

RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

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 residential construction industry, these are:

1. Safety priority
2. Organisation safety learning
3. Supervisor safety practices
4. Co-worker safety practices

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

Safety Priority

S1

+

S2

+

S3

+

S4

Divided by 4

Organisational
Safety
Learning

S5

+

S6

+

S7

Divided by 3

Supervisor
Safety
Practices

Q8

+

Q9

+

Q10

+

Q11

+

Q12

Divided
by 5

Co-Worker
Safety
Practices

Q13

+

Q14

+

Q15

+

Q16

Divided by 4

Overall Safety
Climate

All statements
added together

Divided by 16

Centre
for WHS

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. At this worksite, workers 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"/>
S2. At this worksite, safety is a top priority even when the program falls behind schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S3. At this worksite, workers' safety are not compromised by client demands and pressures.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S4. At this worksite, safety is factored into all project stages.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S5. The principal contractor at this worksite responds to workers who speak up about safety concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S6. The principal contractor at this worksite is open to feedback from SafeWork inspectors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S7. The principal contractor at this worksite shares lessons from accidents to improve site safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S8. The site supervisor pays attention to contractors' safety behaviours.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S9. The site supervisor has regular toolbox talks and safety meetings with workers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S10. The site supervisor reminds workers about the risks in their work environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S11. The site supervisor makes sure all trades use personal protective equipment (PPE).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S12. The site supervisor explains the details of safety procedures so that everyone understands.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S13. At this worksite, workers are open to change how they work to improve safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S14. At this worksite, workers ask each other questions if they are unsure about what to do about safety.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S15. At this worksite, other workers will respect me if I work safely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
S16. At this worksite, workers keep an eye on each other to make sure everyone is safe.	<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.

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

**Overall Safety
Performance**

**All statements added
together**

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 use all the personal protective equipment (PPE) required on this worksite.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I report safety incidents to the site supervisor if they happen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I do all the required safety paperwork and documentation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow the site safety plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I let other trades know if they are working unsafely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I speak up at safety meetings (for example, Toolbox Talks).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I take initiative to handle risks at this worksite.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am happy to stop the job to deal with a safety-related risk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For additional resources on safety in Construction,
visit <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/your-industry/construction>

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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