duBlack

Health, Safety and Environment

Zero Harm

Framework

Introduction

At Du Black, we know that sustainable zero harm is not achieved by chance, it requires structured leadership, clear expectations, empowered people, practical tools, and a culture of learning and improvement.

We believe that the safety, health, and environmental wellbeing of every person, project, and organisation we serve is a non-negotiable foundation for sustainable success.

Our Zero Harm Framework is built to guide organisations across all industries towards achieving sustainable zero harm.

It is based on internationally recognised best practices, industry-leading standards, and our deep operational experience across diverse environments.

Through strong leadership, engaged people, effective tools, and a commitment to continuous improvement, zero harm becomes not just a goal, but a lived reality.

Together, we can create safe, healthy, and environmentally responsible operations for generations to come.

Our Zero Harm Framework is a structured, practical system designed to help organisations:

- Prevent incidents and injuries
- Protect employees, communities, and the environment
- Build a resilient, proactive safety culture
- Strengthen business sustainability and operational excellence

The Framework is grounded in four interconnected pillars:

- Commitment: Leadership sets the tone and defines the path toward zero harm.
- People: Engaged, skilled individuals drive HSE culture.
- Resources: Risk-based systems and controls ensure excellence.
- Performance: Measurement, learning, and improvement sustain progress.

Each pillar includes clear expectations, maturity stages, and leadership practices necessary to embed HSE excellence across an organisation.

This condensed version of our full Framework provides a practical guide for leaders, teams, and organisations who are serious about making zero harm a daily reality.

Framework Overview

The Du Black Zero Harm Framework organises the path to sustainable zero harm around four essential pillars:

1. Leadership

Setting clear leadership, vision, and governance for HSE excellence.

- Establish a strong HSE Policy aligned with business goals.
- Communicate a compelling vision for sustainable zero harm.
- Integrate HSE into all strategic planning and decision-making.
- Ensure leadership visibly drives HSE values and expectations.

2. People

Empowering individuals and teams to take ownership of HSE performance.

- Create an HSE climate of trust, care, and accountability.
- Invest in skills, knowledge, and HSE leadership capabilities.
- Recognise and reinforce safe behaviours and proactive risk management.
- Engage all stakeholders (employees, contractors, communities) in the journey to zero harm.

3. Resources

Providing risk-based management systems, procedures, and resources.

- Implement robust HSE risk identification, assessment, and mitigation processes.
- Establish operational controls that are practical, effective, and user-friendly.
- Embed HSE incident reporting, investigation, and learning systems.
- Conduct assurance, audits, and governance to sustain system maturity.

4. Performance

Measuring progress, learning from performance, and driving continuous improvement.

- Track leading and lagging HSE indicators aligned with risk priorities.
- Regularly review and refresh HSE strategies, policies, and plans.
- Foster a continuous improvement culture through proactive lessons learned.
- Celebrate milestones toward sustainable zero harm and business excellence.

Together, these pillars create a living system that adapts, grows, and strengthens over time ensuring that zero harm is achievable and sustainable across all levels of the organisation.

Pillar 1: Leadership

Leadership sets the vision, expectations, and governance for achieving sustainable zero harm.

1.1 HSE Policy and Strategic Commitment

- Develop a clear HSE Policy that reflects the organisations commitment to sustainable zero harm.
- Ensure the Policy is endorsed by senior leadership and integrated into all operational activities.
- Communicate the Policy widely, making it visible and meaningful to all employees, contractors, and stakeholders.
- Align the Policy with recognised international standards (e.g., ISO 45001, ISO 14001).

1.2 Leadership Accountability

- Leaders set the tone through visible, personal commitment to HSE principles.
- Senior managers must be active role models for safety, health, and environmental stewardship.
- Leadership behaviour must foster a climate of care, trust, ownership, and responsibility.

1.3 HSE Governance and Oversight

- Clear governance structures ensure that HSE performance is monitored, evaluated, and reported regularly.
- Executive teams review HSE risks, targets, and progress at defined intervals.
- Systems are in place to escalate risks and deviations transparently.

1.4 HSE Objectives, Targets, and Plans

- Establish measurable HSE objectives and stretch targets aligned with zero harm.
- Create focused HSE improvement plans ("HSE Game Plans") each year.
- Objectives should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART).
- Plans must be adequately resourced (people, budgets, tools).

Outcome of Pillar 1:

Leadership consistently drives HSE values, integrates risk-based decision making, and empowers teams toward achieving sustainable zero harm.

Pillar 2: People

Empowering individuals and teams to take ownership of HSE performance and culture.

2.1 HSE Culture and Climate

- Build an environment where safety, health, and environmental responsibility are deeply valued.
- Foster a culture based on trust, care, transparency, and accountability.
- Recognise that behaviour is influenced by leadership attitudes and organisational systems.

2.2 Competence, Training, and Development

- Provide mandatory HSE training appropriate to roles and risks.
- Develop leadership capabilities focused on risk-based thinking and zero harm values.
- Identify critical HSE competencies and ensure personnel are qualified and competent.
- Conduct regular refresher training to sustain skills and awareness.

2.3 Employee Engagement and Participation

- Actively involve employees in hazard identification, risk management, and improvement initiatives.
- Empower workers to raise safety concerns and stop work if unsafe conditions exist without fear of blame.
- Recognise contributions to HSE performance and reward positive behaviours.

2.4 Contractor and Partner Alignment

- Apply the same HSE expectations to contractors and partners as to employees.
- Prequalify contractors based on HSE capabilities and past performance.
- Engage contractors early in risk assessments, planning, and incident prevention.

Outcome of Pillar 2:

A highly engaged, skilled workforce where every individual feels responsible for their own safety, the safety of others, and environmental stewardship supporting the achievement of sustainable zero harm.

Pillar 3: Resources

Equipping teams with risk-based management systems, operational controls, and practical resources.

3.1 Risk Identification and Assessment

- Systematically identify hazards and evaluate associated HSE risks across all activities.
- Apply formal risk assessment techniques (e.g., HIRA, bowtie analysis, FMEA).
- Prioritise controls based on risk severity and likelihood (risk matrix).

3.2 Operational Controls

- Develop and implement practical procedures, standards, and safe work practices.
- Ensure controls are user-friendly, accessible, and embedded into operational workflows.
- Apply the hierarchy of controls (Elimination, Substitution, Engineering, Administrative, PPE).

3.3 Incident Management and Learning

- Implement robust systems for reporting, investigating, and analysing incidents and near misses.
- Use incident investigations to identify root causes, not to assign blame.
- Share lessons learned across the organisation to prevent recurrence.

3.4 HSE Assurance and Auditing

- Conduct regular HSE audits, inspections, and self-assessments to verify compliance and identify improvement opportunities.
- Use audit results to adjust risk controls, update systems, and strengthen cultural maturity.
- Ensure independent assurance reviews for critical risk areas.

Outcome of Pillar 3:

Effective, risk-based systems and practical controls support operational excellence, prevent incidents, and embed sustainable practices across all levels.

Pillar 4: Performance

Measuring performance, learning from outcomes, and driving continuous improvement toward zero harm.

4.1 HSE Performance Monitoring

- Track both leading indicators (proactive measures like observations, training, audits) and lagging indicators (injuries, spills, incidents).
- Align indicators with organisational HSE risks and improvement goals.
- Visualise performance data clearly to support decision making at all levels

4.2 HSE Reviews and Reporting

- Conduct regular performance reviews at operational, business unit, and executive levels.
- Analyse trends, systemic issues, and emerging risks from incident reports and audits.
- Prepare honest, transparent reports to drive accountability and improvement.

4.3 Continuous Improvement Processes

- Apply lessons learned systematically after incidents, audits, and near misses.
- Review and refresh HSE strategies, plans, and objectives annually.
- Foster an environment where innovation and learning are valued as pathways to zero harm.

4.4 Recognition and Celebration

- Celebrate milestones achieved toward sustainable zero harm.
- Recognise individuals, teams, and contractors who demonstrate HSE leadership.
- Reinforce positive behaviours and cultural achievements visibly and regularly.

Outcome of Pillar 4:

A living system that constantly adapts, improves, and drives organisations closer to achieving and sustaining true zero harm.

Our Commitment to Sustainable Zero Harm

We know that achieving sustainable zero harm is not a one-time event - it is a continuous journey of leadership, engagement, learning, and excellence.

The Zero Harm Framework presented here is designed to empower organisations to:

- Build a proactive culture where every individual owns safety, health, and environmental protection.
- Equip teams with practical systems and tools that manage real-world risks.
- Strengthen leadership commitment and visibility toward sustainable HSE outcomes.
- Foster a learning organisation that improves steadily over time, not just after incidents.

We firmly believe that zero harm is possible through clear direction, engaged people, effective tools, and consistent measurement of results.

Our team stands ready to partner with you on this journey, helping you translate aspirations into action, and action into lasting excellence.

Du Black HSE

Together, we can achieve sustainable zero harm.

Related documents:

Du Black - Zero Harm Framework. (Full Version) Rev 04

Du Black – Safety Maturity Excellence Approach. Rev 02

Du Black – Safety Fundamentals. Rev 04