



Port Sector Insights Picture and Action Plan FAQs

Q: Why was this plan/programme of work needed?

A: Following the tragic death of two port workers in 2022, the Minister of Transport asked the Port Health and Safety Leadership Group, which is made up of unions, industry, port associations and government regulators (Maritime NZ and WorkSafe NZ) to come up with a plan on how they will address harm on ports and whether regulatory standards were needed. The *Port Sector Insights Picture and Action Plan* was created in response to this request. The Minister also asked Maritime NZ and WorkSafe NZ to undertake assessments of companies operating on Ports and TAIC to undertake an investigation.

Q: What do we expect to see from these new initiatives and when will they take effect?

A: While it will take time for changes to bed in, we hope to begin to see improvements over the next two years. As more people take up fatigue risk management systems and other actions like the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for loading and unloading of cargo are put in place, we would expect to see the picture improve. Harm, near-miss and fatality data will be reviewed against previous years' data to help assess the effectiveness of the new initiatives. We also hope that the Port Sector Insights, and the information provided as part of the insight development to individual companies, will enable PCBUs to consider improvements they can make to health and safety in their companies.

Q: How will the Action Plan be implemented?

A: Publishing the Action Plan is just the start. Collectively, employers, unions and government agencies are promoting it to the wider port sector. We will be working in partnership with the sector on the implementation of actions under the plan: this will include training, education and other resources to support the plan.

Q: Where can we find the Data Insights and Action Plan?

A: The Data Insights and Action Plan documents can be found on Maritime NZ's, WorkSafe and the PIA websites at. On the Maritime NZ's website it will be available at this [link](#) from 10.30am on Wednesday, March 11.

Q: How will we know the Action Plan is making a difference?

A: If the plan is implemented properly, we should see a reduction in the number of incidents which are tracked as part of regular reporting. This will require effort from everyone in the sector.

Q: Why has it taken so long for the sector to develop something like this?

A: While a number of safety initiatives have been enacted by industry and government, this is the first time a comprehensive review of serious harm, near misses and fatalities on New Zealand ports has been conducted. This has been a significant piece of work. It has involved input from all the main PCBUs operating on ports, a number of workers, support from the industry bodies, unions (particularly the RMTU and MUNZ), and the regulators (WorkSafe NZ and Maritime NZ). It has required compromise, trust, and a different way of working between the parties. The PHSLG is incredibly proud of how we have got to this point with a plan we believe will make a difference.

Q: Why were the fatigue guidelines issued first?

A: Worker fatigue is one of the key drivers of harm on ports and the Leadership Group recognised this and undertook tripartite work to develop the Fatigue Risk Management System Good Practice Guidelines. This was developed working alongside Massey university fatigue expert (Professor Leigh Signal), to understand how fatigue affects workers and how to mitigate its effects. This work is now being supported by the Group and rolled out across the sector. The Group has taken the approach that we should deliver priority safety actions and work as soon as possible. Fatigue guidance was always timed for release in 2022.

Q: What's the rationale behind the designation change?

A: Maritime NZ is already the health and safety at work regulator for ships and activity between ships and the port, and Maritime NZ is also on ports for other parts of their role. People in the sector highlighted the need for the extension of the Maritime NZ designation to cover more of the land-side of ports so that there would be greater clarity on who the regulator is on ports, enable one regulator to deal with the complex interactions on the port environment, and allow WorkSafe NZ to focus on the other high-risk sectors, where there is not another health and safety regulator. This is why the Leadership Group has recommended the extension. WorkSafe already works closely with Maritime NZ and if the Government agrees to the extension, will continue to work closely with Maritime NZ to ensure a good transition. There would also be close collaboration with the sector.

Q: Much is made of the tripartite approach throughout the Data Insights and Action Plan work – what does this really mean?

A: Workers, industry and Government are represented on the Port Health and Safety Leadership Group which developed the plan and actions. The Port Sector Insights were developed from worker interviews, workshops and a sector Worker Voice survey, company information on incidents, and regulator data and insights. All actions undertaken by the Group and under the plan are intended to be developed in a tripartite way involving unions, the industry, workers, and Government agencies. The plan has since been endorsed by the Minister for Transport and Workplace Relations and Safety.

Q: How will the sector be supported to make these changes?

A: The overall multi-year programme and focus areas in the action plan have been, and will continue to be, designed in partnership with the sector, for the sector and will be supported by the Port Industry Association and the Port Health and Safety Leadership Group.

Q: Why has it taken so long to release the plan?

A: Developing a plan like this is complex and needs to be done right. We've sought input from many parties to develop this comprehensive picture of port health and safety. We are dedicated to ensuring the best policies and procedures are rolled out consistently across New Zealand. Our focus is looking forward, and protecting the people who work hard to service our ports. There has already been progress on actions laid out in the plan, such as the fatigue guidelines and the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for loading and unloading cargo on ports.

The Minister of Transport also wanted to ensure people were aware of the plan and signal the Government's support. Public release was delayed given the need to respond and focus on Cyclone Gabrielle and other weather events. However, unions, individual ports and stevedoring companies were provided with the Port Sector Insights earlier so they could take these into account to improve health and safety.

Q: Will the Action Plan increase the cost for businesses?

A: Overseas research shows increased productivity outweighs any initial costs in management and worker time. For example, in relation to fatigue, the Queensland construction industry found that as fatigue among workers rose, productivity fell by an average cost of \$50,000 per year for a work crew of 10. In addition, in areas like the Approved Code of Practice on loading or unloading of cargo, it codifies what businesses should be doing as is reasonably practicable anyway.

Q: What does the plan tell us about the harm occurring on ports?

A: The *Port Sector Insights Picture and Action Plan* shows:

- 18 deaths and 397 notified notifiable injuries over the last 10 years.
- The number of fatalities have remained consistent during this period.
- Notifiable injuries at ports have been trending downwards over the last 10 years. Although there has been a small increase in recent years.
- By comparison with other countries our statistics of harm per worker are higher, but differences between countries does make international comparisons difficult.
- The most common causes of fatalities amongst port workers are falls from height, and being crushed by or between vehicles or other machinery, or cargo.
- The most common causes of notifiable injuries are similar; slips, trips, and falls, and being struck by or caught between things – including vehicles, cargo, and walls or sides of vessels. Forklifts and trucks are the machines linked to the greatest number of notifiable injuries.
- There is real inconsistency in relation to health and safety practice across the sector with some good practice in some areas.

Other contributing factors include:

- Training – inconsistent approaches and variability of training, including unclear career pathways.
- Fatigue – inconsistency and issues around fatigue management.
- Workforce issues – becoming difficult to recruit suitable workers.
- Regulator/s – need to be proactive and visible and lack of clarity having two regulators.
- Standard Operating Procedures – some good practices but also instances of inconsistency between PCBUs and insufficient engagement with workers on SOPs.
- Responding, reporting, and notifying incidents – mixed approaches to reporting and recording of incidents. Anecdotal reporting of blame culture.
- Quality of infrastructure, equipment and ships – poor quality of infrastructure at some ports and variation in state of plant, machinery and PPE equipment across PCBUs and ports. Anecdotally, the quality of visiting vessels is increasingly poor.
- Communication and coordination between PCBUs – mixed levels of coordination and communication between PCBUs operating on ports.

Q: How is the ports health and safety work being funded? Who is paying?

A: Money was provided from the HSWA levy for Maritime NZ to provide secretariat support and support for the programme. Other contributing parties have been using their existing resources to contribute to the programme.

Q. How do I get involved?

A. There are plenty of opportunities to be involved. You can sign up for our newsletter by contacting julie-ann.mail@maritimenz.govt.nz. You can participate in calls for workshops, or provide feedback on things produced, or talk to your representative on the Group about how to get involved.