



SafePlus Accredited Assessor Update - May 2018

New resources

Some of the key SafePlus resources have been updated. These include the Q&As for both Accredited Assessors and business clients, available at:

- <https://worksafe.govt.nz/about-us/who-we-are/our-priorities/safepius/accredited-assessors/>
- <https://worksafe.govt.nz/about-us/who-we-are/our-priorities/safepius/faqs/>

We have also expanded the 'Examples of high risks by sector' document that we have previously circulated to Accredited Assessors. This is a simple tool that you may wish to use when engaging with clients across different sectors to identify and agree on the three Deep Dive risks to be covered in each assessment. The key risks have been listed according to different sectors and set out the most commonly reported risks in each sector. This will be a helpful tool to show your clients to see if they identify with the types of risks that are common in their sector. The revised document is available online at www.safepius.nz



New guidance also includes a version of the Performance Requirements document that has been customised to the healthcare services sector. This adds to the existing suite of other customised versions for the following sectors: manufacturing; transport; warehousing, distribution and retail; forestry; agriculture; energy; and emergency services.

Assessor Guidance

We are continuing to receive feedback from accredited assessors and businesses about the SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service. Recurring themes have been the importance of peer review and ensuring your reports are 'packed' with best practice guidance and advice on how your clients can implement your performance improvement recommendations.

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Peer review

Quality assurance is an important factor to be considered across the whole SafePlus assessment process – from initial planning and scoping through to submitting your final report and tailored guidance and advice to the business. Assessors should already have their own existing professional quality assurance mechanisms in place, including steps they undertake before each assessment, when onsite at the business, and after the visit.

The Assessors Guide has a section on quality assurance, but we have received specific feedback about peer review. Assessment reports should always be peer reviewed so that a second set of eyes reviews your assessment reports before you submit them to your clients. The prime focus of peer review is not about editing, proofing, or rewriting poorly drafted reports. Rather, it should focus on testing your assumptions and the logic chain between different sections of your report. A critical part of a peer review is to provide a ‘sense check’ on your work. It should test:

- Whether your assessment findings (good and bad) are clearly described or summarised.
- If it is clear what evidence your performance judgements are based on.
- Whether your findings clearly link through to your recommendations for improvements.

Recommendations should not come ‘out of the blue’ and be clearly tagged to specific findings in your assessment. Likewise, if you stress that a specific finding is important, then in most cases it should also be reflected in your recommendations.

The logic chain also needs to continue through into the tailored guidance and advice that you include in your reports. This should give your clients ideas on how they can actually implement your recommendations and explain why the guidance you cite is relevant to their situation.

In an ideal world your peer reviewer will also be a SafePlus Accredited Assessor, but it may not always be necessary or possible for a peer reviewer to add value to your report.

It is important that peer reviewers understand that SafePlus is different from a compliance audit. You do not want people saying things like ‘we suggest you hold back the guidance and advice on how to implement the recommendations, because this is not traditionally done.....’. The opposite is true with SafePlus. It is exactly this that makes SafePlus different – its consultative, educational and advisory nature. You are working with your clients to show them what good health and safety looks like, and how to go about achieving it. Providing guidance and advice on how to implement your recommendations is the key means of doing this. You are a business consultant not an auditor.

The SafePlus Programme encourages Accredited Assessors to build their networks with other Accredited Assessors. This is a good way of accessing peer review support when you need it. There will be times when other Assessors may need to reach out to you for a peer review – so it’s a win-win. Assessor contact details are on the register on WorkSafe’s web site. It may be worthwhile for you to reach out to some of your Accredited Assessor colleagues to see if there is any interest from the others in being available to provide mutually beneficial peer review support.

You also need to be thinking about peer review during the scoping and quoting/pricing phases of each engagement. It shouldn’t be a surprise to anyone.

Guidance and advice

SafePlus is an educative performance improvement tool that can identify what businesses need to do to improve their health and safety performance and give them tailored guidance and advice on how to do this. Such advice should be customised to their unique circumstances, risk profile, business maturity, management structure, and environment. This is a key point of difference of SafePlus compared to other health and safety products or services, such as the more traditional paper-based compliance audit products. It goes beyond a ‘tick the box’ compliance approach.

Yes, businesses are assessed against a set of good practice performance requirements and given a set of performance recommendations. However, SafePlus is also about Assessors working with businesses (not auditing them) and providing guidance and advice about where and how the businesses can implement the performance recommendations. Every Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service should provide face to face advice and guidance when onsite during the assessment and Assessors' reports should also include consultative guidance and advice that is appropriate for the business. The key message from the SafePlus programme is to pack your reports full of relevant guidance and advice on how businesses can improve their health and safety performance.

HASANZ Register requirement

The SafePlus Programme recently had to clarify the relationship between the Health and Safety Association of New Zealand (HASANZ) register and eligibility for SafePlus Accredited Assessor status.

As you will be aware, those wanting to become a SafePlus Accredited Assessor must apply to the SafePlus Accreditation Body (Tracecare) and undergo a competency assessment against the SafePlus Competency Specification. The Competency Specification, developed by the joint agency SafePlus Programme, sets out the core competencies needed to become a SafePlus Accredited Assessor, and provides some guidance as to how the competency criteria could be demonstrated by candidates.

The Competency Specification also includes a mandatory requirement for all Assessors to be registered on the HASANZ register of verified health and safety professionals - once it is fully operational (see page 4 of the Competency Specification). At the time many of you went through the accreditation process, the HASANZ register was not operational so there was no way to actually meet the requirement. It was included as a 'future requirement' as WorkSafe, ACC and MBIE support the HASANZ register as a key initiative to strengthen professional standards among New Zealand's health and safety practitioners.

HASANZ has worked with the various professional bodies to develop and agree the requirements for attaining registration status. This includes considering practitioners' qualifications, experience, annual continuing professional development, good character, ethics and insurance obligations. The requirements are set by and specific to each HASANZ member association and the profession it serves.

One of the HASANZ register requirements is that applicants must be an appropriately graded member of one of the HASANZ-affiliated full member professional bodies. Some of these professional bodies have different levels of membership and not all of these levels are sufficient to enable the professional to be registered on the HASANZ register.

A small number of the SafePlus Assessors were accredited in late 2017, despite not having the level of graded membership with their professional body needed to be eligible for the HASANZ register (once it became operational). While these people technically met the accreditation requirements that were in force at the time, they now don't meet this HASANZ register requirement to retain their accreditation status now that the HASANZ register is operational.

The SafePlus Programme has considered options for these assessors and new applicants. WorkSafe and ACC, as the operational governing agencies for SafePlus, have agreed that it is important to retain the HASANZ registration requirement as a key initiative to help strengthen professional standards and capability among New Zealand's health and safety practitioners. However, the small number of Assessors impacted will be given a small transition period (to 30 June 2019) in which to attain registration on the HASANZ register. During this transition time they will have SafePlus Accredited Assessor status.

Assessors in this situation have been advised and encouraged to contact their respective

professional body (and HASANZ) to clarify what they need to do in order to achieve the appropriate level of graded membership with their professional body to be eligible for HASANZ registration. If they do not achieve HASANZ registration status by 30 June 2019 then their SafePlus Accredited Assessor status will be revoked by Tracecare.

Moving forward, all new applicants, who apply to Tracecare to become SafePlus Accredited Assessors, must provide evidence that they are on the HASANZ register or their application will not be progressed further.

WorkSafe and ACC considered that this approach was fair and reasonable on those assessors and applicants impacted. They met the accreditation requirements that were in force at the time, and have been assessed as being competent to use SafePlus by the independent Accreditation Body. It would be unfair to them to revoke their accreditation status, but also unfair to the businesses that have already commissioned them to deliver SafePlus services. Immediately revoking their accreditation status could create a lack of confidence in these professionals, when they are perfectly competent to be delivering SafePlus. It would also put the status of their completed (or in progress) assessments and advice services into a grey area and would have commercial implications for them in terms of potential reputational risk and damage with their SafePlus clients.

While some new applicants (who might be in a similar position) could feel that they should also be entitled to the transition period, we consider that this initial group got into the system early, were assessed against the requirements that were 'live' and 'in play' at the time, and were correctly accredited at the time. These factors deserve to be recognised and we believe that it is reasonable to provide this small group with a transition period. HASANZ support this approach.

The HASANZ register requirement was always signalled as a 'future requirement' so there has been transparency for all applicants. The HASANZ register (while still not publicly operational yet) is now live for health and safety professionals to apply for registration. It wasn't for those who previously went through the SafePlus accreditation process in 2017 - so one can argue that all new applicants are being treated the same now the register is operational.

If you have any feedback or questions, please don't hesitate to contact the team at info@safepus.nz.

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