

DISABILITY SUPPORT Safety Climate Survey

What is Safety Climate?

Safety climate is like the mood of the worksite around safety (i.e., is it valued and prioritised?), whereas culture is more like the personality (i.e., what do people believe about safety?).

A positive safety climate influences the broader safety culture. For example, if workers think that management is committed to, and genuine about work health and safety, then they are likely to believe that safety practices are worthwhile and useful. Further, these workers will show this in their own behaviour and social interactions with others.

Safety climate varies by industry. Each industry has its own topics that demonstrate safety is a priority. In the disability support industry, these are:

1. Management safety priority
2. Safety resourcing
3. Supervisor support for mental health
4. Supervisor proactivity

Why measure Safety Climate?

Safety climate is known as a 'leading safety indicator' because it tells us where we should focus our improvements efforts before accidents happen.

A positive safety climate, one where workers experience a strong commitment to safety, is likely to lead to better safety behaviours and fewer injuries.

Safety climate has also been linked to important outcomes such as job satisfaction, engagement and wellbeing/mental health.

By building and maintaining a positive safety climate, workplaces like yours can not only prevent negative events like injuries, but also save costs and create a more productive and engaged workforce.

How safety climate affects important safety outcomes in your industry



How can I measure safety climate?

Safety climate is usually measured by a survey that workers complete. The survey will include a number of statements, usually between 10-20, that describe different ways of experiencing safety in the workplace. These items group together into 'topics' (usually 3-5 items each). People respond to each statement by rating how strongly they agree or disagree. Every "strongly disagree" response gets scored a value of 1, "disagree" a 2, "neither agree nor disagree" a 3, "agree" a 4, and every "strongly agree" response gets scored a 5.

An overall safety climate score is calculated, as well as scores for each 'topic' (groups of survey statements about a particular topic, for example, co-worker safety or safety priority). These scores tell us where to focus our improvement efforts.

Scores that are 3.5 or below would be considered clear areas of improvement. Scores 3.6 to 4.0 are generally fair and should be monitored. Scores of 4.0 or above are areas of

strength where safety is seen as a prioritised and important goal.

An overall safety climate score for each survey respondent is calculated by adding up the scores across all statements, and dividing this figure by the total number of statements in the survey. Any statements without a response marked are left out of the calculation.

To arrive at a safety climate score for a team, or an entire workplace, you calculate the average safety climate score across the members of the team, or across all workplace members.

Scores for each safety climate 'building block' (groups of survey statements about a particular topic, for example, co-worker safety or safety priority) can be calculated as well. To do so, only include responses to the statements that are part of the building block. These building block scores give information about where and at whom to target improvement initiatives.

How to score your safety climate survey results

Management Safety Priority

S1

+

S2

+

S3

Divided by 3

Safety Resourcing

S4

+

S5

+

S6

+

S7

+

S8

Divided by 5

Supervisor Support for Mental Health

S9

+

S10

+

S11

+

S12

Divided by 4

Supervisor Proactivity

S13

+

S14

+

S15

+

S16

Divided by 4

Overall Safety Climate

All statements added together

Divided by 16

Safety Climate Scale

Listed below are a number of statements regarding where you currently work. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each one, based on your experiences at your current worksite. Place a mark or tick in the box that best matches how you feel.

Strongly disagree
Disagree
Neither agree nor disagree
Agree
Strongly agree

S1. Management makes sure there is enough safety resources even when workload increases.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S2. Management does not expect support staff to put the needs of the client above their own personal safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S3. Management uses information from site inspections to improve safety for support staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S4. At this organisation, support staff have access to safety information no matter where they are (for example, on the road).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S5. At this organisation, the safety team is happy to hear about safety issues and concerns from support staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S6. At this organisation, support staff are not afraid of losing their job for speaking up about safety concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S7. At this organisation, there is enough support staff per shift to work safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S8. At this organisation, support staff are given enough time on their shifts to follow all safety activities and processes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S9. Supervisors talk with support staff every day to help them manage stress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S10. Supervisors encourage support staff to tell the supervisors when they feel burned out or distressed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S11. Supervisors make sure support staff know how to get help from the organisation (for example, Employee Assistance, debriefings, peer support).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S12. Supervisors check in with support staff regularly to see how they are going with their workload and stress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S13. Supervisors encourage support staff to identify risks (for example, heavy lifts, challenging behaviours) before injuries happen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S14. Supervisors follow up individually with support staff who have raised safety concerns at work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S15. Supervisors expect that support staff will speak up if they ever feel unsafe when working with a particular client.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S16. Supervisors require support staff to carefully assess the safety risks when working with a new client.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How can I measure safety performance?

Safety performance can be measured by asking workers to self-report how often they demonstrate various behaviours in the workplace. Specific safety behaviours were identified by consulting directly with workers from industry and combining this information with results of previous scientific research.

As a result, the responses received to these safety performance items are highly relevant and will provide extra insights into where areas of safety capability among workers is strongest, and where it may be weakest. Safety performance information can be used to design targeted safety training or awareness sessions and also identify a baseline against which future change can be measured.

Also, if you have advanced statistical knowledge or access to this expertise, the associations between safety climate results and these safety performance items can be evaluated. Such information will help to target areas of safety climate improvement because they will show which topic areas (in addition to the overall safety climate) are most strongly associated with safety behaviour.

To score the safety behaviour items and develop an overall safety performance metric,

simply assign consecutive numbers to each item response. Each 'never' response gets scored as a 1, 'sometimes' is scored as a 2, 'about half the time' is scored as a 3, 'most of the time' is scored as a 4, and 'always' is scored as a 5. Calculate an average across all the safety behaviour items by adding the scored values and dividing by the number of items.

Usually, an average safety performance value of 4 or greater is seen as an area of strength. Anything less than a 4 should be targeted for improvement. Individual safety behaviour averages can be examined to identify which one(s) are driving the overall safety performance result.

In a similar way to the safety climate survey calculations, either team or organisation values can be calculated. Simply divide the survey responses into groups based on the demographic(s) and then calculate the averages for each group separately.

These building block scores give information about where and at whom to target improvement initiatives.

How to score your safety performance survey results



Divided by 9

Safety Performance Scale

Listed below are a number of behaviours that you might show in your current workplace. Thinking about your most recent experiences at work, please rate how frequently you show each behaviour.

	Never	Sometimes	About half the time	Most of the time	Always
I keep up to date with the latest safety alerts and information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I ask questions about safety-related information if I am unsure or confused.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow all safety procedures and protocols for small jobs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take care of my own wellbeing and mental health.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I look for ways to improve the safety of support staff in client care plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I offer help to co-workers so they can do their work safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I share safety information with other support staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give feedback to other support staff on their safety-related performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For additional resources on safety in Disability Support, visit <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/your-industry/health-care-and-social-assistance>

For assistance with implementing this toolkit or more information please contact the Centre for WHS

Email us: contact@centreforwhs.nsw.gov.au
Visit us: <http://www.centreforwhs.nsw.gov.au>

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