



# health and safety in annual reports

members' factcard

union for professionals



## INTRODUCTION

Current Health and Safety Executive (HSE) strategy invites employers and workers 'to be part of the solution' in accident and ill health prevention through effective leadership and worker involvement. Prospect has, therefore, refined existing guidance for employers on health and safety annual reporting to encourage our health and safety reps to support their employer:

- reliably measure and report workplace health and safety performance;
- assist with measurement and reporting systems; and
- demonstrate health and safety cooperation using the organisation's corporate annual report.

## BACKGROUND

An employer's annual report is intended to give shareholders/government and other interested parties information about the organisation's activities and performance over the preceding year; and enable investors to stay up-to-date with the yearly outlook.

Historically the focus has been financial, but nowadays organisations use annual reports to demonstrate **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) and evidence of meeting their duties to clients, customers, employees and contractors. The significance of corporate governance and reputation has grown in status, influencing shareholder investment in the private sector and departmental funding in the public sector.

Yet HSE says only 11% of Boards include health and safety performance in their annual reports, a figure we want to improve.

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## WHAT SHOULD AN EMPLOYER REPORT?

When asked about annual reporting, most managing directors or CEOs will mention percentage profit, return on investment or market share, typically quoting *success*. When asked specifically about health and safety, they tend to quote negatively. This is a reflection of the metrics most organisations use, such as lost time, injuries or reportable accidents, which typically focus on *failure*.

Encouraging employers to exceed the typical core content (overleaf) by suggesting a more 'balanced scorecard' approach will capture leading (active) as well as lagging (reactive) performance indicators. Employers will be able to showcase H&S success. By including worker involvement indicators (checklist below) they will have leading, proactive performance measures with the potential for a very good news story to go in their annual report!

## WORKER INVOLVEMENT CHECKLIST: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a Board member or director with responsibility for worker involvement has been appointed | <input type="checkbox"/> percentage of H&S committee actions closed out (ie actioned) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> number of union H&S reps making or involved with management in periodic H&S inspections  | <input type="checkbox"/> frequency and effectiveness of staff H&S briefings           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> number of union H&S reps making or involved with management in H&S campaigns             | <input type="checkbox"/> staff perceptions of management's H&S commitment             |

- |                          |  |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | frequency of joint H&S training  | <input type="checkbox"/> | percentage of risk assessments completed with staff involvement                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | extent to which H&S consultation is embedded in organisational-change project management | <input type="checkbox"/> | extent to which staff know how to get H&S help  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | percentage of line managers understanding the role of a union H&S rep                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | level and timeliness of management response to union H&S rep suggestions or concerns        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | number of trained union H&S reps   | <input type="checkbox"/> | awareness of who/where H&S reps are and extent to which staff are asked for their H&S views |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | timeliness of H&S consultation   | <input type="checkbox"/> | percentage of H&S policies having formal agreements with trade unions                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | frequency and effectiveness of H&S committee meetings                                    |                          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prospect's contribution is recognised in the annual H&S report!                          |                          |   |

*These indicators are drawn from established, reputable H&S and CSR sources . They therefore shape Prospect's expectations of good practice. We are not 'gold-plating'; we are simply highlighting what good employers regard as the norm through their arrangements for worker consultation and employee engagement. It's about employers working with their staff and vice-versa. Further guidance available from Health and Safety Executive (HSG65), Institute of Occupational Safety & Health, British Standards Institute and Global Reporting Initiative.*

**Successful reporting requires reliable information,** making monitoring and measurement key. This includes workplace health and safety metrics which provide a benchmark for continuous improvement. A function of Prospect H&S reps is to inspect and investigate, contributing to auditing. **Credible reporting requires workforce endorsement,** so involving workers is vital. It also promotes a positive health and safety culture and performance.

## WHAT SHOULD AN EMPLOYER MEASURE?

HSE advises on a balanced approach which combines:

- **hazard burden:** ie the scale, nature and distribution of hazards created by the organisation's activities
- **active monitoring:** of the adequacy of the H&S management system, ie measures of success; and
- **reactive monitoring:** of adverse events such as injury, ill health, near-miss, ie measures of failure.

## WHAT CAN PROSPECT REPS DO?

- Share this factcard with your employer.
- Benchmark using the checklist. Raise any apparent gaps with management to aid improvement.
- Make joint annual H&S reporting the norm, so that Prospect's contributions secure due recognition.

### Contact

- [SafetyReps@prospect.org.uk](mailto:SafetyReps@prospect.org.uk)
- 020 7902 6629

**More?** [www.prospect.org.uk](http://www.prospect.org.uk) for H&S web pages and Negotiator's Guide to CSR

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## HSE ADVICE ON CORE CONTENT

HSE advice is that core content should include:

- broad context of the employer's policy on H&S
- significant H&S risks to staff and others and measures to control them
- corporate H&S objectives and progress towards achieving them
- H&S consultation arrangements
- data on H&S performance, such as the number of:
  - RIDDOR-reportable incidents, distinguishing types (many Prospect employers record to stricter, higher standards of incident definition)
  - cases of disability, physical or mental ill health caused or made worse by work
  - days lost by the employer, due to all causes of physical and mental ill health
  - enforcement notices, convictions, penalties or personal injury claims.
- total costs to the employer of any occupational injuries and illnesses staff have incurred, including costs of absence, providing cover and any personal injury claims
- activity aimed at preventing recurrence of H&S accidents or ill health.

HSE suggests including appropriate narratives, for instance in relation to specific events that impacted on H&S performance or specific developments such as the introduction of new working practices, technological change or organisational restructuring.



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