

Diagnostic Questions for Directors – Health and Safety Governance

The following diagnostic questions for directors are designed to expand on the material contained in the IoD's summary of the Good Governance Practices Guideline for Managing Health and Safety Risks and should be used in conjunction with that document.

The diagnostic questions are examples that can be used by directors and boards:

- as prompts to determine whether they are effectively meeting their responsibilities and accountabilities
- to verify that the information they receive is appropriate, accurate and comprehensive
- to verify that adequate formal reviews of health and safety are being conducted.

They can also be useful in determining whether the organisation's practices are consistent with the board's strategies, beliefs, values, goals and approved systems.

Policy and Planning

1. How do you ensure that the targets you establish for your organisation are aligned with your health and safety strategies and goals in both the long and short-term, are challenging but realistic, and have no unintended perverse consequences?
2. How is your board structured to deliver its commitment to health and safety and where and how is this structure described?
3. What are the key health and safety responsibilities and accountabilities of operating managers and how are these different from support staff?
4. How do you ensure that the CEO understands and meets the board's expectations with regard to health and safety management?
5. What process do you use to assess the CEO's health and safety performance? How does this process recognise good and bad performance?
6. What processes are in place for ensuring that managers clearly understand their health and safety responsibilities and are held accountable for carrying them out?
7. How are the organisation's workers involved in the establishment of your organisation's vision, beliefs and policy?
8. How does the organisation ensure that contractors have satisfactory health and safety standards?
9. How does the organisation ensure that the goods and services it supplies to other organisations meet satisfactory health and safety standards?
10. Does the organisation have an adequate budget for its health and safety programme?

Monitor

1. Are you asking the right questions? Do you determine what information you receive or does management?
2. How do you know that the information you are receiving is supported by a strong and honest reporting culture?
3. How does your organisation's performance compare with other comparable organisations and how do you know?
4. Does the organisation have the capability to carry out 'root cause' investigations, or know where to get it?
5. How do you know that actions identified in incident investigations are effectively implemented?
6. How much of the information that you receive is also shared with workers?
7. Are you receiving sufficient information about health as well as safety?

Review

1. What do you do to ensure an appropriate and thorough board level review of health and safety?
2. What information do you use for the review and who do you involve?
3. How do you ensure that your review uses 'best practice' as a benchmark?
4. How do you ensure that workers contribute to this review?
5. How do you ensure maximum independence and objectivity of reviews and audits?
6. How do you recognise and celebrate success?
7. How do you ensure that actions identified in the review are communicated and effectively implemented?

Deliver

1. How do you know that the organisation's health and safety management system is fit for purpose and represents best practice?
2. What systems are in place to ensure that hazards and risks are identified, assessed and effectively managed?
3. Have you thought about potential incidents that are less likely to occur, but with catastrophic consequences when they do?
4. Where there is significant organisational change that has implications for health and safety how do you ensure that this is reported to the board?
5. How good is the organisation's emergency management plan, and state of readiness that will ensure an effective response to any potential emergency? When was it last tested?
6. How does the organisation ensure that it has the right people with the right skills and motivation managing health and safety?
7. How does the organisation ensure that all plant and equipment used on site meets an acceptable standard?