



Guideline for Great Health, Safety & Wellbeing Leadership

**STAY
LIVE**
Electrical Industry
Health & Safety Group

StayLive Electrical Industry Health and Safety Group



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1 Introduction

This document has been created by the members of the StayLive Governance Group to showcase the behaviours, attributes and skills of great health, safety and wellbeing leaders from within our businesses so that we can learn from them and continue to grow more great leaders allowing our industry and people to flourish.

2 Approach

The StayLive Governance Group has identified colleagues they consider to be great health, safety and wellbeing leaders. The story behind these selections, be it a standout event or examples of daily routines and practices, lays the foundation and sets the scene for exploring what makes these leaders great. From talking to these leaders about their approach to work, we identified behaviours, attributes and skills that lead to great health, safety and wellbeing leadership.

This document outlines what great health, safety and wellbeing leadership looks like, why this is important to a successful business and flourishing people, as well as describing the competence of our leaders.

This document also contains a set of questions to help you further develop your skills in health, safety and wellbeing leadership.

3 What Is Great Health, Safety and Wellbeing Leadership?

People who are considered great health, safety and wellbeing leaders earn the respect of the people they work with who, thanks to their leadership, go home healthy, safe and well. How well New Zealand is really doing in leading workplace health, safety and wellbeing is most accurately gauged by the perceptions of people at all levels within our workplaces.

If you are a great health, safety and wellbeing leader, it will be evident in the way you approach everyday work tasks and events – through your actions, words and interactions with the people around you. Your approach will be inspiring and infectious and will lead to a great health and safety culture that integrates health, safety and wellbeing into all that your teams do and say.

Displaying leadership does not mean you have to be a manager or team leader with direct reports through a formal corporate or project hierarchy. To be a great health, safety and wellbeing leader you will be influential in consistently promoting health, safety and wellbeing while you go about your work, whatever and wherever that may be.

Health, safety and wellbeing leadership is not something you do every now and then, nor is it something that is needed only in a crisis – it is at the front of your thinking, discussions, planning and questions and it is evident to others in all that you do.

Being passionate about people and their safety and integrating this passion with the ways in which successful work is defined and celebrated makes a great health, safety and wellbeing leader. Such leaders walk the talk every day, always challenging the status quo and taking pride in being visibly supportive and involved in health and safety initiatives, whether in their direct area of control or not.

4 Why Is Health, Safety and Wellbeing Leadership Important?

The influence of leadership at all levels in our business is important. From the top, the provision of governance and resources by senior leaders enables the health, safety and wellbeing outcomes to sit alongside business success as an equal.

If 100% of a company's senior leadership team has 100% commitment to an excellent health, safety and wellbeing culture for the organisation and its people, then 100% of those people will support it.

Across the complex contracting chains that make up our dynamic workplaces, teams engaged in health, safety and wellbeing work together to ensure everyone goes home healthy and safe. This requires a level of collaboration that doesn't rely on a position title or formalised role.

Leaders who consistently promote health, safety and wellbeing to all employees, regardless of their position in a company, make their staff feel cared about.

5 Approach to Wellbeing

Understanding wellbeing involves acting on good intentions to care by actively listening and asking open questions. You need to be curious and enquire about how someone's frame of mind is on any given day, particularly if they are involved in high-level risk activities. While the reasons for a person being out of sorts and not 100% present may not be work-related, it is important to remember that as human beings, we are all subject to life's ups and downs, and sometimes these may affect our work lives.

Great health, safety and wellbeing leaders are open to discussions about all things that contribute to a safe and supportive environment for their staff. You may not have the expertise or influence to be able to solve the problem, but being understanding, supportive, and caring will help. If you are able to assist your employees to manage their wellbeing and fitness for work, then do so, otherwise encourage them to seek external expert help.

6 Leadership Competencies

The leadership competencies listed below have been extracted from the stories of our nominated exemplary health, safety and wellbeing leaders across the industry.

As you read through this list we would suggest you reflect on items you are confident in and highlight those where you'd like to hone your skills.

Competencies of our nominated Great HSW leaders	Hone?
Delivers a clear message of what good safety practice.	
Is active in safety initiatives	
Role-models health, safety and wellbeing by 'walking the talk'	
Looks for opportunities for improvement	
Does not immediately accept 'this is how we have always done things'	
Celebrates proactive stopping of work for safety reasons	
Promotes a no-blame culture	
Puts effort in to provide a better working environment for the team	
Considers wellbeing beyond the workplace and looks after employees with external factors impacting on them	
Celebrates reporting to share the learnings	
Won't accept anything that feels possibly wrong (ie, listens to gut feelings)	
Stops and assists or will come out to look at the issues 'on the floor'	
Asks a lot of questions to check thinking	
Inspires others to do better	
Discusses learning opportunities in health, safety and wellbeing as part of development	
Ensures people are comfortable to talk about safety concerns and really listens	
Cares about our team and our contractors and their wellbeing	
Gives the team time and really listens	

7 Useful Leadership Skills

There are many courses, articles, Ted Talks, YouTube recordings of great leaders, and books on leadership skills available. We suggest you talk to your manager about opportunities and resources available in your company.

Some of the skills and strengths that stood out amongst our nominated health, safety and wellbeing leaders that would be worthwhile developing are listed below:

courageous conversations • active listening • building trust • giving constructive feedback • growth mindset • coaching - GROW Model • above and below the line behaviours • high performance teams or culture • open questioning • Iceberg Model

We think material about or training on any of these skills and strengths will be relatively easy to find either by yourself or through your company HR or training team.

8 Questions for You to Consider

Ask yourself the questions below to help you find areas that you could further develop in your journey towards great health, safety and wellbeing leadership:

- *What behaviours from this toolkit would you like to strengthen in your own health, safety and wellbeing leadership journey? How will you work towards this goal?*
- *Who might you ask for feedback on your health, safety and wellbeing leadership?*
- *Who do you consider to be a great health, safety and wellbeing leader? What are the strengths you see in this person? Are these strengths you have or can develop?*
- *Do you celebrate great health, safety and wellbeing proactive initiatives or observations? Have you considered other ways to celebrate?*
- *What are your health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities? What does your manager believe your responsibilities are? What does your team believe your responsibilities are? Are there any inconsistencies that need to be addressed? Are you setting health, safety and wellbeing goals for proactive work rather than reactive?*
- *What do you do to ensure any incident or observation actions in your area of responsibility are completed in a timely manner? What can you do to improve on this, or assist someone who is not managing this so well?*
- *When did you last discuss wellbeing with your team? Who could you bring to speak about any topics of interest such as fatigue management, stress management, mental health awareness? What other ways are there to keep wellbeing in team conversations and communications?*
- *What areas are you aware of that may need some attention to change a poor or perceived poor health and safety culture, and what could you do to improve these perceptions? For example:*
 - *poor housekeeping leads to poor health and safety mindsets and behaviours*
 - *poor feedback on health, safety or wellbeing initiatives leads to a poor health and safety culture*
 - *non-adherence to safety related procedures or personal protective equipment (PPE).*
- *Have you noticed any change in mood, behaviour, attitude of any employees that may mean they are struggling inside or outside work? How might you approach this with them to check if all is OK? For example, changes such as:*
 - *fatigue*
 - *physical appearance*
 - *irritability and loss of patience with others*
 - *quieter than normal.*

9 Advice from Our Nominated Leaders

If you were talking to someone new to leadership, what advice would you give about being a great leader in health, safety and wellbeing?

Barend van der Poll

Walk the talk. Follow the rules. Set the standard. Understand the practicalities of the systems and the on-the-ground realities of your workforce.

Andy Sibley

Take the time to think about what type of leader you want to be, make yourself accountable for it, and ask others for help. Be the leader you would want to work for and ask your team what you could do to bring out the best of them. To genuinely care about the safety and wellbeing is core to all good leadership, but saying it is one thing, holding that view when the pressure is on takes self-awareness, courage and discipline. The ideal mindset to foster as a leader is that doing things safely and maintaining the wellbeing of your team is just how you do things, it's not an extra hassle or cost.

Andrew Rye

Embrace the safety culture and be prepared to stand up and challenge the norms because this is how we see opportunities and improve our culture, which is the right thing to do.

Phillip Erdbeer

It's OK to stop work if you feel it's unsafe. It's OK to question any tier of the organisation if they have asked you to do something that you feel could be done more safely. It's OK to provide constructive feedback. And most importantly, it's OK to do the right thing without feeling pressured – which empowers you to make the best decision possible.

Jim Lord

Know in your mind why you are doing what you are doing and why you are driving health and safety. You need to have that right attitude to bring everyone along with you. It can't be that you are doing it because the regulations say so. Learn and get a feel for what's most important in the areas that you are leader, what are things that could go wrong and what's in place to prevent them going wrong – this will allow you to focus on the right areas. Understand the balance between the need for a quick chat to rectify something and the need for the big stick – this goes a long way to building those connections with staff and contractors. People are key: understand them, work with them, value their inputs.

Remember we are all in this together to do the right thing and there is always support.

Paul Robinson

Have a positive **attitude**, be supportive, be a good listener and be willing to implement improvements. It's your challenge to break down the **old** negative attitudes towards health and safety (although these individuals are fewer in numbers nowadays). Implement systems that allow your work team, visitors, contractors and the public to enter your work place and be safe. Believe in and take pride in the work environment you create. Be open. Own your site. People do care.

Brett Horwell

Ask good questions: a well-thought-out question is a very effective tool. Try to remember to look at things from an alternative perspective – if you've been introduced to the Zero Incident Process (ZIP) then check out the I'm OK – You're OK model.

Mark Allen

Take the time to listen to what your people are saying to you. Be authentic, open and honest. Encourage open communication. Take the time to recognise and celebrate achievements and the dedication shown by your people. Everyone is not the same so acceptance is a key value of any good manager.



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