



AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

The AAR is a proven way to facilitate team learning.

It is a sensible, valuable and simple to implement tool widely utilised in high reliability organisations.

WHAT IS AN AAR SESSION?



An AAR session is a method for reflecting and transferring individual lessons from a specific task among fellow team members. Team members meet for an informal look back on a recent task to gain a more thorough understanding of what has happened, and why.

✓ KEY BENEFITS

- ✓ Identify and spread local good practices
- ✓ Identify and eliminate wasted effort
- ✓ On-the-spot individual and team learning
- ✓ Build a team approach to problem solving
- ✓ Build team morale
- ✓ Increase likelihood of task success

TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE AAR SESSION



No consequences - team members will be honest if they know what they say in a AAR session has no individual consequences.

Make sessions brief - you may however want to get assistance from a colleague/ elected safety representative to help get them started.

Hold sessions regularly - learning happens throughout a task - make AAR a habit not an afterthought when your project is over.

Make sessions local - find a room, close the door, and hold the session soon after an event or task. Don't wait until a mishap occurs.

Reinforce positive behaviours - start by reviewing what went right.

Opportunities for Improvement - review what could have been done better and how to avoid things going wrong in the future.

Take Control - whenever possible team members should complete improvement actions immediately e.g. update risk assessment.

Actions - any that cannot be completed should be documented on an Observation card and handed in to a supervisor or to the permit office

Do not create more work - there are no formal reports from a AAR session.

INVESTIGATION VERSUS AAR SESSION

HOW IS AN AAR SESSION CONDUCTED?

LEARN FROM OTHERS

Investigation	AAR session 
Conducted after a process incident, accident or near miss	Conducted throughout Asset Operations
Independent team separate from work party	Work party members facilitate and decide on actions
Focus primarily on the negatives	Reinforces positive behaviours
Lengthy process	Simple process and short time commitment
Formal report	No reports – team action problems immediately or raise observation cards
Benefits mainly others who read the report	Directly benefits team members who participate

“The AAR process is not an investigation. It is simply a time to reflect and learn from what we have experienced.”

Before a session begins, the facilitator makes the ground rules clear:

- **BE DISCREET.** An AAR session is a closed-door discussion among team members.
- **BE HONEST.** When the activity being discussed directly involves you, call it as you see it.
- **BE TOLERANT.** Others’ opinions and perspectives are equally important regardless of role or experience.
- **BE A TEAM.** When looking at an individual’s actions, view it from the perspective of team responsibility for ensuring excellence.

FIVE QUESTIONS

An AAR session can explore many issues, but the team should try to focus on the following five questions:

1. What did we intend to do?
2. What worked well, and why?
3. What didn’t work well and why?
4. What did we learn from this?
5. What should we change?

Things that have never happened before, actually happen all the time!

