

Specialist work group health, safety and wellness assessments

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Policy statement and principles

What

Identified specialist work groups within Police must assess and report on their health, safety and wellness management to ensure our people are safe and feel safe when at work.

Why

Police seek to provide a safe working environment for all our people. The NZ Police Health, Safety and Wellness Management System Framework outlines the way in which NZ Police ensures all our people are kept healthy, safe and well, including a Governance Framework designed to ensure due diligence is discharged systematically across all NZ Police operations. Monitoring, verification and review is a key element of due diligence.

Within Police there exist several specialist work groups who operate in dynamic, complex and high risk environments and perform activities involving critical risks that, due to the nature or frequency of the work, may have lower day-to-day visibility to Police's leadership.

The Specialist Workgroup health, safety, and wellness assessment provides insights to the HSGG to provide assurance that strategic wellness and safety priorities are being achieved by these work groups. This assists the HSGG and Officers of the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) to meet good practice due diligence requirements, and to identify areas where opportunities for improvement in health, safety and wellness strategies, content and systems may exist.

Additionally, the health and safety system assessment provides leaders of these specialist work groups the opportunity to assure themselves that they have adequate systems in place to protect their workers and act where improvement opportunities are identified.

How

The assessment tool is designed to ensure that Managers engage their workers and understand their perspective, as NZP recognise the value our workers bring to improve how we can manage the risk they face. Specialist Work Group Managers are responsible for ensuring the assessment tool is completed in accordance with the schedule endorsed by HSGG. (There needs to be some consultation around the schedule i.e., Dive squad assessment being done during busiest period). The District Health and Safety Advisors can be used to support the use of the assessment tool designed to carry out the self-assessment.

Where gaps are identified through completing the assessment, the workgroup manager will develop, in consultation with appropriate specialist advisors, action plans to address these gaps.

Good performance should also be identified, recognized and celebrated to encourage the continuation of good performance that results in enhanced health, safety and wellness outcomes.

Workgroup Directors must be engaged throughout the process and provided an opportunity to review and provide commentary on the report findings, and endorse the assessment.

Completed assessments, and any associated action plans (where applicable), will be forwarded to Safer People group for collation and consultation with the respective workgroup and their Director.

The Workgroup Director and Director Safer People must sign off on the HSW assessment prior to presenting the findings to HSGG.

Introduction

Who is covered by this policy?

This policy covers work groups that perform work involving critical risks and who, due to the nature or frequency of their work, may have a lower visibility to the organisation or are otherwise identified as a work group requiring regular oversight by HSGG.

The following are the work groups currently assessed as being covered by this policy:

- Armoury
- Air support unit
- AOS/SSG/STG
- Covert operations
- Forensic Services
- ICT District Services (Radio network team)
- Maritime unit
- National Dive Squad
- Protection Services
- SAR/DVI.
- Any further groups that have been identified as high-risk.

Periodic reviews will occur of the workgroups that will be covered by this Policy to ensure high-risk workgroups are identified and assessed if they should be covered by this Policy. The addition of a workgroup must be approved by the Director Safer People and the relevant Workgroup Director.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Critical gap	Any identified gap that may result in non-compliance with a legislative requirement or is related to a critical risk control measure.
Critical risk	Any risk that includes a consequence of loss of life or life changing injury.
HSWA	Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (including subsequent amendments).
Work group	A work group may comprise of team members of an organisational unit within Police who work in the work group full time (e.g. SOCO, STG or Maritime unit), or team members assigned to a specialised organisational unit where members form on an 'as required' basis and are drawn from the wider Police organisation (e.g. AOS or SAR).
Work Group Manager	For the purposes of this policy the term Work Group Manager refers to the functional lead of that work group or function. The work group team members may have reporting lines up to the Work Group Manager (e.g. STG, Protection Services), or may have reporting lines via district leadership channels (e.g. SOCO, SAR). This is usually at the Inspector rank, but may sit at Senior Sergeant rank depending on the structure of the workgroup,
Workgroup Director	The Superintendent (or equivalent) who is responsible for the workgroups captured by this Policy.

References

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 [Specialist Group assessment - 2023](#)

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Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Health and Safety Governance Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review specialist work groups assessments to ensure risk is being effectively managed. - Ensure if any gaps are identified that appropriate resources are available to deliver on any corrective actions
Health, Safety and Wellness Pre-Tasking and Coordination Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review specialist work group self-assessment and determine what findings are prioritized and escalated to HSGG - Review general feedback identified through the assessment process and request further information from the specialist workgroup if needed
Director Safer People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy Owner - Review feedback to be provided to HSGG - Provide assurance to HSGG
Director Specialist Work Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and sign off assessment prior to it being presented to the Director Safer People and HSGG.
Operational Lead/Work Group Manager/Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand critical risks and related critical controls for the work group - Provide feedback to the District Health and Safety Advisor when asked to be interviewed for the annual assessment
Work Group Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand critical risks and related critical controls for the work group - Provide feedback to the District Health and Safety Advisor when asked to be interviewed for the annual assessment
District Health and Safety Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complete the Specialist Work Group Health, Safety and Wellbeing review. - Interview a minimum of 2 leaders and 4 staff in the work group. - Provide a copy of the review and feedback to the Director of the Work Group. - Work with the work group to establish suitable corrective actions should any be required
Health and Safety Representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support District Health and Safety Advisor to conduct interviews of leaders and workers

Procedure

Performing the Specialist Work Group Health, Safety and Wellness assessment

At the beginning of each financial year the Director: Safer People will arrange to have developed a schedule for the work groups covered by this policy. This will be socialised with the District Health and Safety Advisors and will detail when each work group's assessment is expected to be submitted. This schedule will be endorsed by the HSGG and then circulated to all relevant work group managers. There needs to be consultation with the Workgroup Director and Work Group Manager when planning the schedule, acknowledging specialist workgroups usually have seasonal demands or events that can limit capacity to carry out an assessment during these times, as such these times should be avoided.

Work group managers will undertake and support the completion of the assessment with the District Health and Safety Advisor and nominated Health and Safety Representative. The -assessment should cover all work activities undertaken by the work group.

When improvements are identified, Workgroup Managers and Workgroup Directors should initiate action plans to make the needed improvements as soon as reasonably practicable after completion of the assessment. Where action plans require resources beyond the work group, or a project team is required to develop action plans, the work group manager should identify what, if any, short term mitigations are required to manage the gap until the longer-term solution is able to be implemented.

If work is already underway to address any gaps or create improvements, this must be clearly outlined through the assessment process to demonstrate active management of risks.

When good performance is identified, the Work Group Manager must also clearly outline this in the assessment. Good performance should be recognised and encouraged among our workers.

Reviewing and reporting assessment results

Safer People will review each Work Groups assessment and ensure the work group is actively managing the risks identified in their health, safety and wellness assessment. A summary of the assessment should first be presented to the Workgroup Director and then to through the appropriate Governance channels. Where significant gaps or additional resource requirements are noted, these will be highlighted in reporting up to HSGG through the appropriate governance channels, with Workgroup Director commentary on how these issues are being addressed.

In addition to identifying significant gaps the Safer People review should look for trends, either with a work group or across multiple workgroups. Trends should be reviewed to identify if these are indicators of generic issues that need to be addressed at a strategic level.

The Director Safer People will report identified trends periodically to the appropriate governance channels. Trends identified will be used to review the forward schedule of specialist work group HSW assessments, so these assessments are targeting the work groups that are of higher priority.

In addition to annual trends, the forward schedule for specialist work group HSW system assessments, will take into account all recent, available and relevant risk information to develop a risk-based schedule.

Validation of assessment results

Undertaking health, safety, and wellness assessments and reviewing the results of these is an important part of due diligence for Officers of the PCBU. However, without validation of the results of these assessments there is potential for a false sense of security to develop.

Validation of assessment results can occur by reviewing data from the following processes in place in Police:

- Leadership Engagements: Police leadership conduct regular health, safety, and wellness engagements with staff across all aspects and all levels of the organisation. During these engagements there is the opportunity for staff to raise any concerns with the leader. Leadership engagements record the key observations, including improvement opportunities.
- Where results from these engagements indicate trends regarding a specific area of concern these results may be cross-referenced with the assessment results. When a discrepancy is identified a Safer People Group delegate will engage with the Workgroup Manager and Workgroup Director to identify if there is a gap regarding specific requirements, and work with them to develop appropriate gap closure plans.

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- Audits or Reviews: Audits or reviews may be conducted on specific work groups, or work groups may be included in wider Police audits or reviews. These may be conducted by internal or external parties. Results of audits or reviews may, where appropriate, be cross referenced with health, safety, and wellness assessments.
