



International Safety Awards 2018

Chief Adjudicator's Report

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Results

A total of 623 applications were received for the International Safety Awards in 2018 and 88% of these successfully achieved a Pass grade or higher.

The grading distribution among the applications in 2018 was as follows.

Distinction	15	(2%)
Merit	183	(29%)
Pass	351	(57%)
Fail	74	(12%)

There was no quota of grades to be awarded and nor will there be in future years. If every applicant meets the required standard, every applicant will be awarded a Distinction.

General comments

As with previous awards, considerable effort was clearly invested in those submissions that scored well. Strong applications were once more characterised by each question being analysed and answered in comprehensive terms and in the full use of the allocated word count. These applicants developed each individual response with care and consequently achieved higher scores without breaching the word limit.

The application of practical real-life examples from the workplace once more served as an effective differentiator between the higher and lower-scoring submissions. The highest-scoring submissions were noted for their consistently focused and site-specific nature. The adjudicators again reported many instances of good or even exceptional initiatives among the submissions, practices which may be measured through the appreciable difference that they will make to people's health, safety, welfare and wellbeing.

The adjudicators remain mindful of the financial, global and resource challenges faced by many organisations and the implications of this on planning, available finance and budgets. The adjudicators were therefore again greatly encouraged to observe safety, health, welfare and wellbeing retaining the prominence that these areas warrant within organisations' financial expenditure and future commitments.

As applicants will observe from the grading distribution above, the standards required of applicants to the International Safety Awards continue to be robust. Each submission will be carefully reviewed and scored according to its particular merits. For applicants wishing to score well, it is essential that they dedicate sufficient time to the analysis of each question and its requirements before a response is embarked upon. It is equally important that applicants ensure each question is answered in complete terms since the top mark bands for each question can only be accessed where all of its aspects have been addressed in sufficient detail. As in previous years, weaker submissions tended to digress from the questions posed or otherwise restricted responses through partly relevant information. Similarly,

responses of less than 300 words almost inevitably scored lower marks through insufficient detail - again, those that simply listed activities or factors with limited context could not expect to access the higher mark bands.

New and repeat applicants are once more firmly encouraged to make use of the marking scheme and the Chief Adjudicator's Report from the previous year as a guide to the standards expected. Taken together, the questions, marking scheme and Chief Adjudicator's Report are clearly of essential importance to any successful application. It is therefore a matter of disappointment and frustration that a significant proportion of applicants continue to overlook aspects of this information despite the emphasis regularly applied to it.

The adjudicators recognise that there is a limit to the amount of detail that can be provided given the word limits that are in place. Applicants should look to communicate the salient points of their systems, methodologies and approaches to planning and include some relevant detail or examples in support. It is not a requirement of these awards for applicants to describe everything in detail in order to gain full marks. Taken together with the preliminary questions, a 6,000 word submission (i.e. 12 x 500 words) across a range of questions is quite sufficient for an adjudicator to make a valid judgment regarding an organisation's approach to health and safety management.

Question 1

Describe the main business and operational activities which are undertaken at the site / unit / plant?

Whilst not marked, responses to this mandatory question are of critical significance to the submission as they contextualise the (scored) responses to Questions 3-14.

A number of responses to this question included lots of corporate information. Whilst often interesting, such commentary offered limited insight in terms of the site and its operational activities.

Question 2

What are the three most significant issues at the site / unit / plant in relation to:

- **Occupational health hazards**
- **Occupational safety hazards**
- **Welfare concerns**

As with Question 1, whilst not marked, carefully considered and articulated responses to this mandatory question were essential for adjudication of the scored component of the application. This question supported applicants through further development of the context and operational environment. A general correlation was apparent between responses to this particular question and the overall score obtained by the submission - higher-scoring applicants consistently answered all three components of the question and focused on those activities posing the most significant risks to health, safety and wellbeing. In doing so, these applicants established a stable foundation for the remainder of their application.

Regrettably, a proportion of responses to this question consisted of simple lists lacking in the depth or description required to 'set the scene' in terms of health, safety and welfare at the site concerned.

Question 3

Describe the methodology for identifying significant health and safety hazards at the site and outline how this process provides opportunities for improvement

This question required applicants to answer across a range of aspects; attributing significance for both health and safety hazards and discussing how this process provides opportunities for improvement (whilst ensuring the overall response remains both context and location-specific). To score well on this question, a sufficient emphasis on the approach to assessment, significance determination, hazard identification and improvement opportunity was essential.

Responses that scored well were noted for deconstructing the question into its constituent parts; a discussion regarding significance was typically followed by commentary concerning the process used to determine it (e.g. risk mapping, risk analysis or risk assessment) leading to a discussion of health and safety hazards - often reiterating the particular significance of these hazards for that specific site. For the latter, the highest-scoring applicants typically structured their response in two parts; the first part addressed what the health hazards were, why they were significant and why they were significant at that site and the second part covered the same areas for safety. They then outlined how opportunities for improvement could then be identified and implemented. The highest-scoring applicants here almost always supported their answer with relevant examples.

The method outlined above was an effective approach and one that allowed the adjudicators to easily discern the foundations of a comprehensive response. It is worth noting that methods of this nature were observable throughout the submissions of those that scored well.

Weaker submissions tended to focus on one or two aspects of the question - typically by listing safety hazards and omitting references to health.

Question 4

Explain how the subsequent control measures implemented for these significant health and safety hazards at the site were evaluated for effectiveness.

Question 4 had a clear association with Questions 1, 2 and 3 and was designed to assist applicants in the development of their narrative of hazard identification, assessment, control, monitoring and review across both health and safety within a site-specific context. It was notable therefore that only the stronger submissions identified this link and built directly upon their preceding responses.

Applicants were required to outline the process (approach or approaches) used to evaluate the effectiveness of the controls that arose from the process of hazard identification and risk assessment as detailed in their previous responses - the operative word here being effectiveness. Higher-scoring responses included focused commentary on how the effectiveness of control measures was monitored and what was achieved in terms of continuous improvement and learning for the site concerned. Such applicants frequently explored effectiveness in the context of both positive and negative experiences.

Regrettably, there were a number of very brief, generic answers to this question which neglected important aspects of effectiveness analysis. In order to achieve high marks, applicants needed to link their response to preceding answers in an effective manner and detail the process used to monitor the effectiveness of both the assessment approach (e.g. improvement in accident performance or direct feedback from employees) and the controls in place.

Some applicants acknowledged ineffective hazard identification procedures (as accidents or incidents had still occurred) but gained marks nonetheless; effectiveness analysis and evaluation has both positive and negative dimensions since not every approach will work. Applicants are reminded to pay attention to this aspect as this award scheme evaluates performance in comprehensive terms and, accordingly, the lessons learnt from failure are recognised as being of equal value.

Question 5

Describe how the effective communication of risk assessment content (including control measures) to all relevant stakeholders is achieved at this site.

This question was about ensuring that relevant stakeholders were identified, that the design and delivery of communications for these parties (e.g. contractors, visitors and members of the public) was designed for easy assimilation and that there was some post-communication method for verifying assimilation. High-scoring responses addressed these various components in site-specific terms and with appropriate examples.

Stronger responses recognised that stakeholder groups are varied and that some are also vulnerable groups that fall into a number of categories (e.g. client, contractor, supplier or member of the public). These responses then described how communications were tailored to meet these specific groups.

They then also outlined how the communications had been assimilated - for example, via short tests or verbal exchanges.

Stronger responses also explored the challenges faced when disseminating information to those for whom English is a second language or to those with limited literacy skills. In doing so, the applicants exhibited an understanding that these issues require managing to ensure inclusion and reduce exposure to risk. The highest-scoring applicants explained the procedures that they had in place to oversee stakeholders and specifically vulnerable groups in high risk areas/hazardous industries (or measures in place to prohibit visitors totally due to the high level of risk).

Weaker applicants often relied on basic risk assessment models but failed to discuss controls. They also typically made reference to one-way communication methods (posters, signing-in sheet, signs, etc.) and neglected commentary demonstrating that the communications were received and understood. Weaker responses also focused disproportionately on safety and addressed operational changes only (i.e. omitting organisational change). Again, only the stronger responses covered health and safety.

Question 6

Describe how employees participate in the determination (setting) of health and safety objectives and performance targets at this site.

This question was designed to explore the methods employed towards engaging with - i.e. not just consulting with - employees. In order to affect change to the wider workforce (employees, contractors, temporary staff, agency staff, etc.) effective communication, engagement and employee inclusion are essential in achieving all business objectives. Employee engagement, communication and active involvement are essential components of good health and safety management. Stronger responses demonstrated a good understanding of these factors, the use of different engagement methods (face-to-face, written, etc.) and detailed examples of how their organisation had 'gone the extra mile' to communicate their strategy and targets through open days, drop-in sessions, away days, seminars, safety days, quizzes, competitions, etc. The highest-scoring responses provided examples of where solutions to achieving targets had been co-created between management, supervision and front-line employees with, for instance, union involvement or other wider consultation where appropriate.

Regrettably, weaker applicants tended towards 'telling' rather than 'selling' the message to employees and did not appear to understand the engagement aspect, opting for a more directive approach. Responses of this nature often omitted reference to the various channels that can be used in communicating targets and the associated change. Such responses also failed to recognise that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is ineffective. To illustrate, the use of the intranet is inappropriate for those without access to a computer (such as a delivery driver out on the road or a tower crane operator), those with limited literacy skills or non-native speakers.

Highest-scoring applicants made reference to either two-way dialogue or the use of more innovative methods of communication that demonstrated that they did not rely solely on traditional channels (e.g. newsletters, emails and briefings). Examples of this included suggestions schemes, employee led forums, employee huddles, tool box talks and personal letters sent to employees at home (to read in their own time, with the complicated language often associated with legislation and policy simplified) as some of the approaches used to personalise the change and gain better buy-in towards achieving the targets set.

Question 7

Describe how the provision of adequate resources required to achieve health and safety objectives is ensured at this site.

As with several other questions for this award, the flexibility provided here to applicants offered the potential to score highly - though again, only where the marking scheme was followed and an appropriate rationale included within the response.

Higher-scoring applicants typically answered this question in full by identifying the process used to identify the resources required for the forthcoming 12 months. These applicants listed health and safety targets, the associated resources (time, money, training, etc.), addressed the specifics of the site and clearly linked their response to delivery within a suitably flexible timeframe.

Only the highest-scoring applicants provided enough discussion, with examples, to illustrate that adequacy and effectiveness had been considered.

Lower-scoring applicants tended towards rather generic commentary, typically with a disproportionate focus on safety.

Question 8

Explain how employee wellbeing is promoted and supported at this site.

This was an opportunity for applicants to showcase the wellbeing work being carried out at their site. It offered an open, flexible opportunity to discuss any range of interventions, activities and undertakings at the site that promoted and supported wellbeing.

Stronger applicants described their wellbeing arrangements and provided examples of enhanced provision such as employee assistance programmes, wellness programmes, health promotion and illustrated the tripartite relationship between health, safety and wellbeing.

The strongest responses to this question acknowledged the difficulties that are sometimes faced when trying to gain traction for wellbeing initiatives, the frequent absence of ROI (return on investment) data and the challenges faced in terms of securing resources (particularly budgetary-related resources). Applicants in this category invariably structured their responses by the wellbeing promotion initiatives in place at the site and discussed the impact that these initiatives had made (i.e. improvements in attendance, improvements in safety performance, improvements in employee engagement scores, improvements in employee retention, etc.). Other examples from high-scoring applicants include flexible working arrangements to accommodate specific needs and the effective inclusion of other vulnerable groups such as those for whom English is a second language.

It should be noted that the question required both promotion and support to be discussed. Weaker responses tended to focus on legal compliance and frequently drew little or no distinction between employee wellbeing and statutory health and welfare. Regrettably, some answers merely reiterated standard workplace initiatives or rudimentary practices such as safety committees, the provision of drinking water in towers (i.e. rather than via taps) and poster schemes - and did so with little or no reference to broader wellbeing in conjunction with health promotion and welfare provision.

Question 9

Describe how the potential for mental wellbeing issues are identified and subsequently managed at this site.

This question was designed to explore how mental wellbeing at work is identified and managed, again specifically at the site concerned. With mental health issues affecting an estimated 25% of all individuals, this is clearly a contemporary issue that needs to be brought to the fore.

The strongest responses to this question were often divided into two parts - identification and management. This approach generally promoted the necessary balance between these different aspects of the question and fuller coverage of the significant points. Again, higher-scoring applicants answered this question by ensuring that the points being covered were of direct relevance to the site concerned and provided examples to illustrate.

In order to score well, this question required applicants to discuss the identification tools used and to provide examples (e.g. stress risk assessment or mental health first aid) and discuss how the findings are then managed - again, with suitable examples, (e.g. counselling, employee assistance programmes or referral to specialists). It was important for the whole answer to remain pertinent and operate within the wider mental health context in order to score high marks - the marking scheme was explicit in this regard.

Weaker responses generally opted to focus on either identification or management and neglected to discuss this in the context of a wider health risk assessment approach or mental health landscape. Rather inevitably, answers of this nature lacked the expected depth and/or context to score highly.

Question 10

Explain the process for identifying the legislative requirements and any relevant sector standards applicable to the site and the associated measures for monitoring compliance.

This question presented all applicants with a relatively unimpeded opportunity to score highly. It straightforwardly required of applicants an explanation of their main legal obligations, relevant sector standards (as applicable) and an overview of the measures used for compliance - indeed, all aspects of their site management that should already have been considered as part of the hazard identification and risk assessment process.

High-scoring responses to this question made reference to the fact that there are numerous pieces of legislation applicable to their organisation and site and developed this by detailing the site-specific obligations related to their activities. These applicants identified the main legal obligations relating to their site and activities and structured their response by careful reference to these duties. High-scoring applicants also discussed sector-specific guidance and how/when this was used (planning, execution, reporting, etc.). In most cases, high-scoring applicants developed their response with a range of relevant activities (e.g. inspection, audit, statutory examination and testing) as methods for ensuring legal compliance.

The highest-scoring responses to this question covered the range adequately and offered a balanced response with appropriate supporting examples - commonly identifying the operation of reactive and proactive measures and demonstrating how legal compliance goes beyond the role of the

inspector/auditor - i.e. the organisation and its management must act on the recommendations being made as a key component to maintaining legal compliance.

Given the nature of the question, it was unfortunate that a proportion of the responses scored as modestly as they did, particularly as similar questions on this fundamental area have been posed for previous awards. Responses in this category tended to list legislation with limited justification, explanation or context in view of the activities undertaken at the site - or failed to address the health, safety and welfare components with due balance. Weaker responses also failed to make any reference to sector standards. Again, responses of this nature suggest quite strongly that the question and/or marking scheme had been poorly studied or understood by the applicant - those that listed a wide range of legislation generally failed to recognise the multi-faceted requirements of the question (i.e. legislative, sector and compliance measures). As with previous awards, these aspects were incorporated quite purposefully within the question so as to enable applicants to respond in flexible, dynamic terms that cover various influencing factors (i.e. terms that are quite distinct from simple legal safety compliance).

Weaker responses also characteristically listed a range of activities or otherwise focused disproportionately on the safety component of the question alone.

Question 11

Describe how employees and other relevant stakeholders are consulted with as part of the process for managing operational or organisational changes at this site.

Again, only the strongest applicants answered this question in its entirety. A disappointingly high number of responses failed to address stakeholders with sufficient coverage. An equally high number of applicants also neglected to cover organisational change adequately - structuring their answer exclusively from an operational, i.e. practical, change perspective.

Applicants should note that this was not a communication-based question but rather one aimed at exploring information sharing and engagement (of which communication is an aspect). Lower-scoring applicants favoured lists of activities such as tool box talks, briefings, newsletters and approached the matter from an overly traditional and one-dimensional 'instruction' perspective. This question was designed to explore the extent to which organisations inform, engage and consult in terms of change - i.e. the quality of the dialogue in such matters and the mechanisms in place for active and effective communication (e.g. safety committees, huddles, employee engagement and feedback). Accordingly, the question was not concerned with straightforward communication and as noted above certainly not with one-way communication methods such as newsletters, flyers or noticeboards. Stronger responses cited engagement and consultation activities across the employee and contractor sphere such as forums, workshops, engagement visits and jointly created charters.

The strongest responses to this question were often divided into two parts - employees and stakeholders. This approach generally promoted the necessary balance between these different aspects of the question and it also facilitated a fuller coverage of the significant points. Strong responses to this question also ensured that the points being covered were of direct pertinence to the site concerned (lower-scoring responses tended towards a much more generic answer).

It was noticeable that a large number of the weaker submissions failed to mention other stakeholders entirely (e.g. contractors, enforcers, visitors, members of the public, etc.).

Question 12

Describe how all potential emergency events are identified at this site.

This question served as a good example of how effective reference to the marking scheme can support an applicant. The marking scheme explicitly calls for a clear and detailed description of the process used; whilst risk assessment will clearly constitute an essential component of this, the question itself commands a far wider scope. Applicants needed to consider, for instance, how 'potential' is determined and similarly how emergency events specific to the site are determined.

High-scoring responses were, in most cases, comprehensive in terms of the activities and stakeholder groups considered and they recognised that partnering with specialist services (e.g. fire authority, rescue services, insurers, regulators and enforcers) may be necessary. The highest-scoring responses determined activities by high, medium and low risk and detailed the emergency arrangement discussions that had been conducted. Responses of this nature also typically reported on scenario planning, business continuity/disaster recovery planning and the importance of employee engagement in effecting high quality emergency plans.

Taking the above into account, generic or insufficiently detailed responses to this question inevitably struggled to secure high marks. Responses limited to *"We apply risk assessment"* (and similar) were observed with frustrating frequency in lower-scoring submissions.

Question 13

Describe the methods used to ensure operational competency (including health and safety roles) is maintained at the site.

Question 13 was designed to examine the commitment of the organisation to competence across the various levels. Given the profile of most applicants to these awards, this question offered the potential to achieve very high marks where it was deconstructed appropriately and answered in full.

The highest-scoring responses acknowledged what were ostensibly unrelated matters and linked them appropriately to safety (e.g. leadership training, project management). In doing so, these applicants demonstrated an understanding that good management and competence has a direct relationship with positive health and safety performance. Higher-scoring responses also included a detailed description of the training delivered and its objectives. As one would expect, this question prioritised quality over quantity and accordingly a number of applicants scored highly here despite the limited number of examples included in their response.

Regrettably, this question was answered poorly on a number of occasions. The question involved coverage of operational competency, health and safety training and a range (e.g. directors, managers and supervisors). Lower-scoring responses typically listed the safety training provided to operatives/supervisors or alternatively provided a rather bland overview of the training provision in general.

Some applicants noted the impact of financial constraints and the need to defer aspects of their training provision. Frank and honest responses of this nature were not disadvantaged in terms of their ability to attract marks; this award looks for both positive and negative dimensions of safety, health and welfare at work and the financial restrictions routinely negotiated by those responsible for health and safety are fully acknowledged by the adjudicators.

Question 14

Describe how top management at the site positively influence internal and external stakeholder behaviours in relation to health and safety.

This question concerned the top management team at this site (i.e. senior leaders) assuming an active role in promoting and maintaining a positive culture of health and safety across their internal and external stakeholder populations (directly employed individuals, contractors, suppliers, suppliers, manufacturers, enforcing authorities, etc.). The adjudicators were therefore looking for examples of how the top management team exert a positive influence over those in the operation and how non-health and safety managers - for instance, those in HR, Procurement or Finance functions or others not traditionally associated with operations - demonstrated an active engagement in these important matters. As most health and safety practitioners will recognise, these groups play an important role in maintaining a positive attitude throughout the operation and they are to be actively engaged with in the pursuit of continuous improvement.

The strongest responses provided clear evidence of how the top management actively role model and 'walk the talk' - and how this delivers significantly more value than rhetoric (i.e. delivering a flow-through benefit that contributes to a positive employee attitude right across the stakeholder populations).

Weaker responses often framed their answer with close reference to their health and safety manager rather than the wider senior management team. Here, references to the Chief Executive Officer or Managing Director (or similar role) also tended towards routine or 'business as usual' activity such as chairing meetings, approving budgets and signing policies/agreements. Higher-scoring applicants provided examples of senior management team members engaging directly with the workforce and other stakeholders (e.g. key suppliers, audit bodies and enforcement authorities). Such responses recognised that visible and felt leadership, active intervention and support can positively impact upon employee attitude, morale and relationships and ultimately upon performance. Responses of this nature also acknowledged the challenges faced by senior managers in their implementation of relevant initiatives, such as employee turnover, inertia or cynicism.