



Waipapa
Taumata Rau
**University
of Auckland**



The Value of Safety Walks

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Safety walks are a practical way for leaders to demonstrate their commitment to health, safety and wellbeing. They bring together compliance obligations, proactive risk management, and visible leadership into one simple, powerful practice that strengthens culture and trust across Waipapa Taumata Rau.

Purpose of Safety Walks

The purpose of safety walks is to:

- Identify and address visible hazards.
- Engage with staff on what is working well and what needs improvement.
- Reinforce safe behaviours and expectations.
- Reduce gaps in understanding of work as done vs work as imagined.
- Build a culture of shared responsibility for safety.

Core Benefits of Safety Walks

Proactive Risk Identification | Whakahaere Tūraru

Safety walks help spot issues before they become incidents, reinforcing the importance of hazard identification and reporting. They also ensure a risk-based approach, prioritising environments and activities with the highest potential for harm, aligning with Faculty risk-based walk schedules.

Improved Communication | Whakawhitiwhiti Kōrero me te Whai Wāhitanga

The Safety Leaders Business Forum reinforces that visible presence and authentic engagement are critical to effective leadership. More information can be found on the [Safety Leaders Forum](#)

Reinforcing Safety Culture | Te Ahurea Haumarū

Visible leadership during safety walks helps embed a 'safety-first' mindset, set expectations, and normalise safe behaviours. It demonstrates that safety is a shared responsibility across the organisation.

Demonstrating Due Diligence | Te Haepapa

WorkSafe guidance highlights that worker engagement and leadership visibility are essential for effective risk management. See guidance from [WorkSafe NZ](#)

Safety walks aid in gaining understanding of work as done vs work as imagined.

How to Undertake a Safety Walk | Te Tukanga Haere Haumarū

1. Prepare

- Review previous safety walk notes and outstanding actions.
- Familiarise yourself with high-risk activities in the area (using the risk register).
- Invite the right people (technical managers, supervisors, HSW reps).
- Engage with your Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, who can guide and participate in the process.

2. Engage

- Introduce the purpose of the walk — to learn, listen, and support.
- Encourage open kōrero and make space for staff to raise concerns.
- Acknowledge positive behaviours and good practices observed.

3. Observe

- Walk through the area systematically, focusing on:
 - 1) Housekeeping and physical conditions.
 - 2) Safe behaviours and use of equipment.
 - 3) Alignment with risk controls and procedures.
- Apply a risk-based lens — look closer where likelihood and consequence are highest.

4. Record

- Note observations, hazards, and good practices.
- Capture agreed corrective actions in the Ideagen reporting platform, assigning responsibilities and timelines.

5. Follow-up

- Thank participants and share a brief summary email of key findings.
- Ensure actions are tracked to completion.
- Schedule a follow-up walk within three weeks to confirm progress.
- Using a risk-based approach, consider developing a schedule for safety walks across your faculty or Service Division.

Reporting and Recording | Te Rīpoata me te Tuhi

- All observations, hazards, and corrective actions are entered into the Ideagen reporting platform for tracking and monitoring.
- Progress on actions is reviewed during follow-up walks (typically within three weeks).
- Outcomes are summarised in monthly HSW reports, ensuring leadership visibility.
- Data contributes to university-wide HSW performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

Conclusion | Whakakapi

Safety walks are more than a compliance requirement — they are a leadership practice that builds safer workplaces, stronger relationships, and a culture of care. By applying a risk-based approach, drawing on external guidance, and ensuring robust reporting, Waipapa Taumata Rau continues to strengthen its health, safety, and wellbeing framework.

By taking part in safety walks, leaders reinforce their role as champions of wellbeing and create safer, more engaged workplaces.