

INSPECTIONS FACT SHEET

Workplace inspections are concerned with ensuring that the control arrangements and mechanisms specified in the health and safety policy and other associated policies and procedures are operating effectively and that they cover all risks. They also demonstrate the management's commitment to safety and afford an opportunity to involve employees thereby giving them ownership of safety.

All workplace inspections should consider three basic elements:

1. An assessment of the standards of workplace health and safety against the specified performance standard and risks.
2. Identification and reporting of any deficiencies.
3. The identification of causes and the action to be taken to remedy the problem.

All inspections must be carried out by a competent person and will often involve more than one person, for instance, a health and safety manager along with the supervisor or manager of a particular production area. The inspector is unlikely to be intimately acquainted with the processes and procedures whereas the supervisor or manager should have detailed knowledge. Frequency of inspections are determined by the nature of the risks and the measures required to control or eliminate them. Regular inspections are also a valuable means of assuring the workforce that safety issues are important and demand constant vigilance.

A range of inspection regimes reflect the workplace and are designed to ensure the continuing effectiveness of control systems. They include:

- Routine inspections
- Maintenance inspections
- One-off equipment or site inspections
- Workplace safety inspections
- Safety tours
- Safety surveys
- Safety sampling

All these inspections or surveys consider different aspects of the workplace or processes but all have the same ultimate aim of ensuring the control methods are effective. Some inspections, particularly those with a statutory requirement, must usually be led by a person with specific competence in that area of work with the requirements often being specified in the statutory regulations.

It is important to keep records of all inspections undertaken as these may prove valuable should an incident or accident occur. Enforcement agencies may also require certain information and records to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to health and safety and that policies and procedures have been followed.