WORKFORCE SAFETY GAP ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

A practical guide to assessing your workplace safety arrangements, identifying gaps and planning improvements.

Prepared by **Astute Business Consult**

01. Introduction

Do you know whether your current safety arrangements are protecting the people who work for you?

Having safety policies, providing protective equipment and organising occasional training are important. But these measures do not automatically mean your business has an effective system for managing workplace risks.

You need to know what could harm your workers, whether the right controls are in place and how well those controls work.

This Workforce Safety Gap Analysis Checklist will help you review your existing health and safety arrangements, identify areas that need attention and determine where improvements are necessary.

It is designed for business owners, managers, HR professionals, operations managers, health and safety personnel and anyone responsible for workplace safety.

You can use it whether your employees work in an office, factory, warehouse, construction site, retail outlet or across different locations.

What you will get from this checklist:

- A structured review of your current workplace safety arrangements.

- Questions to help identify weaknesses in your existing processes.
- Guidance on the evidence you should examine.
- A method for prioritising identified gaps.
- An improvement plan to help turn your findings into action.
- An introduction to how ISO 45001 can support your organisation.

Suggested illustration: A simple line illustration showing workers in an office, warehouse, construction site and delivery environment, connected by a central workplace safety symbol.

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02. Understanding Workplace Health and Safety

Workplace health and safety refers to the conditions, practices and arrangements an organisation puts in place to protect people from work-related injuries and ill health.

It covers more than preventing accidents. It also involves identifying hazards, controlling exposure to harmful conditions, providing appropriate training and ensuring workers can carry out their responsibilities safely.

Consider a few examples:

- An office worker may be exposed to ergonomic problems from an unsuitable workstation.
- A factory worker may face risks from moving machinery or hazardous materials.
- A delivery rider may encounter road accidents, fatigue and unsafe delivery locations.
- A security guard working overnight may face risks associated with working alone.

These situations are different, but they share one important requirement: the organisation must understand the risks and take appropriate steps to manage them.

Workplace safety should therefore be considered part of everyday business management, not an activity reserved for emergencies or annual inspections.

What Is a Workforce Safety Gap Analysis?

A workforce safety gap analysis is a structured review of the difference between your organisation's existing safety arrangements and the arrangements it needs to manage workplace risks effectively.

It helps you identify what is already working, what is incomplete and what is missing.

For example, your organisation may have an emergency response policy but no evidence that workers have received emergency training. The policy exists, but there is a gap in its implementation.

The purpose of this assessment is to help you recognise such gaps before they contribute to workplace incidents.

Suggested illustration: A simple three-stage graphic: CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS → IDENTIFIED GAPS → IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS.

03. Key Terms You Should Understand

Before completing the assessment, it is useful to understand some terms commonly used in workplace health and safety.

Term	Meaning
Hazard	Anything with the potential to cause injury or ill health.
Risk	A combination of the likelihood of harm occurring and the severity of its consequences.
Risk assessment	A process for identifying hazards, evaluating risks and deciding what controls are needed.

Control measures	Actions taken to eliminate hazards or reduce the risks they create.
Incident	An occurrence arising from work that resulted in, or could have resulted in, injury or ill health.
Near miss	An incident that could have caused harm but did not.
Personal protective equipment (PPE)	Equipment worn or used to reduce exposure to workplace hazards, such as safety boots, helmets and protective gloves.
Corrective action	Action taken to address the cause of a problem and prevent its recurrence.
Internal audit	A structured review used to determine whether a management system meets its requirements and is properly implemented.
OHSMS	An Occupational Health and Safety Management System. It is the organised approach a business uses to manage workplace health and safety.
ISO 45001	An international standard specifying requirements for an occupational health and safety management system.

Understanding the Difference Between a Hazard and a Risk

These two terms are often used together, but they do not mean the same thing.

Consider a wet floor in a workplace.

- The **hazard** is the wet floor because it can cause someone to slip.
- The **risk** is the possibility that a worker or visitor could slip, fall and suffer an injury.

Identifying the hazard helps you understand what could cause harm. Assessing the risk helps you decide what action is necessary.

Suggested illustration: A small two-part graphic showing a wet floor sign labelled HAZARD and a person slipping labelled POSSIBLE RISK.

04. Who Should Use This Checklist?

This checklist is intended for people who have responsibility for managing workplace activities and protecting workers.

You may find it useful if you are:

- A business owner or company director.
- An operations or facility manager.
- A human resource manager.
- A health and safety officer.
- A compliance or quality management professional.
- A supervisor responsible for employees or contractors.
- A business manager reviewing existing management systems.

Although one person can coordinate the assessment, it is useful to involve supervisors and workers who understand the actual conditions under which the work is performed.

Management may not always be aware of the difficulties workers encounter during their daily activities. Their input can reveal problems that may not appear in existing documents.

05. How to Use This Checklist

Go through each assessment question and select the response that best describes your organisation's current position.

Response	What it means
Yes	The arrangement is in place, implemented and supported by appropriate evidence.

Partly	The arrangement exists but is incomplete, inconsistently applied or not fully effective.
No	The arrangement is not in place or there is no evidence that it is being implemented.
Not Applicable (N/A)	The question does not apply to your organisation's activities.

An Important Note About Your Answers

Do not select Yes simply because your organisation has a policy or procedure.

For example, a company may have an emergency response procedure, but workers may not know where to find it or what to do during an emergency.

In that situation, the procedure exists, but its implementation may be incomplete.

A Yes response should mean that the arrangement exists, is communicated, is implemented and has appropriate evidence to support it.

What Evidence Should You Check?

Depending on the question, useful evidence may include:

- Approved policies and procedures.
- Workplace risk assessments.
- Employee training records.
- Equipment inspection and maintenance records.
- Incident and near-miss reports.
- Emergency drill records.
- Worker consultation records.
- Internal audit reports.
- Corrective action records.
- Relevant legal and regulatory information.

If you cannot confirm that an arrangement exists or works, do not assume that it does.

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PART TWO: THE WORKFORCE SAFETY ASSESSMENT

The following sections cover important areas of an occupational health and safety management system. Answer each question based on your organisation's actual practices.

06. Leadership and Management Responsibility

Workplace safety requires direction and support from management. It should influence how your organisation plans its activities, allocates resources and makes operational decisions.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Does your organisation have a documented health and safety policy?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Has management clearly assigned health and safety responsibilities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do managers provide the resources needed to manage workplace risks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is workplace safety considered when making operational decisions?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does management regularly review the organisation's safety performance?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Health and safety policy, organisational structure, assigned responsibilities, management meeting records and resource allocation records.

What a gap may indicate: Safety responsibilities may be unclear, management may not provide sufficient support, or workplace safety may not receive adequate attention during business planning.

07. Legal and Regulatory Requirements

Businesses have responsibilities under applicable occupational health and safety laws and other relevant requirements.

You should understand which requirements apply to your activities and establish a way to monitor compliance.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have you identified the occupational health and safety laws applicable to your business?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you understand the safety obligations relevant to your operations?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have you assigned responsibility for monitoring applicable legal requirements?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you periodically review whether your business complies with these requirements?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are relevant legal and other requirements communicated to responsible personnel?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Legal and regulatory registers, compliance reviews, permits where applicable, inspection reports and records of regulatory changes.

What a gap may indicate: Your organisation may be unaware of some of its obligations or may lack a reliable process for checking whether it meets them.

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08. Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

You cannot manage risks effectively if you do not understand what could cause harm.

Your organisation should identify hazards associated with its activities and assess the risks they create.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have you identified the hazards associated with your business activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you carry out risk assessments for relevant work activities?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do your assessments consider workers at different locations?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you consider risks associated with equipment, materials and working conditions?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are risk assessments reviewed when work activities or conditions change?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Hazard registers, risk assessments, workplace inspection reports, job safety analyses and records of changes to operations.

What a gap may indicate: Some hazards may remain unidentified, or your organisation may be relying on general safety documents that do not reflect actual working conditions.

09. Worker Participation and Communication

Workers often understand the practical challenges and hazards associated with their jobs. Their input should inform your safety decisions.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Can workers report hazards and unsafe conditions?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are workers consulted on decisions that affect their safety?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Can workers raise safety concerns without fear of unfair treatment?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are safety instructions communicated clearly to employees and contractors?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does management provide feedback on reported safety concerns?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Worker consultation records, safety meeting minutes, reporting forms, communication records and feedback on reported concerns.

What a gap may indicate: Workers may not have a reliable way to raise concerns, or management may not be using their feedback to improve safety arrangements.

10. Operational Controls and Safe Working Procedures

Identifying hazards is only useful when you take appropriate steps to control them.

Your organisation should establish suitable procedures and controls for the risks associated with its activities.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have you established procedures for controlling identified workplace risks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are equipment and machinery inspected and maintained appropriately?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Is suitable personal protective equipment provided where necessary?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are working hours and job demands managed to reduce fatigue-related risks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are safety controls applied consistently across different work locations?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Safe working procedures, equipment maintenance records, inspection checklists, PPE records and work schedules.

What a gap may indicate: Your organisation may have identified risks without establishing adequate controls, or existing controls may not be consistently applied.

11. Training and Competence

Workers need the knowledge and skills to perform their jobs safely.

Training should reflect the hazards associated with their responsibilities and the equipment or processes they use.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Do workers receive relevant health and safety training?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are new employees introduced to the safety requirements of their roles?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do workers understand the hazards associated with their tasks?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are workers trained to use relevant equipment and protective gear?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you maintain records of relevant safety training?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Training plans, attendance records, induction materials, competency assessments and relevant training certificates.

What a gap may indicate: Workers may not have the knowledge or skills required to perform certain activities safely, or the organisation may lack evidence that training has taken place.

12. Emergency Preparedness and Response

Your workers should know what to do and where to get help when an emergency occurs.

Your arrangements should reflect the types of emergencies that could affect your business and the locations where people work.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Have you identified the emergencies that could affect your operations?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are emergency procedures documented and communicated?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do workers know who to contact during an emergency?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are first-aid arrangements and relevant emergency equipment available?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are emergency arrangements tested or reviewed periodically?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Can workers in remote or different locations access emergency assistance?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Emergency response plans, emergency contact lists, first-aid records, fire equipment inspection records and drill reports.

What a gap may indicate: Workers may not know how to respond to emergencies, or your organisation may not have reliable arrangements for providing assistance.

13. Incident Reporting and Investigation

An incident or near miss can reveal weaknesses in your existing safety arrangements. Your response should help prevent similar events.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Is there a clear process for reporting workplace incidents and near misses?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are reported incidents investigated?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do investigations identify underlying causes rather than only immediate mistakes?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are corrective actions assigned to responsible persons?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you check whether corrective actions have resolved the identified problems?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Incident reports, investigation records, corrective action registers and follow-up reviews.

What a gap may indicate: Your organisation may be missing opportunities to understand why incidents occur and prevent similar problems.

14. Monitoring, Review and Continual Improvement

Your safety arrangements should not remain unchanged while your business and its risks evolve.

You need to check whether your controls work and whether your management system continues to meet your organisation's needs.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Do you conduct routine workplace safety inspections?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you monitor whether safety controls are working?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you review incident reports and recurring safety concerns?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are internal audits or structured safety reviews conducted?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does management use review findings to improve safety arrangements?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Inspection records, performance reports, audit reports, management review minutes and improvement plans.

What a gap may indicate: Your organisation may be implementing safety measures without checking whether they are effective or making necessary improvements.

15. Contractors and Workers at Different Locations

If your business relies on contractors or has employees working away from your main premises, you need arrangements that address those conditions.

Assessment question	Yes	Partly	No	N/A
Are relevant safety expectations communicated to contractors?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are risks at client premises or other work locations assessed?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do remote workers have clear safety instructions and reporting channels?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are arrangements in place to contact and assist workers during emergencies?	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are contractors' safety arrangements monitored where relevant?	☐	☐	☐	☐

Evidence to examine: Contractor agreements, induction records, site risk assessments, communication procedures and contractor monitoring records.

What a gap may indicate: Your organisation may not have sufficient visibility of the risks associated with external work locations or the activities of contractors.

PART THREE: UNDERSTANDING AND PRIORITISING YOUR RESULTS

16. Understanding Your Assessment Results

Once you have completed the questions, review your responses across all nine assessment areas.

Look for patterns. Several Partly or No responses in one section may indicate a wider weakness in how your organisation manages that aspect of workplace safety.

Use the following guide to interpret your findings.

Mostly Yes

Your organisation appears to have several important safety arrangements in place. However, you should still check whether they are consistently applied and producing the intended results.

A combination of Yes and Partly

Some arrangements exist, but they may not be sufficiently developed or consistently implemented. Identify the areas that need attention and establish clear improvement actions.

Several No responses

Your organisation may have significant gaps in how it manages workplace health and safety. You should prioritise the risks that could cause the most serious harm and consider a more structured review of your current arrangements.

Do Not Rely on a Percentage Score Alone

Not all safety gaps carry the same level of risk.

For example, an incomplete training record and the absence of a suitable emergency response arrangement should not automatically receive the same priority.

A percentage can show how many questions received Yes responses, but it cannot establish whether your organisation is safe or compliant.

Instead, consider the seriousness of each gap and the potential consequences for the people affected.

17. Prioritising Identified Gaps

After reviewing your answers, classify the gaps according to the attention they require.

Priority	Meaning	Recommended response
Critical	A condition or missing control that presents an immediate or potentially severe danger.	Take immediate steps to protect affected people and address the danger.
High	A significant weakness that could lead to serious injury or ill health if left unresolved.	Assign urgent corrective action and monitor progress.
Medium	An incomplete or inconsistently applied arrangement that requires improvement.	Establish a corrective action with a realistic deadline.
Low	An improvement opportunity that does not currently indicate a significant uncontrolled risk.	Include it in the organisation's improvement plan.

Suggested illustration: A simple four-level priority scale, from Critical to Low, with a short action description beside each level.

How to Decide the Priority

Consider these questions when classifying a gap:

1. Could the issue cause serious injury or ill health?
2. How likely is someone to be exposed to the hazard?
3. Are existing control measures adequate?
4. How many workers or other people could be affected?
5. Does the issue involve an applicable legal or regulatory requirement?
6. Could leaving the issue unresolved make an existing risk worse?

If an immediate danger exists, do not wait until the assessment is complete before taking protective action.

18. Your Workplace Safety Improvement Plan

Identifying gaps is only the first step. You also need to decide what to do about them.

Use the table below to record the most important issues identified during your assessment.

Identified gap	Priority	Action required	Responsible person	Target date	Evidence of completion
Example: No documented emergency procedure	High	Develop and communicate emergency procedures	Operations Manager		
Example: Incomplete equipment inspections	Medium	Establish an inspection schedule	Maintenance Supervisor		

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Reviewing Your Improvement Plan

Once you have assigned actions, establish a process for reviewing progress.

- Confirm that every action has a responsible person.
- Set realistic deadlines based on the seriousness of each gap.
- Provide the resources required to complete the actions.
- Keep evidence of completed work.
- Check whether the action has actually reduced the risk.
- Update the plan when new hazards or weaknesses are identified.

Closing an action should mean more than ticking a box. You should be able to demonstrate that the change was made and that it addressed the original problem.

PART FOUR: CONNECTING YOUR FINDINGS TO ISO 45001

19. How ISO 45001 Can Help Your Business

If this assessment has revealed weaknesses in your existing safety arrangements, you may need a more structured way to manage them.

An Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) provides an organised approach to identifying hazards, assessing risks, assigning responsibilities, establishing controls and improving safety performance.

ISO 45001:2018 is an international standard that specifies requirements for establishing, implementing, maintaining and improving an OHSMS.

It helps organisations move beyond individual safety activities and connect them through a management system.

For example, instead of treating training, risk assessments, emergency planning and incident investigations as separate activities, an organisation can establish processes that link them to its overall safety objectives.

The questions in this checklist cover several important areas associated with an effective OHSMS. They can help you identify weaknesses in your existing arrangements and decide where further work may be necessary.

However, this checklist is not a clause-by-clause ISO 45001 assessment. It cannot establish whether your organisation conforms to the standard or is ready for certification.

You can learn more about the standard through the International Organization for Standardization's ISO 45001 overview.

Do You Need ISO 45001 Certification?

Not necessarily.

An organization can implement an OHSMS using ISO 45001 as its framework without pursuing certification.

Certification is a separate assessment carried out by an independent certification body. Some customers, contracts or industry arrangements may require it, but it is not compulsory simply because a business uses the standard.

Your first priority should be to establish arrangements that protect people and work effectively within your organisation.

Certification can be considered when it serves a clear business or contractual purpose.

20. Need Help Identifying and Addressing Your Management System Gaps?

Completing this checklist can give you a clearer picture of your organisation's current workplace safety arrangements.

But identifying a gap and knowing how to address it are two different things.

You may need support with reviewing existing processes, understanding applicable requirements, developing procedures, assigning responsibilities or preparing your organisation for ISO 45001 implementation.

Astute Business Consult helps organisations assess and improve their management systems through structured diagnostics, implementation support, documentation development, training and internal audits.

If you are unsure where your organisation stands, you can begin with a management system diagnostic.

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Systems first. Standards second. Certification optional. Outcomes central.

Final Note

This checklist is an initial self-assessment resource. It is not a formal ISO 45001 audit, a legal compliance assessment or a substitute for a competent professional risk assessment.

Your answers should be supported by evidence, and significant risks may require further investigation.

The value of the assessment lies in what you do with the findings. Use them to address weaknesses, improve existing controls and make workplace safety part of how you manage your business.

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