

H&S GOVERNANCE

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A new Health and Safety Governance guide from WorkSafe and the Institute of Directors has been released to better support understanding of what good governance looks like in practice.

Governance is not about managing an organisation – it is about keeping an overview and holding management to account so that it operates in a productive, ethical and legal manner to achieve strategic objectives. Health and safety governance is simply one component of overall governance and requires a similar level of effort, understanding and focus as any other. It is important to recognise that it is inter-woven with all those other components and cannot be viewed as a standalone process.

Health and safety governance requires input from officers, from management and from health and safety specialists when necessary. Officers set expectations and managers deliver on those expectations with input from workers. This is regardless of the size of the organisation.

Health and safety needs to be integrated into the organisations overall strategy, effectively embedded into day-to-day operations. Considerations must include the broader ecosystem factors including supply chains, partners, regulators and wider society.

[Click here](#) to access the guide, quick guide and self-assessment tool or go direct to the Institute of Directors website.

Fundamental systems & processes to have in place

Put the foundations in place, make sure the basic systems and building blocks are there to support governance work.

Ongoing monitoring is a legal obligation under HSWA.

- Set expectations - defined roles of officers
- New Officer Inductions
- Governance Processes - clear terms of reference
- Competence framework for governance level
- Continuous Improvement - governance maturity
- Assurance - audits, inspections, reports
- Records - of governance activities, decisions, activities



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VISION:

Capable leaders integrating health and safety into curious and courageous governance discussions and decisions, that are context-rich and demonstrate care for workers.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

Officers should obtain knowledge about what good practice looks like, ask questions and be curious. They should be knowledgeable about health and safety.

Undertake the right activities:

- Learn and develop
- Anticipate and understand
- Plan and resource
- Trust and verify
- Monitor and respond

HOW?

Adopt the right mindset to take a supportive personal approach. Implement the 5c's –

- Courage
- Capability
- Curiosity
- Context
- Care

Governance activities that are key to health and safety include:

- ❖ Setting the vision and strategy for health and safety
- ❖ Mapping the health and safety risk profile
- ❖ Defining your risk appetite/tolerance
- ❖ Oversight of relationships with related parties
- ❖ Agreeing health and safety objectives and the required resources and priorities
- ❖ Establishing the framework for monitoring and reviewing performance
- ❖ Assuring yourself that critical health and safety systems, controls and processes are known about, understood and being applied effectively.

METRICS AND REPORTING

Focus should move away from counting accidents to monitoring positive contributors to H&S. I recommend moving away from LTI/TRIFR (Lost Time Injury/Injury Frequency Rates) reporting models to those that provide insightful information on health and safety performance.

Design your reports around your vision and strategic objectives, provide insight without information overload. Focus on the most important issues and remember, not everything is measurable so provide narrative as well as data. Avoid aiming on hitting targets, rather look at the improvements over time and how these work towards your direction and objectives.

Reports should include:

- **Performance** - meeting objectives, completion of action items, worker competence levels
- **Assurance & Verification** - areas checked, audited, what are we doing about the findings
- **Risks** - focus on critical risks, effectiveness of controls, risk profile
- **Relationships** - overlapping duties, suppliers, contractors, clients
- **Resources** – people, equipment, processes to enable work, matching needs
- **Due Diligence performance** – officer completed and planned activities

WHAT NEXT?

- Review the Health and Safety Governance Guide
- Carry out an internal review using the Health and Safety Governance Self-Assessment Review form.

Use these tools to better understand what good governance looks like. Review the strategic objectives and direction of your organization, the H&S understanding and competency of Officers within the organization, the systems and processes in place and how these facilitate monitoring and measuring performance.

For any further information or support, feel free to contact Brigid at Manawatu Health and Safety Ltd.

For more information or reference to previous newsletters, please visit

www.manawatuhealthandsafety.co.nz