCE GUIDE
1. Management commitment and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S policy exists, has been signed by GM/CEO <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S policy displayed in workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Policy outlines commitment to OH&S <input type="checkbox"/> Policy sets clear goals and objectives for OH&S <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S policy has been formally communicated to all employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Policy is regularly reviewed and updated <input type="checkbox"/> Position descriptions include OH&S responsibilities for managers and employees <input type="checkbox"/> Policy is discussed during inductions and meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employees and managers can demonstrate knowledge of the policy <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S is included within performance management system <input type="checkbox"/> A consultation statement or charter has been developed <input type="checkbox"/> Policy is available for suppliers, contractors, industry regulators, visitors and customers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A signed copy of the policy document that clearly states OH&S objectives and the organisation's commitment to OH&S • Policy displayed in prominent locations, eg in company office or on OH&S notice board in lunchroom • Policy contained in the annual report (if the business is required to publish such) • Policy included in induction material (if such exists) • An electronic copy of the policy on the web page (if the business maintains its own web page) • Minutes of management meetings reflecting review of policy 	Part 2.1, p25-30
2. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a OH&S action plan in place <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan includes risk management <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan ensures legislative obligations are met <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are advised of changes in legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan is reviewed and upgraded annually <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan is reviewed by the safety committee <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan includes information listed in Figure 6: MISHCIF action plan* <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan sets LTIFR targets for OH&S performance <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan has been communicated to all employees <input type="checkbox"/> There are qualified, trained personnel to implement the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Senior managers review and develop strategic OH&S plan <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are involved in developing and reviewing OH&S plan <input type="checkbox"/> Senior managers can demonstrate knowledge of the OH&S plan <input type="checkbox"/> The plan includes measurable objectives <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S plan sets clear leading and lagging performance indicators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A documented health and safety plan which includes objectives and the means by which those objectives will be achieved through the allocation of resources, completion dates, and responsibilities • Minutes of meetings where the organisation's current work practices are reviewed against the latest industry or legislative requirements • Minutes of meetings which record discussion of health and safety objectives and targets • Minutes of meetings that record discussion about progress towards health and safety targets and lists corrective actions • Reports of findings of reviews 	Part 2.1, p31, 36 *Part 2.1, p39




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3. Implementation					
3.1 Training and induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a procedure for the identification of training needs <input type="checkbox"/> All employees receive an OH&S induction <input type="checkbox"/> Employees receive appropriate training to be able to work safely <input type="checkbox"/> Training is delivered by persons with appropriate knowledge, skills and experience <input type="checkbox"/> Training and induction records are kept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A formal induction package is used (see Appendix 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors and managers have received fundamental OH&S training <input type="checkbox"/> Employee competence is assessed and adequate training provided prior to commencing work <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are consulted about training needs <input type="checkbox"/> A training plan is available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A comprehensive training needs analysis has been conducted and training matrix developed <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisors and managers have received OH&S leadership training <input type="checkbox"/> Refresher inductions and training are provided regularly to all personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Accredited training is provided to employees <input type="checkbox"/> Training programs are reviewed with employees to ensure they are relevant and achieve outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Tasks are allocated according to capability and level of training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job descriptions detailing skills/competencies required • Competencies for specific tasks determined and documented • Documentation that outlines the content of the induction training • Competency assessments • Induction records for all employees, including managers • Training needs analysis • Job specific training records for all employees • Details of skills and competencies of those providing training is on record • Results of assessment of employees for specific tasks • Training attendance records for managers and supervisors in accordance with identified needs • Training plan which contains time frames for refresher training as appropriate 	Part 2.2 Appendices 1-2




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3.2 Risk management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard reporting and recording procedures are established <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and risks are reported <input type="checkbox"/> A hazard register/ risk register is available and current <input type="checkbox"/> The likelihood and consequence of risks are assessed <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and risks are controlled <input type="checkbox"/> The hazard identification, assessment and control process is undertaken by competent personnel <input type="checkbox"/> All identified hazards, risk assessments and risk control plans are documented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S representatives are involved in risk management <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards are controlled according to the hierarchy of control <input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessments are reviewed annually and/or when there is a significant change in the workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Areas where access controls are required are identified and controlled <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S requirements are identified, evaluated and incorporated into purchasing specifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All personnel are involved and trained in hazard identification, assessment and control <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive quantitative risk assessments are conducted for high level risks <input type="checkbox"/> Risks are scored and prioritised and appropriate controls put in place <input type="checkbox"/> The effectiveness of hazard management is regularly reviewed <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are involved in reviewing risks and controls to ensure they are effective <input type="checkbox"/> There is a change management process in place that is used by employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project reports which describe the implementation of risk controls • Written safe operating procedures for all potentially hazardous operations • Minutes of meetings that record discussion of hazards, risk assessments or proposed controls • Hazard register • Job safety analyses • Risk assessments and risk control plans • Risk assessments that record or reference the current state of knowledge about the hazard and its potential effects • A risk control plan based on the determined level of risk of each hazard • Minutes of meetings that record discussion about priorities • Change management procedure which requires health and safety implications to be identified and strategies to be prepared 	<p>Part 3 Hazard register – App 4</p> <p>Risk assessment – p53</p> <p>Risk control – p54</p>




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3.3 Contractor safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Formal contracts are established <input type="checkbox"/> Contract includes clear standards for OH&S practices <input type="checkbox"/> Contractors are inducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are documented procedures for contract management <input type="checkbox"/> There are clearly defined safety responsibilities and objectives for contractors <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibilities have been communicated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a list of preferred contractors <input type="checkbox"/> Contractors provide OH&S plans and safe work method statements <input type="checkbox"/> Contracts are rated according to risk potential <input type="checkbox"/> Contractors are audited against standards <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor performance is reviewed regularly for OH&S practices <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor health and wellbeing is monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction program for contractors covering responsibilities and accountabilities • Contractor review procedures incorporate health and safety performance review • Contractor induction program and records • A contractor selection procedure which requires the provision of health and safety systems information • Records of contractor assessments conducted by the organisation • Minutes of contract review meetings that record discussion of health and safety issues • Audit reports of contractor safety performance 	
3.4 Hazardous substances and dangerous goods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Current material safety data sheets are readily accessible for all hazardous substances and dangerous goods <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous substances and dangerous goods are stored safely in designated areas with signage <input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous goods license is current <input type="checkbox"/> There are hazardous substances and dangerous goods registers <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals in use that require AQIS approval are identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There are documented procedures for the safe handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials and substances <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are trained in the healthy and safe use of hazardous substances and dangerous goods <input type="checkbox"/> Environment and health surveillance is conducted as indicated by risk assessment or legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Where appropriate, hazardous substances have been eliminated or substituted <input type="checkbox"/> The hazardous substances and dangerous goods registers have been provided to emergency services <input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessments are reviewed every two years or if there is a significant change to the work <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous substances and dangerous goods are stored in controlled areas and their use monitored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A procedure that details specific requirements for disposal of identified materials • Contracts with waste disposal companies • Records of disposal in accordance with procedures • Relevant documented procedures, eg procedures or work instructions for decanting, spraying, mixing, transfer, etc • Current MSDS and other relevant information at point of use • Manual or procedures that identify specific storage requirements for each class/type of chemical • ‘Hazard alerts’ which identify issues associated with the storage of specific chemicals 	<p>Part 4.10 – p155</p> <p>App 23 – sample MSDS</p> <p>Risk assessment – p122</p> <p>App 22 – register</p>

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3.4 Hazardous substances and dangerous goods	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessments are conducted prior to handling hazardous substances and dangerous goods <input type="checkbox"/> All containers, storage locations and pipelines are correctly labelled			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A purchasing procedure which incorporates checks of all incoming substances to ensure correct supply and clear, durable labeling • A procedure to ensure that all substances are appropriately identified and, where necessary, labelled throughout work processes 	
3.5 Safe operating procedures (SOPs)	<input type="checkbox"/> SOPs exist for hazardous tasks <input type="checkbox"/> SOPs clearly identify health and safety hazards and required controls <input type="checkbox"/> Documented SOPs are available for personnel at job locations <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are trained in the use of SOPs <input type="checkbox"/> SOPs are easily accessed by all personnel	<input type="checkbox"/> OH&S representatives are involved in developing the SOPs <input type="checkbox"/> SOPs incorporate a risk assessment to ensure hazards are controlled <input type="checkbox"/> There is a permit to work system for high-risk tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> SOPs are developed in consultation with employees <input type="checkbox"/> SOPs are reviewed in consultation with employees annually or if a significant change occurs <input type="checkbox"/> SOPs are controlled documents; with previous review date, version number and upcoming review date clearly highlighted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all potentially hazardous operations, written SOPs, which contain hazard identification, risk assessment, and control measure identification • Inspection documents which cover checks of SOPs and relevant legislative requirements • SOP training records • Records showing SOPs have been reviewed 	
3.6 Personal protective equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate PPE is supplied to employees as required	<input type="checkbox"/> PPE use is enforced <input type="checkbox"/> A range of PPE is available to meet needs of personnel (comfort, size) <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are trained in use and maintenance of PPE as required	<input type="checkbox"/> A PPE procedure is established and includes training, maintenance and storage <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are involved in trialling and selecting PPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work procedures that specify the type of PPE required for tasks • A record of supply and replacement of PPE • Records of PPE training and instruction provided to employees • PPE maintenance and replacement procedures and records 	Part 6

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3.7 Emergency management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> An evacuation plan exists <input type="checkbox"/> The evacuation plan is displayed <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency equipment, alarm systems and signs are inspected and tested every six months <input type="checkbox"/> First aid resources comply with legislative requirements <input type="checkbox"/> First aid personnel are available as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A site emergency management procedure is established with responsible people <input type="checkbox"/> Potential emergency situations have been identified and procedures documented <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency drills are conducted at least every six months <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency personnel are trained <input type="checkbox"/> Competent persons have access to emergency equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness of drills are reviewed by senior managers in consultation with OH&S representatives <input type="checkbox"/> The emergency procedure is reviewed annually <input type="checkbox"/> All employees, visitors and contractors are informed of emergency procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency management procedure • Minutes of meetings which record discussion about the suitability of emergency procedures • An emergency plan showing the names of wardens or emergency controllers • Attendance records for general emergency training, eg included in induction • Records of emergency tests or drills • Emergency equipment assessment reports prepared by competent professionals or organisations • Plan that shows location and type of all emergency equipment provided 	Part 7
3.8 Purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Safety is considered when purchasing goods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Safety requirements are documented prior to the purchase of goods <input type="checkbox"/> Safety requirements are communicated to suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Goods are inspected to ensure they meet specifications <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are involved in setting safety requirements for major equipment <input type="checkbox"/> There is an established list of preferred suppliers for procurement with safety performance requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A documented purchasing procedure that outlines how health and safety is considered prior to the decision to purchase goods/services • A preferred supplier listing, with information to demonstrate that all contractors on the list have been informed about the organisation's specific health and safety requirements • A purchasing or contract procedure which describes the methods by which goods/services are to be evaluated for conformance with specifications, eg performance indicators 	

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3.9 Manual handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employees have been provided with manual handling training <input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling hazards are included in the hazard register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> An ergonomic audit has been conducted involving OH&S representatives <input type="checkbox"/> Where possible manual handling has been minimised through redesign and/or provision of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Manual handling risks are formally considered before purchasing plant or designing workplaces or tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are involved in reducing manual handling issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe mechanical and manual handling procedures for movement of materials • Records for training in manual handling • Report on ergonomic audit • Documentation on pre-purchase assessments of manual handling risks 	Part 4.11 – p128 App 24
3.10 Plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plant and equipment is maintained and a record is kept including relevant details and dates <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate controls are used to protect personnel working on or near plant that is being maintained <input type="checkbox"/> Plant and equipment is checked by qualified person before returning to service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A preventative maintenance schedule is established <input type="checkbox"/> There is a documented process in place for unsafe plant to be withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Plant and equipment damage is reported, recorded and repaired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are assigned responsibility for plant and/or equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Plant risk assessments are conducted, in consultation with employees <input type="checkbox"/> Risk assessments are reviewed annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed inspection procedures for all relevant items of plant • A plant register or record for all relevant items of plant and equipment • A procedure that includes a reporting mechanism and tagging of unsafe plant for removal from service • Service records that confirm checks of plant made by designated persons after repair/alteration 	
3.11 Incident investigation and injury management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Incident management policy is established and current <input type="checkbox"/> An injury register is available <input type="checkbox"/> Serious and lost time incidents are investigated <input type="checkbox"/> Incident investigations identify the root causes <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant incidents are reported to statutory authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Serious potential incidents and near misses are reported and investigated <input type="checkbox"/> Investigations identify causes and factors <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are involved in incident investigations <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel have been trained in investigation techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Senior managers are involved in serious incident investigations <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons learned from investigations are shared broadly across the organisation <input type="checkbox"/> Investigations have led to changes to the safety management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation procedure, which also requires examination of root causes • Completed investigation reports • Investigation reports that focus on systems rather than personal failure contain recommendations and refer to checks of existing control measures • Minutes of meetings that record reviews of control measures and discussions about recommendations arising from investigations 	

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3.11 Incident investigation and injury management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Suitable duties are identified for injured employees <input type="checkbox"/> Return-to-work plans are developed as required <input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation coordinator nominated and trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Findings and corrective actions of investigations are communicated <input type="checkbox"/> Investigations have led to workplace changes <input type="checkbox"/> Incident management procedures are established and current <input type="checkbox"/> Incident management performance indicators are established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Incident management policy and procedures are reviewed annually <input type="checkbox"/> Injury management is provided for off-the-job injuries/illnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation procedures and/or the incident form include provision for assigning individuals to implement corrective actions • Records of corrective actions assigned to individuals • Records of implementation of corrective actions, eg minutes of meetings • Investigation procedures which include a requirement that consultation take place with affected personnel prior to implementation of corrective action(s) • Evidence that affected personnel are consulted 	
4. Measurement and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S performance measured through lag indicators <input type="checkbox"/> All recordable cases/incidents are captured <input type="checkbox"/> Indicators are systematically kept track of <input type="checkbox"/> Development of indicators over time is regularly reviewed and analysed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S performance measured through lag and current indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Indicators are aligned with organisation's OH&S objectives and targets <input type="checkbox"/> All recordable cases/incidents are captured without delay <input type="checkbox"/> Following indicator analysis, performance improvement action is determined and recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S performance measured through lag, current, and lead indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Performance improvement action is taken <input type="checkbox"/> Senior management actively involved in measurement and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of meetings that record discussions about selection of indicators • A register in which all relevant cases/incidents are recorded • Little or insignificant difference between date/time incident/case is recorded and actual occurrence of incident/case • Minutes of meetings that record discussions about review of indicator development over time • Records of performance improvement actions determined as a result of indicator review • Minutes of meetings that record conclusion that a particular performance improvement action has been closed out 	Part 3.2 App 7

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5. Review, evaluation and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> There is a documented audit and inspections program <input type="checkbox"/> Audits and inspections are carried out in accordance with program <input type="checkbox"/> Records of audits and inspections are kept <input type="checkbox"/> Annual OH&S management systems reviews are conducted and documented <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations from the OH&S management system review are actioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Employees are involved in audits and inspections <input type="checkbox"/> Audit and inspection findings are actioned and hazards controlled <input type="checkbox"/> Senior managers are involved in the OH&S management system review <input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes of the OH&S management systems review are communicated to employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Senior managers are involved in audits <input type="checkbox"/> Audit outcomes are communicated across the company <input type="checkbox"/> OH&S management systems review incorporates people focus, examining the use of systems by personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Outcomes from the annual review are considered during OH&S strategic planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A documented audit procedure • Audit schedules, which preferably are based on risk level and results of previous audits • Audit reports • Records of auditor training • Records or minutes which include a priority list for corrective actions • Records of corrective actions taken • Comprehensive OH&S management system review procedure • Records of reviews • Minutes of OH&S management system review meetings • Reports of OH&S management system reviews which include recommendations for action • Evidence of changes made as a result of management reviews, eg organisation restructure, changes to assignment of responsibilities, changes to policy, reallocation of resources, etc 	Part 4.11 – p128 App 24



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