

Questions and answers for businesses

These Q&As are for businesses to find out more about the SafePlus toolkit, and/or to commission a SafePlus Accredited Assessor to provide SafePlus onsite assessment and advisory services.

More information about SafePlus is provided in the *SafePlus Guide for Businesses*. www.safeplus.nz (click on How SafePlus works).

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Deciding whether to use SafePlus

What are the benefits to my business and my workers of using SafePlus?

Your business will get an assessment of your health and safety performance against good practice performance requirements. Using the Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service will identify strengths and weaknesses in your health and safety performance. You will receive performance recommendations on what your business needs to do to improve. A key benefit from a SafePlus assessment is that you will get tailored guidance and advice on how you can implement the performance recommendations.

SafePlus will help improve productivity by creating a safer and healthier workplace. It will provide a degree of business confidence about your performance, and boost your business's reputation as an employer of choice. By focusing on improved workplace health and safety, businesses can be assured you are focusing your efforts and costs in the right places.

For workers, it'll help reduce the likelihood of workplace accidents and illness and provide a safer and healthier place to work.

Do I have to use SafePlus to meet my business's health and safety requirements under the law?

No. SafePlus is a voluntary toolkit, which businesses can elect to use. It focuses on best practice health and safety performance, and this goes beyond minimum legal compliance.

How do I know if SafePlus is right for my business?

You should first understand what SafePlus is, and then make a decision if it's right for your business.

Some components of SafePlus are freely available for anyone to use. A business might want to incorporate SafePlus into their own approach to managing health and safety.

Once the Online Self-Assessment tool is available (mid 2018) businesses can use this to undertake their own self-assessment of their performance and receive free guidance and advice based on the findings of their assessment. This will be a good first step for some businesses, but it will not provide an independent verification of performance from a qualified and Accredited SafePlus Assessor. The first version of the online self-assessment tool will be targeted at small to medium sized businesses. Future versions will be customised to larger businesses and key risk sectors.

If you want to use the Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service, you can commission an independent SafePlus Accredited Assessor. This part of the SafePlus toolkit is designed for medium to larger sized business that are committed to achieving good health and safety practice.

However, it could also be suitable for some smaller businesses. For example, when SafePlus was piloted a 14-person business used it and got benefit and value from it.

How much will the SafePlus onsite assessment and advisory service cost?

The fee charged is a commercial matter between your business and the SafePlus Accredited Assessor that you commission, similar to hiring any health and safety service provider or professional in the market. The fee is one of the factors that you will need to consider when selecting your Assessor.

Will there be a cost to use the SafePlus online self-assessment tool?

No. When it is available in mid-2018, it will be free for any business to use.

Accredited Assessors

Why should I use a SafePlus Accredited Assessor?

WorkSafe and ACC strongly recommends that businesses wanting to use the independent Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service should always use a SafePlus Accredited Assessor (rather than a generic health and safety consultant). This will give you greater certainty that your Accredited Assessor is trained in the use and application of SafePlus, has the capability and competency to do a good job, and can give you the best value from a SafePlus onsite assessment. Accredited SafePlus Assessors have had their competency to use the SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service verified by the independent Accreditation Body.

To become accredited, applicants have to demonstrate they meet a set of core competencies developed by WorkSafe that are considered essential to be able to use SafePlus. These competencies are set out in the Assessor Competency Specification (www.safepus.nz/assessors). The accreditation process also requires candidates to undertake and pass a SafePlus training course run by an independent training provider. The Accreditation Body undertakes referee checks for each assessor candidate and considers a range of evidence when assessing the competence of each applicant.

Accredited Assessors must also be members of one of the member organisations of the Health and safety Association of New Zealand (HASANZ) – the umbrella organisation representing workplace health and safety professions in New Zealand. HASANZ aims to raise professional standards across the sector to provide healthier and safer workplaces for New Zealanders.

SafePlus Accredited Assessors also have to go through a re-evaluation process every three years to ensure that their competency has been maintained.

Are there different grades or types of SafePlus Accredited Assessors?

No. There is only one type of SafePlus Accredited Assessor. Only a SafePlus Accredited Assessor can undertake a SafePlus assessment. However, assessments may involve other Accredited Assessors or technical subject matter experts. The specialist technical support person(s) do not need to be SafePlus Accredited Assessors. Other assessors performing on the same assessment to help bolster capacity needs do need to be accredited.

Can SafePlus Onsite Assessments be done by one assessor, or are more than one required?

A key part of the Accredited Assessor's role is to consider whether they have the necessary range of skills, experience and necessary capacity for each specific SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service, or whether they need to involve one or more supporting assessors or other sector or specialist experts.

Most assessments should involve more than one Accredited Assessor to provide the quality assurance of a peer review and second set of eyes – both onsite and afterwards when collating assessment findings and formulating the tailored guidance and advice to the business. It also provides additional resource to manage the sampling work necessary to form evidence-based conclusions, and to complete the assessment in a reasonable timeframe. Finally, it provides additional capacity to provide a greater level of advice and guidance to workers onsite during an assessment of a business, or for assessments at larger businesses with multiple sites. More than one Accredited Assessor is recommended for most assessments.

How do I find and select a SafePlus Accredited Assessor?

There is a public register that lists all of the SafePlus Accredited Assessors and contains their contact details. This can be found on the SafePlus website (safepplus.nz). Accredited Assessors will also be able to advertise and promote their services. As with any service provider you may want to seek quotes or written proposals from multiple assessors to help you select an appropriate Accredited Assessor.

SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service

Your initial conversations and planning with an Accredited Assessor

Initial conversations between Accredited Assessors and businesses are an important part of the SafePlus process. Such engagement and communication begins before any contract for services is agreed. This engagement can help the Assessor to better position and inform their quotes/proposals, can help smooth subsequent contractual negotiations, and help ensure that the final agreed scope of work best meets your needs.

There should be a two-way exchange of information. You should provide the Assessor with information about your business such as what it does, its size, complexity, and critical health and safety risks. Such factors will influence how the Assessor provides advice on what a SafePlus assessment could involve and how SafePlus can benefit your business– whether this is a response to a general query, or a more formal proposal, or quote for services, that you ask them to provide. This exchange of information is essential to help define and agree the scope of a SafePlus assessment (discussed further below).

How is the scope of a SafePlus Onsite Assessment determined and agreed upon?

This is something that you will need to agree upfront with your SafePlus Accredited Assessor and will be specific to each business's context and its needs. The scope will depend on a range of factors, explored through discussions with each business. Some key considerations include:

- The nature of the business – what does it do?

- The size and complexity of the business – for example, does it span multiple locations, or is it comprised of different business units that undertake a range of different functions and activities?
- Its specific risk profile (which will likely vary across the business depending on which parts you are considering).
- Specific client priorities.
- Budget and timeframes.
- Other issues discovered in initial interactions and engagements with your Assessor(s).

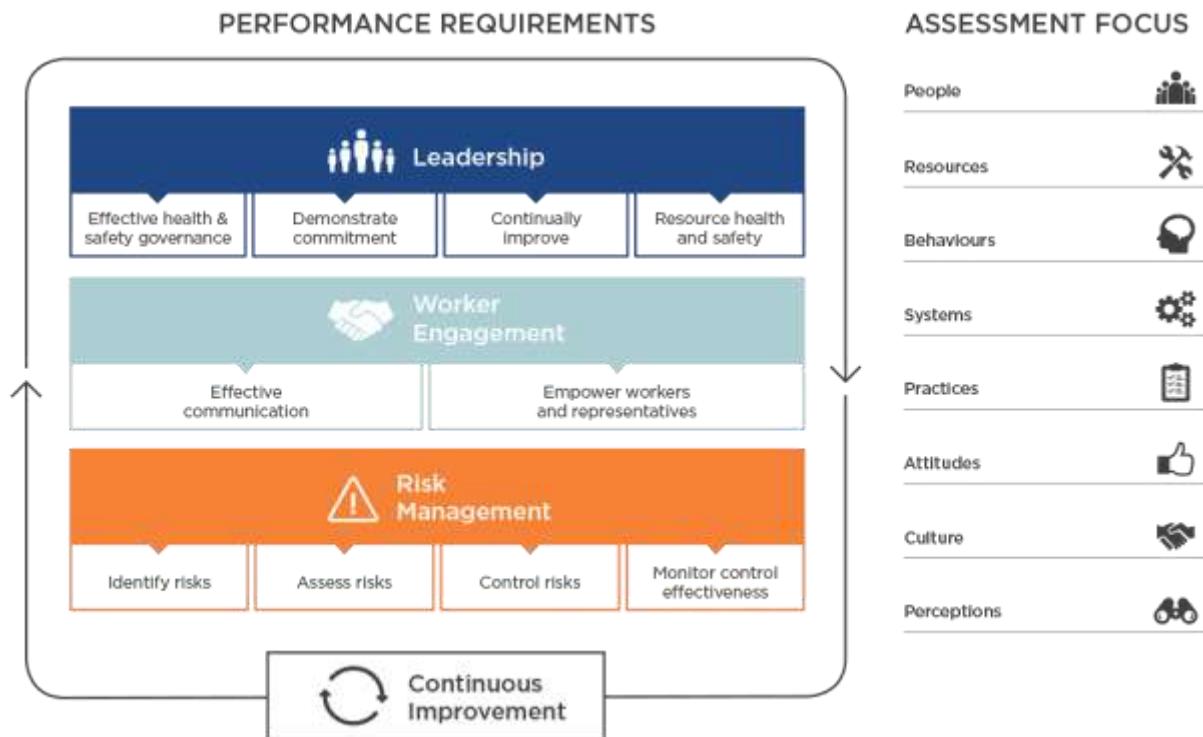
For a larger business with multiple sites or locations it is likely that some form of sampling across sites is required. However, there is no defined minimum sampling rules - it is a matter of the assessor's professional judgement after scoping discussions with the business. It is important to take a business consultative approach, rather than relying on a traditional pre-set formula compliance audit approach to sampling. For example, questioning the business about its risk profile, and how this could vary throughout the organisation, could help you work out what seems a reasonable sampling approach.

The assessment will be tailored to the nature and type of your business and the key risks that are relevant. You should agree with your Assessor issues such as:

- The Deep Dive risks that will be traced through your organisation as part of the assessment – two safety risks and at least one work-related health risk
- The people to be interviewed – workers from all levels
- An assessment schedule – sites to be visited on what dates and the schedule of observations/interviews/focus groups
- Timeframes for undertaking the Onsite Assessment.

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Every onsite assessment will need to consider performance against all ten *SafePlus Performance Requirements* and their indicators. The requirements are organised into three core elements: leadership, worker engagement and risk management – and are underpinned by continuous improvement. Each requirement has four or five indicators, which explore how a business performs against the requirements in more detail. Each performance requirement has a maturity scale to help support continuous improvement and help measure performance over time.



These requirements are described in the SafePlus *Performance Requirements* document.

SafePlus assessments involve observing practices, processes, plant, people, an environment, and assessing behaviours, attitudes, perceptions, values and health and safety culture through interviews and interactions. Assessors conduct behavioural observations onsite, interview people within the business and review practices and processes to understand how key risks are managed. Assessments will involve a Deep Dive assessment process that traces risks through the different layers of the business.

What do you mean by the terms such as ‘perceptions’, ‘attitudes’, ‘behaviours’ and ‘culture’ in this context?

A ‘perception’ can be considered as the way in which something is regarded, understood or interpreted by a person. A person’s perceptions can influence their attitudes and behaviours. A perception can sometimes be wrong, but is based on how a person interprets something.

An ‘attitude’ can be regarded as a more settled way of thinking or feeling about something, or a person’s view point on something. Attitudes can drive behaviours and practices. Attitudes can be a frame of mind.

A ‘Behaviour’ is more about the way in which someone actually acts or conducts themselves in a given situation or in response to certain stimulus. This could include how a person behaves towards other people.

‘Culture’ is a term that includes customs, beliefs and social behaviours in a business or of a particular group of people in a business. Culture can change from group to group, or over time. It can be a way of doing something or a way of working that exists in an organisation. Culture is usually a shared system of assumptions, values and beliefs that govern or influence how people behave.

Will the agreed scope be documented?

Yes. This should be documented at the outset of the assessment so there is clarity between the Assessor and the business. The Assessor will also need to accurately describe the agreed assessment scope within the assessment report, including any changes agreed during the assessment.

Assessors may also describe the scope of each assessment in the disclaimer section at the back of their reports, this will ensure the assessment scope is clear.

Can the scope be revisited?

Yes. The Assessor may need to revisit the Onsite Assessment scope with you as they work through the assessment. For example, it may become apparent that an issue or risk was not initially identified, or was considered a minor issue, so further assessment and consideration is required. Another example is where there is consistent feedback or themes from some sites, so going to another similar site will not be of additional value (eg, you have reached data saturation).

If the scope needs to be revisited, there will need to be open communication between you and the Assessor to raise potential scope changes as soon as possible, discuss the implications on the assessment, and agree a way forward.

How long will an independent SafePlus onsite assessment take?

This will depend on a number of factors such as the size and complexity of your business, the parts of your business to be included in the assessment (eg., sites chosen), the scope of the assessment and specific risks being considered, the issues found during the assessment, how well prepared for the assessment your business is, and your business's existing performance level, etc.

Experience from the pilot undertaken before SafePlus was released to the market suggested that the minimum time for an onsite assessment of a medium sized business, using two assessors, takes approximately 2 days complete. Larger or more complex businesses will likely take 3-4 days. Assessors will need to write their reports after their onsite visit is complete, and there will also be a process where businesses can provide comments on their Assessor's draft report, which will also play out after the onsite visit.

What resource and commitment do I have to put into a SafePlus Onsite Assessment?

This depends on the size and complexity of your business, the scope of the assessment, and your level of preparedness and familiarity with SafePlus of the people in your business. To get the best value out of the onsite assessment your business will need to work and collaborate with their Accredited Assessors during the assessment.

What will I get out of using the Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service?

You will receive expert and independent assessment and advice on your business's health and safety performance against a set of good practice *Performance Requirements*. The Assessor will identify your strengths and weakness and make recommendations on what you need to do to improve. You will also get tailored guidance and advice how you

can implement the recommendations. Your SafePlus Accredited Assessor will provide you with a written report that documents this information.

Will I get a score or performance illustration following my Onsite Assessment?

Yes. Your report will include a performance illustration, as well as a detailed description of your business's performance and the key issues found during the assessment (along with recommendations, guidance and advice). The performance illustration will provide you with an understanding at a glance of how well your business is performing across the SafePlus *Performance Requirements* and your areas of strengths and weaknesses. It should also give your business greater confidence and assurance about how you are performing right now and help you to track improvements over time (when you get a re-assessment).

How does the scoring work?

There are ten *Performance Requirements* that make up SafePlus. Each requirement has a set of four or five indicators that are fundamental to achieving good health and safety. Performance is measured against each requirement using a three-level maturity scale to illustrate the business's health and safety strengths and areas for improvement. Each of the ten *Performance Requirements* is given a performance level outcome of either: *Developing*, *Performing* or *Leading*.

The performance levels achieved for each of the ten *Performance Requirements* then determines the business's overall performance outcome. You will receive a performance illustration level for each of the ten *Performance Requirements* and also an overall performance illustration that is either *Developing*, *Performing*, or *Leading*.

Your Accredited Assessor can explain how the scoring system works. While the performance illustration will provide a snapshot of performance, the key value for businesses will be the Accredited Assessors' findings, recommendations, and tailored guidance and advice on how to improve your health and safety performance.

What happens if my business does not meet one or more of the SafePlus Performance Requirement(s)?

You will be given a performance outcome of *Developing* for any performance requirements that you do not meet. Your SafePlus Accredited Assessor will set out their findings in their report and explain why the business didn't meet the performance requirement(s) in question, and what you could do to improve.

Do I get the opportunity to action a recommendation or make changes before the Assessor finalises their report?

Yes. In many cases this will be a viable option and if the necessary action is undertaken by the business, then this could influence their performance level for a given *Performance Requirement* (or in some cases even their overall performance level).

For example, if a business successfully actions one or more of your recommendations during or soon after your on-site assessment, then this could be sufficient for your Assessor to consider moving the business from the 'developing' level to the 'performing' level.

The SafePlus tool design allows for a three-month period from the end of the assessment visit to be a reasonable timeframe to give the business the opportunity to action those

recommendations made by the Assessors that can be practically achieved following the assessment. Three months has been selected to account for contingencies such as peak seasonal issues and key personnel being on leave and is seen as the maximum timeframe. In practice, it is recommended that the business and Assessor aim to finish in 6-8 weeks.

Each case needs to be considered in its own context and will come down to a professional judgement by the Assessor in discussion with the business to consider what is reasonable in the circumstances. Relevant factors will include:

- The nature and complexity of the recommendation(s) and action(s) required.
- The likely time it will take to action the recommendation(s).
- Whether there is the opportunity for the Assessor to verify that their recommendation(s) has/have been appropriately actioned.
- Cost or logistical implications for any verification needed or implications of delay on being able to finalise the assessment report.
- Whether actioning the recommendation(s) would likely change the performance level (or whether a range of other actions are also needed).

If the change is a relatively quick and simple fix that the business can action during or shortly after the assessment visit, and can be readily verified, then this may be an option. In contrast if the recommendation will take longer to implement and would necessitate the Assessor needing to come back to spend time verifying it has been appropriately actioned, then the best course may be for the business to work on all of its recommendations and seek a reassessment at a future date.

How long is my SafePlus assessment likely to be valid for? When should I get a reassessment?

SafePlus emphasises the need for continuous improvement. The outcome of your onsite assessment will not remain valid indefinitely. There will always be new issues arising and opportunities for you to improve your performance. Even for *Leading* businesses, there is always room for improvement.

Your SafePlus Accredited Assessor will be able to provide advice on when they think you should be re-assessed and this will depend on a range of factors specific to your business including: the risk factors your workers face, the specific findings of your SafePlus Onsite Assessment, the nature of any performance recommendation made by your Assessor (and how long they will take to implement), and your level of health and safety performance. For most business, getting a SafePlus reassessment approximately every two years will likely be appropriate.

If you wish to portray your business as a 'SafePlus Business' and or use the SafePlus brand and visual identity you must:

- have completed an independent assessment by a SafePlus accredited assessor within the last two years,
- have met the performance level of Performing or Leading, as judged by the accredited assessor

If the overall outcome of your assessment is *Developing*, then you may want to spend time implementing the recommendations, guidance and advice provided by your Assessor with a view to getting reassessed to move into the *Performing* level. Likewise, if

you are assessed as *Performing*, you may decide to make the necessary improvements and seek reassessment to achieve *Leading* status.

If you have no intension of using the SafePlus brand and visual identity and portraying your business as using the SafePlus initiative then you can choose if and when you might like a another assessment and advisory service.

Roles and responsibilities

What are my roles and responsibilities as a user business of SafePlus?

SafePlus is a voluntary toolkit. First, find out about SafePlus and decide whether or not it is right for your business. This could include using any of SafePlus' components, tools, or resources – individually or in combination.

For example, if you decide to commission an independent Onsite Assessment, you will be responsible for selecting a SafePlus Accredited Assessor, agreeing the services to be provided, contracting them to provide such services, and monitoring progress (as with any service provider you use).

To get the best value out of your Onsite Assessment you will need to work with your SafePlus Accredited Assessor(s) during the assessment process. This will include ensuring that all levels of the business participate in the assessment as needed (governance, senior managers, line managers, workers, contractors, etc.), and ensure that Assessors have access to the areas of the business and information they need that is within the scope of the assessment.

Once you receive your assessment report you will need to consider the recommendations that your Assessor has made and the guidance and advice they have provided and decide what improvements you will implement.

A comprehensive list of roles and responsibilities for SafePlus Partners and Users is available at www.safepius.nz

Who are the other parties involved with SafePlus and what do they do?

The other key parties include:

SafePlus Accredited Assessors – independent health and safety practitioners can be hired to provide Onsite Assessment and Advisory Services

- The *SafePlus Accreditation Body* – a private sector organisation appointed by WorkSafe to undertake competency assessments of assessor candidates and accredit those that meet a set of key competencies and have passed the required training
- The *SafePlus Training Provider* – a private sector organisation appointed by WorkSafe to run SafePlus training courses for assessor applicants
- *Government agencies including WorkSafe and ACC* – led the development of SafePlus in collaboration with private sector health and safety experts and other sector stakeholders. WorkSafe and ACC will have an ongoing role during SafePlus' implementation.
- A service provider to develop, test, and host the Online Self-Assessment tool has been appointed following a contestable public tender process run by WorkSafe.

Use of Government branding

Can I use the SafePlus logo and branding in my business's marketing and promotions?

Yes, but only in some circumstances. You can only promote your business as meeting the SafePlus performance requirements initiative if your business has:

- Completed the onsite assessment and advisory service, and
- The assessment was undertaken by an Accredited SafePlus Assessor, and
- You scored an overall outcome of *Performing* or *Leading*.

You cannot use the SafePlus branding or logo or expressly state or imply that you meet the SafePlus performance requirements if you have been assessed at the *Developing* performance level for any one or more of the requirements (this will mean your overall performance level will also be *Developing*). The reason for this is that all 10 of the SafePlus performance requirements are considered essential for good health and safety. All must be met in order to use the SafePlus brand.

Advertising and promotion could include using the SafePlus logo on your print material and digital channels but not on permanent fixtures such as signage, equipment and vehicles.

When using the SafePlus branding and logo, businesses must comply with the SafePlus Style Guide, which is available by emailing info@safeplus.nz

Business that has used the free SafePlus resources and tools themselves cannot expressly state or imply that they meet the SafePlus performance requirements. Such businesses have had no independent verification by a SafePlus Accredited Assessor so cannot use SafePlus logos or branding.

The online self-assessment tool (due for release in mid-2018) does not involve any independent verification of performance. As such, businesses cannot use the outcomes of their own internal self-assessments to expressly state or imply that they meet the SafePlus performance requirements.

Can I use the logos of the government agencies that created SafePlus in my business marketing or promotions?

No. You cannot use WorkSafe or ACC's organisational logos. Some SafePlus resources include Government logos, because these documents were developed to support SafePlus. Accredited Assessors or businesses must not add Government logos to their own communications, or promotional material, reports or documents that they produce.

Assessors or businesses must not express or imply that the Government in any way endorses or supports the performance findings, recommendations, and advice contained in their specific assessment reports. Such reports are commercial transactions between the SafePlus Accredited Assessors and the businesses concerned. The Government has no involvement in, or visibility of, specific SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Services provided by Accredited Assessors to their client businesses.

Complaints

What if I have a complaint or concern about the SafePlus Accredited Assessor I used?

SafePlus is a voluntary toolkit that the Government has developed for the market. WorkSafe, ACC or any other government agency will not be involved in the specific SafePlus assessments that are commissioned by businesses. These are specific commercial transactions between the Assessor and business concerned.

If you wish to make a complaint against an Accredited Assessor that you have commissioned, this should be raised with the Assessor concerned in the first instance (as you will usually do with any service provider).

Businesses should only commission SafePlus Accredited Assessors to undertake SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Services. Only SafePlus Accredited Assessors have had their competency assessed by the SafePlus Accreditation Body and this process includes completing a training course on how to use SafePlus.

If you feel that your Accredited Assessor is not, or was not, sufficiently technically competent to undertake the assessment, you could raise such concerns with the SafePlus Accreditation Body, Tracecare Limited. More information about the complaints process is available on Tracecare's website www.tracecare.co.nz or you can write to:

The Manager
SafePlus Accreditation Body
PO Box 10138
Wellington

If you become aware of any practitioner that has been acting as a SafePlus Accredited Assessor when they have not been accredited, please notify the SafePlus Accreditation Body.

Use of my information

Will any third-party be able to access information from my SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advice?

No, not without your approval. The findings and outcomes of any SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Services that your business commissions from an Accredited Assessor is a private commercial transaction between the two parties.

From time to time, WorkSafe may commission an independent research provider to survey businesses that have commissioned SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Services. Participation in such research is voluntary, and information will be aggregated and anonymised by the research provider so that individual business cannot be identified by the Government or any third-party.

This research helps to inform the Government's understanding of the health and safety needs of businesses and the performance issues facing businesses, and ensures that SafePlus is kept up-to-date and relevant to New Zealand businesses. Over time, good practice health and safety will evolve, and the critical performance issues facing businesses will also change. Obtaining appropriate market intelligence from businesses

that use SafePlus will help maintain it and support businesses' continuous performance improvement over time.

Market intelligence is also important to support and inform other Government and industry health and safety initiatives e.g. informing future policy and injury prevention programmes, and developing guidance for the sector on key health and safety issues facing New Zealand businesses. For example, market intelligence from SafePlus could benefit ACC's insurance role as it can help ACC better understand the performance of their levy paying businesses.

Can any third party see any information when I use the online self-assessment tool (when it is available in mid 2018)?

Businesses that use the SafePlus Online Self-Assessment tool will be required to enter administrative information (such as their identity, business size, types of geographical location(s)) as well as their own self-assessment of how they believe they are performing against the SafePlus *Performance Requirements*.

The Tool will be hosted by an independent third party, who will provide the Government with aggregated and anonymised self-assessment information only. The Government will not have access to identifiable information from any individual business, or to the entries made by individual business respondents who input information into the Online Self-Assessment Tool.