



Questions and Answers for Assessors

These Q&As are for SafePlus Accredited Assessors, or those interested in becoming a SafePlus Accredited Assessor. This document is designed to supplement the SafePlus Accreditation Process and the Assessor Competency Specification.

GETTING ACCREDITED

Why should I get accredited as a SafePlus Assessor?

SafePlus is a commercial opportunity for health and safety professionals. If you get accredited, you will be able to offer your services to the market as a SafePlus Accredited Assessor. Businesses will be able to commission you to use SafePlus to provide onsite assessments of their health and safety performance and to provide them with guidance and advice on how to improve their health and safety performance. All SafePlus onsite assessments will be led by an Accredited Assessor who has been successfully trained and accredited as a SafePlus Assessor by the independent SafePlus Accreditation Body.

Is accreditation at an individual or corporate level?

Only individuals can get accredited. There is no corporate category of accreditation to cover organisations with multiple practitioners. Each practitioner wanting to become a SafePlus Accredited Assessor will need to go through the accreditation process and be successfully accredited. This is because the necessary skills and expertise are held by the individual assessors.

ONSITE ASSESSMENT AND ADVISORY SERVICE

Your initial conversations and planning with businesses

Assessors will need to provide businesses with information about themselves and SafePlus; how it works, what the assessment process involves, and how it can help businesses improve their health and safety. It is important for Assessors to be able to communicate the benefits of SafePlus. Key messages will include:

- SafePlus is not a compliance audit service. The key purpose of SafePlus is to provide consultative guidance and advice to improve a business's health and safety performance.
- SafePlus describes what good health and safety looks like through the ten SafePlus Performance Requirements and their supporting indicators.
- SafePlus uses a diagnostic and behavioural evaluative assessment, which does not primarily focus on a document review. The assessment approach involves interviews with workers and leaders in the business at different levels - observing people at work, their practices, the conditions they are working in, and reviewing business processes where applicable. SafePlus will help the business to understand the health and safety practices, behaviours, attitudes, perceptions, values, and culture.
- Businesses will receive good practice performance improvement recommendations that are based on the assessment's findings and tailored to business improvement needs.
- Assessors will provide expert guidance and advice on how to implement the recommendations as part of the assessment.
- The assessment will give the business an illustration of the business's current health and safety performance, including its strengths and what it needs to do to improve.
- SafePlus can provide a business with greater confidence, knowledge on how to improve its health and safety, and provide assurance they are on track.

SafePlus is not a one-size-fits-all approach; it will depend on the Assessor getting to know the business - what it does, its size, complexity and critical risks.

What should each SafePlus Onsite Assessment cover?

The Onsite Assessment evaluates a business's health and safety performance against the ten SafePlus performance requirements. SafePlus assessments involve observing practices, processes, plant, people, an environment, and assessing behaviours, attitudes, perceptions, values and health and safety culture through interviews and interactions. Assessors conduct behavioural observations onsite, interview people within the business and review practices and processes to understand how key risks are managed. Assessments will involve a Deep Dive assessment process that traces risks through the different layers of the business. The Assessor Guide provides more information about assessments. The training provided during the accreditation process also provides more detailed information.

Should I document the scope of each SafePlus Onsite Assessment?

Yes. This should be documented at the outset of the assessment so there is clarity between the Assessor and the business. It is also important to accurately describe the agreed assessment scope within the assessment report, including any changes agreed during the assessment.

A clear scoping statement sets the context for your report and advice, as well as supporting your findings/recommendations in the performance illustration.

Assessors may also describe the scope of each assessment in the disclaimer section at the back of their reports, this will ensure the assessment scope is clear.

Can the scope be revisited?

Yes – you may need to revisit the assessment scope with your client as you work through the assessment. This is a routine occurrence for most professional advisory services, and SafePlus is no different. For example, it may become apparent that an issue or risk was not initially identified, or was considered a minor issue, so further assessment and consideration is required. Another example is where there is consistent feedback or themes from some sites, so going to another similar site will not be of additional value (eg, you have reached data saturation). In this case, it could be more valuable to direct time and effort to another part of the assessment.

A range of scenarios will likely arise when you are providing services to different organisations. The key is to have open communication with the client; raise potential scope changes as soon as possible, discuss the implications on the assessment, and agree a way forward.

What can I charge a business to undertake a SafePlus onsite assessment? Is there any set fee?

There is no set fee. This is a commercial matter between each SafePlus Accredited Assessor and the businesses that commission them, just like it is when hiring any health and safety service provider or professional in the market. Price is one of the factors that Assessors will need to consider when offering their services.

How long should a SafePlus Onsite Assessment take?

This will depend on a number of factors such as the size and complexity of the business, what parts of the business are included (eg, sites chosen), the scope of the assessment and specific risks being considered, the issues found during the assessments, the capacity, capability, and experience of the assessment team, how well the business is prepared for the assessment, and the business's existing performance level.

Experience from the SafePlus pilot suggests that the minimum time for an Onsite Assessment of a medium sized business, using two assessors, takes approximately 2 days to complete. Larger or more complex businesses will likely take 3-4 days. Assessors will need to write their reports after their onsite visits, and there will also be a process of the business providing feedback on the draft report, which will play out after the onsite visit.

Why do Assessors need to provide guidance and advice to the business during SafePlus Onsite Assessments?

SafePlus is about Assessors working with businesses (not auditing them) and providing guidance and advice about where and how the businesses can implement the performance recommendations. Every Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service report needs to include consultative guidance and advice that is appropriate for the business.

Do businesses get the opportunity to action a recommendation or make changes before I finalise my report?

Yes. In many cases this will be a viable option and if the necessary action is undertaken by the business, then this could influence their performance level for a given Performance Requirement (or in some cases even their overall performance level).

For example, if a business successfully actions one or more of your recommendations during or soon after your onsite visit, then this could be sufficient for you to consider moving the business from the 'developing' level to the 'performing' level.

The SafePlus tool allows for up to a three-month maximum period from the end of the assessment visit to give the business the time to action the recommendations made by the Assessors in order to be considered as part of the initial assessment outcome and influence the final performance judgement. Three months has been selected to account for contingencies such as peak seasonal issues and key personnel being on leave and is seen as the maximum timeframe. In practice, it is recommended that the business and Assessor aim to finish quick remedial actions in 4-8 weeks.

Each case needs to be considered in its own context and will come down to a professional judgement by the Assessor in discussion with the business to consider what is reasonable in the circumstances. Relevant factors will include:

- The nature and complexity of the recommendation(s) and action(s) required.
- The likely time it will take to action the recommendation(s).
- Whether there is the opportunity for the Assessor to verify that their recommendation(s) has/have been appropriately actioned.
- Cost or logistical implications for any verification needed or implications of delay on being able to finalise the assessment report.
- Whether actioning the recommendation(s) would likely change the performance level (or whether a range of other actions are also needed).

If the change is a relatively quick and simple fix that the business can action during or shortly after the assessment visit, and can be readily verified, then this may be an option. In contrast if the recommendation will take longer to implement and would necessitate the Assessor needing to come back to spend time verifying it has been appropriately actioned, then the best course may be for the business to work on all of its recommendations and seek a reassessment at a future date.

How do businesses identify and choose a SafePlus Accredited Assessor?

There will be a public register that lists all the SafePlus Accredited Assessors and contact details at safeplus.nz.

SafePlus Accredited Assessors can also advertise and promote their services (although there are some restrictions that Assessors need to be aware of that are noted in the questions below). Businesses may also seek quotes or written proposals from Accredited Assessors.

USE OF SAFEPLUS BRANDING AND COLLATERAL

Can I promote or advertise myself as a SafePlus Accredited Assessor?

Yes. You can advertise or promote that you are a SafePlus Accredited Assessor if you have been successfully accredited by the Accreditation Body, and your accredited assessor status is current (ie. it has not lapsed after three years or been revoked). Practitioners who have not been successfully accredited cannot refer to themselves as SafePlus Accredited Assessors.

Advertising and promotion could include using the SafePlus logo on your print material and digital channels but not on permanent fixtures such as signage, equipment and vehicles. You should also be aware that it is not the company that is accredited, but individual Assessors. There are no group or organisational accreditations given.

When using the SafePlus Accredited Assessor logo, please comply with the SafePlus Style Guide for third party use which is available by emailing info@safeplus.nz

Do I have to use the SafePlus assessment report template when I produce SafePlus reports for businesses?

Yes, SafePlus Accredited Assessors should use the SafePlus assessment report templates to ensure consistency across assessors and include the required information for businesses. The report template includes space for Accredited Assessors to add their own branding, or branding from the businesses that they are assessing or advising (assuming the business gives permission to do this). There is some scope to add or tailor the report template, but it is important to ensure that all of your assessment reports contain the necessary information and cover the sections that are included in the report template. Using the report template will ensure that you follow the SafePlus Style Guide, and there is a nationally consistent approach, experience and quality to the SafePlus initiative.

Can I use ACC or WorkSafe’s agency logos on my SafePlus onsite assessment reports, or any of my advertising/promotional material, signage, equipment, premises etc?

No. You cannot use Government logos. Some SafePlus resources include Government branding, because these documents were developed by such agencies to support SafePlus. Accredited Assessors or businesses who use SafePlus must not add Government logos to any of their communications, promotional material, or reports or documents that they produce as part of providing SafePlus Onsite Assessment or Advisory Services.

Assessors' reports must not expressly state or imply that the Government, or any government agency, endorses or supports the performance findings, recommendations, and advice contained in their assessment reports. Such reports are commercial transactions between SafePlus Accredited Assessors and their client businesses. The Crown has no involvement in, or visibility of, specific SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Services provided by Accredited Assessor to their client businesses. No Government endorsement of the assessment outcome is provided.

OTHER ISSUES

What is the relevance of the Online Self-Assessment tool to the Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service?

The online self-assessment tool helps businesses undertake their own self- assessments of their health and safety performance. This will help them to identify gaps and issues in their health and safety system and provide guidance on how they can improve, based on their self-assessment. It will use a 360-degree approach to get insight from workers, managers and senior leaders against the SafePlus Performance Requirements. The Online Self-Assessment tool will have a focus on small to medium sized businesses.

While the Online Self-Assessment tool will not have any independent verification, and reflect the business's own view of its performance (which can sometimes be over-estimated), it is a good first step for businesses to familiarise themselves with the SafePlus Performance Requirements and gain perspective about how well they are performing. If a business has carried out an Online Self-Assessment, this will be useful to share with their Accredited Assessors as it could help inform planning of the Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service. Businesses that have undertaken their own self-assessment will be more familiar with SafePlus, creating efficiencies for Assessors and their client businesses.

Can a person who is not a SafePlus Accredited Assessor use SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service and supporting resources?

Most of the SafePlus resources are freely and publicly available for any business to use. Some businesses will use these resources internally to strengthen their own health and safety system and performance, without hiring a third-party provider.

Likewise, there is nothing to stop a health and safety practitioner using the same SafePlus material and providing generic health and services to the market or incorporating the SafePlus performance requirements into an existing product or service in the market, and WorkSafe and ACC encourage this. However, they cannot express or imply that they are a SafePlus Accredited Assessor unless they have been successfully accredited and maintain that accreditation. Additionally, businesses must use a SafePlus Accredited Assessor, and meet the SafePlus performance requirements (Performing or Leading) if they wish to promote themselves as using the SafePlus tool or 'being a SafePlus business'.

WorkSafe strongly recommends that businesses only use SafePlus Accredited Assessors if they are considering using the SafePlus Onsite Assessment and Advisory Service. This will give them greater certainty that the Accredited Assessor is trained in the use and application of SafePlus, has the capability and competency to do a good job, and can give you the best value from a SafePlus Onsite Assessment.