

Leading and managing for health and safety – what to look for

Use the following examples of effective and ineffective health and safety management to check if you are doing what you need to do on leadership.

What it looks like when done effectively	What it looks like when done badly or not at all
<p>Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain attention on the significant risks and implementation of adequate controls. ▪ Demonstrate their commitment by their actions; they are aware of the key health and safety issues. ▪ Ensure consultation with the workforce on health and safety. ▪ Challenge unsafe behaviour in a timely way. 	<p>Leaders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set no health and safety priorities. ▪ Don't understand the need to maintain oversight. ▪ Don't meet their own organisation's standards/procedures, e.g., wearing correct PPE on site/shop floor. ▪ Lack of engagement with health and safety by workers. ▪ Health and safety is perceived as an add-on, irrelevance or nuisance. ▪ Poor incident history (accidents, near misses, plant damage or other indicators, e.g., poor maintenance, poor housekeeping).
<p>Management of health and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A systematic approach is used to manage health and safety. ▪ People understand the risks and control measures associated with their work. ▪ Contractors adhere to the same standards. ▪ Appropriate documentation is available: current, organised, relevant. ▪ People understand their roles and those of others. ▪ Performance is measured – to check controls are working and standards are being implemented, and to learn from mistakes after things go wrong. 	<p>Management of health and safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incomplete or missing paperwork. Does not link to actual risks in workplace. ▪ Confusion over roles, inaction as no one takes responsibility for health and safety, distrust of management motives. ▪ Widespread, routine violations of procedures. No oversight of contractors. ▪ Information is not passed on, not understood, or not implemented. ▪ Managers are unaware of employee concerns or do not respond appropriately. ▪ Lessons are never learned.
<p>Beyond compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If a formal system (such ISO 9001:2015 OR 45001:2018) is used, has it been externally certified – is the certification accredited? ▪ Health and safety are integrated into the business processes. ▪ Benchmarking is used to compare performance with others. ▪ Supply chains are influenced to improve health and safety. ▪ A 'wellness' programme is in place. 	

What the owner/manager does to set an example and to provide a lead on health and safety to their staff determines the outcome.