

SAFETY ROLE FOR EXECUTIVES



Join Our Monthly
Webinars

WHS Awards
2022

Safety Action
Out and About

What's new in April?

Welcome to the April Safety News.

This month we look at the role of top management in effective safety programs and initiatives in the workplace.

The Safety Action team is excited to be back out onsite, face to face with our many friends again. We also explain the recent changes to Victoria's incident notification regulations.

The 28th of April is World day for Safety and Health at Work. See details of this year's theme.



Gary Rowe, CEO

Stay Safe!

Safety Webinar – 8th April 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Friday 8th April** for our free monthly webinar to keep you up to date on workplace health and safety. Gary and the team present short informal sessions of only 20 to 30 minutes on topical issues and answer your questions.

Register [here](#)

Missed our last webinar? View them [here](#)

SAFETY ACTION TEAM



Andrea Rowe



Stephen Weber



Katie Weber



Gary Rowe



Glecellie Castro



Sarah Oliver



Miriam Oliver

Safety Role for Executives

*“Management have the power to direct the actions of employees and influence their attitudes, and they do this every day to get what they want – except to prevent accidents”**



This statement may surprise and disappoint many managers as we assume, often more through hope than factual evidence, that our safety programs and initiatives actually work.

So what is the safety role for top management?

Let's first look at the various levels of management in the organisation and their key functions.

1. Senior Management

Executives and directors set the vision, strategy and targets for the business, find and allocate the resources necessary to achieve the desired objectives, and motivate all levels of the business to fulfil their roles.

2. Middle Management

The group with responsibility for developing the detail and plans to implement the company policy and strategy, and support departments to understand and follow company policy.

3. Staff Advisors

Various specialists including; safety, legal, human resources, quality and environmental (who often do not share accountability for the business output), who advise on compliance and cost minimisation programs e.g. workers compensation self-insurance

4. Frontline Supervisors & Managers

Staff who direct the day-to-day activities of employees who produce the company output

Almost every authoritative study on management effectiveness confirms the two most influential levels within your organisation are:

- a) **Frontline supervisors** who co-ordinate production and most directly affect employee behaviour; and
- b) **Senior managers** who set the strategic direction and moral standards e.g. what tactics are acceptable to achieve the corporate objectives and how we treat individuals.

This is not to say middle managers and advisors are not required or effective in what they do, but it does highlight the importance of your initial focus being on the two priority groups if you want to launch a successful safety initiative.

A study by Petersen* on the effectiveness of safety initiatives shows that some of the least effective activities include:

- Using posters to promote safety
- Setting up employee safety committees
- Offering incentives for good safety records
- Safety contests and prizes
- Training all supervisors in first aid
- Investigating all incidents

* Safety Management a Human Approach, Petersen, 2001

Some of the above findings may come as a surprise or shock as many of us have seen these activities used frequently in business and would have thought most of these activities are sensible and reasonable. Once again highlighting that much of what we do to improve safety is not proven to be effective, but we continue to do it.

The same study found that the most effective safety initiatives include:

- Supervisor participation
- Managers Support
- Effective engineering of equipment and good inspection & maintenance practices
- Effective selection and training of employees
- Monitoring of performance and feedback
- Providing employees with clear simple rules, and fair enforcement process



We can see from the above that executive participation in the safety program is important, and this leads back to our earlier question of what should senior managers do?

The Australian workforce is irreverent and often sceptical about the motives and value of senior managers. Therefore, great care is needed in guiding executives to interface with employees, otherwise even well-intended initiatives will be interpreted harshly and likely back-fire.

Senior managers and executives planning activities to demonstrate safety leadership e.g. tours/ site visits, should be coached in correct safety communication and culture practices to ensure they understand the risks of poor practice and the key Do's and Don'ts.

PURPOSE OF EXECUTIVE SITE VISITS:

- 1) Not to find hazards, or criticise individuals.
- 2) Motivate workers to follow agreed (safe) work practices.
- 3) Opportunity to ask questions about local issues or concerns.
- 4) Show personal concern for safety of employees.
- 5) Demonstrate your personal involvement in the safety program.

Studies by Dr Larkin** show the least effective tactic is to over-concentrate on corporate values, and the most effective is communicating on “shop floor” issues including asking:

- Is your equipment and tools safe and reliable?
- Are you adequately trained to do your job?
- Has anyone been injured working in this area? What happened? What has been done to prevent it occurring again?

** Communicating with Employees (Larkin, 1989)

If interested in Safety Actions executive leadership coaching programs or you would like a sample pocket card with key Executive Safety Leadership Do's and Don'ts [email us](#).

World Day for Safety and Health at Work



The World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2022 will be commemorated on 28 April 2022 and will explore the topic of participation and social dialogue in creating a positive safety and health culture.

The international theme for this year is “Act together to build a positive safety and health culture”

More details [here](#).

Safety Action Out and About

As we finally move out of the COVID-19 lockdown environment the Safety Action team are very excited to finally be able to leave the office and get back out to interface with our clients directly.

Our newest team member Glecellie Castro was recently at Toyota, test driving one of their hydrogen fueled vehicles.



Glecellie in a hydrogen fueled Toyota

Our senior WHS consultant Stephen Weber has enjoyed getting back in front of people again to undertake training and coaching programs, both in-house during our public safety leadership course and as a guest lecture for VIOSH at Federation University.



As we get out more, we hope to see you all soon.

Changes to Incident Notification

The Victorian OHS amendments came into effect on the 16th March 2022, which include changes to prohibition notices and incident notification.

1. The **threshold for issuing prohibition notices** and giving directions by Inspectors has been amended, to better capture serious-risk activities. The directions will now have the potential for an instantaneous effect and are generally used to immediately cease dangerous activity pending processing of a prohibition notice. It is likely that, under the new threshold, some activities for which an inspector may have issued an improvement notice will now become subject to a prohibition notice until the activity is rendered safe.
2. **Three changes to incident notifications** requirements:
 - I. Under section 37(2) of the OHS Act, relating to incident notification where a person is not seriously injured, the definition is changing from incidents exposing a person '*in the immediate vicinity to an immediate risk*', to incidents exposing a person '*to a serious risk to the person's health or safety emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard*'.
 - II. Regulations can now prescribe certain illnesses to be incidents for the purposes of incident notification. Prescribed illnesses could include large-scale, infectious diseases posing a serious health risk, like COVID-19, serious illnesses acquired in workplaces, like silicosis, and, potentially, work-related transmissible diseases.
 - III. Incidents relating to the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, plant will become notifiable if that plant is prescribed under regulations.

For more information contact [Safety Action](#) for our latest bulletin or download it from our [website](#).



WHS Safety Awards 2022

Recognition of safety in the workplace can encourage workers and businesses to continue to show excellence and innovation in the field of workplace health and safety. There are some awards currently open for nominations. We encourage employers that have new initiatives and individuals to enter the awards.

National Safety Awards of Excellence

The NSCA and **GIO Workers Compensation's** 29th National Safety Awards of Excellence recognizes outstanding Work, Health and Safety initiatives. Any Australian operating business, organization, alliance or individual in the public or private sector with a workplace health and safety initiative that complies with one of the nine categories are encouraged to apply. Entries close on the 17th June 2022.

For more information and to submit your nomination click [here](#).



Australian Workplace Health & Safety Awards

The Australian Institute of Health & Safety (AIHS) is presenting the Australian Workplace Health & Safety Awards (AWHSA) 2022.

The awards provide national recognition to organisations and individuals who are demonstrating excellence and innovation in the field of WHS.

Organisations of all sizes are encouraged to nominate individuals or initiatives they believe are worthy of the recognition, with nominations closing the 1st July 2022

For more information and to submit your nomination click [here](#).