

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Introduction

HOSPITAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE



This questionnaire is designed to help you assess your hospital's implementation of the key activities of a safety and health management system (also known as an injury and illness prevention program). It contains 53 questions in six sections:

1. Management leadership (8 questions)
2. Employee participation (11 questions)
3. Hazard identification (10 questions)
4. Hazard prevention and control (8 questions)
5. Education and training (10 questions)
6. Program evaluation and Improvement (6 questions)

Each of the questions covers an action that a hospital with an *effective* safety and health management system would take.

To help you answer the questions, carefully review the "tips" column before assigning your own score. It describes what hospitals with effective programs might do and what hospitals with weaker programs are failing to do that can be improved. To use the tool, place an "X" in the box to assign a score that best describes your agreement with the action item statement. You will have four options:

- No action—indicates that the hospital has not taken the action. (No points awarded.)
- Strongly disagree—indicates that the hospital has taken some action but has done so ineffectively or infrequently. (One point awarded.)
- Agree—indicates that the hospital has taken the action and it has been effective some of the time. (Two points awarded.)
- Strongly agree—indicates that the hospital routinely takes the action described and does so effectively. (Three points awarded.)

The tool will allow you to tally your score and summarize the scores for each section. Your scores can help you identify gaps and actions that, if taken, would improve the effectiveness of your safety and health management system. It is recommended that hospitals retake the questionnaire periodically (e.g., annually, every six months) to track progress and trends.

This document is advisory in nature and informational in content. It is not a standard or regulation, and it neither creates new legal obligations nor alters existing obligations created by OSHA standards or the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Management Leadership

Section 1: Management Leadership

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
1.1 Top hospital management implements a written policy supporting and mandating the safety and health management system.						You might strongly agree if your hospital has a written policy that commits the entire organization to continuous improvement in safety and establishes the concept that worker safety is integrated into all business operations. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not include worker safety in its business policies or treats worker safety as a second-tier organizational value.
1.2 Hospital management defines effective worker health and safety goals and expectations for the program.						You might strongly agree if your hospital establishes goals that address specific actions that implement or enhance the system, such as "increase the number of employees engaged in safety committee work by 25 percent." You might strongly disagree if your hospital sets goals using lagging indicators such as "reduce injuries by 10 percent."
1.3 Top hospital management assigns responsibility and accountability for the implementation and maintenance of the program.						You might strongly agree if your hospital assigns responsibility for the system to one or a few capable people and holds them accountable. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assigns responsibility to someone ill-suited to the task, to a large number of people (such as all members of a safety committee) or to "all employees," which ensures that no one takes personal ownership of the system.
1.4 Hospital management effectively communicates its worker health and safety goals and expectations to all those working for or on behalf of the organization.						You might strongly agree if you are able to verify that employees understand the system goals and expectations. You might strongly disagree if your hospital simply sends out an all-staff email or posts the goals on a bulletin board.
1.5 Everyone in the hospital knows who has been assigned responsibility for the program.						You might strongly agree if your hospital has identified an employee or small group of employees to manage the program, actively advocates for program implementation, and strives for continual improvement. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assigns responsibility to someone but does not identify that person to the rest of the organization.
1.6 Hospital management allocates appropriate resources (funds and time) to accomplish goals and manage the program.						You might strongly agree if your hospital identifies and makes available the necessary resources (time and funding) to drive improvements in safety and health performance. You might strongly disagree if your hospital establishes goals but does not supply the resources needed to make improvements.
1.7 Hospital management recognizes employee contributions to worker safety and health at the hospital.						You might strongly agree if your hospital recognizes employees whose actions contribute to the goals of the system. You might strongly disagree if your hospital only recognizes employees who are not injured during a period of time.
1.8 Hospital management routinely demonstrates visible commitment to the program.						You might strongly agree if administrators engage workers in safety discussions during their rounds, your hospital approves funding requests to meet safety objectives, or meetings start or end with a safety concern or message. You might strongly disagree if your hospital has managers who assign responsibility, but are rarely personally engaged in safety issues.
Section Total					__ /24	

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Employee Participation

Section 2: Employee Participation

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
2.1 We involve employees in defining and developing the worker health and safety program structure.						You might strongly agree if your hospital includes workers in committees developing the systems, and system design reflects their input. You might strongly disagree if your hospital programs are developed by a small group of managers or the professional safety staff alone and are less likely to be widely accepted.
2.2 We assign hospital employees roles in program implementation.						You might strongly agree if your hospital involves employees in implementing system elements, such as assessing training needs, conducting job hazard analyses, investigating incidents, and evaluating performance. You might strongly disagree if your hospital lets safety staff or management make most of the decisions about the system.
2.3 Employees are active in evaluating and updating the program.						You might strongly agree if your hospital conducts system evaluations that are more complete and effective in detecting deficiencies because they involve employees in analyzing data and records of activities under the safety and health management system. You might strongly disagree if your hospital asks employees' opinions about the effectiveness of the system but does not engage them in the analysis or updating activities.
2.4 Employees know how to report an injury, illness, hazard, or concern, including good catches/near misses.						You might strongly agree if your hospital ensures that employees know how to report injuries, incidents, concerns, and near misses or good catches. You might strongly disagree if your hospital is vague about how reports are to be made, relies only on the first line supervisor to inform upper management, and/or is only interested in reporting what is required by law.
2.5 We have established a reporting mechanism for all contractors to use to report injuries, hazards, and concerns.*						You might strongly agree if your hospital collects the information about injuries, hazards, and concerns from contractor personnel to ensure that exposures of hospital staff and contractor personnel are adequately controlled. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assumes that contractors are keeping their own records and do not need to inform the hospital when someone is injured or becomes ill.
2.6 Employees consistently report observed injuries, illnesses, hazards, and concerns, including good catches/near misses.						You might strongly agree if your hospital has an easily accessible system for reporting not only injuries and illnesses but also concerns, near misses, and good catches, and if employees are comfortable using such systems. You might strongly disagree if your hospital relies on systems where employees report only injuries and illnesses and only through their supervisors.
2.7 We acknowledge reports of injuries, illnesses, hazards, or other concerns promptly.						You might strongly agree if your hospital acknowledges reports promptly and provides follow-up feedback, which encourages future reporting. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not acknowledge receiving reports or does so in an untimely fashion.

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Employee Participation

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
2.8 We resolve reports of injuries, illnesses, hazards, or other concerns promptly.						You might strongly agree if your hospital values what it learns from reporting and takes actions to resolve concerns quickly. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not inform employees whether, how, or by when issues will be addressed.
2.9 We involve hospital employees in workplace health and safety inspections.						You might strongly agree if your hospital ensures that employees participate in workplace inspections and actively engages employees in identifying hazards in their work area. You might strongly disagree if your hospital uses management or safety staff to conduct workplace inspections with little or no employee input.
2.10 We involve hospital employees in all incident investigations.						You might strongly agree if your hospital involves employees in incident investigation and, as a result, often conducts more complete investigations that reveal root causes. You might strongly disagree if your hospital attributes causation to the most obvious factor, or to employee misconduct or failure to follow procedures without looking for potential problems with the procedures themselves.
2.11 Employees feel free to report without fear of reprisal, pressure from superiors or coworkers, loss of incentives tied to injury rates, or post-incident substance abuse testing.						You might strongly agree if your hospital encourages, recognizes, or rewards reporting of incidents in a blame-free environment. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assumes the employee did not follow procedures, disciplines injured employees, and conducts universal post-incident drug testing.
Section Total					__/33	

* "Contractor" includes anyone working at a hospital who is not an employee of the hospital (e.g., doctors with privileges to practice at the facility and any services that may be regularly provided by a vendor, including information technology, housekeeping or environmental services, facilities maintenance, dietary and food service, laundry, etc.).

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Hazard Identification

Section 3: Hazard Identification

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
3.1 We regularly review written materials such as OSHA logs, workers' comp claims, results of workplace inspections, incident investigation reports, and manufacturers' literature to help us identify hazards.						You might strongly agree if your hospital reviews many sources of information to identify workplace hazards, and shares such information with its employees. You might strongly disagree if your hospital relies primarily on visual inspections of the workplace or knowledge of safety professionals to identify hazards.
3.2 We regularly inspect the hospital physical environment to identify conditions that pose or could pose a worker safety or health concern.						You might strongly agree if your hospital inspects work areas often and observes work areas and work procedures informally. You might strongly disagree if your hospital relies on infrequent (e.g., annual) inspections to reveal hazards.
3.3 Managers ask employees about worker hazards and safety concerns in their work areas during rounds.						You might strongly agree if your hospital recognizes that employees are a valuable source of information about hazards in their work areas and engages employees during rounds. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not benefit from the perspectives of employees and does not ask them about their safety concerns .
3.4 We investigate incidents to identify any hazards previously unrecognized or inadequately controlled.						You might strongly agree if your hospital investigates incidents to determine the root cause. You might strongly disagree if your hospital is satisfied with findings that employees did not follow procedures or that an incident resulted from employee misconduct .
3.5 We conduct all inspections and exposure assessments required by OSHA standards.						You might strongly agree if your hospital knows the OSHA standards and uses any required inspections and exposure assessments to identify hazards. You might strongly disagree if your hospital relies on OSHA inspections to identify compliance issues .
3.6 We identify hazards associated with emergencies and non-routine operations.						You might strongly agree if your hospital conducts job hazard analyses to identify hazards that may arise during non-routine activities and emergencies, and addresses these hazards in its emergency preparedness plans. You might strongly disagree if your hospital looks only for hazards associated with routine operations .
3.7 Management informs employees of hazards in their work areas.						You might strongly agree if your hospital discusses hazards with affected employees to ensure that they understand and recognize the hazards. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not inform employees about hazards or simply posts a list of existing hazards with little or no explanation.
3.8 We review all contractor job plans for safety and health hazards, prevention, and control.*						You might strongly agree if your hospital requires contractors to have project-specific plans to address the hazards they will encounter. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assumes that contractors will address their own hazards and need not be subject to oversight by hospital safety staff.

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Hazard Identification

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
3.9 We expect contractors to inform the hospital of any hazards they cause as part of their work.*						You might strongly agree if your hospital ensures that its employees are informed of any contractor-specific hazards they may encounter, how these hazards are controlled, and what procedures to follow to protect themselves. You might strongly disagree if your hospital allows hospital staff and contractor personnel to work in the same area without exchanging information about hazards.
3.10 We inform all contractors of the hazards they may encounter during their work on site.*						You might strongly agree if your hospital informs contractors of hazards they will encounter by including contractors' personnel in general safety awareness training and by providing project-specific descriptions of existing hazards. You might strongly disagree if your hospital allows contractor personnel to find out about hazards on the job.
Section Total					__ /30	

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Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Hazard Prevention and Control

Section 4: Hazard Prevention and Control

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
4.1 We have a hazard control plan in place and we keep it up to date.						You might strongly agree if your hospital maintains hazard control plans that track progress toward controlling hazards, removes hazards from the plan when they are fully addressed, and adds new hazards as they are identified. You might strongly disagree if your hospital lacks such plans or waits until the annual system evaluation is conducted to update them.
4.2 We control hazards to workers according to the "hierarchy of controls": elimination, engineering controls, administrative controls, and PPE.						You might strongly agree if your hospital places a priority on engineering controls to prevent or eliminate hazards. You might strongly disagree if your hospital relies more on work procedures and personal protective equipment.
4.3 All controls required by applicable OSHA standards are in place.						You might strongly agree if your hospital maintains compliance with OSHA standards that call for specific types of controls. You might strongly disagree if your hospital waits for OSHA inspections to identify compliance issues.
4.4 We promptly install controls when a hazard is identified.						You might strongly agree if your hospital eliminates or controls hazards as soon as they are identified (or uses work practices and personal protective equipment as interim controls). You might strongly disagree if your hospital ignores hazards even after someone has been injured or become ill as a result.
4.5 We use interim controls when permanent controls cannot be immediately implemented.						You might strongly agree if your hospital uses interim controls when needed but also ensures that effective engineering controls are implemented as soon as possible, reducing the reliance on procedures, work practices, and personal protective equipment. You might strongly disagree if your hospital allows interim controls to be permanent or ignores the hazard while waiting for a permanent fix.
4.6 We have informed employees of the controls implemented and planned for hazards they may face.						You might strongly agree if your hospital involves employees in the design and implementation of controls to ensure their "buy-in" and appropriate use. You might strongly disagree if your hospital purchases equipment and establishes procedures but, because employees have no input, they are often ignored and unused.
4.7 A person (or persons) is assigned responsibility to ensure that controls are implemented and to verify their effectiveness.						You might strongly agree if your hospital monitors hazard controls to ensure that they are operating as designed and are effective. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assumes that controls remain effective long after they are installed.
4.8 Implementation of controls is tracked to completion.						You might strongly agree if your hospital tracks its progress toward controlling hazards. You might strongly disagree if your hospital verbally assigns responsibility to control a hazard or submits a work order but does not follow up to ensure that the work is completed.
Section Total					__ /24	

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Education and Training

Section 5: Education and Training

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
5.1 Hospital employees understand the elements of the worker safety and health management system and how to participate in it.						You might strongly agree if your hospital trains employees in the elements of the system, and emphasizes the ways in which employees can be involved in its operation. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not explain the elements of the system and how it is intended to operate.
5.2 Hospital employees understand the employers' responsibility in the safety and health management system.						You might strongly agree if your hospital empowers employees to ask questions of management, point out deficiencies, and recommend improvements. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not encourage or respond to employees who question management's implementation of the system.
5.3 Each employee understands his or her own role in the safety and health management system.						You might strongly agree if your hospital ensures that employees know what is expected of them and how to interact with the system. You might strongly disagree if employees in your hospital hesitate because they are not sure how to participate or become engaged.
5.4 Hospital employees understand the procedures for reporting injuries, incidents, hazards, and concerns.						You might strongly agree if your hospital ensures that employees understand, through training, how to report injuries, hazards, and concerns. You might strongly disagree if your hospital relies solely on directing employees to report through their supervisors.
5.5 Hospital employees know they have a right to participate in the program and report injuries without fear of retaliation or discrimination.						You might strongly agree if your hospital has established a blame-free environment where employees can report injuries, hazards, and concerns without fear. You might strongly disagree if your hospital discourages employees from reporting through blame, retaliation, drug testing, or misguided incentive systems.
5.6 Hospital employees can ask questions, receive answers, and provide feedback during and after training.						You might strongly agree if your hospital gives employees ample opportunity to ask questions, get clarification, request additional information, and provide feedback during and following training. You might strongly disagree if your hospital provides information to employees but does not ensure it that is understood.
5.7 We provide supplemental health and safety training when a change in the workplace could introduce new or increased hazards.						You might strongly agree if your hospital evaluates the need for new or modified training to address changes in the workplace, and provides such training when necessary. You might strongly disagree if your hospital installs new equipment and establishes new procedures without informing employees about safety concerns or procedures.
5.8 We provide supplemental health and safety training when an employee is assigned a new task or given a new assignment.						You might strongly agree if your hospital recognizes that employees in new or unfamiliar situations have a greater potential for injury because they may not understand the hazards they face. You might strongly disagree if your hospital expects such employees to learn about the hazards of a new assignment "on the job."

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Education and Training

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
5.9 We provide training in a language and at a literacy level that all employees can understand.						You might strongly agree if your hospital ensures that they reach all employees with training in a variety of languages and appropriate literacy levels. You might strongly disagree if your hospital provides "one-size-fits-all" training, often using computers; does not account for differences in language or literacy; or has not provided appropriate training for support staff (e.g., food service, housekeeping, maintenance).
5.10 We inform contractors of all emergency procedures.*						You might strongly agree if your hospital provides information and training to contractor personnel about emergency procedures before they start work. You might strongly disagree if your hospital does not anticipate that emergencies might affect contractor personnel.
Section Total					__/30	

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Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Program Evaluation

Section 6: Program Evaluation and Improvement

Action item	No action	Strongly disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Points earned	Tips
6.1 We conduct an annual review of the worker safety and health management program.						You might strongly agree if your hospital evaluates the system at least annually to determine if goals are being met and if there are deficiencies in system implementation. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assumes that, once implemented, no further improvement is necessary.
6.2 We involve hospital employees in the program reviews.						You might strongly agree if your hospital seeks a broad perspective on system performance and involves employees from all levels of the organization in the evaluation. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assigns the system evaluation to a manager or the professional safety staff with little or no input from employees.
6.3 Program reviews determine whether all program elements are fully implemented.						You might strongly agree if your hospital examines each core element of the systems to ensure that all opportunities to improve are recognized and implemented. You might strongly disagree if your hospital conducts more cursory or superficial evaluations.
6.4 We have established appropriate metrics and data with which to evaluate our progress.						You might strongly agree if your hospital tracks a wide variety of indicators including injuries, near misses, hazards reported, participation in safety committees, inspections completed, number of employees trained, and many others. You might strongly disagree if your hospital relies only on lagging indicators such as injury rates to assess its performance.
6.5 Program reviews determine if progress is being made toward established goals.						You might strongly agree if your hospital collects and reviews sufficient data to determine whether goals are being met, and modifies its goals and expectations each year in pursuit of continuous improvement. You might strongly disagree if your hospital has the same goals year after year and does not achieve improvement.
6.6 We modify the program as needed to correct deficiencies.						You might strongly agree if your hospital modifies its system as soon as deficiencies are detected or opportunities to improve arise. You might strongly disagree if your hospital assumes that, once implemented, the system operates effectively without need for change.
Total					__/18	

Assessment Tool for Hospitals - Scores

Scoring Summary

	Score	Percent
Management Leadership		
Employee Participation		
Hazard Identification		
Hazard Prevention and Control		
Education and Training		
Program Evaluation and Improvement		
Overall Score		

By comparing your “percent of total points available” across sections you should be able to spot strong and weak areas in your hospital program, allowing you to focus resources and time on improving the areas that need the most work.

For example, if your overall score is 115 (72 percent of points available) and your “Management Leadership” score is 20 points (83 percent of points available), then management leadership is a relative strength for your hospital. On the other hand, if your “Education and Training” score is 18 points (60 percent of points available), then education and training is a relative weakness and more focus in that area may be warranted.

Keep records of your assessment and repeat the assessment periodically so that you can track your progress over time.

Reality Check

If your overall score is high, you may want to benchmark your hospital’s injury and illness rates against hospital averages using the “How Safe Is Your Hospital for Workers?” self-assessment questionnaire at www.osha.gov/dsg/hospitals. If your injury and illness rates are higher than (worse than) those of the best-in-class hospitals, you may want to review your responses to the safety and health management system questions and make sure they fully reflect practices and programs at your hospital.

For example, hospitals in OSHA’s Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP), which recognize worksites with exemplary safety and health management systems, report average Total Case Incidence Rates and Days Away, Restricted, or Transferred Rates of 4.8 and 1.4, respectively. For all hospitals nationwide, the lowest quartile rates are 3.1 and 0.6, respectively.¹

¹Quartile data come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and cover “general medical and surgical hospitals” (NAICS 6221). VPP data were compiled from 14 hospitals that participate in VPP.