

Loss Prevention Standards

The Power of Stop Audits

Introduction

In almost all incidents and losses where the outcome is worse than expected, significant contributing factors or one of the primary causes of the incident starting or developing, is as a result of:

- Human behaviours or reactions
- Management systems or operating procedures
- Training or consistency of application

Do we consistently and competently do what we say and say what we do, 24 hours per day 365 days per year?

A Stop Audit is basically a 'freeze-in-time' process that helps us to ensure we are doing exactly what we say we should be doing. It is a very powerful tool to immediately assess the environment, behaviours, tasks, operating procedures or permitting systems.

- Are we doing in practice what we say in our procedures and management systems...consistently and accurately?
- Are we saying what we do in our procedures and management systems, what we actually do in practice... consistently and accurately?

This can be extended to all tasks/site areas for all types of potential risks, including:

- Standard operating procedures
- Emergency operating procedures
- Maintenance activities
- Contractor activities
- Security functions
- Permit to work systems, e.g.
 - Hot work
 - Confined spaces
 - Working at height, etc.
- Emergency evacuation plans
- Emergency response plans and team(s)
- Health and safety related tasks, e.g.
 - As simple as using a hand rail on stairs
 - Manual handling, etc.
- Driver behaviours, etc.
- All risk management programmes
- High hazard, critical or sensitive operations
- Maintenance workshops
- Car parks
- Kitchens
- Plant or utility rooms, etc.

Undertaking a Stop Audit

The fundamental concept of a Stop Audit is:

- Individual(s) approaches the activity/practice and gets everyone involved to 'stop and freeze', i.e. essentially nobody moves.

They then ask/establish:

- Is the working environment as expected?
- Are operating procedures being followed as they should be?
- Are all permissions or permits in place that should be?
- Are all permissions or permits completed accurately, reflecting the actual task being completed?
- Are all safety features in place that should be?
- Are all behaviours being followed as they should be?
- Do the people completing the task believe the existing procedures and practices are appropriate?

Depending upon the nature of the audit, the time to complete it can take as long as is available or required, and can even be extremely effective with the investment of only a few minutes of time.

Once the audit is complete, any good practice can be celebrated and reinforced, and any divergence from expected performance can be assessed for the root cause failing(s), following which:

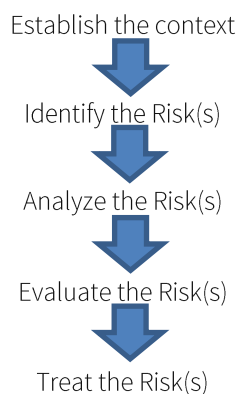
- Behaviours and/or training can be reinforced
- Procedures and practices can be assessed and modified to reflect the actual situation
- Permits and permissions can be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of the business
- Working environment and topography can be amended, etc.

A management framework that embraces a continual improvement process, and which includes Stop Audits will see significant benefits in their risk management performance.

It is particularly useful if used where higher frequency issues, near misses or incidents have been experienced historically, or at specific 'problem' areas on site, or even at times of the year when increases in issues can be expected.

In addition, if the culture of Stop Audits is extended to empower all employees to challenge their status quo, including training employees to intervene and stop a colleague if a job is being carried out unsafely, then there should be a consummate increase in near miss type reporting. As a result, the learning and ownership across the organisation should increase, and the number and severity of actual incidents or accidents should reduce.

This is essentially fundamental risk management:



Checklist

A generic Stop Audits Checklist is presented in Appendix 1 which can be tailored to your own organisation.

Further risk management information can be obtained from [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#)

Please Note

This document contains general information and guidance and is not and should not be relied on as specific advice. The document may not cover every risk, exposure or hazard that may arise and Aviva recommend that you obtain specific advice relevant to the circumstances. AVIVA accepts no responsibility or liability towards any person who may rely upon this document.



Appendix 1 – Stop Audits Checklist

| | |
|--|--|
| Location | |
| Date | |
| Completed by (name and signature) | |

| | Stop Audits | Y/N | Comments |
|----|--|-----|----------|
| 1. | Is there a formal Stop Audit programme established? | | |
| 2. | Are Stop Audits regularly completed? If so, do they include: a) Management programmes? b) Permit to work systems? c) Working at height? d) Hot work? e) Confined spaces? f) Maintenance activities? g) Contractors on site? h) Activities in high hazard areas? i) Activities in sensitive or critical areas? j) Activities in utility rooms? k) Activities in kitchens, etc.? | | |
| 3. | Are good practice/best practice findings celebrated and shared with all areas/departments? | | |
| 4. | Are findings from Stop Audits reviewed to establish root cause failings? | | |
| 5. | Are root cause failings shared with all areas/departments? Are the root cause failings trended by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cause? • Task? • Area/activity, etc.? | | |
| 6. | Are any improvements to address failings tracked through to completion? | | |
| 7. | Are written management systems modified and revised as a result of any findings? | | |
| 8. | Are training and refresher training frequencies revised as a result of any findings? | | |



| | Stop Audits Contd. | Y/N | Comments |
|-----|---|------------|-----------------|
| 9. | Is the frequency of Stop Audits for specific areas, tasks or operations based on learning and findings (i.e. repeat offenders are visited more often)? | | |
| 10. | Are all employees empowered to complete formal and/or informal Stop Audits? | | |
| 11. | Are Stop Audits used specifically where on-site or industry incident or accident data shows there are known historical higher frequency near misses, incidents, etc.? | | |
| 12. | Are Stop Audits used specifically to target seasonally occurring or recurring issues? | | |
| 13. | Are near miss incidents recorded on site? Are there any links between the number and type of near misses and Stop Audits? | | |
| 14. | Additional comments: | | |

