

Actions for Directors – Health and Safety Governance

The following actions 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 actions are separated by the four elements of the role of a director in health and safety.

Within the element, the actions are divided into two categories – baseline actions and recommended practice.

Baseline actions are a suggested minimum requirement while recommended practice reflects taking the next step towards best practice.

Policy and Planning

Baseline Actions	Recommended Practice
Organisational Beliefs, Vision, Policy	
Develop, approve and publish a safety vision and beliefs statement that will express the organisation’s commitment to health and safety.	Consider involving workers and their representatives in the development of a vision and beliefs statement. This will help to ensure that it is ‘owned’ by the whole organisation.
Targets	
Establish targets for tracking the organisation’s effectiveness in implementing the board’s health and safety strategy and goals.	Include both lead and lag indicators in targets and ensure they do not create perverse incentives.
Board Policy, Structure, Process	
Decide how to structure the board so that health and safety has appropriate focus and expertise.	Consider nominating a non-executive director as a health and safety ‘champion’, or a committee that can focus on this key area.
Determine a board charter that will describe the board’s own role and that of individual directors in leading health and safety in the organisation.	Ensure the board charter describes detailed structures and processes to be used to plan, deliver, monitor and review leadership of health and safety.
Management Structure and Performance	
Provide the CEO with a role description that includes health and safety responsibilities and accountabilities.	
Ensure that management operates with a structure that appropriately recognises the respective health and safety responsibilities and accountabilities of operating and support staff.	
Apply a performance review process to the CEO role and ensure that a similar process applies to other management.	Ensure that performance review and reward systems do not encourage cover-ups and other unwanted behaviours that are inconsistent with the board’s beliefs and values.

Deliver

Baseline Actions	Recommended Practice
Health and Safety Management Systems	
Ensure that management develops, implements, audits and regularly reviews and updates an effective health and safety management system consistent with accepted standards.	Undertake training to ensure a good understanding of the requirements of the health and safety management system and particularly of hazard and risk management practices.
Review management reports on reviews and audits of systems and control plans.	Commission periodic external audits and reviews of the system. Ensure that workers and representatives participate in audits and system reviews.
Become personally aware of your organisation’s hazards and control systems. Review risk registers.	Ensure you have a detailed knowledge of your organisation’s hazards and control systems. This should be refreshed regularly including through engagement with managers and workers which may include site visits.

Baseline Actions	Recommended Practice
Ensure that hazards are identified by management and that control plans are in place for their effective management.	Periodically (at least every two years) obtain/review independent advice on the adequacy of hazard control plans and the effectiveness of their implementation.
Ensure that management implements procedures for the selection of contractors and monitoring their activities so that you are assured of their health and safety.	Ensure that management insists on contractors having health and safety standards that match your organisations.
Resources – People	
Ensure that management have staffed the organisation with sufficient personnel with the right skill mix, supported by specialists as required to operate the business safely.	Ensure that the organisation has effective processes in place for recruitment, training and direction of managers so that they are skilled and motivated to reinforce a positive health and safety culture and ensure the health and safety of their people and teams.
Ensure management implements a system of worker participation that enables workers and their representatives to participate in decision-making, implementation and monitoring of their workplace health and safety management systems.	Ensure that the organisation implements a 'just culture' whereby there is an atmosphere of trust in which people are encouraged to provide safety-related information, without fear of retribution or blame for honest mistakes but are still held accountable for wilful violations and gross negligence.
Encourage a culture where reporting of events is expected and followed up.	Monitor the overall workplace health and safety culture using survey techniques.
Resources – Plant and Equipment	
Ensure that plant and equipment is provided by management that is fit for purpose, well maintained and supported by training and safe operating procedures.	Ensure well established and documented standards for plant and equipment that are used at procurement and during on-going operation and maintenance. Plant and equipment is not allowed on site if it does not meet this standard. This also applies to equipment used by contractors.
Resources – Systems	
Ensure that management provides systems that will support the effective management of health and safety.	Ensure management provide computer based systems for capturing data on health and safety incidents, analysis and reporting. Good systems will also assist with the tracking of action plans following incidents and audits etc and will assist to ensure their timely completion. The health and safety management system will be documented and available for all to read. Information from it will be regularly communicated to workers.
Resources – Budget	
Provide sufficient funds for the effective implementation and maintenance of the health and safety management system and for improvement programmes.	Ensure there is a policy of dealing with health and safety on the basis of need rather than budget limits.

Monitor

Baseline Actions	Recommended Practice
Specify clear requirements regarding reporting and timeframes for significant events in the board's charter.	
Ensure that in the case of serious incidents management have sought external input or review to provide independence and avoid potential vested interests.	
Review serious incidents, including serious non-compliance and near misses and be personally satisfied with the adequacy of management actions in response.	<p>Directors should receive basic training in incident investigation methodology sufficient to ensure that they are able to distinguish between adequate and inadequate investigations.</p> <p>In the case of serious health and safety incidents, obtain independent advice on the adequacy of the investigation and remedial actions.</p>
Ensure that improvement goals are developed annually by management and that regular progress reports are received by the board.	<p>Separate organisations and work sites will have their own business goals. Visible tracking of goals by directors will demonstrate commitment and leadership and encourage commitment from line management to take these goals seriously.</p> <p>For example a site manager may be invited to a board meeting to report on progress with an annual improvement plan or this may be the subject of discussion during a site visit.</p>
Specify clear requirements for the regular reporting of health and safety performance results, and review these reports at meetings for indications of trends, system breakdowns and improvement needs.	<p>Ensure you have a sound understanding of, and focus on, hazards that would have a significant impact on the business.</p> <p>Ensure reports allow tracking of both lag and lead indicators.</p> <p>Directors should satisfy themselves that there are no obstacles to free and frank reporting.</p> <p>Boards should develop their own reports on health and safety performance for shareholders and other stakeholders. Health and safety performance should be included in external reports.</p>

Review

Baseline Actions	Recommended Practice
Specify arrangements for the formal review of health and safety in the board's charter including frequency, who is involved and how, what input is required etc.	Provide opportunities for worker representatives and workers with relevant skills and knowledge to participate in internal audits and reviews and in the selection of external auditors and reviewers.
Ensure that input to the formal review includes audits (internal and external), system reviews, performance results, significant incidents, organisational changes and benchmark data.	Periodically commission a culture survey to assist the review.
As an outcome from the review determine an action plan and track progress.	