

SAFETY  
CULTURE  
SNAPSHOT

# *User Guide*



# *Using the Safety Culture Snapshot*

## Introduction

A positive safety culture means a safer, healthier and more productive workplace. And like any aspect of an effective business, growing a positive safety culture requires a commitment of time, resources and focused actions. The Safety Culture Snapshot can help your workplace make a start on that journey.

The Snapshot is an introductory tool that can help you assess and understand your workplace's safety culture. If used as part of a planned process, it can help to:

- Engage everyone in your workplace on health and safety
- Identify areas of strength and weakness in your safety culture
- Inform action planning to make improvements

## What it is and what it isn't

The Snapshot is only an *introductory* survey tool to help businesses interested in taking a *first step* towards a better safety culture. The Snapshot is not a comprehensive safety culture tool or a compliance management tool.

Surveys don't fix workplace problems – people, ideas and resources do. So it's best to think of the Snapshot as a *self-help diagnostic tool*. It can be a catalyst for understanding your safety culture. This may involve bringing in specialist advice along the way.

If you are looking for a more sophisticated or scientific safety culture improvement process, there are a number of existing safety culture assessment tools and workplace culture consultants operating in NZ.

## Who is it for?

The Snapshot is for workplaces motivated to improve their health and safety. More specifically, the Snapshot is for businesses that:

- understand effective health and safety is an investment, not a cost
- know there is always room for improvement
- believe their people are their most important asset.

## How to use the Snapshot

The best way to use the Snapshot is as part of a 3-phase improvement process:



# *Set up*



## Being ready

It is important to think about how ready and willing your workplace is to starting this process. Improving safety culture is not an overnight process, nor a silver bullet to all your health and safety problems. It requires sustained commitment and action across a number of parts of your workplace.

How ready your workplace is relates to:

- the state of your health and safety systems
- the condition of your tools, plant and protective equipment
- how open the business is to making changes
- a workplace's capacity to resource actions (i.e. time, people and money)

If these fundamentals need improvement, you are best to focus on these before tackling safety culture. That doesn't mean your health and safety approach needs to be perfect before you can focus on your safety culture, but it is worth thinking about where the most pressing areas of improvement are from the outset.

If your team(s) don't have elementary protective equipment, for example, or there are basic health and safety systems missing – fix those things first. Go to [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz) for practical assistance on getting the basics right. Health and safety consultants or your sector association are also good sources of information and assistance.

## Communication with your team(s)

Communicating with your teams is really important to manage expectations and get buy-in to looking at your safety culture. It is critical that your team(s) know what is happening and why, what they need to do and how the process will unfold over time.

Practically, make sure you have thought about:

- how you will keep people informed and involved  
i.e. newsletters, health and safety meetings, messages from the manager/owner
- who the messages will come from  
i.e. there is real value in the owner or business leader delivering important messages, it signals commitment from the top
- the language skills of the audience  
i.e. if your team(s) have reading or language challenges, then obviously a long, written newsletter isn't going to work
- being clear about timing, expectations and process  
i.e. what's happening next and when

# *Implementation*



## Survey distribution and collection

Once your team(s) know the survey is coming you will need to distribute the surveys. This is simple, but still needs to be planned.

Practical considerations include:

- Are there any people with reading challenges? If so, can someone help them complete the survey?
- Who will ensure the surveys are distributed and collected?
- Will you give your team(s) time to complete the surveys? e.g an extra 5–10 minutes at smoko?
- How will you respect confidentiality?

Go to [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz) to download the survey forms. Alternatively, you can photocopy the survey form in this pack.

## Reminders and follow-up

People will need reminders. You will need to follow-up with your team(s) to ensure a reasonable response rate. Practical ideas for improving response rates include:

- Ensuring your team(s) know the survey is coming
- Having a clear timeframe for completion
- Making someone responsible for following up
- Sending a reminder by e-mails, at toolbox meetings, through newsletters
- Having a prize for the team with the best response rate (if more than one team)

*Follow-through*



## Analysis of the survey results

Once the surveys have been completed and collected, the critical next step is to analyse the results. The analysis does not need to be sophisticated. Remember, the Snapshot is just that, a snapshot. It will help highlight some areas to look at in more detail.

You could simply lay the completed surveys out on a table and look across the category scores from your teams for areas of strength or weakness. Alternatively, you can enter the category results into a spreadsheet to help analyse the results.

Either way, it's useful to identify:

- the strongest safety culture categories
- the weakest safety culture categories
- the safety culture categories with a wide range of perceptions

The *high scoring categories* (18 or higher) highlight where your workplace is probably getting things right. Think about what you are doing in that category that is making a positive difference and make sure you *build and consolidate* that strength.

The *low scoring categories* (under 18), are red flag areas to *explore and improve*. If there is agreement that a particular category is not strong, then clearly you need to drill into this area more. Equally, it is worth exploring the categories where the *scores across your team(s)* are wide ranging.

Think about what's happening in your workplace that could be impacting on these scores. Are there big differences between management and the frontline's perceptions of a particular category? For example, if management all think safety communication is 'always' effective, and the employees feel that is 'rarely' effective, it is likely that there is something worth exploring in that category.

Equally, have a look through any free text comments that people might have made. These can give you a more colourful sense of where the room for improvement and consolidation are.

The more you want out of the process, the more time may want to spend on understanding the results. But remember, the Snapshot is the catalyst not the answer. Think about who you could talk to get a better understanding of an area of strength or weakness (i.e. the foreman, some team members, a consultant). Also, think about other sources of business information to get a better understanding (i.e. near miss reports, loss time injuries, equipment damage).

## Communicating back to your teams

By this time your team(s) will have heard about the survey, probably talked about it with their workmates and spent time completing it. That's why it is really important to maintain integrity in the process and respect the contribution of your team(s) by providing timely feedback. If this does not happen, your team(s) will quickly lose any confidence in the process.

As soon as you can, let your team(s) see the results and any themes or ideas that emerged from the findings. Invite their ideas for making some improvements. Newsletters, team meetings, and workplace visits from the manager or owner are all effective means of getting your team(s) involved in identifying some solutions.

## Action planning

The Snapshot is a self-help diagnostic tool that can act as a catalyst for taking action and improving your workplace's safety culture. Action planning is the most important stage of the Snapshot process.

The only way to make a healthy, safe and productive workplace is by taking smart, sustained and small steps. A good action plan maps out those steps in a logical and clear way. There are 4 key steps to think about when you are developing an action plan:

1. Understand the problem
2. Clarify the goals
3. Determine who should be involved
4. Make the plan

## Developing an Effective Action Plan

Key Steps	Things to think about
<p>1. <i>Understand the problem(s)</i></p>	<p>The Snapshot results provide you a start point to understanding the problems. It will give you some 'red flag' areas to drill into.</p> <p>Snapshot results provide one stream of data. But don't forget the other sources of data you collect, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lost time injuries</li><li>• serious harm reports</li><li>• near miss reports</li><li>• equipment or plant damage</li><li>• feedback from team meetings</li></ul> <p>Using the Snapshot results in combination with these other sources of information will give you a fuller picture of where the opportunities for improvement are.</p> <p>Remember, the Snapshot is just an introductory self-help diagnostic tool. You may need to talk with your teams more, or get the help of your accountant, industry association, local Chamber of Commerce or a consultant to get to the bottom of the problem area.</p>
<p>2. <i>Clarify the goal(s)</i></p>	<p>Once you have a better understanding of the problem, you can start thinking about what you actually want to change or achieve. Equally, you need to think about how you will know when you have fixed the problem.</p>
<p>3. <i>Determine who should be involved</i></p>	<p>Be inclusive. Health and safety issues impact on everyone, and therefore need a business-wide solution. Include your foremen, supervisors and health &amp; safety representatives.</p>
<p>4. <i>Make an Action Plan</i></p>	<p>The final step is actually making some concrete actions to fix the problem. The action plan outlines the things you will do to get your ideas off the drawing board and into reality.</p> <p>Any action plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What will happen</li><li>• Who will do it</li><li>• When it will happen</li><li>• What's needed to make it happen (i.e., money, personnel, time)</li><li>• What barriers could stop it happening (e.g., time, resources)</li><li>• Communication – who needs to know</li></ul>

## Action Planning Support Resources

### Action Planning Template

The action planning template assists you to develop an effective action plan by outlining some basic questions to help you work through the planning process systematically. There is also an example action plan to show you what they can look like.

### Safety Briefings

It can sometimes be difficult to know where to start with understanding the scope and nature of a problem let alone finding solutions. To help spark some ideas, look through the 12 Safety Briefings. These briefings include simple background information and some practical ideas on:

- each safety culture category and why it is important
- additional questions to help identify the cause and nature of problems
- potential actions to do things differently

Safety Culture Snapshot Category	Relevant Safety Briefing
<i>Communicating Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety communications</li><li>• Relationships on site</li></ul>
<i>Leading Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risk taking</li><li>• Managing work pressures</li><li>• Management's leadership commitment to safety</li></ul>
<i>Knowing Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Training</li></ul>
<i>Resourcing Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rewards</li><li>• Resourcing</li></ul>
<i>Reporting &amp; Learning for Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reporting and investigating</li><li>• Learning from mistakes</li><li>• Safety systems and procedures</li></ul>
<i>Involving for Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employee involvement</li></ul>

## Coaching for Safety

In addition to the Safety Briefings, a set of very elementary resources have been developed to support you taking safety onto the worksite. A good sports team needs a good coach, and it is the same with safety. These coaching resources summarise some of the key skills required to coach teams for safety.

They can be used to help facilitate the on-going day-to-day process for achieving, maintaining and improving safety performance. The Coaching for Safety resources provide simple guidance on:

1. Listening
2. Questioning
3. Giving Feedback
4. Holding effective team meetings
5. Facilitating effective meetings
6. Diagnosing problem behaviours
7. Setting health and safety objectives and targets

But remember, *knowing what to do* is one thing; *being able to do it* is another. The Coaching for Safety resources simply highlight the types of skills and approaches that make a good coach. Actually building or improving these skills takes time, effort and, very often, help.

There is a range of organisations and associations that can help you build these skills, such as:

- your local Chambers of Commerce
- your industry association
- Business Mentors NZ
- Toastmasters NZ.

