



# International Safety Awards 2024

Chief Adjudicator's Report

British Safety Council

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### Results

A total of 1251 applications were received for the British Safety Council's International Safety Awards in 2024. The number of applications has more than doubled since the 2022 Awards, a reflection of the esteem in which these awards are held across the globe.

A Distinction, Merit or Pass was achieved by 90% of applicants.

The distribution of grades among the applications submitted in 2024 was as follows:

<b>Distinction</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>Merit</b>	<b>456</b>
<b>Pass</b>	<b>399</b>
<b>Fail</b>	<b>127</b>

Year	Total number of applications	Overall pass %	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Fail
2024	1251	90%	269 (22%)	456 (36%)	399 (32%)	127 (10%)
2023	978	79%	136 (14%)	296 (30%)	342 (35%)	204 (21%)
2022	640	86%	135 (21%)	204 (32%)	210 (33%)	91 (14%)

The number of **Distinctions** awarded in 2024 doubled compared to those awarded in 2023; additionally, there were 8% more distinctions as a proportion of total applications than in 2023.

There were 217 more **Merit** and **Pass** grades in 2024 compared to 2023; 68% as a percentage of total applications compared to 65% in 2023.

Overall, the proportion of applicants receiving an International Safety Award in 2024 (90%) - increased by 11% compared to 2023.

The number of award applications has increased from 640 in 2022 to 1251 in 2024.

The International Safety Awards have an extensive international reach. Once more organisations from China, Europe, India, the Middle East, South East Asia, Turkey, the UK and the Republic of Ireland were strongly represented. These awards are also attracting new entrants operating in countries in the Far East and Central America.

Many applicants for the 2024 awards highlighted the importance of migrant workers and their key contribution to organisational success. We had many excellent applications that comprehensively set out the support these organisations provided to their migrant workers and workers working far from home and the contribution these workers made in ensuring that their workplace was kept healthy and safe and wellbeing ensured.

The International Safety Awards have a key role to play in helping to drive continuous improvement in the management of workplace health, safety and wellbeing. The Chief Adjudicator's Report is importantly intended to assist organisations in identifying what high performing organisations are doing to prevent the risk of injury and ill-health and promote wellbeing in the workplace.

A further aim of my report is to assist organisations contemplating applying for the International Safety Awards in 2025 by providing them with advice on how best to showcase key evidence they have at their fingertips to achieve excellence.

## General comments

Organisations were provided with online 'easy-to-access' aides to assist them in the preparation and submission of their award applications. These included:

- The 2024 International Safety Awards question set and marking scheme
- The Chief Adjudicator's Report for the 2023 International Safety Awards
- A guidance note concerning the eligibility requirements
- The list of 2023 International Safety Award winners; and
- Webinars hosted by the British Safety Council.

The webinars hosted by the British Safety Council staff, the Chief Adjudicator and the award scheme's Independent Adjudicator in October 2023 and January 2024 were well attended. Through the medium of webinars, we sought to assist applicants in navigating the online application form and assist their understanding of how best to provide the evidence necessary to correctly answer the questions and earn high marks.

The importance of applicants accessing and understanding the International Safety Awards eligibility requirements as set out in the regulations, guidance and advice listed above cannot be overstated. Key to an applicant succeeding in obtaining a high grade is the need to closely follow the regulations, guidance and advice we provide.

We cannot overstate the importance of reading and understanding the questions. Low scores in many cases resulted from an incomplete reading or misunderstanding of what was being sought.

Particular questions had distinct elements all of which had to be addressed in order to score high marks. Partial answers, for example, to Question 7 concerning emergency arrangements in the event of the fire that failed to provide details of a recent mock drill failed to achieve a high score.

In our webinars we recommended applicants draft answers in a separate word document before transferring to the online application. It is essential that all answers are proofread and ideally peer reviewed by a colleague before the application is submitted. The time taken to do so is time well spent as it can result in the extra marks that make the difference, for example, between a Pass and a Merit or a Merit and a Distinction.

This year many of the questions specifically asked for evidence of arrangements and actions being taken to prevent injury and ill health and ensure wellbeing at the applicant site. Low scoring applicants often failed to provide substantive evidence and examples or provided theoretical answers lifted from websites that provide guidance on the management of health and safety and wellbeing programmes. An overly theoretical approach to answering questions was evident in responses by poor performing applicants. The adjudicators need to understand what is happening at the applicant's site not solely what the textbooks say.

Applicants who provided too short answers inevitably failed to provide the evidence necessary to score more than one mark. Additionally, our advice and guidance made it clear that applications had to be submitted in the English language. Even so we still received a few applications in other languages and others with answers in a mixture of languages. Answers in languages other than English were not marked by adjudicators.

This year there were four questions for which we attached one supplementary mark namely Questions 3b, 4b, 6b and 8b. These four questions were drafted with the intention of giving applicants the opportunity to provide relevant and concise evidence to bring the substantive answers to questions 3a, 4a, 6a and 8a to life.

The quality of evidence provided in respect of these supplementary questions was generally of a high standard. We were seeking illustrative evidence as reports, documents, photographs or logs of activity. The one additional mark that questions 3b, 4b, 6b and 8b could attract was easy to achieve if the advice and guidance was strictly followed. Brief explanations of the relevance of the submitted evidence was essential. Some applicants attached numerous files containing pages and pages of text. This is not what was required to score one mark on each of these supplementary questions.

This year as in 2023 the word count for answering each of the substantive questions was 600 words. We are mindful of the time applicants spend preparing and drafting their responses and the time adjudicators have to spend judging the applications. There were still instances of applicants far exceeding the 600-word count. Applicants must carry out a word count when proofing their award submission. Applicants whose answers grossly exceeded the 600-word count were marked down. Exceeding the word count resulted in a small number of applicants failing to achieve a Distinction, Merit or Pass simply by losing marks for failing to follow the ISA 2024 regulations and guidance.

It is important that applicants ensure that their answers to the questions are well presented using clear and concise language, headings, sub-headings and paragraphs where appropriate. Several questions contained more than one theme. The flow of the answers in all cases was vastly improved by using headings, sub-headings and paragraphs.

The application of practical real-life examples from the workplace are important and a key requirement in several questions. The adjudicators want to understand how things operate in practice in specific sites or workplaces. This approach brings applications to life and helps improve the adjudicator's understanding of the effectiveness of the measures in place. The highest-scoring submissions were noted for their consistently focused, site-specific nature and use of examples. The adjudicators again reported many instances of good or even exceptional initiatives among the submissions.

The adjudicators were once again greatly encouraged to see the importance that senior management commits to ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of their respective workforces and the wider community.

Wellbeing is now at the heart of successful corporate and business agendas. We applaud the efforts made by many applicant organisations to identify and implement the improvements that are necessary to ensure the health and wellbeing of their workforce and the wider community impacted by their activities.

There were instances where applicants addressing the wellbeing questions only provided examples of measures that they had taken to prevent injury and ill health in the workplace and neglected to provide evidence of the initiatives and measures that they had in place to improve and protect the quality of workers' lives more generally. Measures, for example, to improve the working and living conditions of migrant workers attracted high marks.

Applicants were asked to provide details of any enforcement action taken by their respective regulator including Improvement Notices, Reportable Injuries, Dangerous Occurrences or Occupational Ill Health cases and any remedial actions taken. Although not attracting marks, as with Questions 1 and 2 this is important contextual information for the adjudicators. Had enforcement action been taken in the relevant eligibility period it is for the adjudicators to decide whether any resulting remedial action is sufficient to allow the application to proceed to adjudication.

The adjudicators hope that the information provided in this report helps you not only in preparing for the 2025 International Safety Awards but equally importantly in providing information that helps you to continue to meet the challenges you and your colleagues face in preventing injuries and ill health occurrences and ensuring wellbeing in your workplace. We wish you every success in 2025.

The Independent Adjudicator and myself wish to thank the panel of Adjudicators and colleagues at British Safety Council for their hard work and dedication in handling the applications speedily and with rigour.

## **Questions – Introduction**

Questions 1 and 2 are scene setting questions that have been key features of the International Safety Awards for many years. The importance of providing key information about your business or organisation can not be overstated. These questions will appear again in the 2025 International Safety Awards question set.

The question set for the 2024 awards was markedly different from questions asked in previous years. We will, going forward, refresh the questions introducing new subjects to explore and refining old favourites.

### **Application Question 1 – no marks attach to this question**

**Describe the nature and scope of the main operational activities carried out at the site. Include details of the number of staff working at the site and the main functions these staff perform.**

*This question is not marked but is mandatory as the response is essential for the adjudicators to understand the context and background of scored questions 3 – 12.*

A comprehensive answer detailing the full extent of the activities undertaken at the applicant's site is crucial to assist the adjudicators' understanding of the business operation. The focus must be on the activities at the applicant's site.

Although corporate information, for example, ownership and detailed coverage of the activities undertaken across the organisation is helpful, the focus in answering this question must be on the site. The question required a description of the activities undertaken at the site including the location, the timeframe, the occupation and numbers of those working at the applicant site and the work activities being undertaken.

### **Application Question 2 – no marks attach to this question**

**What are considered to be the most significant issues at the site in relation to:**

- **Occupational health hazards**
- **Occupational safety hazards**
- **Wellbeing concerns.**

*This question is not marked but is mandatory as the response is essential for the adjudicators to understand the context and background of scored questions 3 – 12.*

Award winning applicants addressed all three elements of the question focussing on wellbeing concerns and the most hazardous activities at that site and the risks these posed to the safety and health of their employees, their contractors' employees and where appropriate the wider community. High scoring applications provided a comprehensive list of hazards with an explanation of why the cited hazards and concerns were of significance. This question naturally leads in to Question 3a and 3b.

Some applicants listed the health and safety hazards and wellbeing concerns very briefly without an explanation of their significance to those working at the site.

### **Application Question 3a – a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

With reference to the hazards you have highlighted in your answer to Question 2, identify the hazard with the highest risk factor. Describe how you have determined the risk factor and detail the control measures you have put in place to control the risk. Provide examples throughout.

The first part of the answer to this question must link back to the applicant's answer to Question 2.

High scoring applicants provided an evidence-based explanation of the methodology they had used to determine the most significant hazard, the result of that exercise and the control measures put in place. To score high the impact of those control measures had to be explained including the resulting improvements that had been achieved.

Low scoring applicants identified the most significant hazard at their site but failed to detail the methodology used to determine its significance, or only sparse control measures with a lack of information concerning the impact of control measures.

Some applicants misunderstood the thrust of the question and provided details of many significant hazards rather than the one most significant hazard. This resulted in insufficient detail concerning the most significant hazard.

### **Application Question 3b – one mark may be awarded when answering this supplementary question**

**Provide evidence of how you control the risk identified in 3a for example, documentation or work plans detailing: how you have eliminated the risk; engineering and / or management controls you have introduced; and / or photographs of PPE used to control the risk.**

**Please submit your evidence via the [Supporting evidence page](#).**

The one additional mark could easily be obtained by simply attaching documentation or work plans detailing: how you have eliminated the risk; engineering and / or management controls you have introduced; and / or photographs of PPE used to control the risk.

The adjudicators were simply requesting one simple, but important piece of evidence not pages of text that, for example, repeated what the applicant had provided in their answer to 3a.

### **Application Question 4a - a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**For your site, set out the organisation's key health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures that you have put in place and describe how you communicate these policies and procedures effectively to your staff.**

This question had two key elements. Both elements had to be addressed in order to secure a high mark. First, the headline health, safety and wellbeing policies needed to be detailed. High scoring answers made the link back to the information contained in the answers to Questions 1, 2 and 3a. The applicant needed to explain why these were formulated, by whom and go on to describe the key elements of these policies and procedures.

The second part of the of the question sought a description of the channels for communicating these policies to staff at the site. High scoring answers provided brief descriptions of the various channels used including the information these channels disseminated, details of the targeted audiences and how the effectiveness of these channels was assessed. Low scoring applications gave examples that lacked detail and failed to demonstrate their effectiveness. We were looking for applicants to provide evidence of the effectiveness of these communication channels not just list the channels used.

### **Application Question 4b - one mark may be awarded when answering this supplementary question**

**Provide evidence of three communication channels that are used to educate staff on site concerning key safety and wellbeing policies and procedures, for example, photos of training activities, meeting notes, documentation containing details of training courses provided and / or certificates awarded.**

**Please submit your evidence via the Supporting evidence page.**

Examples of high scoring communication channels included hard evidence of staff inductions, instruction and training, toolbox talks, safety meetings and workshops, employee one-to-ones, staff appraisals, online communications including e-mails and learning tools.

**Application Question 5 - a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Describe the arrangements you have in place at your site for responding to accidents or incidents resulting in injury or ill-health. Please explain how you ensure that the first aiders or first responders who provide assistance in such circumstances have the competence to respond in the event of an accident / ill health resulting from your operational activities.**

**Provide examples of the various measures you have in place to ensure first aiders / first responders develop and maintain the knowledge and expertise to effectively carry out their responsibilities.**

This question comprised a number of different elements all of which had to be comprehensively addressed in order to secure a high mark. The elements were: response arrangements in the event of an accident or incident; measures to assure first responders and first-aiders had the requisite competence, and the ongoing training and development to ensure their continuing effectiveness in such an event.

All three elements had to be fully addressed in-order to secure a high mark. Low scoring applications often addressed the first element, provided only brief detail of response arrangements and failed to address competence assurance, training and development.

**Application Question 6a - a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Describe the arrangements you have in place at your site for investigating accidents and incidents. Detail one accident or incident that has taken place at your site in the past three years and the resulting remedial action(s) put in place to prevent future occurrences.**

This question was in three parts. All three parts had to be comprehensively answered to attract a high score. High scoring applicants provided full details of accident/incident investigation arrangements including details of the roles of the people at the site responsible for carrying out the investigation.

Some applicants reported that there had been no accidents or incidents in the previous years. These applicants were not marked down for this. However, we expected them to detail the investigation arrangements they had in place should such an event occur.

Not only were applicants asked to detail the remedial actions in place but also to explain why these actions would help prevent future occurrences. Examples included changes in work and operating practices, enhanced arrangements for the supervision of activities and improved training. High scoring applicants also identified those individuals at their site with responsibility for undertaking investigations and ensuring that necessary remedial action was taken.

Theoretical answers that did not help adjudicators to understand how the investigation process worked in practice at that site scored low marks.

### **Application Question 6b - one mark may be awarded when answering this supplementary question**

**Provide evidence of the remedial action that has been taken, for example, a copy of the action plan that has been put in place to implement the remedial actions contained in the investigation or audit report or copies of documentation detailing new or revised control measures.**

**Please submit your evidence via the [Supporting evidence page](#).**

Suitable evidence included: an accident investigation or audit report; documentary evidence detailing the why, how and intended effect of the remedial action; an evidence-based report on the impact of these remedial actions. A photograph simply showing, for example, a worker wearing new improved PPE was not sufficient to warrant the one additional mark.

### **Application Question 7 - a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Detail the emergency arrangements you have currently in place in the event of fire at your site. Identify those members of staff with specific responsibilities in such an emergency. What arrangements do you have to evacuate staff with disabilities and give details and results of a mock drill, and any actions needed to improve.**

There were four elements to this question all of which needed to be addressed to achieve a high mark namely: emergency arrangements in the event of a fire; key members of staff; evacuation arrangements for staff with disabilities, and results and learning from regular fire drills.

Most applicants provided detailed explanations on emergency arrangements. However, some applicants provided brief job titles for key staff with no detail of precise responsibilities. Generally, answers concerning the arrangements for evacuating staff with disabilities were of a high standard.

There were too many applicants who copied fire emergency arrangements out of textbooks or from the web and failed to explain how these arrangements worked in practice at their particular site. It was apparent that some applicants had in not in fact carried out a mock drill but simply set out what the textbooks said about key learning that drills should identify.

Applicants who reported real life emergencies in the event of a fire and the resulting actions taken to refine and improve emergency arrangements scored high.

### **Application Question 8a - a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Identify the Directors and/or Executive Team members at your site with specific responsibilities for leading health, safety and wellbeing. Provide details of the arrangements you have in place to provide these Directors and / or Executive Team members with appropriate training and development to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.**

This question had two elements both of which had to be comprehensively addressed in order to secure a high score. High scoring applicants identified each-and-every member of the senior management team and elaborated the details of their role and responsibility.

In order to score a high mark applicants had to provide detailed information on the sustained training and development Directors and/or Executive Team members regularly undertook in order to carry out their roles effectively.

Many applicant organisations had been certified to ISO 45001 standard. ISO 45001 attaches great importance to the role played by top management in ensuring the effective management of the risks that workplace hazards pose to health and safety. It was not clear in many low scoring



answers, despite being ISO 45001 certified, who precisely had responsibility at the top of their organisation for leading on health, safety and wellbeing.

**Application Question 8b - one mark may be awarded when answering this supplementary question**

**Provide documentary, photographic or other evidence demonstrating relevant training and development activities undertaken by Directors and / or Executive Team members.**

**Please submit your evidence via the Supporting evidence page.**

A photograph of members of the leadership team, for example, undertaking classroom training or carrying out a team building exercise built around a significant health, safety or wellbeing challenge was sufficient to attract that one additional mark.

**Application Question 9 – a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Identify one individual at your site who has during 2023 been instrumental in promoting greater awareness amongst the workforce of the importance of protecting their own and others' health and safety and wellbeing. Please give two examples of the activities they have undertaken and the impact they have had.**

This question was framed to encourage applicants to think broadly about one individual at their site who through their whole-hearted commitment had influenced and encouraged colleagues to appreciate the importance of keeping their colleagues and their workplace safe.

That individual could be anyone at the site from the shopfloor to the boardroom. To obtain a high mark applicants needed to provide two detailed persuasive examples that brought to life the actions of that one individual and the impact that these actions had on the health, safety and wellbeing of their colleagues. High scoring applicants provided examples that spanned health, safety and wellbeing.

One applicant identified an individual who had turned their behaviour around following an accident resulting from their own omission. That individual recovered from their minor injury and went on to become a key player at the site in informing, influencing and encouraging colleagues that they were in day-to-day contact with to work safely, prevent ill-health and address issues essential to sustaining a productive work-life balance.

**Application Question 10 – a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Describe how your site addresses wellbeing and mental health issues as set out in your answer to Question 2. Provide three examples of measures you have put in place to address these issues and how you assess the effectiveness of these measures.**

The question had two parts both of which had to be answered in full to achieve a high score. Applicants were asked to explain how their site addressed the wellbeing concerns identified in their answer to Question 2. The second part of the question asked not only for three examples of measures taken but how the effectiveness of these measures, that is the impact, was assessed.

High scoring applicants set out a range of measures that they helped promote a healthy lifestyle and physical and mental wellbeing. Psychological support through individual and team counselling has become increasingly prevalent among high scoring organisations to address issues such as stress, loneliness, remote working, self-esteem and pressures caused by work.

Lectures on particular health issues such as diet, exercise, smoking and alcohol are becoming increasingly common. The ready availability of expert medical support and assistance was also a

factor in securing a high score. The role and responsibilities of Mental Health First-Aiders, if provided, was also probed in this question.

Applicants provided details of the arrangements that they had in place to assess the effectiveness and impact of the initiatives they had in place including before and after surveys of workers' knowledge, behaviour and all-round health, analysis of data from the use of help lines for example and workers perception of the impact of the support provided on team cohesion.

Low scoring applicants provided limited answers, for example, solely identifying remedial actions to address particular health and safety hazards as noise, exposure and falls from heights.

### **Application Question 11 – a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Identify those members of staff below Directors and / or Executive Team level at your site with specific health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities and detail how you ensure that they have relevant competencies to carry out their respective roles effectively.**

High scoring applicants identified in detail the individuals below the top-level leadership with specific health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities. The question sought information as to precisely what responsibilities these roles involved and how they linked together to ensure as a team that health, safety and wellbeing were being effectively managed.

Key to securing a high score applicants had to provide evidence of the arrangements in place to ensure that persons recruited to undertake these roles had the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications to carry out or grow into these roles and through ongoing training and development maintain their competence.

High scoring applicants undertook continuing training needs analysis and provided evidence of how identified training needs were being met. Details of any qualifications that were considered essential to individual effectiveness needed to be provided. Arrangements for the regular appraisal of the post-holders also needed to be provided.

Low scoring applicants simply identified the relevant members of staff without describing their specific responsibilities and/or failed to provide details of the measures that they had in place to ensure continuing competence. Others provided details of the leadership team that were the subject of Question 8.

### **Application Question 12 - a maximum of five marks may be awarded when answering this question**

**Describe the arrangements you have in place for ensuring that all contractors operating at your site comply with your organisation's health, safety and wellbeing policies, systems and procedures. Provide three examples detailing how these arrangements have operated effectively at your site.**

This question was in two parts. Top-scoring applicants were able to comprehensively describe the health and safety factors taken into consideration when appointing contractors/suppliers and the arrangements in place for ensuring ongoing compliance with their policies, systems and procedures. They also were able to provide three detailed examples to demonstrate the effectiveness of the control arrangements in operation at their site.

To secure a high score we wanted to see evidence that the applicant was working hand-in-hand with contractors to ensure that the site and the workers, both the applicants and the contractors, were being kept healthy and safe. Supervision and oversight of contractors was essential. The examples of operating arrangements had to be more than details of penalties and sanctions imposed on contractors who had failed to follow policies and procedures for that site.

High scoring organisations also provided evidence of the measures they had put in place to review the performance of the contractor or supplier and the action they would take in the event of non-compliance. Credit was given to applicants who by their example worked with their contractors to remedy omissions and contraventions rather than removal from the site. However, in serious cases the adjudicators recognised that termination of the contract was justified.

There were applicants who focused on providing theoretical answers rather than providing evidence of the measures in place to ensure contractor compliance; this resulted in a low score.

### **Accreditation evidence**

Applicants could also gain a maximum additional three marks by uploading evidence of the following accreditations. To gain these additional marks applicants had to provide evidence of current certification or accreditation:

- **One mark** – 3 Star outcome from British Safety Council Five-Star Audit within the ISA 2024 eligibility period
- **Two marks** – Current ISO 45001 Certification or 4 Star outcome from British Safety Council Five-Star Audit within the ISA 2024 eligibility period
- **Three marks** – 5 Star outcome from British Safety Council Five-Star Audit within the ISA 2024 eligibility period.

A small but significant number applicants made specific reference to their organisation's ISO 45001 certification in answering the substantive and supplementary questions but failed to provide evidence of the certification consequently missing out on two additional marks. Again, the failure to get credit for ISO 45001 certification in some cases made the difference to the eventual grade achieved.

**Chief Adjudicator**  
**On behalf of British Safety Council**  
**March 2024**