

Effective learning from incidents (LFI) is critical for safe working. The reasons leading to many of our health, safety and environmental (HS&E) incidents are not new. Incidents are often repeat events or events that are very similar in nature to previous incidents. So the immediate question we ask is, 'Why have we not learned from these past events and why do people continue to make errors or ignore rules and good practices?'

Through LFI, organisations gather knowledge about what went wrong in the past (incidents, accidents and near misses) and change working practices to prevent future incidents. But without effective learning processes, or effectively engaging with the workforce, organisations are at risk of repeating the same incidents, or suffering incidents with similar causes.

Learning from incidents provides an easy to use framework and set of exercises that can be used at different levels in the organisation to analyse and improve LFI processes and learning opportunities. The tool is designed to:

- * guide the implementation of LFI initiatives.
- * encourage engaging discussions to deepen the learning from past events to prevent repeat injuries and losses.

Who should use this tool and when?

The tool can be used by anyone with facilitation skills, including health and safety staff as well as team leaders and managers, and should involve the workforce at any level. Some exercises in this tool are designed to be used periodically whilst others can be used in bite-sized chunks whenever there is the opportunity for a safety discussion, such as:

- * During HS&E training programmes aimed at improving on-site safety.
- * When actively working to improve the LFI processes in your organisation.
- * There has recently been an incident on site or elsewhere that is of relevance to the organisation or team.
- * You have an incident alert relevant to your team's activities.
- * You have found an incident alert relevant to a job that you are about to undertake.

Overview of the tool

Learning from incidents consists of four main parts:

LFI process model

The LFI process model helps the organisation map current LFI activities and identify potential gaps. The LFI process model includes six main phases common to all organisations:

1. Reporting
2. Investigating
3. Developing incident alerts
4. Communicating
5. Reflecting
6. Implementing actions

The model helps the organisation integrate LFI activities in a way that supports learning throughout the LFI process.

Reflective LFI engagement exercises

Three workshop-style activities are provided that can help engage people with LFI, providing the means to help people reflect on incident information and apply lessons to their own operations, processes and behaviours.

LFI hints and tips

These can be used to guide the improvement of different LFI activities and processes. Hints and tips are provided for each of the six phases of the LFI process, for each question in the LFIQ (see below) and are based on good practice.

Learning from incidents questionnaire (LFIQ)

This helps the organisation evaluate the quality of its LFI practices and processes by measuring employee perceptions. The results can help those in the organisation identify and prioritise aspects and activities of the LFI process that need improvement.