

Workplace Inspections & Audits Policy

For Australian Small & Medium Enterprises

Template Version 1.0 | December 2024

Important Notice

This template is provided as a general guide only and should be customised to your specific workplace. The frequency and scope of inspections should be determined based on your workplace hazards and risk profile.

1. Purpose

This policy establishes [Company Name]'s requirements for workplace inspections and audits. Regular inspections help identify hazards, verify that controls are effective, and demonstrate our commitment to maintaining a safe workplace.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All [Company Name] workplaces and work sites
- All areas, equipment, and work activities
- All employees involved in conducting or participating in inspections

3. Definitions

3.1 Workplace Inspection

A systematic examination of the workplace to identify hazards, assess compliance with safety requirements, and verify that controls are in place and working effectively.

3.2 Audit

A more comprehensive, systematic review of the WHS management system, policies, procedures, and their implementation to evaluate effectiveness and identify improvement opportunities.

4. Types of Inspections

4.1 Regular/Scheduled Inspections

Routine inspections conducted at set intervals:

- Daily: Pre-start checks, high-risk areas
- Weekly: General workplace walk-through
- Monthly: Comprehensive area inspections

- Quarterly: Equipment and plant inspections

4.2 Specific Inspections

- Pre-start equipment checks
- First aid kit inspections
- Fire equipment inspections
- PPE inspections
- Electrical equipment testing

4.3 Triggered Inspections

Inspections conducted in response to:

- Incidents or near misses
- Reported hazards or concerns
- Changes to workplace or work activities
- Introduction of new equipment or processes
- Regulatory requirements

4.4 External Inspections

- Regulatory inspections (SafeWork, WorkSafe)
- Insurance inspections
- Third-party audits
- Customer or client audits

5. Inspection Frequency

[Company Name] conducts inspections at the following frequencies:

- General workplace: Monthly
- High-risk areas: Weekly
- Equipment pre-start: Daily/before each use
- First aid kits: Monthly
- Fire equipment: Monthly (by staff), 6-monthly (by provider)
- Emergency exits and lighting: Monthly

Frequencies may be adjusted based on risk assessment.

6. Inspection Process

6.1 Preparation

- Review previous inspection reports
- Review any recent incidents or hazard reports
- Obtain relevant checklists

- Notify area supervisor (if required)

6.2 Conducting the Inspection

- Use appropriate checklist
- Walk through systematically
- Observe work practices
- Speak with workers
- Look for hazards – physical, chemical, ergonomic, psychosocial
- Check condition of equipment and facilities
- Verify controls are in place and effective
- Note both hazards and good practices

6.3 Documentation

- Complete inspection checklist/report
- Photograph hazards where appropriate
- Record findings clearly
- Rate hazards by risk level
- Identify corrective actions

6.4 Follow-Up

- Address immediate hazards straight away
- Assign corrective actions with responsibility and due dates
- Track completion of actions
- Communicate findings to relevant parties
- File records

7. What to Look For

Inspections should look for hazards including:

7.1 Physical Environment

- Floor conditions (slips, trips hazards)
- Lighting adequacy
- Housekeeping and cleanliness
- Storage and stacking
- Walkways and access
- Ventilation and temperature

7.2 Equipment and Plant

- Condition and maintenance

- Guarding in place
- Safety devices working
- Electrical safety
- Correct use

7.3 Emergency Preparedness

- Emergency exits clear and accessible
- Fire equipment accessible and current
- First aid kits stocked
- Emergency signage visible
- Evacuation diagrams current

7.4 Safe Work Practices

- PPE being worn correctly
- Safe work procedures followed
- Manual handling techniques
- Hazardous substance handling

8. Audits

8.1 Internal Audits

[Company Name] conducts internal WHS audits:

- Frequency: At least annually
- Scope: WHS management system and procedures
- Conducted by: Trained internal auditor or WHS personnel

8.2 External Audits

External audits may be conducted:

- By regulators
- For certification purposes
- By customers or clients
- By insurance providers

8.3 Audit Process

- Plan and scope the audit
- Review documentation
- Conduct site verification
- Interview personnel
- Document findings

- Report and recommend improvements
- Follow up on corrective actions

9. Corrective Actions

Hazards identified during inspections must be addressed:

- Immediate action for serious hazards
- Corrective actions assigned with responsible person
- Timeframes set based on risk level
- Actions tracked to completion
- Effectiveness verified

9.1 Timeframes

- Extreme risk: Immediate action required
- High risk: Action within 24-48 hours
- Medium risk: Action within 1-2 weeks
- Low risk: Action within 1 month

10. Responsibilities

10.1 Management

- Ensure inspections are conducted
- Provide resources for inspections
- Review inspection reports
- Approve and allocate resources for corrective actions
- Monitor corrective action completion

10.2 Supervisors

- Conduct regular inspections in their area
- Report hazards and findings
- Implement corrective actions
- Follow up on outstanding items

10.3 Employees

- Participate in inspections
- Report hazards
- Maintain their work area
- Support corrective actions

10.4 Health and Safety Representatives

- Participate in inspections
- Conduct inspections as part of their role
- Represent worker interests

11. Inspection Checklists

[Company Name] uses standardised checklists for:

- General workplace inspections
- Office inspections
- Warehouse/workshop inspections
- Vehicle inspections
- Equipment pre-start checks
- Emergency equipment

Checklists are reviewed and updated as needed.

12. Records

[Company Name] maintains records of:

- Inspection reports
- Audit reports
- Corrective actions and completion
- Inspection schedules

Records are retained for at least 5 years.

13. Review

This policy and inspection procedures will be reviewed:

- At least annually
- Following significant incidents
- When work activities change
- When inspection findings indicate systematic issues

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood [Company Name]'s Workplace Inspections & Audits Policy.
I understand my role in workplace inspections and commit to maintaining a safe work environment.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____