

## Communications planning

Developing a communication plan can help raise awareness and uptake of the safety capability survey in your workplace. Consulting with workers, supervisors and senior leaders is an important way to ensure a high survey response rate, which will produce more meaningful and representative data.

Effective communication plans identify:

- your audience
- key messaging
- how you will communicate each survey process stage (i.e. pre-survey, launch, during, closing and post survey).

## Audiences

Depending on the structure of your workplace, you will need to consider the best way to communicate with your target audience to generate interest and encourage survey participation.

Consider the impact that age, language, literacy, shift work and remote locations may have on your communication plan and adapt your messaging as necessary to ensure it is delivered concisely across the organisation.

Your communication strategy should combine whole-of organisation and targeted messaging to reach all levels of your workforce.

## Key messages

Key messages are the main points you want to communicate about what to expect from the survey. They are more effective when tailored to suit the audience and should be:

- concise – provide a lot of information clearly using few words
- positive – focus on what people can do, not what they can't; and
- specific – target the audience.

While every workplace is unique, some key messages for workers, supervisors and senior leaders are suggested below.

## Workers

Workers are more likely to complete the safety capability survey when they clearly understand the process and benefits of participation. Communication with workers should include:

- details of the survey process
  - start and end dates for survey period
  - how to access the survey (i.e. computer/tablet/smartphone)
  - how long the survey will take (i.e. 15 – 20 minutes)
  - who to direct questions to (i.e. survey champions)
  - confidentiality
  - what happens after the survey closes.
- advantages of participation:
  - opportunity to provide feedback to their employer
  - contribute to health, safety, and wellbeing at the workplace
  - understand more about safety capability and how they can contribute
  - organisation strengths and areas for opportunity at the workplace
- the organisation's commitment to following up on results to improve safety capability.

## Supervisors

Supervisors play an important role in developing and maintaining safety capability at the workplace. Supervisors with a good understanding of safety capability can promote the survey and answer questions from workers. Consider providing additional information to supervisors so they understand more about the benefits of safety capability prior to the survey period.

Supervisors also have a key role in ensuring post survey action plans are implemented. They can help create positive changes and improve safety capability, by:

- encouraging workers to participate in the survey
- sharing information on how
  - the survey will be implemented
  - anonymity for workers will be protected
- explaining the survey results will:
  - highlight strength areas and opportunity areas for improvement
  - contribute to the development of action plans and interventions
- facilitating consultation between employees and senior leaders if needed
- liaising with survey champions if needed
- being prepared to participate in positive action planning to improve safety capability.

## Senior leaders

Explaining the background and purpose of the safety capability survey with senior leaders is essential to gain their approval and commitment to the process. Visible support from senior leaders can encourage discussion, influence survey uptake, and drive positive change.

Key messages for senior leaders should focus on:

- providing a good understanding of safety capability
- the benefits of engaging and consulting with workers on safety capability
- the safety capability survey's purpose and aims:
  - to identify focus areas in which the organisation is performing well
  - to identify key areas of opportunity that can be targeted to improve safety capability
- how the survey will be implemented
- post survey activities such as focus groups and action planning.

# Communication activities



## Pre-survey

Before launching the survey, let your workforce know:

- why you are conducting a survey
- what the survey will measure
- when the survey will be available and for how long
- how the results will be used by the organisation
- who their survey champions will be if workers need to ask questions?

Offer face-to-face communication during team meetings and safety briefings, written promotional materials such as emails, information flyers and promotional posters. Use a variety of communication methods to ensure your key messages are received.



## Survey launch

Successful survey launches:

- use multiple methods of communication (e.g. email, posters, meeting notices) to let employees know the survey is open. A promotional poster has been provided as part of the safety capability suite of tools.
- let employees know where they can seek further information or ask for support if they have questions about the survey, such as survey champions, supervisors, or senior managers.
- encourage participation by communicating the importance of the survey and commitment of the organisation to respond to findings.



## During the survey period

It is important to maintain momentum and interest in safety capability while survey responses are being collected. You can do this by:

- thanking those who have already participated and send reminders to encourage those who have not. Use a variety of techniques to increase the response rate such as:
  - including the percentage of the workforce who have already completed the survey
  - telling them how long the survey will take (i.e., 15-20min)
  - refrain from sending too many emails as this can reduce worker engagement
- emphasising the importance of high response rates (i.e. more responses provide more representative survey results).
- engaging in informal discussions with workers about safety and encouraging them to share their perspectives and experiences via the survey.

Safety capability champions can engage workers and share these messages with their teams.



## Post-survey

After the survey has been closed:

- thank the workforce for participating and taking an interest in improving the organisation's safety capability
- communicate expected timeframes for the delivery of results, further consultation (e.g. focus groups) and action plan development
- maintain interest in safety capability through formal meetings (e.g. sharing of information, toolbox talks) and informal discussion with workers.

## Additional resources

Additional resources are available via WHSQ's [Safety capability, leadership and culture](#) website to assist with pre- and post-survey communications.



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