



LEARNING OUTCOMES

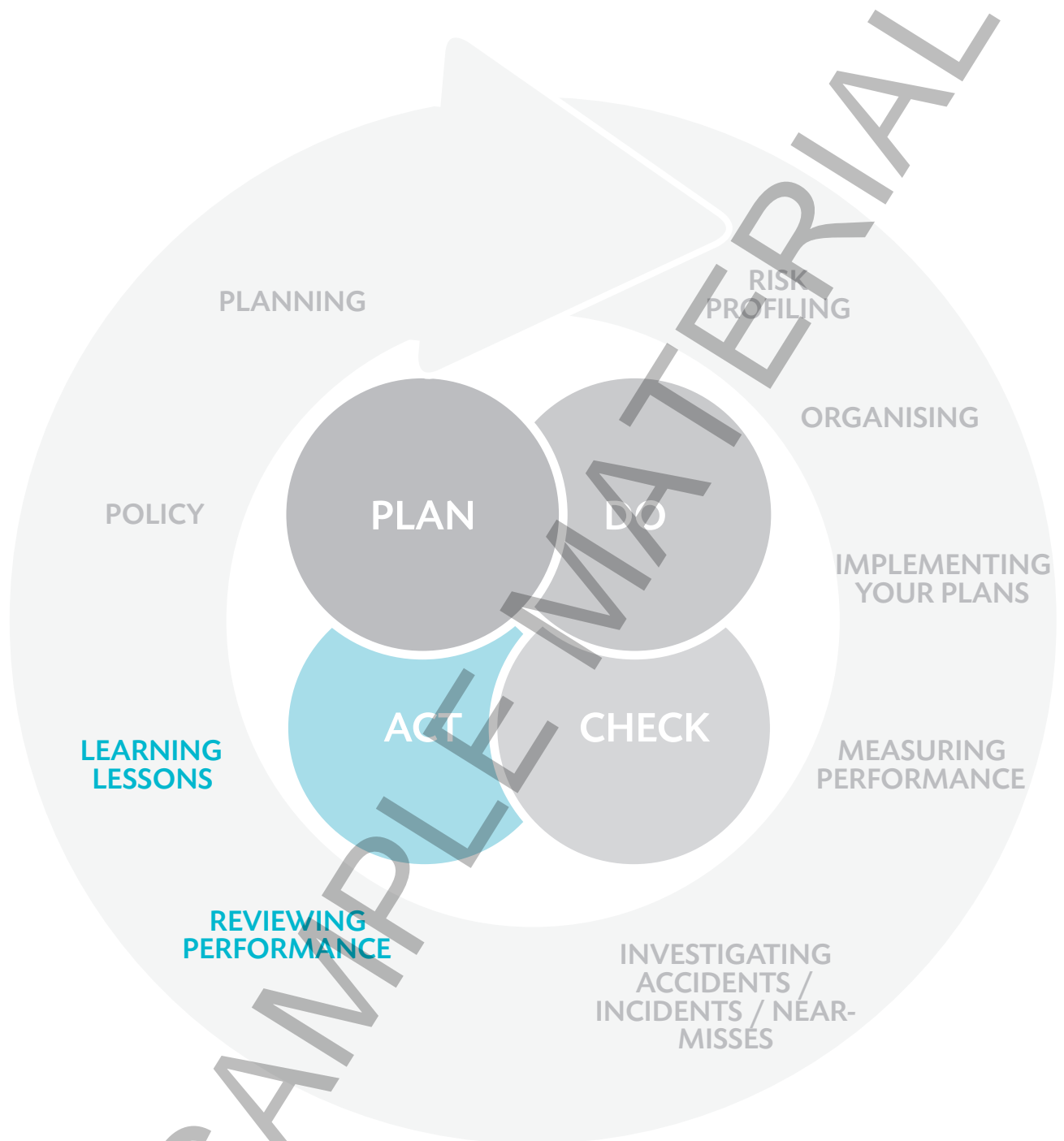
On completion of this module, you should be able to outline the importance of:

- 1 The role and purpose of top-level reviews of health and safety.
.....
- 2 Key outcomes of the top-level reviews:
 - Determining whether policy is in line with organisational priorities and plans.
 - Determining whether the health and safety management system is reporting effectively.
 - Identifying shortcomings and impact of board decisions.
 - Deciding actions to address any weaknesses......
- 3 Annual reporting.
.....
- 4 Continuous improvement.
.....

Contents

REVIEWING HEALTH AND SAFETY	5-3
Purpose of Regular Reviews	5-4
Continuous Improvement	5-5
Learning Lessons	5-6
Revision Questions	5-6
SUMMARY	5-7

RRC SAMPLE MATERIAL



Based on original image from INDG417: Leading health and Safety at Work
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg417.pdf

“A formal boardroom review of health and safety performance is essential. It allows the board to establish whether the essential health and safety principles – strong and active leadership, worker involvement, and assessment and review – have been embedded in the organisation. It tells you whether your system is effective in managing risk and protecting people.”

Source: INDG417: Leading health and safety, HSE, 2013
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg417.pdf, accessed 01/10/13

KEY INFORMATION

- Health and safety performance should be reviewed by directors on a routine basis to ensure that management systems are working effectively.
- Reviewing performance uses data gathered from various sources to make a judgment about the achievement of the organisations aims and objectives.
- Directors have a role in evaluating this information so that appropriate priorities and resources can be allocated.
- Reviews enable action to be taken so that health and safety performance is continuously improved.
- It is important that organisations learn the right lessons from events so that effective corrective action can be taken.

PURPOSE OF REGULAR REVIEWS

Reviewing health and safety performance is a key part of any health and safety management system. Reviews should be carried out by managers at all levels within the organisation on a scheduled routine basis. Each review is likely to have a different focus and will be conducted at different intervals, e.g., a review of local department performance might be conducted monthly by the relevant department manager. A review of safety management performance should be undertaken at board level on at least an annual basis.

The essence of the review process is to answer the questions:

- Are we on target?
- If not, why not?
- What do we have to change?

An important aspect of reviewing is that it closes the loop. The outcomes of the review become the plan for what to do next with health and safety.

CASE STUDY

One objective for an organisation set by the board of directors is to achieve a 20% reduction in the lost-time accident incidence rate within a three year timescale.

The board reviewed performance at the end of the first year; a reduction of only 2% had been achieved:

- **Are we on target?**
No the target will be missed if this performance continues.
- **If not, why not?**
Further enquiry revealed poor investigation and follow up of lost-time accidents meaning that similar types of accident were recurring.
- **What do we have to change?**
Improved focus on identifying effective corrective action flowing on from good quality accident investigations that identified the real underlying causes of accidents.

As a result of the review, senior management may reassess the policy and update it as required. The important question is:

“Does the health and safety policy reflect the current priorities, plans and targets of the organisation?”

Reviews will confirm whether health and safety arrangements still make sense. They allow changes in the health and safety environment in the business to be checked. This will enable organisations to stop doing things that are no longer necessary while allowing appropriate responses to new risks. Reviewing also provides an opportunity to celebrate and promote health and safety successes.

Most importantly, Directors should use the review process as an opportunity to prioritise and allocate resources. What are the new priorities for the organisation in light of the review? What resources need to be provided to allow these priorities to be achieved?



Routine performance review meeting

Records of routine performance reviews should be kept to demonstrate that these reviews are taking place. These records can themselves be used as a performance indicator and form a data source for the review process.

Routine performance reviews are sometimes required by a specific management standard (e.g. OHSAS 18001) and, where this is the case, records of reviews may be mandatory to prove compliance with the standard.

The board/senior team may be required to make a declaration or statement based on this review. It is increasingly common for a report of the annual review to be recorded in an organisations' annual report to investors and stakeholders. Third parties (e.g. clients) increasingly require partner organisations to report health and safety performance publicly. This reporting is a mandatory requirement for directors of companies listed on the London Stock Exchange.

CASE STUDY

Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's rethought its approach to health and safety after an external audit highlighted the need for a more unified approach across the company. The key element was a health and safety vision, set out by the group HR director and backed by a plan that included targets over three years.

As part of the plan, all board directors were given training on health and safety responsibilities. Health and safety now regularly features on board agendas. The business benefits include:

- 17% reduction in sickness absence;
- 28% reduction in reportable incidents;
- improved morale and pride in working for the company, as indicated by colleague surveys.

Source: INDG417: Leading health and safety, HSE, 2013
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg417.pdf, accessed 01/10/13

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The purpose of the review process at all levels of the organisation is to answer the three questions mentioned earlier:

- Are we on target?
- If not, why not?
- What do we have to change?

Since strategic targets are set by senior management, it makes sense for these targets to be filtered down through the organisation:

- **Senior management** set strategic targets.
- **Middle and junior management** review performance and set local targets that will collectively allow the strategic targets to be achieved.

This requires that health and safety reviews, at all levels, feed directly into action plans. These plans should identify the actions to be taken by responsible persons by appropriate deadlines. In this way **continuous improvement** of health and safety performance can be achieved.

One important aspect of continuous improvement is that lessons are learnt from previous experiences.

LEARNING LESSONS

After an accident or case of ill health, many organisations find they already had systems, rules, procedures or instructions that would have prevented the event but were not complied with. The underlying causes often lie in management arrangements which are designed without taking proper account of human factors, or inappropriate actions that are condoned implicitly or explicitly by management. If health and safety performance is to improve then the organisation has to be robust enough to honestly appraise its failings and act on them.

Organisational learning is a key aspect of health and safety management. If reporting and follow-up systems are not fit for purpose, for example if a blame culture acts as a disincentive to reporting near-misses, then valuable knowledge will be lost. If the root causes of events are not identified and communicated throughout the organisation, this makes a recurrence more likely. In many cases, artificial barriers within an organisation inhibit organisational learning. For example, the learning from an accident in one department is restricted within that one department as a result of poor horizontal communication and a silo mentality.

To learn lessons effectively, organisations have to take account of **human factors**. These are the organisational, job and individual factors that influence a worker's safety-related behaviour. The rather short-sighted view that workers break safety rules as a result of wilfulness or laziness and that they would behave the same wherever they work or whatever job they are doing will not deliver effective organisational learning. Recognising that the characteristics of an **organisation** (its culture, policies and arrangements, etc.); the **job** or task that a person is doing (its physical and psychological demands, etc.); and the **individual's** personal characteristics (such as their personality, attitudes and experiences, etc.), all have an influence on personal behaviour is essential for effective management of health and safety.

REVISION QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of reviewing health and safety performance?
2. Who should take part in reviews of the occupational health and safety management system?
3. How often should the board review the performance of the occupational health and safety management system?
4. What is continuous improvement?
5. What, at heart, are the three questions at the centre of the review process?

(Suggested Answers are at the end.)