

# Principles of effective health and safety management system management essay



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The framework for a health and safety management system must be based on an intrinsic design of all relevant processes and stakeholders. The principles of an effective safety management system should provide a sound foundation for the improvement of health and safety performance, yet ensure the rights and respect of all; workers, supervisors, HSE personnel's and most important management.

By definition, a Safety Management System must be the bedrock of a company development and survival, yet it must not be written in stone, it must be able to learn, grow and adapt to changing work conditions, procedure demands, safety awareness, standards, codes and regulations.

The need for Safety Management is a business necessity. Risk management is an essential objective in today business workplaces. The proper implementation of an effective safety management system will ensure that all hazards in the workplace are properly mitigated (to contain and reduce damage) both pro-actively and re-actively (accident Investigation).

Safety is usually seen as a drain on resources and an outside factor to production. SMS should be priority over all other activities, so that it can fully integrate all of the companies operation. SMS should answer only to and be reviewed by senior management. This will show management commitment to safety, make it more effective and afford the SMS it rightful place in the organization structure.

The majority of elements required for an effective health and safety management are parallel to those which are required for the philosophy of “total quality management” (TQM). Typically, commercially successful

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organizations will usually have a more structurally viable health and safety management systems in place. The objective of a TQM is to promote a cycle of checks and balances in order to achieve continuous improvement in management. Likewise, in order to establish an effective Safety management System, similar checks and balances are designed into the system to achieve the ultimate goal of an accident/incident free work environment.

Safety management must encompass the following objectives:

Achievement of safety goals and objectives

Provide an enhance safety culture

Have clearly outlined definitions

Validation of procedures (purchasing and maintenance)

Identify shortcomings and fast corrective measures

Priorities attention to critical areas of concern

Checklist, and constant review of system

Provide quality program

Clear authority assignments

Layout clearly responsibility, functions and roles

Account for allocation of resources (financial and human)

Defined auditing standards (internal and external)

Establish proactive mentality

Reactive real-time assessment (accident investigation)

Identify and develop detailed remedial actions to correct inconsistencies

HSE, in HSG 65, management model have identified five fundamental designations that must be established to create a successful safety management system. These five elements are known as POPMAR: Policy; Organization; Planning; Measurement; Auditing and Review.

While HSG65 provides a flexible model of a safety management system, it lacks in proper guidance in the implementation of this model in order to establish an “ effective” system. This guidance can be sought in much more define terms in INDG 275; Managing health and safety Five steps to success.

Step 1: Set your policy

The health and safety policy must be specific and detailed. It should incorporate all of the business activities, including the selection of people, types of equipment and materials, standards, codes and regulations to be followed, the way work is done to develop a safety culture and how goods and services should be provided. The policy must be a clearly written statement outlining the organization and the arrangements for implementing and monitoring safety in the workplace. It should show your staff, and anyone else, that hazards have been clearly identified and all foreseeable risks has been assessed, eliminated or controlled.

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Some pertinent questions that should be asked in the development of an effective policy include:

Do you have a clear policy for health and safety; is it written down?

What did you achieve in health and safety last year?

How much are you spending on health and safety and are you getting value for money?

How much money are you losing by not managing health and safety?

Does your policy prevent injuries, reduce losses and really affect the way you work?

Step 2: Organize your staff

In order for the safety policy to be effective a ' positive health and safety culture' must be established. This can only be achieved by getting the entire work-force, inclusive of management involved and committed in achieving this goal.

INDG 275 outlines the four ' Cs' of a positive health and safety culture. These are;

Competence: recruitment, training and advisory support.

Control: allocating responsibilities, securing commitment, instruction and supervision.

Cooperation: between individuals and groups.

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Communication: spoken, written and visible.

### Competence

â- Assess the skills needed to carry out all tasks safely.

â- Provide the means to ensure that all employees, including your managers, supervisors and temporary staff, are adequately instructed and trained.

â- Ensure that people doing especially dangerous work have the necessary training, experience and other qualities to carry out the work safely.

â- Arrange for access to sound advice and help.

â- Carry out restructuring or reorganization to ensure the competence of those taking on new health and safety responsibilities.

### Control

â- Lead by example: demonstrate your commitment and provide clear direction let everyone know health and safety is important.

â- Identify people responsible for particular health and safety jobs especially where special expertise is called for, eg doing risk assessments, driving forklift trucks.

â- Ensure that managers, supervisors and team leaders understand their responsibilities and have the time and resources to carry them out.

â- Ensure everyone knows what they must do and how they will be held accountable set objectives.

#### Cooperation

â- Chair your health and safety committee if you have one. Consult your staff and their representatives.

â- Involve entire staff in planning and reviewing performance, writing procedures and solving problems.

â- Coordinate and cooperate with those contractors who work on your premises.

#### Communication

â- Provide all information about hazards, risks and preventive measures to employees and contractors working on your premises.

â- The concept of good health and safety practice should be discussed regularly.

â- Be 'visible' on health and safety.

Some pertinent questions to ask in the development of an effective organization structure include:

Have you allocated responsibilities for health and safety to specific people are they clear on what they have to do and are they held accountable?

Do you consult and involve your staff and their representatives effectively?

Do your staffs have enough information about the risks they run and the preventive measures?

Do you have the right levels of expertise? Are your people properly trained?

Do you need specialist advice from outside and have you arranged to obtain it?

### Step 3: Plan and set standards

Planning is the key to ensuring that your health and safety efforts really work. Planning for health and safety involves setting objectives, identifying hazards, assessing risks, implementing standards of performance and developing a positive culture. It is often useful to record your plans in writing. Your planning should provide for:

- â- identifying hazards and assessing risks, and deciding how they can be eliminated or controlled;
- â- complying with the health and safety laws that applies to your business;
- â- agreeing health and safety targets with managers and supervisors;
- â- a purchasing and supply policy which takes health and safety into account;
- â- design of tasks, processes, equipment, products and services, safe systems of work;
- â- procedures to deal with serious and imminent danger;



â- cooperation with neighbors, and/or subcontractors;

â- setting standards against which performance can be measured.

Standards help to build a positive culture and control risks. They set out what people in your organization will do to deliver your policy and control risk.

They should identify who does what, when and with what result.

Three key points about standards

Standards must be:

â- measurable;

â- achievable;

â- realistic.

Statements such as ' staff must be trained' are difficult to measure if you don't know exactly what ' trained' means and who is to do the work. ' All machines will be guarded' is difficult to achieve if there is no measure of the adequacy of the guarding. Many industry based standards already exist and you can adopt them where applicable. In other cases you will have to take advice and set your own, preferably referring to numbers, quantities and levels which are seen to be realistic and can be checked. For example:

â- completing risk assessments and implementing the controls required;

â- maintaining workshop temperatures within a specified range;

â- specifying levels of waste, effluent or emissions that are acceptable;

â- specifying methods and frequency for checking guards on machines, ergonomic design criteria for tasks and workstations, levels of training;

â- arranging to consult staff or their representatives at set intervals;

â- monitoring performance in particular ways at set times.

Some pertinent questions that should be asked in the planning stage include:

Do you have a health and safety plan?

Is health and safety always considered before any new work is started?

Have you identified hazards and assessed risks to your own staff and the public, and set standards for premises, plant, substances, procedures, people and products?

Do you have a plan to deal with serious or imminent danger, e. g. fires, process deviations etc?

Are the standards put in place and risks effectively controlled?

Step 4: Measure your performance

Just like finance, production or sales, you need to measure your health and safety performance to find out if you are being successful. You need to know:

â- where you are;

â- where you want to be;

â- what is the difference and why.

Active monitoring, before things go wrong, involves regular inspection and checking to ensure that your standards are being implemented and management controls are working. Reactive monitoring, after things go wrong, involves learning from your mistakes, whether they have resulted in injuries and illness, property damage or near misses.

Two key components of monitoring systems

â- Active monitoring (before things go wrong). Are you achieving the objectives and standards you set yourself and are they effective?

â- Reactive monitoring (after things go wrong). Investigating injuries, cases of illness, property damage and near misses identifying in each case why performance was substandard.

You need to ensure that information from active and reactive monitoring is used to identify situations that create risks, and do something about them. Priority should be given where risks are greatest. Look closely at serious events and those with potential for serious harm. Both require an understanding of the immediate and the underlying causes of events.

Investigate and record what happened find out why.

Refer the information to the people with authority to take remedial action, including organizational and policy changes.

Some pertinent questions that should be asked in measuring performance include:

Do you know how well you perform in health and safety?

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How do you know if you are meeting your own objectives and standards for health and safety?

Are your controls for risks good enough?

How do you know you are complying with the health and safety laws that affect your business?

Do your accidents investigations get to all the underlying causes or do they stop when you find the first person who has made a mistake?

Do you have accurate records of injuries, ill health and accidental loss?

Step 5: Learn from experience audit and review

Monitoring provides the information to let you review activities and decide how to improve performance. Audits, by your own staff or outsiders, complement monitoring activities by looking to see if your policy, organization and systems are actually achieving the right results. They tell you about the reliability and effectiveness of your systems. Learn from your experiences. Combine the results from measuring performance with information from audits to improve your approach to health and safety management. Review the effectiveness of your health and safety policy, paying particular attention to:

â- the degree of compliance with health and safety performance standards (including legislation);

â- areas where standards are absent or inadequate;

â- achievement of stated objectives within given timescales;

â- injury, illness and incident data analyses of immediate and underlying causes, trends and common features.

These indicators will show you where you need to improve.

Some pertinent questions that should be asked in the development of an effective review policy include:

How do you learn from your mistakes and your successes?

Do you carry out health and safety audits?

What action is taken on audit findings?

Do the audits involve staff at all levels?

When did you last review your policy and performance?