Health and safety auditing

Why it's important

Health and safety auditing is an integral part of an effective worker protection program. When a health and safety audit is to be performed, planning and the preparation are the determining factors for its success.

A health and safety audit is a validation that what is in place follows its design and its intent.

How to control the hazards

There are generally two types of health and safety audits.

The first – an internal audit where the employer, manager, supervisor or joint health and safety committee perform the audit.

The second – an external auditor comes onto the workplace and performs the audit.

Planning and preparation require that supervisors and workers know that a health and safety audit is going to be performed. This is so they can expect and watch for the auditors entering their workstations.

Everyone must be prepared to discuss health and safety items that they have knowledge on, that they acquired through any or all of the following:

- Observation
- Experience
- Informal training
- Formal training

During the audit, workers and supervisors must also be able to:

- Discuss specific aspects that concern them and their jobs
- Discuss general aspects that concern everyone
- Answer questions to the best of their ability
- Ask questions that could prove to be a benefit to the audit.

The intent of a health and safety audit is:

- To improve areas identified as weaknesses in the health and safety program
- To strengthen the program that is already in place
- To develop elements that are required but presently do not exist in the program
- To plan for future changes and processes in the workplace.

For the benefit of all, communication and cooperation between workplace parties and the auditors is an important step towards the protection of all workers.

Show and tell

Show participants an example of a workplace health and safety audit.

Discuss the importance of inspections and audits in the overall framework of your company's health and safety program.

Notes:

OFSWA
Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association
Partners on the Road to Zero