



Empowering People & Culture

5 Common Health & Safety Management Failures

1. Failure to Conduct (or act on) Suitable Risk Assessments:

Many organisations either bypass formal risk assessments entirely or conduct them superficially, resulting in critical hazards going unnoticed.

Even when thorough assessments are performed and potential risks are identified, the failure to implement the recommended control measures renders the entire exercise futile.

This lapse creates a dangerous illusion of safety, leaving employees exposed to preventable dangers.





2. Inadequate Training and Supervision:

This isn't just about giving new workers a handbook; it's about managers failing to ensure that every worker, even experienced ones, receives ongoing, job-specific safety training.

They also fail to supervise and step in when they see unsafe behaviours or shortcuts being taken.

3. The "Tick-Box" Mentality (Lack of Priority):



Many managers treat health and safety as a necessary evil or an administrative task to be rushed through, rather than a core operational priority.

When management doesn't truly value safety, it leads to budget cuts, under-resourced H&S teams, and reactive compliance—waiting for an auditor or an incident before taking action.

4. Poor Communication and Consultation:

Safety information should flow in both directions.

Management fails when they don't clearly communicate policies and procedures (often because the policies are too complex).

More importantly, they fail when they don't listen and consult with workers who are actually doing the job and know the risks best.





INVESTIGATION

5. Failure to Learn from Mistakes (Weak Investigation):

When an incident or a near-miss occurs, managers often stop the investigation after finding the worker who made the mistake.

The real failure is not looking deeper to find the systemic fault—the manager who didn't train, the faulty process, or the missing resource. Failure to investigate the root cause means the same incident will likely happen again.

- ❏ These failures all come back to a lack of active leadership and accountability from the management team, which is why a proactive strategy is so important!

Moving Forward - 5 Simple Health & Safety Management Checkpoints

Moving past the reactive "tick-box" compliance takes just a few key shifts in management focus.

Use this quick checklist to see if your organisation has simple, foundational controls in place to prevent the costly incidents that stem from systemic management failure.



Managerial Safety Accountability

The Checkpoint: Are all managers specifically trained on their *individual* health and safety responsibilities and performance goals?

Why it matters: Safety must be a measured part of every manager's job, not just a topic for the H&S department.

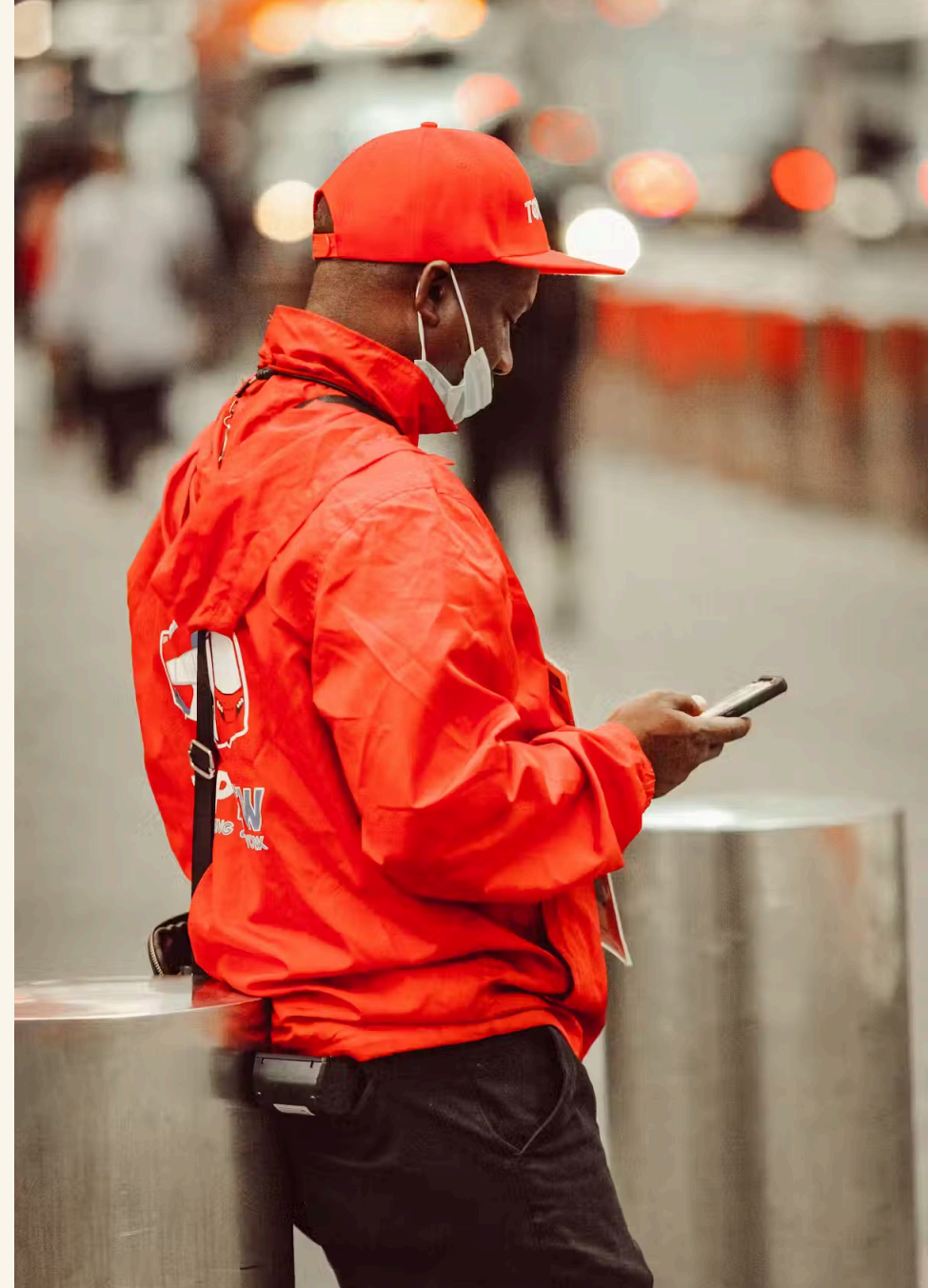
When managers feel truly accountable for safety outcomes, it shifts their mindset from passive obedience to active leadership.

Near-Miss and Hazard Reporting System

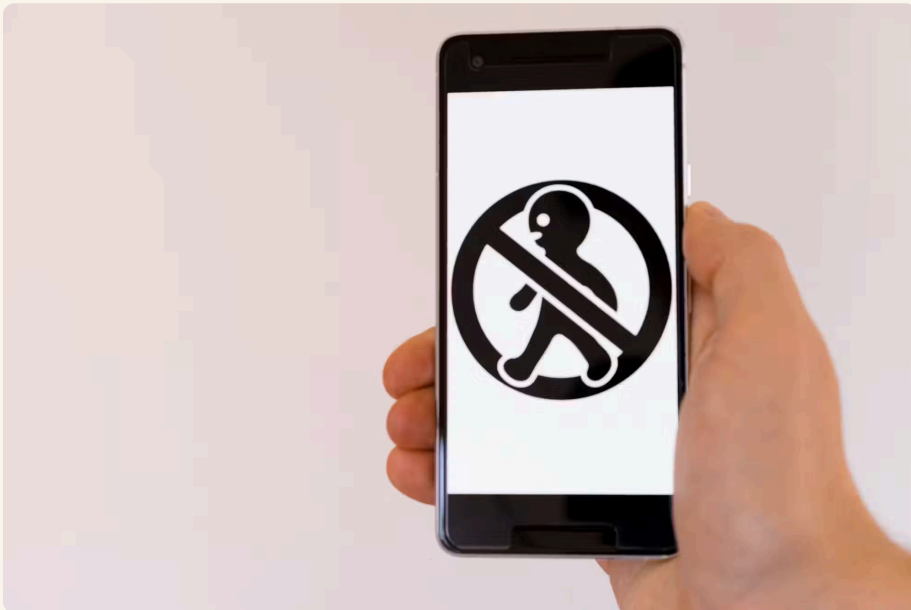
The Checkpoint: Is there a simple, 60-second, no-blame mechanism for all staff to report a hazard or near-miss?

Why it matters: Near-misses are free lessons. They highlight risks before they result in injury, but only if they are reported.

If the system is complex or punishes the reporter, you lose your most valuable preventative data.



Policy Accessibility and Simplicity



The Checkpoint: Can any employee easily locate the key Health & Safety policy documents on their mobile device or workstation in under one minute? Is the language simple and jargon-free?

Why it matters: A complex, hard-to-find policy is a policy that doesn't exist to your staff.

Simple, accessible documentation ensures compliance is practical and not a hurdle.

Senior Leadership Review Frequency

The Checkpoint: Does senior management review accident and incident data (including near-miss trends) at least monthly, assigning specific owners and deadlines for corrective actions?

Why it matters: When leaders regularly review safety data, it signals that H&S is a strategic priority, not just an administrative one.

This ensures corrective actions are funded, prioritised, and followed through.





New Process/Equipment Safety Sign-Off

The Checkpoint: Before any new piece of equipment or new work process is introduced, is a simple, documented risk assessment signed off by the responsible manager and a worker representative?

Why it matters: Change introduces new risk. By making a managerial risk assessment a mandatory step before launching anything new, you ensure that safety is proactively baked into operations, preventing issues before they start.