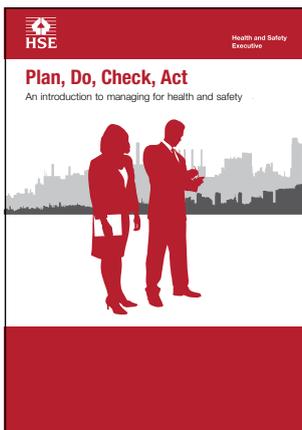


# Plan, Do, Check, Act

An introduction to managing for health and safety



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## Introduction

This leaflet is for those who need to put in place or oversee their organisation's health and safety arrangements. The advice may also help workers and their representatives, as well as health and safety practitioners and training providers.

It's a brief guide to help you comply with the law, and summarises the more detailed guidance in *Managing for health and safety* (HSG65) and the supporting website ([www.hse.gov.uk/managing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing)). See 'Find out more' at the end of the leaflet for details.

## Core elements of managing for health and safety

Organisations will have management processes or arrangements to deal with payroll, personnel issues, finance and quality control – managing health and safety is no different.

To help you comply with the law, HSE encourages a common-sense and practical approach to managing health and safety. It should be part of the everyday process of running an organisation and an integral part of workplace behaviours and attitudes.

Whatever your industry, or the size or nature of your organisation, the core elements to effectively managing for health and safety are:

- leadership and management;
- a trained/skilled workforce;
- an environment where people are trusted and involved.

HSE advocates that all of these elements, underpinned by an understanding of the profile of risks the organisation creates or faces, are needed.

### **What does the law say?**

You have a legal duty to put in place suitable arrangements to manage for health and safety. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to put in place arrangements to control health and safety risks.

As a minimum, you should have the processes and procedures required to meet the legal requirements, including:

- a written health and safety policy (if you employ five or more people);
- assessments of the risks to employees, contractors, customers, partners, and any other people who could be affected by your activities – and record the significant findings in writing (if you employ five or more people). Any risk assessment must be 'suitable and sufficient';
- arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventive and protective measures that come from risk assessment;
- access to competent health and safety advice ([www.hse.gov.uk/competence](http://www.hse.gov.uk/competence));
- providing employees with information about the risks in your workplace and how they are protected;
- instruction and training for employees in how to deal with the risks;
- ensuring there is adequate and appropriate supervision in place;
- consulting with employees about their risks at work and current preventive and protective measures.

HSE provides advice and templates on these processes – see our risk management site for more information ([www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk)).

**Figure 1** The core elements



## **So are you doing what you need to do?**

Leaders, owners, trustees and line managers need to consider if they are doing enough to manage for health and safety effectively. You need to answer fundamental questions such as:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation's health and safety performance, and are there any barriers to change?
- How reliable and sustainable for the future are the measures currently in place?
- If your organisation is getting risk control right, why is that? For example, does performance depend on one person's dedication and enthusiasm or is it a key value across the organisation?
- If there are problems, what are the underlying reasons, eg competence, resources, accountability, or lack of engagement with the workforce?
- Have you learned from situations where things have gone wrong?

### ***Risk profiling***

Effective leaders and line managers know the risks their organisations face, rank them in order of importance and take action to control them. The range of risks goes beyond health and safety risks to include quality, environmental and asset damage, but issues in one area could impact in another.

More advice on risk profiling: [www.hse.gov.uk/managing/risk-profiling.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/risk-profiling.htm)

### ***Leading and managing for health and safety***

Leaders, at all levels, need to understand the range of health and safety risks in their part of the organisation and to give proportionate attention to each of them. This applies to the level of detail and effort put into assessing the risks, implementing controls, supervising and monitoring.

More advice on leading and managing for health and safety:  
[www.hse.gov.uk/managing/leading.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/leading.htm)

### ***Competence***

Competence is the ability to undertake responsibilities and perform activities to a recognised standard on a regular basis. It combines practical and thinking skills, knowledge and experience.

More advice on competence: [www.hse.gov.uk/managing/competence.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/competence.htm)

### ***Worker consultation and involvement***

At its most effective, full involvement of your workforce creates a culture where relationships between employers and employees are based on collaboration, trust and joint problem solving. Employees are involved in assessing workplace risks and the development and review of workplace health and safety policies in partnership with the employer.

More advice on worker consultation and involvement:  
[www.hse.gov.uk/managing/worker.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing/worker.htm)

## **Delivering effective arrangements: the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach**

Managing health and safety can rarely be achieved by one-off interventions. A sustained and systematic approach is necessary.

While this may not always require a formal health and safety management system, whatever approach is used it probably contains the steps Plan, Do, Check, Act (see Figures 2 and 3).

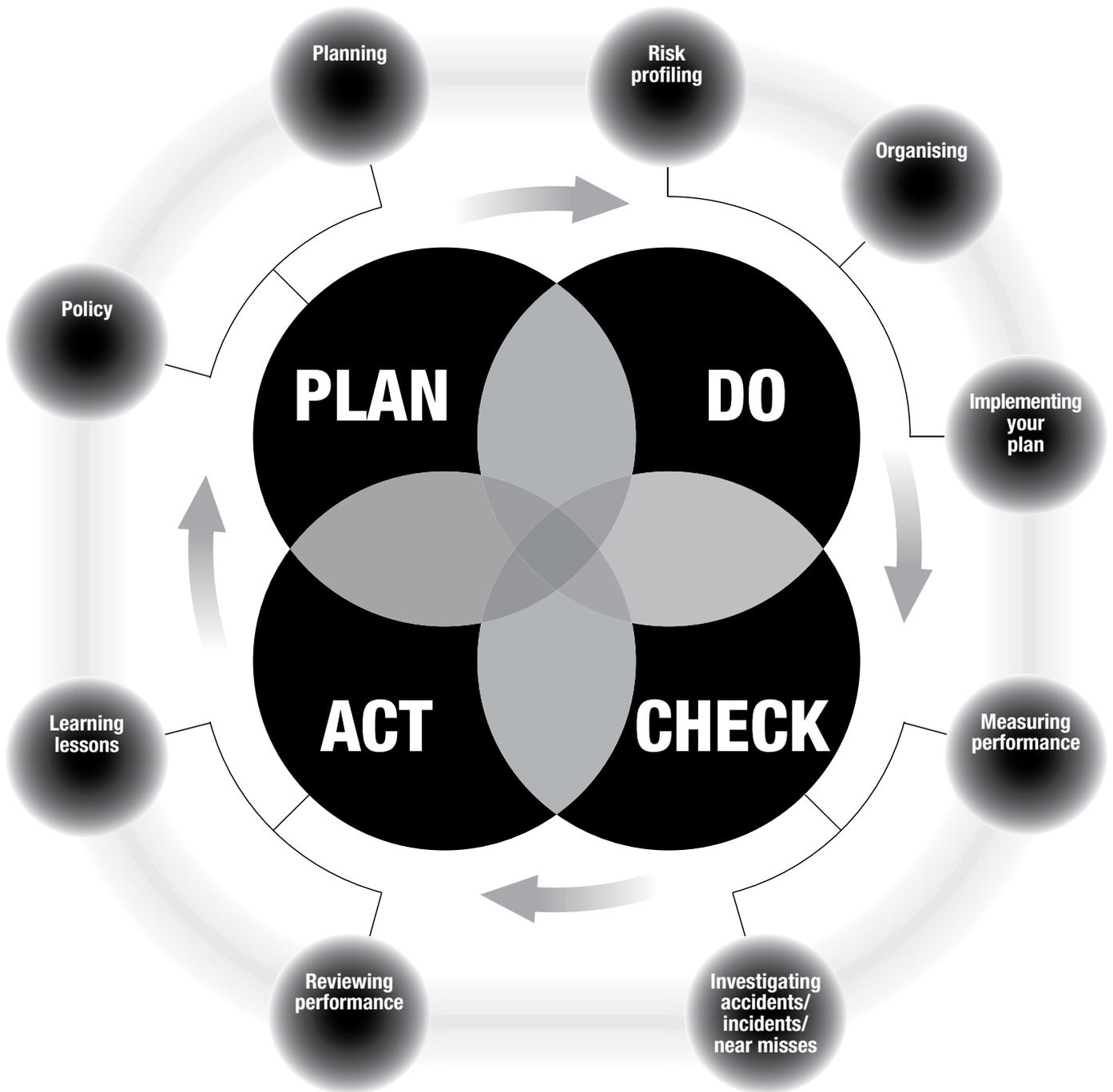
Plan, Do, Check, Act helps you achieve a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management. It also treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system.

The high-level descriptions may vary, depending on the industry or sector you are working in, but this leaflet provides a summary of the actions involved in delivering effective arrangements.

**Figure 2** The actions involved in delivering effective arrangements

<b>Plan, Do, Check, Act</b>	<b>Conventional health and safety management</b>	<b>Process safety</b>
<b>PLAN</b>	Determine your policy/Plan for implementation	Define and communicate acceptable performance and resources needed
<b>DO</b>	Profile risks/Organise for health and safety/Implement your plan	Identify and assess risks/Identify controls/Record and maintain process safety knowledge  Implement and manage control measures
<b>CHECK</b>	Measure performance (monitor before events, investigate after events)	Measure and review performance/Learn from measurements and findings of investigations
<b>ACT</b>	Review performance/Act on lessons learned	

**Figure 3** The Plan, Do, Check, Act approach



## Plan, Do, Check, Act

### Plan

- Think about where you are now and where you need to be.
- Say what you want to achieve, who will be responsible for what, how you will achieve your aims, and how you will measure your success. You may need to write down this policy and your plan to deliver it.
- Decide how you will measure performance. Think about ways to do this that go beyond looking at accident figures; look for active indicators as well as reactive indicators.
- Consider fire and other emergencies. Co-operate with anyone who shares your workplace and co-ordinate plans with them.
- Remember to plan for changes and identify any specific legal requirements that apply to you.

### Do

- **Identify your risk profile**
  - Assess the risks, identify what could cause harm in the workplace, who it could harm and how, and what you will do to manage the risk.
  - Decide what the priorities are and identify the biggest risks.
- **Organise your activities to deliver your plan**

In particular, aim to:

  - Involve workers and communicate, so that everyone is clear on what is needed and can discuss issues – develop positive attitudes and behaviours.
  - Provide adequate resources, including competent advice where needed.
- **Implement your plan**
  - Decide on the preventive and protective measures needed and put them in place.
  - Provide the right tools and equipment to do the job and keep them maintained.
  - Train and instruct, to ensure everyone is competent to carry out their work.
  - Supervise to make sure that arrangements are followed.

### Check

- **Measure your performance**
  - Make sure that your plan has been implemented – ‘paperwork’ on its own is not a good performance measure.
  - Assess how well the risks are being controlled and if you are achieving your aims. In some circumstances formal audits may be useful.
- **Investigate the causes of accidents, incidents or near misses**

### Act

- **Review your performance**
  - Learn from accidents and incidents, ill-health data, errors and relevant experience, including from other organisations.
  - Revisit plans, policy documents and risk assessments to see if they need updating.
- **Take action on lessons learned, including from audit and inspection reports**

You may need to go round the cycle more than once, particularly when:

- starting out;
- developing a new process, product or service; or
- implementing any change.

## Health and safety management systems

A formal management system or framework can help you manage health and safety; it's your decision whether to use one or not.

Examples include:

- national and international standards such as:
  - BS OHSAS 18001 *Occupational health and safety management systems*;
  - BS EN ISO 9001 *Quality management system*;
- in-house standards, procedures or codes;
- sector-specific frameworks such as:
  - the Energy Institute's *High-level framework for process safety management*;
  - the Chemical Industries Association *Responsible Care* framework.

Although the language and methodology vary, the key actions can usually be traced back to Plan, Do, Check, Act.

## Find out more

*Managing for health and safety* HSG65 (Third edition) HSE Books 2013  
ISBN 978 0 7176 6456 6 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm)

HSE's 'Managing for health and safety' website: [www.hse.gov.uk/managing](http://www.hse.gov.uk/managing)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3242/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1999/3242/contents/made)

### **Many other organisations offer advice, guidance and support to help you manage risks to your organisation:**

Institution of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH) Risk Assessment Routefinder  
[www.ioshroutefinder.co.uk](http://www.ioshroutefinder.co.uk)

British Safety Council (BSC) [www.britsafe.org](http://www.britsafe.org)

British Standards Institution (BSI) [www.bsigroup.com](http://www.bsigroup.com)

Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) [www.rospace.com](http://www.rospace.com)

National Examination Board for Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH)  
[www.nebosh.org.uk](http://www.nebosh.org.uk)

Trades Union Congress (TUC) [www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) [www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) [www.cieh.org](http://www.cieh.org)

Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) [www.rsc.org](http://www.rsc.org)

Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) – The Manufacturers' Organisation  
[www.eef.org.uk](http://www.eef.org.uk)

Energy Institute [www.energyinst.org](http://www.energyinst.org)

Chemical Industries Association [www.cia.org.uk](http://www.cia.org.uk)

## **Further information**

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk). You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

This leaflet is available at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg275.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg275.htm).

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