



Executive Summary

In March 2019 the Site Specific Safety Planning Working Group surveyed subcontractors to discover current attitudes, opinions and practices relating to site specific safety planning as part of the discovery phase of the SSSP Industry Review.

Overall, the responses from the survey give an indication of why subcontractors employ the Site-Specific Safety Plan (SSSP) process, what forms they use, and what they see as current barriers to the process. These responses uncovered two key areas for improvement:

- communication between the main contractor and the subcontractor
- guidance on how to complete the forms

Based on the survey findings, the Site Specific Safety Pan Working Group have formed some basic principles that will underpin the development and maintenance of the SSSP. These principles are:

- **Keep it simple** – Ensure that there is clear guidance on how to complete and use the SSSP
- **Keep it focused** – Recognise that not all forms are always required and ensure that it is easy to focus on what's critically important to know
- **Keep it up to date** – Review and update the SSSP to meet the needs of industry and legislation
- **Meet the needs of industry** – Regularly gather and review user feedback to ensure that the SSSP is meeting industry needs.

Site-Specific Safety Plan Survey Report

Purpose

This report summarises the highlights of a survey of industry perceptions of site-specific safety planning.

Background

Earlier this year, the Capital Safety Initiative Group and Site Safe NZ formed a working group to review the industry's attitudes, opinions and practices relating to site specific safety planning (SSSP). The intention is to consider some of the concerns raised by industry practitioners and respond where possible and appropriate.

This survey is part of the initial discovery phase that will inform future directions of the project.

Summary Highlights

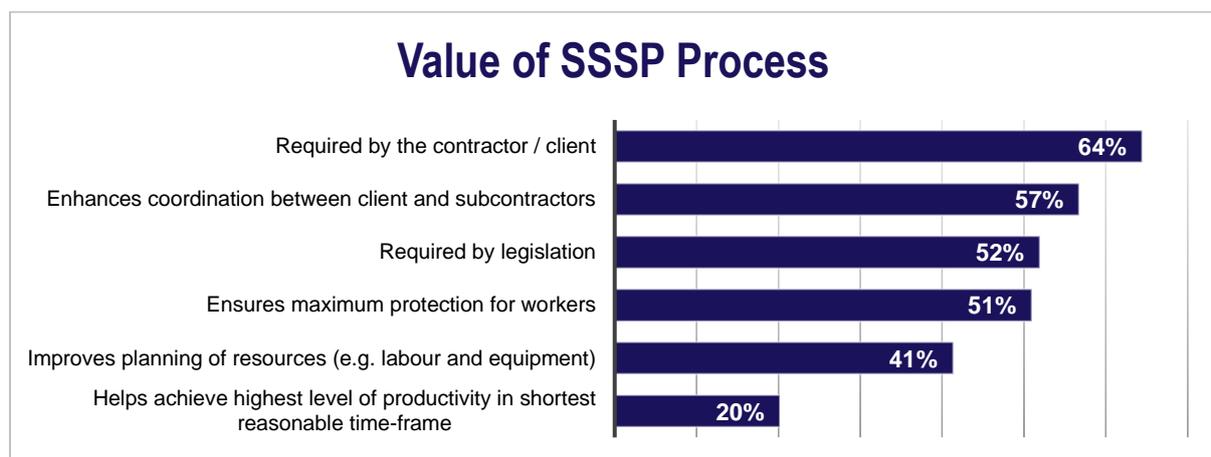
The survey was disseminated among subcontractors of Hawkins, Naylor Love and a few other members of the Health and Safety Practitioners Group, between 13 February and 5 March 2019.

Some 104 respondents provided feedback. The total sample, however, is unknown as it was unclear how many subcontractors were contacted by the working group members who circulated the survey.

Value of the SSSP Process

Subcontractors have varied reasons for using the SSSP process, foremost of which are - it is required by the client; it enhances coordination between the principal and subcontractors; it is required by legislation; and it ensures maximum protection for workers.

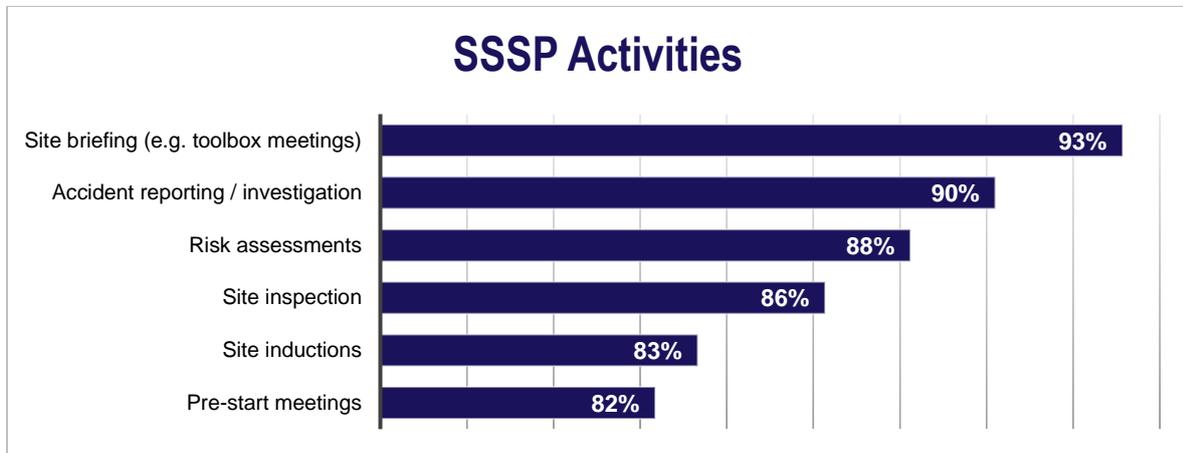
The chart below shows the other reasons why subcontractors use the SSSP process.



Some emphasised that the value of the process lies in the details it provides around how the contractor works and the risks his trade poses. It enables both the principal and contractors to work together in identifying safety issues likely to arise, planning accordingly and improving the safety of workers on site.

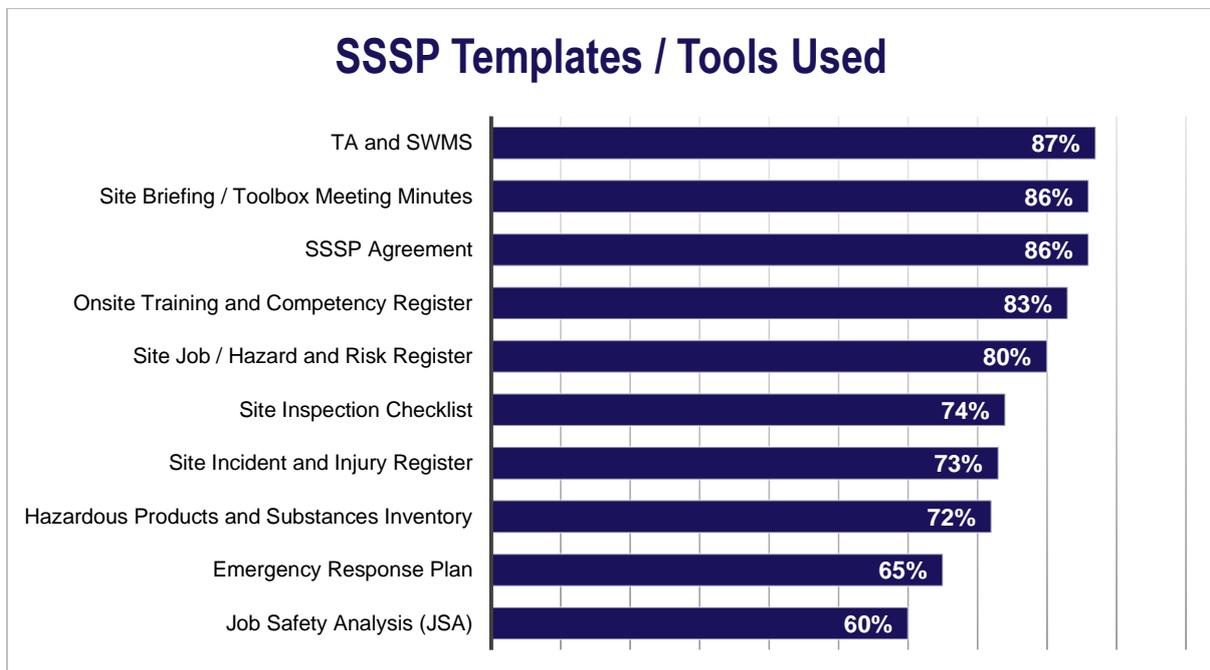
SSSP Management Activities

The following chart shows the main activities used by the subcontractors in planning and managing safety in their worksites. Other activities not listed below include emergency planning, vehicle and plant inspections, Hazmat assessments, safe operating procedures, site audit and monitoring, police vetting, and drug testing.



SSSP Templates and Tools

While most of the subcontractors used the forms listed in the chart below, others added environmental inspection documents, induction registers and their companies' forms. Many mentioned they are using Site Safe's templates.



SSSP Barriers

The respondents have identified a myriad of barriers that they face when undertaking the SSSP process. The following are the main themes mentioned.

1. Lack of knowledge and understanding on what needs to be done – by the principal / main contractors and/or subcontractors and workers.

- a. Many complained that some PCBUs (particularly individuals or small businesses) are not familiar with the process and are reluctant to sign off on a document they do not understand. They do not know how to fill up a SSSP form and provide poor or incomplete information due to lack of awareness of and training on site hazards and risks. This often results in contractors having to chase PCBUs for signed SSSP agreement in order to conform with the general safety plan.
- b. On the other hand, there are some subcontractors (especially the smaller ones) and workers who do not understand the SSSP document, its contents and requirements. Many are unclear about their responsibilities and do not know how to complete TAs. Getting them interested in the process is also hard due to the amount of paperwork. Many see the SSSP process as being a compliance exercise to satisfy the main contractors.
- c. Another issue highlighted is the SSSP document being drawn up by staff in the office who do not have site-specific knowledge.

2. Inconsistency of requirements.

- a. Many expressed discontent around the industry having no set standard - with different contractors having varied requirements. There is lack of consistency in SSSP requirements and the format changes from client to client and project to project.
- b. Some also complained about the impracticality of some of the requirements – clients imposing high administrative demands on small and / or low risk sub-trades. It is suggested that a standard industry template be created that works for main contractors, subcontractors and other parties involved.

3. Getting buy-in and coordination.

- a. Several respondents mentioned challenges in securing commitment from management and / or getting buy-in from site managers and workers. Reasons cited are time-constraints due to strict deadlines and a general industry ignorance of SSSP. It is not a priority for a lot of small contractors who do not have the resources and well-developed practices. Many perceive the SSSP process as arduous and time-consuming, requiring a very long document to complete.
- b. Many also mentioned poor communication and coordination as obstacles in their SSSP process. Main contractors are not communicating clearly, and site teams are not involved enough in the process to support the subcontractors in implementing safety plans. Some are unaware of the activities of other contractors on site. And those who have established safety protocols are unhappy about having no control over the other contractors' unsafe behaviour and culture that affect everyone else on site.

4. Variable quality of SSSP documents.

- a. A significant number complained about the requirement to prepare safety plans and provide TAs and hazard registers even before they are granted access on site. Combined with inaccurate and vague information supplied by clients – subcontractors find it hard to draw up site-specific documents. Lack of familiarity of the site and understanding of the hazards to be faced – leads them to copy-and-paste and submit generic SSSP documents.
- b. Some added IT problems, clunky software, slow internet connection and staff not used to do paperwork as other issues affecting the quality of SSSP documents produced.

Site Safe's SSSP Template

Around 14% of respondents said they use their own SSSP templates. Many mentioned they built their own version using Site Safe's forms as a guide and benchmark.

Respondents who use Site Safe's templates identified the following strengths of the templates:

- simple, easy to use, navigate and fill-out;
- clear and concise, straight-forward and comprehensive – covers most of the items required by clients;
- has good format, professional look and available online;
- provides guidance and prompts throughout the project; and
- offers ready-to-use forms

Suggestions for improvement

Many provided wide-ranging recommendations for improvement – from fine-tuning the format to encouraging the industry to focus more on the spirit of the SSSP; not just the forms.

Main suggestions include:

- **improving the format** by enabling auto-fill feature on common fields, e.g. name, date, address, etc.; fixing formatting limitations on MS word and pdf versions; and enabling easier download and exporting of online version
- **making it more comprehensive by adding more forms**, including - methodology plans or similar to identify not only the steps of carrying out a task but the planning that is required; accident investigation form; emergency evacuation template and tool & equipment register; hazard register (e.g. house-keeping, trip hazards, dust levels (concrete), TES and tagging to date, etc); wall charts; and space for site layout drawing

Others, however, emphasised there is no need to add more forms. Instead, they encouraged users to take Site Safe's templates as a guide in designing forms that suit their own trade and projects.

Some underscored the need to focus more on the spirit and content of the SSSP. They said Site Safe's SSSP template is a good safety communication tool among the principal, the contractor and other parties involved in a project. As such, there is a temptation to add more forms to cover several bases. However, this comes with the downside of discouraging people to read it due to volume and complexity. The main challenge remains getting the principal, all contractors and their workers on board – to think about safety on site and commit to the SSSP process.

Summary of Findings

The survey results show that –

1. End-users employ the SSSP process mainly to satisfy requirements of clients, comply with legislation, enhance coordination among different parties involved in their projects (client, contractors, subcontractors and workers) and enhance protection of workers in the sites.
2. The common SSSP activities performed are site briefing, accident reporting / investigation, risk assessment, site inspection and induction, and pre-start meetings.
3. The templates used vary widely with many using Site Safe's forms and others using tailored templates that meet their specific trades and projects.
4. The most common barriers in implementing the SSSP process are
 - lack of knowledge and understanding on what needs to be done by the different parties involved and managing the projects, and the people working on site;
 - lack of communication and coordination, as well as commitment and buy-in for the process;
 - inconsistency of requirements of different clients, trades and projects; and
 - poor quality of SSSP documents.
5. Specific recommendations to address issues include having an industry standard SSSP process and requirements, and better information, engagement and coordination around project and site-specific health and safety.
6. Suggestions to improve SSSP templates are mainly focused on improving format and ease of use. Many proposed tailoring Site Safe's templates to suit users' trade and projects.