



Safety Culture Ladder Manual

Working Safely Together

Version: 4.0

Date: December 2020



SAFETY CULTURE LADDER

NEN

Safety Culture Ladder Manual

Working Safely Together

Version: 4.0
Date: December 2020

Introduction

The Safety Culture Ladder Manual is the framework document for Safety Culture Ladder certification. It includes all the required formal information on the certification processes. The framework provides clarification and objectives, methods, requirements and definitions.

From Step 2, a definition is provided of what a company must comply with (the requirement), what the accompanying criteria are (the standard), how these criteria are valued (the scores) and what the independent auditors should pay attention to (the auditor guideline). Step 2 is also the minimum step for a ladder audit. If following an audit, a company does not achieve Step 2, it will 'automatically' receive Step 1.

A Safety Culture Ladder audit is always performed by 2 auditors in order to ensure a well-balanced and objective opinion. These 2 auditors need not necessarily be from the same certification authority.

The Safety Culture Ladder is owned and managed by NEN. The Manual and the Certification Scheme are published on the website www.safetycultureladder.com and can be downloaded free of charge.

Safety Culture Ladder Manual version 4.0 replaces all previous versions per date of publication. Extra decisions which are published on the website (www.safetycultureladder.com), after publication of version 4.0, are also part of the manual.

Preface

Almost daily the media reports incidents in which workers are injured in the course of their duties. Sometimes it is about minor incidents, sometimes it is about accidents with serious injuries or even fatalities. The responsibility lies with all parties involved, both employers and employees. There are systems, structures, rules and regulations in place to avoid accidents, but that alone is not sufficient to prevent unsafe situations. The evaluations show again and again that the problem is not caused by systems and regulations, but by behaviour and (wrong or faulty) communication.

A key factor is awareness at all levels of the organisation's own contribution to safety. This has everything to do with attitude, behaviour and culture. Has a setting been created in which people dare to express themselves if there is an unsafe situation? Is safety often talked about and are employees being heard on safety issues? Does one also address employees of other organisations in regard to their behaviour?

The Safety Culture Ladder is purposely developed to address attitudes, behaviour and leadership. It focusses less on rules and structures. In the past years NEN has made big steps in bringing the Safety Culture Ladder to the attention of organisations. The acceptance increases as does the number of organisations that actually apply the ladder. A good development, but we are not yet satisfied.

In regard to content we also permanently seek improvement and listen carefully to input from "the field", such as from certifying bodies, clients and contractors. This resulted in several changes to the ladder, to improve it and make it less ambiguous. With this, we hope to bring the ladder another step closer to our ultimate goal: a widely supported system which is broadly applied in every sector. It offers enough starting points for organisations to work on safety within their own organisation and in the supply chain through procurement or purchasing processes, or even better, purely out of ambition and conviction.

Working safely and healthy is a responsibility we share together!

Johan van den Elzen
Chairman Board of Stakeholders Safety Culture Ladder



Contents

1	Introduction	6
2	Relationship with safety management systems	7
3	Terms and abbreviations	8
4	The Safety Culture Ladder	11
4.1	What is the ladder	11
4.2	How does the ladder work	11
4.3	For whom is the ladder intended	12
4.4	How are company differences handled	12
4.5	How does assessment take place	12
4.6	Who determines the height of the step	12
4.7	How does the certification proceed	13
4.8	Validity of Safety Culture Ladder	13
4.9	Description of ladder steps	13
4.10	Description of company aspects	14
5	Safety Culture Ladder products	16
5.1	SCL Original	17
5.2	SCL	17
5.3	SCL Light	17
5.4	Approved Self-Assessment	19
6	Certification audit	22
6.1	Authorised Ladder Certification Authorities	22
6.2	Auditor and assessor	22
6.3	CB ladder audit requirements	23
6.4	Certification man-day table	24
6.5	Unannounced work visits	26
6.6	Scores	27
6.7	Attendance	27
6.8	Audit report	28
6.9	Issuance of certificate and statement	28
6.10	Validity of certificate and statement	29
6.11	Audit process	29
7	Organisation	30
7.1	Who manages the ladder	30
7.2	Financing	30
7.3	Document/version management	31
7.4	Information and advice	31
7.5	Complaints	31
	Annex A Additional requirements offshore assessment	32
	Annex B Qualification requirements	35

1 Introduction

Exceptional requirements made of building work in the 21st century. Work is carried out at a fast pace, often under very complex circumstances. Also, the labour market is subject to change. The traditional structure consisting of a long-term relationship with a single employer is being phased out. Also, building companies are becoming increasingly dependent on foreign employees to provide the necessary expertise. All these changes impact on current working processes. Rising work pressure may, however, never be at the expense of safety.

Together with rail contractors, engineering firms, consultancies and the scientific community, ProRail has developed a Safety Culture Ladder to stimulate safety awareness and safe working practices. Efforts made in this area will be objectively measured and positively valued. Ultimately, the objective is to reduce the number of unsafe situations and incidents (absenteeism, damage).

Use of the Safety Culture Ladder has a broader function, however. It offers a framework for safe working to all parties active in the various sectors, whereby no distinction is made between clients, contractors or suppliers. Safety is something we achieve together, throughout the chain.

The Safety Culture Ladder has been developed in such a manner that the core concept can be generically applied in every sector and all types of organisations (paragraph 4.4).

The Safety Culture Ladder started on 1 July 2012, at several, by ProRail acknowledged, contractors. In 2016, ProRail has transferred the ownership and management of the Safety Culture Ladder to NEN (Netherlands Standardisation Institute). With this transfer to NEN, the ladder has become available to organisations in all sectors. In 2019 the name 'Veiligheidsladder' was changed to 'Safety Culture Ladder'.

2 Relationship with safety management systems

OHSAS 18001/ISO 45001

OHSAS stands for Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series and is a standard for an Occupational Health & Safety management system. A company can use this system to ensure and prove that the working conditions are properly regulated. It is based on the inventoried and evaluated risks and the applicable rules and agreements. The continuous improvement of working conditions also forms part of the requirements, including the ability of the organisation to learn from experiences (incidents and established deviations). It serves as a standard for all organisations seeking to ensure that they comply with laws and regulations, and striving to systematically improve their working conditions based on proactive risk analyses. At the international level OHSAS 18001 has been converted into a widely accepted ISO standard (ISO 45001). This standard was published at the end of 2018. With the publication of ISO 45001:2018, the OHSAS 18001 standard will be withdrawn by BSI.

VCA

The VCA is a health, safety and environment checklist, with which contractors can be tested in terms of their policy and performance. The VCA is thus focused on the health and safety of employees and intended not only to show compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (*Arbowet*), but is primarily a programme aimed at reducing the number of accidents and improving safety. Contractors have comparable standards with the VCU (Health and Safety Checklist Temp Organisations) and the VCO (Health, Safety and Environment Checklist for Contractors). The essence of the VCU is to control the health and safety of temp workers in cooperation with the host organisation(s). The VCO is intended for contractors that wish to create the necessary conditions so that parties who perform high-risk activities on their behalf or on their site can realise optimal HSE (Health, Safety & Environment) performance. The VCO sets requirements and defines the leadership that the client must provide under these circumstances. Point of departure is that the instructing party has an HSE management system that at least meets the VCA requirements.

The aforementioned standards apply to all types of organisations, whether profit, non-profit, or in the service or industrial sector. Both large and smaller companies. All the standards are aimed at controlling and continuous improvement of Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental (OHS&E) management systems.

It has in recent years become ever clearer that besides the availability of appropriate resources and systems, it is the human factor that plays a prominent role, especially when it comes to working safely in practice. Attention has therefore shifted to the 'soft' side of the OHS&E management system, such as implicit safe and healthy working practices.

The Safety Culture Ladder is not a (new) standard for assessing an H&S management system, but instead a standard for objectively measuring the health & safety attitude and behaviour in a company. The purpose of the Safety Culture Ladder is to contribute to H&S awareness in companies and thereby stimulate safe and healthy working practices and realise improvements in this area. As a result, the Safety Culture Ladder operates supplementary to 'system standards' such as ISO, OHSAS and VCA/VCU/VCO, as well as current rules, regulations and sector guidelines.

3 Terms and abbreviations

Ladder Certification Authority

A Ladder Certification Authority or CB is a Certification Authority that has been recognised by NEN to perform, as an independent third party, a ladder audit and consequently issue a Safety Culture Ladder certificate or statement. In order to perform a ladder audit, an CB and its auditors must comply with a number of conditions (see Chapter 6.1).

Company

The company under certification. The highest legal entity under certification is regarded as the establishment; the accompanying or underlying legal entities are regarded as branches.

Note: Some companies have a high-level legal structure but are organised operationally with, for example, business units and/or functional units. In those cases, the choice can be made to certify the operational unit (business unit/functional unit), including the controlling and supporting departments of the business unit/functional unit.

Board/Director

Highest level of management within the company.

Management/Manager

All managers in the operational line (study, preparation and performance). From Board (members) to first-line manager(s).

First-line management/First-line manager

Direct superiors of employees.

Employees

All persons with a position in the company. Both persons in salaried employment of the company as well as hired self-employed persons, temp workers and other loan personnel of the company.

Project

A number of interrelated activities (commissioned by the client) that are carried out by an entity (e.g. company, combination or joint venture) on-site or in its own working environment. Examples of these activities are performing a specific job or task, creating a design, supervising a work order, etc.

Client

The party for whom work is carried out, i.e. the party granting the instruction to the company.

Contractor

The party performing work on the instructions of the company (subcontractor, supplier, service provider).

Subsidiary contractor

The party who on the instructions of the client performs activities in the proximity of the work by the company, which activities impact on the work by the company.

Stakeholders

Parties with an interest such as employees, parent company, clients, commissioning authorities, contractors, subsidiary contractors, surrounding residents, political/administrative community.

Emergency services

Emergency services such as the fire brigade, police, ambulance, ANWB emergency doctor (helicopter), Environmental Service (Environmental disaster response firm/organisation), Labour Inspectorate, Emergency Response Team (ERT), etc.

Sector

The entire complex comprising the company, commissioning authorities, clients, secondary contractors, workforce hiring companies and sector organisations.

H&S¹

The health and safety of all persons at or in the proximity of the work environment.

Work environment

Location where employees perform work.

Safety culture

The complex of common values, standards, competences and accompanying behaviour in the area of health and safety.

H&S behaviour

Intentional and unintentional behaviour and actions aimed at the healthy and safe performance of work, with attention to people, materials, resources, methods, workplace and environment.

Campaign

A complex of systematic communication actions aimed at achieving the desired H&S behaviour. A campaign involves the deployment of multiple actions and resources in order to reinforce the message. The action resources include: management presentation, video, poster, booklet, an article in the company magazine, a detailed presentation for an H&S consultation, a training. It is important that the resources and message are aligned to the target group.

H&S meeting

An organised and structured periodic gathering of managers and employees, for a longer or shorter period, in order to inform one another about and confront one another with safe working practices and to motivate one another to observe these. Examples are H&S personnel meetings, H&S consultations, client-supplier days, training days, etc.).

H&S consultation

A safety discussion to raise H&S awareness (e.g. toolbox presentations, work consultations, lunch lectures or brief H&S reviews).

H&S observation rounds

A tour of the work environment, primarily aimed at observing the actions and behaviour of the employees in the area of health and safety. An important element of observation rounds is confronting employees with, and entering into a discussion on, desired H&S behaviour.

H&S work environment inspection

Inspection round both at the office (own and seconded) and on-site, primarily focusing on the health and safety of the physical work environment (barriers/access security, equipment/service vehicles, tools, technical facilities and suchlike).

H&S behavioural audit

Systematic assessment of the level of safety awareness and safe working practices in the company.

Incident

A collective term comprising all types of undesirable occurrences, situations, actions and/or behaviour in the area of health and safety. Safety concerns integral safety and thus comprises more than physical safety alone. It also includes social safety, external safety, etc.

¹ Abbreviation for Health & Safety.

Risk analysis

Written inventory and evaluation of H&S risks for employees and other persons in the work environment. The risk analysis comprises a description of the hazards, risks, seriousness and the applicable risk-limiting measures (including those concerning attitude and behaviour).

Process disruption

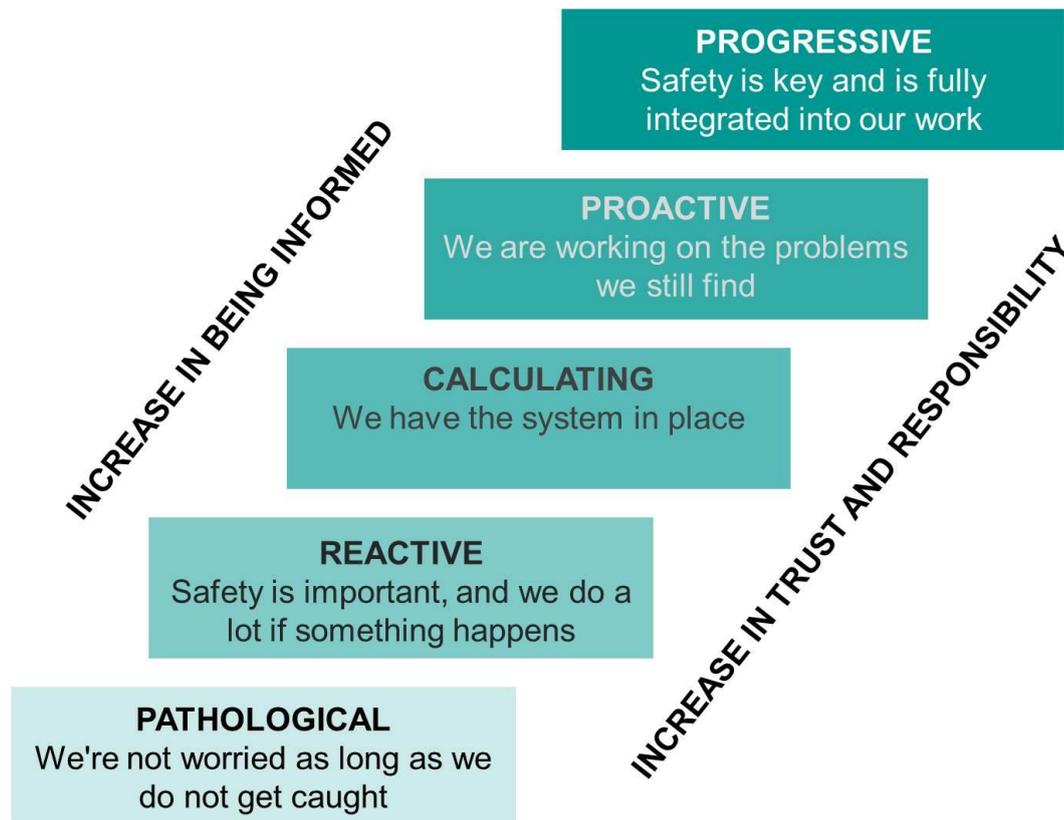
A disruption of the progress of the work and the related processes by stakeholders as a result of unsafe behaviour and/or actions, leading to significant loss (of image) for the company and its stakeholders.

4 The Safety Culture Ladder

4.1 What is the ladder

The Safety Culture Ladder is based on the safety culture ladder according to the model of Parker et al² (Figure 1), which is an evolutionary ladder consisting of five levels. The model assumes that the safety culture of a company has reached a certain level of maturity. The model distinguishes between five culture levels. Each culture level reflects the development phase of the company in terms of health and safety.

<Figure 1>



Like the model of Parker et al, the Safety Culture Ladder also consists of 5 levels, called steps, ranging from 1 to 5. A definition is provided per step of what a company must comply with (the requirement), what the accompanying criteria are (the standard), how these criteria are valued (the scores) and what the independent auditors should pay attention to (the auditor guideline). These originate from 6 perspectives or company aspects, subdivided into 18 company characteristics, each with an own weighting factor. The position of a company on the Safety Culture Ladder is determined by the highest step at which the company still meets the requirements.

4.2 How does the ladder work

The Safety Culture Ladder provides a concrete elaboration of the ambition to creating clear and accessible instruments for the advancing of quality aspects in the purchasing of works, services and supplies. It can be, for example, take the form of a minimum requirement or award criterion in tendering procedures. Point of departure is that efforts made to raise safety awareness to a higher step are

² Parker, D., M. Lawrie, and P.T.W. Hudson. 2006. A framework for understanding the development of organisational safety culture.

rewarded. How the Safety Culture Ladder is exactly applied in tendering procedures is stated in the client's tender documents.

4.3 For whom is the ladder intended

The Safety Culture Ladder has been developed for all types of organisations, whether profit, non-profit, or in the service or industrial sector. It is applicable to both large and smaller companies. In order to raise safety awareness at the workplace, all chain parties (clients-contractors-suppliers) will have to take steps on the Safety Culture Ladder in order to achieve the maximum effect. This means that all parties will have to undergo testing against the Safety Culture Ladder as part of the chain.

4.4 How are company differences handled

The Safety Culture Ladder has been designed to make it applicable to all kinds of companies. It is emphatically not the intention to create various (company specific) versions of the Safety Culture Ladder, but instead to use the existing version. If sectors or companies do not immediately identify with a requirement or criterion, one can look at the intention of that requirement or criterion. By looking at the intention, requirements and criteria can be interpreted for the business sector or the type of company being assessed.

4.5 How does assessment take place

When using the Safety Culture Ladder, how the company scores is assessed per step. Use is thereby made of 18 company characteristics resulting in 6 company aspects. Every company aspect (and thus also every company characteristic) has its own weighting. That weighting is translated into the maximum number of points that can be scored per criterion. The score per criterion is based on the certification scheme of the Safety Culture Ladder. This score per criterion then results in a score per company aspect (Table 1). Based on the total assessment, the company is certified for a specific step on the ladder.

<Table 1>

Company aspect	Step 2		Step 3		Step 4		Step 5	
	Max	Min	Cumulatively	Min	Cumulatively	Min	Cumulatively	Min
1	800	70%	2450	70%	3800	75%	4800	75%
2	200	70%	600	70%	1200	75%	1800	75%
3	550	70%	1500	70%	2500	75%	3450	75%
4	400	70%	1300	70%	2500	75%	3200	75%
5	750	70%	1650	70%	3000	75%	3950	75%
6	150	70%	350	70%	550	75%	800	75%
Totaal	2850	75%	7850	80%	13550	80%	18000	85%

4.6 Who determines the height of the step

Independent certification bodies use audits to determine how companies score in terms of safety behaviour. In this process, they use the certification scheme of the Safety Culture Ladder consisting of the aforementioned requirements and accompanying criteria. Assessment takes place on a step-by-step basis. A company meets the requirements of a certain step if (1) it complies with the minimum requirements per company aspect of the relevant step and those of the lower steps and (2) the sum of the weighted scores of all company aspects of the steps satisfy the minimum requirement prescribed for that step. A progressive approach applies to both the minimum requirement per company aspect and the average per step (Table 2).

<Table 2>

Subject	Explanation
Per criterion (100 points per criterion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes/No [0-100] • Completely [100], Largely [80], Partly [40], Not [0]
Amount of criteria/points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 2: 29/2850 • Step 3: 46/5000 [75/7850] • Step 4: 55/5700 [130/13550] • Step 5: 44/4450 [174/18000]
Per step (of the ladder); according to the progressive approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 2: min. av. [75]; min. per company aspect [70] • Step 3: min. av. [80]; min. per company aspect [70] • Step 4: min. av. [80]; min. per company aspect [75] • Step 5: min. av. [85]; min. per company aspect [75]
Weighting per company aspect	Emphasis on leadership and commitment, deviations and communication

Assessments carried out within the context of the Safety Culture Ladder are not strictly audits of the management system of the relevant organisation. Not the having (the what), but the how and why is determinative in the Safety Culture Ladder. The ladder audit determines the degree in which the organisation has adopted safety awareness and to what level employees in all ranks of the organisation are involved in safe working practices.

4.7 How does the certification proceed

The company that wishes to undergo assessment will familiarise itself with all current and formal information regarding the application of the Safety Culture Ladder. This is available in the up-to-date manual and other documents that are available on the www.safetycultureladder.com. Based on current information, the company then performs a self-assessment using the certification scheme of the Safety Culture Ladder. A Ladder Certification Authority (CB) tests and verifies the report submitted by the company by means of various interviews and observations in the company and during on-site work visits. The CB establishes the achieved safety step and, if the minimum requirements are met, issues the corresponding Safety Culture Ladder certificate or statement.

4.8 Validity of Safety Culture Ladder

The application of the Safety Culture Ladder is constantly changing. The most up-to-date information can be found in the latest version of the Safety Culture Ladder Manual and in additional decisions, available on www.safetycultureladder.com/en/certification/documents/.

It is the responsibility of all parties themselves to keep up to date with the latest version. NEN reserves the right to cease publication and application of the Safety Culture Ladder at any time.

4.9 Description of ladder steps

The Safety Culture Ladder distinguishes between 5 steps. The safety steps reflect the development phase in which a company finds itself in terms of safety awareness.

Step 1

The company's attitude is: 'we have no mishaps, we deliver good quality, so why should we waste time on preventive activities' and 'what you don't know, won't harm you'. The company makes little to no investment in improving safety behaviour. This is not the desired attitude and will therefore not be rewarded.

Step 2

The company tends to make changes after things have gone wrong. The response is based on deeply ingrained patterns. Employees are inclined to feel themselves the victim of a situation, rather than personally responsible. 'But that is not my fault?' Change behaviour is often ad hoc and short lasting. This behaviour is moderately valued.

Step 3

The company has determined which safety rules are important. It adopts a vulnerable approach, assumes responsibility, but is often driven by self-interest. 'What's in it for me?' Involvement in health and safety and compliance with rules and laws is mainly the task of (senior) management. Attention is given to health and safety, which is valued.

Step 4

Health and safety has a high priority, is deeply ingrained in the company's operations. Continuous investments are made in raising safety awareness and employees are encouraged to confront one another with unsafe behaviour. Improvements are structurally implemented and evaluated. The approach is characterised by proactivity and initiative. Safety awareness is regarded as an own responsibility: 'how can I contribute?'. This form of behaviour is highly valued.

Step 5

Safety is fully integrated in the operational processes. It is a fixed item on the agenda during reflection and evaluation within the own organisation and with sector parties. Health and safety is ingrained in the thinking and behaviour of all employees; it is part and parcel of their work. This is very highly valued.

4.10 Description of company aspects

The requirements and criteria that a company must comply with originate from 6 perspectives or company aspects. Each company aspect is further subdivided into a number of company characteristics. A brief explanation of each company aspect and a summary of relevant characteristics are provided below.

1. Leadership and involvement

How important is health and safety? Who or which body is responsible for (un)safe working? Do clear rules exist and are these complied with? Does the management stimulate and reward good behaviour? Does the management set a good example? What form does the communication on incidents take? Do managers and employees confront one another in a positive manner with undesired behaviour?

(Company characteristics: management interest, employee involvement, performance rewards).

2. Policy and strategy

Is health and safety high on the strategic agenda? What is the vision? Is health and safety fully integrated in the management cycle. Are regular awareness actions planned? To what degree is investment in safety behaviour regarded as a profit-enhancing factor?

(Company characteristics: causes of accidents, profitability and continuity).

3. **Organisation and contractors**

Are contractors selected on the basis of their safety behaviour and performance? Is attention given to health and safety in the contracting of subcontractors? How are new employees selected and instructed? Is safety awareness included in the competence profiles. Are employees motivated to pursue further schooling/training? Do safety issues play a role here? Do safety officials have a high level of expertise and competency? Can a safety official directly approach the company director?

(Company characteristics: contractors, competency and training, H&S department).

4. **Workplace and procedures**

How high is the risk awareness and what is done to optimise safety awareness at the workplace? Are rules and protocols applied? Are these tailored to the specific users? Are the improvement agreements resulting from a study always implemented?

(Company characteristics: work planning, workplace safety, procedures).

5. **Deviations and communication**

How is the reporting culture and what is done with the reports? Is the workplace regularly inspected? Are lessons learned from incidents? Are changes prompted by incidents implemented and evaluated in practice? Does sufficient communication and evaluation take place?

(Company characteristics: report, study and follow-up of incidents, daily control, meetings).

6. **Audits and statistics**

Are specific audits held of safety behaviour? Does the company use statistics for improvement?

(Company characteristics: audits and reviews, trends and statistics).

5 Safety Culture Ladder products

The following products are available for the Safety Culture Ladder:

<i>Product</i>	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>
SCL Original	100% audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCL Original certificate valid for 3 years with mention of step • Man-days according to man-day table • 2 auditors 	100% audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of certificate • Man-days according to man-day table • 2 auditors 	100% audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of certificate • Man-days according to man-day table • 2 auditors
SCL	100% audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCL certificate valid for 3 years with mention of step • Man-days according to man-day table • 2 auditors 	Follow-up audit 40% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of certificate • Man-day table 40% • 2 auditors 	Follow-up audit 40% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of certificate • Man-day table 40% • 2 auditors
SCL Light	SCL Light audit 40% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement valid for 3 years with step indication • Man-day table 40% • SAQ Extended mandatory • Assessment GAP-analysis and action plan • 2 auditors 	Check on action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of statement • 1 man-day * • 1 auditor 	Check on action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of statement • 1 man-day * • 1 auditor
Approved Self Assessment	Review Self Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement by CB valid for 3 years without step indication. • SAQ Compact mandatory • Assessment of GAP-analysis and action plan 1 man-day • 1 auditor 	Check on action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of statement • 0,5 man-day • 1 auditor 	Check on action plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of statement • 0,5 man-day • 1 auditor

* Time spent on one man-day (SCL Light: years 2 and 3) applies from 1-1-2021. The time spent on one day includes travel time to go from one location to another and does not include commuting time.

Certificates and statements are included in the register on www.safetycultureladder.com.

5.1 SCL Original

With the SCL Original certificate, the CB assesses the presence and quality of the safety culture by conducting an audit as described in chapter 6. A 100% audit is carried out in year 1 as well as in years 2 and 3. The SCL Original certificate is valid for 3 years if the same step, or level, is obtained in years 2 and 3. If the same step is not achieved, the validity of the issued certificate will expire. If the step is not obtained but the audit results show that a lower step is obtained, a new certificate can be issued on the lower step. A step increase or scope extension is possible in year 2 or year 3. In that case, a new certificate will be issued in that year and will be valid for a period of 3 years.

5.2 SCL

With the SCL certificate, the CB assesses the presence and quality of the safety culture by conducting an audit as described in chapter 6. A full certification audit is carried out in the first year. The SCL certificate is valid for 3 years, with an assessment carried out in the two intervening years by means of a 40% audit.

Year 1

The audit in the first year is a full certification audit (100%), as described in the man-day table in chapter 6.

Years 2 and 3

The follow-up audit in year 2 and 3 meets the following conditions:

- The scope of the follow-up audit is set at a minimum of 40% of a full certification audit, as described in the man-day table, with a minimum of two man-days on step 2 and three man-days from step 3 and up.
- There are two options for effectuating a 40% audit:
 - Option 1: assessment of four business aspects (25% each):
 - leadership and commitment;
 - work environment and procedures;
 - deviations and communication;
 - organisation and (sub)contractors.
 - Option 2: inclusion of the questions from the certification scheme with a score ≥ 100 points in the assessment (is more than 40% of total requirements).
- The results are recorded in a report including a summary.
- At least the board, management and executives must be assessed during the audit.
- At least one work or project visit takes place.
- If an auditor is unable to confirm that the level has remained as it was determined in year 1 during the follow-up audit in year 2 or year 3, a 100% audit must be carried out within a period of three months. 100% means that the remaining 60% of the audit is carried out. If this audit shows that the company no longer meets the requirements, but it is clear from the audit results that a lower step has been achieved, a new certificate can be issued on a lower step.
- A scope extension or step increase in year 2 or 3 is viewed as an 'initial certification'. In that case, a 100% audit must be performed. A new certificate is issued with a validity of 3 years.

5.3 SCL Light

With the SCL Light, the CB assesses the presence and quality of the safety culture, the GAP analysis and the action plan. The audit in the first year is 40% of a full certification audit as described in chapter 6. The SCL Light Statement that is issued with an audit on this product has a step indication and is valid for 3 years, with an assessment taking place in the two intervening years to check if the action plan has been carried out according to plan.

Year 1

The SCL Light audit in year 1 meets the following conditions:

The CB evaluates the SAQ Extended, the GAP analysis and the action plan drawn up by (or on behalf of) the organisation concerned. The SAQ Extended is mandatory in combination with the SCL Light. The tool is available through NEN: <https://webtoolscl.nl/en>. The tool also includes the “Online file” feature in which reports can be uploaded.

GAP analysis

A GAP analysis is a method to make a comparison between an existing and a desired situation. In this case, the results from the SAQ Extended are compared with the step the organisation aims to obtain. The GAP analysis is drawn up by (or on behalf of) the organisation in year 1 and then again in year 4. This GAP analysis is assessed by the CB before issuing an SCL Light statement or an Approved Self-Assessment statement. By assessment is meant: checking whether it contains the minimum information.

The GAP analysis should contain at least the following information:

- date / period in which the SAQ was carried out;
- overview of each business aspect and characteristic of the achieved score;
- identification of business characteristics that score below the desired level;
- an analysis of existing versus desired situation for each identified business characteristic;
- overview of necessary measures to get from the existing to the desired situation. The CB assesses if measures are described that fit the 'gaps'. It is assessed if measures are specific and quantifiable and coherent with the identified 'gaps'. The CB does not assess the measures substantively on effectivity.

Action plan

The action plan is drawn up by (or on behalf of) the organisation concerned. The action plan describes which actions will be concretely implemented for the coming year in order to fulfil the necessary measures that have emerged from the GAP analysis. This means that per measure to be taken from the GAP analysis a step-by-step approach is developed to evolve from the current situation to the desired situation.

The action plan should at least contain:

- a description of concrete actions and intended result;
- a detailed planning with deadlines for each action;
- appointment of action owners (names and positions);

It allows for priorities to be set and for specific actions to be put on the agenda for the following years. The action plan also contains a description of how the implementation of the actions is monitored and how they are adjusted if necessary. If applicable, the action plan also contains an overview of the actions and results of the previous³ years.

The 40% audit

The scope of the follow-up audit is set at a minimum of 40% of a full certification audit, as described in the man-day table, with a minimum of two man-days at step 2 and three man-days from step 3 and up.

- There are two options for effectuating a 40% audit:
 - Option 1: assessment of four business aspects (25% each):
 - leadership and commitment;
 - work environment and procedures;
 - deviations and communication;
 - organisation and (sub)contractors;
 - Option 2: inclusion of the questions from the certification scheme with a score ≥ 100 points in the assessment (is more than 40% of total requirements).
- The results are recorded in a report including a summary.
- At least the board, management and executives must be assessed during the audit.
- At least one work or project visit takes place. This visit must be done on location (not remote). The location is determined by the auditor. The choice for location should be based on

representability (in regard to the scope of the audit), the scope of the audit, the risks and earlier experiences at that client (related to the SCL).

- The audit does not result in a score and a certificate being issued, it merely provides a statement indicating that the step has been obtained indicatively.
- A scope extension or step increase in year 2 or 3 is viewed as an 'initial certification'. In that case, a 40% audit must be performed. A new statement with step indication is issued with a validity of 3 years.

Year 2 and 3 Check on action plan

An assessment of the action plan takes place in year 2 and 3.

The purpose of this assessment is not to check whether the step indication that was granted is still correct. At the same time, it is also more than just a documentary assessment by means of the check on the action plan. It includes a site visit, during which observations are recorded and interviews are carried out.

The check on the action plan and the site visit enables the auditor to verify whether **the targeted progress** has taken place fully, partially or not at all. If it is established that the targeted progress has not taken place, another 1st year audit needs to take place in that year (40%). As part hereof the auditor enquires after an analysis why the progress has not taken place and how the organisation plans to prevent this in the future. In year 4 the regular cycle is initiated again (40% audit – check on action plan – check on action plan).

5.4 Approved Self-Assessment

Evaluating the Approved Self-Assessment (ASA) is a process-based test in which no statement or decision is made about the step in question. The Approved Self-Assessment is an independent confirmation that determines - to a reasonable extent - that the self-assessment has been carried out in accordance with the requirements.

It must be clear to all parties that an Approved Self-Assessment can in no way be used by an CB to take stock of/check the level of the safety culture. The auditor only checks whether the implementation meets all the agreements that have been made to that end. This can only result to the following statement: "the auditor has established that the Approved Self-Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the applicable NEN regulations."

The Approved Self Assessment includes a self-assessment, a GAP analysis and an action plan.

Self Assessment and GAP analysis

It is mandatory to use the SAQ Compact (questionnaire) for the self-assessment, available through NEN: <https://webtoolscl.nl/en>. The self-assessment is a self-evaluation of the safety culture, undertaken by the organisation itself. The 'online file' is connected to this instrument in which the reports can be uploaded. These reports describe how an organisation esteems itself in regard to attitude and behaviour to a specific theme.

The outcomes of the SAQ are input for the GAP analysis in which a comparison is made between the existing and the desired situation in regard to safety culture.

The GAP analysis is drawn up by (or on behalf of) the organisation in year 1 and then again in year 4. This GAP analysis is assessed by the CB before issuing an SCL Light statement or an Approved Self-Assessment statement. By assessment is meant: checking whether it contains the minimum information.

- The GAP analysis should contain at least the following information:
- date / period in which the SAQ was carried out;
- overview of each business aspect and characteristic of the achieved score;
- identification of business characteristics that score below the desired level;

- an analysis of existing versus desired situation for each identified business characteristic;
- overview of necessary measures to get from the existing to the desired situation;

Action plan

The action plan is drawn up by (or on behalf of) the organisation concerned. The action plan describes which actions will be concretely implemented for the coming year in order to fulfil the necessary measures that have emerged from the GAP analysis. This means that per measure to be taken from the GAP analysis a step-by-step approach is developed to evolve from the current situation to the desired situation. The action plan should at least contain:

- a description of concrete actions and intended result;
- a detailed planning with deadlines for each action;
- appointment of action owners (names and positions);

It allows for priorities to be set and for specific actions to be put on the agenda for the following years. The action plan also contains a description of how the implementation of the actions is monitored and how they are adjusted if necessary. If applicable, the action plan also contains an overview of the actions and results of the previous years.

Year 1

The audit day is as follows and is composed of the following elements:

- preparation;
- research (conducted on-site);
- reporting.

Preparation

Auditor is given (access to) the:

- self-assessment – the score and a substantiation of these scores;
- GAP analysis of the organisation – substantiation for which aspects no or insufficient score is achieved;
- plan of approach/action plan – further specification of the focus areas for the coming period to improve with responsible persons and timeline.

Based on the documents received, the auditor prepares a day plan (see example elaboration).

Research

The auditor conducts a research on-site. De location is determined by the auditor. The auditor observes extensively, not rather actively, but passively (what stands out?). The research is comprised of a document research as well as interviews in which the following is checked:

- Cross-checks to see if there is a logical connection between the provided answers.
- Identification of the bottlenecks and main issues, where the organisation gives itself a noticeably low or noticeably high score, or declares matters as not applicable. In the case of 'n/a' answers, a mandatory field is included in the web tool (SAQ Compact) for further elaboration. If the substantiation is unfounded on too many occasions, the research can be suspended.
- Verification of whether a sufficient number of respondents from all layers of the organisation have completed the SAQ in order to have a reliable outcome. The calculation tool from the SAQ gives an indication of the number of respondents needed for a realistic picture; the calculation tool is mandatory for the SAQ Compact;
- What the organisation has done with the results of all the respondents: have they been discussed? What were the follow-up actions?
- Possible outcomes of observations (which the auditor has passively perceived).

The auditor also receives relevant information regarding safety performance, including:

- information about the trend of incidents of multiple years and how the company has treated this and learned from this;
- information about serious incidents (incidents involving absence, permanent injury and fatalities) in the past year, including a brief description and how the company has treated these and learned from these;
- information regarding sanctions and rewards in regard to undesired H&S behaviour and desired H&S behaviour is valued within the organisation in the past year;
- The leadership and exemplary behaviour of the management.

The auditor assesses the action plan, which consists of:

- a phased schedule of when to take which action;
- a step-by-step plan for each measure from the GAP analysis aimed at moving from an existing to a desired situation, consisting of at least:
 - a description of concrete actions, intended result and means to achieve this;
 - a detailed planning with deadlines for each action;
 - the substantiation if one chooses to not (yet) undertake an action;
 - appointment of action owners (names and positions);
- for each measure, a description of how the result of the actions is quantified;
- an overview of already implemented measures and actions, and measurement of the permanent result.

Day plan example

Auditor is welcomed – brief introduction Interview with the board	Management board, supervision
Evaluation of Self-Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempt to decipher the how's and why's of the scores • Assessment of the GAP analysis, action plan with underlying documents. 	Management board, supervision
Interview(s) with employee(s) from the organisation, conducted on-site. Input for this includes the data from the documentary assessment. The action plan is also discussed. The location is determined by the auditor.	Employees(s), supervision
Lunch	
Preparation of feedback internal review at the discretion of the auditor	Auditor
Give feedback of findings	Management board, supervision

Reporting

Reporting is limited to the Approved Self-Assessment and a report should contain the persons spoken to, the visited location, and the positive as well as negative findings.

Technical review

Technical review is not required with an Approved Self-Assessment.

Year 2 and year 3

An assessment of the action plan takes place in year 2 and 3. This is a desk review, therefore no site visit is required. It looks at whether the intended progress has taken place fully, partially, or not at all. If it is established that the targeted progress has not taken place, another 1st year audit needs to take place in that year (40%). As part hereof the auditor enquires after an analysis why the progress has not taken place and how the organisation plans to prevent this in the future. In year 4 the regular cycle is initiated again (40% audit – check on action plan – check on action plan)

6 Certification audit

A Safety Culture Ladder audit is carried out in accordance with the NEN-EN-ISO/IEC 17021, which is supplemented by the regulations below.

6.1 Authorised Ladder Certification Authorities

An CB is authorised to perform a ladder certification if the CB has been accredited by the Dutch Accreditation Council or by a member of the IAF in accordance with the NEN-EN-ISO/IEC 17021 standard.

What's more, the additional conditions below apply to all recognised CBs.

- Accredited by the Dutch Accreditation Council for VCA and management systems such as ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 or ISO 45001.
- Every CB communicates in advance which (new) auditors will be used for the ladder audit and includes a competence file, showing that the auditor is competent for assessment. Auditors will be declared competent by NEN, if they meet the qualifications as described in Annex B. Each (new) auditor will audit up to step 3. For auditing step 4 or 5, the auditor needs to acquire sufficient experience and training. To be allowed to conduct audits for step 4 and 5 an additional statement of competency is required.
- The CB devotes sufficient time to the training of auditors in the principles of the Safety Culture Ladder and accompanying certification scheme. The training is documented as part of the competence file.
- Personnel that in a period of two years prior to the certification activities have been involved in consultancy on management systems or have been employed by the company under certification may not perform audits in the context of the Safety Culture Ladder. Auditors may have performed ISO, OHSAS, VCA, or BTR audits at the company.

NEN has final responsibility for the issue of the statement of competency. NEN can at all times in case of non-fulfilment of the above conditions proceed to suspend or withdraw the statement of competency. The CBs registered as competent by NEN to perform the Safety Culture Ladder certification are listed on www.safetycultureladder.com.

The CB has with respect to certification concluded an agreement with NEN on the use of the Safety Culture Ladder certification standard and participation in the Harmonisation Committee.

6.2 Auditor and assessor

The qualified personnel involved in certification can be distinguished according to:

- Auditors: charged with the performance of the certification audit, the assessment of the results, the audit report, the certification recommendation and performance of the annual reassessment.
- Assessor: charged with taking decisions on the issue and continuation of a certificate.

The qualified auditor and assessor are employed by an CB that has been recognised by NEN. The auditor and assessor can be loan personnel, on condition that they are demonstrably qualified to perform Safety Culture Ladder audits.

The following minimum qualification requirements apply to auditors:

1. In terms of education and experience they have competences that are at least equal to higher vocational education.
2. Experience in management system certification under accreditation.
3. Certified safety expert (HvK, MvK).
4. Qualified Lead Auditor for VCA** or OHSAS 18001/ ISO 45001.
5. Demonstrable familiarity with sector-specific techniques by means of training or extended experience (sector qualification).

6. Demonstrable competency with the certification scheme of the Safety Culture Ladder by means of training (Safety Culture Ladder qualification).
7. A positive audit assessment by the CB of the auditor's attitude and behavioural competences.

Annex B contains a further specification of the qualification requirements for auditors.

The audit report assessor must at least meet the following supplementary requirements:

1. Qualified assessor for VCA** or OHSAS 18001/ ISO 45001.
2. 3 years demonstrable experience as Lead Auditor for management system certification.

6.3 CB ladder audit requirements

- The CB draws up an audit plan for every audit. This plan details at least the following: ladder audit structure (including scope of the audit), ladder step, organisational boundaries (department, company, legal structure, relevant business locations), the number of employees, SCL product name, initial audit or follow-up audit, number of man-days, composition and division of tasks audit team, ladder audit programme and report.
- A ladder audit is carried out by a minimum of two auditors, of which one is appointed in advance as lead auditor. Auditors need not necessarily be employed by one and the same CB.
- If activities that take place offshore fall within the scope of the assessment, additional agreements apply that are included in Annex A.
- Four methods are used in the performance of the ladder audit:

Method	Objective
Self-assessment	Self-assessment of quality requirements and criteria in terms of safety awareness and safe working practices.
Analysis of self-assessment by CB	Analysing of factual data provided by company on safety awareness.
Interviews by CB	Verification of factual data, the self-assessment and the factual implementation of quality criteria.
Observations & Work Visit by CB	Observation of the application and enforcement of safety awareness and behaviour in the work environment and its significance within the organisation.

- Interviews are chosen to ensure that all layers of the organisation (from high to low) are addressed, with an emphasis on (operational) employees. The interviews are additionally chosen in such a manner that the results together with the observations in the work environment are verifiable in other (held) interviews.
- The performance of a ladder audit entails at least an on-site work visit by the CB. A ladder audit solely on the basis of a desk review is insufficient and thus not acceptable.
- As regards the number of interviews and worksites to be visited, refer to the man-day table below.
- Scores are awarded to criteria on the basis of interviews, observations and verifications.
- The ladder audit is concluded with an audit report. This report presents the conclusions of the ladder audit as well as the end score (ladder step). A copy of this audit report remains with the CB and will be submitted at the request of NEN.
- A ladder audit for Step 'N' also entails a ladder audit of lower steps with the minimum requirements of Step 'N'.
- If a company fails to achieve the required minimum scores during a ladder audit for Step 'N', the company will not have Step 'N' on the Safety Culture Ladder and this does not automatically mean that the company has ladder step 'N-1'.
- The company has at least Step 1 of the ladder if it has a completed ladder audit and the ambition to further proceed up the Safety Culture Ladder.

- If an initiated audit cannot be (completely) performed due to circumstances and causes attributable to the company under audit, the audit must be completed within 3 months of the start of the audit.

Project certification with certification of multiple contractors on one project

The following requirements additionally apply for project certification of multiple contractors on one project.

Certificate and scope

The scope stated on the certificate describes its validity and must be in accordance with the activities being assessed. A certificate is issued per scope. This means that several certificates may be issued / valid per project. These certificates can have different steps.

The scope indicates which phase (s) apply. An example of a phase is "engineering" or "execution". If the scope contains multiple phases, these phases must be active at the time of the audit. A phase can consist of several sub-activities. These sub-activities do not all have to be active during the audit.

Time spent on the audit

The time spent on the audit is related to the scope.

Certificate validity

The certificate is valid until the end of the project or until the end of the project phase. If the project or project phase lasts longer than a year, the control activities will take place in accordance with the agreements in chapter 5. If the auditor has doubts during the follow-up audit (e.g. whether the previously determined level on the SCL is still applicable), the regular agreements apply, as included in chapter 5.

6.4 Certification man-day table

As regards the time devoted to certification, the table below provides a guideline with a minimum number of man-days. The highest legal entity under certification is regarded as the establishment; the accompanying or underlying legal entities are regarded as branches.

Table 3 shows the certification audit for **step 2** of the Safety Culture Ladder, consisting of:

- Phase 1: assessment of the scale and structure of the organisation, drawing up an audit plan and initiating the audit report.
- Phase 2: certification audit of working practices and assessment of all questions on the ladder step.

<Table 3> Man-day table

Number of workers	Audit term in man-days	Number of workers	Audit term in man-days
5-65	See Table 4 'small organisations'	1176-1550	13
		1551-2025	14
		2026-2675	15
66-125	6	2676-3450	16
126-175	7	3451-4350	17
176-275	8	4351-5450	18
276-425	9	5451-6800	19
426-625	10	6801-8500	20
626-875	11	8501-10700	21
876-1175	12	>10700	Continued according to the above progression (+500 persons) 10700 persons (+2200) 13400 persons (+2700) 16600 persons (+3200)

The provisions below apply to the table:

1. A certification assessment on step 3 and higher also implies that a certification assessment of the lower steps is required that meets the minimum requirements of the highest to be assessed step. The time spent on the certification assessment in man-days (see the table above) will increase by a factor indicated below for each subsequent step:
 - step 3, factor 1.5;
 - step 4, factor 2.0;
 - step 5, factor 2.5.
2. The calculation of the number of man-days for an SCL follow-up audit (year 2 and 3) and an SCL Light audit (year 1) is 40% of a full certification audit, with a minimum of two man-days for step 2 and three man-days for step 3, 4 and 5.
3. The audit duration in man-days is rounded up to half-days.
4. In order to ensure objectivity, a certification audit (phases 1 and 2) is performed by a team of two auditors.
5. Besides personal interviews, on-site visits are also made of projects in progress. All work awarded by clients to companies under audit can be assessed as long as it is representative in terms of number and type (large, small, complex, simple, standard, unique, etc.).
6. The total number of workers concern those of the establishment and relevant branches (falling under the scope of the certification audit). For determining the number of workers, apply the sum of own personnel + loan personnel, whereby the auditors determine which persons will be interviewed. The minimum number of persons to be interviewed is $0.6\sqrt{M}$ for the board, management, staff, etc., and $1.2\sqrt{M}$ for operational employees. M is equal to the number of workers.
7. The number of workers in the table must be viewed as a continuum rather than a stepped progression.
8. If the company on average has N projects simultaneously ongoing per year, the audit will visit and test at least $0.6\sqrt{N}$ projects, whereby the auditors determine which projects will be visited. The total number of projects concern the projects that are managed from the establishment and/or the branches to be visited, if applicable.
9. Branches can be visited at random according to the schedule below. In this, (X) stands for the total number of branches and (\sqrt{x}) for the minimum number of branches to be visited. In the choice of branches, consideration should be given to:
 - does it offer a good reflection of the work performed under assignment;
 - safety risks and the related attitude and behaviour;
 - a representative image of the establishment as a whole.

(X)	(\sqrt{x})
2<6	2
6<12	3
12<20	4
20<30	5
30<42	6
37 ... etc.	

10. An audit is performed separately for certification under ISO/VCA/OHSAS, etc.
11. If an organisation wishes to be certified on two different steps for different business units, two separate audits will need to be performed. In cases where specific groups, such as management, need to be audited twice, the selection of persons to be audited can be set up in such a way that the

same person will not be interviewed twice. Furthermore, possible overlap is the consequence of the organisation's choice to have two audit paths. The number of man-days may not be reduced.

12. The SCL products (see Chapter 5) are applicable for companies with a minimum of 5 employees.

13. Group interviews are allowed for organisations with up to 10 employees.

Small organisations

For companies with 5 up to 65 employees (both own and contracted) the following revised man-day table applies. The man-day table specifies the audit term in man-days per step.

<Table 4> Man-day table for organisations with up to 65 employees

Audit	Nr. of employees	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
		Audit time in man-days			
100%	5-10	2	3	4	5
40%		2	3	3	3
100%	11-25	3	4	5	6
40%		2	3	3	3
100%	26-35	3	5	6	8
40%		2	3	3	3
100%	36-50	4	6	8	10
40%		2	3	3	4
100%	51-65	5	8	10	13
40%		2	3	4	5

Provisions 4 to 13 of Table 3 also apply to the man-days in this table 4

6.5 Unannounced work visits

The purpose of an unannounced work visit is to better determine additionally whether an organisation meets the requirements of the Safety Ladder in daily practice 'at an arbitrary moment'. The unannounced work visits serve in this way to verify visibly internalized safety behaviour in practice. An unannounced work visit will take place during the (annual) audit for (re)certification applying from step 4. The certification body will offer an audit on step 3 to plan an unannounced work visit. The contractor ultimately decides whether or not he wants to include this.

How is it done

The audit team will ask on a random day during the audit which work is in progress (together with the audit supervisor of the organisation to be audited) and will then independently go to a work location for an unannounced work visit. Internal works can also be selected for work visits.

An unannounced work visit mainly contains observations, but sometimes also interviews.

Observations serve to be able to see if one is working safety consciously. There is the possibility to engage with employees if necessary. It is not the intention to conduct extensive conversations, but rather a short conversation in order to be able to get more feelings (background) about behaviour. These conversations can preferably be held during the break or before or after work.

The way in which these interim unannounced work visits take place depends on the type of organisation. In general, the following principles apply:

- Implementation organisation → observe activities at the (construction) sites.
- Service organisation → observe activities at the construction-sites (if applicable), observations of employees at the office (tours and addressing employees) and meetings (attendance).

The intention is to observe the employees as much as possible in their natural work habitat.

Planning

In accordance with paragraph 6.5 the number of work visits is determined within the fixed audit time, included unannounced work visits. At least 1 of them will be visited unannounced. For small organisations (10 FTE or less), the time taken for this unannounced work visit is a maximum of half a day.

Reporting and effect

No separate report is made of the unannounced work visit. The findings are part of the standard report, as specified in paragraph 6.9. The scoring on the unannounced work visits is part of the total per company characteristic and the overall total. The results of the unannounced work visits by themselves can't lead to conclusions about obtaining or maintaining a step.

6.6 Scores

The scores attainable for each criterion are stated in the certification scheme. A maximum score can only be awarded if the criterion is fully and demonstrably complied with.

If a criterion is only met in part, the auditors will award a score that, based on the expert judgement of the auditors, corresponds with the degree in which the criterion is demonstrably complied with. For this a spread is applied between largely (80%) and partially (40%).

6.7 Attendance

NEN is invited to attend ladder audits. By attending, NEN wishes to acquire insight into the competences of the deployed audit teams. NEN can moreover determine whether the decision and assessment process of the auditors is adequately harmonised between the various CBs.

Notice of a pending ladder audit is sent at least 15 working days before commencement of the audits by the CB to NEN. This notice will contain at least the following information:

- A clear description of the "organisational boundaries" indicated by the company.
- An audit plan drawn up by the CB (only the main points; date and location of the audit, which actions, who, when, where).
- Information on the relevant auditors (specifying lead auditor, if applicable).

An attendance is carried out at each newly qualified auditor during the first audit. After the first attendance of a newly qualified auditor, a follow-up attendance takes place at least once every 4 years, unless deviations have been identified during an attendance. In this case, an additional attendance will take place. NEN will inform the CB at least 3 working days before commencement whether or not it will attend the audit and if so, by whom. The organisation cannot refuse an attendance. NEN can decide to replace the attendance by the company with a review of the CB.

NEN will act as observer during the attendance and will thus not interfere with or be involved in the audit process by the CB. This will, however, not prevent NEN at fixed times from exchanging information with the CB auditors, requesting additional information, etc. Such interventions will, however, only take place outside the presence of the client (company). This may make it necessary to schedule extra time in the audit planning. The CB ensures that the presence and objective of the attendance, as well as the task/function of the observer, is clearly explained to the company in advance. NEN will treat all

information provided during the attendance as confidential. NEN will refrain during the audit from expressing any opinions on the scores to the CB (or the client).

NEN will draw up an attendance report for every attendance. The attendance report drawn up by NEN will focus only on the main points (professional and harmonisation aspects). This attendance report can serve as input for improvement measures by the CB. General observations regarding harmonisation will be anonymised and discussed during the harmonisation consultation with the CB auditors.

6.8 Audit report

The audit reports will express at least the results of the requirements of the Safety Culture Ladder and state which step of the ladder has been audited.

The failure of the company to (demonstrably) comply with the requirements is set out separately in the audit report. Every audit report will contain the auditor's conclusion regarding the step on the Safety Culture Ladder. The audit results may only lead to a positive report if the minimum requirements of the step have been complied with. A positive audit report will specify the attained step and make a recommendation to the CB to grant or revise the step on the certificate.

The decision by the CB to issue a certificate is taken on the basis of:

1. A complete audit report with positive conclusion on the attained step and a certification recommendation.
2. Generally compulsory appendices such as a statement by the board on the activities and company entities, possibly accompanied by a copy of the (legal) organisational structure as included in the annual auditor's report.
3. Specific compulsory appendices such as the assessor's report on the audit report, notes and findings of auditors, substantiation of scoring by auditors.

The report will be made available by the CB to the board of the company no later than 15 working days after the final audit day. The audit report forms an intrinsic part of the certificate to substantiate the step on the Safety Culture Ladder. The audit report is confidential and does, in itself, not provide proof to third parties that the company meets the requirements of the Safety Culture Ladder.

NEN has no influence on the audit report and the audit results. NEN is not provided with a report. NEN is permitted to inspect audit reports at random for the purpose of CB/auditor assessment and in case of complaints by audited companies.

6.9 Issuance of certificate and statement

The name of the certificate/statement reads: Safety Culture Ladder certificate or statement step N , where N can have the value 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5. A certificate or statement indicates the highest ladder step attained and the date on which the certificate or statement was issued. Each certificate or statement is a unique document the size of an A4 page with a unique number. This number is provided by the CB. The CB issues the certificate or statement to the organisation. At least the following information is mentioned on the certificate and statement:

1. the legal name, address details with place of business and the Chamber of Commerce number of the business entity or entities covered by the Safety Culture Ladder certification;
2. the name of the CB as stated in the rating;
3. the step obtained (or indicative step in a statement) on the Safety Culture Ladder (steps 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5);
4. the name and signature of the CB representative.
5. a reference to the version number of the certification scheme used for the Safety Culture Ladder.
6. the date of first issue and the date of change;
7. the certificate/statement registration number issued by the CB. The certificate issued by an CB is submitted by the CB to NEN for publication on www.safetymcultureladder.com.

6.10 Validity of certificate and statement

A “Safety Awareness Certificate or statement Step N” issued by an CB has a validity of 3 years from the date of issue, subject to the condition of an annual reassessment, From 10 to no more than 12 months after certification, reassessment (follow-up audit) is required in order to continue the validity of the original certificate or statement. In case of an assumed rise up the ladder, a company may request a new ladder audit from an CB. Such a request may not be made sooner than six months after receiving the certificate.

If a company does not (any longer) meet the requirements, the company can within a period of 13 weeks perform an extra audit to show that the first audit contains a measurement error and that the requirements are indeed met. The review will then focus specifically on the company aspects that were supposedly 'wrongly' assessed. The CB will draw up an audit plan for this.

If the 2nd measurement also shows that the company does not (any longer) comply with the requirements, the company will lose its certificate for Step N and will – on the basis of the recommendation of the CB – be certified for a lower step. It is not permitted to change CB or auditors during the term of 13 weeks. A change is permitted thereafter on condition that the company communicates such to NEN in advance. An issued statement for the product Approved Self Assessment has a validity of 3 years as well.

6.11 Audit process

Certification audit

Every certification audit will be completed within 13 weeks (1 quarter). Phase 1 of the audit is regarded as start time. The certification audit is completed on issue of the certificate or statement. No change of CB is permitted during this period. If a certification audit is not completed within the period of 13 weeks, the audit is invalid and no legal certificate or statement can be issued. If a company still requires a valid certification, a completely new certification audit will have to be carried out. The company is at that time free in its choice of CB.

The certification audit will be aborted in case of significant changes during the certification audit (reorganisations, etc.) as a result of which the original scope of the audit is no longer representative. If the company wishes to receive a valid certificate or statement on the basis of the new/changed scope, a completely new certification audit will be scheduled. The company is also at that time free in its choice of CB.

Test audit

In case an organisation wants to experience the extent of a Safety Culture Ladder audit, but does not yet feel ready for an actual audit, there is the possibility of ‘testing’ whether certain company aspects meet the requirements and to gain experience with a Safety Culture Ladder audit. The test audit is limited in scale and does not produce a score or certificate. The scale is set at 40% of a complete certification audit with a minimum of 1,5 man-days per auditor (total of 3 man-days). The audit covers at least the board, management and operational personnel, whereby 1 work visit will be carried out. The test audit is performed as standard against the requirements of Step 3. The CB is not permitted to make any statements with respect to whether or not the requirements of the step have been complied with.

7 Organisation

7.1 Who manages the ladder

ProRail was owner and manager of the Safety Culture Ladder since 2012. Due to the transfer of the management of the Safety Culture Ladder from ProRail to NEN (Royal Netherlands Standardization Institute) the ownership is also passed on to NEN.

As of July 1, 2016 NEN is responsible for its use, continuous development, management of the certification scheme and the extension to other clients and new sectors.

NEN has established a Board of Stakeholders (BoS) as the main decision making body of the system. And for the operational implementation it has established a technical Committee of Experts (CoE). NEN provides the overall scheme and project management and secretariat.

The composition of the structure of the Safety Ladder is as follows :

- The *Board of Stakeholders* (BoS) acts as the main decision-making body of the system and governs the management and development of the Safety Culture Ladder system. The BoS is a broad assembly of procurers, businesses, science institutions and civil society organisations and is led by an independent chairman at board level. The Board consults (interested) clients, contractors and other relevant (professional) organisations on new developments. For the management and development of the Safety Culture Ladder the BoS is supported and advised by the Committee of Experts and NEN.
- The *Committee of Experts* (CoE) is the operational committee of the Safety Culture Ladder. The Committee of Experts is primarily responsible for keeping the certification scheme up to date and functions as the contact for the Ladder Certification Authority (CB) regarding interpretation issues and other issues. The Committee of Experts is represented by clients and contractors. Members of the Committee of Experts shall be appointed in a personal capacity. In case of organisational changes interested parties may nominate other representatives.
- The *Harmonization Platform CIs* is composed of delegates from CBs that signed a license agreement with NEN. The delegates need to be involved in the certification process as (lead) auditor or a person who takes the certification decision (assessor). CBs also assess companies on the basis of this harmonization. Interpretations problems or audit issues can be submitted to NEN by the CBs together with the company (as a customer of the CB). If necessary the Manual can be adjusted.
- When necessary an *Interpretation Working Group* can be established in which technical experts from clients, contractors and certifying institutions participate. The Board of Stakeholders must approve the composition of the Working Group. The Working Group members may be part of the Committee of Experts.

7.2 Financing

The Safety Culture Ladder is a market initiative. The ladder is thus not supported by subsidy or government involvement. The principle of the ladder is that all companies and organisations involved jointly finance the ladder and contribute proportionately to the costs of the ladder, which include the site, the helpdesk, the further development, the supporting of initiatives, the management of the certification scheme, the administration, etc.

Active use of the Safety Culture Ladder thus requires a modest contribution, which will be kept as low as possible.

Contributing parties are all companies and organisations that actively use the ladder as an instrument for:

- tendering;
- certification of the own company/organisation;
- other commercial activities (such as consultancy, training, research, certification).

Use of the Safety Culture Ladder should consequently generate sufficient income to ensure that the ladder remains up-to-date and applicable in the future.

Income will thus consist of:

- payments by all companies that undergo certification, per issued certificates and per annual audit;
- payments by companies who offer paid services and products related to the Safety Culture Ladder.

An overview of the payments and tariffs can be found on www.safetycultureladder.com.

7.3 Document/version management

NEN is responsible for the development and management of the certification scheme and manual of the Safety Culture Ladder. The existing versions are developed and adopted by the Committee of Experts and endorsed by the Board of Stakeholders. Comments and suggestions regarding the documents of the Safety Culture Ladder can be submitted to NEN.

The current versions of the document are published on www.safetycultureladder.com. All previous versions lapse as a result.

7.4 Information and advice

All required formal information on the certification processes is contained in the manual. The latest version of the Safety Culture Ladder manual as published on www.safetycultureladder.com applies. You are therefore advised to regularly check www.safetycultureladder.com whether an updated version of the manual applies.

Contact must also be sought with any of the recognised CBs for further information on or support in preparing for certification, etc.

7.5 Complaints

Complaints, comments and suggestions regarding the scheme or the relevant CB can be submitted in writing to NEN, via info@safetycultureladder.com.

Annex A Additional requirements offshore assessment

Scope of the assessment

We speak of an offshore assessment when the scope of the assessment contains activities that take place offshore. This includes all maritime activities: at sea, in the port, at the quay and in the air. The aforesaid activities relate to the work on the wind turbines offshore through to pulling and connecting the power cables onshore.

This concerns:

- the preparatory work (e.g. engineering and route selection);
- the work carried out by means of ships and/or helicopters;
- the work carried out on installations positioned at sea.

Other examples are offshore companies that carry out activities in the oil and gas industry.

The definition of offshore assessment means that if offshore assessment is involved, the high-risk preparatory activities at the quay/in the port must also be included.

If the activities or work only take place at the quay or in the port, this does not constitute offshore assessment and therefore the term 'offshore' is not mentioned on the scope of the certificate.

In the case of an assessment of the preparatory work, a similar project in progress will suffice.

Point of attention: agreements between certification body and client

It is important that the certification body (CB) makes proper arrangements with the client in advance regarding the scope, the project locations to be audited (offshore / onshore), the specific conditions such as the required education and training of the auditors, and other details including extra costs and man-days.

Interpretation offshore assessment

In the table below, the column on the right contains the interpretation for offshore assessment. The left column shows the relevant texts from the Safety Culture Ladder Manual.

Safety Culture Ladder Manual 4.0	Interpretation for offshore assessment
<p>6.2 Auditor and assessor (current definition in the manual)</p> <p>The following minimum qualification requirements apply to the auditors:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on education and experience, auditors must have an intellectual and working level that is equivalent to higher vocational education. 2. Experience in management system certification under accreditation. 3. Qualified safety expert (HvK, MvK). 4. Qualified Lead Auditor for SCC** or OHSAS 18001/ISO 45001. 5. Proven knowledge of sector-specific techniques through training or long-term experience (industry qualification). 6. Demonstrable competence in the certification scheme of the Safety Culture Ladder through education/training (safety culture ladder qualification). 7. Positive evaluation by the CB on the auditing of attitudinal and behavioural competencies by the auditor. 	<p>In point 3, 'Qualified safety expert (HvK, MvK, which are Dutch training programmes)' is also understood to mean an equivalent diploma. The equivalence of a diploma is assessed and determined by the CoE.</p> <p>The following additional requirements apply to auditors who do assessments at an offshore site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The auditor who is assessing at an offshore location must have a valid NOGEP A 0.5A basic Offshore Safety or OPITO BOSIET certificate. • The auditor has undergone a standard medical examination with a positive result. <p>In consultation with the client and depending on the selected project visit, the following additions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional safety training; • a valid certificate for a completed NOGEP A, OPITO or GWO training programme; • a shoulder width measurement.

Safety Culture Ladder Manual 4.0	Interpretation for offshore assessment
	<p>With 'NOGEPA' is meant: Certified NOGEPA training for offshore North Sea area.</p> <p>With 'OPITO' is meant: Certified trainings for worldwide offshore installations, approved by OPITO.</p> <p>With 'GWO' is meant: Global Wind Organisation, training programme details are registered in WINDA.</p>
<p>6.3 Ladder evaluation requirements of CB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performing a ladder evaluation involves at least one on-site working visit by the CB. A ladder evaluation based solely on a 'desk review' is insufficient and is therefore not acceptable. The number of interviews to be held and work locations to be visited is explained in the man-day table below. <p>6.11 Audit process</p> <p>Each certification audit must be completed within 13 weeks (1 quarter) after commencement. Phase 1 of the audit is regarded as the starting moment. The certification audit is completed once the certificate has been issued. It is not possible to change the CB during this period. If a certification audit cannot be completed within the period of 13 weeks, the audit will be invalid and therefore no legally valid certificate can be issued.</p>	<p>Working visits must also be carried out in the event of an offshore assessment. If offshore activities fall within the scope of the certificate, performing a working visit only at an onshore activity or a supporting activity is not considered sufficient.</p> <p>The location choice of the working visit must be related to the scope of the certificate. In other words, the total number of visited work locations must add up to cover the context of the scope. The CB may opt to substantiate why the project site it has visited adequately reflects other project locations.</p> <p>Offshore review in year 1</p> <p>An offshore project visit must be performed in year 1.</p> <p>If it is not possible to assess offshore in the first year, only those activities that have actually been assessed may be stated on the scope of the certificate.</p> <p>Note: For the calculation of the number of man-days, this means that if a scheduled offshore project visit cannot take place, the total audit time can be spread over three years.</p> <p>However, any mention of the term offshore on the certificate can only be made in the year that the project has actually been assessed offshore. This is regarded as a postponed project visit, and only on the condition that offshore is part of the initial application.</p> <p>Offshore assessment in years 2 and 3</p> <p>If an offshore assessment has been carried out in year 1, whether or not the offshore activities need to be assessed in years 2 and 3 is determined on the basis of risk</p>

Safety Culture Ladder Manual 4.0	Interpretation for offshore assessment
	<p>analysis and the outcome of the year-1 offshore assessment.</p> <p>Note: If the risk analysis shows that the risks have been sufficiently covered, the requirement to perform offshore assessments in years 2 and 3 lapses.</p> <p>Expansion of scope with offshore in year 2 or 3 If an organisation wishes to expand the scope to include offshore activities in year 2, a full 100% audit must be carried out.</p> <p>In summary: If offshore is part of the scope of the certificate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1: offshore assessment is an unconditional requirement. • Years 2 and 3: whether an offshore assessment is performed or not is determined on the basis of risk analysis and the outcome of the year-1 offshore assessment. <p>Exceptions: Exceptions can be submitted to NEN for evaluation. In such situations, NEN will consult with the client. The organisation requesting the certificate is considered to be the client.</p> <p>Term for completion of audit A certification audit involving offshore activities must be completed within 26 weeks after commencement.</p> <p>During the project visit offshore, the auditor will <i>passively</i> observe the activities. This means that the auditor does not enter the water with a diver or climb a mast.</p>
	<p>Basic principle for interpretation matters: the scope of the certificate is leading.</p>

Annex B Qualification requirements

From step:	Requirement	Criteria	Review
1	Level of working and thinking that is at least equal to higher professional education.	Completed higher vocational education or equivalent through education or experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma • CV • Assessment (optional)
4/5	Level of working and thinking that is at least equal to higher professional education	Certified Safety Expert (HVK) or equivalent through education or experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma • CV
1	Knowledge and understanding of managing safety risks	Certified Safety Expert (MVK or HVK) or equivalent through education or experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma • CV
1	Knowledge of general characteristics of human behaviour	Completed education or training or equivalent through experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV • Attendance • CB reviews
1	Qualified Lead Assessor	Completed Lead Assessor Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma
1	Competency with the principles and contents of the Safety Culture Ladder	Auditor has knowledge of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification scheme Safety Culture Ladder • Manual Safety Culture Ladder; • other additional documents Safety Culture Ladder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Review audit reports
1	Completed the 2-day NEN auditor training Safety Culture Ladder	Demonstrably completed the training.	NEN Participation certificate
4/5	Completed the Masterclass '4/5	Demonstrably completed the masterclass	NEN Participation certificate
1	Completed two audit days for accompanying an experienced Safety Culture Ladder auditor	Included in the audit plan	Audit plan
1	Familiar with the safety risks in the sector and country.	Auditor is familiar with the safety risks in the sector (rail, energy, housing, healthcare, etc.). Auditor is familiar with best practices in the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Review audit reports • CV

Skills

Requirement	Criteria	Review
Experience with management system certification under accreditation	Qualified Lead Auditor for VCA or ISO 45001 (OHSAS 18001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV
Language proficiency to communicate on each level of the organisation of the client	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditor has excellent written and spoken command of the primary language used in the organisation (also in the workplace) • Auditor can have a pleasant conversation (dialogue). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV • Attendance • CB reviews • Review audit reports
Familiar with the customs and habits of the country	Auditor was born or raised or has at least 2 years of working experience in the designated country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CV • Attendance • CB reviews • Review audit
Good reporting skills	Auditor is able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summarize and analyze well; • clearly report the points for attention and improvement; • provide a substantiation of the indicated score; • report on the main points (focus on culture); • prepare a concise and well written report; • distinguish main and side issues and identify the most important message; • write actively, without using the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Review audit reports •
Convincing presentation	Auditor can present himself well, can present the results of an audit properly and can motivate / explain the results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • LCI reviews

Soft skills

Requirement	Criteria	Review
Interview skills	Auditor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can apply good and different questioning techniques, which results in the required information; • can listen, summarize and ask questions - on 5 levels; • can observe well, is keen and alert; • can focus on the client during the audit, let the client speak without interrupting; • can recognize differences in attitude and behaviour; • can recognize the different levels of attitude and behaviour; • can recognize nonverbal behaviour and body language; • is analytical and can easily switch between different tasks (responding to answers, etc.); • can create links between 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Assessment

Personal qualities

Requirement	Criteria	Review
Social/Communicative	Auditor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can create an environment where the auditee feels comfortable answering questions; • can communicate pleasantly and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Assessment
Diplomatic/Tactful	Auditor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has tactful skills; • can stimulate or confront the auditee, especially from step 3 where the auditor has to stimulate employees/management to see 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Assessment
Calm, confidence building appearance	Auditor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not chaotic and nervous; • can create an environment where the auditee feels comfortable; • can ask questions to get to the core (what is really important to you?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Assessment
Attentive/Interested	Auditor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes the time for the auditee; • let the auditee speak without interrupting and listens carefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • CB reviews • Assessment (optional)

Maintaining qualification

From step:	Requirement:	Criteria	Review
1	Participation annual NEN harmonisation day.	Mandatory presence on the auditor's day.	NEN attendance registration
1 t/m 3	Performing audits on a regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 20 days (including preparation and reporting) of Safety Culture Ladder audits within the past year. Once every 3 years a monitoring/review on-site by an experienced CB auditor, in accordance with ISO 17021 	Audit logbook (dispensation from market conditions possible)
4	Performing audits on a very regular basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum of 35 days within at least two completed audits within the past year, of which at least 20 days on step 3. Once every 3 years a monitoring/review on-site by an experienced CB auditor, in accordance with ISO 17021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit logbook Reporting/attendance by team leader

Colophon

Title: Safety Culture Ladder Manual version 4.0
Publication date: December 2020

NEN
Vlinderweg 6
2623 AX Delft
The Netherlands
P.O. Box 5059
2600 GB Delft
The Netherlands

Copyright NEN

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced and/or published by means of print, photocopy, microfilm or any other medium without the prior permission of NEN.