

A Brief Introduction to Health and Safety Planning

Planning is the key to ensuring that health and safety measures really work. Planning involves the setting of measurable objectives to be achieved, the identification of hazards, the assessment of risk, the implementation of standards of performance and the development of a positive safety culture. These things will not happen by themselves, they need to be carefully planned, co-ordinated and implemented and understood by all.

The Health and Safety Executive identify the key elements of a successful Health and Safety Management Strategy as:

- Policy;
- Organisation;
- Planning and implementing;
- Measuring performance; and
- Reviewing and auditing.

The results of planning need to be recorded in writing. All organisations should be pro-active with their management processes, continually checking that standards are being met. As an organisation we can't wait until something goes wrong such as an accident, injury or dangerous occurrence before we review our safety procedures. North Lanarkshire Council will endeavour to be proactive, not reactive!

Proactive Planning

There is an expectation that each Service will outline its own health and safety plan for each year. In pursuit of this plan some forethought will be required to ensure the correct areas of work are focused on. This may well require some discussion and consultation and include such things as:

- identification of hazards and the assessment of risks and the means for their elimination/control;
- agreement of health and safety targets with managers, supervisors and team members that go beyond simple safety compliance;
- design of tasks, processes, equipment, products and services with regard to health and safety;
- establishment of safe systems of work;
- establishment of procedures to deal with serious and imminent danger;
- means of ensuring co-operation with other employers, contractors and neighbours etc;
- setting of standards against which health and safety performance can be measured.

Standards help to build a positive culture within the workforce and to control risks. They should identify who does what, when and with what results.

Standards can be set for a range of topics and circumstances and these might fall into the following broad headings:

- Premises, places of work and for environmental control;
- Plant and substances, purchase, supply, transport, storage and use;
- Procedures, design of jobs and the way work is carried out;
- People, training and supervision;
- Products and services, design, delivery, transport and storage.

Is the plan working?

Over the lifetime of the plan some monitoring work will be required to ensure the aims outlined in the plan are being achieved. Measurable objectives and performance standards, with regard to physical resources, human resources and information, need to be set as part of this process

Active and reactive monitoring arrangements need to ensure that the objectives and performance standards are being met in practice. Auditing should ensure that the whole system for setting, implementing and measuring standards is effective. Monitoring should be undertaken by local managers, Service health and safety teams and the corporate health and safety team. Trade Unions also play an important role in the monitoring of health and safety standards.

The Council's annual health and safety plan is presented to Policy and Resources (HR) Sub Committee each year around August or September. Service produced plans are considered at local Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings and Health and Safety Forums.

The planning process seeks the views of all relevant stakeholders and employees can provide input to this process through their line manager, local health and safety forum, their trade union representative, service health and safety teams or the principal health and safety officer.

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