

Safety Monitoring

Your organisation has a legal obligation to provide and maintain a safe environment for your volunteers, customers, and visitors – you can read more on this in the previous [Sector Brief – Safety Responsibility and Accountability](#).

Under the Duty of Care requirements, you should have in place processes to monitor (check) safety at the sites you operate. See [Sector Brief – Managing Safety Risk](#).

Safety management is a cycle of continuous improvement, this cycle is often referred to as the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle. Previous Sector Briefs have provided guidance on:

- 1) 'Plan' - [How to identify risk and controls to mitigate those risks](#)
- 2) 'Do' - Controls for specific risks including:
 - a. First aid equipment
 - b. Working at height
 - c. Asbestos
 - d. Solar UV Radiation
 - e. Electricity
 - f. Chemicals

Safety monitoring provides the 'check' of your implemented controls and allows for the improvement of those controls during the 'Act' phase.

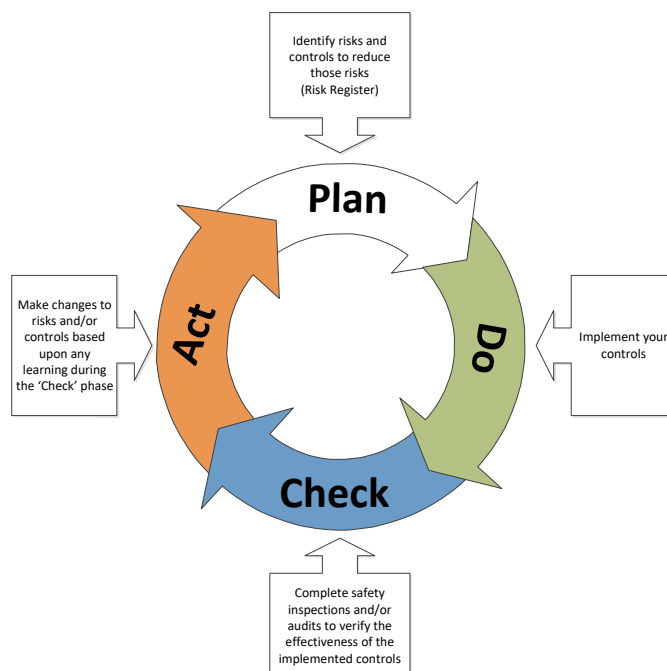


Fig 1 – Plan, Do, Check, Act

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There are various methods to 'check' the effectiveness of the identified controls, they include:

- 1) Informal monitoring
- 2) Site Inspections
- 3) Audit

1) Informal monitoring

Informal monitoring can be an effective method of reviewing the effectiveness of the controls, but as they are informal and typically not documented they are the weakest monitoring method. Informal monitoring can be completed by managers and peers and is typically completed on an ad-hoc basis.

2) Site inspections

Site inspections are a simple mechanism to review the effectiveness of the controls you have implemented. For many rail heritage sector groups, site inspections would be considered reasonably practical, and if completed and documented help to demonstrate that you are managing safety (public and worker) under your duty of care.

IMPORTANT

While formal site inspections are not mandated, they do help to demonstrate that your organisation is monitoring safety and trying to achieve its duty of care to both your volunteers/workers and visitors. Site Inspections could be used in your defence if your duty of care is challenged.

- Site inspections can be completed by anybody, but ideally should be completed by someone independent of the site/work being completed.
- The frequency of Site inspections should be dependent upon risk. You should consider completing an inspection prior to any significant event or open day, where physical changes are made to a site, or the way a task is completed is change.
- The inspection could be the complete site or be limited to an area or task being completed.
- Inspections should be formally documented/recorded to demonstrate your duty of care. Typically, organisations will have a form for these inspections providing some guidance to those completing the inspection on what to look for, an example inspection form (used by THNSW) is linked [here](#). Completed inspection forms should be retained for a minimum of 5 years.

3) Audit

Audits typically target a specific scope and are more formal than a Site Inspection. Depending on the complexity of your operation you may need to completed audits. Audit scope should target specific risks from within your Risk Register, targeting your higher rated risks. Completed audit records should be retained for a minimum of 5 years.

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4) Act Phase

When you find, through monitoring, that controls can be improved you should then 'Act' and update the controls and/or provide new controls. This may include updating your Risk Register and/or processes. It's important that any changes are communicated to relevant volunteers/workers, and the risk/control owner. The 'act' phase is critical to the effective continuous improvement of safety.



TIP

"Rome wasn't built in a day" and it's the same for safety. Significant changes in the management of safety are not common and typically only occur in an organisation where there's been a major injury or event. More typical are small incremental changes that over time become significant. Monitoring safety regularly enables these small incremental changes. Often the first inspection will identify the obvious, but subsequent inspections will find other opportunities to improve further.

By applying the monitoring strategies detailed above you can demonstratively show you are managing risk to prevent harm to volunteers, customers, and visitors, thus meeting your duty of care requirement.

If you have more questions or queries, contact:

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