HEALTH AND SAFETY
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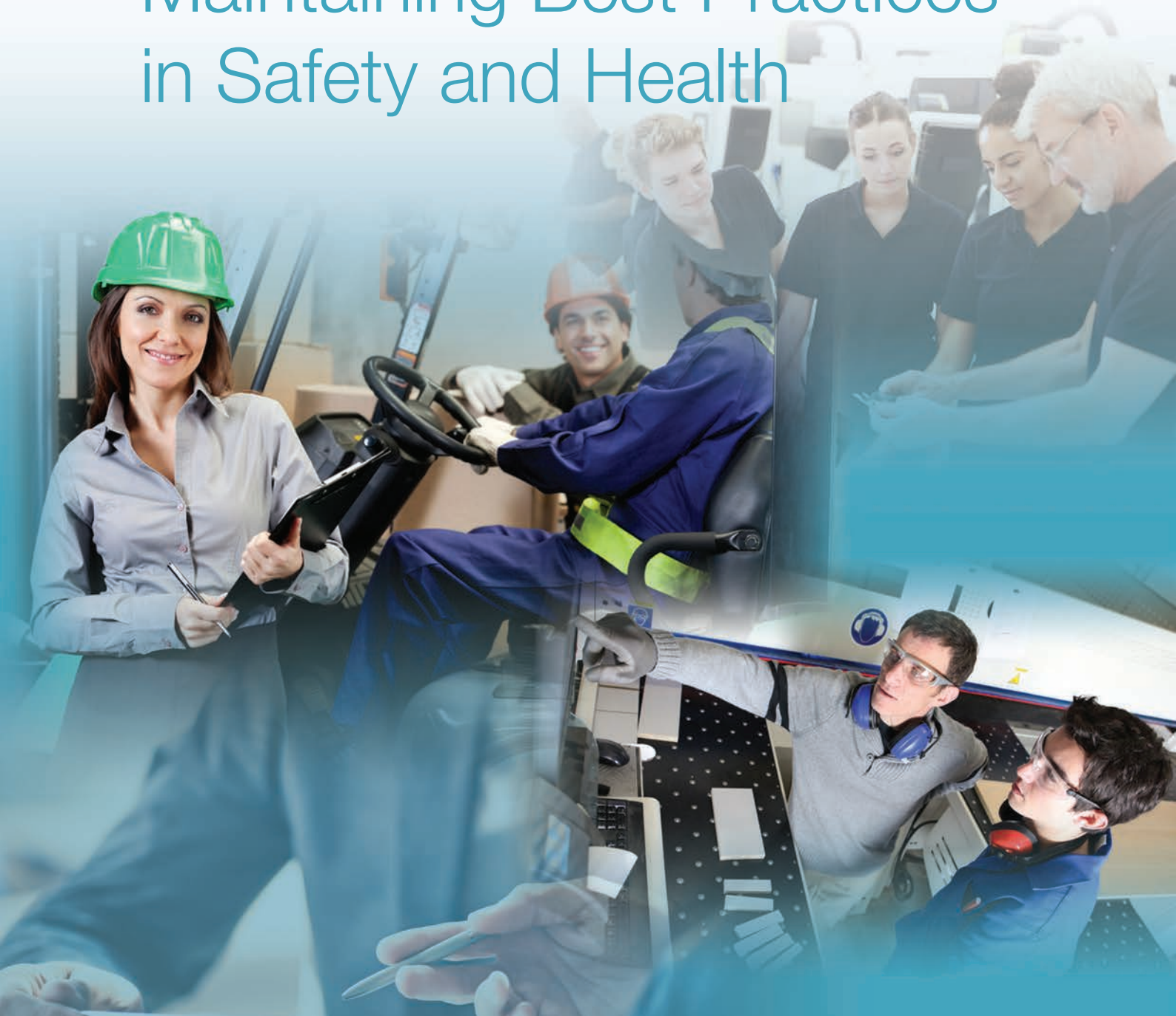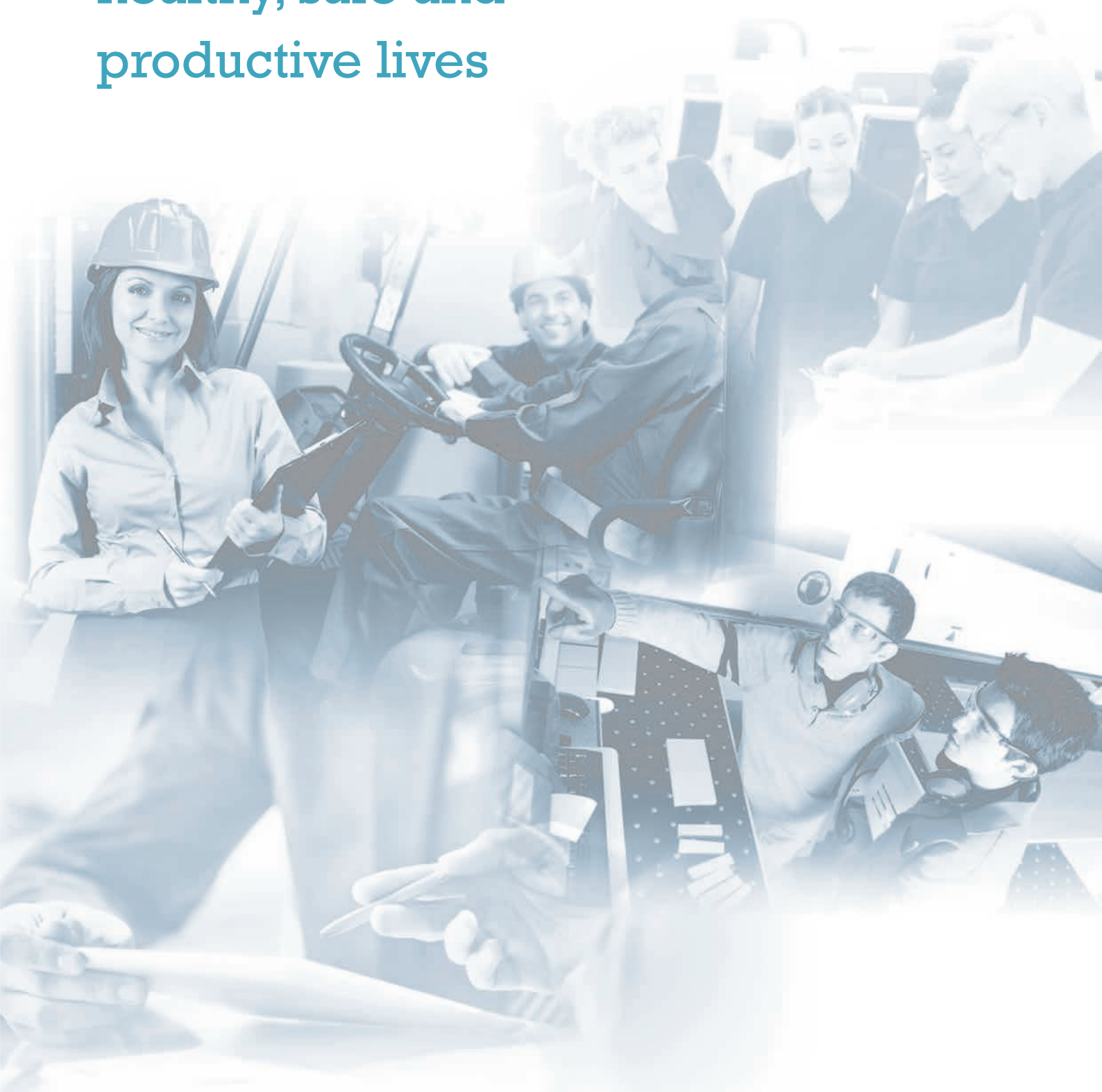
A guide to

Maintaining Best Practices in Safety and Health

Our Vision

healthy, safe and productive lives

Contents

Maintaining best practices in safety and health introduction

This guidance is aimed at business leaders, owners, managers and those who control work activities at all workplaces. It will help those who have responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (the 2005 Act) and other relevant Regulations that may apply to their work activities. It sets out what they should do in order to develop and maintain their safety and health management systems. This guidance will help the various duty holders at work to ensure their safety and health management systems comply with the best practices in safety and health.

The guidance sets out how companies should plan for and execute their safety and health management programmes. It recommends that safety and health management should be an integral part of good management generally, rather than a stand-alone system, and that it should be a fundamental part of the successful running of a business. It encourages directors and senior managers to demonstrate and promote leadership in safety and health excellence. Duty holders should also consult the more detailed and sector-specific guidance which is available on the Health and Safety Authority website at www.hsa.ie for how to fully implement the principles set out here.
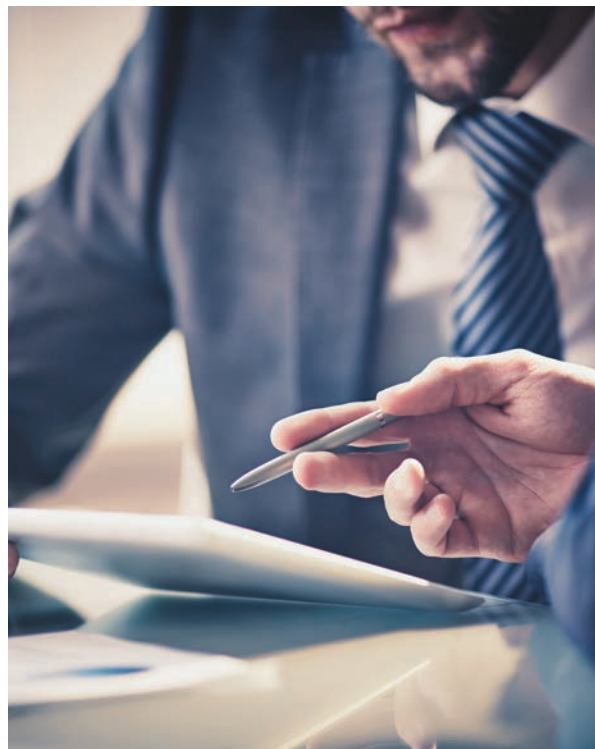
Understanding legal compliance

- Complying with the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005
- Other Regulations which may apply to you
- What does legal compliance mean?
- What Health and Safety Authority inspectors do
- Promoting best practices in safety and health management

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (the 2005 Act) sets out clearly the responsibilities of the main duty-holders who have occupational safety and health responsibilities at the workplace. The main provisions include Sections 8 (Duty of Employers); 10 (Instruction and Training); 12 (Duties to Others); 15 (Duties of those who Control Workplaces); 19 (Risk Assessments); 20 (Safety Statements), 25 (Safety Representatives) and 26 (Safety Consultation etc.) for which meeting legal compliance is mandatory. Meeting legal compliance is mandatory for these provisions. Guidance on how to comply with these mandatory requirements is available on the Health and Safety Authority website at www.hsa.ie.

Other Acts and Regulations may also apply, depending on what work you do or what sector your activities relate to, for example, the Chemicals Act 2008 and the European Communities (Transport of Dangerous Goods and Transportable Pressure Equipment) Regulations (ADR) apply to chemical processing operations and the transport of Dangerous Goods by road. The General Application Regulations apply to all workplaces and set out broad requirements on the workplace relating to the use of work equipment; manual handling; first-aid; the use of computers; along with many other work-related activities. The Construction Regulations apply on all construction sites, and the Asbestos Regulations apply to asbestos-stripping work carried out during demolition. These laws set out the key responsibilities

that are relevant to managing safety and health proactively. Please refer to our website for guidance on how to comply with these responsibilities.

Health and Safety Authority inspectors check for compliance with these legal requirements and give advice and information on how to comply with the best practices on safety and health management so as to prevent accidents and ill health. However, these laws set the minimum standards.

Many companies now wish to exceed he minimum legal compliance when setting standards for themselves, so they compare to the best companies that are out there. They wish to apply a professional and best-in-business philosophy to occupational safety and health management, as they do for all other aspects of their business. This is what makes these companies industry leaders and successful at business. They learn from others in their business class and use the lessons learned to continue to improve and ensure no harm to their employees. All businesses must do this in order to ensure they continue to be successful and have no accidents.

This guidance now sets out the general principles that should be used by employers to comply with the best practices in safety and health, with the objectives of having no accidents or ill health among employees.
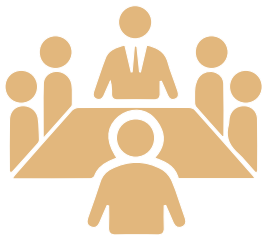
Knowing the roles and responsibilities of boards and directors

Boards must:

- Understand their safety and health responsibilities
- Make managing risks a board priority
- Know the difference between macro and micro decision-making
- Be informed by senior managers of all significant risks
- Learn about and understand the risks in their operations: risk profiling
- Ask their senior management key questions around safety and risk
- Give risk management the focus and attention it deserves at meetings
- Consider appointing a safety and health director
- Set safety and health management as a core value
- Enable external validation of management system

In order to ensure compliance, boards and their directors must firstly understand their legal responsibilities in relation to safety and health management. Both board members and their senior managers must understand that their role includes both legal and moral obligations. The board and its directors are responsible for setting the broad strategic direction of the company. They are focused on the macro situation, like the manager looking at the team's performance from the side-lines. Senior managers are responsible for running the business on a day-to-day basis, and this includes the management of the safety and health brief. Managers need to focus on the micro picture, that is, the players on the field. Boards need to understand that their actions (or inactions) can affect workers safety and health and that they must do all they can to prevent accidents and ill health. They must be aware that accidents at work can affect employees, members of the public, their families, shareholders and the wider community in which they operate.

In meeting legal requirements, senior management must inform their board of all significant hazards their workplaces pose. In risk

profiling their company, most effective leaders and their senior managers rank their risks in order of importance and then take actions to control them.

The board must ask their senior management tough questions around the safety and health risks to which the organisation is exposed. Best practice would suggest that a senior manager with responsibility for safety and health would report directly to the board at each meeting regarding the company risk profile and on safety and health performance. Other important areas which can be reported on include safety and health competence and worker consultation or engagement. Best practice would suggest that this information comes straight from those at the coal face, and that it should not be allowed to be overlooked in the shuffle of information presented by, say, the CEO or the rest of the management team to the board.

Only with the correct level of knowledge can the directors ask the right questions of their senior management team. Ignorance is not bliss. The board must give risk management the focus and

attention it deserves, with the higher risk profile companies giving it more serious attention. Boards need to make managing risks a priority and give their management team the resources and processes it needs to ensure better safety and health.

Depending on the size, scale and nature of the business and the potential risks arising, it may be prudent to nominate a director sitting on the board to oversee and co-ordinate the safety and health governance process. Remember that the establishment of such a role does not dilute other directors' safety and health responsibilities. Areas where this might be appropriate include those companies which control activities at many workplace locations, such as large construction projects, utility companies, high-risk businesses where safety and health management is critical to business continuity, along with the so called "major accident hazard" workplaces, such as the mining, quarrying and chemical sectors.

Having regard to the safety and health risks that the business poses, the safety and health director's role could be discharged on either an executive or a non-executive basis.

For preference, the director with responsibility for overseeing workplace safety and health management should work within the business and have knowledge of its activities. In particular where the safety and health management of critical plant exists and the consequences of loss of integrity could be severe for the business, the director must be a person with the necessary competence to adequately understand his role and responsibilities.

This director may chair the safety and health sub-committee of the board, where one exists. Such a nomination will not mean that the board's general safety and health responsibilities are delegated to one person. However, such nominees should have the responsibility to ensure that safety and health risk management issues are properly addressed at board level and throughout the organisation as a whole. They will also keep the board informed of the relevant safety and health issues, levels of performance, etc. Whoever is assigned to this role must have a clear understanding of what is expected of

them. They should receive the necessary safety and health training so that they can become comfortable with their responsibilities.

A significant way of demonstrating the board's commitment to safety and health management is for the nominated safety and health director to take time to observe safety and health compliance at the workplace level. They can look for evidence of the practical working of the board's safety and health policy. The director could also liaise closely with the business's safety committee, where one exists. They can also ensure that discussions on these issues at board meetings are focused on the business's risk profile.

The board must ensure that safety and health performance is never compromised and a safety and health culture is a "core value" that ensures there are no accidents or cases of ill health. The board should be aware that their company cannot sustain profitability when compromises are made in safety and health management. To maintain their high-performance output, the board will ensure every employee is focused on delivering a product or service in a productive, high-quality, cost-effective and safe way. With board support, these high-performing companies will strive for a safety and health culture that takes care of all its employees and sub-contractors, so that they arrive safely at their job, work safely and return home safely at the end of the day.

In complying with best practices for safety and health management, boards and their directors should consider:

- the merits of having an externally certified safety and health management scheme,

- ensuring safety and health is integrated into the business processes and the safety and health director's input is understood, valued and implemented,

- benchmarking their performance against other similar companies,

- sharing the lessons learned both internally and externally, and

- using their supply chain to influence the safety and health performance of their suppliers.

Setting key safety and health tasks for managers

Managers must:

- Approve and endorse the Safety Statement and risk assessments
- Ensure adequate resources are made available for safety and health management at workplace level
- Provide the necessary safety and health competence
- Develop a communications plan for safety and health
- Facilitate the worker consultation and engagement process
- Set up the structure for implementing the safety and health plan
- Have a system for informing them about safety and health problems
- Ensure that safety and health monitoring and audits are done

In meeting legal compliance, senior managers need to perform the tasks set out in the above table. They must accept their collective responsibility for implementing the organisation's safety and health responsibilities. As a minimum, the manager must ensure the preparation and approval of the Safety Statement and the work-specific risk assessments, which need to cover all work activities, work locations, departments and the divisions they control.

Beyond this, their responsibilities include:

- receiving regular reports on progress, performance and implementation of safety and health plans and assessments as set out in the Safety Statement;

- ensuring sufficient resources are made available to achieve and implement these safety and health plans;

- ensuring managers and supervisors know their risks and how to manage them;

- identifying key job holders and their safety and health roles and responsibilities;

- providing employees with the necessary training, skills, knowledge and experience to fulfil their safety and health responsibilities;

- ensuring their employees are actively involved in the management of safety and health;

- facilitating safety consultation and employee engagement by enabling the safety committee to meet regularly and report on safety and health issues discovered; they can also provide a forum for the safety representative(s) to carry out their role;

- developing an effective communications plan to ensure that the board's safety and health policy is understood and implemented;

- making sure that the necessary organisational structures exist to ensure that safety and health risks are properly controlled;

- being kept aware of all matters in relation to safety and health, especially for minor incidents and near misses;

- ensuring safety and health audits are undertaken to monitor all aspects of safety and health policy implementation; and

- changing the safety behavior of the management team, so as to ensure they lead by example and create trust and meaningful dialogue among workers on safety and health.

Taking collective responsibility for safety and health

Managers must:

- Ensure the Safety Statement and risk assessments clearly spell out the safety and health responsibilities
- Reflect the company's values and beliefs in giving effect to its safety and health policy
- Be given responsibility to effect changes in safety and health
- Show strong leadership in order to maintain risk control
- Engage with employees in safety and health policy promotion
- Encourage joint decision-making with workers on safety and health
- Ensure employees understand that safety and health is a board priority
- Report safety and health performance to the board
- Promote employee engagement in order to make safety and health everyone's responsibility

Section 12 of the 2005 Act puts the legal responsibility on employers to ensure the safety and health of employees and others at their workplace(s) and they give effect to this responsibility through their senior managers. It is well recognised that if everyone at work takes responsibility for ensuring better safety and health through their actions and behaviours, then its management will be more successful.

The Safety Statement must spell out the safety and health responsibilities for all levels within the business and, in particular, how they must all work together to ensure safety and health. Those at work, who control how work is performed, must be given the responsibility and authority to effect safety and health changes in the workplaces covered by the Safety Statement. The Statement must start by setting these aspirations in the safety and health policy. This policy is the workplace's commitment to protecting employees' safety and health. It should be based on the organisation's values and beliefs about providing a safe and healthy working environment. If it is shown that the senior managers within the business take safety and health management seriously, then the employees will automatically follow the same approach. Thus, strong leadership is essential.

In maintaining collective responsibility for safety and health management at the workplace level, senior managers must ask themselves the following questions:

- Do we provide daily safety and health leadership in the areas we control?
- Have we allocated responsibilities and authority for safety and health to specific people in our departments or divisions and at each work location?
- Are our managers clear on what they have to do and have we provided them with the necessary training, experience and knowledge?
- Do we have sufficient information about the risks our work colleagues are exposed to and the preventive measures they must take?
- Are our safety and health professionals helping us in this task or do we need to use external safety and health competence?
- Do we stand up for better safety and health where it really counts, for example at senior manager and board meetings?
- Do we take safety and health issues to the CEO, or do we tend to bend under pressure when other things are more important?

- Do we consult and involve our staff in key decision-making on safety and health issues?
- Do we engage with our safety committee for this purpose and do we facilitate the selection of safety representative(s)?

Leadership on safety and health will ensure that employees will be consulted when the Safety Statement and the risk assessments are being prepared and being reviewed. This needs to happen when there are changes in the workplace that affect the safety and health risk profile; changes in the workforce, organisation or methods of work; or new articles or substances being introduced for the first time. The senior management team must ensure all their business decisions reflect the safety and health policies that are set out in the Statement. Managers must have a clear understanding of what the Safety Statement requires and promote its policies whenever the situation requires it.

The board, through its senior managers, is responsible for driving and promoting the safety and health agenda, understanding the risks and opportunities associated with safety and health and any matters that might affect safety and health. The knowledge, training, experience and safety and health competence that these senior people should have to carry out their role and ensure their legal responsibilities are met will depend on the safety and health risks the workplace poses.

Everyone in the workplace must know and believe that the board and its senior managers are committed to continuous improvement in safety and health performance. Employees must understand that safety and health decisions are made jointly and that they must deliver on them. By involving all staff in the development, decision-making process and maintenance of the safety and health programme, safety and health becomes everyone's business.

Successful employee engagement

Managers must:

- Enable employees to be proactive on safety and health
- Motivate employees on safety and health
- Reward good safety and health practices
- Make sure all employees understand their safety and health roles
- Facilitate the safety representative role
- Use the safety committee for promoting safety and health excellence
- Engage with employees on developing safe procedures
- Encourage progress and programmes for improvement
- Promote positive safety and health feedback

Experience has shown that positive employee engagement reaps dividends and ensures greater safety and health compliance. Section 26 of the 2005 Act provides for consultation between employers and employees to help ensure co-operation in the prevention of accidents and ill health. Under Section 25 of the 2005 Act, employees are entitled to select a safety representative to represent them on safety and health matters with their employer. Section 26 sets out the arrangements for this consultation on a range of safety and health issues at the workplace. Where a safety committee is in existence in a workplace, it can be used for this consultation process. These are key provisions of the 2005 Act and a central part of the preventive system of promoting safety and health at work. For these reasons, managers must enable all employees to engage in safety and health promotion. It is essential that all employees know and understand their role and realise that they are agents for promoting better safety and health performance.

Remember that if workers see the company making progress on promoting safety and health, they too will be motivated to do more on safety and health. Harvard Business School research has shown that what is important to being successful and remaining motivated is a sense of progress. They called this the "Progress Principle", which we can apply to safety and health promotion. For example, there were no fatal accidents during the building of the Olympic Stadium and the other stadia for the 2012 London Olympics; positive employee engagement was seen as one of the primary reasons for the success of safety and health compliance.

It is well known that the best way to get workers to follow safe procedures and systems is for them to be involved in the development and review of those systems. If people feel that their opinions are valued and considered, they are much more likely to follow the processes when they are implemented. It is critical to get the right people involved at the right time; after all if they are the ones doing the job, they will know that job better than anyone. Given the right approach and opportunity, workers will let managers know the correct way to do a job, and if they are encouraged to contribute in this way they are also extremely likely to work in the correct way.

We all need self-esteem, and to feel respected and recognised for the things we do. In safety and health terms, it makes sense to encourage managers to recognise good safety and health practices. Observe what is going on, and then give the person feedback. Positive feedback is more powerful when it is done at the moment when the good practices are observed. Bring in an awards programme such as the offer of vouchers for a night out, having an awards night out or an annual conference, which will help to focus attention on safety and health.

Creating a positive safety and health culture

Managers must:

- Lead the business, which includes safety and health management
- Promote the continuous improvement approach
- Set clear, positive values and standards on safety and health
- Foster an open, blame-free approach to safety and health
- Influence workers by their commitment to safety and health
- Promote the concept of having no accidents
- Spell out the risks due to human error

A positive safety and health culture increases safety and health compliance. A safety and health culture is the product of the individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to an organisation's safety and health management. It means that for a workplace to be said to have a good safety and health culture in place, it must ensure its entire workforce has these values. If these elements are in place and all other factors are right in the workplace, then the compliance standards will be strictly adhered to by all. This is because all workers will have the same mindset, ideology or philosophy of safety. There are no reasons for unsafe acts or unsafe behaviour that negates safety culture. Creating a positive safety and health culture in the workplace means ensuring the correct standards and procedures are in place and that workers are in compliance with these standards.

Managers who authorise and direct work activities are responsible for ensuring good safety and health as part of their management role. If managers promote a positive safety and health culture, employees will automatically follow them. Senior managers should consider the following key elements when endeavouring to promote a positive safety and health culture:

- How do we lead the business in establishing the correct safety and health direction to follow?

- What are our values and beliefs on safety and health?

- Do we promote continuous improvement and get workers engaged in making things safer?

- Do we set standards, targets and objectives for our managers on safety and health?

- Do we give our senior managers responsibility, accountability and support for safety and health management?

- How do we hold our managers accountable for the safety and health responsibilities given to them?

- How do we manage our contractors and do we expect them to follow the same safety and health regime?

- Do we carry out on-site inspections, that is, "walk the walk" and not just "talk the talk"?

- How do we ensure sufficient internal control for safety and health?

In setting the strategic aims for the business, directors must have an understanding of the role safety and health performance plays in the overall performance of the business. In accepting corporate social responsibility for safety and health, directors, through their senior managers, need to be proactive in developing a positive safety and health culture for the workplace or workplaces that they control. Managers do this by:

- ensuring that safety and health compliance is an integral part of the management process,

- setting clear safety and health values and standards,

- thinking strategically about their corporate safety and health responsibilities,

- being open and constructive about safety and health regulation,

- rewarding good safety and health behaviour,

- fostering an open and positive approach to risk control,

- having a no-blame culture for reporting and investigating accidents, incidents and near misses, and

- creating a culture of integrity about and responsibility for safety and health matters.

Senior managers who authorise and direct work activities exert considerable influence over the businesses they run, shaping the way things are done, how managers interpret safety and health policies and promote a safety and health culture among the workforce. Employees' commitment to safety and health is influenced by how they perceive "your commitment to safety and health". Visible and active support, strong leadership and commitment from all senior managers are essential for successful safety and health management.

Organisations that are proactive in preventing accidents and ill health at work aim to have no accidents at all and subscribe to accident-prevention programmes that help them achieve their aim. The target of "Zero Harm" or "Zero Unsafe Acts" are programmes which can be used. If these are nothing more than a label, they will be ineffective, but if they reflect a sound safety and health culture that has the right ethos and support at its core, they are great principles to work on, with the right support from the top level. Attitude and culture are crucial for success, and it is a journey rather than a milestone; it takes time, commitment and understanding. This concept has been extended by some companies to a "Triple Zero Target", that is, zero harm, zero incidents and zero compromise in delivering a transformational safety and health performance.

In choosing any of these approaches, it is understood that all accidents are preventable if we work hard to prevent human error. In aiming for a target of zero accidents, directors and senior managers must consider the human contribution to occupational injury, which is based on the premise that we are not perfect and do make errors. Regardless of an organisational culture, or the clan culture of the workgroup and any local supervisory influence, the human dimension of behaviour is where the zero harm option lies. Organisations need to deal with the cognitive influences of individual performance and then target 'zero accidents' as an aspirational option. Thus senior managers, with the support of their safety and health professionals, need to focus on their workers and make safety and health a focus for all. Be aware of complacency creeping into the safety and health management programme because, as the number of near misses rise, the likelihood of accidents happening will increase.

Safety and health monitoring

Managers must:

- Drive good safety and health monitoring of "leading and lagging" indicators
- Review the adequacy of compliance with the Safety Statement
- Ensure the risk assessments are work specific and appropriate
- Ensure inspections take place of key safety critical tasks
- Make safety and health monitoring part of the safety culture
- Integrate continuous improvement into what is being monitored

In order to give effect to the objectives set out in the Safety Statement, senior directors, supported by their board, need to set key targets for their management team for safety and health monitoring. Senior managers need to ensure that this monitoring drives better safety and health performance. Key performance "leading and lagging" indicators must be specific to the business needs and link in with the board's overall safety and health policy. Leading or proactive indicators that ensure legal compliance can include:

- checking the thoroughness and appropriateness of work-specific risk assessments and that they are clearly documented in the Safety Statement. The legal requirement for carrying out risk assessments has an improvement requirement built into it and this may also be checked;

- ensuring the implementation of the Safety Statement accurately reflects what happens in the workplace;

- reviewing how safety and health monitoring is set out in the Safety Statement. This would cover carrying out safety and health inspections, checks and audits of work activities, processes, units and departments;

- monitoring the appropriateness, replacement and maintenance of plant and equipment used for safety critical processes;

- recognising the ageing mechanisms that affect process plant and then introducing and maintaining a structured management system approach to mitigate the potential for failure and significantly reduce the incidence of major accidents;

- carrying out Hazard and Operability Studies (HAZOP) studies in high hazard industries when critical changes are made to processes which have the potential to increase the risks when altering the operating conditions of safety critical plant;

- checking the extent and thoroughness of safety and health training, whether it is around safety critical operations and whether post training monitoring is carried out;

- measuring the safety and health culture of the business, for example, do all employees subscribe to the company values on safety and health; and

- checking the level of implementation and performance of the overall safety and health management system, i.e. from policy development, through its operation on the ground, emergency response arrangements and the follow-up monitoring and auditing.

Lagging or reactive indicators include investigating accidents, near misses, chemical releases and spills, lifting equipment failure, safety-implication incidents and safety-related reports and representations.

All safety and health monitoring requires continuous improvements in the safety and health performance of the business. The successful implementation of the Safety Statement will help to ensure the protection of the workers and others who may be affected by the company's work activities. To properly implement the Safety Statement, the organisation it covers must put in place a monitoring system that suits its needs and gets the job done in an efficient manner. This monitoring system must ensure that everyone in the workplace knows what is expected of them and that they will be monitored. Monitoring will look at the ground rules that all must follow and, as a minimum, it will cover compliance with legal responsibilities.

The most successful organisations now want to do much more than the minimum and strive to have safety and health rules that ensure they have no accidents or incidents, that is, "Zero Harm", and continue to strive to improve. These organisations recognise when complacency is creeping into their safety and health management programme. They know that standards will drop and accidents or near misses will begin to occur. Monitoring procedures need to be developed which can identify the creep of complacency. This will ensure that high-performing organisations remain and continue to be a safety and health and a business success.

Reviewing safety and health performance

Managers must:

- Audit safety and health performance to ensure legal compliance
- Put in place an audit process
- Decide what needs to be audited and by who
- Audit the monitoring programme's effectiveness
- Have audit findings open to challenge by senior managers and by external auditors
- Establish internal control for successful safety and health management
- Keep the safety and health management system up to date

Carrying out reviews of safety and health performance will confirm whether your safety and health arrangements are still appropriate. They will check the validity of the safety and health policy and the extent of its implementation. Many companies are now publishing the results of these reviews in their Annual Reports.

Under its legal remit, the board, through its senior management team, must ensure that safety and health risks generated by its activities are managed and controlled adequately. Senior managers must put in place a performance framework that ensures compliance with the organisation's core safety and health values and standards. As a minimum, this performance auditing programme will establish that the organisation is in compliance with safety and health laws. It will review the outcomes from the routine monitoring programme to ensure that recommendations made are fully implemented. It will also establish that the safety and health programmes are up to date and that redundant risk assessments are removed from the programmes.

Assessing how internal control procedures work is a key part of senior managers' responsibilities. It is important that the organisation's governance structures allow for management systems, actions and levels of performance to be challenged. The board and its senior management team should have an

agreed plan on how this is done and this will include reviewing the results of the safety and health audits carried out by audit teams. When accidents occur and are investigated, the board should be made aware of the lessons learned and the steps taken to prevent a recurrence. Board members and their senior managers need to be aware of the people-related, cultural and organisational issues which may prevent lessons being learned effectively, and the performance auditing will help to minimise this risk.

Auditing at board and senior management levels must be carried out by people who have the competence and experience to do it successfully. Depending on the nature, scale and size of the organisation, performance auditing can be carried out by safety and health professionals and/or appropriate technical professionals from within the organisation, or by a professional from an external service. In all cases, the appropriate competence and previous experience of the auditors must be fit for the auditing to be done.

Senior managers must assure its board that their operating teams are doing, at a minimum, what the law requires. In addition, they all need to be satisfied that the organisation's safety and health management system continues to operate to the best standards. Regular reviewing of safety and health performance ensures the safety and health risk management system remains fit for purpose, up to date and effective.
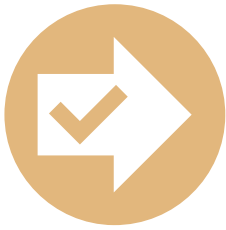
Ensuring continued safety and health success

A checklist for managers:

- Do we review our Safety Statement and key risk assessments on an annual basis?
- Are we committed to continuously improving our safety and health management programme?
- Do we have adequate safety and health control systems in place?
- Do we have adequate safety and health competence available to us?
- Do we engage enough with our employees and promote safety representation?
- Do we have adequate safety and health communications systems in place?
- Do we get to the underlying causes of accidents during investigation and implement recommendations?
- Do we monitor and audit our safety and health performance and keep inspection records?
- Do we keep our directors informed on our safety and health performance?

The following list of questions, which the board and its senior management team should ask themselves, will help them make a judgement on the robustness of their safety and health system. This list will help them decide whether they have met legal compliance standards and if they are operating to the best practices for their sector.

- When did we last review our Safety Statement, our risk assessments and our safety and health policy?

- Do we carry out an annual review of our Safety Statement and risk assessments?

- Do we review them again when we introduce new risks that may alter our risk profile?

- Are we committed to continuously improving our safety and health performance?

- Do we monitor the performance, maintenance and integrity of safety critical plant, ageing plant, equipment and processes?

- Do we reward excellence in safety and health and praise good safety practices?

- To what extent do we have meaningful consultations with our safety committee and do we engage with our safety representative(s)?

- Are we the directors kept informed by our senior management team of our safety and health performance?

- Do we comment on safety and health performance in our Annual Report and make it public?

- How do we know if we are meeting our own objectives and standards for safety and health? Are our risk controls good enough?

- Do we have an active monitoring system in place for safety and health critical issues?

- How do we know if we are complying with the safety and health legislation that applies to our business?

- Do our accidents or incident investigations get to all the underlying causes, or do they stop when we find the first person that has made a mistake?

- Do we have accurate records of injuries, ill health, bullying complaints, accidental loss, etc.?

- Do we as directors get reports on our safety and health failures?

- How do we learn from our mistakes and our successes?

- Do we have a blame-free culture for accidents and near-miss investigations?

- Do we carry out safety and health audits regularly, as necessary? If we do, what action do we take on audit findings?

- Do these audits involve staff at all levels? Are they carried out by external services and if so, are they competent enough? Do we involve our safety representative and safety committee, where they exist, in the audits?

Depending on the size, nature, complexity and risk profile of any workplace, there will be guidance in some or all of these principles. The more a work organisation subscribes to these principles, the more likely they are to have zero harm among its employees.

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