



Strategic Review of the Workplace Health and Safety System

Submission template

This template can be used to make a submission to the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety. The template does not limit the length of your answers, and you can attach documents to supplement your answers if you wish. Alternatively, you can use the on-line questionnaire to make a submission, which can be found at www.hstaskforce.govt.nz. The on-line questionnaire restricts the length of your answers to about 300 words per question.

Please refer to the taskforce's consultation document, *Safer Workplaces* before completing this template. The consultation document can be found at www.hstaskforce.govt.nz

About you

* Indicates mandatory questions

1. *Your full name:

Geoff Brokenshire

2. *Is this submission on behalf of an individual or an organisation?

☒ Individual ☐ Organisation

Name of organisation: Deosan Manufacturing Ltd

3. *Region

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northland | <input type="checkbox"/> Whangarei | <input type="checkbox"/> Auckland |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waikato | <input type="checkbox"/> Bay of Plenty | <input type="checkbox"/> Gisborne |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hawke's Bay | <input type="checkbox"/> Taranaki | <input type="checkbox"/> Manawatu-Wanganui |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wellington | <input type="checkbox"/> Marlborough | <input type="checkbox"/> Nelson |
| <input type="checkbox"/> West Coast | <input type="checkbox"/> Canterbury | <input type="checkbox"/> Otago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Southland | <input type="checkbox"/> Overseas | |

4. *Respondent category

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employer | <input type="checkbox"/> Not in paid employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational health nurse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee | <input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety practitioner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employee representative | |

5. *Which type of industry do you manage, own a business in, or work in?

- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Forestry
- ☐ Fishing
- ☐ Mining
- ☒ Manufacturing
- ☐ Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Wholesale Trade
- ☐ Retail Trade
- ☐ Accommodation and Food Services
- ☐ Transport, Postal and Warehousing
- ☐ Information Media and Telecommunications
- ☐ Financial and Insurance Services
- ☐ Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services
- ☐ Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
- ☐ Administrative and Support Services
- ☐ Public Administration and Safety
- ☐ Education and Training
- ☐ Health Care and Social Assistance
- ☐ Arts and Recreation Services
- ☐ Other Services

6. *Size of business that you own / manage or work for?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self employed | <input type="checkbox"/> 20-49 employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-99 employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-9 employees | <input type="checkbox"/> 100+ employees |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 10-19 employees | |

7. Gender

☒ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

8. Age

☐ 15–24 ☐ 45–54

☐ 25–34 ☒ 55–64

☐ 35–44 ☐ 65+

9. Ethnicity

☐ NZ Maori ☐ Asian

☒ European ☐ Middle Eastern/Latin American/African

☐ Pacific Island

☐ Other ethnic group

☐ Other European ☐ Do not wish to indicate

10. Your contact details

Phone number(s)

Email address:

Please tick the boxes below as appropriate

☒ I consent to my submission being placed on the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety website

☐ I would like my name withheld from publication (submissions from individuals only)

Please note that your name and contact information, including any personal information, is being collected so that the Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety can publish the names of people and organisations who or that made submissions, follow up with a respondent if any submission needs clarification, and for the general purposes of the Strategic Review of the Workplace Health and Safety System. The Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety is the intended recipient and holder of the information and can be contacted at PO Box 3705, Wellington, New Zealand. In accordance with Privacy Principle 7, you have the right to access and correct any personal information you provide.

Submission template questions

Please answer the following questions and feel free to attach any supporting documents.

If you are completing the template on paper, please feel free to add other pages but make clear which questions your answers refer to. **If you are completing the template electronically** and need more space for any of your answers, please write the rest of your answer into another document, making clear which question your answer refers to, and attach it when you send your completed submission template to us. The answer fields below hold approximately 430 words.

Who gets hurt, killed or suffers from ill-health or disease as a result of work?

1. What do you think is driving the differences in health and safety outcomes for different demographic groups?

Education and Socio-economic situation.

Unfortunately those who are the lowest paid are the poorest educated but also the ones most exposed to dangerous situations. In NZ it is the Maori, Pacific Island and immigrants for whom English as a second language are most exposed.

NZ Maori and NZ born Pacific Islanders have the same opportunities for education as NZ European residents, unfortunately it seems there is little incentive to uptake the educational opportunities offered.

2. What changes are needed to the workplace health and safety framework to improve outcomes for demographic groups with higher than average rates of injury and illness?

Health and safety needs to be a compulsory part of education with increasing knowledge as education levels increase.

Numeracy and literacy skills need to be addressed along with better H&S education however for an SME employer this is an added expense that may not be affordable.

Independent workplace assessments may help in identifying hazards and educational opportunities for the at risk demographic groups. Unfortunately if employer sponsored education is not available then these at risk groups may find themselves excluded from the workforce through lack of education and understanding.

The H&S framework could be adjusted by requiring employers to provide signage and training in native languages and by directing specific regulatory attention to those industries where the majority of the at risk groups are employed.

Regulatory framework

3. What do you think the challenges are with the current health and safety regulatory framework?

The challenges with the current regulatory framework is:

1. The lack of coordinated regulatory approach
2. The multitude of regulatory bodies involved with various aspects of the H&S system
3. The relatively few inspectors meaning that firms located outside main urban concentrations may never have a visit from an inspector unless there is an investigation due to a serious harm event.
4. The lack of consistency in applying the H&S legislation and regulations across the workforce particularly in SME's where the owner controls the day to day operations and is focused on income rather than on compliance.

4. How do you think the health and safety regulatory framework could be improved?

The development of clear prescriptive requirements appropriate to all businesses that allow SME operators to implement the requirements easily without having to either employ a specialist or take time away from their primary focus of making a living.

Regulators' roles and responsibilities

5. How effective are the regulators in influencing workplace health and safety outcomes?

Regulators currently only get involved when they have to, usually as a result of an accident.

Within the community there is a fear of the regulators role and therefore a reluctance to approach them for advice. Certainly you never invite them into your workplace in case they see an opportunity to prosecute. The perception is that MBIE inspectors are ogres who only wish to add to the treasury bank balance.

How effective are the regulators in influencing H&S outcomes. Reasonable if you look at the bid stick approach they have adopted as business owners only wish to do sufficient to cover their butts.

Could regulators do better? Yes but they will need to overcome 20years of conditioning that has lead to the current state of mind among business owners.

6. How could the regulators' roles and responsibilities be changed to improve their effectiveness in influencing workplace health and safety outcomes?

Regulators could take a more educational approach to H&S. They need to develop an approach that encourages business owners to want to attend seminars / webinars etc. They need to take a gentler approach rather than a do as I say attitude.

New Zealand's changing workforce and work arrangements

7. What impacts are New Zealand's changing workforce and work arrangements having on health and safety outcomes?

Perhaps the greatest changes to influence NZ's workforce and work arrangements are:

1. The acceptance of the 7 day work week especially in retail, tourism and retail sectors.
2. The increasing expectation within some professional areas (accountancy, law and medicine) to work extended hours - weekends included.
3. The increasing numbers of immigrant workers especially from Asia
4. The move away from traditional Christianity based morals to the acquisition of wealth based culture where any shortcut to achieve the goal is acceptable even if it compromises the H&S of staff.

8. What changes to the health and safety framework, if any, are needed as a result of the changing workforce and work arrangements?

Worker participation and engagement

9. How effective do you think worker participation is in improving workplace health and safety in New Zealand?

Worker participation is probably as effective as the business owners attitude to Health and Safety.

Given that >90% of business in NZ is conducted through SME's where the owner has a large hands on component their attitude to H&S largely determines the attitude of their workforce.

Given the variable attitudes of business owners to H&S one may expect variable effectiveness to any worker participation.

10. What improvements can be made to worker participation in workplace health and safety so as to get better workplace health and safety outcomes?

I am not sure that any changes made in the H&S frame work will improve worker participation unless business owner attitudes change.

Where workers feel their participation is valued then they will participate more fully in Health and Safety matters but that will only work if business owners value health and safety and their worker opinions.

Leadership and governance

11. To what extent do directors and other senior leaders provide effective leadership and governance of workplace health and safety?

Unless H&S is actively promoted from the top down then H&S just will not happen. Directors & Senior Leaders must budget for H&S as with any other compliance requirement.

Clearly senior management must put clear directives around H&S issues and communicate these clearly to their staff.

12. What improvements can be made to directors' and other leaders' participation in workplace health and safety, so as to get better workplace health and safety outcomes?

If the regulators (MBIE) and the Companies Office shared a data base and contact details then information critical to the senior management of companies could be circulated electronically. Directors and Senior Managers suffer from the same lack of information around H&S as any other person.

In this age of modern communications there is no excuse not to get critical information to senior people in every business in NZ. Once directors & senior management know and understand the issues around H&S they will engage to achieve the desired outcomes.

Capacity and capability of the workplace health and safety system

13. To what extent do firms have the capacity and capability to effectively manage workplace health and safety issues (including through accessing external resources)?

Capacity is a critical issue as H&S can occupy large chunks of time & time = money. Most SME's do not have the resources to employ specialist H&S practitioners even as consultants therefore once the capacity to manage H&S suffers so does the capability.

14. What options are there for improving firm level capacity and capability to deliver better health and safety outcomes?

Employment of external licensed H&S practitioners to act as H&S oversight for a number of firms may be part of the answer however the dissipation of critical information as suggested above (electronic links) may also form part of the answer.

Incentives

15. How effective are existing financial and non-financial incentives in improving workplace health and safety outcomes?

What incentives?

Very few workplaces have incentives based around H&S performance for their workers. Where they do exist workers generally are more aware and careful of their H&S responsibilities.

16. How could incentives be better used to improve workplace health and safety outcomes?

Influencing health and safety outcomes beyond one's own workplace

17. How successful are government, industry, corporate or other potentially influential bodies in influencing health and safety outcomes beyond their own workplaces (for example through influencing their suppliers, counterparts, and competitors)?

Some larger firms e.g. Fonterra are quite effective in influencing H&S beyond their workplaces especially through placing stringent requirements on contractors who need to lift their game before entering contractual arrangements with those firms. On the whole though H&S influence ceases at the company gate.

18. What could be done to get government, industry, corporate or other potentially influential bodies to exert greater influence on improving workplace health and safety outcomes beyond their own workplaces?

Reporting of unsafe acts by contractors on site to their principle may have a positive influence on H&S beyond the workplace however this comes down to individual attitudes and the preparedness of individuals to stick their necks out.

Influence comes down to communication therefore it is up to those bodies with influence to communicate regularly with business decision makers and H&S reps.

Major hazards

19. How strong is New Zealand's current approach to regulating major hazards?

There is sufficient legislation to control major hazards however the policing of these controls is sometimes lacking. There seems to be a large component of self regulation and relies heavily on individual user knowledge to regulate hazards. Again the attitude of the user plays a large part in the effectiveness of the regulation.

20. What improvements to the regulation of major hazards would lead to better health and safety outcomes?

Stronger and more clearly defined procedures around the control of major hazards would aid in improving outcomes. However human attitudes are variable therefore control of hazards will be variable

Health and hazardous substances

21. What are the most significant challenges to managing occupational health risks and exposure to hazardous substances?

1. Attitude of both management and workers
2. Financial commitment to identification and mitigation of hazards and to monitoring health exposure risks

22. What changes could be made to the existing health and safety framework to reduce the harm caused by occupational disease and ill-health?

1. provision of a subsidy to allow financial relief to the cost of monitoring for occupational health risks.
2. provision of a subsidy to allow for regular health checks for workers exposed to Occupational health risks including eyesight, hearing, muscular / skeletal, respiratory and cardiac monitoring.

Small to medium-sized enterprises

23. What workplace health and safety challenges are specific to the self-employed and small-to-medium enterprises?

1. Stress and fatigue - self employed never leave the job but carry it with them 24 / 7
2. Time - H&S matters are extra to the prime concern of making a living and / or providing income for employees.

24. What improvements could be made to the workplace health and safety framework, and its implementation, to ensure that it's effective for self-employed and small-to-medium sized enterprises?

Measurement and data

25. To what extent are New Zealand's workplace injury and occupational disease data collection mechanisms conducive to robust monitoring, investigation and comparative analysis?

Is Data collected? Obviously it is particularly when severe injuries or occupation diseases are encountered by medical and regulatory authorities however there is no requirement to report minor injuries or those injuries which may result in a lost time accident but do not meet the definition of Serious harm. Again reporting relies on the honesty of individuals concerned with the management of H&S systems to report accidents / incidences that meet the definition of Serious Harm.

My guess is that a large proportion of Serious Harm accidents may go unreported.

26. What opportunities are there for improving data collection, integration and reporting?

Better data collection could be achieved by requiring the filing of all accident data (minor and serious harm) on a quarterly basis to the Department of Statistics.

This data should not be used for punitive procedures but to get a better handle on what is actually happening and to design better information for distribution.

Our national culture and societal expectations

27. Do you think New Zealand culture influences our workplace health and safety outcomes?

Yes

The Kiwi "She'll be right" attitude and the "No.8 wire" approach promote the culture that we are a bullet proof society. This attitude promotes the idea that H&S is for sissies and therefore reduces the effectiveness of planned H&S outcomes.

28. What might we do to improve our culture relating to workplace health and safety?

Other factors

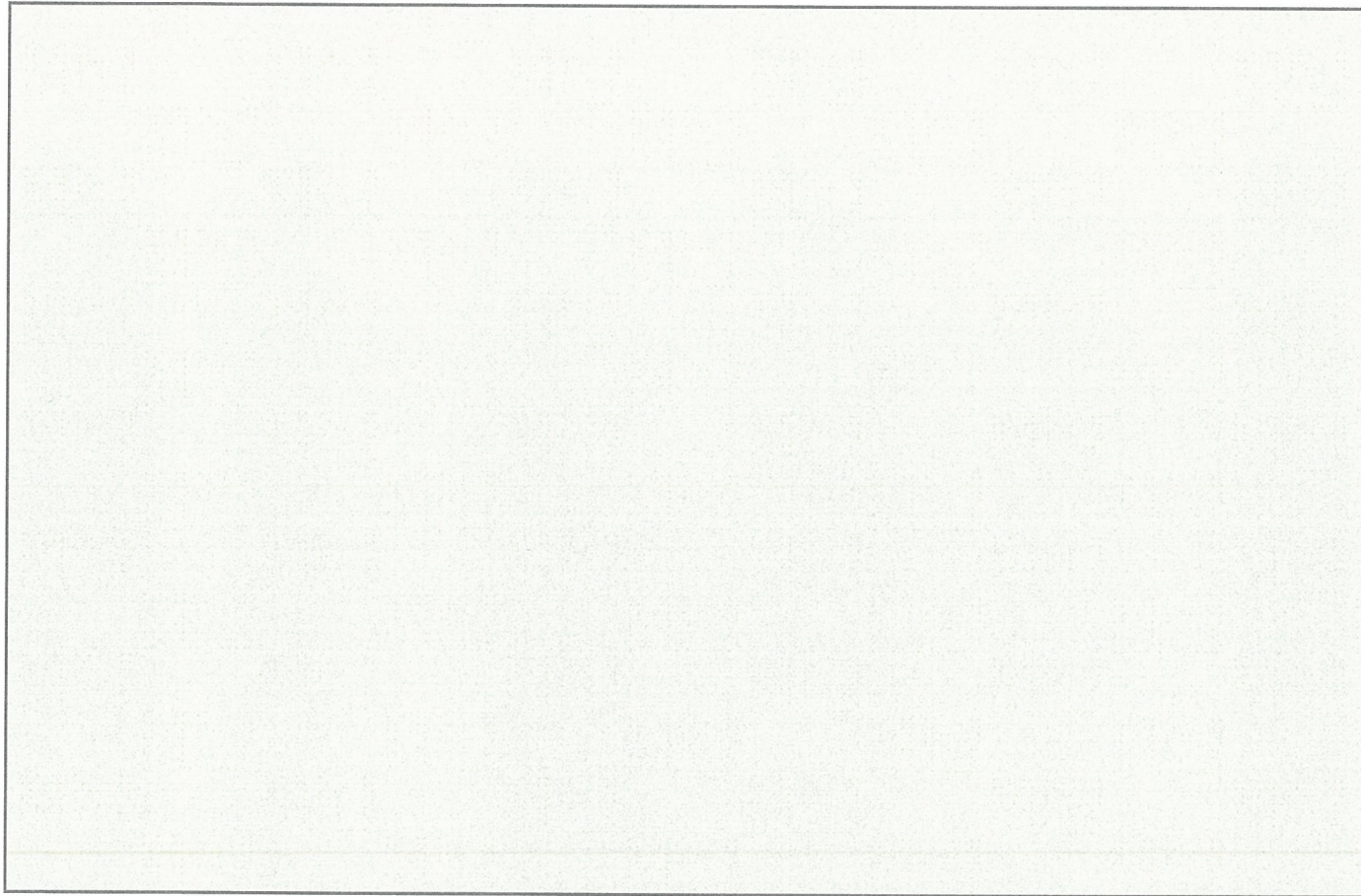
29. Are there any other factors (not already covered) that influence workplace health and safety outcomes in New Zealand?

30. Do you have any other suggestions for how to improve workplace health and safety outcomes in New Zealand?

Promotion of the cost of not doing H&S particularly to employers and senior management / directors.

Other comments

31. Are there any other comments that you would like to make?



Please send your completed submission to secretariat@hstaskforce.govt.nz (preferred) or post it to: Submissions, Independent Taskforce on Workplace Health and Safety, PO Box 3705, Wellington 6140. We would appreciate it if you could get your submission to us as early as possible, but at the latest, you must get your submission to us by **5pm, Friday 16 November 2012**. If you are sending your submission to us by mail, you should put it into the post by 5pm, Wednesday 14 November 2012.