People at Work

People at Work survey
Implementation guide
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Overview

This document details the key elements critical to the successful implementation of the People at Work (PAW) survey in your organisation. The purpose of the guide is to provide you with an overview of the key phases you might follow in delivering the PAW survey in your organisation.

The key questions answered in the implementation guide are:

- How should we deliver the PAW Survey?
- Who is responsible for what?
- How long will it take?

The following sections will provide an overview of these three aspects to the survey, followed by more detailed information on how to progress through each of the phases of implementation.

Implementation phases

There are several phases involved with the delivery of the PAW survey in your organisation. Please note, you may administer the survey in any manner that you feel will best suit your organisation – this is a guide to assist if you require. The 4 major phases for survey implementation, and key milestones within each, are described below.

- **Planning and design**: The planning and design phase involves setting up your survey project for success, ensuring that senior management champion the project, and establishing implementation and communications plans, as required.

- **Survey administration**: The survey administration phase involves the practical set up of your survey, delivery of communications, invitations to complete the survey, follow-ups and reminders, and close out of the survey.

- **Data analysis**: The data analysis phase involves taking your survey data and analysing the data in order to produce meaningful results. Comparisons can also be made between the survey data and other information available in the organisation, such as absenteeism data, incident reports, complaints etc.

- **Results**: The results phase involves finalising survey reports and debriefing the organisation on the findings of the survey. This is followed by steps to develop action plans and implement strategies to address any psychosocial hazards identified by the survey.
Survey implementation responsibilities

In administering the PAW survey and working through the above phases, there are key responsibilities that are important for implementation within your organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key task responsibilities include:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Planning and design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• nomination of survey lead or project manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>• getting senior management on board to champion the survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>• establishment of PAW steering group to support the delivery of the survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>• development and execution of the PAW Implementation Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>• addition of demographic questions and other desired items</td>
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<td>2. Survey administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>• production of surveys</td>
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<td>• invitation to participate in the survey</td>
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<td>• pre/during/post survey communications with managers and workers to encourage participation</td>
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<td>• updates to steering group, as applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>• distribution of paper surveys</td>
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<td>• close of survey and thank you to those that participated</td>
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<td>3. Data analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>• entry of data into excel spreadsheet</td>
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<tr>
<td>• extraction of key results and themes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• comparison of survey results to other data available within your organisation</td>
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<td>4. Results</td>
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<tr>
<td>• preparing reports with PAW Survey results</td>
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<td>• coordinating report debriefs for management and workgroups</td>
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<td>• delivery of presentations to the staff</td>
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<td>• delivery of follow-up focus groups, if desired</td>
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<tr>
<td>• organisational action planning to address results</td>
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<tr>
<td>• reviewing and evaluating of risk management plans implemented</td>
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</table>

There are four critical factors that your organisation will need to address to maximise the successful implementation of the PAW Survey:

- Senior management engagement
- A survey implementation lead/champion/project manager
- Designated staff to be responsible for undertaking key tasks
- Worker engagement to ensure understanding of the survey purpose and maximisation of response rates
Project timeline

The following table demonstrates the key milestones for each phase and the approximate delivery time. This is a guide only and may need to be altered based on your organisation’s specific situation. This timeline also assumes that your organisation has consented to the delivery of the survey and an individual or team is the lead agent for delivering the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Implementation Timeline</th>
<th>W 1</th>
<th>W 2</th>
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<td><strong>Phase 1 - PLANNING &amp; DESIGN</strong></td>
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<td>Establish the PAW steering group, if applicable</td>
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<td>Determine how the survey will be administered</td>
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<td>Develop the survey implementation plan (based on this guide)</td>
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<td>Develop a communication plan</td>
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<td>Survey customisations for demographics/extra items finalised</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 2 - SURVEY ADMINISTRATION</strong></td>
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<td>Communicate with staff regarding the survey and its purpose</td>
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<td>Print and prepare hard copy surveys for distribution</td>
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<td>Invite the staff to participate in the survey</td>
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<td>Monitor survey responses and send reminders, as required</td>
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<td>Brief PAW steering group on progress, if applicable</td>
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<td>Close survey</td>
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<td>Send communication - thank you email to workers</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 3 - DATA ANALYSIS</strong></td>
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<td>Enter responses into analysis spreadsheet in excel</td>
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<td>Analyse data and extract key themes and findings</td>
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<td>Compare findings to other organisational data</td>
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<td><strong>Phase 4 - RESULTS</strong></td>
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<td>Prepare and finalise reports on survey results</td>
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<td>Debrief results to steering group and management</td>
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<td>Deliver survey results presentation to the staff</td>
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<td>Undertake follow-up focus groups, if desired</td>
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<td>Undertake action planning to address results</td>
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<td>Review and evaluate actions/strategies implemented</td>
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Implementing the People at Work survey

Phase one: Planning and design

Nomination of project lead/manager

The person tasked with leading the project and facilitating the administration of the survey will be central to the success of your survey. The implementation of the survey is going to require someone who has a good basic understanding of psychosocial hazards in the workplace, can coordinate the administration, interpretation and reporting of survey results, and has good credibility and trust within the organisation so as to elicit responses to the survey (e.g. a work health and safety or human resources advisor). The project lead should also be able to communicate the results of the survey effectively at all levels of the organisation, and be able to support the organisation in implementing the
agreed actions resulting from the assessment. Here are some qualities to look for when selecting the right project lead:

- **excellent multi-tasking and coordination skills** – particularly if your organisation is large, reasonable effort will be required in managing the project
- **good interpersonal skills** – the information collected within the PAW survey is of a sensitive nature, and so the project lead should be able to build trust and communicate sensitively with any workers that may have concerns about the survey
- **good communication skills** – to effectively communicate the findings of the PAW survey and facilitate follow-up discussions
- **change advocacy skills** – to support changes that may need to be implemented as a result of the findings of the PAW survey
- **patience and flexibility** – getting people to respond to surveys isn’t always easy; patience and flexibility may be required in coping with setbacks and supporting and encouraging the staff to participate.

**The PAW steering group**

Appointing a steering group can be a good way to support the implementation of the PAW survey, particularly for organisations with more than 100 workers. The role of the steering group is to provide advice to the project lead and ensure the effective and timely completion of all aspects of the implementation process.

The project lead typically attends periodic meetings with the steering group, providing updates on progress, answering questions raised, and seeking guidance and advice as needed. Members of the steering group would not usually work on the implementation of the survey itself; rather, the group may consist of managers and worker representatives who can help promote the survey and intended benefits, assist with communications, provide advice about how to engage the staff, and help with decision-making on how the survey will be undertaken and how results will be used.

The role of individual members of the steering group might include:

- **understanding the objectives of undertaking the PAW survey, the outcomes, and the intended benefits**
- **appreciating the significant of undertaking the PAW survey as part of your organisation’s Health and Safety management strategy**
- **taking a genuine interest in the PAW survey and the management of psychosocial hazards in the workplace**
- **becoming an advocate for the PAW survey and the importance of psychological wellbeing at work**
- **answering questions that the staff may have about the PAW survey and associated outcomes**
- **helping to maintain momentum and ensuring that the organisation realises the benefits of undertaking the PAW survey**
- **considering ideas and issues raised and participating in group discussion.**
Survey implementation plan

To help with the implementation of the survey, you might like to consider developing an implementation plan. This may be more or less detailed depending on your organisation’s needs with consideration for the size of your organisation. Your implementation plan can be tailored to suit your needs, but as an indication, you might include the phases included in this implementation guide:

- Phase one: planning and design
- Phase two: survey administration
- Phase three: data analysis
- Phase four: results.

The information under ‘Project timeline’ should also assist in planning out the implementation process for your organisation.

Survey communication plan

It is helpful to plan communications around the delivery of your survey. How you communicate, who you communicate to, and who delivers key communications can impact responses rates to your survey.

Phase two: Survey administration

Promoting the survey

Promoting the PAW survey in your organisations is important. Effective promotion ensures that all workers are aware of the survey and have an opportunity to participate, and also increases response rates. The greater the number of responses you get to your survey, the more representative the data will be of your workforce.

Workers are more likely to complete a survey when they feel that the benefits of the survey outweigh the costs in terms of the time and effort it takes to fill out the questionnaire. This does not mean you have to give financial incentives to complete the survey. Benefits might include:

- the survey’s usefulness to the worker
- opportunities to provide feedback
- knowing that the organisation will take positive action as a result of feedback
- celebration of positive results from the survey.

Costs can be reduced by making the survey appear to be quick and easy to complete. This information should be included in any communications promoting the survey.

Strategies to promote your survey might include:

- build excitement and anticipation by sending out information about the survey in advance, explaining the purpose of the survey and the benefits to the organisation in having the data
- put up information about the survey around the office
- have senior manager or steering group members promote the importance of the survey
- post information and a link to the survey on your intranet (if you have one)
- include information about the survey in your staff newsletter
- ensure managers remind workers about the survey during team meetings.
Preparing the survey for distribution

Ensure you have prepared the survey ready for distribution from the date you would like the survey to open. Preparation involves printing out copies of the survey for paper and pen completion, organising for someone to ensure all staff receive a copy, and having a process ready to collect them when completed.

Inviting the staff to participate

When inviting staff to participate in the PAW survey, they should be fully informed about the purpose of the survey and how the data they provide will be used by your organisation. Where possible, responses should be anonymous – you may get more responses, and more honest responses, if respondents do not need to give their name. Be explicit about confidentiality – reassure respondents that their answers are confidential, and only aggregated data will be reported on. The PAW survey does not capture demographic information so as to help preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Consider advising workers on how the survey data will be stored and who will have access to the raw data.

Survey reminders

Depending on how long you intend to leave your survey open for, ensure you plan to send reminders. Using the promotion strategies above will assist in reminding people to complete the survey.

Closing the survey

You can close your survey at a prescheduled date, or leave it open and wait until you receive enough responses. Workers should be given notice as to when the survey will close. Send out a thank you communication to workers and communicate the next steps for the organisation in processing the results.

Phase three: Data analysis

Preparing data for analysis

Once you have collected the data from the PAW survey, you are ready to go into translating this into tangible knowledge that can be used by your organisation in managing psychosocial hazards at work. In preparing to analyse the data you have collected, you might consider the following:

- survey checking – you may need to eliminate any unacceptable survey responses, such as incomplete surveys or surveys with missing pages
- coding – you will need to assign numeric codes to answers. All scales start with 1 at the low end and the relevant number at the top end (e.g. Never = 1 and Always = 7).

Using the PAW reporting spreadsheet

To assist in analysing and reporting on PAW survey data, a reporting spreadsheet has been provided for your convenience. It is recommended that you use this spreadsheet, as it has been set up with survey benchmarks and appropriate measurement of psychosocial hazards at your workplace. For more information on the reporting spreadsheet, please refer to the spreadsheet and accompanying guidance material on How to use the People at Work survey reporting spreadsheet.

Understanding the PAW survey data

The dashboards that have been provided within the reporting spreadsheet are designed to quickly prepare graphs and statistics that make it very easy to report survey results back to your organisation.
There is also a spreadsheet that provides descriptive data for all the survey items, so you can see how your organisation responded to each question.

### Comparing and validating data

The data captured by the PAW survey can be compared back to other data that may be available to your organisation. A list of comparable data sources is included in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAW scale</th>
<th>Organisational data sources</th>
<th>How to make meaningful comparisons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Demands, resources and job burnout            | - Anecdotal reports of occupational stress  
- Psychosocial hazard reports and incidents  
- Psychological injuries  
- Workers’ compensation claims                   | If there are anecdotal reports of stress in your organisation, considering high demands, low resources and signs of burnout may help to explain the causes of stress in your organisation. This can partly be quantified by looking at the rate of workers’ compensation claims for mental stress, and reports of psychosocial hazards, incidents and injuries.                                                                                         |
| Experiences of workplace bullying             | - Workplace bullying hazard reports  
- Workplace bullying complaints  
- Workplace bullying incidents                            | The PAW survey will give you an indication of the prevalence of workplace bullying in your organisation. Comparing this to the number of incidents logged, hazards reported and complaints received will help to identify if your organisation is adequately addressing workplace bullying. If the number of complaints received is considerably less than survey responses indicating workplace bullying, this may show a need to focus on barriers to reporting workplace bullying. |
| Musculoskeletal symptoms                      | - Musculoskeletal hazard reports  
- Recorded musculoskeletal injuries                     | Musculoskeletal symptoms are a lead indicator for musculoskeletal injuries and disorders. It might be helpful to consider reported levels of these symptoms as compared to any hazard reports recorded by workers – this will help to determine what areas to focus on in preventing injuries. The parts of the body that workers report experiencing symptoms might also be compared to the nature of recorded injuries, to help identify were the risks of injury are highest. |
| Sleep patterns                                | - Reports of high levels of fatigue  
- Fatigue-related incidents                             | Poor sleep is a common cause of fatigue. If the survey demonstrates some workers are experiencing difficulties sleeping, it may help to consider reports of fatigue at work and to encourage managers to have discussions with their staff about fatigue. Sleep disturbances may also be caused by stressors at work, such as working long hours, high workloads, demanding jobs, conflicts etc. It may help to make a comparison between stress levels and fatigue. |
| Intentions to take sick leave or leave the organisation | - Absenteeism rates  
- Turnover rates                                          | Absenteeism and turnover are strong indicators of stress, disengagement and dissatisfaction in organisations. Understanding worker intentions to leave can help to demonstrate the potential consequences of not taking sufficient action to address worker concerns. The rate of reported intentions to take leave or resign from the organisation due to stress can be compared to existing absenteeism and turnover rates to see how much stress-related issues might be accounting for these metrics. |

Satisfaction  - Worker engagement data  
- Organisational climate and culture data

Experiences of stress and workplace bullying are likely to increase worker dissatisfaction. This can lead to absenteeism and turnover, but might also result in presenteeism and lost productivity. Satisfaction rates on the survey might be best compared with engagement, climate or culture data as comparative trends.

**Phase four: Results**

**Reporting on PAW survey results**

The *PAW reporting spreadsheet* has been developed to prepare information to assist you in explaining your survey results.

The reports that you prepare for your PAW Survey will ultimately depend on your organisation’s needs. You will be able to copy the graphs from the reporting spreadsheet straight into a word document or PowerPoint presentation. If you have compared the PAW Survey data to other organisational data, you may wish to report on this also.

**Debriefing results with management**

Debriefing management can be an important first step in commencing action to address survey results. Organisations have a duty of care to their workers for health and safety; managers play an important role in providing a safe workplace for staff, and so should be informed about any health and safety issues that have been identified within your survey. Some of the information found within your survey may be of a sensitive nature, and so results and feedback from the survey should be delivered with care. Be honest about survey results – managers need to be willing to discuss difficult issues being faced within the organisation. Be sure to also point out the positive results and the areas in which the organisation is doing well; focusing solely on negative results can result in defensiveness and dismissal of results.

Bringing your management team together to discuss survey results provides a good opportunity to discuss what happens next. If a process has already been determined to develop actions, you can communicate this process. This session might be a good time to get management input into actions and strategies to address psychosocial hazards/areas for development identified. It is also a good opportunity to seek management commitment to the implementation of survey results.

The level of detail you choose to provide will likely be dependent on the needs of the audience. Managers should be encouraged to discuss the results of the survey with the staff. You might decide for managers to be the primary communicators of survey results. Alternatively, you might provide formal presentations to the staff.

**Presenting results to the staff**

Workers most often want to know what is going to happen to survey data after they have taken the time to complete a survey. Presenting the survey results and discussion actions moving forward will ensure worker commitment to achieving improvements. Ensure the information shared is appropriate for the audience. Avoid sharing information that is inflammatory or likely to be cause for concern. In debriefing results, communication should be two-way. Invite workers to ask questions and engage in meaningful discussion about the survey results. You might deliver the results through a staff face-to-face presentation, team meetings, newsletters, short reports, emails, or any other means of communication that works for your organisation.
Undertaking focus groups

Surveys can often benefit from follow-up process to further unpack survey results, understand what psychosocial hazards in the workplace look like for staff, and discussion on ways to address these. This can be best achieved through focus groups. Focus groups are a way to further drill down on survey findings, particularly in the absence of qualitative data. Focus groups can ensure that you have obtained sufficient detail of information so as to best formulate actions moving forward. Focus group results can then be integrated into survey reports to provide a final review of psychosocial hazards in your organisation and a set of recommended actions for management consideration. For more information about focus groups, please refer to the PAW focus group guide.

Action planning

Developing an effective action plan is an important way to ensure the benefits of undertaking the survey are fully realised. The action planning process focuses on documenting the activities and strategies that will be implemented in managing psychosocial hazards in the workplace. Action planning should result in an agreed set of goals with timeframes for achievement and measures of success. For further guidance on action planning, please see the PAW action planning guide.

Monitoring and review

Monitoring and review is a critical aspect of any risk assessment and management process.

What are we monitoring?

Gathering data through the PAW survey should be supplemented by ongoing activities to monitor the work environment to identify changes that might increase the level of a particular risk such as monitoring the effectiveness of the agreed action plan. By undertaking monitoring activities, issues can be identified quickly, allowing for adjustment of risk management strategies. Furthermore, monitoring work practices ensures that members of the organisation are following policies and procedures, taking active measures to manage risk, reporting hazards and incidents, and speaking up about concerns. The PAW survey can be run again (e.g. annually) as part of the ongoing monitoring process.

What are we reviewing?

Risks should be documented in living documents that are reviewed on an ongoing basis. The nature of workplaces is such that we can get shifts in psychosocial hazards quite quickly. For example, whilst the PAW survey might show that role overload is not an issue, changes can occur quite quickly in resourcing that see people immediately experience greater pressures and high workloads. Having good risk management systems in place can ensure that you are continuing to review psychosocial hazards and risk in your organisation, and taking reasonably practicably steps to provide a safe work environment for your staff.

Further information

Be sure to look through the range of information and guidance materials provided on worksafe.qld.gov.au/people-at-work

If you have questions or require further information, please contact psychologicalhealth@oir.qld.gov.au