



START YOUR SAFETY AND HEALTH @ WORK

A guide for small and medium sized enterprises



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Do you know that a work incident that leads to injuries or ill health can hurt your employees and eventually your productivity and business profitability? It can grind your operations to a standstill, impact staff morale, and harm your company's reputation and future opportunities.

If you can prevent work accidents, you can keep your business running smoothly and enhance your future growth. Managing safety and health at work can be simple.

This book will guide you through START, a five-stage approach:

- Set up a team
- Think and plan
- Act on your plan
- Review your plan
- Train your employees

Quick Check

SET UP A TEAM

YES NO

1. Do you have a safety and health team or committee? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 4](#)

THINK AND PLAN

2. Do you have a safety and health policy? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 6](#)
3. Do you set safety and health rules? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 6](#)
4. Do you have a plan to address safety and health issues? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 7](#)
5. Have you done your risk assessment? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 8](#)

ACT ON YOUR PLAN

6. Have you developed safe work procedures? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 10](#)
7. Do you have a maintenance programme for equipments? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 10](#)
8. Do you have an emergency plan? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 11](#)
9. Do you keep your employees informed on safety and health matters? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 12](#)

REVIEW YOUR PLAN

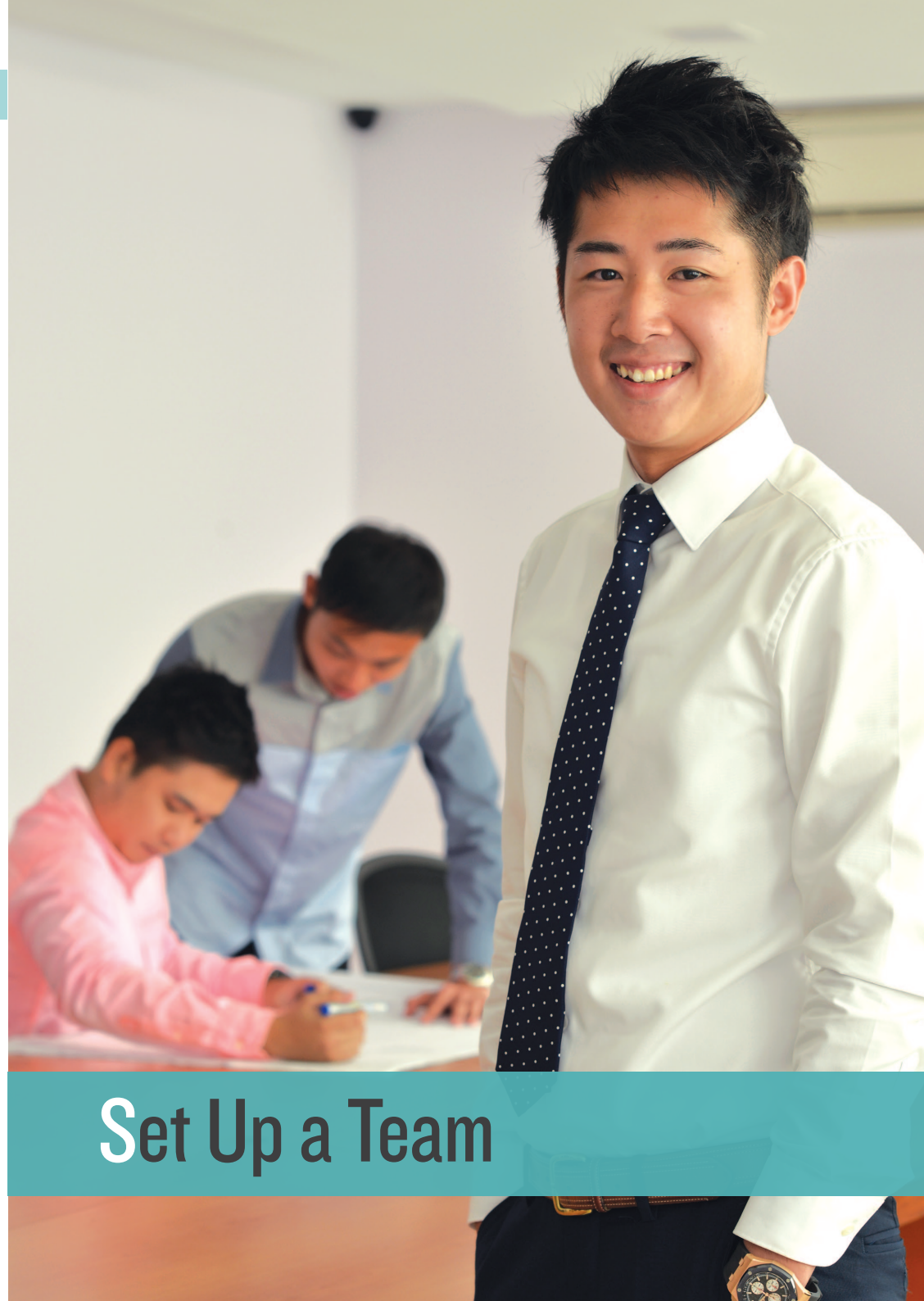
10. Do you monitor your safety and health performance? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 14](#)
11. Do you investigate and report incidents? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 15](#)

TRAIN YOUR EMPLOYEES

12. Do you provide training to your employees? ☐ ☐ [GO TO PAGE 16](#)

YESIf you've answered "yes" to all 12 questions, please continue your effort on WSH.

NOFollow the steps in the pages stated to get started on your WSH journey.



Set Up a Team

Set Up a Team

Do you have a safety and health team or committee?



DO YOU KNOW?

- It is mandatory to form a WSH Committee if your company has more than 50 employees and is regarded as a factory¹ under the WSH Act.
- The WSH Committee must meet at least once a month.
- Minutes of meeting must be recorded and filed.
- Factories that have 100 or more employees will need to appoint a WSH Officer.

Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) issues cannot be handled by one person. To address all aspects of the organisation's WSH operations, it has to be a group effort.

You may want to consider forming a team or committee to plan, develop and promote WSH. We suggest that the WSH team be made up of:

- Chairman;
- Secretary; and
- Members.

If your company has fewer than 10 employees, forming a team may not be practical. Do consider:

- Including WSH in the agenda of your company meetings; and
- Appointing a representative to handle WSH in your company.

¹ For the definition of a factory, refer to the WSH Regulatory Framework on Ministry of Manpower's website.



Think and Plan

Think and Plan

Do you have a company safety and health policy?

After forming a WSH team for your company, formulate a safety and health policy statement.

A clear and concise policy statement will reflect your company's commitment and support towards managing the wellbeing, safety and health of your staff. This statement should be signed by the business owner, managing director or CEO equivalent, to demonstrate senior management's commitment.

A good policy will consist of:

- Commitment to adhere to relevant legal requirements;
- Duties and responsibilities to ensure wellbeing, safety and health at work; and
- Commitment to continuously improve WSH performance.

DO YOU KNOW?

- The safety and health policy should be communicated to your staff.
- Place it in a visible location, such as the notice board or reception area.

Do you set basic safety and health rules?

Now that you have a safety and health policy to set your company's direction, you can move on to define basic safety and health rules for your employees, vendors, contractors and visitors.

Rules create a common understanding on what can make your workplace safer. To ensure compliance, you may want to put regular checks in place.

Some common rules and regulations could include:

- No smoking near areas where flammable materials are stored;
- Speed limit within the company compound should not exceed 20km/hr;
- No consumption of alcohol at work;
- No by-passing of emergency switch; and
- Prompt reporting of all injuries.

DO YOU KNOW?

- Rules must be documented, communicated and made easily available.
- Review of rules should be carried out periodically.
- Some organisations incorporate WSH compliance as part of staff appraisal.

Do you have a plan to address safety and health issues?



DO YOU KNOW?

As there may be a list of issues to be addressed, you need to:

- prioritise the importance;
- put a reasonable timeline to each action item;
- identify resources required; and
- identify owners for each action item.

The policy and rules form the fundamentals of WSH in the company and the WSH team can now start identifying the issues to be solved. Your WSH team can brainstorm on WSH issues with these questions.

- Have we carried out risk assessment for each work activity²?
- Do we have safety instructions for each job?
- Are our machines properly maintained to ensure safe operations?
- What should we do if there is an emergency?
- Are our employees adequately trained?
- Do we provide personal protective equipment³?
- Do we need regular inspection or audit?
- Have we addressed the personal health risks?
- Do we have health promotion programmes?

² For more information on common WSH hazards and suggested safety tips, go to *A Guide to Workplace Safety and Health: Don't ignore everyday risks at work* on the WSH Council website.

³ For information on standards for personal protective equipment, refer to Singapore Standards on SPRING Singapore's website.

Have you done your risk assessment?



DO YOU KNOW?

- It is mandatory to carry out risk assessment under the WSH (Risk Management) Regulations 2007.
- Risk assessment should be reviewed every three years, or with the occurrence of an incident or when there are major changes to the work practices or work processes.
- The WSH Council has a step by step programme called bizSAFE that helps companies to build risk management capabilities. More information on bizSAFE can be found on the WSH Council website.

By identifying the potential hazards your employees might face, you can then determine and apply appropriate control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks.

These are the basic steps to conduct risk assessment⁴ (RA).

1. Form a RA team with staff who are familiar with the work.
2. Gather information such as:
 - layout or plan of your workplace;
 - list of all work activities; and
 - list of equipment, tools and chemicals used at work.
3. Identify the hazards, including personal health risks, associated with the work activities.
4. Evaluate the risks based on how likely an incident will happen and how serious it can be.
5. Eliminate or control the risks.
6. Keep RA records and review them regularly.

⁴ For more information on risk management, refer to *Code of Practice on WSH Risk Management* on the WSH Council website.



Act on your Plan

Act on your Plan

Have you developed safe work procedures?

Documenting instructions or work procedures will ensure that knowledge is passed on and not lost.

However, it is insufficient to solely perform the job in the correct sequence and manner. Carrying out the work safely is equally important. In developing safe work procedures, you can follow these steps.

1. Identify a list of work activities.
2. Break down each activity into simple steps.
3. For each step, discuss with the RA team on how to perform it safely and minimise any health risks.

You must also ensure that plans are put in place if you have work at height activities⁵ or lifting activities⁶.

DO YOU KNOW?

Safe work procedures must be:

- documented;
- communicated; and
- reviewed when there are changes to the work activities, RA or when there are incidents.

Do you have a maintenance programme for equipments?

Defects or failure of the work equipment can turn work activities into a dangerous situation and your workers may get injured. Due to time loss from work stoppages, productivity will also be affected. Having a good maintenance programme is, therefore, essential to keep work machinery safe and reliable.

A good maintenance programme should include:

- Identifying a list of equipment;
- Setting frequency of maintenance according to manufacturer's recommendation;
- Ensuring that manufacturer's manual for maintenance is updated and available if the maintenance can be carried out in-house; and
- Training employees to use the equipment properly and safely.

Statutory equipment such as lifting equipment and pressure vessels must be licensed⁷ by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and inspected by an authorised examiner.

DO YOU KNOW?

The maintenance programme should be reviewed annually.

Do you have an emergency plan?



DO YOU KNOW?

- It would be useful to display the names of first aiders and emergency numbers in prominent locations.
- Fire extinguishers must be periodically checked and replaced when expired.
- Drills should be conducted periodically to test your plan.

First Aid

As a basic emergency preparation, your employees should have access to first aid provision such as:

- sufficient number of first-aid boxes; and
- adequate number of first aiders (For 25 to 100 employees, you need a trained first aider. Subsequently, you need to maintain the ratio of one first aider for every 100 employees.).

Fire Safety

Building owners or occupiers of certain premises need to prepare a fire emergency plan⁸ and notify the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF). All tenants should be informed of such procedures.

Spill Control

If your company handles a large quantity of chemicals, you must ensure there is an emergency plan in the event of a spill and a spill control kit to mitigate any loss of containment. Activate SCDF when the spillage is beyond your company's control.

⁵ For more information on working at height, refer to *Code of Practice on Working Safely at Height* on the WSH Council website.

⁶ For requirements of safe lifting, refer to *Code of Practice on Safe Lifting* on the WSH Council website.

⁷ For more information on licensing of equipment, visit the MOM website.

⁸ Information about the Fire Safety Plan Approval is available at the SCDF website.

Do you keep your employees informed on safety and health matters?



DO YOU KNOW?

Your employees should be informed of the following safety and health matters:

- safety and health policy;
- employees' roles and responsibilities;
- hazards, risks and control measures for the operations that they are involved in;
- safe work procedures;
- emergency procedures; and
- contact numbers of the first aider and fire warden.

Educating employees on safety and health matters is a challenge. However, with good communication and consultation, employees can be involved and informed on safety and health issues at the workplace.

Some methods of communication include:

- providing a WSH notice board;
- holding regular safety talks and screening of videos;
- distributing of safety handbooks and brochures;
- displaying WSH signs and posters; and
- organising a WSH Day annually.



Review your Plan

Review your Plan

Do you monitor your safety and health performance?



Keeping track of your company's safety and health performance will help you to monitor trends and identify gaps and areas for improvement.

Monitoring your company's WSH performance includes data gathering on:

- incident trends;
- medical leave trends
- findings from inspections;
- findings from audit; and
- feedback from employees.

It is also important to set standards and requirements for your vendors or contractors⁹. As part of your monitoring system, you should also include supervision of their safety and health performance.

You can request the following from your contractors:

- RA records;
- past safety records;
- safe work procedures; and
- their own contractor management policies.

⁹ For information, refer to WSH Guidelines Contractor Management on the WSH Council website.

Do you investigate and report incidents?

DO YOU KNOW?

- RA and safe work procedures should be reviewed when a workplace incident has occurred.
- You can also pick up important learning points from past incident cases. They can be found at the WSH Bulletins on the WSH Council website.¹⁰

Incident Reporting

As an employer, you must notify MOM of the following workplace incidents immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable¹¹:

- fatality;
- injury whereby your employee is given more than three cumulative days of medical leave; or hospitalised for at least 24 hours;
- occupational diseases; and
- dangerous occurrences.

Incident Investigation

The true cost of a workplace incident is often underestimated. To prevent an incident from recurring, investigations must be conducted¹². This will help you to find the root cause of the incident and identify gaps in your safety and health system. In conducting an investigation, you should:

- form a team;
- identify the sequence of events;
- identify root causes and their solutions; and
- develop an action plan.

¹⁰ To view past WSH-related case studies, refer to the WSH bulletins on the WSH Council website

¹¹ For information on incident reporting, refer to *Incident Reporting* on Ministry of Manpower's website.

¹² For information on conducting investigations, refer to *WSH Guidelines: Investigating Workplace Incidents for SMEs* on the WSH Council website.



Train your Employees

Train your Employees

Do you provide training to your employees?



DO YOU KNOW?

Workers from the following sectors must attend compulsory safety orientation training:

- construction;
- oil and petrochemical;
- metalworking; and
- marine.

Safety Orientation

When new workers are hired, they should undergo an in-house safety orientation course first to familiarise themselves with the new work environment.

Likewise for veteran workers in your company, they should also go for upgrading or refresher courses regularly.

When there are changes in work procedures, all workers should be informed and retrained where necessary.

Other Trainings

Many Learning Service Providers (LSP) and related courses offered by the Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC) Scheme provide a range of relevant courses for workers¹³. By undergoing related WSH training, your workers can upgrade their knowledge and skills hence improving their job performance.

¹³ For a list of Learning Service Providers (LSP) and courses provided by the Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC) Scheme, go to Ministry of Manpower's website. Note that the LSP will replace the existing Accredited Training Providers (ATP).

Other Useful Information

Financial Assistance

Financial Assistance	Description
Skills Development Fund (SDF)	A funding scheme for employers to get subsidies for course fees and absentee payroll from SDF for rank-and-file workers as well as professionals, managers, executives and technicians for pre-approved courses.
Workplace Health Promotion Grant	A funding scheme offered by the Health Promotion Board. The grant provides financial support to help SMEs establish and sustain their workplace health programmes.
Accelerated Depreciation Allowance for Noise Control	A tax incentive scheme to recover the cost of implementing noise control measures over a one-year period.
Accelerated Depreciation Allowance for Chemical Hazard Control	A tax incentive scheme to recover the costs of implementing chemical hazard control measures over a one-year period.
Productivity and Innovation Credit Scheme (PIC)	A scheme that offers tax deductions and cash payouts to companies for investing in innovations and improving productivity.
WSH Culture Fund (WCF)	A grant to help defray costs incurred in going through the CultureSAFE programme.
Others	SPRING provides schemes to assist new companies in setting up and establishing their business.

Annex A - WSH Policy Sample

Guidance Materials

These guidance materials are available on the WSH Council website at www.wshc.sg. If you would like a hardcopy, please email contact@wshc.sg. Copies are subject to availability. You can download a softcopy of the collaterals from the WSH Council website under the Resources tab.

Guidance materials	Description
Activity Based Checklist	A short one to two-page checklist that highlights the hazards specific to an activity at work. Available in both English and Mandarin.
Guidebook	A quick guide that provides information on specific work hazards and precautionary measures to take. Some examples of guidebooks are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Guidebook for Lifting Supervisors</i> - <i>Confined Space Safety Guidebook</i> - <i>Ladder Safety Guidebook</i>
Case Studies	Documented past incidents that occurred in an industry. Includes how the incidents happened and how to prevent a recurrence. Available for the following industries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Construction</i> - <i>Metalworking</i> - <i>Marine</i> - <i>Chemical</i> - <i>Logistics and Transport</i>
Step-by-Step Guide on Risk Management	Offers instructions on how to set up a Risk Management System in your workplace.
WSH Guidelines	References that provide information on identifying hazards, good WSH practices, and control measures. Some topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Safe Operation of Forklift Trucks</i> - <i>Guide to Total Workplace Safety and Health</i> - <i>Traffic Safety Management</i>
Codes of Practice	Sets the preferred work practices or standards that industry practitioners are expected to adopt when managing workplace risks. Existing codes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Working Safely at Heights</i> - <i>WSH Risk Management</i> - <i>Safe Lifting Operations in the Workplaces</i>

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICY

ABC Company is a leading consumer product factory in the metal industry. We are committed to providing staff, contractors and visitors with a healthy and safe environment.

This policy applies to the company premises, activities of the company and controlled equipment.

The company strives to fully integrate health and safety into all aspects of its activities through a continuous improvement of processes. This will be achieved by:

- Implementing and maintaining a framework that ensures the systematic management of health and safety throughout all sites and workplaces and compliance with legal and other requirements; and
- Setting measurable objectives and targets aimed at controlling higher risk activities and increasing awareness of health and safety.

Our principal goal is to improve well-being, health and safety management and to eliminate injuries and illnesses at our workplaces.

We promote a proactive health and safety management philosophy based on effective communication and consultation, the systematic identification, assessment and control of hazards and the encouragement of innovation.

SIGNATURE

Managing Director
ABC Company
June 2012

COMPANY LOGO

Revised in February 2015 by the Workplace Safety and Health Council in collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower.

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