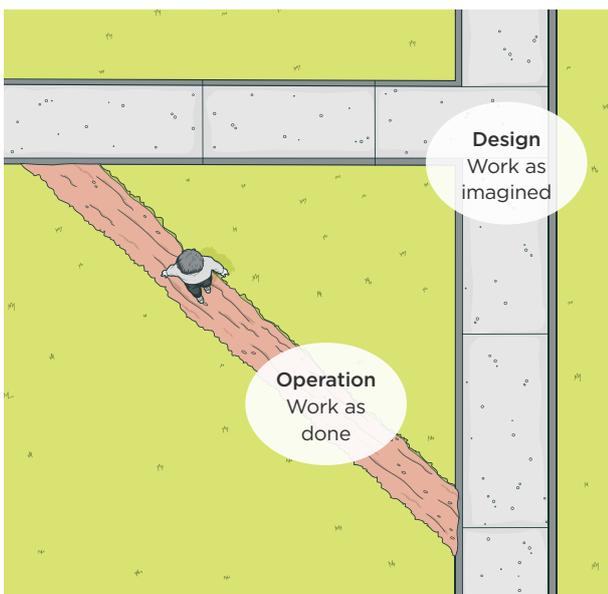


October 2021

Designing work with workers' insights

Look at how work is really done (work as done) rather than how you believe it is being carried out (work as imagined).



The difference between work as done versus work as imagined¹

The people you work with may not be carrying out work how you believe it is being carried out.

This could be because:

- the equipment does not allow them to do their best work
- workers are adapting to events in ways you did not expect
- your work processes and procedures require updating to reflect the fast-changing world of work.

You should look for where and why gaps exist between planned work methods and how the work is actually done.

Understanding these gaps is important as, for example, the control measures used to manage a risk may not be effective if the work is being done differently to how you expect.

People may feel worried about speaking honestly, so explain that you are trying to make things better rather than finding blame. Worker representatives (including health and safety representatives) may be able to help with this.

If what you find out is different from what you expected, discuss the reasons why. You may need to update your work processes and procedures as a result with everyone's input.

¹ Image inspired by the webinar *Safety differently – A balanced conversation*. Presenter Andy Shone: myosh.com

Practical suggestions

1 Work alongside your people and ask them what helps them do their work well and what makes it more difficult

This WorkSafe New Zealand case study describes a practical example: [Shared ownership of health and safety boosts staff retention](#)

2 Regularly review your policies and procedures with the people you work with

For each policy or procedure, you could ask the following questions.

- How useful is this policy/procedure to our work?
- How well does the policy/procedure support people to easily do the work without difficulty?
- How does this policy/procedure keep people safe at work?

You may find during your discussions that some policies/procedures are seen as barriers to doing work well.

WorkSafe's Innovation Lead Daniel Hummerdal gives [an example](#) of how workers improved health and safety by removing paperwork.

3 Have regular conversations with people about their work

The following questions may be useful to start the conversation.

- What do you do when you do not have the right resources to do the work? For example, if a piece of equipment is not available to use when you need it.
- When something unexpected happens, how do you change how you work? For example, if someone calls in sick, how does that affect your day?
- How do you balance your workload with doing your work well?
- Do you feel like you are set up for success at work? What support could you be given to make you more successful?

For more information, go to: [A positive work culture](#)

CASE STUDY

Central Districts Pest Control (CDPC) is a Napier-based pest control business that works across the country. They employ 30 staff and 20 contractors, who often work alone, in isolated, potentially dangerous terrain. CDPC carried out an onsite SafePlus assessment to drive greater ownership of health and safety across CDPCs widespread field team.

General Manager Rob Brenstrum said one of the changes that came out of the SafePlus assessment was a different approach to carrying out health and safety walkabouts.

"I used to go out into the field with a clipboard. Through the assessment, we realised people saw that more as a 'test'," he says.

"Now, instead of that, I spend a day working alongside the guys. I get a better idea of their health and safety behaviours, and we've incorporated discussions into that. It's much more useful for putting people at ease and getting under the surface of what's happening."

Learn more about their story: [SafePlus lifts worker participation](#)