

EuLA Safety Tools: List of Good Lead Indicators



Lagging or outcome indicators of safety have been used for many years in industry (including the lime industry) to track when damage, injury or harm has occurred. They provide a measure of safety performance, allow comparisons between industries and help to show whether improvement actions taken are being effective or not. However, lagging performance indicators do not show the full picture and focussing too greatly on them can drive undesirable behaviours, such as the under-reporting of safety incidents.

Leading or activity indicators are proactive and predictive as they measure the direct and indirect precursors to harm. They give advance warning before an event occurs, providing an opportunity for preventative action to be taken. They can also be used to monitor and manage the implementation of safety initiatives which have been introduced to improve safety performance.

To be effective, leading indicators must be integrated with the overall business objectives, strategy and decision-making processes to deliver on desired performance. The closer an organization gets to “zero harm”, as measured using lagging indicators, the more difficult it is to ensure safety through tracking lagging performance, and to determine the factors that contribute to improved performance. It is also unreliable to make any generalized causal inferences based on these rare events. Management efforts should therefore be focused on more frequently measurable **leading indicators of precursor circumstances**. This said, it is important to select appropriate leading indicators. The selection of lagging indicators is straightforward and often obvious given the goal of safety management being to prevent harm. By contrast there are a large number of possible leading measures and the best ones for a given business may change over time due to changing areas of focus. The list over the page gives an idea of some possible leading indicators and their potential use.



Area of focus	Purpose	Examples of Indicators
<p>Visible Felt Leadership</p> 	<p>Measures leadership roles' engagement in safety conversations with others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Safety conversations • Safety conversations as a percentage of target • Number of safety conversations completed alongside line manager • Quality/impact of safety conversations (difficult to measure)
<p>Safe working conditions</p> 	<p>Monitoring the conditions of the workplace, seeking to make it safer and to encourage workplace pride and safe mindset.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of workplace order/cleaning plan • Number of hygiene inspections • Workplace dust and RCS (respirable crystalline silica) measurements • Workplace light/noise/vibration measurements • Walk-round inspection scores • Completion/coverage of 5S exercise • Number of dust hotspots
<p>Safety in action</p> 	<p>The completion of safety tasks, safety improvements and correction of unsafe conditions is vital in maintaining a safe working environment. Prioritising safety action over other work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Risk Assessments done • Completion of safety audit plan • Number of safety improvements completed • Number of safety actions outstanding (%) • Number of investigations outstanding • Reactive maintenance vs planned maintenance
<p>Safety learning</p> 	<p>The engagement with safety material aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge of the workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of training plan • Number of safety training hours • % of competency/certification/authorisation within date • Completion of toolbox talks
<p>Safety Reporting & Communication</p> 	<p>An open and honest environment for reporting safety concerns, incidents and ideas/opportunities is essential for safety improvement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of near misses raised • Number of potentially serious incidents raised • Number of safety suggestions • Number/proportion of types of safety observations (unsafe behaviour, unsafe conditions etc)
<p>Best Practice Sharing</p> 	<p>Learning from others can accelerate learning and improvement by seeing opportunities and hazards without having to experience them all oneself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number safety suggestions shared/received • Number of safety incidents shared/received • Completion of safety best practice meetings