

PABIAC STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS.

A self assessment tool for employers.

By 31 March 2008 all sites in the industry will have in place, and be able to demonstrate, a safety management system that meets a recognised standard such as HSG 65, “ Successful Health and Safety Management” or OHSAS 18001.

What are the essential elements of a successful safety management system?

These are described in HSE publication HSG 65, Successful Health and Safety Management. They are summarised in a simple free leaflet INDG275, “Managing health and safety – Five steps to success” which you can download free of charge from the HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk). The web page is: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg275.pdf>

Managing health and safety is no different from managing any other aspect of your business. You need to:

- Set a clear **policy** for health and safety
- **Organise** your staff for managing health and safety
- **Plan** for health and safety by setting targets and objectives, identifying hazards, assessing risks and establishing standards against which you can measure your performance
- **Measure** your health and safety performance in just the same way that you already measure production or sales
- Periodically **audit and review** how well you are doing so that you can decide how to improve

We have no safety management system in place. What should we do?

You need to put one in place. Health and safety law requires you to have a health and safety **Policy** as well as appropriate arrangements for **Planning, Organising, Controlling, Monitoring and Reviewing** the health and safety precautions that you are required by law to have in place. You can use the self-assessment checklist below to help you decide what you need to do.

How can we demonstrate that we have a safety management system?

If you already have a safety management system to a recognised standard such as OHSAS 18001 or BS 8800:2004 and can produce documented evidence, such as a record of an audit verifying that the requirements of the standard are being met, then you have already achieved this objective and you have nothing further to do.

Is this the only way to achieve the objective?

No. You can meet it in other ways provided you are able to show that you have the essential elements of a safety management system in place.

If you are already having your safety management system audited by competent auditors – who may be from your own staff or external auditors – then an audit report showing that the essential elements of a safety management system are present would be sufficient. It is not necessary for

you to show that your safety management system is perfect or best in class. You just need to show that all the essential elements are there.

You can use the self assessment checklist below to help. It is unlikely that any one person in your business will be able to answer all the questions. You will need to involve your management team and consult your workforce, including any employee and safety representatives, when you answer the questions. If you can honestly answer “yes” to all of the questions then you probably have the basic elements of a successful safety management system in place.

Of course, simply having a safety management system in place does not guarantee success in managing health and safety. Nor does it mean you are complying with all requirements of health and safety law. Everything depends on how your safety management system operates in practice and that will depend on many factors including: management leadership of the organisation; effective implementation of safety processes and procedures; continuously improving assessment of risk and hazard, followed by enhanced controls; use of communication and consultation processes that develop ownership at all levels in the business: and all these supported by monitoring, review and improvement of the systems.

How do we know how well we are managing health and safety?

You can benchmark yourselves using a suitable benchmarking tool. PABIAC recommends the Health and Safety Performance Indicator for small and medium size enterprises. This is available free of charge at the Business Link website (www.businesslink.gov.uk/). See web page: www.hsapi.info-exchange.com. You can use it to see how well you are doing compared with other businesses in your industry and to check your own progress over time. You put in your own information by answering some simple questions. This takes about 15 minutes. The answers you give remain anonymous and confidential. Nobody else can see your results. But you can see the collective results for all businesses using the indicator and compare your own score with the rest of your industry.

As with any business system it takes time to build a successful health and safety management system and then to fine-tune it so that it continues to deliver satisfactory standards of health and safety at work. You can use the performance indicator to see where you are now and to check your progress at appropriate intervals.

Self assessment Checklist

POLICY

	YES	NO
1. The company has a clear, written policy for health and safety at work, signed, dated and communicated to all employees?		
2. The Directors regard health and safety of employees as an important business objective?		
3. The Directors are committed to continuous improvement in health and safety (reducing the number of injuries, cases of work-related ill health, absences from work and accidental loss)?		
4. A named Director or Senior Manager has been given overall responsibility for implementing our health and safety policy?		
5. Our policy commits the Directors to preparing regular health and safety improvement plans and regularly reviewing the operation of our health and safety policy?		
6. Our policy encourages the involvement of employees and safety representatives in the health and safety effort?		
7. Our policy includes a commitment to ensuring that all employees are competent to do their jobs safely and without risks to health?		

For advice on health and safety policies see chapter 2 of HSE publication HSG 65 “ Successful Health and Safety Management (ISBN 0-7176-1276-7) or page 5 of free leaflet “Managing Health and Safety: Five Steps to Success” at web page <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg275.pdf>

ORGANISING - CONTROL

	YES	NO
1. In our company responsibilities for all aspects of health and safety have been defined and allocated to our managers, supervisors and team leaders?		
2. Our managers, supervisors and team leaders accept their responsibilities for health and safety and have the time and resources to fulfil them?		
3. Our managers, supervisors and team leaders know what they have to do to fulfil their responsibilities and how they will be held accountable?		
4. We have identified the people responsible for particular health and safety jobs including those requiring special expertise (e.g. our health and safety advisor)?		

For advice on the essential elements of organisational control see page 17 of chapter 3 of HSG 65 and page 6 of the free leaflet “Managing Health and Safety: Five Steps to Success”.

ORGANISING – COMPETENCE

	YES	NO
1. We have assessed the experience, knowledge and skills needed to carry out all tasks safely?		
2. We have a system for ensuring that all our employees, including managers, supervisors and temporary staff, are adequately instructed and trained?		
3. We have a system for ensuring that people doing particularly hazardous work have the necessary training, experience and other qualities to carry out the work safely?		
4. We have arrangements for gaining access to specialist advice and help when we need it?		
5. We have systems for ensuring that competence needs are identified and met whenever we take on new employees, promote or transfer people or when people take on new health and safety responsibilities e.g. when we restructure or reorganise?		

For advice on competence in relation health and safety please see page 22 of chapter 3 of HSG 65 and page 6 of the free leaflet “Managing Health and Safety: Five Steps to Success”

ORGANISING – COOPERATION

	YES	NO
1. We consult our employees and employee safety representative on all issues that affect health and safety at work?		
2. We have an active health and safety committee that is chaired by the appropriate Director or Senior Manager and on which employees from all departments are represented?		
3. We involve the workforce in preparing health and safety improvement plans, reviewing our health and safety performance, undertaking risk assessments, preparing safety-related rules and procedures, investigating incidents and problem solving?		
4. We have arrangements for cooperating and coordinating with contractors and employment agencies whose employees work on our site on health and safety matters?		

For advice on how to secure the cooperation of your workforce and their involvement in health and safety management see HSE website at web page <http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/index.htm>, page 22 of chapter 3 of HSG 65 and page 6 of free leaflet “Managing Health and Safety: Five Steps to Success”. HSE publication HSG 217 “Involving Employees in Health and Safety” (ISBN 0-7176-2053-0), although prepared primarily for the chemical industry, also contains useful guidance.

ORGANISING – COMMUNICATION

	YES	NO
1. We discuss health and safety regularly and health and safety is on the agenda of management meetings and briefings?		
2. We provide clear information about the hazards and risks and about the risk control measures and safe systems of work to people working on our site (which is easily accessible in the relevant work area)		
3. Our directors, managers and supervisors are open and approachable on health and safety issues and encourage their staff to discuss health and safety matters?		
4. Our Directors, Managers and Team Leaders communicate their commitment to health and safety through their behaviour and by always setting a good example?		

For advice about communications on health and safety issues please see page 23 of chapter 3 of HSG 65 and page 6 of free leaflet “Health and Safety Management: Five Steps to Success”

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING

	YES	NO
1. We have a system for identifying hazards, assessing risks and deciding how they can be eliminated or controlled?		
2. We have a system for planning and scheduling health and safety improvement measures and for prioritising their implementation depending on the nature and level of risk?		
3. We have arrangements for agreeing measurable health and safety improvement targets with our managers and supervisors?		
4. Our arrangements for purchasing premises, plant, equipment and raw materials and for supplying our products take health and safety into account at the appropriate stage, before implementation of the plan or activity?		
5. We take proper account of health and safety issues when we design processes, equipment, procedures, systems of work and tasks?		
6. We have health and safety rules and procedures covering the significant risks that arise in our day-to-day work activities including normal production, foreseeable abnormal situations and maintenance work?		
6. We have procedures for dealing with serious and imminent dangers and emergencies?		
7. We set standards against which we can measure our health and safety performance?		

For advice on how to plan for health and safety and how to set and implement standards for health and safety performance see Chapter 4 of HSG 65 and page 7 of free leaflet “Health and Safety Management: Five Steps to Success”

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

	YES	NO
1. We have arrangements for monitoring progress with the implementation of our health and safety improvement plans and for measuring the extent to which the targets and objectives set under those plans have been achieved?		
2. We have arrangements for active monitoring that involve checking to ensure that our control measures are working properly, our health and safety rules and procedures are being followed and the health and safety standards we have set for ourselves are being met?		
3. We have arrangements for reporting and investigating accidents, incidents, near misses and hazardous situations?		
4. Where the arrangements in 2 and 3 above show that controls have not worked properly, our health and safety rules or procedures have not been followed correctly or our safety standards have not been met we have systems for identifying <i>why</i> performance was substandard.		
5. We have arrangements for dealing with situations that have created risk with priority being given where the risks are greatest.		
6. We have arrangements for analysing the causes of any potentially serious events so as to identify the underlying root causes including causes arising from shortcomings in our safety management system and safety culture.		

For advice on how to measure your health and safety performance see chapter 5 of HSG 65 and page 9 of free leaflet “Managing Health and Safety: Five Steps to Success”

AUDIT AND REVIEW – LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

	YES	NO
1. We have regular audits of our safety management system carried out by competent external auditors or competent auditors employed by our company who are independent of the department they are auditing?		
2. We use the information from performance monitoring and audits to review the operation of our safety management system and our safety performance?		
3. We regularly review how well we have met the objectives in our health and safety improvement plans and whether we have met them in the agreed timescales?		
4. We analyse the information from performance measurement and use it to identify future improvement targets and to identify particular causes of accident, ill health or poor control of risk to target for future risk reduction effort.		
5. We benchmark (* see footnote) the performance of our safety management system against that of other businesses in the same industrial sector and/or to monitor our own overall improvement over time?		

For advice on how to audit and review the operation of your safety management system see chapter 6 of HSG 65 and page 10 of the free leaflet “Health and Safety Management: Five Steps to Success”.

For further advice

Contact your trade association. They will be able to point you in the direction of further sources of advice and guidance. If you are a small or medium enterprise free and impartial advice is available to you through “Workplace Health Connect”. For more information about their free advice line and other services please visit their website at <http://www.workplacehealthconnect.co.uk>

Footnote

* PABIAC recommends the use of the Health and Safety Performance Indicator for small and medium size enterprises. This is available free of charge at the Business Link website (www.businesslink.gov.uk/). See web page: www.hspl.info-exchange.com