



**ACT**  
Government

**ACT Health**

# Work Health and Safety Audit and Assessment

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<b>Author branch</b>	People Strategy
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# Purpose

The purpose of this document is to assist the ACT Health Directorate (ACT HD) to:

- implement an effective work health and safety (WHS) audit and assessment program as part of its work health and safety management system (WHSMS), and
- meet the requirements of the [ACTPS WHS Audit and Assurance Framework](#) (the Framework) which requires ACTHD to verify and review the effectiveness of the WHSMS, taking into account the specific WHS risks, changes in ACTHD and the results of previous audits every year.

# Objectives

ACT HD will:

- verify and review the effectiveness of the WHSMS, considering the specific WHS risks, changes in ACT HD and the results of previous audits and assessments every year
- use WHS audit and assessment information for monitoring and performance management, and
- provide information from WHS audits and assessments to officers to assist them to meet their due diligence requirements.

# Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Responsibilities
Director-General and Deputy Directors-General, who are officers in accordance with the WHS Act.	Approve the three-yearly WHS audit and assessment program. Ensure that effective action is taken to address identified corrective actions. Review and monitor WHS reports and corrective actions.
Executive Group Manager, Corporate and Governance	Receive reports and provide information to officers and to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executive Board</li><li>• Corporate Governance and Finance Committee (CGFC)</li><li>• Audit and Risk Committee, and</li><li>• ACT HD WHS Committee.</li></ul>

Position	Responsibilities
People Strategy	<p>Prepare three-yearly WHS audit programs, considering the specific WHS risks, changes in ACT HD and the results of previous audits and assessments, for approval by the Director-General.</p> <p>Communicate, consult and co-operate with workers, health and safety representatives, WHS committees and governance committees.</p> <p>Manage and undertake WHS audits and assessments in accordance with the approved program.</p> <p>Ensure that WHS audits and assessments are undertaken by competent persons.</p> <p>Consult with and support business units during WHS audits and assessments.</p> <p>Act on identified corrective actions and recommendations that are within the functions of People Strategy.</p> <p>Provide information about outcomes to managers, officers, governance committees and WHS committees.</p> <p>Maintain records of outcomes and corrective actions as corporate record.</p>
Workplace managers	<p>Manage risk and the work health and safety management system within their areas or responsibility.</p> <p>Communicate, consult and co-operate with workers, health and safety representatives and other duty holders.</p> <p>Participate in and support audits and assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making managers and workers available to the auditor/s and assessors</li> <li>• providing access to relevant documents and records, and</li> <li>• providing information about the WHS risks and risk controls in their workplace/s.</li> </ul> <p>Act on any identified unsafe situations and implement corrective actions and recommendations within their areas or responsibility.</p> <p>Provide information about outcomes to workers, officers, governance committees and WHS committees.</p>
Health and safety representatives	<p>Participate in the audits and assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participating in workplace inspection and consultation processes</li> <li>• providing information about the WHS risks and risk controls in their workplace, and</li> <li>• consulting about corrective actions.</li> </ul>
Workers	<p>Participate in audits and assessments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing access to relevant documents and records</li> <li>• providing information about the WHS risks and risk controls in their workplace.</li> </ul>

# Requirements and Design

The [Framework](#) assists the ACT Public Sector to meet its self-insurance licence conditions under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*. Under the Framework, ACTHD is required to verify and review the effectiveness of the WHSMS, taking into account the specific WHS risks, changes in ACTHD and the results of previous audits every year.

The three-year ACTHD WHS audit and assessment program will include:

- one external audit of the WHSMS, based on AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management System, Requirements with guidance for use (AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018), will be undertaken
- at least 50 per cent of the WHS audits and assessments being undertaken by external subject matter experts
- a minimum of one WHS audit or assessment being undertaken every year
- self-assessments (using an abridged version of the National Audit Tool), hazard specific audits and WHSMS audits (using the full set of National Audit Tool criteria)
- at least one third of the WHS audits and assessments will focus on a specific hazard, risk or area of practice
- the selection of a specific hazard, risk or area of practice to be audited will be undertaken in consultation with the WHS Committee, relevant governance committees and approved by the Director-General
- the engagement of specialist expertise to undertake audits of a specific hazard, risk or area of practice
- every ACT HD occupied premises in at least one WHS audit or assessment in the three-year cycle, and
- an internal annual review of the WHSMS to assess the maturity of the system.

## Procedure for Undertaking Audits and Assessments

The procedure for undertaking the audits specified by the three yearly WHS audit and assessment program is detailed in in table 1.

Table 1 – Procedure for undertaking audits

Step	Action	Comments
1	<p>People Strategy will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prepare three-yearly WHS audit programs, considering the specific WHS risks, changes in ACT HD and the results of previous audits and assessments, for endorsement by the CGFC and approval by the Director-General, and</li> <li>• plan the annual audit requirement in its business plan.</li> </ul>	Financial considerations will be considered in budget processes.
2	People Strategy will consult with the relevant business units to be included in the specific audit or assessment and develop a schedule.	
3	People Strategy will advise to the Senior Director – Internal Audit about the proposed audit or assessment.	Participation of Internal Audit will be invited, as appropriate.
4	People Strategy will engage external expertise, if required, in accordance with ACT HD procurement processes.	The ACTPS Consultancy Panel includes audit services.
5	People Strategy and the managers in the business unit will consult with workers and health and safety representatives (HSRs) about the proposed audit or assessment.	Communication will also take place with WHS committees.
6	<p>People Strategy (and the external auditor if one is engaged) and the business unit will decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• which sections of the business unit will be included</li> <li>• which managers and workers will participate in interviews and focus groups, and</li> <li>• what documents may be required to address the audit or assessment criteria.</li> </ul>	The workbook and information for WHS noticeboards will be provided at least two weeks before the audit.
7	The auditor/s or assessor/s will undertake the document review before the site visit.	Further documents will be obtained on site.
8	<p>The auditor/s or assessor/s will undertake:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• site inspections, and</li> <li>• onsite interviews and focus groups.</li> </ul>	<p>One day on site is expected</p> <p>People Strategy will assist external auditor/s or assessor/s (where engaged) with this process</p> <p>HSRs will be invited to participate.</p>

Step	Action	Comments
9	The auditor/s or assessor/s will provide verbal feedback to the business unit about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>any unsafe conditions identified during the audit, and</li> <li>the themes that will be included in the report and recommendations.</li> </ul>	
10	The auditor/s or assessor/s will prepare a draft report and provide it to the directorate and the business unit to identify errors of fact or omission.	Within two weeks.
11	The final report and recommendations will be provided to ACT HD and the business unit.	
12	People Strategy and the business unit will prepare corrective action plan/s.	Monitoring of corrective actions will be undertaken until all corrective actions are closed out.
13	Information about the outcomes and corrective action plans will be communicated to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>workers</li> <li>HSRs</li> <li>WHS committee/s, and</li> <li>governance committees.</li> </ul>	The relevant WHS and governance committees will be advised of the outcomes and corrective actions at the next available meeting.
14	Progress against corrective actions will be monitored and considered in the identification of future audits.	People Strategy and Internal Audit will undertake monitoring and reporting.

## Records Management

WHS audit and assessment documents and corrective action plan records must be retained in accordance with the relevant [retention and disposal schedule](#). Specifically records of:

- workplace inspections must be retained for 10 years, and
- WHS audits must be retained for 5 years.

## Related Documents

### Legislation

- Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*
- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#)

- [Territory Records Act 2002.](#)

## Supporting Documents

- Work Health and Safety Self-Assessment Workbook
- [Work Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Guideline](#)
- ACT HD [records management policies and procedures](#)
- [Territory Records \(Records Disposal Schedule – Territory Administrative Records Disposal Schedules – Occupational Health & Safety \(OH&S\) Records Approval 2009 \(No.1\)\)](#)

## References

- [Comcare Self Insurance Licences.](#)
- Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission’s performance standards and measures for licensees
- National Audit Tool (Comcare)
- [ACTPS WHS Audit and Assurance Framework](#)

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Competency	The ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the standard expected in employment.  Competencies include attributes such as knowledge, skills and abilities, and attitudes required in professional practice. Competency may be core (such as communication skills), general (for a professional group or role) or task specific. <sup>1</sup>
Competent person	The WHS Regulation defines a competent person as “a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out the task” Examples include WHS auditor training or a qualification in an area of technical speciality.
Officer	Officer means: a) an officer within the meaning of the Corporations Act, section 9, other than a partner in a partnership b) an officer of the Territory within the meaning of section 247, or c) an officer of a public authority within the meaning of section 252.

<sup>1</sup> National Competency Standards Policy and Guidelines, National Training Board, 1991



Term	Definition
Worker	<p>A person is a worker in accordance with the WHS Act, if the person carries out work in any capacity for a person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) an employee</li> <li>(b) a contractor or subcontractor</li> <li>(c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor</li> <li>(d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking</li> <li>(e) an outworker</li> <li>(f) an apprentice or trainee</li> <li>(g) a student gaining work experience</li> <li>(h) a volunteer, or</li> <li>(i) a person of a prescribed class.</li> </ul>

## Search Terms

Work health and safety audit/s and assessments.

## Version Control

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	4 June 2021	First version
2.0	6 July 2023	Update review date

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