

Safety Corner

What are the board directors' responsibilities for safety and health?

One key role of board directors is to determine the organisation's purpose, develop an effective governance culture, hold management accountable, and ensure effective compliance. Board directors must also recognize that health and safety governance is just as important as any other aspect of governance. Failure to manage health and safety risks properly and effectively as key business risks can have catastrophic results as many high-profile safety accidents over the years have been rooted in failures of board leadership.

Safety must be led from the top. Directors of all types of organisations in the private and public sectors have both collective and individual responsibility to provide the necessary leadership through:

- Leading by example to establish the right safety culture throughout the organisation
- Developing safety policy, strategy and business plans which are then implemented by management to ensure that health and safety standards are communicated and implemented throughout the organisation
- Requesting management to provide evidence that safety policies and procedures are in place to manage health and safety risk
- Including safety in board agenda and request that safety risks and performance be reported at each meeting
- Inviting health and safety committee representatives to attend and address the board on health and safety risks at least once per annum
- Ensuring health and safety risk issues are raised, discussed at all levels and safety is never compromised

Safety is everyone's responsibility and demands active involvement by all, whether you are a front line staff or a board director of the organisation.

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