What are Safety Audits?

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Safety Audits are detailed and systematic inspections or reviews of programs related to occupational health and safety. These audits are done to ensure compliance with organizational policies and external regulations that are applicable to the operations and work being conducted. Safety audits can be conducted either by external members with no affiliation with the organization undergoing the audit and known as independent audits or conducted by internal members of the organization and are known as internal audits.

The key issues relating to safety audits is that it involves a process of checking the activities that are conducted within the organization against established internal standards as well as external regulatory standards. The checking of these activities is done to provide a measure of the level of compliance to the standards that are relevant to those activities. Finally, safety auditing can be viewed as a snapshot measurement of the current safety climate within an organization.

There are various purposes for conducting safety audits, safety auditing can help to facilitate a safe working environment for the personnel performing tasks in that environment by identifying potential conditions within the environment that may pose danger to their well-being. Safety audits can also be understood to be a system that can identify potential failures or weaknesses in the risk management system in place to protect workers in the workplace. It can also serve as a monitoring device and act as a deterrent to unsafe work practices. Another reason for safety auditing is to ensure that the work practices comply with regulation standards to protect not only the workers but other assets within the organization, establishes a measure of accountability and identify potential areas for improvement. The final reason is that safety audits may be required to fulfill organizational licensing terms of operation.