HARM BLINDNESS FRAMEWORK

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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Collaboration Welcome: This framework represents the first comprehensive cross-industry stakeholder analysis system for harm prevention. Modifications require collaborative involvement with the author to maintain systematic rigor. Contact above email to discuss applications, adaptations, or integrations.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This Implementation Guide provides step-by-step instructions for integrating the Harm Blindness Framework into your organization's workflows. Whether you're a startup, enterprise, policy organization, or development team, this guide helps you:

- **Set up the framework in your organization**
- **Integrate checkpoints into existing workflows**
- **Assign roles and responsibilities**
- **Meet documentation requirements**
- **Measure success**

For the complete framework methodology, see the full Harm Blindness Framework document.
For checkpoint templates and worksheets, see the Checkpoint Templates document.

2.1 GETTING STARTED

Prerequisites

Before implementing framework, ensure you have:

Organizational Commitment:

- **Leadership buy-in (framework requires authority to delay/cancel)**
- **Resource allocation (time for checkpoints, fixes for issues)**
- **Culture support (psychological safety to raise concerns)**

Team Structure:

- **Designated checkpoint facilitator**
- **Cross-functional participation**
- **Stakeholder representatives or access to them**
- **Documentation owner**

Tools and Materials:

- **Checkpoint templates (available separately)**
- **Stakeholder mapping tools (available separately)**
- **Risk assessment worksheets (available separately)**
- **Documentation system (wiki, shared docs, etc.)**

Initial Setup (Weeks 1-2)

Week 1: Training

- **Leadership team reads full framework**
- **Key personnel complete training session**
- **Q&A to address concerns and objections**
- **Agreement on who has authority at each checkpoint**

Week 2: Customization

- **Adapt checkpoint questions to your context**
- **Define documentation requirements**
- **Integrate into existing project management tools**
- **Pilot with upcoming low-risk project**

Pilot Program (Weeks 3-8)

Select 1-2 projects for pilot implementation:

- **Choose medium-complexity projects (not too simple, not critical path)**
- **Assign experienced facilitators**
- **Run all four checkpoints**
- **Document time spent, issues caught, problems faced**
- **Gather feedback from participants**

Success Criteria for Pilot:

- **All four checkpoints completed**
- **Stakeholder analysis caught at least one issue that would have been missed**
- **Time overhead acceptable (<10% of project time)**
- **Team felt process was valuable**
- **Documentation complete and useful**

Rollout (Weeks 9+)

Based on pilot learnings:

- **Refine checkpoint questions**
- **Update documentation templates**
- **Train additional facilitators**
- **Set organization-wide requirements**
- **Monitor compliance and effectiveness**

2.2 INTEGRATING INTO EXISTING WORKFLOWS

For Agile/Scrum Teams

Checkpoint Integration:

Checkpoint 1 - Ideation:

- **When: Epic creation / Project kickoff**
- **How: Required before sprint planning**
- **Duration: 1 checkpoint session (60 min)**
- **Output: Stakeholder analysis added to epic documentation**

Checkpoint 2 - Design:

- **When: Design sprint / Architecture planning**
- **How: Required before development sprints begin**
- **Duration: 1 checkpoint session (90 min)**
- **Output: Design doc includes harm mitigation strategies**

Checkpoint 3 - Testing:

- **When: QA/UAT phase**
- **How: Required before prod deployment prep**
- **Duration: 1 checkpoint session (60-90 min)**
- **Output: Testing report includes stakeholder analysis**

Checkpoint 4 - Launch:

- **When: Pre-production go/no-go meeting**
- **How: Replaces or augments existing launch review**
- **Duration: 1 checkpoint session (90-120 min)**
- **Output: Launch approval includes signed stakeholder analysis**

Definition of Done: Add checkpoint completion to your Definition of Done for relevant work items.

For Waterfall/Traditional PM

Checkpoint Integration:

Checkpoint 1: Requirements Phase (before design)
Checkpoint 2: Design Phase (before build)
Checkpoint 3: Testing Phase (before UAT completion)
Checkpoint 4: Pre-Launch (before go-live)

Each checkpoint becomes a required gate with sign-off before proceeding to next phase.

For Startups / Rapid Iteration

Lightweight Approach:

For MVPs:

- **Checkpoint 1 + 4 only (before you build, before you launch)**

- **30-minute sessions, focus on obvious harms**
- **Document in shared doc or Notion page**

For Feature Additions:

- **Checkpoint 2 + 3 (design review + pre-deployment)**
- **45-minute sessions**
- **Can combine if small feature**

For Major Releases:

- **All four checkpoints**
- **Full documentation**
- **External stakeholder input**

For Policy Development

Checkpoint Integration:

Checkpoint 1: Problem definition phase
Checkpoint 2: Policy drafting phase
Checkpoint 3: Comment period / stakeholder input
Checkpoint 4: Pre-implementation review

Each checkpoint includes broader stakeholder consultation than typical policy process.

2.3 TEAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Required Roles

Checkpoint Facilitator

- **Ensures checkpoints happen on schedule**
- **Asks checkpoint questions**
- **Documents discussion and decisions**
- **Escalates if serious harms identified**
- **Maintains institutional knowledge**

Qualifications:

- **Not directly on project team (avoids bias)**
- **Strong facilitation skills**
- **Understands technical context**
- **Has organizational authority**
- **Can push back on leadership if needed**

Project Owner

- **Ultimately accountable for stakeholder analysis**
- **Makes final decisions at each checkpoint**
- **Ensures mitigation strategies resourced**
- **Signs off on risk acceptance**

Qualifications:

- **Decision-making authority for project**
- **Accountable for outcomes**
- **Willing to delay/cancel if harms too severe**

Technical Lead

- **Explains technical implementation**
- **Identifies technical risks and constraints**
- **Proposes technical solutions to identified harms**
- **Implements mitigation strategies**

Stakeholder Representatives

- **Represent affected stakeholder groups**
- **Provide perspective on potential harms**
- **Validate that mitigation strategies work**
- **NOT PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS**

Options for representation:

- **Actual members of stakeholder groups (best)**
- **Dedicated user researchers**

- **External advisory board**
- **Community liaisons**

Optional But Recommended Roles

Legal Counsel

- **Identifies regulatory/legal risks**
- **Reviews documentation for liability protection**
- **NOT primary driver (framework is about stakeholder harm, not just legal compliance)**

Ethics/Safety Specialist

- **Provides expertise on similar cases**
- **Suggests additional stakeholder groups to consider**
- **Challenges assumptions**

Communications Lead

- **Helps with "front page test"**
- **Plans stakeholder communication if needed**
- **Prepares response plans for backlash**

2.4 TIMING AND FREQUENCY

Project Lifecycle Checkpoints

Every project requires:

- **All four checkpoints in sequence**
- **Cannot skip checkpoints to save time**
- **Each checkpoint must be complete before proceeding**

For large projects (>6 months):

- **Repeat checkpoints every 6 months**
- **Or when major direction changes**
- **Treat as iterative process**

For small projects (<1 month):

- **Can combine Checkpoint 2+3 if appropriate**
- **Still require 1 and 4 separately**
- **Shorter sessions (30-45 min)**

Feature Addition Checkpoints

Major features (>4 weeks dev time):

- **Checkpoint 2 (design) + 4 (launch) minimum**
- **Full checkpoints if affects new stakeholders**

Minor features (<2 weeks dev time):

- **Checkpoint 4 (pre-launch review) minimum**
- **Quick stakeholder check (15 min)**

Bug fixes / maintenance:

- **No formal checkpoint unless changes behavior**
- **If behavior changes, treat as feature**

Scale Change Checkpoints

When user base grows 10x:

- **Repeat all four checkpoints**
- **Scale changes everything about stakeholder impact**
- **What worked at 10K users may fail at 100K**

When entering new market/demographic:

- **Repeat all four checkpoints**
- **New stakeholder groups may have different needs/vulnerabilities**

2.5 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Minimum Documentation Standards

For Each Checkpoint:

1. **Metadata**

- **Date of checkpoint**
- **Project/feature name**
- **Participants present**
- **Facilitator name**
- **Checkpoint number**

2. **Stakeholder Analysis**
   - **Complete list of identified stakeholders**
   - **For each stakeholder group:**
     - **Number affected**
     - **Benefits received**
     - **Harms incurred**
     - **Net impact assessment**
3. **Risks Identified**
   - **Description of each risk**
   - **Probability (low/medium/high)**
   - **Impact (low/medium/high)**
   - **Priority (calculated from probability × impact)**
4. **Mitigation Strategies**
   - **For each high-priority risk:**
     - **Mitigation approach**
     - **Owner responsible**
     - **Resources required**
     - **Timeline for implementation**
     - **Success criteria**
5. **Decision**
   - **Proceed / Modify / Cancel**
   - **Reasoning for decision**

    - **Conditions for proceeding (if any)**
    - **Sign-off from project owner**
6. **Follow-Up Required**
    - **Action items with owners**
    - **Next checkpoint date**
    - **Monitoring plan**

Documentation Format

Acceptable formats:

- **Structured document (Google Docs, Word)**
- **Wiki page (Confluence, Notion)**
- **Project management tool (Jira, Asana)**
- **Version-controlled files (Markdown in repo)**

Must be:

- **Searchable**
- **Accessible to relevant stakeholders**
- **Preserved for future reference**
- **Auditable**

Retention Requirements

Keep documentation for:

- **Duration of project + 5 years minimum**
- **Longer if product still in use**
- **Indefinitely for major projects**

Why:

- **Legal protection if sued**
- **Institutional learning**
- **Training examples**
- **Audit compliance**

2.6 SUCCESS CRITERIA

Individual Checkpoint Success

Checkpoint is successful if:

- ✅ **Happened on schedule (before next phase)**
- ✅ **All required participants present**
- ✅ **All checkpoint questions answered**
- ✅ **Stakeholder analysis complete and documented**
- ✅ **Risks identified and prioritized**
- ✅ **Mitigation strategies defined with owners**
- ✅ **Decision made and documented**
- ✅ **Project owner signed off**

Checkpoint has failed if:

- ❌ **Skipped or delayed to "save time"**
- ❌ **Superficial analysis (10 min check-box exercise)**
- ❌ **Key stakeholders not considered**
- ❌ **Risks identified but dismissed without mitigation**
- ❌ **Decision made before analysis complete**
- ❌ **No documentation produced**

Program-Level Success

Framework implementation is working if:

Harm Prevention (Primary Goal):

- **Issues being caught at Checkpoint 1 or 2 (before significant investment)**
- **Projects being modified or cancelled based on stakeholder analysis**
- **Fewer harms emerging post-launch than before framework**
- **Stakeholder complaints decrease**

Cultural Integration (Secondary Goal):

- **Teams proactively considering stakeholders without prompting**
- **Stakeholder language appearing in normal conversations**
- **Resistance to checkpoints decreasing over time**

- **Success stories being shared**

Organizational Health (Tertiary Goal):

- **Reduced legal/regulatory risk**
- **Fewer PR crises**
- **Increased stakeholder trust**
- **Competitive advantage from not causing harm**

Metrics to Track

Leading Indicators (Show Framework Working):

- **Percent of projects completing all checkpoints: Target >95%**
- **Number of issues caught per checkpoint: Higher is better**
- **Number of projects modified at Checkpoint 1-2: Target >50% of issues**
- **Time spent on checkpoints: Target <5% of project time**

Lagging Indicators (Show Outcome Success):

- **Number of products causing stakeholder backlash: Target 50% decrease**
- **Cost of settlements/lawsuits: Target 80% decrease**
- **Stakeholder satisfaction scores: Target increase**
- **Regulatory actions against organization: Target 75% decrease**

Process Indicators (Show Quality):

- **Documentation completion rate: Target 100%**
- **Stakeholder representation in checkpoints: Target >50%**
- **Time to complete checkpoints: Target <90 min each**
- **Team satisfaction with process: Target >70% positive**

NEXT STEPS

1. **Download the Checkpoint Templates - Get the actual worksheets for running checkpoints**
2. **Review the full Framework - Understand the complete methodology**
3. **Start your pilot program - Pick 1-2 projects and begin**

For questions or support:
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