

Safe System audit guidelines: Implementation of the new guidelines

Frequently asked questions

16 January 2023

What date does the new guidelines come into effect?

The Safe System audit guidelines should be used from the publication of Technical Advisory Note – 1st November 2022. However, there may be contractual conditions that require otherwise. It is important that auditors are familiar with the Safe System Assessment Framework before using the new guidelines.

What if I'm part way through an audit do I need to change to the new guide and audit report template?

No, if your audit is currently underway and has not been finalised, it is advised to continue to use the previous guide and audit template to finish that audit stage. Then when the project requires the next audit stage the Safe System audit guidelines and report template should then be used.

What has the name changed to Safe System Audit?

The name change better reflects the safety outcomes we were seeking and are inclusive of all people that access our transport system regardless of their mode of transport. We also wanted to be clear that while the fundamental process is the same as the previous guide, we need to people to think about the principles and how it is applied differently, we wanted to recognise the step change we are seeking.

Is there any consideration to establish a qualified safety audit register to ensure consistency of auditors?

There is an Austroads project underway that aims to establish a framework for the harmonisation of road safety auditing in Australia and New Zealand, covering training, accreditation, continued professional development (CPD) and assessment of auditor requirements.

Why has Waka Kotahi not used the Austroads Road Safety audit guide?

When we were first looking to update our audit guidance to incorporate Safe System assessments it was decided to wait on the outcome of the Austroads review of their Road Safety Auditing Guidelines.

During the review and on the completion of the Austroads project, it was felt that it did not reflect the level of ambition and the embedment of Safe System principles that New Zealand is striving for.

Do individual roading control authorities need to follow the Safe System audit guidelines or are these optional?

Waka Kotahi requires that these audit procedures be applied to any improvement or renewal project or activity that involves funding assistance from the National Land Transport fund.

There is no requirement from Waka Kotahi for projects and activities not funded by the National Land Transport fund to be audited using the Safe System audit guidelines, however we would encourage RCAs to adopt this guidance into their own internal policy.

What is the view on the need for independence of preparing a Safe System Audit? Can the project team complete it?

No, the project team cannot complete the audit. It is a requirement to have an independent team complete a Safe System audit so that the project outcome is viewed with fresh eyes and is unbiased.

The client has the ultimate responsibility for accepting that the level of independence is adequate and credible. To avoid an inappropriate 'culture' of the designer or contractor being incorporated, auditors should be commissioned from other organisations. Waka Kotahi requires Safe System auditors to be appointed separately from the Professional Services Contract drawn up for all projects.

Who does an ideal Safe System audit team consist of?

Ideally consists of at least two people with a team of at least three people desired. While audits can be carried out by a one-person team, the client will need to manage the potential risks by ensuring the person is sufficiently experienced and capable of the audit requirements for the project.

The team should be made of up individuals with diverse backgrounds, experience, knowledge and approaches. This allows for the cross-fertilisation of ideas through discussion as well as simply having more than one pair of eyes reviewing the project.

Being part of these audit teams can also be hugely beneficial as a capability building opportunity and we would encourage teams include people wanting to gain a better understanding of road safety and auditing as observers.

Is there an opportunity to provide feedback on the new guidelines?

We welcome feedback on the guidelines. A review of the effectiveness of the changes will be undertaken over the next 12 months this will include gathering feedback from internal and external parties using the new document. The review will seek to:

- determine whether the guides introduction has been effective in terms of delivery and impact
- determine if changes are required to improve the effectiveness or clarity of the guidance
- to ensure that appropriate education, monitoring and ongoing review of the guidance is occurring.

We will be running some sessions towards the middle of 2023 to proactively gather feedback on the guidance. However, feedback at any time is welcome please send it to trafficandsafety@nzta.govt.nz.