

health and safety in annual reports

members' factcard

union for professionals

prospect

INTRODUCTION

Current Health and Safety Executive (HSE) strategy invites employers and workers 'to be part of the solution' in accident and ill health prevention through effective leadership and worker involvement. Prospect has, therefore, refined existing guidance for employers on health and safety annual reporting to encourage our health and safety reps to support their employer:

- reliably measure and report workplace health and safety performance;
- assist with measurement and reporting systems; and
- demonstrate health and safety cooperation using the organisation's corporate annual report.

BACKGROUND

An employer's annual report is intended to give shareholders/government and other interested parties information about the organisation's activities and performance over the preceding year; and enable investors to stay up-to-date with the yearly outlook.

Historically the focus has been financial, but nowadays organisations use annual reports to demonstrate **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) and evidence of meeting their duties to clients, customers, employees and contractors. The significance of corporate governance and reputation has grown in status, influencing shareholder investment in the private sector and departmental funding in the public sector.

Yet HSE says only 11% of Boards include health and safety performance in their annual reports, a figure we want to improve.

WHAT SHOULD AN EMPLOYER REPORT?

When asked about annual reporting, most managing directors or CEOs will mention percentage profit, return on investment or market share, typically quoting ***success***. When asked specifically about health and safety, they tend to quote negatively. This is a reflection of the metrics most organisations use, such as lost time, injuries or reportable accidents, which typically focus on ***failure***.

Encouraging employers to exceed the typical core content (overleaf) by suggesting a more 'balanced scorecard' approach will capture leading (active) as well as lagging (reactive) performance indicators. Employers will be able to showcase H&S success. By including worker involvement indicators (checklist below) they will have leading, proactive performance measures with the potential for a very good news story to go in their annual report!

WORKER INVOLVEMENT CHECKLIST: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- ☐ a Board member or director with responsibility for worker involvement has been appointed
- ☐ number of union H&S reps making or involved with management in periodic H&S inspections
- ☐ number of union H&S reps making or involved with management in H&S campaigns
- ☐ percentage of H&S committee actions closed out (ie actioned)
- ☐ frequency and effectiveness of staff H&S briefings
- ☐ staff perceptions of management's H&S commitment

- ☐ frequency of joint H&S training
- ☐ extent to which H&S consultation is embedded in organisational-change project management
- ☐ percentage of line managers understanding the role of a union H&S rep
- ☐ number of trained union H&S reps
- ☐ timeliness of H&S consultation
- ☐ frequency and effectiveness of H&S committee meetings
- ☐ Prospect's contribution is recognised in the annual H&S report!
- ☐ percentage of risk assessments completed with staff involvement
- ☐ extent to which staff know how to get H&S help
- ☐ level and timeliness of management response to union H&S rep suggestions or concerns
- ☐ awareness of who/where H&S reps are and extent to which staff are asked for their H&S views
- ☐ percentage of H&S policies having formal agreements with trade unions

These indicators are drawn from established, reputable H&S and CSR sources . They therefore shape Prospect's expectations of good practice. We are not 'gold-plating'; we are simply highlighting what good employers regard as the norm through their arrangements for worker consultation and employee engagement. It's about employers working with their staff and vice-versa. Further guidance available from Health and Safety Executive (HSG65), Institute of Occupational Safety & Health, British Standards Institute and Global Reporting Initiative.

Successful reporting requires reliable information, making monitoring and measurement key. This includes workplace health and safety metrics which provide a benchmark for continuous improvement. A function of Prospect H&S reps is to inspect and investigate, contributing to auditing. **Credible reporting requires workforce endorsement**, so involving workers is vital. It also promotes a positive health and safety culture and performance.

WHAT SHOULD AN EMPLOYER MEASURE?

HSE advises on a balanced approach which combines:

- **hazard burden**: ie the scale, nature and distribution of hazards created by the organisation's activities
- **active monitoring**: of the adequacy of the H&S management system, ie measures of success; and
- **reactive monitoring**: of adverse events such as injury, ill health, near-miss, ie measures of failure.

WHAT CAN PROSPECT REPS DO?

- Share this factcard with your employer.
- Benchmark using the checklist. Raise any apparent gaps with management to aid improvement.
- Make joint annual H&S reporting the norm, so that Prospect's contributions secure due recognition.

Contact

- SafetyReps@prospect.org.uk
- 020 7902 6629

More? www.prospect.org.uk for H&S web pages and Negotiator's Guide to CSR

HSE ADVICE ON CORE CONTENT

HSE advice is that core content should include:

- broad context of the employer's policy on H&S
- significant H&S risks to staff and others and measures to control them
- corporate H&S objectives and progress towards achieving them
- H&S consultation arrangements
- data on H&S performance, such as the number of:
  - RIDDOR-reportable incidents, distinguishing types (many Prospect employers record to stricter, higher standards of incident definition)
  - cases of disability, physical or mental ill health caused or made worse by work
  - days lost by the employer, due to all causes of physical and mental ill health
  - enforcement notices, convictions, penalties or personal injury claims.
- total costs to the employer of any occupational injuries and illnesses staff have incurred, including costs of absence, providing cover and any personal injury claims
- activity aimed at preventing recurrence of H&S accidents or ill health.

HSE suggests including appropriate narratives, for instance in relation to specific events that impacted on H&S performance or specific developments such as the introduction of new working practices, technological change or organisational restructuring.

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Dear Dr Judge

Celebrating 40 years of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

Congratulations on your appointment as Chief Executive of the Health and Safety Executive.

Given that this year is 40 years since the Health & Safety at Work Act gained royal assent, I'd like to take the opportunity to send you Prospect's contribution to the 'celebrations'. Enclosed is our **'40@40 voices from the frontline'** booklet, publishing inspector stories that we collected 2 years ago when we marked 40 years of the Robens report.

HSE inspectors have a pride in their work and have been concerned at the negativity around 'elf n safety' that they feel has sullied their reputation. Prospect has been very supportive of HSE's myth-busting approach which has been highly influential in improving public perception.

You will appreciate that Prospect's interests in health and safety go beyond HSE or its inspectorate. As you know, we represent professionals across many public and private sectors, often in safety-critical work. Our interest in health and safety regulatory systems is broad and we pride ourselves in showcasing many excellent examples of the sort of collaboration Robens envisaged. Indeed our tripartite work in the electricity supply industry featured in HSE's strategy **'One Year On'** report.

Underpinning our health and safety work is the core principle of worker involvement. We aim to mainstream this so I have also enclosed the Fact Card we supply our Health & Safety reps to relay to their employer. This may also be of interest to you.

Prospect has worked with you in several organisations and we look forward to continuing the constructive relationship in your new role from November. We are deeply committed to promoting and maintaining the UK's acclaimed health and safety reputation, recently acknowledged by Martin Temple in his Triennial Review as aided by the dedication and professionalism of HSE staff.

Yours sincerely

Garry Graham
Deputy General Secretary

Encl: 40@40, Fact Card H&S in Annual Reports

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