Health & Safety Governance self-assessment review

The purpose of this review is to allow officers to assess their own approach and practices against the guidance laid out in the H&S Governance – A Good Practice Guide.

The review is separated into two sections. The group review is designed primarily for governance groups, usually Boards, to work through together. This is based on the principles. The individual assessment is for officers to use for their own benefit and is based on the 5Cs. They can, however, each be used in either way based on your preference.

There is deliberately no scoring system and no reference to 'performance levels', 'good practice' or similar concepts. Assessments like this are very subjective and there is little value to be gained in trying to achieve specific scores. Instead, focus on making improvements where needed and consider factors such as:

- Where results differ from your preconceptions
- Where there are obvious areas of strength or weakness
- Where there are noticeable differences of opinion

Where any of these are identified, consider the guidance provided in the main text when developing improvements.

Group Review

These questions do not replicate those from the guide. They are related questions that can further extend the discussion and/or self-reflection.

Questions	Assessment		
Foundations			
How well do we work together as a team? Do we: • Balance each other well, both in skills and approach? • Challenge each other constructively? • Review our own performance on a regular basis? • Commission independent evaluation of our effectiveness?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
How well do we keep abreast of good practice in governance as well as in technical areas of our operation?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
What is our relationship like with the CEO and the Management team?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Questions	Assessment		
How robust and comprehensive are our governance processes? Do they provide rigour without paperwork overload?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Learn and Develop			
Does the formal process we have in place for learning about the organisation meet our needs? Does it balance site visits with deep dives, expert advice and formal training? Are we confident that we have enough knowledge to make informed and effective decisions that impact on health and safety?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Are our conversations based on good knowledge of H&S concepts? Do they recognise: • How systems drive behaviour and decision making? • The need to build capacity into the system to manage unexpected situations? • That H&S management systems are imperfect and need workers to make them successful?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
How well do our interactions with workers centre on learning more about their context and the risks they face? Do they help us understand: • Daily pressures and where work goals might conflict with each other? • The reality of work as done, rather than work as imagined? • Where work varies from what was intended and what workarounds and innovations are needed to manage that? • Implications for vulnerable worker groups?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
How often do our discussions of incidents and issues focus on 'what happened and how?' to enable systemic improvements and learning, rather than 'who and why?' that may lead to blaming individuals?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Questions	Assessment		

Anticipate and Understand

Questions	Assessment		
Do we explicitly consider what conditions need to be in place to deliver good work under expected and unexpected circumstances? Do we then review our provision of resources, training, equipment and other factors to ensure those conditions are present as consistently as possible?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
When we develop strategic objectives for the organisation, do we consider the potential impact on the health and safety of our workers and other people we may interact with, even when those objectives are not obviously H&S related?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Do we adequately scan ahead and develop scenarios that may arise when considering the broader environment in which we operate? Do we have plans in place for those scenarios that may have significant consequences?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Do we carefully consider how external and internal changes will affect our future work and the capacity to deliver it safely?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Who is in our ecosystem that we share overlapping duties with? How have we considered those?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Plan and Resource

Questions	Assessment		
Do we have multiple, independent routes available for feedback to help us plan for what is needed? How often do we hear from people other than senior management/ H&S Manager?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Do we discuss the complexity of the work environment and factor in how to plan for complex work that is dynamic and constantly changing? Does this include: • Recognising that there is not usually a single right answer to problems? • Supporting trials and experiments that seek to test possible solutions? • Encouraging the input of a diverse range of views into planning processes?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Do we explore whether there are good feedback loops available for workers to share how well resources are being allocated?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Questions	Assessment		

When management presents plans and resource requests, do we delve into how the requirements have been identified, including:

- Who was involved in developing them?
- What assumptions have been made and what are those based on?
- Have they been developed based on a verified understanding of what capacity is required to deliver good work?
- What contingencies and accuracy ranges are included to make sure that resources are not too tight?

	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Trust and Verify

How much effort do we spend ensuring the people who advise us on H&S matters are reliable and competent? Do we know, for example, if our internal audit is carried out by H&S experts, or generalist auditors?

	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Do the reports and information that we get provide verification that our systems and processes are working effectively?

	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Are verification processes tightly focused on those areas and risks that are most important, rather than overloading us with data on minor issues? Does this include:

- Information about critical risks and their controls?
- Demonstration of the effectiveness of controls?

	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Do our verification processes take account of work actually done, rather than what is laid out in procedures? Do they show us when variation from work-as-designed takes place and whether that variation is innovation to learn from or unnecessary risk that needs support to manage?

	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Monitor and Respond

Do we, as a group, respond constructively to bad news so that people are comfortable delivering it?

	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Questions	Assessment		
Do we actively seek narrative feedback and look for insights into those areas that are difficult to measure? Does this include things such as: • Safety climate? • Relationships? • Psychological safety? • Effectiveness of our H&S approach? • Leadership?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Do we monitor work ourselves through site learning visits to understand the complexity and real-world issues faced by our workers?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength
Do our indicators and reports give us genuine insights into the capacity of the organisation to deliver safe work? Can we genuinely connect the reported information to the conditions necessary for safe work?	Needs attention	Acceptable	Strength

Individual Review

This review collates the questions from the guide but provides an opportunity to consider specific examples when assessing yourself against them. This helps develop an objective assessment.

Once completed, consider asking someone else to assess you and compare the results and consider combining findings across your governance group and seeing how well-balanced it is across all areas.

5Cs

Courage

Question   What do I do to create a constructive environment for those bringing us information?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   When was the last time I said, "I don't know" or "I don't understand"?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I speak up if I hold a different view to the rest of the group?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I actively encourage people to air different perspectives and advocate for diversity of input particularly from vulnerable groups, or those with a different cultural perspective?

Answer, including specific examples

5Cs

Question   When I am challenged, do I respond to this in a constructive manner and seek to understand, then improve?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Am I comfortable displaying vulnerability or is that seen as a sign of weakness?

Answer, including specific examples

Capability

Question   What personal development in H&S have I had in the last few months? Is that enough? Do I have a future development plan?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I genuinely understand enough about what makes good H&S happen?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Who have I listened to outside of my immediate governance contacts for greater understanding of work?

Answer, including specific examples

5Cs

Question   Have I discussed capability/ experience with fellow officers to make sure we have the right mix of skills and knowledge?

Answer, including specific examples

Curiosity

Question   Do I accept the reports presented by management or do I follow up with curiosity to understand more, probing beneath the surface to make sure systems are effective and that organisational culture is supportive?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I know what our people really think? How do I hear their authentic voice especially those that may be reluctant to speak up?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I think about health and safety implications in relation to our core business processes such as procurement, competence management, asset management, business planning, M&A, incentive schemes, goal setting etc?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I ask questions that I genuinely don't know the answer to, rather than asking to confirm existing beliefs?

Answer, including specific examples

5Cs

Context

Question   Do I keep up to date with the external factors in our industry that are influencing H&S? What's changing? How can we influence them?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I understand the day-to-day pressures of our front-line workers and how organisational decisions affect them?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I know what may cause internal conflict with H&S outcomes in areas such as work planning, priorities and resourcing?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I understand the demographics of our workforce and the particular needs of vulnerable groups?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   When did I last step back and consider the broader operating environment?

Answer, including specific examples

5Cs

Question   How have I made sure that external voices are invited into H&S discussions?

Answer, including specific examples

Care

Question   How do I express my concern for our people in a way that is genuine, culturally appropriate and likely to be believed?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   How do I demonstrate that safety must be a core value of the organisation and that safety cannot be sacrificed for productivity and performance?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   How is my concern for our people's health and safety, and equitable outcomes for all workers, reflected in my actions?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   When responding to events how do I make sure people are put at the centre of things?

Answer, including specific examples

5Cs

Question   Do I know how we treat injured workers and get them back to work?

Answer, including specific examples

Question   Do I know what our people think about the process?

Answer, including specific examples