

# Stop Audits – Property

Stop audits are a simple and effective way of assessing processes and risks in the workplace.

This Loss Prevention Standard provides an overview of stop audits, the benefits and useful guidance on incorporating stop audits within risk management programmes.

# Stop Audits - Property

## Introduction

Stop audits are a risk management tool designed to check agreed procedures, rules and management systems are being appropriately followed. This allows organisations to test both the efficacy of their management systems and the effectiveness of communication around such systems.

Including stop audits within risk management programmes can help identify areas for improvement, improve the quality of such systems, and help to reduce the extent of downtime and losses associated with risk events.



**Note:** This document is focussed on property loss prevention in relation to Stop Audits. It is not intended to address liability exposures. The presumption is that all regulatory requirements, Fire Risk Assessments, and compliance with requirements placed by the local authority having jurisdiction which would include licencing, building permissions, regulations, codes, or standards, have or will be met.

## How Stop Audits Can be Used

Unexpected events can occur in the workplace at any time and should be both considered and planned for. Risk assessments are one way of identifying risks which could lead to such events and risk controls, or mitigations, can then be adopted to help eliminate or reduce the extent of any associated loss or damage.

Organisations should regularly assess the adequacy of these risk controls and mitigations. New processes, changes to layout and equipment, new or altered buildings, changes to the workforce etc., can significantly impact both the delivery and effectiveness of the controls and stop audits are a useful means of testing whether emergency plans, procedures, training and communications remain suitable and sufficient.

Stop audits can be extended to many processes, tasks and site areas covering a variety of potential risks, including:

- Standard operating procedures.
- Emergency operating procedures.
- Maintenance activities.
- Contractor activities.
- Security functions.
- Permit to work systems, including:
  - ✓ Hot work.
  - ✓ Confined spaces.
  - ✓ Working at height.
- Emergency evacuation plans.

- Emergency response plans and teams.
- Driver behaviours.
- All risk management programmes.
- High hazard, critical or sensitive operations.
- Maintenance workshops.
- Car parks.
- Kitchens.
- Plant or utility rooms.
- Health and safety related tasks, such as manual handling, fire safety etc.

## The Benefits of Stop Audits

A management framework that embraces a continual improvement process, including stop audits, will usually see significant benefits in risk management performance. This is particularly useful where higher frequency issues, near misses or incidents have been experienced, at specific 'problem' areas on site, or at times of the year when increases in issues can be expected.

Benefits include:

- **Detection.** Stop audits help identify issues, faults, non-compliance with site rules etc., before a risk event occurs. This can help prevent loss, downtime, cost, unplanned use of resources etc.
- **Continual Improvement.** Stop audits help demonstrate an organisation's commitment to quality, risk management and continual improvement and require similar commitment from workers.
- **Compliance.** Stop audits encourage ongoing compliance with site rules and procedures, rewarding good behaviours and identifying and actioning poor performance.
- **Training.** Improved processes can often result in improved performance, reduced costs etc.

## Undertaking a Stop Audit

Stop audits should be undertaken by appropriately skilled individuals, or teams, and with no prior warning to workers, and in some cases, supervisory or local management teams. The aim of the audit is to assess the actual working practices against the defined rules, procedures etc. Prior warning can allow work teams to prepare and reduce the effectiveness of the stop audit.

Stop audits should be carried out at regular intervals, with the frequency determined by several factors including hazards and business reliance/criticality. Care should be taken to avoid carrying out stop audits at similar times, to help avoid teams anticipating and preparing.

Care should also be taken to ensure immediate, unplanned cessation of workplace activities can be undertaken safely with no risks of damage to equipment, stock etc. In some cases, a risk assessment should be undertaken to ensure this is feasible and appropriate.

Persons conducting the stop audit should follow a defined process/checklist, including but not limited to the following questions:

- Is the working environment as expected?
  - ✓ If not, what issues were observed and reasons provided?
  - ✓ Were the issues reported for corrective action?
  - ✓ If not, why?
  - ✓ If reported, why have they not been actioned?
- Are defined operating procedures being followed?
  - ✓ If not, what breaches were noted and reasons provided?
  - ✓ Were workers aware of the operating procedures?
  - ✓ If not, why?
- Are all permissions or permits in place that should be?
  - ✓ Have they been completed accurately, reflecting the actual task being completed?
- Are all safety features in place that should be?
  - ✓ If not, what issues were observed and reasons provided?
  - ✓ Were the issues reported for corrective action?
  - ✓ If not, why?
  - ✓ If reported, why have they not been actioned?
- Are all required behaviours being correctly followed?
  - ✓ If not, why?
- Do workers undertaking tasks believe the existing procedures and practices are appropriate or require revision?
  - ✓ What recommendations were provided?
  - ✓ Have they been appropriately logged for review?

To conduct the stop audit, in the simplest terms, the audit team will enter a work area, production line or other specific location and require immediate cessation of activities and all workers to remain where they are, once equipment has been safely stopped. The checklist will then be undertaken with the work team or individuals as appropriate.

The time taken to complete the stop audit should reflect the hazards, business reliance on the function/process etc., however most should be completed as promptly as possible.

Once the stop audit is complete, observed good practices should be acknowledged and reinforced. In some cases, reward or recognition may be appropriate e.g., high standard of compliance; improvement on previous stop audit findings; new processes etc.

Where simple breaches or non-compliance are noted, these should be discussed with the team or individual and the issue actioned, or improvement requested. It may be useful to check procedures are being followed via a spot check a day or two after the stop audit.

For more significant divergence, the non-compliance should be assessed by the audit team or other appropriate function e.g., site safety and engineering teams etc., for the root cause failing, following which:

- Procedures and practices can be assessed and modified to reflect the desired situation.
- Behaviours and training can be reinforced as necessary.
- Permits and permissions can be reviewed to ensure they meet the needs of the business.
- The working environment and topography can be amended.

- Disciplinary procedures may need to be invoked for serious or ongoing breaches or non-compliance.

Remedial changes and process improvements should be actioned as appropriate. The findings and value of the stop audit should be communicated to the work team. It may be timely to also remind them of their responsibilities to report faults, damage or other issues, as well as suggested improvements to procedures following any workplace changes.

## Key Actions

- Consider the benefits of conducting stop audits.
- Appoint and empower appropriate persons/teams to undertake stop audits.
- Provide appropriate checklists that reflect the hazards and processes in the work area or location.
- Ensure the cessation of activities can be done safely with no increased risk of asset damage, injury etc.
- Reward good behaviours or improvements following previous stop audits.
- Ensure more significant issues are addressed promptly.
- Spot checks can help to ensure behaviour changes or issues have been addressed.
- Address any training needs.

## Checklist

A generic **Stop Audit Checklist** is presented in Appendix 1 which can be tailored to your own organisation.

## Specialist Partner Solutions

Aviva Risk Management Solutions can offer access to a wide range of risk management products and services at preferential rates via our network of Specialist Partners.

- Inspection, audit, risk assessment software platform - [Safetyculture](#)

For more information please visit: [Aviva Risk Management Solutions – Specialist Partners](#)

## Additional Information

Relevant Aviva Loss Prevention Standards include:

- **Material Damage Risk Assessment**
- **Self-Inspections**
- **Maintenance Regimes**
- **Emergency Response Teams**
- **Hot Work Operations**
- **Managing Contractors – Property**
- **Managing Change – Property**

To find out more, please visit [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#) or speak to one of our advisors.

Email us at [riskadvice@aviva.com](mailto:riskadvice@aviva.com) or call 0345 366 6666.\*

\*The cost of calls to 03 prefixed numbers are charged at national call rates (charges may vary dependent on your network provider) and are usually included in inclusive minute plans from landlines and mobiles. For our joint protection telephone calls may be recorded and/or monitored.

# Appendix 1 – Stop Audit Checklist

Location	
Date	
Completed by (name and signature)	

	Stop Audits	Y/N	Comments
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there a formal stop audit programme?</li> <li>If not, would the introduction of a stop audit programme be beneficial?</li> </ul>		
2.	Is the stop audit team trained and adequately empowered?		
3.	Is the frequency of Stop Audits for specific areas, tasks or operations based on learning and findings?		
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are stop audits regularly completed?</li> <li>If so, do they include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Management programmes?</li> <li>✓ Permit to work systems?</li> <li>✓ Working at height?</li> <li>✓ Hot work?</li> <li>✓ Confined spaces?</li> <li>✓ Maintenance activities?</li> <li>✓ Contractors on site?</li> <li>✓ Activities in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High hazard areas?</li> <li>▪ Sensitive or critical areas?</li> <li>▪ Utility rooms?</li> <li>▪ Kitchens or cooking areas?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
5.	Is a formal checklist or question set compiled to address hazards and processes in the different work areas?		
6.	Are findings from stop audits reviewed to establish the causes and identify corrective actions?		
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are findings and corrective actions appropriately communicated to work teams or individuals?</li> <li>Are good behaviours adequately acknowledged/rewarded?</li> </ul>		
8.	Are any improvements to address failings tracked through to completion?		

	Stop Audits Cont'd	Y/N	Comments
9.	Are written management systems modified and revised as a result of any findings?		
10.	Are training and refresher training frequencies revised as a result of any findings?		
11.	Are Stop Audits used specifically when on-site or when industry incident or accident data, shows there are known historical higher frequency near misses or incidents?		
12.	Are Stop Audits used specifically to target seasonally occurring or recurring issues?		
13.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are near miss incidents recorded on site?</li> <li>Are there any links between the number and type of near misses and Stop Audits?</li> </ul>		
14.	Additional comments:		



## **Please Note**

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