

# Workplace Safety and Health Guidelines

Procurement in the Construction Industry



**WSHCOUNCIL**

Tripartite Alliance for  
Workplace Safety and Health



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# 1. Introduction

Singapore aims to be one of the best countries in keeping workers safe and healthy. A key target of Singapore's Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) 2028 vision is to maintain a workplace fatal injury rate of less than 1.0 per 100,000 workers by 2028. Only a handful of developed countries have achieved this.

Reducing fatal injury rates in the construction industry will be a major contributor towards attaining the WSH2028 target. With a strong correlation between construction demand and fatal injury rate of workers in the construction industry (Figure 1), there is a need to further improve WSH standards to achieve a sustained reduction in construction-related injury rates beyond 2028.

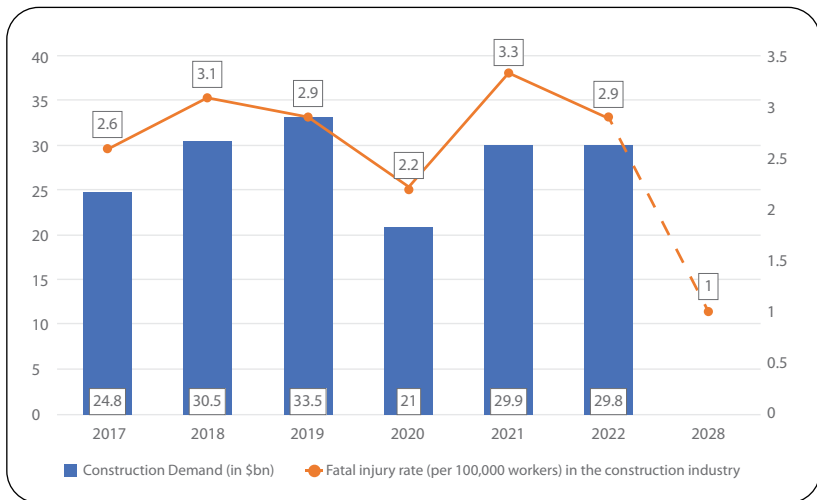


Figure 1: Fatal injury rate (per 100,000 workers) in the construction industry vs construction demand (in \$bn)

## 1.1 Role of Procurement in Strengthening WSH Outcomes

Developers, as the apex pay masters in the construction industry value chain, exert strong influence over strengthening WSH practices and culture across main and sub-contractors through their procurement contracts.

Principle 2 of the *Code of Practice on Chief Executives' and Board of Directors' WSH Duties* (ACOP) states that company directors can demonstrate leadership in improving WSH performance

and management by continuously building a strong WSH culture, setting the tone, and demonstrating visible leadership in embodying and communicating highly effective WSH standards.

One of the ways CEOs and Board directors can adopt this principle is by setting and demanding effective WSH standards and performance from their vendors and partners. These guidelines give details and examples on how construction companies, particularly developers, should design their procurement practices in support of Principle 2 of the ACOP.

## 1.2 Scope

While there are several models of construction processes (e.g. build only, design & build, etc.), this Guidelines will refer to the construction process of a typical construction project (Figure 2) and covers only the project inception stage to the construction stage.

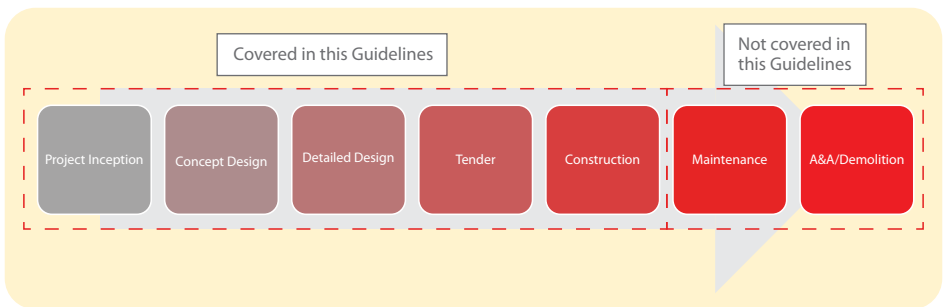


Figure 2: Different stages of the construction process in a typical construction project

While the maintenance and A&A/demolition stages are not covered in this Guidelines, the principles of procurement remain applicable. The procurement practices shared in this Guidelines should also be contextualised to the complexity, size and models of construction projects.

This Guidelines also includes recommendations which have taken into consideration the SAFE (Safety Accountability, Focus and Empowerment) measures announced by the Multi-Agency Workplace Safety and Health Taskforce (MAST<sup>1</sup>) for public sector developers (for more information on these enhancements, please refer to Annex B). Private sector developers should emulate such practices to reduce the likelihood of workplace incidents in their projects. Likewise, the good procurement practices adopted by private sector developers in this Guidelines can be considered by public sector developers.

<sup>1</sup>The Multi-Agency Workplace Safety and Health Taskforce aims to identify and implement sectoral strategies and outcomes, including incentivising good safety performance in public tenders. Refer to Annex B for more info. The tripartite composition of MAST includes the Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of National Development, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Health, industry leaders and the labour movement.

## 2. Summary of Key WSH Recommendations

Developers can demonstrate strong WSH ownership by incorporating WSH principles into their procurement process. Eliminating tenderers who may struggle to cope with WSH risks improves WSH performance across the construction industry.

Table 1 provides a summary of the key WSH recommendations for developers to adopt in their procurement process to improve WSH outcomes.

Project stage	Key WSH recommendations for procurement requirements
Project Inception (pg 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on positive WSH outcomes early in the project</li> </ul>
Tender Stage (pg 9-14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a WSH bonus of at least <b>0.5%</b> of contract value (capped at a reasonable amount)</li> <li>Disqualify all main contractors and sub-contractors with poor WSH records from tendering for the project</li> <li>Incorporate a safety weightage of at least 5% into the tender evaluation framework</li> </ul>
Construction Stage (pg 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the pre-qualification and tender evaluation framework to all sub-contractors</li> <li>Track the WSH performance of all sub-contractors working on the site</li> </ul>

Table 1: [Summary of key WSH recommendations for procurement](#)

# 3. WSH Considerations for Procurement in Construction Projects

To ensure that WSH remains a key focus of a construction project, WSH principles should be an integral part of every key business decision. Figure 3 describes how developers can incorporate WSH into each stage of the process.

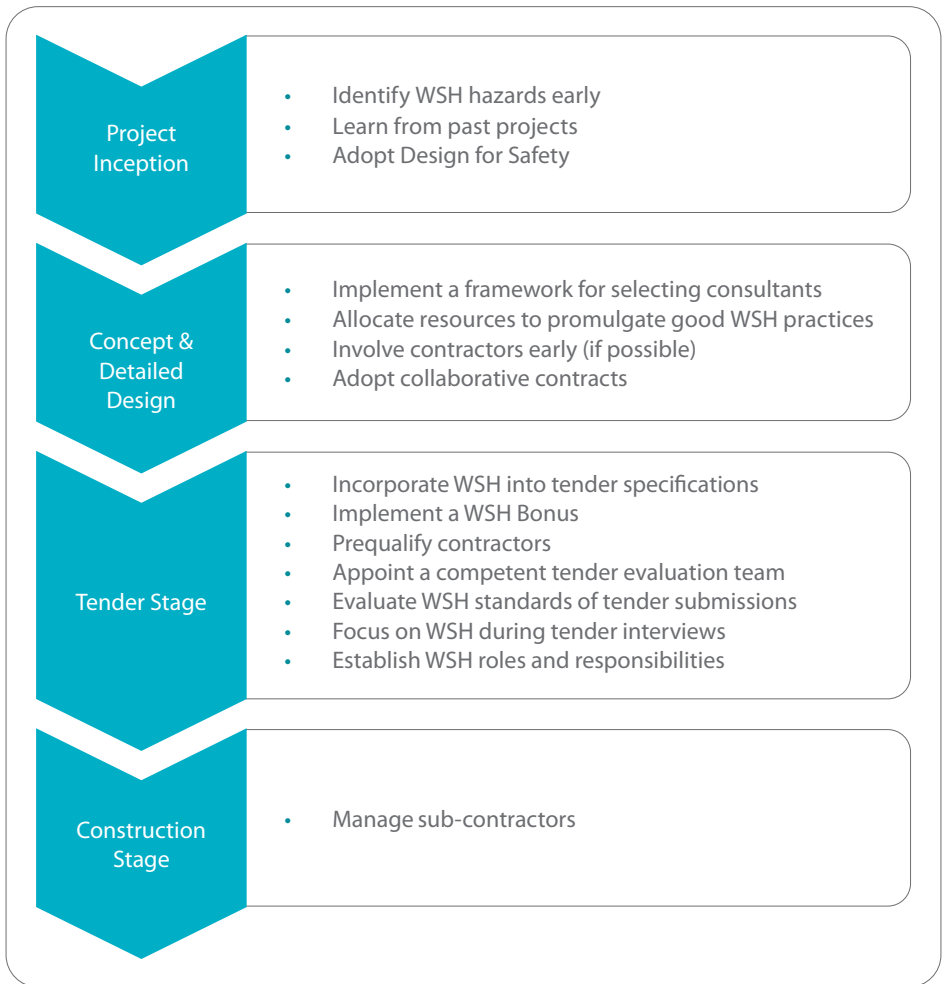


Figure 3: Overview of WSH considerations

## 3.1 Project Inception Stage

The project inception stage (also known as the planning stage) is when the developer develops a business case for a new construction project. While developing the business case, potential hazards should be considered upstream. By focusing on WSH outcomes before construction begins, developers can make WSH more salient in business decisions and avoid costly rectifications later in the project.

### Identify WSH hazards early

Developers should make a proactive effort to identify potential hazards of the project. Some questions that can help identify these hazards include (but are not limited to):

- What are the key activities involved and their associated risks (e.g. first of its kind, close proximity to potential environmental hazards)?
- What are the complex and high-risk procedures required for the project (e.g. tunneling, high-rise bridge between towers – for example, Pinnacle@Duxton)?
- How challenging and high-risk is the construction environment (e.g. near existing residential buildings, reclaimed land)?

### Learn from past projects

Developers should also refer to past experiences or case studies of similar projects to identify potential hazards that may not be immediately obvious. Referencing past projects can provide insights into how potential hazards can be mitigated. For example, the Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay and Jewel Changi Airport could provide learning points for the implementation of a curved glass façade.

### Adopt Design for Safety (DfS)

The WSH (Design for Safety) Regulations came into effect on 1 August 2016. The objective of DfS is to identify WSH issues early and eliminate or minimise them by making safer design choices. For more information, refer to the [WSH Guidelines for Design for Safety](#).

Any hazards that cannot be eliminated through design should be recorded into the DfS Register as residual risks and presented as tender documentation during procurement. Tenderers should then be assessed on their responses when they tender for the project.



## 3.2 Concept and Detailed Design Stages

Over the lifecycle of a building, it gets harder and more expensive to influence the design vis-à-vis safety; e.g. increased costs of retrofitting WSH controls versus inherently safe design. During the design stage, developers should eliminate or reduce WSH risks with minimal cost through safe design.

### Implement a framework for selecting consultants

Developers should implement an evaluation framework for selecting consultants that takes into consideration factors such as their track record and proposed approach to the project.

One example is the Quality Fee Method Framework used by government procurement entities (GPE) to evaluate consultancy tenders for public construction projects. The QFM framework places a high emphasis on consultancy firms' capacity and capability to undertake the project and quality of service (refer to Example 1).

#### Example 1 – Quality Fee Method

The Quality Fee Method (QFM) quantitatively evaluates consultancy tenders based on price (fee) and non-price (quality) attributes to determine the best proposal received.

Depending on the project requirements such as complexity of the project and extent of inputs from tenderers, the evaluation of tenders can be designed based on a range of weightages:

Component	Weightages (as of 1 June 2022)
Quality	70 – 90%
Fees	10 – 30% correspondingly

The QFM Framework requires GPEs to evaluate consultancy tenders with a heavier weightage placed on non-price criteria. The firm with the highest QFM score would be awarded the project.

In assessing potential consultants on their quality score, developers should consider track records, past performances, written proposal/concept design proposal and key personnel's experiences.

Depending on project needs, developers can request for written proposals or concept design proposals for consultants to illustrate their proposed DfS approach and design intent.

Refer to the Building and Construction Authority (BCA)'s [Quality Fee Method Framework](#) for more information.

Developers should strive to select consultants who are committed to be involved in WSH considerations. Consultants should continue to be involved with the evaluation of tenders and ensure that the project delivery adheres to the specifications, especially in terms of WSH.

### **Allocate resources to promulgate good WSH practices**

Based on the design, developers should estimate the resources required to complete a project. This estimate should **exclude** any operational costs required to perform the required work safely (e.g. scaffolds and edge protection for work at height). Developers should promulgate WSH systematically or through leading good practices (e.g. technology, culture-building, competency, etc.) that are beyond compliance to regulations.

### **Involve contractors early**

Residual risks are ultimately borne by contractors downstream. Developers can consider involving contractors before the tender stage (if possible) to provide their insights on addressing some of the residual risks.

BCA encourages GPEs to consider adopting Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) for construction projects that are more complex or where there are benefits in having the contractors' early inputs into the design.

Refer to BCA's [Early Contractor Involvement](#) for more information.

### **Adopt collaborative contracting models**

Collaborative contracts encourage stakeholders to work together to prevent or mitigate costly disputes. Collaborative contracts include an early warning mechanism to alert other parties of issues that could affect the project, such as WSH.

Public sector projects can adopt collaborative clauses such as an Option Module to the Public Sector Standard Conditions of Contract. Private sector projects can consider forming developer-led alliances to adopt collaborative contracting principles and practices.

Refer to BCA's [Public Sector Standard Conditions of Contract](#) for more information.

## 3.3 Tender Stage

The tender stage is the critical step of procurement where the developer engages a contractor for construction work. During the tender process, developers should actively communicate their WSH expectations to contractors.

The tender process consists of the following steps:

1. Preparing for the tender process
2. Inviting contractors to tender
3. Evaluating tender submissions
4. Awarding the contract to the selected contractor

Developers should integrate WSH concerns throughout these steps to ensure that all stakeholders work together to strengthen WSH ownership.

### 3.3.1 Preparing for the Tender Process

#### Incorporate WSH into tender specifications

Developers should establish good WSH standards by incorporating WSH into their tender specifications. The following WSH information should be included in the tender specifications:

- Project specifications
- Tender evaluation criteria (refer to Table 2 and Table 3) and scoring metrics
- List of residual risks that needs to be addressed in tender submissions

#### Lagging WSH indicators

Past WSH performance (developers can check, compare and verify companies' past WSH performance using the Ministry of Manpower's [CheckSAFE portal](#))

Experience with similar construction projects

Work injury compensation claims

Table 2: [Lagging WSH indicators \(non-exhaustive\) for tender evaluation](#)

## Leading WSH indicators

Construction Safety and Health Plan (refer to Annex A)

Knowledge in the type and complexity of work to be carried out

Adoption of WSH technology that can detect and prevent workplace incidents (e.g. e-PTW, video surveillance systems, vehicular safety technology)

WSH policies (e.g. management commitment, worker engagement, accident reporting and monitoring)

WSH procedures (e.g. risk management, internal reporting system, safe work procedures)

WSH knowledge management for workers (e.g. information, training, supervision)

Sub-contractor management system

Accreditation and certification of WSH management systems

Table 3: [Leading WSH indicators \(non-exhaustive\) for tender evaluation](#)

### Implement a WSH bonus

To drive positive WSH outcomes and emphasise the importance of WSH, developers should implement a WSH bonus and include it in their tender specifications.

A WSH bonus specifies certain WSH performance milestones and their corresponding bonuses for achieving these targets. Some of these milestones include (but are not limited to):

- Number of fatal and major workplace injuries among all workers on site, regardless of employer
- Number of non-compliances found from inspections
- Frequency of senior management walkabouts and engagement sessions
- Number of WSH training sessions on managing high-risk activities

Developers should include leading WSH performance indicators for the WSH bonus such as the number of non-compliances found from inspections.

Developers should set aside at least 0.5% of the procurement value (capped at a reasonable amount) for their WSH bonus, and stipulate it be shared with sub-contractors, to drive positive WSH outcomes among all companies in the project. Annex C provides more insight into some of the WSH bonuses implemented by developers, including GPEs.

### 3.3.2 Inviting Contractors to Tender

#### Pre-qualify contractors

Developers should disqualify tenderers with a poor WSH record, through a pre-qualification process. Disqualifying tenderers with poor WSH performance can improve WSH outcomes for the project and serve as motivation for main and sub-contractors to strive for better WSH performance.

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has implemented a Safety Disqualification (SDQ) Framework (refer to Example 2) across GPEs that disqualifies main contractors and downstream sub-contractors with poor WSH performance from participating in public sector construction tenders.

#### Example 2 – Safety Disqualification Framework

Under the SDQ Framework, companies in the construction sector can be temporarily disqualified from taking part in public sector construction tenders as main contractors and downstream sub-contractors due to poor WSH performance if they meet **either** of the following disqualification criteria:

- **Entry into MOM’s Business Under Surveillance programme (BUS)**
  - Has entered BUS within the three months prior to the tender closing/Letter of Award date;  
OR
  - Has entered BUS after the tender closing date, but before the tender award date.
  
- **Accumulation of 25 demerit points or more under MOM’s Demerit Points System. If your company:**
  - Was being barred under MOM’s Demerit Point System at the tender closing/ Letter of Award date;  
OR
  - Was being barred under MOM’s Demerit Point System between the tender closing date to tender award date (both dates inclusive).

Refer to MOM’s [Safety Disqualification Framework](#) for more information.

### 3.3.3 Evaluating Tender Submissions

Evaluating tender submissions is the most critical step of the procurement process and WSH should be a developer's key consideration when selecting the best contractor for the job.

#### **Appoint a competent tender evaluation team**

Before evaluating the tender submissions, the developer should appoint a competent tender evaluation team. The team should comprise of members with WSH knowledge relevant to the project. The tender evaluation team should focus on evaluating and identifying tenderers with good WSH standards, and not necessarily tenderers with lower bids.

#### **Evaluate WSH standards of tender submissions**

The WSH standards of all tenderers must be adequately assessed. When evaluating the WSH standards of tender submissions, the tender evaluation team should follow these principles:

- Tenders submitted must adequately consider WSH risks
- WSH is not compromised in favour of faster project delivery
- Tenders are thoroughly reviewed and benchmarked against the tender specifications for WSH

Developers should adopt a tender evaluation framework that considers WSH. Refer to Example 3 for a sample of the WSH-related tender evaluation criteria used by a private sector developer.

#### **Example 3 – Sample of a private sector developer's WSH-related tender evaluation criteria**

- Gap analysis between contractor's safety standards against developer's requirements
- Visibility of contractor's leadership
- Commitment of resources to WSH
- Management of high-risk work activities
- WSH management systems/monitoring systems for safety KPIs
- Proactive implementation of best WSH practices
- WSH assurance and compliance checks
- Incident reporting/emergency response plans
- Logistics preparation (e.g. construction planning, material delivery/handling, traffic management, site coordination meetings)
- Welfare and well-being for workers
- WSH culture initiatives and programmes

For public sector construction projects valued above \$3,000,000, GPEs are required to adopt the Price Quality Method (PQM) Framework to evaluate tender submissions. PQM is a structured tender evaluation framework which accounts for both price and non-price attributes to select the optimal tenderer (refer to Example 4).

While WSH performance is already a mandatory evaluation in public sector construction projects, developers should incorporate a WSH performance weightage of at least 5% of the total evaluation score.

**Example 4 – Price Quality Method**

Price Quality Method is a structured framework which considers price and non-price (quality) attributes to evaluate construction tenders. It translates the qualitative attributes of a tender submission into quantitative scores, allowing GPEs to optimise value by enabling the tenderer with the highest combined price and quality scores (i.e. best offer) to be awarded the contract.

The PQM Framework adopts a range of weightages for evaluation of price and quality attributes depending on the complexity of the project, and the extent of design input required from the tenderers:

Component	Weightage for Tender Evaluation
Price	40 – 60%
Quality	40 – 60% correspondingly

GPEs are strongly encouraged to adopt a two-envelope system, where tenders are evaluated based on their non-price attributes before price attributes.

Refer to BCA’s [Price Quality Method Framework](#) for more information.

**Focus on WSH during tender interviews**

For larger or more complex projects, developers should conduct structured tender interviews to thoroughly evaluate each tenderer’s submission. Developers should ensure that:

- Tenderers understand the WSH risks of the project
- Tenderers meet the WSH criteria within the tender specifications
- WSH expectations are shared with the tenderers

Tenderers should take the opportunity for their senior management to front these sessions and demonstrate their commitment to WSH during these interviews. The representatives should:

- Demonstrate their understanding of the WSH risks of the project
- Present their approach to manage the WSH risks of the project
- Align their commitment to WSH with the developer’s expectations

### **3.3.4 Awarding of Contract to the Selected Contractor**

#### **Establish WSH roles and responsibilities**

Once a suitable contractor has been selected, developers should establish the WSH roles and responsibilities before signing the contract (e.g. at a pre-contract meeting). Contracts should state the respective legal obligations and duties to the WSH Act.

The contract documents should clearly state the responsibilities of all parties during the construction phase. This may include the following:

- WSH performance metrics and reporting
- Site induction and training requirements
- Site inspections and corrective actions
- Incident and near-miss reporting system

To ensure that contractual obligations are observed, the contract should be monitored for its duration by relevant parties, including expectations of audits and inspections. This includes:

- Making sure all parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities
- Managing the agency/contractor relationship
- Fulfilling contract specifications and requirements
- Holding regular meetings to monitor and review the WSH performance of contractors
- Carrying out inspections to monitor work conditions and practices
- Raising unsafe conditions or practices to the attention of the contractors
- Making sure that unsafe conditions or practices are addressed
- Responding to and investigating accidents and incidents
- Recording WSH progress for future contracting situations
- Provide regular feedback to the contractor on their WSH performance



## 3.4 Construction Stage

This stage encompasses the building and construction works based on the design. After a contractor has been appointed, the developer should continue to monitor and ensure that the contractor fulfills the terms of the contract, including upholding the required WSH performance. These roles and responsibilities should be stated explicitly in the signed contract and observed diligently.

### Managing sub-contractors

It is necessary to engage the services of sub-contractors to fulfill the construction order (M&E contractors, ACMV contractors, etc.). This may also be done prior to the construction stage, i.e. during the tender process.

There are two models of sub-contracting:

- **Domestic sub-contractors (DSCs)**  
DSCs are sub-contractors that are procured by the main contractor through their own sub-contractor procurement process.
- **Nominated sub-contractors (NSCs)**  
NSCs are sub-contractors that are specified in the developer's list of pre-approved sub-contractors.

Developers and main contractors should assess sub-contractors in the same manner as how main contractors were evaluated by developers. The developer and main contractor should work together to ensure selected sub-contractors properly manage their WSH risks.

To better manage sub-contractors, developers should require main and all sub-contractors to consider the following (non-exhaustive) recommendations when engaging their own sub-contractors:

- **Extend the pre-qualification and tender evaluation framework to all sub-contractors**  
Main and sub-contractors should not engage any sub-contractors with poor WSH records to work on the project.
- **Track the WSH performance of all sub-contractors working on the site (including those not directly engaged by the main contractor)**  
Main contractors should encourage all their sub-contractors to improve their WSH performance. Errant workers should not be allowed to continue working on the project.

# 4. Annexes

## Annex A: Construction Safety and Health Plan

Based on David V. MacCollum's book, *Construction Safety Planning*, the Construction Safety and Health Plan is a tenderer's approach to address the potential risks and hazards in the context of the project and is commonly used for evaluating contractors' bids. The Construction Safety and Health Plan demonstrates the contractor's WSH planning capabilities and should include the following:

- Site-specific internal reporting system to address hazards.
- Roles and responsibilities for hazard prevention (include training, working relationship, specific WSH scope of individuals).
- Legislations (e.g. WSH Act) and standards (e.g. Singapore Standards) relevant to the project.
- Identification of high-risk hazards (e.g. work at height, excavation, confined space) and proposed control measures to address them. This may be based on the list of residual risks.
- Types and specifications of certified equipment (e.g. cranes, lifts, forklifts, monitoring equipment) required for the project.
- Proposed construction method for major phases of work, including the process and relevant safe work procedures.
- Proposed list of physical safety controls measures (e.g. shoring, guard rails, lifelines) for implementation onsite.
- Proposed list of administrative safety control measures (e.g. lifting plan, fall prevention plan, fire protection plan, traffic management plan, contingency plans for extreme weather, emergency plans).

## Annex B: Safety Accountability, Focus and Empowerment Measures

The Safety Accountability, Focus and Empowerment (SAFE) measures are a package of sectoral and broad-based measures by MAST to strengthen WSH ownership fundamentally and sustainably at the sectoral, company and worker level.

At the sectoral level, MAST has introduced enhancement to WSH requirements in public sector construction and construction-related projects called on and after 1 April 2024 (unless otherwise stated). These measures include:

S/N	Measure
<b>Enhancement 1: Harmonised WSH requirements across public sector construction and construction-related projects</b>	
1A	Extend Safety Disqualification (SDQ) framework for construction and construction-related projects: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For projects &gt; \$90k to ≤ \$1mil, applicable to main contractor only; and</li> <li>For projects &gt; \$1mil, applicable to main contractor and all levels of sub-contractors.</li> </ol>
1B	Require main contractor to identify and implement WSH trainings/competencies specific to site activities for construction and construction-related projects > \$1mil.
1C	Require main and sub-contractors' management to exercise enhanced safety commitment for construction and construction-related projects > \$1mil.
1D	Require main contractor to conduct a risk assessment and ensure compliance of the method statement by all sub-contractors for construction and construction-related projects > \$1mil.
<b>Enhancement 2: Enhanced safety-related tender evaluation criteria</b>	
2A	Require at least 5% weightage on safety for construction and construction-related projects not using BCA's Price Quality Method (PQM) framework > \$1mil.
2B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broaden the scope of safety performance under the PQM to safety-related criteria.</li> <li>Require a minimum of 15% of Quality weightage for evaluation of safety related criteria, or 5% of total PQM score, whichever is higher.</li> <li>Applicable for projects ≥ \$3mil.</li> </ol>
<b>Enhancement 3: Additional measures to incentivise good WSH standards</b>	
3A	Require main contractor to adopt mature WSH technology for construction and construction-related projects ≥ \$3mil. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electronic Permit-to-Work system.</li> <li>Vehicular-safety technology.</li> </ol>
3B	Include WSH Bonus scheme for construction and construction-related projects ≥ \$50mil. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pegged at 0.5% of awarded contract sum, subject to a bonus cap of \$1mil.</li> </ol>

## Annex C: WSH Bonus

A WSH Bonus scheme incentivises good safety performance during the construction phase. Contractors can use the rewards to recognise the efforts of onsite workers who uphold good safety standards to encourage others to report any safety issues and thus creating a strong safety culture.

The developer conducts regular assessments of the main contractor's WSH performance and ascertains the contractor's eligibility for the incentives. The payout can be staggered over the expected duration of the project (e.g. 80% throughout the project and the remaining 20% is paid upon completion).

For large government projects with procurement value  $\geq$  \$50mil, an additional 0.5% (capped at \$1,000,000) will be set aside for the WSH Bonus Scheme. Contractors are required to use part of the bonus to reward the workforce and reinforce commitment to improve/sustain WSH performance onsite. Some of these incentives can include a care programme, company-sponsored meals, recognising safe workers with vouchers/rewards, milestone celebrations, etc.

Several developers have seen improvements in overall WSH performance after implementing a WSH bonus.

# 5. References

## Legislations

- Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Act (Chapter 354A)  
(Visit <https://sso.agc.gov.sg/Act/WSHA2006> for more details about the WSH Act)

## Subsidiary legislations under the WSH Act

- WSH (Construction) Regulations 2007
- WSH (Design for Safety) Regulations 2015

## WSH Council's resources

- Code of Practice on Chief Executives' and Board of Directors' WSH Duties
- Workplace Safety and Health Guidelines for Design for Safety

## Other resources

- Construction Demand, Tender Price Index & Construction Materials, Building Construction Authority (BCA), 2023
- Guide to QFM Framework, Building Construction Authority (BCA), 2023
- Price Quality Method, Building Construction Authority (BCA), 2023
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- Health and Safety: A Good Practice Procurement Guide for Improving Health and Safety, New Zealand Government Health and Safety Lead, 2019
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- WSH 2028 Report, Ministry of Manpower, 2019
- Workplace Safety and Health National Statistics Report, Ministry of Manpower (MOM), 2017-2022
- A handbook for the public sector: Health and safety in construction procurement, Work Safe Australia, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed., 2017
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# 6. Acknowledgments

The Workplace Safety and Health Council would like to thank the following for their valuable contribution towards this Guidelines.

S/N	Name	Organisation
1	Mr Reggie Lim (Co-Chairperson)	ST Telemedia Global Data Centres
2	Mr Kelvin Pek (Co-Chairperson)	Far East Organization / Real Estate Developers' Association of Singapore
3	Ms Lim Puay Shan	Building & Construction Authority
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6	Ms Jocelyn Lee	Land Transport Authority
7	Ms Chang Huay Ying	Ministry of Manpower
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9	Mr Yong Jian Rong	Woh Hup (Pte) Ltd / Singapore Contractors Association Ltd
10	Mr Bernard Ho	Society of Project Managers
11	Mr Ian Teo	Specialists Trade Alliance of Singapore
12	Mr Chan Yew Kwong	Workplace Safety and Health Council
13	Mr Muhammad Hafiz bin Md Jamil	Workplace Safety and Health Council
14	Mr Royston Lim	Workplace Safety and Health Council
15	Mr Chevy Ang	Workplace Safety and Health Council



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