

SNAPSHOT



GUIDEBOOK FOR COMMANDERS AND MANAGERS



**YOUR UNIT
YOUR VOICE**

VERSION 1.0

USE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook has been designed to familiarise commanders and managers with some of the key features of the Defence Flight Safety Bureau (DFSB) *Snapshot* Survey and to provide practical guidance and tips for getting the most out of the program.

The guidebook is divided into two parts. Part 1 provides an overview of the *Snapshot* Survey program and its inner workings. Part 2 details the components of the *Snapshot* Cycle – from preparing your workgroup through to interpreting your *Snapshot* results, providing feedback and taking action.

Version 1.0 — June 2021



Contents

PART 1 – SNAPSHOT SURVEY INNER WORKINGS	4
The use (and misuse) of surveys	4
Introducing the <i>Snapshot</i> Survey	4
<i>Snapshot's</i> underlying model	5
The interaction of safety and organisational climate	6
PART 2 – SNAPSHOT CYCLE	7
Overview	7
Step 1 – Prepare workgroup	8
Step 2 – Complete survey	8
Step 3 – Interpret results	8
Unit Report	9
Breakdown Report	9
Comments Report	9
Step 4 – Feedback and workforce engagement	12
Step 5 – Take action and review outcomes	14
Take action	14
Review outcomes	15
Additional Resources	15

PART 1 — SNAPSHOT SURVEY

INNER WORKINGS

The use (and misuse) of surveys

Organisational surveys are sometimes considered a nuisance because they take time to complete, their purpose is not always clear and feedback is not always forthcoming. But they have their strengths too. From a manager's perspective, they are a quick and economical way of obtaining information from a large number of people on a range of topics concerning the work environment. From an employee's point of view, a survey offers a means of expressing views on the topics being surveyed. If enough fellow employees think the same way, strong messages will be delivered to management.

Not quite so obvious are the longer-term benefits. Information supplied by respondents forms part of a database that can be used to track progress, make comparisons and, perhaps, answer questions that were not so important when the survey was designed. Well-designed surveys are useful at the time of administration and for a long time afterwards. They are based on models of organisational functioning that are intended to capture the key factors that drive safety, wellbeing and performance.

Contributing to meaningful change and confidence in the survey instrument are critical success factors for the Snapshot Survey program.

Introducing the Snapshot Survey

As part of fostering a generative safety culture, the DFSB Snapshot Survey is administered annually to all of Air Force and the Defence aviation community. The Snapshot Survey captures information on a broad range of issues that impact the safety, performance and overall health of participating organisations. The annual administration of the Snapshot Survey enables areas of comparative strength and weakness to be highlighted — against both defined benchmarks and across time.

DFSB generates a range of tailored Snapshot reports targeting different levels of the organisation. The release of unit/workgroup-level reports to each commanding officer or senior manager is the primary output of the Snapshot survey program. This level of reporting supports local ownership and ensures that survey results are contextualised and reviewed in conjunction with other information that may be relevant to the work group at the time of administration.

Information on the management, co-ordination, and administration of the Snapshot Survey, including ethical consideration and the storage, use and reporting of survey results is available on the DFSB website.

Some of the specific aims of Snapshot include:

- providing a picture of a workgroup's safety/organisational climate
- benchmarking against other units
- tracking changes from one year to the next
- identifying risks and hot spots
- assess the effectiveness of recent interventions.

Snapshot's underlying model

Well-designed surveys are based on models, with strong theoretical underpinnings. *Snapshot* has been designed with this in mind, with items and subsequent indicators based on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, one of the most widely used organisational psychology models in the world today.

This JD-R model proposes that there are two basic sets of forces acting on an individual in a work setting: job demands and job resources.

Job demands

Physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive and emotional) effort or skills and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs. Examples are high work pressure, an unfavourable physical environment, and emotionally demanding interactions with clients. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312)



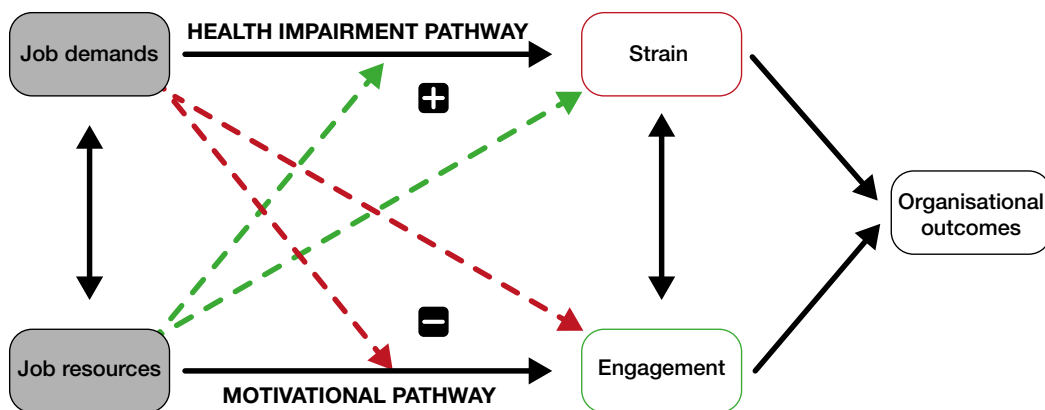
Job resources

Physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that are either/or: (1) functional in achieving work goals; (2) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (3) stimulate personal growth and development. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 312)



In essence, job demands put the individual under pressure and job resources help the individual to deal with that pressure. If high job demands exhaust employees' mental and physical resources, burnout and lack of commitment may result. In JD-R theory, this train of events is called the Health Impairment Pathway (see Figure 1, page 6). On the other hand, if resources outweigh demands then individuals are likely to become more engaged and therefore more satisfied and productive. This section of the JD-R model traces what is referred to as the Motivational Pathway. These pathways, in turn, influence organisation and safety-related outcomes.

For more information on the model underlying the *Snapshot* Survey and the relationship between different indicators, request a technical report from DFSB.



The Snapshot version of the JD-R model is shown in Figure 1.

The interaction of safety and organisational climate

Safety climate refers to employee perceptions of the organisation’s policies, procedures and rewards related to safety that influence safety attitudes and behaviour in the workplace. A substantial body of evidence suggests that safety climate predicts safety outcomes. For more than 40 years the safety climate construct has been studied extensively and used effectively to promote safety and reduce incidents in high-risk industries.

This may lead some to ask that ‘if *Snapshot* was introduced to monitor safety climate, why does the survey look at other issues traditionally covered in organisational climate surveys such as communication, co-worker issues, autonomy and training?’ Throughout its history, safety-climate research has focused primarily on physical hazards and the prevention of workplace incidents. However, in more recent years a strong (and separate) body of evidence has emerged demonstrating that psychological health at work is a health-and-safety issue of equal importance.

Various organisational climate indicators (for example; leadership, communication and autonomy) have been shown to have significant influence on the health, wellbeing and morale of workers. Within safety-critical organisational settings like Defence, aspects of organisational climate also heavily influence individuals’ attitudes and behaviours related to safety. For example, work pressure leads to strain that in turn leads to errors and incidents.

Accordingly, the *Snapshot* survey has been designed to integrate safety climate with aspects of organisational climate to provide a more holistic approach to safety. *Snapshot* covers both the physical and psychological components of health and safety within the workplace. This approach is beneficial for leaders as it enables them to have effective oversight of their safety and organisational climate.

PART 2 – SNAPSHOT CYCLE

Overview

The success of *Snapshot* is not measured by reaching reporting targets or gathering data to confirm a model. As depicted in the *Snapshot Cycle* (see Figure 2), the goal is to foster a mindset of continuous improvement through an open, just and fair examination of organisational and safety-related issues. The following sections expand on the five conditions that DFSB has identified as critical to the success of the *Snapshot* program, with a particular focus on feedback and consultation.

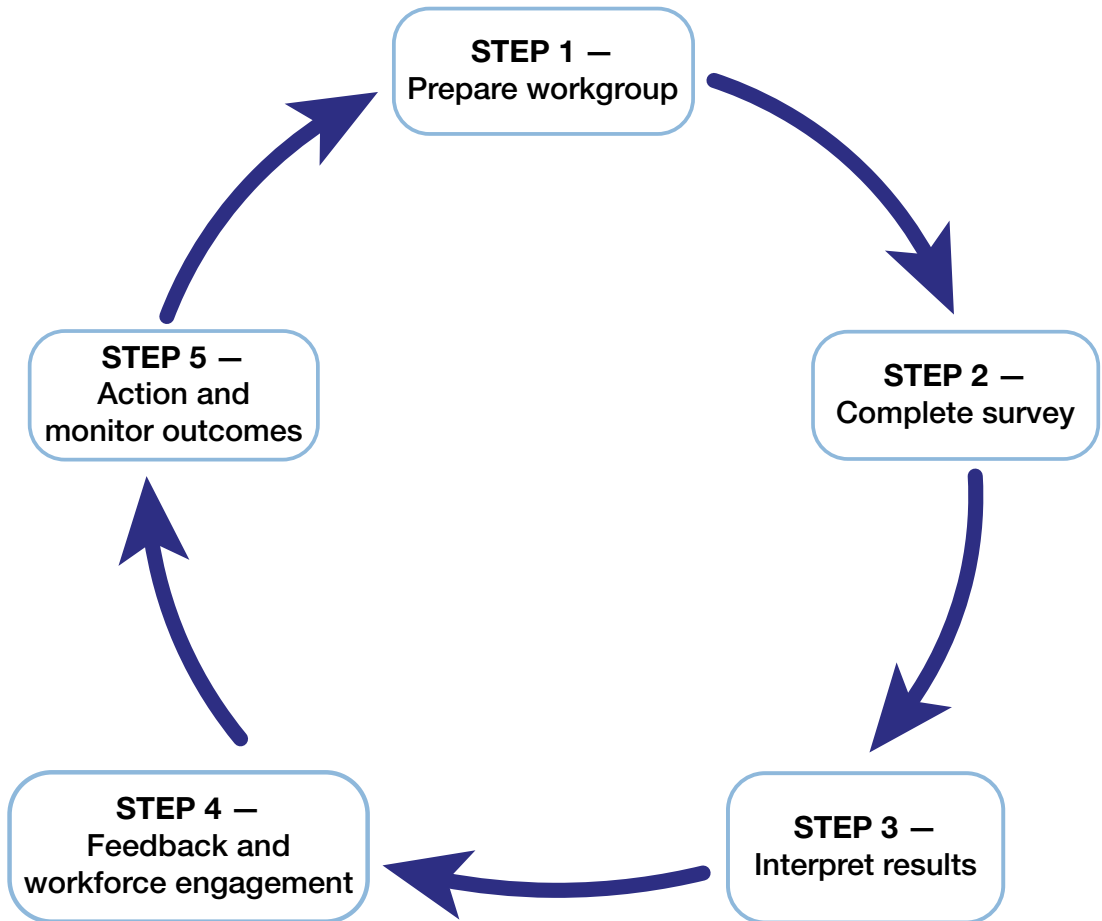


Figure 2. Snapshot Cycle

Step 1 – Prepare workgroup

Visible command and management commitment to the *Snapshot* survey is critical to promoting participation. Adequate survey response rates are essential for producing representative, accurate and useful results; whereas, low response rates restrict the level of analysis that can be undertaken and reduce the ability to draw meaningful inferences.

Importantly, *Snapshot* is a voluntary survey conducted under a strict code of ethics in which members can decline to participate without having to give a reason and without consequence. However, it is important that you support your workforce in participating and provide opportunities in which members can access the survey to enable representativeness of results.

Prior to administration, consideration should be given to enable members to participate. This may include:

- arranging access to DPN terminals
- encouraging participation via additional promotional material (such as emails and posters available on the DFSB website)
- scheduling time within shift rosters and duty periods in which personnel can complete the survey.

Step 2 – Complete survey

The *Snapshot* Survey is conducted online and takes about 20 minutes to complete. It can be completed both inside and outside the DPN, which allows members the flexibility to complete it in the privacy and comfort of their own home (if preferred). Responses to the survey are automatically saved, which also enables members to complete the survey over multiple sittings.

If individuals in your work group have not been emailed a link to the survey or unable to access the DPN, you should contact DFSB and an alternative distribution method will be provided.

It is important to note that *Snapshot* is considered to be a confidential survey, with all subsequent reports based on group-level data which cannot be linked to an individual. For instance, work ranks are aggregated together to make groups like Senior Officers, Junior NCOs' and APS.

Ethical considerations

Commanders and managers need to be aware of the ethical responsibilities attached to different aspects of organisational surveys as the success of a survey depends very much on the amount of trust individuals have in the survey process.

The confidentiality of individual responses must be maintained throughout the survey process. For this reason, **Snapshot reports are not produced for units with fewer than 10 respondents.** In a further attempt to maintain confidentiality, the written comments provided by respondents are edited (redacted) by DFSB staff to remove identifying information.

Step 3 – Interpret results

Three primary *Snapshot* reports — Unit Report, Breakdown Report and Comments Report — are produced and released by DFSB to commanders and managers. They are released approximately four weeks after the survey has closed.

Unit Report

The Unit Report provides commanders and managers the ability to review their *Snapshot* results from year to year, as well as against the Defence benchmark. Year-to-year results can be a way to measure whether changes have been successfully executed, and what degree of impact these changes have had, both positive and negative.

Unit-level reports are released to commanders and managers four weeks after the closure of the survey.

Snapshot indicators have been developed to complement the JD-R model. Each safety indicator is depicted by a 'fan blade' with the length of the blade representative of where the unit sits in relation to other Defence units. Where comparisons can be made, the previous year's results are depicted with a dot (see Figure 3).

When examining results, it is important to focus on deviations; both in terms of (1) the length of the fan blade (where it exceeds the green dotted line, or falls below the red dotted line), and (2) substantial differences between years, depicted by movement between the dot and fan blade.

Breakdown Report

The *Snapshot* Breakdown Report provides commanders and managers with individual item-level results for their unit compared to the Defence average. This allows deeper-level analysis to see whether respondents answered positively or negatively to particular items within each indicator. The Breakdown Report also shows how respondents differed in their answers depending on their work rank, which can be used to explore whether an area of strength or weakness applies to the whole unit or a specific group(s). This may provide additional insights and context as to what is driving indicator deviations.

Comments Report

The Comments Report contains redacted transcripts of written comments. The redacted comments are for the commander or manager only and should not be discussed with unit members. Comments supplement, and in some instances help explain, the information contained in the Unit and Breakdown Reports.

There are a number of things to be cautious of when reading through the comments reporting, including:

- **Confirmation bias.** Confirmation bias is the tendency to interpret or search for information which supports your own perceptions or beliefs. When reading the Comments Report it is important to be aware of this bias.
- **Representativeness of comments.** Not all members of a unit or workplace will choose to provide comments. Therefore, views presented may not necessarily be representative of the rest of the unit.

Commanders and managers should look for links between the comments and the numerical data. An example would be a significant proportion of aircrew respondents indicating that they are concerned about loss of skills, and written comments from aircrew about the lack of flying opportunities. In this case, the small number of aircrew who made the comments could well be representing the views of many.

WORKING EXAMPLE

When initially eyeing your Snapshot unit report (Figure 3) a number of strengths can be identified where results exceed the green dotted line (indicating a favorable result). However, relative challenges can also be identified where results fall below the red dotted line. Looking specifically at the job hindrances indicator, you will notice that the results indicate the workgroup has responded well below the Defence benchmark. Additionally, there has been a change in result (in the negative direction) from the previous year.

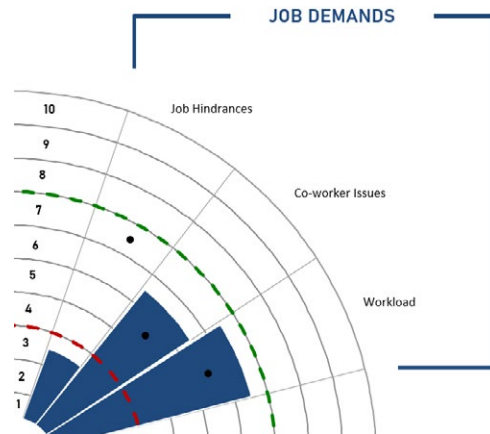


Figure 3. Snapshot fan blades

After reviewing your Unit Report you should look through the Breakdown Report to see if it provides additional information as to what is driving results. When looking at the item-level results for job hindrances (Figure 4) you can see that job hindrance results (across all six items) for other ranks and junior NCOs are fairly similar to the Defence average. However, senior NCOs and junior officers are reporting particularly greater perceptions of negative job hindrances compared to their rank category and the Defence average. This would suggest that job hindrance challenges are specific to senior NCOs and junior officers rather than whole workgroup.

IEM		Overall	Other Ranks	Junior NCO	Senior NCO	Junior Officer	Senior Officer	APS	
Job Hindrances	...we do not have the equipment that we need to do our job properly.	Your Unit	75%	52%	55%	81%	79%	45%	33%
	Average	50%	57%	59%	52%	43%	42%	43%	
	...we are micromanaged.	Your Unit	56%	60%	55%	46%	38%	0%	33%
	Average	38%	57%	50%	32%	26%	19%	35%	
	...we are not given enough notice of variations to schedules/duty rosters.	Your Unit	72%	56%	59%	63%	61%	27%	33%
	Average	45%	57%	57%	43%	44%	27%	31%	
	...we are concerned about loss of skills because of the lack of opportunity to practise.	Your Unit	68%	51%	62%	62%	68%	45%	67%
	Average	53%	61%	60%	52%	56%	41%	48%	
	...we spend more time on paperwork than on our real jobs.	Your Unit	76%	64%	74%	77%	71%	73%	33%
	Average	63%	65%	71%	65%	60%	55%	55%	
	...unimportant tasks or activities interfere with our real jobs.	Your Unit	83%	71%	75%	69%	63%	73%	33%
	Average	62%	65%	70%	61%	59%	55%	62%	

Figure 4. Item-level results

After analysing your Unit Report and Breakdown Report to find out more about your job hindrance results, you should look through your Comments Report to see if any further information can be extracted. When reading through the comments you notice a trend of individuals saying they don't have sufficient equipment to be able to do their job properly. Specifically, a number of comments cite the age and quality of the current equipment and that newer models would enhance the effectiveness and quality of their work.

Combining this information with that from the Unit and Breakdown Reports paints a clearer picture of some issues individuals are currently facing within the workgroup.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Benchmarks for Snapshot indicators

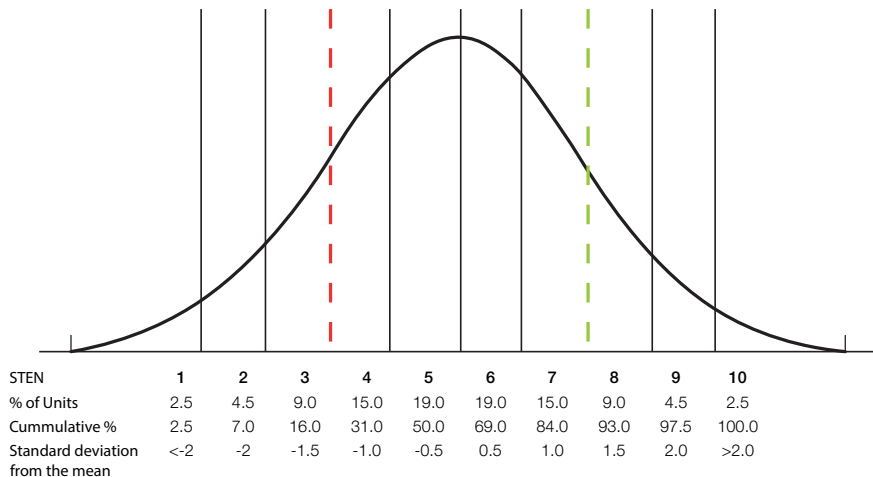
Benchmarks provide a point of reference by which something can be measured. The objective in using benchmarks is to identify workgroups that are doing noticeably better in order to identify good practices, and workgroups that are doing noticeably less well in order to assist them to improve. Benchmarks make it possible for workgroups to compare their own performance across safety indicators and to compare their own performance with similar groups. They enable performance to be effectively gauged and monitored over time as well as provide direct feedback on command actions taken to improve safety performance.

The process used for generating Snapshot benchmarks

Unlike engineering, where there are design parameters and criteria leading to design tolerances, there are no objective tolerances in the assessment of organisational climate. For this reason the generation of the *Snapshot* benchmarks was an empirical, data-driven process wherein safety indicator results were standardised using the non-linear STEN (Standard Ten) method.

The STEN method is a rigorous and defensible approach that enables workgroups with *Snapshot* indicator results noticeably better or worse than most work groups to be identified. STEN simply means “score out of 10” and is commonly used in psychological tests to provide a score that ranges from 1 to 10 (poorer to better performance). STEN scores are narrow enough to distinguish statistically significant differences between groups, but also wide enough not to over-emphasise minor differences. STEN scores of between 4 and 7 are the most common scores, and scores that fall outside this range (in either direction) are considered less common the further out they fall. In fact, 68 per cent of work groups should fall into the STEN score range of between 4 and 7 — that is the average range. Very few work groups get a score of 8, 9 or 10, (approximately 16 per cent). Likewise, around 16 per cent of work groups get a STEN score of 1, 2 or 3. Importantly, a STEN score of 1, 2 or 3 for a *Snapshot* indicator is considered to be statistically noteworthy and warrants further consideration and investigation.

In accordance with the non-linear STEN method, to calculate cut-offs for *Snapshot* indicators a set percentage of work groups were assigned to each STEN score. As shown below, 2.5 per cent of workgroups were assigned a STEN of 1, the next 4.5 per cent assigned a STEN of 2, et cetera.



Step 4 – Feedback and workforce engagement

Feedback is one of the most important aspects of the *Snapshot Survey*, it helps respondents see a return on investment for their participation, and fosters trust.

As part of fostering a generative safety culture, commanders and managers are strongly encouraged to share and discuss information in their *Snapshot* reports with their workforce, command chain, peers and airworthiness authorities. Feedback both up and down the chain of command engenders trust and will ensure the enduring success of the program.

Analysis of *Snapshot* data shows that there is an association between receiving feedback on the previous year's survey and seeing value in contributing to the current survey. In 2014, 57 per cent of respondents reported receiving feedback in relation to their *Snapshot* results. Comparatively, Figure 5 shows how this has increased to 83 per cent of respondents in 2020 reporting feedback on the previous year's survey (2019). Additionally, results have also shown that ratings of unit morale and unit performance are also higher when feedback was given on the previous year's survey.

Forums such as safety standdowns and safety committee meetings provide an ideal opportunity for results to be discussed in context. Additionally, incorporating survey results into safety committee meetings (or similar forums) ensures that issues confronting the unit are discussed, and actions for mitigation/remediation are established, tracked and implemented.

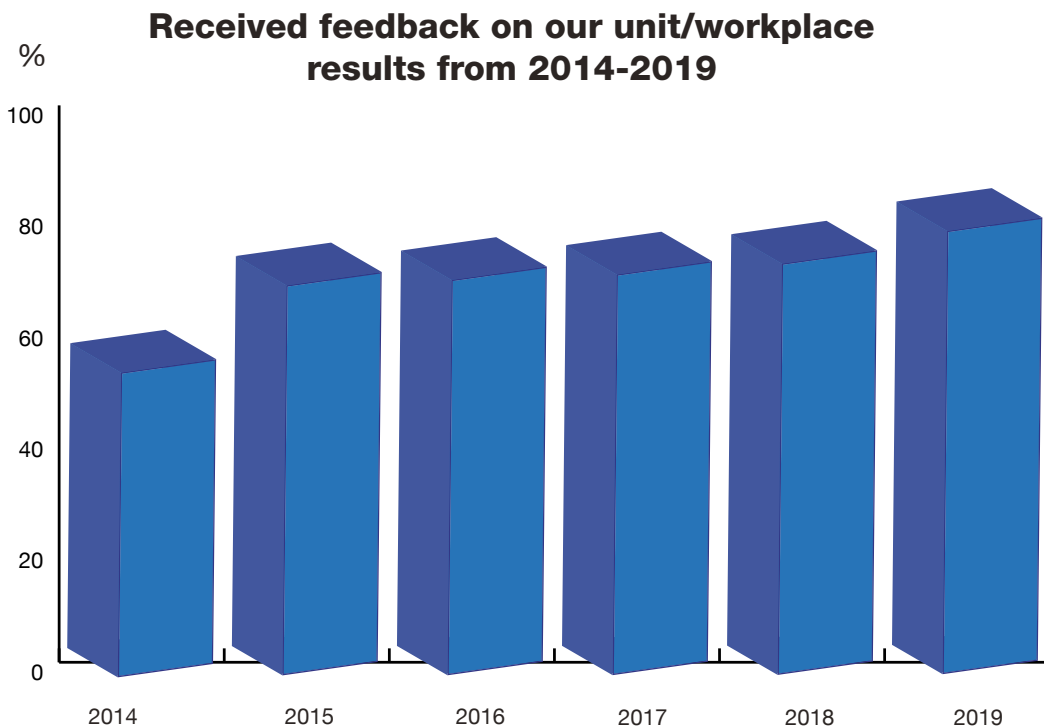


Figure 5. Received feedback on the *Snapshot* survey.

While feedback helps respondents see a return on investment for their participation, consultation and workforce engagement is essential for unpacking results and gaining a greater understanding as to why members are responding in a certain way. Results challenge expectations and it is important to consider why the differences may exist. What was occurring within the unit at the time of administration? Were members participating while on an exercise? What changes have been made that may have influenced results?

83 per cent of respondents in 2020 reported receiving feedback on the previous year's survey (2019).

Focus groups may provide a way to engage in this consultation process, magnifying underlying sentiments driving issues.

When planning a focus group units should think about the following:

- **Size.** Focus groups need to be large enough to generate ideas, but not so big that members don't get the opportunity to make a contribution to the discussion. The ideal size for a focus group is approximately 8-12 participants.
- **Composition.** Consideration of focus-group composition is important to get the most out of the process. It is common to conduct focus groups by work role or rank. Additionally, including members of a mix of experience levels or cross-team participation can provide dynamic discussions.
- **Duration.** The duration of a focus group can influence the usefulness and credibility of the process. The ideal time is 60-90 minutes. Sessions shorter than this are unlikely to delve into issues in a meaningful way and if they are longer, participants will become fatigued or bored, withdrawing from the conversation.
- **Location.** It is important to consider where the session should be held and the formation of the room. The ideal seating plan for focus groups is a U-shape or circle without tables acting as physical barriers.
- **Questions.** A question guide comprised of open-ended and non-leading questions to ask the group should be developed (noting during facilitation additional prompts can be asked). It is important to remember that a focus group is not just for digging through the issues but also an opportunity to celebrate wins and the units' strengths.

Further information on how to develop and run focus groups can be found in the additional resources section of this guidebook.

ABOUT FOCUS GROUPS

A focus group is a form of group interview with a small number of people used to gather information on their knowledge, experiences and views on a specific topic. This process can focus on a number of different aspects such as gaining a more in-depth understanding of a particular issue, identifying group norms and culture values or generating ideas and identifying priorities.

One of the key advantages of using such an approach to explore the topics of safety, performance and wellbeing, is that they can help in gathering more detailed information as it provides people with a platform to not only express their feelings but also explain where these feelings might be derived from. This is particularly relevant when it comes to gaining a deeper understanding of potential issues.

Step 5 – Take action and review outcomes

Take action

The overall success of the program is based on its capacity to contribute to meaningful change. In 2020 the percentage of members observing improvements in safety systems and workplace performance/health as a result of the *Snapshot* survey increased to 68 per cent (see Figure 6). After *Snapshot* results have been united with input from unit members the focus turns to planning and implementing any necessary strategies to better manage the identified issues.

When developing an action plan a unit should utilise multiple data sources, including data from their *Snapshot* results, information captured from focus groups, safety event data, audits and their own observations. Once a plan has been developed, sharing an outline with the unit can be beneficial in showing that their thoughts and opinions have been considered and are being actioned. Additionally, this should also foster a sense of ownership from the workgroup regarding the plan. Ownership of change has been shown to be an essential component of successful and positive change.

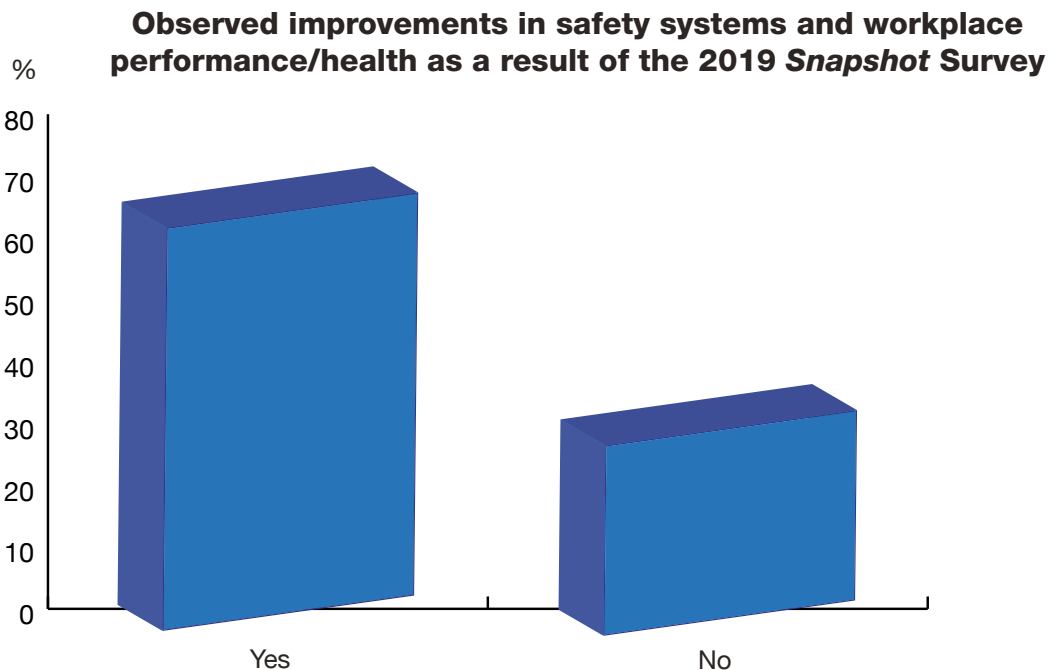


Figure 6. Improvements as a result of the *Snapshot* survey.

68 per cent of members observed improvements in safety systems and workplace performance/health as a result of the *Snapshot* survey.

Review outcomes

Ongoing monitoring and review to examine the effectiveness of any interventions is essential to determine whether chosen solutions are effective or whether they require modification. The *Snapshot* survey is a useful tool for providing these insights for commanders and managers.

The *Snapshot* results from the preceding year can be used to see whether actions taken were successful and/or flow-on effects, positive or negative, in other areas. If a commander wishes to review the effects of their actions on the unit before the next annual *Snapshot* Survey, they are able to request participation in the *Snapshot* Lite survey later in that year. The only caveat with this is that change is a process that can take time and it may be a while before you are able to see its outcomes.

The *Snapshot* Lite Survey is a condensed version of the annual *Snapshot* Survey and can be adjusted to target specific areas of interest for a unit. For example, *Snapshot* results may suggest an issue with communication within a unit. After reviewing these results and consulting with the unit, the commander develops and implements an action plan to improve communication. Later that year, the commander could request participation in a *Snapshot* Lite Survey focusing on communication and asking respondents to comment on the success of their actions. Given resource limitations, priority will be given to units assessed as having the highest need.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional resources related to this guidebook and the *Snapshot* Survey can be accessed through Survey, Research and Specialist Support (SRS) page on the DFSB intranet website.

