SYSTEM DRIVERS
SAFETY BY DESIGN

H&S NEWS

SPRING EDITION 2026

Practical health & safety news, views and lessons from the real world.



IN THIS EDITION

Prosecutions • 2027 law changes • Doing It Digital • AI in H&S • Lessons from the field

FROM SYSTEM DRIVERS

Spring is here.

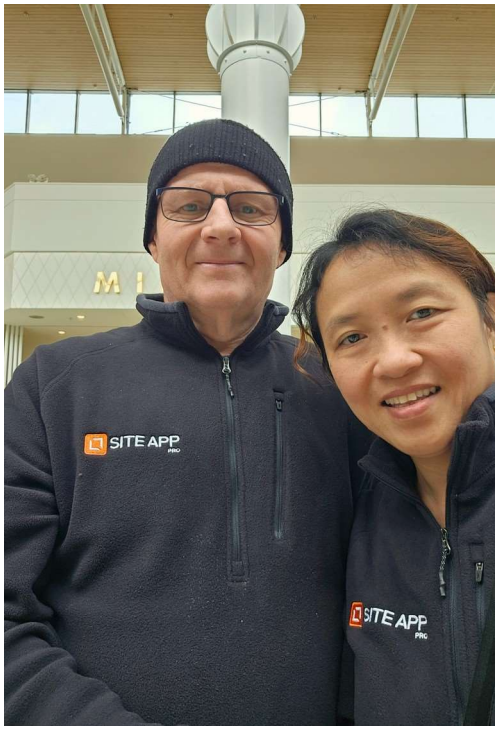
A busy season, a changing H&S landscape, and plenty of lessons worth sharing.

FROM ALASTAIR

It has been another busy few months across our client workplaces. In this edition we look at a recent WorkSafe prosecution, the health and safety law changes coming in 2027, the growing role of digital systems and AI, and a simple reminder from the field about situational awareness.

The thread running through all of it is pretty straightforward: good health and safety is about what actually happens at work - not what we assume happens. Systems need to work in practice, people need to understand what is expected, and the evidence needs to be there when it matters.

"Assumption is not a control."



A WORD FROM PAM

It has been lovely getting out and about with Alastair and having the opportunity to meet more of our clients and the people working on site.

I'm slowly but surely learning the ropes at System Drivers and getting a much better understanding of what happens behind all those reports, forms and phone calls!

A big thank you to the Site App Pro team too - SAP Con 2026 was an absolute blast! It was great meeting the people behind the app, learning more about where it is heading, and celebrating the Partner Award together.

Thank you to everyone who has made me feel so welcome.

- Pam

PROSECUTIONS CORNER

Taking someone’s word for it is not enough.

A recent fatal forestry case carries lessons well beyond forestry.

VERIFY COMPETENCE • INDUCT • SUPERVISE • CHECK IN

On 9 September 2026, WorkSafe published the outcome of a prosecution following a fatal tree-felling incident near Dannevirke. The worker was alone and unsupervised in a high-risk environment. WorkSafe identified four reasonably practicable steps that had not been taken: confirming experience, training and qualifications; completing an adequate induction; ensuring appropriate supervision; and having an adequate check-in/check-out procedure.

THE SYSTEM DRIVERS TAKEAWAY

Train them. Check they understood it. Check they can do it. Record it.

A training register does not magically make somebody competent. But it is part of the evidence showing how competence was established. WorkSafe’s guidance is clear that workers need the information, training, instruction or supervision necessary to work safely. The point is not paperwork for paperwork’s sake - it is being able to show that the person doing the job was ready to do it safely.

COURTROOM LESSON

Experience matters. But experience should be established, transferred and supported - not simply assumed.

The classics we keep hearing...

...and why they should make you just a little nervous.

01 **"We've been doing it this way for 30 years."**

Longevity proves you've done it for 30 years. It doesn't prove the risk is well controlled.

02 **"We've never had an accident."**

A good record is worth celebrating. It is not, by itself, evidence that every risk is controlled.

03 **"It's just common sense."**

Common sense is often learned experience. The new worker may not see what the experienced worker sees.

04 **"He knows what he's doing."**

Excellent. How do we know? Establish competence rather than assuming it.

05 **"It'll only take five minutes."**

Gravity, machinery and electricity are remarkably indifferent to job duration.

EXPERIENCE IS VALUABLE. CAPTURE IT. TEACH IT. VERIFY IT. PASS IT ON.

Assumption is not a control.

ON WORKSAFE'S RADAR

Spring 2026: what's changing, and what inspectors are looking at.

A quick practical update drawn from WorkSafe's latest work-related health newsletter.

LAW CHANGE

From 1 April 2027, small businesses will focus their risk management on critical risks - those most likely to cause death, serious injury, serious illness or long-term harm.

EXPOSURE STANDARDS

WorkSafe has released new resources for workplace exposure standards (WES). WES are guideline values, not mandatory limits or regulatory targets. Values for flour dust, wood dust and welding fumes have now been confirmed.

INSPECTOR FOCUS

Manufacturing visits are focusing on machine safety, hazardous substances, dust and fumes, noise and musculoskeletal risks. Wood-product inspections found recurring gaps in guarding, substance inventories and dust controls.

NORTHLAND HEADS-UP

WorkSafe inspectors are assessing collision repair businesses across Northland, Auckland and Waikato, with attention on spray booths, work-related health, chemicals and worker engagement. In the 2024 initiative, urgent improvements were needed in 84% of assessments.

HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

WorkSafe is also reminding businesses to check that required hazardous-substance compliance certificates are current and valid.

WHAT TO DO NOW | Know your critical risks. Check exposure controls. Review guarding and substance records. If you use compliance certificates, check the expiry date.

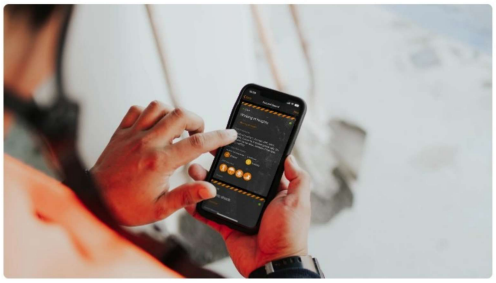
DOING IT DIGITAL

Saving the Amazon, one safety form at a time.

Less paper. Better visibility. Practical information captured where the work actually happens.



Automate site safety, contractor compliance, and equipment registers in one app



DON'T JUST BUY AN APP. GET YOUR SAFETY SYSTEM WORKING IN IT.

Site App Pro can bring inductions, inspections, toolbox meetings, incident reporting, contractor compliance and equipment registers into one practical digital system. When you choose it through System Drivers, you also have your Safety Professional alongside you - helping configure the system around your business, build practical forms and workflows, support rollout, and keep the digital system aligned with what should actually be happening on site.

Get Alastair to arrange your demonstration today.

There are significant benefits in implementing Site App Pro through your Safety Professional that ordinary app users do not receive.

Brilliant assistant. Terrible boss.

AI is becoming genuinely useful in H&S - provided human judgement stays in the driver's seat.

WHERE IT CAN HELP

- Summarising inspections and field notes
- Spotting themes in incident and near-miss data
- Drafting and reviewing risk information
- Simplifying or translating safety information
- Reducing repetitive administration
- Supporting hazard analysis and trend detection

WHERE YOU STILL NEED THE HUMAN

- AI may produce information that looks right but needs checking
- Guidance or legislation may have changed
- AI cannot see the actual conditions on your site
- A generic risk assessment may miss hazards specific to the job
- Good prompts need good information - garbage in, garbage out
- Final decisions and controls still need competent human judgement

AI CAN HELP YOU THINK. IT SHOULDN'T DO YOUR THINKING FOR YOU.

AI is now firmly part of the professional H&S conversation. The 2026 New Zealand Journal of Health and Safety Practice includes articles on artificial intelligence and critical controls. The practical message remains the same: use AI to support analysis and administration, but keep competent human judgement in charge of decisions and controls.

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

Situational awareness: the hazard you're not looking at.

A simple reminder from a recent inspection.

During a recent site inspection, attention was focused on photographing a piece of equipment when a step backwards found an open service point. Fortunately, no injury resulted.

It was a useful reminder of how quickly attention can narrow onto one thing while another hazard goes unnoticed - particularly on changing construction and commissioning sites.

Stop. Look around. Think about where you are moving before concentrating on the task in front of you.

Near misses are opportunities to learn without somebody having to get hurt.



SAP CON 2026 - PARTNER AWARD

At SAP Con 2026, System Drivers was stoked to receive Site App Pro's Biggest Deal of the Year - Partner Award.

For us, it is great recognition of the work going into helping clients move from paper-heavy systems to practical digital H&S. A big thanks to the Site App Pro team for the support - and for a conference that was an absolute blast!

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