

Keeping Our People Safe

SHARING STORIES FROM ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR 2024 / 25



Welcome

**KEEPING OUR PEOPLE SAFE
CONTINUES TO SHOWCASE THE
BREADTH OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND
WELLBEING WORK HAPPENING
ACROSS THE PUBLIC SECTOR.**

Government Health & Safety Lead

www.healthandsafety.govt.nz

Ministry for Primary Industries / Manatu Ahu Matua

Pastoral House, Level 9

25 the Terrace

Wellington

New Zealand

Contents

Message from Ray Smith.....	4	Asbestos Safety - NZ Defence Force.....	18
The GHSL.....	6	High-Risk Addresses - Wellington Free Ambulance	20
Sector H&S Dashboard.....	8	VetNet - Biosecurity NZ.....	22
Tactical Response Model - NZ Police.....	10	Tier 2 HSW Leaders Programme - GHSL..	24
Shifting from blame to learning - Department of Corrections.....	12	System and field safety - Stats NZ.....	26
Building from the Base - Ministry for Regulation.....	14		
Critical Risk Control Assurance - Ministry for Primary Industries.....	16		

Message from Ray Smith

From 2010 to 2018 Ray served as Chief Executive of the Department of Corrections. He is currently the Director-General of the Ministry for Primary Industries. In August 2017 Ray was appointed as 'Government Health and Safety Lead'.

The power of collective work

More than just a collection of stories, this publication has become the inspiration to spark new connections, collaborations and conversations.

Over the past year, agencies have reached out to each other after reading about the work shared here — from exploring critical risk approaches with NZ Police, to learning more about MBIE's contact centre software. This is the power of sharing what works. It not only celebrates progress, but creates opportunities for others to build on it.

Sharing success

Health, safety and wellbeing requires a continual commitment to research and change in pursuit of improvement.

Senior leaders hold responsibility for building safer, healthier, and more inclusive public sector workplaces. But real progress doesn't come from leadership alone — it comes from the commitment of people across our agencies who continue to look at familiar challenges with fresh eyes.

Over the past year, we've seen teams innovate — not just through new tools or technology but also through smarter ways of working. Some have piloted new initiatives or refined complex systems. Others have chosen to go back to basics, taking a refreshed look at foundational practices. Safety is about continual improvement, and many agencies have shown the value of doing the essentials well.

Keeping Our People Safe has become a platform that not only shares this work, but encourages action. We've heard how last year's publication sparked

follow-up calls, inter-agency visits, and practical changes. This speaks to the power of transparency, collaboration and learning from each other.

This year brings with it new expectations along with the increasing complexity of our operating environments. The challenge is to stay focused and to support our people. I hope this publication gives you a sense of the determination, care and creativity that exists across the sector — and that it prompts you to reach out, ask questions and share your own story in the year ahead.

“The intent of this publication is to give you a sense of the determination, care and creativity that exists across the sector”



Ray Smith

Director General - MPI
Government Health and Safety Lead

About the GHSL

The Government Health & Safety Lead is a small team tasked with providing practical support to Chief Executives, senior leaders and the health and safety teams of government agencies to enable their leadership of health and safety to the benefit of all New Zealanders.

The Government Health and Safety Lead (GHSL) works across over 50 public sector organisations to support the development of strong health, safety and wellbeing practices. By helping agencies connect, share insights and learn from one another, we continue to build capability across the sector and support consistent improvement.

The GHSL adds value by:

- ◇ Identifying areas of need and helping align priorities and resources.
- ◇ Sharing good practice to reduce duplication and encourage consistency.
- ◇ Enabling the sector to learn from both success and setbacks.
- ◇ Supporting agencies to monitor and report on performance to focus effort where it matters most.

As the functional lead for health and safety in the public sector, the GHSL brings a cross-sector view of

how agencies are working to understand and manage the complex challenges they face.

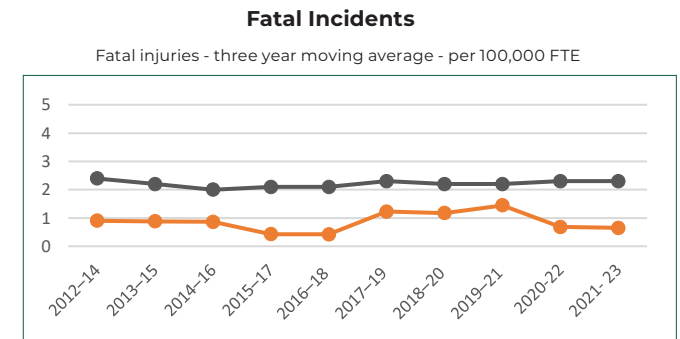
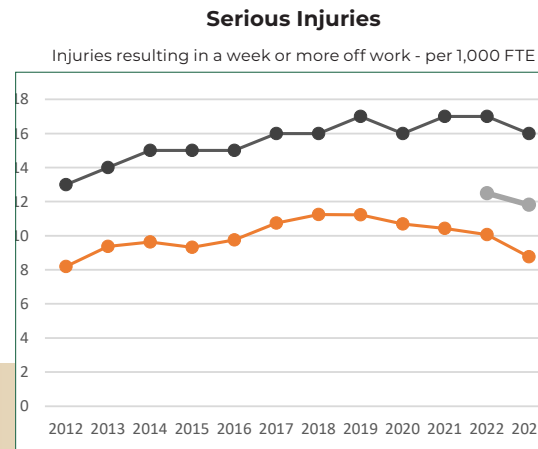
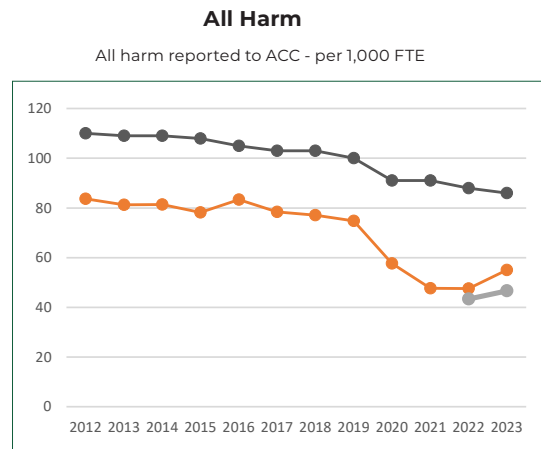
Over the past year, we've seen agencies continue to invest in getting the fundamentals right while also exploring innovative ways to engage their people and improve outcomes. This publication offers a snapshot of some of what has been achieved in 2024/25.





The Sector Health & Safety Dashboard

The GHSL has collected analysed Public sector agency statistics from the original 38 member agencies since 2018 and the additional 14 agencies since 2021, comprising of over 190,000 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) workers from the public sector primarily drawing data from the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC). The primary focus is on tracking harm, serious harm and fatality.



Monitoring the Sector

Our approach was to align health and safety indicators which have been identified and used for the **Health and Safety at Work Strategy 2018 - 2028**. These include Fatal, Serious and All Harm related data, primarily drawing from the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC).

All Harm: This graph compares GHSL member agencies and the overall New Zealand rate of harm per 1,000 Full-time Equivalent (FTE) employees.

Serious Injuries: Defined as injuries resulting in a week or more away from work (WAFW) per 1,000 FTEs.

Fatal Incidents: From 2012 to 2022 there have been seven recorded fatal injuries across the GHSL member agencies: relating to assault, vehicles, drowning and aviation.

Key

- National
- GHSL Original Agency (38)
- GHSL All Agencies (52)

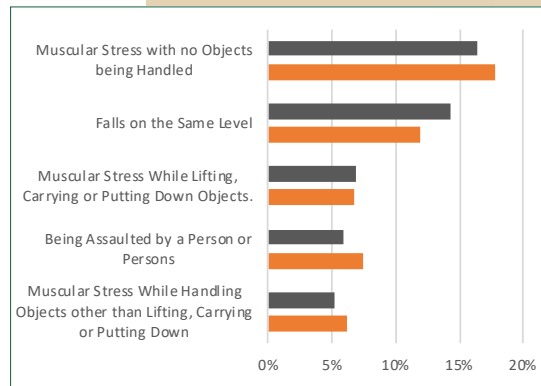
Diving a bit deeper

In order to dig a little further into the sector, we undertook some analysis into incidents of Serious Harm (injuries resulting in a week or more away from work):

Injury Mechanisms: This graph shows the percentage of top five recorded injury mechanisms for all serious harm injuries of the GHSL member agencies, 2012 -2022 compared against 2023.

Sector Type comparisons: Utilising the sector groupings by Public Service Commission we looked at injury rates of GHSL members and identified the top six sectors in terms of serious harm.

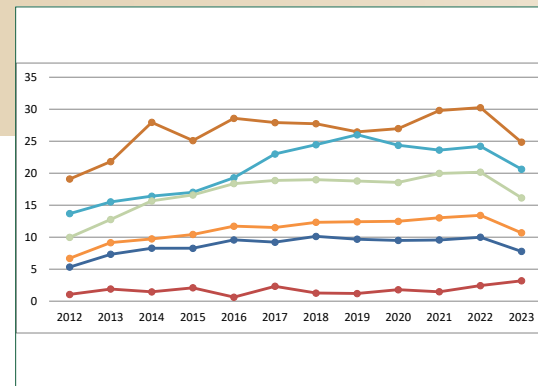
FTE Size Comparisons: We compared serious harm rate of GHSL agencies by Full Time Equivalent (FTE) size. These categories cover small agencies (less than 1,000 FTEs), medium-sized agencies (1,000 - 4,000 FTEs), and large agencies (above 4,000 FTEs).



GHSL Member Agency Injury Mechanisms

Recorded mechanisms of injuries resulting in a week or more away from work

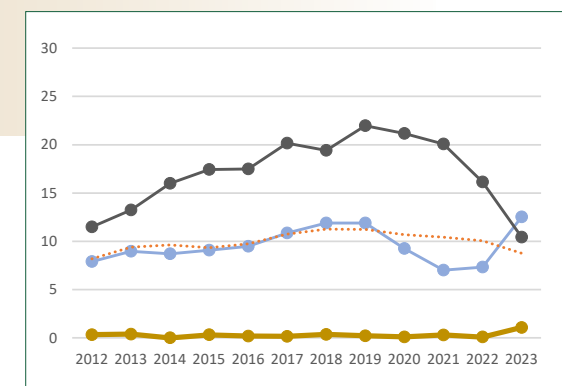
● 2012 - 2022 top Injury Mechanisms ● 2023 top Injury Mechanisms



GHSL Member Agency by Sector

Serious Harm resulting in week or more away from work by GHSL agency activity type - rate per 1,000 FTE

● Border Sector ● Emergency ● Health
● Justice ● National Security ● Transport



GHSL member agency by agency size

Serious harm resulting in week or more away from work grouped by agency size - rate per 1,000 FTE

● Small agencies (less than 1000 FTE) ● Medium sized agencies (1000 - 4000 FTE)
● Large agencies (4000+ FTE)

Listening, learning and innovating to improve frontline safety:

New Zealand Police - Tactical Response Model

With over 16,000 personnel working across New Zealand's communities — often moving toward risk when others move away — Police operate in the country's most dynamic and high-risk environments daily.

Frontline policing cannot eliminate all harm but New Zealand Police is clear: it must continually improve how risk is understood, managed and prepared for — and it must do so in a way that frontline staff trust, value and feel ownership of.

Understanding the risk environment

Through both historical learning and contemporary experience, NZ Police recognised that serious incidents — including the tragic death of a constable in police while undertaking frontline duties — highlighted opportunities where staff safety could be improved in training, deployment and capability.

Rather than assume the answers, Police initiated a major programme of engagement and evidence gathering. This included:

- ◇ 2000 emails and feedback contributions from frontline officers

- ◇ 1200 staff involved in focus groups across the country from metro and rural areas
- ◇ 570 community engagement sessions to ensure our community were part of this journey
- ◇ Analysis of near misses, use of force and high-risk events
- ◇ An operating environment review that included factors like gang trends, mental health callouts and changes in criminal violence
- ◇ Review of national and international evidence through the Evidence Based Policing Centre

The message was clear: Officers wanted to feel safer — and be safer — through fit for purpose scenario based training, improved intelligence, increased support at high-risk events and a stronger organisational focus on those who pose a threat of serious harm to their staff and community.



Moving beyond compliance

Many officers described their existing training as compliance-driven, lacking realism and wanting to train in line with the operational environment they worked in.

They asked for:

- ♦ Scenario-based training with the teams they work with
- ♦ More credible trainers with frontline experience
- ♦ Environments and skills that reflect true to life operational challenges

At the same time, the operating model and deployment systems were updated to align with the risk landscape. Access to tactical support and intelligence was improved — and specialist support like qualified Armed Offender Squad (AOS) members working proactively and preventatively in small teams to target high risk operations (rather than just responding) and partnering up dog handlers with highly capable members to increase their capability when supporting frontline on the ground.

Building a new system — from the ground up

These insights led to the design of the **Tactical Response Model (TRM)** — a new, integrated system focused on increasing preparation, support and safety of frontline officers and their communities.

Evaluating what works

The Evidence Based Policing Centre led an extensive evaluation of the Proof of Concept phase of the Tactical Response Model — including academic and operational partners. This evaluation has helped shape the refinement and national implementation of the model, ensuring it continues to respond to what staff and community need.



Three key components which anchor the Tactical Response Model are:

1. ENHANCED FRONTLINE TRAINING

Police now deliver an additional four days of dedicated tactical training each year to frontline officers. Known as Frontline Safety Training, it focuses on realistic, scenario-based practice in the teams they work in. A coaching culture is embedded — where mistakes in training environments are expected, feedback is timely and constructive and learning is real.

2. A NEW DEPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK

Police have introduced a deployment system that integrates tactical intelligence and pre-planning for staff safety persons of interest (SSPOIs), creating a better risk picture that enhances planning and response decisions. It also embeds staff safety culture and tasking as a coordinated system across the organisation.

3. ENHANCED ACCESS TO SPECIALIST CAPABILITY

New Offender Prevention Teams (OPT) — made up of qualified AOS members — proactively tasking SSPOIs and providing frontline support for high-risk emergency redeployment.

Dog handlers being paired with AOS members to ensure added safety and capability during response.

Importantly, AOS members are now also training coaches — bringing credibility, experience and trust into the delivery of tactical skills to general frontline teams.

A system-wide approach to organisational safety:

Department of Corrections - Shifting from blame to learning

Who are we?

The Department of Corrections - Ara Poutama Aotearoa is one of New Zealand's largest government agencies, with over 10,000 staff managing 9,000 people in prisons and 30,000 in community-based settings. Across 17 prisons and 148 Community Corrections sites, staff operate not only in complex social environments but also in high-risk sectors such as construction, forestry, farming and industrial services.

Historically, incident response at Corrections followed a traditional Safety-I model — with an emphasis on identifying faults, assigning actions and restoring order.

From investigation to understanding

While well-intentioned, from 2020 - 2022, Corrections completed more than 2,000 internal reviews and produced over 3,400 corrective actions — often focused on frontline decisions rather than system factors.

The shift toward **Safety-II** began in 2021, with the introduction of critical risk control assurance processes. In 2023, this work was embedded as a core part of the Te Ara Whakamua (The Pathway Forward) organisational change programme, laying the groundwork for a new approach to learning.

A whole-of-organisation learning system

To support a continued move forward, the Organisational Learning team was established in April 2024. Unlike previous models, this team:

- ♦ Acts as a **central triage** for serious incidents.
- ♦ Consolidates reviews into **single system-focused learning reviews**.
- ♦ Focuses on understanding how normal work happens, not just what went wrong.

Supporting this is a newly formed **Organisational Learning Forum**, chaired by the Chief Executive, which oversees

learning quality and system-wide uptake of lessons.

Engaging frontline insights through Learning Teams

One of the most visible and impactful changes has been the introduction of **Learning Teams**. These structured workshops bring together frontline staff after an incident to explore how work normally happens, what made sense at the time and where changes might be needed.

The model has been adapted to fit Corrections' operational environment — condensing the usual two workshops into one, to make it more accessible for staff balancing frontline duties.

“Since starting to use Learning Teams, I’ve noticed a real shift in how engaged staff are after incidents. It’s quicker, more flexible, and ultimately leads to better learning.”

— Manager HSW





“HOW WE RESPOND TO MISTAKES MATTERS. JUST LOOKING FOR PROCEDURAL CAUSES CAN DRIVE FEAR, INSTEAD OF SUPPORTING GOOD JUDGEMENT AND LEARNING.”

TE ARA WHAKAMUA

Tools to embed change

To support this shift, Corrections has introduced a suite of practical tools:

- ♦ Lines of Enquiry: standardised prompts to explore normal work.
- ♦ Learning Alerts: concise, actionable summaries shared across sites.
- ♦ Question banks and template guidance for consistency.
- ♦ Training for staff likely to facilitate or lead learning reviews.

These tools make learning from incidents faster, more relevant and more broadly shared — including through case studies, workshops and soon, a biannual publication focused on learnings from events.

A cultural shift underway

While early in the journey, the impact is already evident:

- ♦ Reviews are more targeted and system focused.
- ♦ Frontline participation has increased.
- ♦ Staff feedback shows improved trust, with the Just Culture score improving for the first time since 2019.

“In this case, it wasn’t just about what happened on the day — but also in the lead-up. The Learning Team helped us surface issues we wouldn’t have otherwise seen.”

— General Manager, Rimutaka Prison

The work is now being embedded into leadership expectations and training, with HOP principles reflected in new development frameworks and the third phase of Corrections’ Positive Safety Leadership programme.

Looking ahead

The Department of Corrections - Ara Poutama Aotearoa is not just changing how it investigates incidents — it’s building a learning culture that recognises complexity, values frontline voices and puts people at the centre of system improvement.

“We need a culture of curiosity... one that hears the voices of those involved, explores the broader picture and uses learning to make real change.”

— Jeremy Lightfoot, Chief Executive

The success of this programme has been recognised with it being a finalist in the the Safeguard New Zealand Workplace Health & Safety Awards 2025.

Standing up a new central agency with wellbeing at its core:

Ministry for Regulation - Building from the base

Established in March 2024, the Ministry for Regulation leads efforts to improve regulatory quality and streamline compliance across government.

The Ministry for Regulation (MfR) officially launched on 1 March 2024. In its first few weeks, a small team of seven secondees was tasked with a big job: establish a brand-new agency while beginning to deliver on its core regulatory functions.

Where we started

In the first few months, the priority list was long: recruitment, payroll, Individual Employment Agreements and managing ongoing organisational change.

A key moment came with the transfer of eleven employees from Treasury and MBIE. Many of these new team members were navigating not just a change in role, but the cumulative effects of several restructures. Recognising this, the team placed wellbeing front and centre, making access to support services an immediate priority.

Finding the right support

MfR sought an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider that could deliver:

- ♦ Responsiveness – appointments within days, not weeks
- ♦ Flexibility – a range of support options
- ♦ Context-awareness – an understanding of the pressures facing a start-up public agency

A provider was selected who guaranteed triage within 48 hours and access to counsellors and clinical psychologists. Feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive.

Building a system that fits

As with any new or rapidly growing agency, one of the most important activities to get right is the development of a Health and Safety Management System (HSMS). While it can be tempting to adopt





Ministry for Regulation Te Manatū Waeture

an off-the-shelf system, this rarely reflects the operating realities or risk profile of a specific agency.

MfR made a deliberate choice to build a fit-for-purpose HSMS — one grounded in the context of our work and informed by the collective experience of the public sector. Rather than starting from scratch, the Ministry tapped into the expertise of the Government Health and Safety Lead (GHSL) and drew on the lessons of agencies further along their journey.

This support proved invaluable for a team without a large in-house health and safety function, offering access to expert advice and practical examples of what works.

Through the GHSL's summer internship programme, MfR also gained a passionate intern who developed key resources now forming the backbone of our HSMS, including:

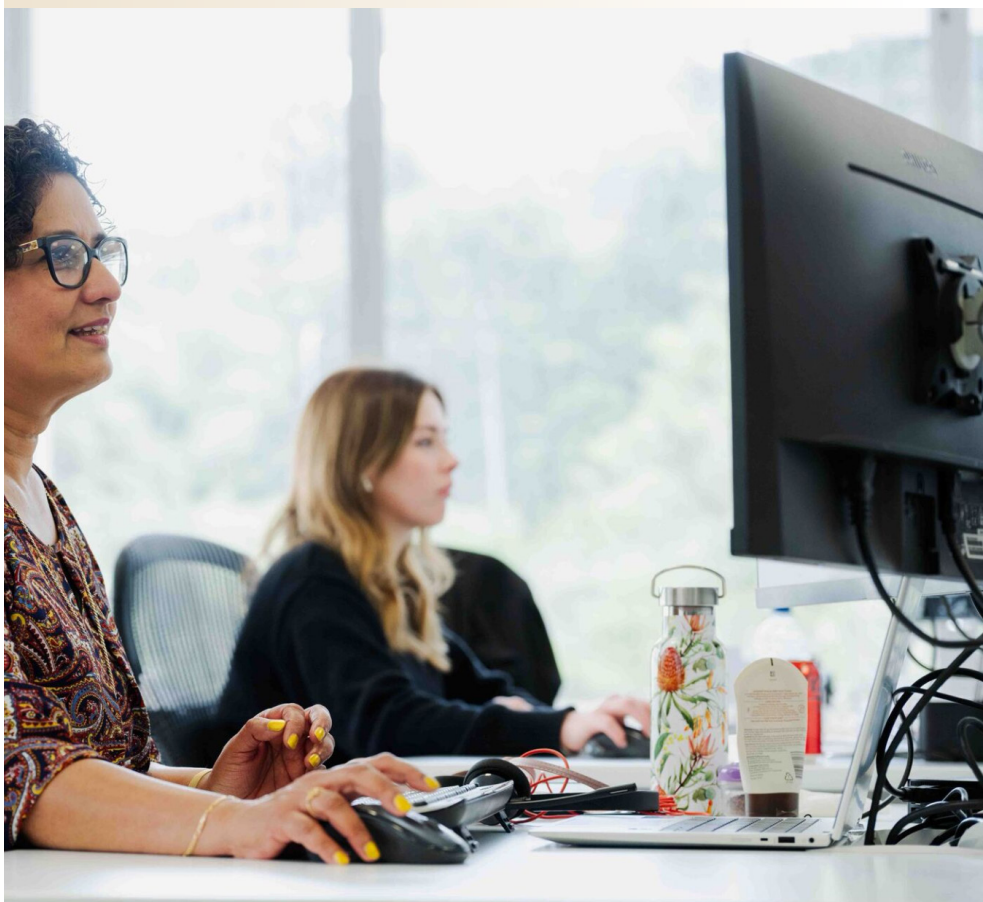
- ◇ A Health and Safety risk register
- ◇ Senior Leadership Team briefing materials on Officer responsibilities
- ◇ A framework for Health and Safety Representatives
- ◇ Induction content tailored to MfR's needs

Looking ahead

Now celebrating its first birthday, the Ministry is proud of what it has achieved in its establishment phase. The year ahead will focus on embedding mentally healthy work practices and identifying ways to proactively address psychosocial risks.

With a supportive leadership team and a strong foundation, MfR is ready for the next stage of the journey — one where wellbeing and system maturity go hand in hand.

“THE INTERNSHIP GAVE US A REAL HEAD START ON CORE HEALTH AND SAFETY SYSTEMS AND BROUGHT GREAT ENERGY INTO THE TEAM.”



Strengthening governance and assurance:

Ministry for Primary Industries - Critical risk control checks

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) employs around 3,500 people across the primary sector, including roles in biosecurity, food safety, forestry, animal welfare and fisheries.

Many of these functions involve high-risk work in complex, uncontrolled environments — from remote farms and beaches to fumigated shipping containers and active ports.

To ensure the safety of its people, MPI has undertaken a multi-year transformation in how it understands and manages critical risks.

Building a system-wide picture of risk

In 2020–21, MPI began identifying its organisation-wide critical risks. But by 2023, it recognised the need for greater assurance that critical controls were consistently applied and effective across diverse operations.

In response, MPI launched a **Critical Control Assurance Programme** — a structured, tri-level (First, Second, and Third Line) approach to assessing risk control performance. Built collaboratively with operational teams and supported by external

expertise, the programme checks 2–3 risks every two months and prioritises areas of highest exposure.

The model is high-trust but data-informed:

- ♦ **First Line:** anonymous staff surveys and tracked manager inspections through MPI's online system.
- ♦ **Second Line:** review of incidents, training records and prior assurance work.
- ♦ **Third Line:** external expert input for higher-risk topics like fumigation or aviation.

All findings and recommendations are reported to MPI's internal Health, Safety and Wellbeing Governance Committee, which includes senior leadership and independent H&S expertise.

Evidence of impact

The process has already improved visibility and consistency in risk management. For example:



Body-Worn Cameras (BWCs) – Fisheries

BWCs were introduced in 2022 to protect Fisheries Compliance Officers from aggressive public interactions. Control assurance data shows that with an increase in the use of BWC, serious incidents have decreased — with First and Second Line checks identifying that BWCs are an effective control.

Risk assessment for aggression

Frontline staff operating in uncontrolled public spaces use risk assessments to plan safe engagements. Critical control checks show this process is widely applied and well supported by additional controls like working in pairs, GPS tracking and backup planning.

Clarifying 4WD training

Control checks revealed variability in 4WD training across MPI. On review, the intended control was clarified — only staff who operate vehicles off-road require specific training — helping directorates apply it more practically.

Mobile plant separation

Incident trends show a 45% reduction in high-potential incidents involving mobile plant, confirming the effectiveness of physical and procedural controls such as barriers and scheduling.

Fumigation safety

MPI has significantly improved handheld detection device use and calibration during container inspections. Ongoing work is reviewing offshore fumigation risks and control adequacy, supported by expert validation that current approaches keep staff safe.

“THE PROGRAMME HAS NARROWED THE KNOWLEDGE GAP BETWEEN WORK AS IMAGINED AND WORK AS DONE — AND BROUGHT OPERATIONAL RISK INSIGHT DIRECTLY TO THE GOVERNANCE TABLE.”

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



IMPROVING GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING

Governance reporting now includes summaries of completed checks, recommendations, and a status update on all HSW-related remediation actions. This gives senior leaders and officers a clear view of where controls are working, where improvements are needed and how risk is changing over time.

EMBEDDING SYSTEMIC LEARNING

MPI's assurance model is now a tool for:

- ♦ Strengthening risk ownership at all levels.
- ♦ Identifying both weak points and areas of excellence.
- ♦ Creating a common language for critical risk across the agency.

- ♦ Enabling better risk-based governance decisions.

With the next tranche of critical risks underway, MPI will continue to explore how a focus on critical control assurance, as opposed to just identifying risk within a large, high-risk agency can embed learning, assurance and governance in a way that protects its people and strengthens system-wide resilience.

RECOGNITION

The scope and impact of this work has been recognised with the programme being a finalist in the Safeguard New Zealand Workplace Health & Safety Awards 2025.

Proactive risk leadership and innovation: New Zealand Defence Force: Asbestos safety

As one of Aotearoa's largest and most complex government agencies, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) operates 24/7 across hundreds of facilities and environments — many of them legacy sites with historic risks.

With a clear mandate: maintaining a safe, ready and responsive force, the NZDF made the strategic decision to strengthen its oversight of asbestos-related hazards by embedding dedicated, expert leadership into its Defence Estate Infrastructure (DEI) function.

A system designed to meet risk

NZDF's infrastructure footprint spans bases, training grounds, barracks, ports and operational buildings — some of which contain ageing materials and residual contaminants. One of the most persistent and serious risks identified was asbestos.

Rather than manage this risk through generic systems, NZDF stood up a dedicated Asbestos Manager role to develop a nationally consistent framework, improve data visibility and standardise controls across the estate. This approach not only met regulatory expectations but recognised the long-term operational need for sustained assurance, confidence and safety in how asbestos is handled.

The resulting **Asbestos Management Plan** provides the backbone of NZDF's compliance with New Zealand regulations. Developed through cross-functional consultation, the plan now governs how asbestos-related work is conducted, reviewed and monitored nationwide — and is complemented by a national asbestos awareness training programme rolled out across the workforce.

Enabling innovation through informed structure

NZDF's investment in capability has also enabled it to respond quickly and creatively to emerging situations. A standout example came when a burst water main at Devonport Naval Base presented a unique and urgent infrastructure risk. Excavation was needed fast — but the surrounding soil was suspected to be contaminated with asbestos.

Conventional hydro-excavation was prohibited due to the potential for fibre release and manual digging would have delayed repairs significantly. NZDF showed a high level of confidence in the



Asbestos Manager, who proposed an innovative solution and worked with WorkSafe New Zealand to obtain a rare exemption — demonstrating a robust plan for safely managing the work with high-pressure water in a contaminated environment.

Thanks to this work, the mains were repaired within days rather than weeks — and the method has since been recognised as a benchmark for safe, innovative excavation in similar contexts.

Sector influence through credibility and practice

NZDF's approach to asbestos is not only improving safety outcomes internally — it is also shaping national thinking. The Defence Force's work is now informing updates to the asbestos regulatory framework, with their systems, tools and methodology recognised as leading practice by external regulators.

By investing in the right roles, systems and partnerships, NZDF has moved from managing asbestos reactively to leading the conversation on how it should be handled across New Zealand.

“WE'VE BUILT A SYSTEM THAT REFLECTS OUR RISK, OUR PEOPLE AND OUR OPERATIONAL DEMANDS — AND IT'S DELIVERING RESULTS.”



MATT WRIGGLESWORTH, ASBESTOS MANAGER FOR DEFENCE ESTATE

In recognition of his work with the hydrovac project, Matt was awarded the NZDF Safety Person of the year and was nominated for a Safeguard award in 2024.



Wellington Free Ambulance

Enhancing frontline safety through a High-Risk Address notification system

Wellington Free Ambulance (WFA) provides 24/7 emergency paramedic services across the greater Wellington region, including the Kāpiti Coast, Wairarapa and the capital itself.

WHERE ARE WE

With nine ambulance stations, a clinical communications centre and mobile and community-based clinical teams, WFA responds to more than 54,000 incidents each year and answers over 246,000 calls.

FUNDING

As a charitable organisation, WFA receives the majority of its funding from government but must raise around \$8 million annually from the community to ensure its services remain free of charge. Despite its size, WFA delivers far beyond expectations — combining clinical excellence with a deep connection to the people and places it serves.

What we did

Guided by a set of strong organisational values and the whakataukī Kia ora te Tāngata — “Keeping people alive / keep people living” — WFA continues to evolve to meet the changing needs of its communities. Its focus on teamwork, compassion and continuous improvement underpins everything it does.

Improving staff safety at the front line

To further support staff in unpredictable environments, WFA has developed a process to immediately notify frontline crews of any known violent or aggressive behaviour (VAB) associated with an address. The goal is simple: increase situational awareness and reduce risk before paramedics arrive on scene.

Why it was needed

Previously, the process for identifying high-risk addresses was informal and inconsistent. Without structured assessments or governance, notifications were subject to bias, delay, or outdated information. This created the potential for staff to arrive unaware of previous threats or incidents of VAB.

The new system addresses these gaps by ensuring accurate, up-to-date information is added to dispatch notes immediately — enabling dynamic risk assessment before arrival.





Defining and managing High-Risk Addresses

Using definitions from the Council of Ambulance Authorities, WFA established four High-Risk Address (HRA) categories, with risk levels based on the type of behaviour and likelihood of recurrence. The process includes:

- ♦ Standardised wording and review timeframes (6 or 12 months).
- ♦ Monthly reviews by operational managers, the Health, Safety and Wellness team and the Clinical Lead.
- ♦ Quarterly reviews of addresses with higher risk levels by the Medical Director.

Care is taken to ensure other residents at multi-occupant addresses are not unfairly impacted, and clinical care is not compromised by the HRA designation.

A collaborative effort

WFA's Health, Safety and Wellness team led the co-design of the process, working alongside clinical, operational and IT colleagues. A project group met monthly to test and refine the system, ensuring it reflected real work as done, not just imagined workflows.

"It helped us understand work as done, not just work as imagined."

User acceptance testing was carried out with frontline teams, enabling refinements and building strong staff ownership of the process from the outset.

Results and benefits

- ♦ Faster, more accurate risk notifications.
- ♦ Improved situational awareness and confidence for crews.
- ♦ Better visibility and governance of VAB-related risks.
- ♦ A process co-designed with and trusted by those who use it.

The result is a smarter, safer system that helps WFA deliver care with the information they need — when and where they need it most.



Training vets for safe and effective biosecurity response:

Biosecurity New Zealand: VetNet

Biosecurity New Zealand, within the Ministry for Primary Industries, oversees New Zealand's multi-layered biosecurity system—managing risks at the border and beyond to protect our environment, economy, and way of life.

Protecting New Zealand from exotic animal diseases isn't just a biosecurity challenge—it's a critical health and safety issue. Whether responding to foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) or another high-consequence outbreak, veterinarians on the ground are tasked with managing risk not only to animal populations but also to themselves, their teams and the wider community.

To support this, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has developed **VetNet-Biosecurity**—an initiative to ensure New Zealand's private veterinarians are ready, trained and safe in the event of a major biosecurity response.

Co-Designing for Safety in the Field

The need for a national veterinary response network was identified through independent reviews and MPI-led research. But ensuring that response-ready vets are also safe and confident in their role has required a collaborative approach.

Engaging directly with veterinarians—those who would be on the frontlines of any future outbreak—was key. Their

insights helped shape learning content that is practical, relevant and focused on what it takes to work safely in high-risk environments.

The result is a training programme that not only builds technical competence in tasks like surveillance and biosecurity protocols, but also reinforces how to look after personal wellbeing, operate safely in the field and avoid unintentional spread of disease between properties.

Training Grounded in Real Work

Until recently, New Zealand veterinarians preparing for FMD responses had to rely mostly on overseas materials, such as those produced by the European Commission for the Control of FMD (EuFMD). To better reflect local context and conditions, MPI developed a bespoke training programme. The new modules use New Zealand voices, farms and field scenarios—making the content immediately relevant and practical.



The first three online modules are now live on MPI's learning platform will be available to all registered veterinarians via the Veterinary Council of New Zealand as of June 2025. The training covers:

- ◇ Health and safety protocols for biosecurity response
- ◇ Field surveillance for FMD
- ◇ Personal cleaning and disinfection practices
- ◇ Destruction procedures
- ◇ Legal responsibilities under the Biosecurity Act 1993

All content is scenario-based and grounded in real-life operations. MPI teams drew on past experiences

and frontline feedback to create modules that reflect the demands of working in unfamiliar and often pressured field conditions.

A key area of focus was ensuring that veterinarians could visualise and practise critical tasks. For example, drone footage was used to show how to safely set up a cleaning and disinfection station, highlighting clean and contaminated zones. Learners can also access downloadable guides, videos and feedback forms to practise and refine their approach.

Results

A successful training package

MAKING SAFETY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

The training is designed to be as accessible as possible. Alongside video and audio materials, full descriptive transcripts are included to support different learning styles and accessibility needs.

By prioritising inclusivity and real-world usability, the programme helps ensure that safety practices are understood, retained and applied—no matter the context.

PREPARING FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

As MPI considers whether to expand the training to cover additional exotic diseases such as avian influenza, the value of VetNet-Biosecurity is already clear: it's an investment not only in disease preparedness, but in the health, safety and confidence of the veterinary professionals who play critical roles in biosecurity responses.

The programme reflects what's possible when health and safety is embedded from the ground up—by listening to those doing the work and equipping them with tools that work for them and for the country.



Biosecurity New Zealand

Ministry for Primary Industries

Manatū Ahu Matua



Strengthening governance and assurance:

GHSL - Learning and Building Leadership Capability

The Government Health and Safety Lead (GHSL) was established to strengthen Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) leadership across the public sector.

Since 2017, its mission has remained consistent: supporting Chief Executives, senior leaders and practitioners to improve health, safety and wellbeing management within their organisations and for the benefit of all New Zealanders.

Public sector Tier 2 leaders (e.g. Deputy Chief Executive, Deputy Director-General) often serve as both officers under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) and as senior managers overseeing diverse operational portfolios. This creates natural tension: how do you provide governance assurance while also managing day-to-day realities? Many of these leaders do not come from HSW backgrounds but are accountable for ensuring health and safety systems function effectively across their organisations.

Recognising this, GHSL designed a targeted initiative responding to the unique challenge faced by senior executives holding governance and / or operational roles for health and safety. The programme is specifically designed for those Tier 2 leaders with responsibility for HSW, to bridge the gap between governance expectations and operational responsibilities. Developed in consultation with senior leaders and launched in late 2024, the programme brings together the Tier 2 HSW leaders from the 52 GHSL member agencies, to share experiences, learn from their peers and strengthen their understanding of what effective HSW governance and management look like in practice.

Practical, Peer-Based Learning

The programme uses a blended learning approach to suit the needs of time-poor executives. This includes in-person leadership breakfasts, field trips, online webinars, peer shadowing and development resources, including regular environmental scans. Topics to date have included:

- ◊ Crisis leadership and organisational response (FENZs experience with Cyclone Gabrielle)
- ◊ Governance responsibilities under HSWA
- ◊ Embedding safety in tactical operations (NZ Police Tactical Response Model)
- ◊ Managing psychosocial harm
- ◊ Legal lessons from the Ports of Auckland case

The programme deliberately excludes delegates outside the Tier 2 level, creating a trusted space for open discussion among peers with shared challenges.



What they said:

"This is the first time I've been able to learn from peers at my level rather than figuring it out alone."

Government Health & Safety Lead

Sector Buy-in and Growing Impact:

Leaders Janine Hearn (DCE, FENZ) and Richard Griffiths (DCE, MBIE) have championed the programme, reinforcing its value in lifting sector capability. As Richard Griffiths put it, "This kind of horizontal learning helps us lift the system response across government."

The initiative has quickly gained traction. Attendance has grown across events, with agencies volunteering to host upcoming sessions. Participants report applying lessons directly in their agencies, with feedback highlighting the value of peer learning and the confidence it builds in influencing executive decisions.

The Programme has been selected as a finalist in the Safeguard New Zealand Workplace Health & Safety Awards 2025, Category 8 – Governance.

A structured approach to keeping workers safe

Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa: System strength and field safety

Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa is New Zealand's official data agency. With more than 1,000 staff across offices in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and in field roles nationwide, Stats NZ is responsible for collecting, analysing and publishing data that informs decisions across Aotearoa — from government and iwi to businesses and communities

As leaders in data and analytics, Stats NZ supports others to use data safely and effectively, while maintaining high standards of privacy, integrity and accessibility. The agency's work is guided by the principle: About Aotearoa, for Aotearoa — data that improves lives today and for generations to come.

A strong system for health, safety and wellbeing

The health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) of Stats NZ's kaimahi (workers) is supported by a robust and well-established Health and Safety Management System, designed to promote consistent practice, clear governance and continuous improvement across the organisation.

Key elements of the system include:

- ◊ A structured governance framework with clear roles and responsibilities
- ◊ Aligned policies, standards and tools across six documentation levels
- ◊ Regular review and audit cycles
- ◊ Performance indicators to support due diligence and strategic oversight

Each quarter, the system is reviewed, and findings are presented to the Executive Leadership Team. These insights feed directly into an annual HSW improvement plan.

Supporting safe collection work

Stats NZ's **Collection Operations Group** — responsible for door-to-door surveys and data collection — operates in a variety of uncontrolled environments and faces unique risks including occupational violence, dog encounters, driving hazards and ergonomic strain.

In response, the Health and Safety team has:

- ◊ Simplified and standardised documentation, including process maps
- ◊ Enhanced training and hazard control reviews
- ◊ Strengthened incident reporting and investigation protocols
- ◊ Maintained robust frontline tools, including Care & Caution Registers, risk flags and annual de-escalation training

All field collectors are equipped with safety gear, such as lone worker tools with SOS functions, satellite communication devices and first aid kits.





Stats **NZ**

Tatauranga Aotearoa

Results that matter

2024 was a standout year for health and safety performance:

- ◇ Over 30% of event reports were hazard-related — a strong signal of proactive engagement
- ◇ Only one high-severity incident was recorded
- ◇ Medium-severity incidents dropped by nearly 80%, from 69 in 2023 to 14 in 2024
- ◇ 95% of staff achieved their training KPIs, with improved access and quality

“Keeping our kaimahi safe is a continuous process of refinement, adjustment, and care.”

With mature systems, active governance and a responsive safety culture, Stats NZ continues to demonstrate what it means to protect both its people and the quality of the insights they gather.



Government Health & Safety Lead

Ministry for Primary Industries / Manatu Ahu Matua

Pastoral House, Level 9

25 the Terrace

Wellington

New Zealand