CRITICAL CONTROL MANAGEMENT SERIES

CCM-04 · Executive Critical Control Governance

Product Overview

Audience: Business owners, directors and senior managers · Duration: 90–120 minutes

Version 1.0 · 8 November 2026

For the owners and directors who need to know, not hope, that the controls preventing a fatality are working.

A business with fatal risks can report no lost time injuries for years while the controls that stand between its people and a fatality slowly erode. Owners, directors and senior managers decide whether critical control management is resourced and taken seriously, and are the ones asked afterwards what they knew. This briefing covers what critical control management is and is not, what the board should receive about critical controls, why injury rates say little about fatal risk, how to read verification results, and how to respond to a significant control failure. Officer duties are covered for each jurisdiction, including Victoria, where the law takes a different form. Executives compare a typical green safety report with the same company reported properly, and follow a production increase through four stages, from the approval to a serious control failure.

Learning outcomes

- Describe the governance responsibilities for critical risks, and how officer duties differ between jurisdictions
- Explain why injury frequency rates do not measure fatal risk
- Interpret critical control verification reporting critically, and recognise results that are too green to be true
- Tell an isolated control failure from a systemic one, and know which needs the board
- Recognise and respond to a significant critical control failure
- Resource critical control management deliberately, knowing what doing it properly takes
- Set clear accountability for critical risks and controls, and ask 'how do you know?'

Session outline

Part	Covers
1. The green dashboard	What boards typically receive, and why injury rates say nothing about fatal risk
2. What governance requires	Critical control management, governance and assurance; three things the board must know about critical risks; officer duties by jurisdiction, including Victoria; lessons from inquiries into workplace fatalities; what critical control management is not, and what doing it properly takes; accountability for each critical risk and control
3. Reporting	What the board should receive; Activity 1, read the report; reading verification results that tell you something; leading and lagging indicators for critical risk
4. Assurance	How a control stays green on paper; isolated or systemic?; responding to a significant critical control failure; is your assurance real?; Activity 2, a production push, stage by stage
Close	Activity 3, the executive question set applied to your own critical risk reporting;

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Part	Covers
	knowledge check; commitments

What is in the package

Folder	Contents
01_START_HERE	Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information
02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION	Training Presentation: the executive briefing (.pptx with speaker notes, and PDF)
03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE	Facilitator Guide (.docx and PDF), Session Plan
04_PARTICIPANT_RESOURCES	Participant Workbook: the executive briefing workbook (.docx and PDF)
05_ACTIVITIES_AND_ASSESSMENTS	Critical Control Reporting Example (PDF), Governance Scenario, Knowledge Assessment, Assessment Answers (PDF)
06_WORKPLACE_TOOLS	Assurance Checklist with the executive question set, Board Critical Risk Report Template (editable)
07_TRAINING_ADMINISTRATION	Attendance Register (.xlsx), Completion Certificate Template, Training Evaluation

Document control

Item	Detail
Product	CCM-04 Executive Critical Control Governance
Document	Product Overview
Version	1.0
Status	Released
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CRITICAL CONTROL MANAGEMENT SERIES

Executive Critical Control Governance

Know, not hope, that the controls preventing a fatality are working

[Insert organisation name] · [Insert date]

04

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What this briefing is, and is not

This briefing is

- ✔ About the few controls that stand between your people and a fatality
- ✔ About what the board should receive, and what to ask
- ✔ About the decisions only owners and executives make
- ✔ Practical: your own reporting, tested

This briefing is not

- ✕ A course in building bowties or verifying controls
- ✕ A safety statistics review
- ✕ Legal advice
- ✕ A replacement for your WHS or risk advisers

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Today

Part	What it covers	Time
1. The green dashboard	What boards typically receive; why injury rates say nothing about fatal risk	10 min
2. What governance requires	Three things to know; officer duties; lessons from inquiries; what CCM is not; accountability	22 min
3. Reporting	What the board should receive; Activity 1, read the report; verification results; indicators	24 min
4. Assurance	How a control stays green; isolated or systemic; responding to a failure; Activity 2	25 min
Close	Activity 3, the question set; knowledge check; commitments	23 min

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PART 1

The green dashboard

What boards typically receive

1

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A page from a board paper

“Safety report, October (harvest month 1). LTIFR 0.0. TRIFR 2.1, down from 3.4. 412 days LTI free. Critical control verifications: 86 scheduled, 86 completed (100%). Pass rate 98%: 84 pass, 2 non-conformance, 0 fail. High potential incidents: 0. All five critical risks green. Receivals 486,000 tonnes, 12% ahead of plan. Overall status: Green.”

Every figure is true. The business is a regional grain storage and handling company: a composite, used throughout the briefing.

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Executive Briefing Workbook

Duration: 90–120 minutes

Name: _____

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How to use this workbook

A short companion to the briefing. Make notes, use it for the three activities, and keep the executive question set at the back. All cases and reports are composites.

By the end of the briefing you will be able to:

- Describe the governance responsibilities for critical risks, and how officer duties differ between jurisdictions
- Explain why injury frequency rates do not measure fatal risk
- Interpret critical control verification reporting critically, and recognise results that are too green to be true
- Tell an isolated control failure from a systemic one, and know which needs the board
- Recognise and respond to a significant critical control failure
- Resource critical control management deliberately, knowing what doing it properly takes
- Set clear accountability for critical risks and controls, and ask 'how do you know?'

The company used in the activities

A regional, privately owned grain storage and handling business: a central hub site with concrete silos and a bucket elevator, four country receival sites with steel silos, augers and conveyors, and two temporary bunker sites opened each harvest. About 140 permanent workers, plus seasonal casuals and contract truck drivers. The board is the managing director, two directors from the founding family, a grower director and an independent chair. This is a composite: no real business is described.

Its critical risks	Worst credible outcome
Worker engulfed in grain during silo entry	Fatality
Pedestrian struck by a reversing truck at receival	Fatality
Entanglement in an auger or conveyor	Fatality or amputation
Grain dust explosion in a silo or the bucket elevator	Multiple fatalities
Fall from a silo roof or ladder	Fatality

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Part 1. The green dashboard

Safety report, October (harvest month 1). LTIFR 0.0. TRIFR 2.1, down from 3.4. 412 days LTI free. Critical control verifications: 86 scheduled, 86 completed (100%). Pass rate 98%: 84 pass, 2 non-conformance, 0 fail. High potential incidents: 0. All five critical risks green. Receivals 486,000 tonnes, 12% ahead of plan. Overall status: Green.

The paper says	What it actually tells you
LTIFR 0.0; TRIFR down from 3.4 to 2.1	A count of minor injuries that happened. Nothing about the controls on the risks that could kill
412 days LTI free	Luck as much as control. Nobody has been engulfed yet
86 of 86 verifications completed	Activity, not results. Who checked, how, and what did they find?
98% pass; 0 fail	In the busiest month of the year, with 60 new seasonal workers. Too green to be true?
0 high potential incidents	Is a failed critical control being counted as one?
All five critical risks green	Green against what? Nobody in the room can test it

What the board has not been told:

- Which critical controls the 20% capacity increase depends on, and whether they are holding
- That 71 of the 86 checks were done by the site manager of the site checked, 58 of them in the last three days of the month
- That both non-conformances were found by the one independent verifier
- That the spotters at both bunker sites are also working as grain samplers
- That the night-shift isolation officer role is unfilled at two sites
- That a conveyor guard found off at a bunker site was refitted on the spot and never recorded

Why injury rates say nothing about fatal risk

What an injury rate counts	What it cannot tell you
• Frequent, minor injuries: strains, sprains, cuts • How cases were classified, and the hours worked • Harm that has already happened • Luck, as much as control	• Whether the critical controls on fatal risks are working • How often those controls fail with nobody hurt • Whether a serious event is close • Anything reliable about rare, high-consequence events

A business can report no lost time injuries for years while its critical controls erode.

Part 2. What governance requires

Definitions

Term	Definition
Governance	Who owns what, how decisions are made, and how risk fits into strategy.
Critical risk	One whose worst credible outcome is a fatality, serious injury or catastrophic event.

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Accountability for each critical risk and control

Role	Accountable for	The board asks
Risk owner	Accountable for understanding, managing, and reporting on a particular risk. Usually senior, with visibility over budget, resources and controls.	What is the state of this risk's critical controls, and what do you need?
Control owner	Responsible for the day-to-day implementation, monitoring, and verification of controls designed to mitigate risks.	How do you know your control works today?
Verifier	Checks the control in the field against its performance standard and records the evidence. Independent of the control owner where it matters.	What did you find that we did not want to hear?
Officers and the board	Resource critical control management, receive the results and act on them, and verify for themselves.	How do we know?

Activity 1. Read the report

The same company, in the same month as the green report, reported properly.

Critical risks: monthly report to the board, October

Critical risks and their critical controls

Scenario	Worst credible outcome	Critical controls	Verification this month	Assured?
Worker engulfed in grain during silo entry	Fatality	Outlet and augers isolated and locked out before entry; harness and lifeline tended from above; rescue set-up	18 checks, 18 pass, all by the manager of the site checked. Night isolation officer unfilled at 2 sites	Not assured
Pedestrian struck by a reversing truck at receival	Fatality	Pedestrian exclusion zone at receival; a dedicated spotter for every reversing truck	24 checks, 23 pass, 1 non-conformance. Spotters also sampling grain at both bunker sites	Not assured
Entanglement in an auger or conveyor	Fatality or amputation	Fixed guards on augers and conveyors; isolation before clearing a blockage	20 checks, 20 pass. A conveyor guard found off at a bunker site, refitted, not recorded	Not assured
Grain dust explosion in a silo or the bucket elevator	Multiple fatalities	Hot work control; bucket elevator monitoring and shutdown	12 checks, 11 pass, 1 non-conformance (hot work without a fire watch), found by the independent verifier	Action open
Fall from a silo roof or ladder	Fatality	Roof edge protection; fall arrest on fixed ladders	12 checks, 12 pass, by the independent verifier, with photos and test records	Assured

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