

# PABIAC Safety Opinion Survey Tool - Guidance for Use

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 PABIAC Strategic Objective 4 requires all employers in the industry to “*establish, and be able to demonstrate, a continuously improving health and safety climate with senior management commitment and governance using a suitable survey tool*”.
- 1.2. If your company is already using a suitable health and safety climate survey, such as the published HSE climate tool, and the results of successive surveys show continuously improving scores, you are already meeting Strategic Objective 4.
- 1.3. If your company is not measuring the health and safety climate at its sites you can use the attached health and safety opinion survey tool. Christian Salvesen developed it and they have used it successfully to achieve improvements in safety climate at their depots. PABIAC is grateful to Christian Salvesen for allowing us to provide the tool for use by employers in the papermaking, corrugated packaging and recovered paper industries.

## 2 Purpose and benefits

- 2.1 The staff health and safety opinion survey tool is designed for use by employers to help them gauge the health and safety climate of their business. It allows the employer to identify areas requiring improvement. The employer can plan and implement measures aimed at bringing about improvements in the targeted areas within appropriate timescales. By repeating the staff opinion survey at appropriate intervals (e.g. annually) the employer will be able to measure the improvements that have been achieved over time. In this way the employer will be able to demonstrate a continuously improving health and safety climate.
- 2.2 The survey can help to:
  - benchmark your health and safety climate (e.g. between different sites) and to gauge improvements in your business’s safety climate over time;
  - raise the profile of health and safety;
  - supplement your health and safety monitoring system;
  - give fresh impetus to your health and safety committee;
  - stimulate discussion about health and safety.

### **3. Preparing for a survey**

- 3.1 The senior managers of your organisation must give their full support to the survey process. They need to recognise that appropriate resources will be required both for conducting the survey and for taking forward the issues that are subsequently revealed by the survey. They need to be committed to communicating the results of the survey even if the results are not favourable. This commitment has to be communicated to all those who are likely to be involved in the survey. If there is not full commitment from senior managers to conducting the survey and acting on the results then your organisation should not conduct the survey.
- 3.2 It is also important to gain and communicate the active endorsement of employee safety representatives e.g. via the health and safety committee. Involving workforce representatives at the planning stages of the survey is particularly valuable for ensuring success.
- 3.3 People are more likely to complete a questionnaire if they have been told why it has been issued and what is going to happen as a result of completing it. Explaining that it has been endorsed by senior managers and the local site manager is also vital for success. People need to understand:
- what is going to happen;
  - why it is happening;
  - the value the organisation places on the survey;
  - the importance the organisation attaches to individuals completing the questionnaire;
  - how the confidentiality of the individual is maintained;
  - when the results will be presented;
  - how issues revealed by the survey will be taken forward;
  - how they will be involved in the process.
- 3.4 It is important to bear in mind that the survey will raise people's expectations. The survey is likely to identify areas for improvement. You will need to prioritise these and they may take time to complete. You also need to remember that there may be issues that are important to management that may not be important to the workforce and vice versa. You will need to plan accordingly. It is important that people are kept informed of progress and timescales so that their expectations are realistic.
- 3.5 Consideration needs to be given to the timing of the survey. For example, it would be wise to avoid holiday periods, times following major organisational changes, periods of wage negotiations or when there are industrial relations problems.

## **4. Confidentiality**

- 4.1 People might be unwilling to participate in the survey or feel hesitant about doing so if they are concerned that they can be identified individually so you need to plan your survey to take account of these concerns.
- 4.2 The survey should be voluntary but you need to encourage people to participate. People who feel forced to complete the questionnaire are less likely to answer the questions honestly. Nothing will be gained if people are put under pressure and it is essential that nobody attempts to influence the way in which an employee answers the questionnaire.
- 4.3 You should make every effort to ensure that the anonymity of every individual respondent is guaranteed and you must reassure every participant that their anonymity will be respected. These guarantees must be honoured. Sometimes people can feel more confident if an outside third party administers the questionnaire but this can add to the costs of the survey.
- 4.4. Where anonymity cannot be guaranteed then you should not claim that it is. Instead respondents should be made aware that it may be possible to identify individuals and you should explain what you intend to do to ensure that their responses are kept confidential.
- 4.5 You need to give consideration to employees whose first language may not be English and to any who may be dyslexic or have reading difficulties. You may need to arrange for someone to help them complete the questionnaire and confirm that their answers to the questions have been recorded accurately. This will need to be handled with great care and sensitivity and you will need to ensure that anonymity is guaranteed and confidentiality is respected.
- 4.6 Once the survey is underway you need to maintain momentum. There should not be undue delays between the various stages of the survey from announcing that a survey is to be held to communicating the results and then acting on the results.

## **5. Responsibility**

- 5.1. We recommend that a manager is made responsible for ensuring the following.
- 5.2 A safety opinion survey is conducted at intervals decided by the employer.
- 5.3 A member of staff is designated to run the survey.
- 5.4 A reasonable sample size of employees at all levels, including managers and supervisors, complete the survey questionnaire.

5.5 On completion of the survey, the results are analysed and communicated to all employees.

5.6. On completion of the analysis an action plan is developed to tackle areas shown by the survey to require attention and is communicated within the company.

## 6 Conducting the survey

6.1 A health and safety opinion survey should be conducted to a timetable decided by the employer.

6.2 The 'questionnaire' should be printed from the attached spreadsheet and copies retained by the member of staff running the survey.

6.3 All employees, including managers and supervisors should be encouraged to participate in the survey and given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. The survey should be planned and conducted in such a way as to ensure that all employees working on all shifts have the opportunity to participate and are encouraged to do so.

6.4 The questionnaire and briefing document (see section 6 at page 5) should be made available to each employee.

6.5 No minimum sample size has been imposed however smaller sites will need to achieve a higher rate of participation than larger ones. The participation should be achieved from each shift or work discipline (e.g. admin, engineering, management etc.). For large sites a minimum sample of 33% of employees completing the questionnaire is recommended.

6.6 The employees should be asked to return the completed questionnaire to the member of staff running the survey and to indicate on their questionnaire which shift or work discipline they represent. **Please note that the work discipline categories on the questionnaire supplied are just examples. You need to choose work disciplines or shifts appropriate to your business and to suit your needs and you should amend this part of the questionnaire accordingly.**

6.7 The member of staff running the survey should be available to help employees who are completing the questionnaires in order to clarify any queries.

6.8 The survey should be conducted anonymously.

## 7. Completing a questionnaire

7.1 The employee should circle the shift or work discipline at the bottom of the form and then read each of the statements on the questionnaire.

- 7.2 The employee should tick the appropriate box to indicate whether they either 'agree', 'mostly agree', 'mostly disagree' or 'disagree' with each of the statements made.
- 7.3 Employees should request clarification or help from the member of staff running the survey if they have any questions on completing the questionnaire.
- 7.4 Once completed, the employee should hand the form to the member of staff running the survey.

**8. Data consolidation**

- 8.1 The data input section of the spreadsheet should be copied to ensure that there is one spreadsheet for each shift/work discipline to allow comparison between job roles, work areas etc.
- 8.2 The member of staff running the survey should ensure that questionnaire results are entered into the "data input" section of the spreadsheet by entering the relevant scores from an employee into a single column. There are 100 columns allowing up to 100 questionnaires to be entered for each job role/work area.
- 8.3 Note that the only numbers that can be entered into a field are 'minus 1', 'minus 2', 'plus 1', or 'plus 2'. The figures must be checked to ensure that no inaccurate data has been input into the spreadsheet.
- 8.4. The member of staff running the survey should ensure that a chart is generated following the inputting of data. This can be accessed by clicking on the chart section of the spreadsheet. The chart can be printed and posted on site notice boards.
- 8.5. A reliability chart will also be generated automatically by the spreadsheet and will indicate the reliability of the answers provided.

**9. Analysing and understanding the reasons for the results**

- 9.1 Questions are set under the following headings:

<b>Headings</b>	<b>Question Number</b>
Site Management	- 1,13,14,15,20,21,28.
Supervision	- 10,16,24,27.
Staff Ownership	- 2,9,11,17,22,25.
Training	- 3,4,19,23.
Barriers to safety	- 8,12,18,26,29.
Accident Reporting	- 5,6,7,30.

- 9.2 No manual calculation relating to the reliability of data is required, however for information purposes, the reliability of the answers given by an employee is determined by comparing the answers given between four groupings of similar questions. These are 25 and 17, 3 and 4, 8 and 18 and 6 and 30. If all of these questions are answered in such a way to conflict with each other, then this should indicate a 'nil reliability result'. In the same way, all questions which have been answered by ticking 'all agree' or 'all disagree' statements should show a nil reliability score.
- 9.3. A result showing a reliability of 50% or less, is deemed to be an indicator that the results show a low reliability. This could be an indicator of a lack of interest or a poor attitude to safety, however these results should not be discounted and should be tackled as part of the action plan for improvement.
- 9.4. The graph will give an overall percentage score, which indicates a figure from minus 100 to plus 100. If a result is zero, then no bar will be displayed on the graph. If you obtain a low, zero or negative score in any of the 6 topic areas then you have some work to do in order to improve in those areas. The higher (more positive) the score the more favourable the result. The six topic areas are as follows.
- 9.4.1 **Site Management.** The score reflects the workforce's perception of site management's commitment to ensuring their health and safety.
- 9.4.2 **Supervision.** The score reflects the workforce's perception of the extent to which they consider that supervisors are interested, and actively involved, in ensuring the health and safety of the workforce.
- 9.4.3. **Staff Ownership.** The score reflects the extent to which the workforce feels that they are actively involved in the health and safety effort.
- 9.4.4 **Training.** The score reflects the extent to which the workforce perceives that they have been adequately trained in relation to the risks associated with the tasks they perform and the measures and procedures in place for controlling those risks.
- 9.4.5. **Barriers to Safety.** The score reflects the extent to which the workforce perceive that they experience practical and/or organisational difficulties in complying with health and safety rules and procedures and the extent to which they receive appropriate recognition for working safely.
- 9.4.6 **Accident Reporting.** The score reflects the extent to which the workforce perceives that, accidents, near misses and hazardous situations are reported to managers and are properly investigated.
- 9.5 A copy of each result chart should be sent to the appropriate Directors or managers responsible for health and safety.

- 9.6 On completion of the analysis an action plan for tackling areas of concern identified by the survey should be developed and communicated to everyone within the company. This requires careful thought and planning. The attitudes survey should reveal a great deal of useful information about *what* employees think about the health and safety but in order to draw up a successful action plan to tackle any areas of concern revealed by the survey the employer needs to know *why* employee perceptions are as they are. It is essential for the appropriate manager(s) to speak to a representative group of employees, in a non-threatening way, in order to obtain a good understanding of the issues underlying the quantitative results and the reasons for any areas of weakness revealed by the survey. This then allows the employer to prepare an action plan based on a proper understanding of what needs to be tackled and why.

[Name of employer .....]

## Health and Safety Opinion Survey

Dear Employee,

The attached safety opinion survey questionnaire has been introduced as a way of allowing you to tell the company what you all actually think of the health and safety standards on your site. The survey has the full support of *[insert name of appropriate senior manager or executive]* and has the full backing of the trades unions/ employee safety representatives/ site safety committee *[you need to tailor the wording to suit your circumstance]*.

Please take the time to complete this questionnaire and tell us what you think. We will summarise your collective responses, let you know the results and use them to improve standards.

Please circle your shift/work discipline at the base of the questionnaire and then tick the appropriate box to indicate whether you either agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree or disagree with each statement made.

If you have any questions please check with the person responsible for carrying out this survey at your site. Once completed, hand the form to them.

Remember that the survey is anonymous and you should not put your name on the questionnaire unless you want to.

We shall conduct a further survey in the future to see what progress has been made in improving standards and your perception of health and safety.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Regards,

Site Manager