

## Safety Audits

The term safety auditing means different things to different folks. Some folks have used it as being almost identical with workplace inspection, although auditing is a much more thorough review of procedures beyond what can merely be observed in the workplace. The HSE's publication Successful Health and Safety Management, considers safety auditing to be a crucial part of the feedback process in safety management systems and define it as

... the structured process of collecting independent information on the efficiency, effectiveness and reliability of the total safety management system, and drawing up plans for corrective action.

three different types of safety audits are:

the management safety audit - this is normally carried out yearly, and covers general safety matters, it involves local staff and will be normally conducted by a manager(s), H&S specialists or trained auditors.

the plant technical audit - this involves an in-depth review of all plant and processes carried out by specialist staff. It is usually conducted less often than the management safety audit, which in itself may examine many aspects of the plant technical audit.

the site technical audit, this covers all work of a specified type at agreed intervals and normally involves both local and specialist staff.

A number of other monitoring techniques are available some are described below, many have similar features.

### Workplace inspections

These are essentially concerned with what can be seen from observations within the workplace. They are used mainly to look at physical conditions, and are often carried out by supervisors, line managers, H&S professionals, safety reps or combinations of these staff.

### Safety tours

Safety tours tend to be logical and frequently ad-hoc examinations of a given workplace, carried out on a walk through basis. They are mainly concerned with physical

conditions. Managers often use this method to abreast themselves with what is happening in the workplace, and to make obvious their interest, 'awareness' and concern for health and safety issues.

#### Safety sampling

This requires reviews of specific elements of health and safety on a random basis, for example tidiness, cleanliness, control of hazardous substances, control of waste stream, control of traffic routes etc etc..

#### Behaviour sampling

This is the assessment of employee's behaviour on a planned sampling basis to establish the amount of 'unsafe' work practices which might require corrective actions, for example by discipline, training or process / design improvements. The competencies necessary to perform this function are similar to those for safety sampling.

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