



Safety On The EDGE



COMPANY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Forum May 11-14, 2027
Savannah, Georgia

The Award, Its Intent, Its Reach, and Its Method – An Invitation to Participate

1. The Intent of the Award

The Safety On The Edge Award for Excellence recognizes companies for demonstrated excellence in safety. That phrase is used deliberately and carefully. Excellence, as the award defines it, is not the absence of incidents, nor a favorable injury statistic, nor a year of good fortune. It is the demonstrated maturity of the organizational systems, leadership behaviors, and cultural conditions that produce safety – measured where safety is actually created, upstream in the organization, rather than where its failures are counted, downstream in the lagging indicators.

This is the award's founding conviction: injury rates measure the past, while organizational processes shape the future. The assessment therefore examines how leaders enact their commitment, how risk is identified and controlled at the point of work, how organizations learn from incidents and near-misses, how psychosocial and physical risks are managed within one system, and how long-term strategy is translated into short-term, verifiable action. Companies are evaluated on the presence and effectiveness of these processes – not on the injury statistics that trail behind them.

It follows that the award does not seek, and does not expect, perfection. Companies with mature systems still experience serious events; what distinguishes excellent organizations is the honesty of their disclosures, the discipline of their learning, and the demonstrable trajectory of their improvement. Candor about adverse outcomes is treated in the assessment as a hallmark of maturity, not a liability. The award celebrates organizations as they truly are – and helps them see, with clarity, what they could yet become.

Excellence is not a spotless record. It is a presence of system: visible leaders who verify rather than exhort, measurement of controls and culture rather than injury counts, disciplined learning, and the honesty to assess oneself as one is rather than as one wishes to appear.

Finally, the intent is developmental as much as it is celebratory. The primary goal of safety is the protection of human life and health – the prevention of injury, illness and fatality. The award exists to recognize those endeavors, and equally to support every participating organization in improving them, so that the benefit reaches beyond the workplace into families and local communities.



2. The Scope and Intended Reach

The award is global and industry-agnostic by design. Companies from any industry sector and any location in the world are welcome to participate, provided they operate as standalone entities creating products or providing services and employ more than fifty people. Participation is open at the level that makes sense for each organization: an individual site, a business unit, a national operation, or an entire corporation.

To ensure that organizations are compared fairly against genuine peers, participants are assessed in one of two categories:

Category 1 – Large: Companies or corporations with a global, multinational or national footprint, with several locations and/or services, or with more than 1,000 employees.

Category 2 – Small and Medium: Companies with one or two locations, typically with fewer than 1,000 employees.

The breadth of this scope is intentional. Previous award cohorts have spanned metal recyclers, global engineering and technology corporations, single-site manufacturers, professional services firms with field-based and hybrid workforces, and multi-jurisdictional chemical producers. That diversity is precisely what gives the award its benchmarking power: when the same characteristics of excellence recur across recycling yards, factory floors, project sites and chemical plants, they can be trusted as genuine markers of maturity rather than artifacts of one industry's regulatory environment.

The intended reach of the award extends beyond the participating companies themselves. Through the published findings of each awards cycle, the practices of the strongest organizations become a reference for the entire international safety community – a rising standard that any organization, participant or not, can benchmark itself against.

3. The Value and Benefits of Participation

Organizations that participate in the Safety On The Edge Awards gain far more than the possibility of a trophy. The process itself is designed to return value to every participant, whether or not they reach the podium.

A Rigorous, Independent Mirror

The structured self-assessment – completed against eighteen criteria and a defined maturity model – is itself a professional-grade diagnostic. Many participating organizations report that the discipline of scoring themselves honestly, assembling evidence, and articulating strengths and gaps is the single most valuable outcome of participation. The subsequent independent

evaluation then provides something few organizations ever receive: a calibrated external view of their safety maturity, judged by an expert panel against a consistent international standard.

Benchmarking Against the Best

Following each awards cycle, Safety On The Edge publishes a research whitepaper, written by the judging panel, that distills the key strengths, capabilities and common characteristics of the winning group of companies – a register of genuine, evidenced best practices. All participants and conference attendees receive this research, giving every organization a practical roadmap for self-improvement drawn from independently verified practice rather than folklore.

Recognition

- Industry recognition: Peers and competitors recognize the company as a leader in safety, building respect and influence across the sector.
- Internal recognition: Employees feel valued and acknowledged for their commitment to safety, strengthening morale, motivation and pride in the organization.

Networking and Collaboration

- Industry events: Participation connects company representatives with an international community of safety leaders, academics and practitioners at the Safety On The Edge Global Forum.
- Partnerships: Recognition opens doors to collaborations and partnerships with other organizations that prioritize safety and innovation.

Reputation and Market Presence

- Media exposure: Award recognition is genuinely newsworthy, generating coverage in industry publications, media and online platforms, and providing powerful content for the company's own channels.
- Customer trust: Customers are more likely to trust and do business with a company recognized for its safety standards, supporting loyalty and growth.
- Investor confidence: Investors and shareholders view the award as a positive indicator of management and operational quality, strengthening confidence in the company's direction.

Taken together, participation strengthens an organization in three directions at once: inward, by energizing its people and sharpening its systems; outward, by enhancing its standing with customers, investors and peers; and forward, by providing an evidenced roadmap for the next stage of its safety journey.

4. The Assessment Criteria

Participating companies are assessed against eighteen criteria, organized into four categories that together span the full anatomy of a mature safety organization – from the behavior of its most senior leaders to the daily design of work, and from the management of emerging risks to the organization's contribution beyond its own gates.

	Criteria	Score
Category 1: Leadership and Culture	4	32
Category 2: Risk Management and Innovation	4	32
Category 3: Operational Excellence	4	32
Category 4: Performance and Continuous Improvement	6	48
TOTALS	18	144

Category 1: Leadership and Culture

This category examines how leaders foster a positive, inclusive safety culture that prioritizes physical, mental and psychological well-being. Its four criteria assess how effectively leaders demonstrate commitment to safety as a core value, including mental health and psychological safety; how well leaders engage diverse stakeholders – employees, contractors and communities – in safety decision-making; how effectively safety goals are aligned with sustainability and ESG objectives; and how visible leadership is in promoting work-life balance and the safety of remote and hybrid work.

Category 2: Risk Management and Innovation

This category assesses the systematic identification, mitigation and innovative handling of risk using modern tools. Its four criteria examine how effectively the organization uses data analytics and artificial intelligence for predictive risk assessment; how well emerging risks such as cyber threats and climate change are integrated into safety strategies; how effectively contractor and supply chain safety risks are managed; and how competently the organization addresses mental health risks within its risk management framework.

Category 3: Operational Excellence

This category evaluates day-to-day safety processes, training and compliance. Its four criteria assess the effectiveness of training programs in building inclusive, competency-based safety skills; the consistency with which safe work practices are deployed across all operations, including remote settings; the effectiveness of compliance with certifications and regulations as a driver of improvement rather than a paper exercise; and the degree to which safety considerations are integrated into the daily design of work for teams.

Category 4: Performance and Continuous Improvement

The largest category focuses on measurement, learning and community impact. Its six criteria examine how well the organization measures and benchmarks safety performance using key performance indicators; how effectively lessons from incidents and near-misses are converted into improvement; how deeply safety is integrated with community engagement and philanthropic efforts; how well long-term safety plans are translated into short-term, verifiable actions; how balanced resource allocation is for safety innovation; and how effectively the organization shares knowledge and collaborates externally for the advancement of safety.

Read as a whole, the eighteen criteria describe a deliberately high standard: an organization whose leadership is visible and accountable, whose risks are understood and controlled, whose operations embed safety in the design of daily work, and whose performance system learns, improves and reaches outward. No organization is expected to be at the frontier on every criterion – the assessment is designed to reveal the honest profile of strengths and opportunities that every real organization possesses.

5. The Assessment Methodology: The IADRII Model

Every criterion is assessed using the IADRII model – a maturity framework that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of any business process through the examination of six key principles:

Intent What was the purpose and the expected outcomes of the practice or process?	Approach What was planned to be done, and how sound and systematic was that plan?	Deployment Where and how widely was it actually done – including at the least convenient sites and operations?
Results How well has it worked, demonstrated with data rather than asserted?	Improvement How were changes made based on lessons learned since the practice began?	Integration How invisibly is the process woven into normal operations, rather than running alongside them?

For each of the eighteen criteria, organizations score themselves on an eight-point maturity scale anchored by four descriptive levels – from ad-hoc and reactive practice at the lowest levels, through structured and consistent approaches, to fully integrated, best-in-class practice at the highest. Each score is supported by a concise written explanation of the reasons and evidence behind it, and by documentary evidence substantiating the claim. The maximum achievable score is 144.

The logic of the scale rewards evidence over aspiration. A description of intent and approach, however eloquent, supports a middle score; the top of the scale is reserved for practices that are deployed everywhere, producing measured results, refined over time, and validated externally. The independent evaluation applies exactly this logic, testing every high claim against four questions: Is the practice deployed everywhere, or described at framework level with a single example? Is it operating, or merely being implemented? Are outcomes measured, or asserted? Has external validation confirmed the claim?

The overall score places an organization within one of four maturity bands:

Score	What the Score Signifies
1 – 36	The organization still lacks in various aspects of safety and health management, and would be best served by an extensive review of its current systems and approaches.
37 – 72	Safety and health processes are on par with most companies. A benchmarking exercise is strongly advised to identify more advanced approaches and to strengthen the integration between operational and safety processes.
73 – 108	The organization has progressed well above the quality of safety and health of most companies. Approaches, deployment and results are above average, while integration and continuous improvement would benefit from further development.
109 – 1144	The organization is “best in class” on most of the identified categories and criteria – the standard of the strongest submissions the awards program has assessed.

One further principle deserves emphasis, because the experience of previous awards cycles has proven it repeatedly: calibrated, honest self-assessment is itself a hallmark of safety culture maturity. The organizations judged strongest have consistently been those whose self-scores were measured, whose gaps were openly acknowledged, and whose language distinguished carefully between what is operating and what is still in progress. The assessment is designed to reward that epistemic humility – and organizations approaching the process in that spirit will find it returns the greatest value.

6. An Invitation

The Safety On The Edge Company Excellence Awards exist for one reason: to raise the standard of safety internationally by identifying, verifying and sharing what genuine excellence looks like – and to help every participating organization move closer to it. None of the characteristics the award recognizes requires the scale of a multinational or decades of history. Each is available to any organization willing to do the unglamorous work of building sound systems, deploying them everywhere, measuring their effect, and telling the truth about the result.

If your organization is on that journey – at whatever stage – the Safety On The Edge Forum warmly invites you to participate, to measure yourself against the most rigorous standard in the field, and to join a global community of companies committed to safety at the edge of what is possible.





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