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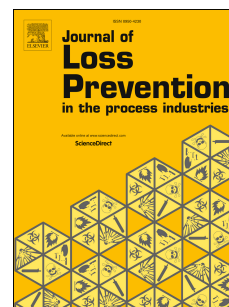
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## The auditing of process safety

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### ABSTRACT

There is growing concern with respect to the effectiveness of auditing of process safety management systems as undertaken by major hazard operators. Although criticisms of process safety auditing are periodically expressed by accident investigators, competent authorities and respected commentators it is rare to hear from those who are involved in the process of audit. This paper attempts to redress the balance and its subject is the auditing of process safety from the viewpoint of those process safety practitioners who play a role in that process. An online survey was distributed to a cross section of process safety professionals which explored the themes of audit organisation, audit criteria and audit team composition and training provision. The majority of respondents declared that their business conducts dedicated process safety audits. Those that did not were split on the question of whether general safety audits diluted the auditing of process safety. No correlation was observed between process safety content in general safety audits and opinion on dilution. The majority of respondents declared that their business uses internal standards against which safety audits are performed and against which the audit is conducted. The role of part time auditor was the most commonly found member amongst audit teams with the majority of organisations choosing to deploy internal resources to train their own auditors.

**Keywords:** auditing, process safety

### 1. Introduction

The background to this particular research is that the company members of the European Process Safety Centre, EPSC, have a long standing interest in the audit of process safety which extends back to 2001 when the Centre produced its first member report EPSC (2001) on the subject on general safety auditing. This report was then further updated and revised by EPSC (2011) specifically on the topic of process safety auditing. It is reasonable to conclude

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