

# Strategic Health and Safety Audit



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is well known that organisations can maintain and improve their ability to manage risks by learning from experience through the use of audits and performance reviews. Auditing enables an organisation to reinforce, maintain and develop its ability to reduce risks as far as possible and to ensure the continued effectiveness of their arrangements for managing health and safety.
- 1.2 Quantum Compliance has developed a structured auditing process designed to independently and accurately collect information on the efficiency, effectiveness and reliability of an organisation's current health and safety arrangements.
- 1.3 The Strategic Audit from Quantum Compliance aims to establish that:
- appropriate management arrangements are in place;
  - adequate risk control systems exist; and
  - appropriate workplace precautions are in place.

## 2. Quantum Compliance's Approach

- 2.1 Our approach is quite simply to:
- Deliver services to the very highest levels of professional integrity and competence.
  - Apply intelligence to the work in hand - we believe that risk management information needs to be put into meaningful context.
- 2.2 Our approach centres on our belief that effective communication needs to be maintained between ourselves and managers/employees at all stages of the audit process. This ensures the audit is not merely perceived as a fault-finding activity, but as a valuable contribution to improving the arrangements for managing health and safety within an organisation. Therefore, the audit approach recognises positive achievements as well as areas requiring improvement.
- 2.3 The methodology for undertaking the Strategic Audit is described by the following key stages:

### **Key Stage 1 – Understanding the organisation and discussing and agreeing objectives and scope of the audit**

At the beginning of the process Quantum Compliance would:

- Understand the organisation in terms of what it does, how it is structured and organised and how it is managed.
- Agree the objectives and scope of the audit in terms of the key people to be interviewed, and the number of sites/activities to be included.
- Establish timelines for delivering the various stages of the process.
- Determine the format of the audit report and the way in which its findings would be communicated to the organisation's managers/directors.

### **Key Stage 2 – Collecting Information**

The method of collecting health and safety information would be determined as part of the scoping exercise described in key stage 1. Furthermore, the scoping exercise would also help determine how much sampling needs to be done to make a reliable assessment.

The nature and complexity of the audit would vary according to the:

- objectives and scope;
- the size, sophistication and complexity of the organisation; and
- the maturity of the existing health and safety arrangements.

Information would be collected via three main sources:

- Interviewing individuals – to gain information about the operation of the health and safety management arrangements and the perceptions, knowledge, understanding, managing practices, skill and competence of managers and employees at various levels.
- Examining documents – assessing records, performance standards, procedures and instructions for completeness, accuracy and reliability.
- Visual observation – of physical conditions and work activities to examine compliance with legal requirements and verify implementation and effectiveness of workplace precautions.

### **Key Stage 3 – Making Judgements**

The adequacy of the health and safety arrangements would be judged against legal standards, HSE guidance and applicable industry standards. In particular, judgements can be made against the following recognised standards:

- HSG 65 – Successful Health and Safety management.
- Occupational Health and Safety Series (OHSAS) 18001.

The areas of health and safety management that would be covered by the audit would include:

- Policy – an effective health and safety policy sets a clear direction for the organisation to follow.
- Organisation – an effective management structure and arrangements must be in place for delivering the policy.
- Planning and implementation – a planned and systematic approach to implementing the health and safety policy is achieved through an effective health and safety management system.
- Performance measurement – measuring performance against an agreed standard would reveal when and where improvement is needed.
- Auditing and reviewing performance – enables the organisation to learn from all relevant experience and to apply the lessons.

## **3. Report Format**

- 3.1 The specific format of the Strategic Audit report would be bespoke to the client, however, it would include the following:

- Introduction – covering the scope and objectives of the audit.
  - Executive Summary – including a summary of the key findings and conclusions.
  - Health and Safety Risk Profile – a quantified measurement of risk for the organisation which focuses on key health and safety criteria.
  - Audit Findings – containing the qualitative positive as well as negative findings.
  - Action Plan – a prioritised plan detailing any recommended improvements.
- 3.2 With specific reference to the action plan, recommendations would be prioritised on the likelihood of enforcement action being taken, i.e. the failure would result in:
- Prosecution and or Prohibition Notice being served.
  - Improvement Notice being served.
  - Warning letter being received.
  - Advice being issued.
- Note: in relation to the audit findings and action plan items, these would be backed up with actual practical examples to provide illustrations to managers why these observations are being made.
- 3.3 The SHSA report would be initially presented in draft format to ensure that in the client’s opinion, the scope and objectives have been strictly adhered to, as well as ensuring the style etc is acceptable. Once comments have been received from the client, the final version would be issued.



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