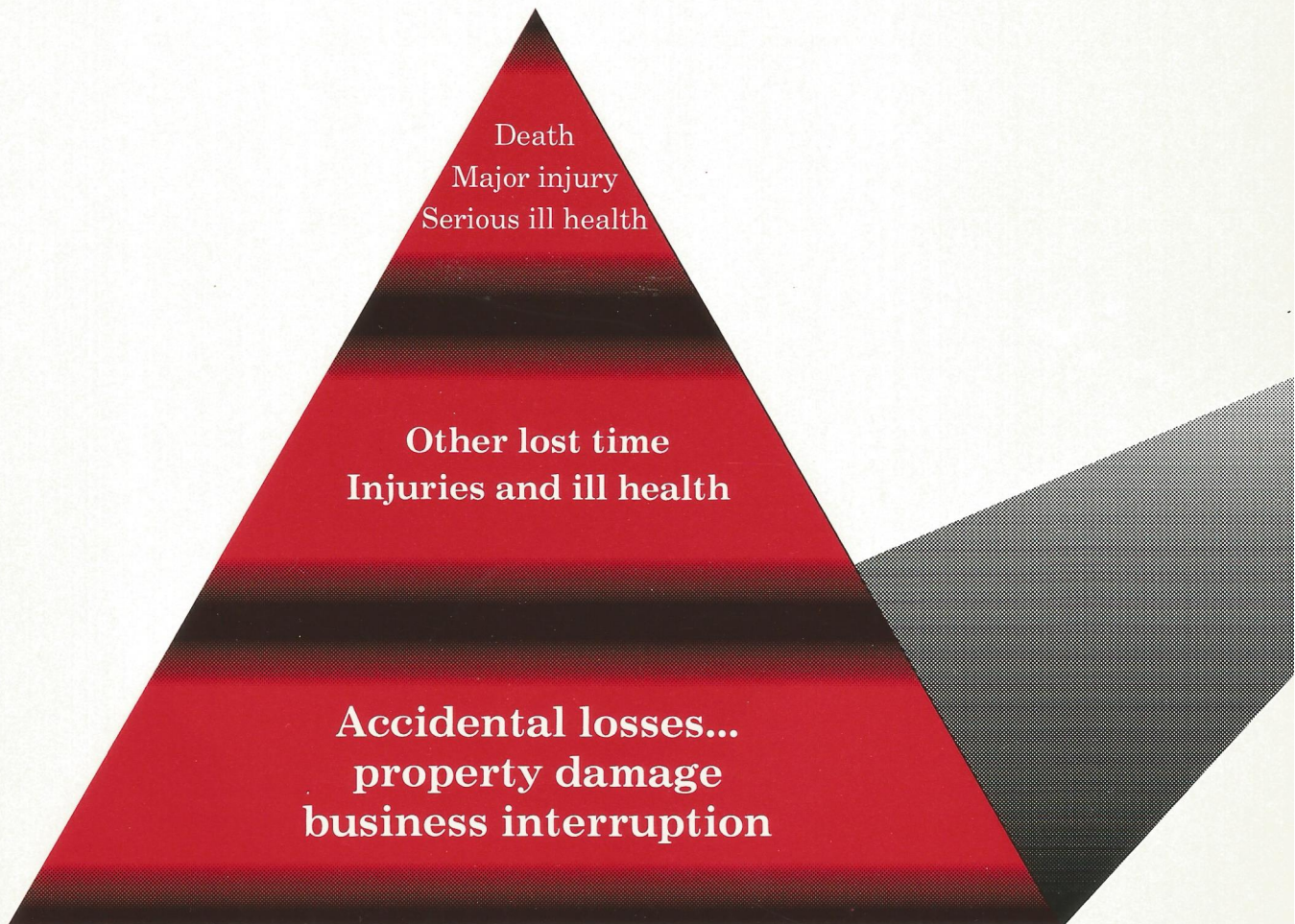




SUCCESSFUL HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT



Death
Major injury
Serious ill health

Other lost time
Injuries and ill health

Accidental losses...
property damage
business interruption



SUCCESSFUL HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT

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FOREWORD

This publication, which has been produced by HSE's Accident Prevention Advisory Unit, describes the main elements of successful health and safety management. It is designed to be a source of reference and guidance to all those involved in the management system - general managers, those with special health and safety responsibilities and people at the very top of organisations. It can also be used to develop programmes for improvement, define training needs and audit performance.

Much of the guidance involves the application of the principles of total quality management to health and safety. The pursuit of quality is, of course, largely driven by commercial considerations, but there is an additional moral imperative about securing the health and safety of people. Good health and safety management, like good human resource management generally, is something to which many organisations aspire; it is also something which the law requires.

But, in addition, the costs of failure to manage health and safety successfully are high:

- 30 million days lost in a year from work-related injuries and ill health: nearly ten times the number from strikes;
- a two-thirds increase in real terms of employers' liability insurance costs over the past decade and a doubling of claims since 1985;
- uninsured losses from accidents costing organisations anything between 6 and 27 times what they are paying out in insurance premiums: in some cases making the difference between profit and loss.

Such losses, whether counted in human or financial terms, are not inevitable and experience has shown that real and substantial improvements can be achieved by applying the guidance in this publication. Each chapter provides points of reference for the various stages in developing a successful health and safety management system - starting with effective well considered policies, organising, planning and going right through to methods of auditing and reviewing performance. HSE inspectors will be using this publication as a guide when judging the adequacy of health and safety management and compliance with statutory requirements. It can help you to do the same.

The path described is neither easy nor short. There are no short cuts to successful health and safety management. It cannot be sidelined. It must not be delegated out of sight. The clearest lesson from practical experience is that the starting point is the genuine and thoughtful commitment of top management. I believe firmly that such commitment is beneficial and worthwhile.



A J LINEHAN

HM Chief Inspector of Factories and Director of Field Operations,
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INTRODUCTION

Successful health and safety management has been prepared by HSE's Accident Prevention Advisory Unit as a practical guide for directors, managers and health and safety professionals intent on improving health and safety performance. The advice given here will be increasingly used by HSE inspectors as a basis for testing the performance of organisations against the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSW Act).

Organisations which manage health and safety successfully display a number of common characteristics. They have their health and safety risks under control and can demonstrate a progressive improvement in their injury and ill health record. The book describes the principles and health and safety management practices which form the foundations of success of these organisations.

It sets out the issues which need to be addressed and can be used for self audit and assessment and for developing programmes for improvement. Although the principles described are applicable to all organisations, the extent of action required will vary with the size of the organisation, the hazards presented by its activities, products or services and the adequacy of its existing arrangements.

Chapter 1 gives an overview of key issues which need to be considered and which are developed in succeeding chapters. Chapters 2 to 6 are arranged in the following standard form:

- a synopsis of the topics covered in the chapter (blue pages);
- the core material of the chapter. Insets and diagrams are used where necessary to explain important principles;
- a summary at the end of each chapter describing the key ways of controlling that aspect of health and safety management (red pages);
- suggestions for further reading.

Taken together, the chapter summaries describe what organisations aiming to comply with the requirements of Sections 2 to 6 of the HSW Act need to do to manage health and safety effectively. They identify broad areas of competence which need to be developed in ways which are in line with an organisation's own management style and systems.

Many of the features of effective health and safety management are indistinguishable from the sound management practices advocated by proponents of quality and business excellence. Indeed, commercially successful companies often also excel at health and safety management, precisely because they bring efficient business expertise to bear on health and safety as on all other aspects of their operations. The general principles of good management are therefore a sound basis for deciding how to bring about improved health and safety performance.

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SUMMARY

The key elements of successful health and safety management are set out below, and the relationship between them is outlined in Diagram 1 opposite.

Policy*

Organisations which are successful in achieving high standards of health and safety have health and safety policies which contribute to their business performance, while meeting their responsibilities to people and the environment in a way which fulfils both the spirit and the letter of the law. In this way they satisfy the expectations of shareholders, employees, customers and society at large. Their policies are cost effective and aimed at achieving the preservation and development of physical and human resources and reductions in financial losses and liabilities. Their health and safety policies influence all their activities and decisions, including those to do with the selection of resources and information, the design and operation of working systems, the design and delivery of products and services, and the control and disposal of waste.

Organising*

Organisations which achieve high health and safety standards are structured and operated so as to put their health and safety policies into effective practice. This is helped by the creation of a positive culture which secures involvement and participation at all levels. It is sustained by effective communications and the promotion of competence which enables all employees to make a responsible and informed contribution to the health and safety effort. The visible and active leadership of senior managers is necessary to develop and maintain a culture supportive of health and safety management. Their aim is not simply to avoid accidents, but to motivate and empower people to work safely. The vision, values and beliefs of leaders become the shared 'common knowledge' of all.

Planning*

These successful organisations adopt a planned and systematic approach to policy implementation. Their aim is to minimise the risks* created by work activities, products and services. They use risk assessment methods to decide priorities and set objectives for hazard* elimination and risk reduction. Performance standards are established and performance is measured against them. Specific actions needed to promote a positive health and safety culture and to eliminate and control risks are identified. Wherever possible, risks are eliminated by the careful selection and design of facilities, equipment and processes or minimised by the use of physical control measures. Where this is not possible systems of work and personal protective equipment are used to control risks.

Measuring performance*

Health and safety performance in organisations which manage health and safety successfully, is measured against pre-determined standards. This reveals when and where action is needed to improve performance. The success of action taken to control risks is assessed through active self-monitoring involving a range of techniques. This includes an examination of both hardware (premises, plant and substances) and software (people, procedures and systems), including individual behaviour. Failures of control are assessed through reactive monitoring which requires the thorough investigation of any accidents, ill health or incidents* with the potential to cause harm or loss. In both active and reactive monitoring the objectives are not only to determine the immediate causes of sub-standard performance but, more importantly, to identify the underlying causes and the implications for the design and operation of the health and safety management system.

Auditing* and reviewing* performance

Learning from **all** relevant experience and applying the lessons learned, are important elements in effective health and safety management. This needs to be done systematically through regular reviews of performance based on data both from monitoring activities and from independent audits of the whole health and safety management system. These form the basis for self-regulation and for securing compliance with Sections 2 to 6 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Commitment to continuous improvement involves the constant development of policies, approaches to implementation and techniques of risk control. Organisations which achieve high standards of health and safety assess their health and safety performance by internal reference to key performance indicators and by external comparison with the performance of business competitors. They often also record and account for their performance in their annual reports.

* For definitions see Appendix 1

Diagram 1 Key elements of successful health and safety management

