

# THE AUDIT PROCESS AND THE ONLINE AFRA LIBRARY

All AFRA members meet rigorous standards both when applying for and to maintain membership. AFRA undertakes face-to-face audits every four years and undertakes a desktop audit on an alternating four year cycle.

Audits are a constitutional requirement of AFRA membership. AFRA is introducing a 'self-audit' for members who are encouraged to undertake their own internal 'business health check' in between formal AFRA audits.

For example, a typical four-year cycle would see an AFRA face-to-face audit year one, a self-audit year two, an AFRA desktop audit year three, finishing with another self-audit year four. The cycle would start again year five with a face-to-face AFRA audit.

Regular audits are a great way to ensure you and your operation are not suffering 'business slip' – this can occur when you start out with all the correct policies and procedures in place but you allow these to 'slip' over time. Business slippage can occur for many reasons – bad habits creep in, regular maintenance of safety systems may be missed, or high staff turnover may mean training staff about procedures and/or enforcement is overlooked. Audits can help keep you on track.

Aside from being a membership requirement, the primary reason AFRA undertakes audits is to ensure members are managing risk in their business. Risk to reputation – both your individual business and AFRA's reputation – risk to staff safety and risk to client's goods are primary focuses when auditing. Having robust procedures in place assist you to manage these risks.

Perhaps even more importantly, having active procedures and policies in place will provide you with crucial evidence you may later require in the event of investigation of a workplace accident or injury.

The AFRA team have been busy with audits over the past six months, with a heavy program of audits this year after years of COVID travel shutdown. These audits have revealed gaps in some members' business procedures.

For example, many members have excellent policies in place, but cannot evidence they are being enforced. A member might have designated pathways in a warehouse

where a forklift and trucks are in use, an important workplace safety requirement. Although a member might have such pathways in place and ensure staff are trained to use those pathways, it is also critical they can evidence that such training has taken place. You must have a policy, ensure your staff have been informed or educated about the policy and evidence that training took place.

Toolbox Talks are an excellent vehicle to educate and train staff on current or new policies and procedures. When holding a Toolbox Talk, ensure you keep a record of what the talk covered and who attended, and have attendees

evidence of their attendance by either signing a printed sheet or other electronic evidence of attendance.

Ideas for Toolbox Talks, and versions and/or proformas of many items required for audit can be sourced from the online AFRA library.

The AFRA library is a valuable but underutilised membership resource. Available via the members only section of the website – see [aframembers.com.au/workplace-library](http://aframembers.com.au/workplace-library). These resources are readily downloadable for adaptation and use in your business.

Resources are available in relation to Employment Templates, WHS Systems, Drivers, Vehicle & Equipment Maintenance, Training and Contractor/Subcontractor Contracts.

Specifically, policies, templates and other business support documents available include a Drug,

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Substance and Alcohol Policy, an Employee Engagement Checklist, Application for Leave, Annual Fire Drill, Forklift Inspection Checklist and Competency Schedules. Many of these documents are requested as part of the AFRA audit process. The online AFRA Library is a handy reference if you are preparing for

audit and require any of these documents or would like to look at suggested wording or content for requested documents.

The library is currently being reviewed and updated. These resources are a guide only, and each member will need to adjust these proforma documents to suit their own specific circumstances. If there are policies, templates or other supporting documents you would like to see included in the AFRA library, please contact us. We work for you and are happy to include resources that are requested by members.

The AFRA online Library is also where you will find the AFRA Terms and Conditions of Contract, award information and member directory.

Past editions of *On The Move* can also be accessed from here. With the new easy to use website, these resources are easier to use than ever. ●