

LEADing for frontline safety workbook and toolkit for the electrical industry



ESO

Electrical Safety Office
electricalsafety.qld.gov.au



Contents

Safety culture, climate and leadership.....	3
What is safety culture?	3
What is safety climate?.....	3
What is safety leadership?	3
What's the difference between safety leadership and safety management?.....	4
Can safety leadership be improved?	4
Case study: LEAD a safety culture in the electrical services industry pilot.....	5
The LEAD model.....	5
Safety goals.....	6
How to use the LEAD model	6
Let's get started.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
The LEAD toolkit	7
Understanding the LEAD model.....	7
Phase one – preparation	7
Management rational for undertaking a safety culture initiative	7
Phase two – measure.....	9
Safety capability survey.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Measuring your safety culture and establishing your baseline - best practice in administering a survey.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Interpreting your Safety capability survey report	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Phase three – implementation	10
Action plan	10
Powerful words	11
Phase four – embed and monitor	13

Safety culture, climate and leadership

To develop a positive safety culture in your business, you need to show strong safety leadership.

What is safety culture?

Safety culture embodies the value placed on safety and the extent to which people take personal responsibility for safety in an organisation. Safety culture is often described as the 'personality' of an organisation, as it is a shared value of safety.

Safety culture is just one aspect of an organisation's broader culture. Culture forms naturally wherever there are groups of people working together to achieve a common goal. Organisational culture is invisible as most people aren't consciously aware of the shared beliefs and assumptions that influence their behaviour.

An example of how you might experience safety culture is when you start work in a new organisation. Initially, as a new employee you would try to gain an understanding of the safety practices in your organisation. At first you would be guided by the written rules, procedures, and training you have been given. You would also look to your colleagues and leaders, watching what they say and how they act. Based on this information and observations you would come to understand the safety culture of the organisation.

A positive safety culture exists when employees understand the importance of safety and exhibit positive safety behaviours. Examples of positive safety behaviours include wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) without being asked, completing risks assessments for all jobs and reporting all incidents. If an organisation has a negative safety culture, safety may be seen as unnecessary and this might lead staff to have poor safety practices. Negative safety behaviours include taking shortcuts or choosing to ignore safety hazards.

What is safety climate?

Safety climate is the perceived value placed on safety in an organisation at a particular point in time. Therefore, we can think of safety climate as the 'mood' of an organisation, based on what workers experience at a specific time.

As safety climate is a snapshot of safety at one point in time it can change rapidly, on a daily or weekly basis. For example, safety climate might be heightened after implementing a new safety procedure or after an incident. If that heightened safety climate is maintained over time, it can lead to changes in the underlying culture.

As safety climate captures the attitudes towards safety at a specific point in time, it is a useful indicator of safety performance. Measuring safety culture is usually done using an employee survey or team discussions.

What is safety leadership?

Safety leadership is a particular type of leadership that promotes both physical and psychological safety, and so contributes to a positive safety culture, a physically and mentally healthy workplace, and business performance generally.

Safety leadership refers to the specific behaviours and skills that frontline leaders (e.g. team leaders, supervisors, managers) show in the workplace that promote physical and psychological health and safety. Many of these behaviours overlap with good leadership practices in general and are especially useful in safety-specific situations. There are also several behaviours that are specific to safety leadership, such as being vigilant to risks and detecting hazards.

In a positive safety culture, safety leadership is shown at all levels. However, frontline safety leadership is particularly important and is the focus of the LEAD toolkit. If effective frontline safety leadership is demonstrated every day, it can contribute to a work environment where people are more likely to be:

- mindful
- open to learning
- proactive
- compliant
- efficient
- productive
- safe.

Safety leadership is influencing others to adopt health and safety as an important work goal. Through leading by example in the workplace, team leaders, managers and executives can:

- help build workers' safety knowledge and motivation
- increase compliance with safety rules
- encourage proactive safety behaviours.

What's the difference between safety leadership and safety management?

Although it is not always clear, there are some differences between safety leadership and safety management. Safety leadership involves behaviours that motivate and inspire workers to adopt the organisation's safety goals as their own. Safety leadership drives a shift in the values and attitudes of workers towards those that are more helpful for safety. Another way of describing safety leadership is the 'soft' skills required to lead people in workplaces where there are hazards to physical or psychological health and safety.

Safety management, on the other hand, is more concerned with the 'hard' skills required by leaders. Some of these skills include conducting incident investigations and delivering toolbox talks.

As many frontline leaders do not receive development in soft skills, this workbook will focus on safety leadership.

Can safety leadership be improved?

Studies have shown that safety leadership can be improved. Through training and coaching, leaders can develop their safety leadership competencies and capabilities. This workbook will help you to develop your safety leadership skills at your own pace.

Part of the pre-conditions for learning is a state of confusion, so it is important to keep an open and reflective mind as you progress through the workbook. At times you may feel challenged or confronted, particularly if you realise that you might need further development in a particular area. You may also feel confused or unclear.

Case study: LEAD a safety culture in the electrical services industry pilot

Background

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) and the Electrical Safety Office (ESO) within the Office of Industrial Relations (OIR) embarked on a pilot project to reduce incident rates in the electrical services industry following a series of fatalities and electrical events that included working on live electrical equipment. It was widely recognised that in addition to the regulatory work undertaken by WHSQ and ESO, reducing incident rates also required interventions that focused on workplace culture to improve health and safety in this high-risk sector.

The pilot project

A pilot project was designed to develop, test and evaluate the LEAD safety culture toolkit tailored for the electrical services industry. An organisation's safety culture is influenced by many variables such as systems, environment, behavior, human factor and leadership. The LEAD model is based on the premise that developing the safety leadership capability of frontline leaders should influence team safety and move the organisational culture in a direction that is more supportive of safety.

A key aim of the pilot was to measure shifts in safety leadership capacity and changes in the participants understanding of safety culture and in their overall business.

Results

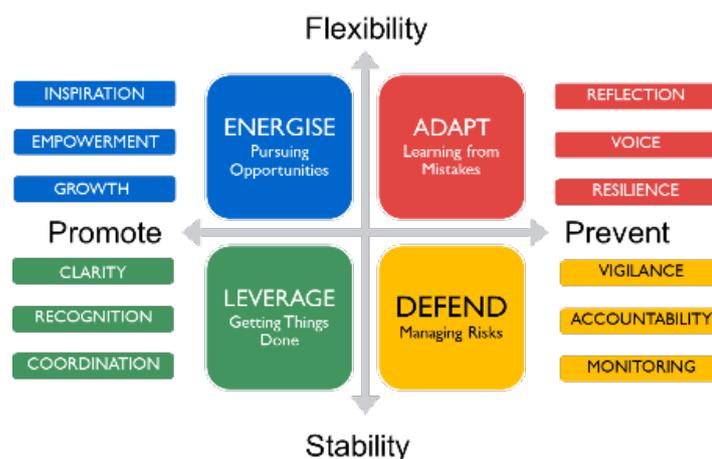
Results from the pilot organisations (14 electrical companies) identified positive shifts in safety leadership capacity as a result of the intervention, and a more consistent understanding of safety culture by staff in those businesses.

The LEAD model

The LEAD model brings together many different theories of safety leadership into one practical framework that you can apply in your place of work. It describes the specific skills you'll need for different work situations.

Developed by the Office of Industrial Relations, Curtin University and the University of Queensland, the LEAD model offers organisations an evidenced-based approach to measuring, understanding and improving safety culture.

An effective safety leader will use:



1. leverage – to get things done by providing clarity, recognise achievements and co-ordinate work.
2. energise – to pursue opportunities by creating meaning and purpose to inspire, empower and help workers grow.
3. adapt – to learn from mistakes and improve by encouraging the team to reflect on past performance, encourage speaking up and build resilience.
4. defend – to manage risks by improving vigilance, drive accountability and monitor work.

The LEAD model encourages us to be flexible and adaptable with our safety leadership — adopting the best mode of safety leadership for each work situation.

Safety goals

The LEAD model gives four ways that leaders can frame safety goals recognising four different dynamics teams operate in:

- either stability or flexibility
- either promote or prevent.

Stability - when work is routine and hazards are well known, you should use behaviours that promote stability within your team.

Flexibility - encourage your team to accept responsibility and ownership for work health and safety. Support them when they voice concerns, share ideas, and accept safety duties.

Promote - set specific objectives for your team to strive to achieve, and recognise or reward your team when they achieve a positive safety outcome.

Prevent - focus on preventing negative outcomes by highlighting risk, implementing controls and avoiding risk taking.

How to use the LEAD model

The LEAD model is based on the idea that leaders can frame safety goals in different ways depending on the situation, and that this can have a positive effect on workers' behaviours. For example, when hazards are well-known, the situation is predictable, and the focus is on getting work done, leaders should:

- set specific safety goals to strive towards
- recognise workers' progression towards these goals
- encourage effective communication and coordination among the team.

The LEAD safety culture toolkit provides support when implementing the LEAD model in your place of work.

There are four key phases to support implementation.

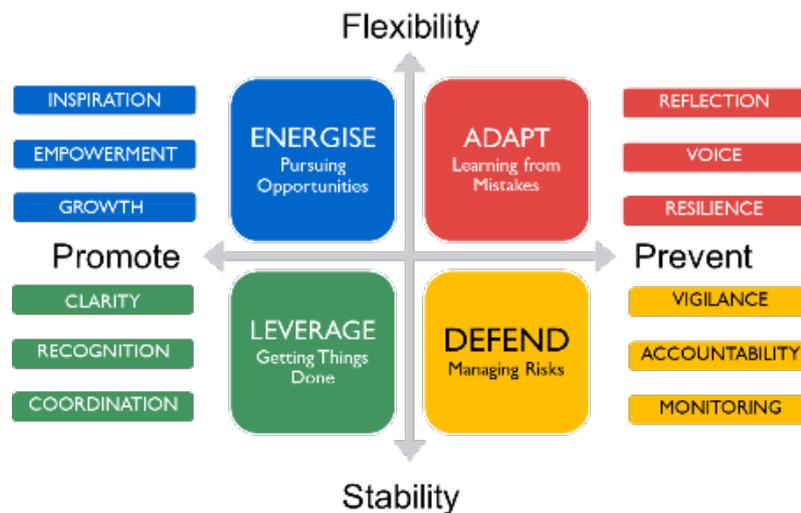
- Phase one - Preparation (rational for undertaking a safety culture initiative).
- Phase two - Measure (baseline survey and dashboard report).
- Phase three - Implementation (action plan and training).
- Phase four - Embed and monitor (systems integration and re-survey to assess culture change).

The LEAD toolkit

Understanding the LEAD model

In the space provided below, please write what safety leadership practices you believe would contribute to high performance for each quadrant.

For example, you might indicate that monitoring compliance with safety procedures would be classified under defend.



Phase one – preparation

(Rational for undertaking a safety culture initiative)

Management rational for undertaking a safety culture initiative

The first of four phases critical to understanding your workplace culture and developing effective safety leaders is **preparation**. This involves gaining commitment from senior managers, understanding the perceptions and safety behaviours of workers and effective communication.

What is your main reason/rationale for undertaking a safety culture change initiative?

- Does it align with your company's objectives/goals?
- Is it in response to safety performance – either a serious incident or plateauing safety indicators?
- What type of information/data are you using to support your conclusions (workers' compensation, human resources etc)?

Who should be involved to support and/or assist in the implementation?

- Consider formal and informal influencers in your organisation (i.e. decision makers, stakeholders, influencers/champions).
- Who will you consult?

What resources will you need?

- Consider the timing of this project to avoid conflicting work priorities such as peak production cycle for your business, the people who should be involved, information technology requirements and budget.

How will you evaluate the project's effectiveness?

- What short and long-term measures will you use (behaviour change, safety or workers' compensation data etc.)?

Completing Phase 1 – preparation of the LEAD Program is an important step in understanding the LEAD model and preparing your organisation for the next phase.

Phase two – measure

Leadership and teamwork can have a significant impact on the potential and ability of organisations to maintain strong safety and recovery and return to work outcomes when faced with uncertainty, risks, and other challenges.

Implementing the Safety capability survey in your workplace will provide a baseline of your current areas of strength and where improvements can be made using safety leadership practices and the LEAD model.

Survey

The survey asks participants how WHS and recovery and RTW is perceived and managed in the workplace. It is comprised of two measures, which, when considered together, provide a holistic view of an organisation’s approach to safety:

- **WHS capability:** 27 questions across nine fundamental areas are designed to measure safety strengths and identify improvement opportunity areas.
- **Recovery and RTW capability:** 15 questions across five fundamental areas are designed to assess injury management and return to work strengths and identify improvement opportunity areas.

When your organisation has completed the survey, you’ll receive a report, accompanied by a single page executive summary. The report scores each of the fundamental areas to provide an overall picture of your current workplace level of Safety capability strengths and improvement opportunities.

More information about the benefits of safety capability, leadership and culture can be found [here](#).

Access the survey at [Safety capability survey | WorkSafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/safety-capability-survey)

Example discussion questions

1. Are there any results that surprised you, based on what you previously knew or perceived about the organisation?

2. Are there any results that matched your experiences at this organisation?

3. Looking at these results, what would you say are the organisation’s strengths? What about opportunities to improve?

4. How would you explain this pattern of results? What may be causing these areas of strength and opportunity?

5. If you had to pick one area of focus for the next 12 months, what would it be?

6. What results should be communicated back to the workforce? What should we recognise or acknowledge as achievements? What should we identify as our area(s) of focus?

Phase three – implementation

(Action plan and training)

Action plan

Our survey results

Strengths to celebrate	Opportunities to improve

Strengths we will focus on celebrating

Opportunities we will focus on improving

Powerful words

Solve	Lead	Organise
Promote	Innovate	Impact
Improve	Train	Grow
Adapt	Build	Achieve
Positivity	Introduce	Increase
Initiate	Strengthen	Focus
Plan	Motivate	Drive
Inspire	Persuade	Create

Our vision for health, safety and wellbeing

To achieve this vision, we will

Goals	Actions
1	
2	

3	

Results/areas/actions where we need to consult with others

Results/areas/actions	Who will be consulted	How will we consult

Who will we engage in this project?

Stakeholder group	What will we engage on	How will we engage

Notes

Phase four – embed and monitor

(Systems integration and re-survey to assess culture change)

Sustaining safety culture change – monitoring impact, embedding change, and driving continuous improvement

The final stage to improving your safety is integrating the changes into existing systems and processes within your organisation, and monitoring its progress, including returning to the survey in 12-24 months to determine the impact on safety culture against your baseline data.

Do you have examples of health and safety initiatives that have been successful over the long term?

- Can you use existing measures or systems to monitor this projects progress?

What barriers do you foresee and how will you overcome them?

- What can you learn from past experiences and what has/hasn't worked previously?

How will you maintain momentum and ensure sustainability?

- Consider regular reporting to senior management, existing systems and processes that can be utilised and communication strategies.
