

2025 Roadmap to a Safety Culture



Building a safety culture takes work. It isn't built just because you hand out a brochure or put up some posters. It's an iterative and slow building process that starts at the top and works its way to the frontline, but it also requires consistent and vigilant work, day after day after day.

The upside of all that hard work? If keeping employees healthy and safe isn't enough, organizations that employees recognize as having a strong safety first culture, on average have:

- upwards of **30% higher profit margins** than those that don't
- upwards of **70% higher employee retention** rates than those that don't
- and are **more productive** (based on comparing operational metrics in similar industry competitors)

Now, of course, every organization has its own unique culture, its own unique guidelines, its own unique safety hazards and plans, but OHS Insider went to the experts and those with great safety cultures and operational excellence with a simple question: **What's the roadmap for a safety supervisor/manager/director that supports a sustainable safety culture?**

Below is a month-by-month breakdown of strategic priorities and actionable tasks for an Occupational Health and Safety

(OHS) leader at the start of the calendar year. While every organization's needs differ, these guidelines focus on proactive planning, engagement, and continuous improvement in OHS programs and culture.

January: Strategic Review and Goal-Setting

Key Focus Areas:

1. Annual OHS Strategy Review and Refinement:

- Assess last year's OHS performance against key metrics (e.g., TRIR, LTIFR, near-miss rates, incident severity).
- Identify gaps, analyze root causes of underperformance, and incorporate lessons learned into this year's plan.
- Align OHS goals with the broader organizational strategy (growth plans, new projects, or changes in operations).

2. Regulatory and Compliance Update:

- Review upcoming regulatory changes and assess their potential impact.
- Ensure policies and procedures reflect the latest standards, codes of practice, and industry best practices.

3. Budget and Resource Allocation:

- Confirm OHS budgets and allocate resources to priority areas, such as specialized training, audit support, and new safety technologies.
- Communicate resource needs early to senior leadership and secure commitments.

4. Stakeholder Engagement:

- Meet with department heads and frontline supervisors to align OHS priorities with operational realities.
- Set clear expectations and timelines for safety-related initiatives.

Recommended Actions:

- Finalize an OHS strategic plan and share it with key stakeholders.
- Update master compliance calendar for all audits, certifications, and reporting deadlines.
- Schedule quarterly leadership reviews of OHS performance and establish clear KPIs.

February: Training, Communication, and Program Initiatives

Key Focus Areas:

1. Training and Competency Development:

- Roll out annual or refresher training for employees, focusing on high-risk tasks or areas with recent incidents.
- Identify new training needs based on updated regulations or equipment changes.

2. Communication and Culture Building:

- Reinforce OHS policies through internal newsletters, site visits, toolbox talks, and safety posters.
- Recognize teams or individuals who demonstrated exemplary safety performance in the previous year.

3. Program Enhancements:

- Launch or revamp critical OHS programs (e.g., ergonomic assessments, chemical management protocols, contractor safety management systems).
- Ensure emergency response plans are reviewed, updated, and tested.

4. Employee Engagement Surveys:

- Consider conducting short pulse surveys or safety perception surveys to gauge frontline understanding and buy-in to safety protocols.
- Use feedback to refine communication strategies

and address identified concerns.

Recommended Actions:

- Initiate training sessions and ensure they are recorded and tracked.
- Establish internal communication campaigns around new or revised OHS policies.
- Begin planning for external audits or certification renewals later in the year.

March: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessments, and Continuous Improvement

Key Focus Areas:

1. Comprehensive Risk Assessments:

- Conduct workplace hazard assessments to identify emerging risks tied to operational changes, seasonal conditions, or new equipment installations.
- Prioritize corrective actions and track them through a structured safety action plan.

2. Safety Committee and Team Engagement:

- Hold formal Safety Committee meetings to review progress on Q1 initiatives, discuss survey results, and brainstorm solutions to identified challenges.
- Promote cross-functional collaboration to address complex risks or departmental barriers.

3. Incident and Near-Miss Analysis:

- Review incident data from Q1 to determine trends and root causes.
- Implement targeted interventions—such as additional training, improved controls, or equipment upgrades—to prevent recurrence.

4. Supplier and Contractor Safety Integration:

- Evaluate contractor and supplier OHS performance.

- Strengthen clauses in contracts and Service Level Agreements to ensure alignment with internal OHS expectations.

Recommended Actions:

- Update risk registers and ensure all hazard controls are effectively implemented and monitored.
- Provide feedback to contractors and suppliers regarding safety standards and expectations.
- Prepare a Q1 OHS performance report for senior leadership, noting accomplishments, areas for improvement, and plans for Q2.

April: Performance Review, Continuous Improvement, and Culture Reinforcement

Key Focus Areas:

1. Quarterly Performance Evaluation:

- Review and analyze OHS performance metrics from the first quarter.
- Identify trends, investigate reasons behind any uptick in incidents or near-misses, and ensure corrective actions are taken promptly.

2. Continuous Improvement Initiatives:

- Based on Q1 findings, refine or introduce new safety processes, controls, or interventions.
- Update standard operating procedures (SOPs) if necessary, incorporating lessons learned and best practices from internal and industry sources.

3. Focused Training and Refreshers:

- Address skill or knowledge gaps identified through Q1 performance data.
- Conduct targeted refresher training for high-risk roles, newly updated procedures, or areas where compliance is lagging.

4. Leadership Engagement and Communication:

- Hold a Q1 OHS review meeting with senior leadership and key stakeholders. Present findings, successes, and areas needing attention.
- Use communication channels—internal bulletins, manager briefings, and toolbox talks—to share successes, highlight improvements, and keep safety top-of-mind.

5. Culture Reinforcement and Recognition:

- Publicly recognize teams or individuals who contributed to improvements or achieved notable safety milestones in Q1.
- Reinforce the organization's safety values through consistent messaging, highlighting the positive behaviors and results you want to see carried forward through the rest of the year.

Recommended Actions:

- Publish a Q1 safety performance summary for all employees, clearly stating priorities and next steps.
- Update internal checklists and action plans based on Q1 insights, ensuring that any required engineering or administrative controls are implemented promptly.
- Confirm that new safety measures are effective, seeking employee feedback on usability and practicality.

May: Compliance Validation and Mid-Year Training Checkpoints

Key Focus Areas:

1. Regulatory and Certification Audits:

- Confirm compliance with current regulations, standards (e.g., ISO 45001), and any new legislative requirements.
- Prepare for mid-year inspections or audits by ensuring documentation, records, and training logs are up-to-date.

2. Mid-Year Training Assessments:

- Review training completion rates and competency tests, ensuring no critical gaps.
- Offer follow-up courses or additional coaching for teams struggling with certain procedures or equipment.

3. Supply Chain and Contractor Safety Alignment:

- Evaluate contractor and supplier safety performance early to address risks before peak project seasons.
- Update contracts or service agreements to reflect the latest OHS standards.

4. Documentation and Reporting:

- Streamline incident reporting, hazard identification processes, and corrective action tracking.
- Make sure safety documentation systems are user-friendly, accessible, and secure.

Recommended Actions:

- Conduct a compliance audit dry-run to prepare for official inspections.
- Issue reminders for required mid-year training or certifications.
- Engage with contractors to review and reinforce safety expectations.

June: Seasonal Adjustments, High-Risk Reviews, and Risk Assessments

Key Focus Areas:

1. Seasonal Hazard Mitigation (Heat, Outdoor Work):

- Reinforce heat-related illness prevention measures, including hydration breaks, shaded rest areas, and acclimatization plans.
- Update PPE and ensure it's appropriate for warmer

conditions.

2. Comprehensive Risk Assessments:

- Revisit risk registers to identify emerging hazards tied to mid-year operational changes or new equipment.
- Implement control measures, and verify their effectiveness through testing or pilot programs.

3. Emergency Preparedness for Summer Storms:

- Review severe weather or natural disaster response plans.
- Conduct a tabletop exercise or drill to ensure readiness.

4. Behavioral Safety Observations:

- Implement or reinforce behavioral-based safety (BBS) observations to understand common at-risk behaviors.
- Provide coaching and positive reinforcement to encourage safe habits.

Recommended Actions:

- Conduct field inspections focusing on heat safety, material handling, and emergency exits.
- Update hazard communication materials to address seasonal changes.
- Hold a mid-year safety committee meeting to check progress against annual goals.

July: Engagement, Technology Integration, and Program Innovation

Key Focus Areas:

1. Employee Engagement in Safety:

- Launch interactive safety events or workshops (e.g., safety fairs, innovation challenges).
- Gather feedback from frontline workers on what safety initiatives have been most impactful.

2. Leveraging Technology and Innovation:

- Pilot new OHS technologies (e.g., wearable sensors, digital safety management systems).
- Implement mobile safety reporting tools or e-learning platforms for more efficient training.

3. Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing safety programs (hazard communication, lockout/tagout).
- Introduce incremental improvements in high-risk areas, informed by incident data and worker input.

4. Health and Wellness Integration:

- Consider adding wellness components—stress management, ergonomic breaks, and mental health resources—into the safety framework.

Recommended Actions:

- Run a survey to gauge employee perceptions of current safety measures.
- Identify one or two new technologies or methods to trial by Q3.
- Publish mid-year progress reports highlighting successes and next steps.

August: Contractor Management, Supply Chain Oversight, and Hazard Controls

Key Focus Areas:

1. Contractor Safety Performance Review:

- Evaluate contractors' compliance, training records, and incident history.
- Adjust vetting processes and onboarding requirements to ensure alignment with organizational OHS standards.

2. Supply Chain and Materials Handling Safety:

- Review material storage protocols, ensuring chemicals and hazardous substances are correctly

labeled, stored, and inventoried.

- Prevent overexertion and ergonomic injuries by reassessing manual handling procedures.

3. Targeted Hazard Controls:

- Address any lingering issues identified earlier in the year, such as machine guarding, ventilation, or traffic management in loading areas.

4. Cross-Functional Collaboration:

- Partner with procurement, logistics, and operations teams to integrate OHS considerations into supplier selection and evaluation processes.

Recommended Actions:

- Hold a supplier and contractor OHS summit to align expectations.
- Update hazard control measures based on incident and near-miss data from Q2 and Q3.
- Validate that corrective actions implemented earlier in the year are sustained and effective.

September: Emergency Preparedness, Business Continuity, and Refresher Trainings

Key Focus Areas:

1. Emergency Response and Crisis Management:

- Refresh training on evacuation procedures, spill response, fire drills, and first-aid.
- Ensure emergency equipment (extinguishers, first-aid kits, AEDs) are inspected and functional.

2. Business Continuity Planning (BCP):

- Incorporate safety considerations into BCP scenarios, such as workforce shortages, supply chain disruptions, or IT failures.
- Conduct a scenario-based drill to test the resilience of safety-critical functions.

3. Refresher Trainings and Retraining:

- Identify employees who need refresher courses before year-end.
- Offer short, focused training sessions on hazardous tasks or critical SOPs.

4. Health Surveillance and Monitoring:

- Check the effectiveness of occupational health screenings, hearing tests, respiratory fit tests, etc.
- Make adjustments based on results to better protect workers' long-term health.

Recommended Actions:

- Conduct a company-wide evacuation drill.
- Update emergency contact lists and ensure alignment with local emergency services.
- Publish an emergency readiness guide for all staff.

October: Health and Wellness Focus, Mental Health, and Ergonomics

Key Focus Areas:

1. Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives:

- Integrate mental health resources (counseling services, stress management workshops) into the safety and health agenda.
- Promote open dialogue around psychosocial hazards, such as stress, bullying, or work overload.

2. Ergonomic Assessments and Interventions:

- Reassess workstations, tools, and processes for ergonomic risks.
- Implement improvements that reduce repetitive strain injuries and enhance comfort.

3. Seasonal Preparedness (Autumn/Winter):

- Prepare for colder weather, ensuring appropriate PPE, slip-resistant footwear, and safe indoor heating systems.

- Review heating, ventilation, and lighting as daylight hours shorten.

4. Occupational Health Monitoring:

- Revisit any outstanding health surveillance findings and ensure follow-up actions.
- Encourage flu vaccinations or health screenings if available on-site.

Recommended Actions:

- Launch a wellness campaign highlighting mental and physical health best practices.
- Adjust work tasks or introduce mechanical aids to address ergonomic issues identified.
- Communicate autumn/winter safety reminders, including safe driving and weather-related precautions.

November: End-of-Year Planning, Budgeting, and Future-Readiness

Key Focus Areas:

1. Year-End Performance Analysis:

- Review overall OHS performance against annual targets.
- Identify any shortfalls and plan final corrective actions or initiatives to wrap up by year-end.

2. Budgeting and Resource Allocation for Next Year:

- Begin discussions with senior management on next year's OHS budget needs.
- Justify investments in training, technology, PPE, or consultancy support based on data-driven assessments.

3. Compliance and Certification Preparations:

- Confirm that all regulatory submissions, permit renewals, or certifications are scheduled before year-end deadlines.
- Address any outstanding regulatory non-

conformances or improvement notices.

4. Succession Planning and Skill Development:

- Identify key OHS personnel who may need leadership training or professional development.
- Plan a training calendar for the upcoming year, focusing on skill gaps and emerging technologies.

Recommended Actions:

- Prepare a draft OHS annual report for executive review.
- Secure commitment from management for next year's safety initiatives.
- Schedule external audits or assessments for early next year to maintain momentum.

December: Year-End Review, Recognition, and Strategic Roadmapping

Key Focus Areas:

1. Comprehensive Year-End Evaluation:

- Analyze incident statistics, training outcomes, audit findings, and culture survey results from the entire year.
- Identify strategic successes and improvement areas to guide next year's planning.

2. Recognition and Rewards:

- Celebrate OHS achievements, recognizing individuals or teams who have gone above and beyond.
- Reinforce a positive safety culture by publicly acknowledging progress.

3. Finalizing Next Year's OHS Strategy:

- Incorporate lessons learned into the upcoming year's OHS goals and key initiatives.
- Develop a high-level roadmap that includes targets, timelines, and responsible parties.

4. Communication and Closure:

- Communicate year-end results to all employees, highlighting improvements, stable safety performance, and ongoing commitments.
- Ensure all outstanding action items from the current year are assigned owners and deadlines.

Recommended Actions:

- Publish the annual OHS report and circulate it to executives, managers, and employees.
- Finalize and approve next year's OHS calendar and training schedule.
- Send out a year-end safety message from senior leadership, reinforcing that safety is an ongoing, collective responsibility.

By following these month-by-month focuses from January through to December, OHS leaders can maintain a proactive, flexible, and data-driven approach where each month's priorities build on the last. Is it the definitive solution? Absolutely not. But it is an amalgamation of what successful safety first organizations are doing to ensure consistent performance evaluations, strengthen their safety culture, meet regulatory compliance, and build strategic foresight.