

Good health and safety leadership

Seven steps > Step 4 > Further tools



The importance of good leadership

The way you lead your team on health and safety can determine how safe your site is to work on (and the number of accidents, incidents and ill-health cases that happen) because:

- your attitudes and beliefs about health and safety drive your behaviour;
- your behaviour on site sends a powerful message to your workers about how seriously they should take health and safety; and
- the real causes of accidents on site can often be traced back to managers' decisions.

What makes a good leader

A **leader** influences others to reach a goal.

A **transformational leader** makes a positive impact on attitudes, behaviours and organisational performance. They transform, energise and motivate their workers to:

- view their work from different perspectives;
- be aware of their organisation's vision;
- reach their full potential by challenging themselves; and
- work to benefit the team rather than just themselves.

The difference between a leader and a manager

Leader	Manager
Creates and communicates a vision for the future.	Develops a plan and allocates resources.
Encourages others to commit to the vision.	Sets objectives and organises a schedule.
Motivates and inspires workers to overcome barriers. Encourages innovation.	Monitors situations.
Helps the organisation to develop by adapting to changing circumstances.	Focuses on order and efficiency. Ensures standards are met.

A healthy and safe organisation requires both managers and leaders.

Top tips to become an effective health and safety leader

Challenge the status quo

- How could current health and safety practices be improved?
- Are there new ways to improve health and safety – eg by learning from accidents, incidents and ill-health?
- Challenge your workers, by asking them 'What can we do to solve the problem?'.

Create a vision

- Consult your workforce to identify and set clear health and safety goals.
- Motivate them to create a 'shared vision' through those goals.
- Involve them in planning and decision making.
- Make sure everyone knows what they need to do.

Inspire workers to be healthy and safe

- Make sure everyone has the skills, abilities and resources they need to do their jobs safely.
- Plan enough time for work to be done in a healthy and safe way.
- Share your expertise to help workers overcome barriers.



- Develop mutual trust.
- Reward workers who successfully work safely.

Be a good role model

- Be honest with yourself. Do you set a good example to your workers?
- Put health and safety first and behave in a healthy and safe way on site.
- Promote safe work behaviour and practices – encourage the attitude: ‘I do it because I want to, not because I have to’.
- Be fair – trust and respect workers when making health and safety decisions.

Show consideration

- Get to know workers and respect their opinions.
- Treat each worker as an individual.
- Show personal concern for their safety and well-being.
- Treat others as you would expect to be treated yourself.
- Develop a team spirit where health and safety comes first and everyone looks out for one another.

Communicate regularly

- Update workers on developments and performance in health and safety and encourage feedback.
- Be approachable and receptive to your workers’ ideas.
- Respond to concerns immediately and discuss the actions you will take.

What to do next - other tools in Step 4

- Make sure you have completed the *Leadership Check Tool* to help find ways to improve your leadership skills.
- *Training Pack 1* will help you to develop a health and safety vision with your supervisors.
- *Facilitating Training for Managers and Supervisors to Embed Positive H&S Values*, supplements *Training Pack 1*, and will help you and your supervisors examine the values of a good leader, and behaviours that you need to show or improve.

Quick wins

- Introduce a **STOP** work procedure. This will help to prevent accidents, incidents and ill health, and show your workers that you are serious about health and safety (see *Step 6*).
- Develop or review your company’s health and safety policy and make sure all your workers are aware of it. Consult supervisors and workers to consider any changes (see *Step 3*).
- Act immediately when you or your supervisors see workers behaving in an unsafe or unhealthy way. Ask them in a private and non-threatening way why they are carrying out the task that way and tell them your concerns for their health and safety. Together, come up with a safer way of working, and communicate this to other workers (see *Step 2 > Further tools*).
- For further information see www.hse.gov.uk/construction.

The Leadership and Worker Involvement toolkit is aimed particularly at small and medium sized businesses and is designed to help improve your health and safety and bring additional benefits to your business performance and productivity.