

## 3.2 Analyse Audit and Inspection Data to Identify Systemic Compliance Gaps





# Learning Outcome

By the end of this session, learners should be able to analyse audit and inspection data to identify systemic compliance gaps within an Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OH&SMS). Learners will examine audit findings, root cause analysis techniques, recurring issues, and risk prioritisation methods to support continual improvement.



# Learning Objectives

After completing this topic, learners will be able to:

- Analyse audit and inspection findings.
- Apply root cause analysis techniques to identify underlying causes of non-conformities.
- Identify systemic weaknesses and recurring compliance issues.
- Prioritise risks using structured risk assessment approaches.



# Introduction

Audits and inspections generate valuable information about an organisation's health and safety performance. However, collecting data alone is not enough. Organisations must analyse findings to identify recurring problems, understand their root causes, and implement improvements that prevent future non-compliance.

# 1. Analysis of Audit Findings

Audit findings should be reviewed to determine:

## Areas to Review

- Areas of legal non-compliance.
- Repeated non-conformities.
- Weaknesses in procedures.
- Gaps in training or supervision.
- Opportunities for improvement.

## Findings are commonly classified as:

- **Conformity** – Requirements are fully met.
- **Minor Non-Conformity** – Small deviation with limited risk.
- **Major Non-Conformity** – Significant failure requiring immediate action.
- **Opportunity for Improvement (OFI)** – Suggestions to enhance system performance.

# 1. Root Cause Analysis Techniques

Correcting a problem without identifying its root cause often leads to repeated incidents. Common techniques include:

## 5 Whys

Asking "Why?" repeatedly until the underlying cause is identified.

## Fishbone (Ishikawa) Diagram

Analyses causes related to people, equipment, methods, materials, environment, and management.

## Fault Tree Analysis (FTA)

Identifies combinations of failures leading to an incident.

Root cause analysis focuses on preventing recurrence rather than treating symptoms.



# 1. Systemic Weaknesses and Recurring Issues

A single finding may indicate a wider organisational problem. Examples include:

**Repeated failures to complete risk assessments.**

**Poor contractor management.**

**Inadequate employee training.**

**Weak supervision.**

**Ineffective communication.**

**Outdated procedures.**

Identifying patterns helps organisations improve the management system rather than addressing isolated incidents.

# 1. Risk Prioritisation Approaches

Not all findings require the same level of urgency. Organisations should prioritise actions based on risk. Common approaches include:

**Risk Matrix (Likelihood × Consequence)**

**Risk Register ranking.**

**Trend Analysis to identify recurring issues.**

**Pareto Analysis (80/20 Rule) to focus on the few causes responsible for most problems.**

High-risk findings should be addressed first to reduce the likelihood of serious incidents and legal breaches.



## Practical Example

During several internal audits, a manufacturing company repeatedly identifies incomplete lockout/tagout (LOTO) procedures. Root cause analysis reveals inconsistent supervisor training rather than employee negligence. The organisation revises its training programme, updates procedures, and increases supervisory monitoring.

- ✅ Outcome: Compliance improves and repeated audit findings are eliminated.



# Critical Evaluation

Analysing audit and inspection data enables organisations to move from reactive problem-solving to proactive system improvement. By identifying root causes, recognising recurring patterns, and prioritising risks, organisations can address systemic weaknesses rather than isolated issues. This strengthens legal compliance, improves governance, and supports continual improvement.



# Summary Table

| Analysis Method         | Purpose                                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Audit Findings Analysis | Identify compliance gaps and improvement opportunities |
| Root Cause Analysis     | Determine the underlying causes of non-conformities    |
| Trend Analysis          | Identify recurring or systemic issues                  |
| Risk Prioritisation     | Focus resources on the highest-risk findings           |

# Reflective Questions

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Why is root cause analysis more effective than simply correcting immediate problems?

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Why should organisations prioritise corrective actions based on risk?

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How can recurring audit findings indicate weaknesses in the management system?

04

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How do trend analysis and Pareto analysis support continual improvement?

# Key Takeaways

- Audit and inspection data should be analysed to identify systemic compliance gaps, not just individual non-conformities.
- Root cause analysis techniques such as the 5 Whys, Fishbone Diagram, and Fault Tree Analysis help prevent recurrence.
- Repeated findings often indicate weaknesses in organisational systems, processes, or governance.
- Risk prioritisation tools such as risk matrices, trend analysis, and Pareto analysis help organisations focus on the most significant compliance issues.
- Effective analysis supports legal compliance, better governance, and continual improvement within the OH&SMS.