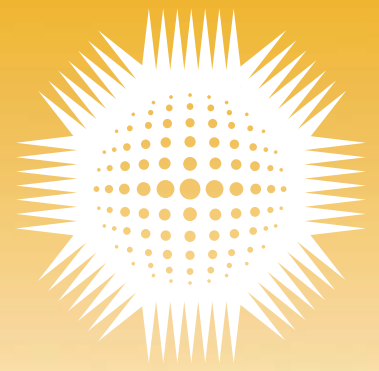


December 2008

# Examiners' Report

NEBOSH National  
General Certificate in  
Occupational Health  
and Safety (NGC1)



nebosh



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# Examiners' Report

## NEBOSH LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

### PAPER NGC1: MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

**DECEMBER 2008**

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For: NEBOSH Level 3 Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety  
NEBOSH Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management  
NEBOSH Level 3 Certificate in Construction Health and Safety

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## Introduction

NEBOSH (The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) was formed in 1979 as an independent examining board and awarding body with charitable status. We offer a comprehensive range of globally-recognised, vocationally-related qualifications designed to meet the health, safety, environmental and risk management needs of all places of work in both the private and public sectors.

Courses leading to NEBOSH qualifications attract over 25,000 candidates annually and are offered by over 400 course providers in 65 countries around the world. Our qualifications are recognised by the relevant professional membership bodies including the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM).

NEBOSH is an awarding body to be recognised and regulated by the UK regulatory authorities:

- The Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) in England
- The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) in Wales
- The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) in Northern Ireland

NEBOSH follows the “GCSE, GCE, VCE, GNVQ and AEA Code of Practice 2007/8” published by the regulatory authorities in relation to examination setting and marking (available at the Ofqual website [www.ofqual.gov.uk](http://www.ofqual.gov.uk)). While not obliged to adhere to this code, NEBOSH regards it as best practice to do so.

Candidates’ scripts are marked by a team of Examiners appointed by NEBOSH on the basis of their qualifications and experience. The standard of the qualification is determined by NEBOSH, which is overseen by the NEBOSH Council comprising nominees from, amongst others, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). Representatives of course providers, from both the public and private sectors, are elected to the NEBOSH Council.

This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to candidates and tutors in preparation for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content and the application of assessment criteria.

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## General comments

Many candidates are well prepared for this unit assessment and provide comprehensive and relevant answers in response to the demands of the question paper. This includes the ability to demonstrate understanding of knowledge by applying it to workplace situations.

There are always some candidates, however, who appear to be unprepared for the unit assessment and who show both a lack of knowledge of the syllabus content and a lack of understanding of how key concepts should be applied to workplace situations.

In order to meet the pass standard for this assessment, acquisition of knowledge and understanding across the syllabus are prerequisites. However, candidates need to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in answering the questions set. Referral of candidates in this unit is invariably because they are unable to write a full, well-informed answer to the question asked.

Some candidates find it difficult to relate their learning to the questions and as a result offer responses reliant on recalled knowledge and conjecture and fail to demonstrate any degree of understanding. Candidates should prepare themselves for this vocational examination by ensuring their understanding, not rote-learning pre-prepared answers.

### Recurrent Problems

It is recognised that many candidates are well prepared for their assessments. However, recurrent issues, as outlined below, continue to prevent some candidates reaching their full potential in the assessment.

- Many candidates fail to apply the basic principles of examination technique and for some candidates this means the difference between a pass and a referral.
- In some instances, candidates are failing because they do not attempt all the required questions or are failing to provide complete answers. Candidates are advised to always attempt an answer to a compulsory question, even when the mind goes blank. Applying basic health and safety management principles can generate credit worthy points.
- Some candidates fail to answer the question set and instead provide information that may be relevant to the topic but is irrelevant to the question and cannot therefore be awarded marks.
- Many candidates fail to apply the command words (also known as action verbs, eg describe, outline, etc). Command words are the instructions that guide the candidate on the depth of answer required. If, for instance, a question asks the candidate to 'describe' something, then few marks will be awarded to an answer that is an outline.
- Some candidates fail to separate their answers into the different sub-sections of the questions. These candidates could gain marks for the different sections if they clearly indicated which part of the question they were answering (by using the numbering from the question in their answer, for example). Structuring their answers to address the different parts of the question can also help in logically drawing out the points to be made in response.
- Candidates need to plan their time effectively. Some candidates fail to make good use of their time and give excessive detail in some answers leaving insufficient time to address all of the questions.
- Candidates should also be aware that Examiners cannot award marks if handwriting is illegible.

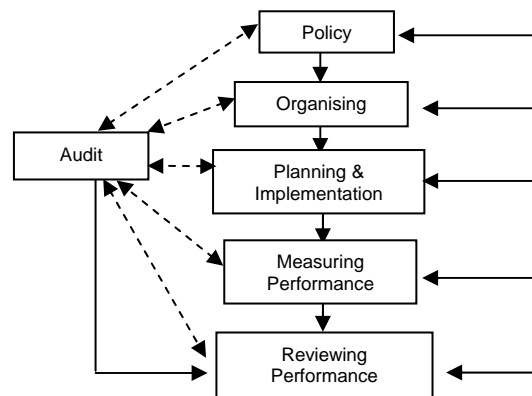
# Paper NGC1

## Management of safety and health

- Question 1**
- (a) *With the aid of a **sketch**, identify the key elements of a health and safety management system (such as HSG65).* (6)
- (b) ***Outline** the main contents of **EACH** of the elements of the health and safety management system as identified in part (a).* (12)
- (c) ***Identify TWO** practical measures that managers could take to motivate employees to follow the standards contained within the health and safety management system.* (2)

In answering this question, candidates, almost without exception, referred to the HSG65 health and management system.

For part (a), a flow chart, such as that which follows, should have been provided showing the six elements of the system in their correct sequence, and demonstrating their relationships with one another and the feedback loops from the final performance review and audit into the other elements.



For those few who chose the OHSAS model, a similar type sketch should have identified key elements such as: the policy, planning, implementation and operation, checking and management review.

In both cases, it was disappointing to note that many candidates found difficulty in identifying all the key elements of the systems.

In part (b), Examiners expected candidates who chose the HSG65 model, to outline the part played by each of the six elements in the model, beginning with “policy” which should state management’s intentions and set clear aims, objectives and targets followed by “organising” where responsibilities for health and safety would be allocated and effective communication systems and commitment at all levels established. The next stage would involve “planning and implementing” where the risks faced by employees would be assessed and effective control measures introduced. That done, proactive and reactive “monitoring” systems would need to be introduced to provide data on the achievement or non achievement of the objectives and targets set. After a period of time, a “review” would have to be carried out to evaluate the performance to date, to consider options for remedial action to improve performance and to reset targets. The review would be reinforced by an independent and structured “audit” of all parts of the system which would assess compliance with health and safety management procedures and identify where existing standards were inadequate and deficient.

Candidates who chose the OHSAS model were expected to carry out a similar exercise again starting with “policy” which would be appropriate to the nature and scale of the organisation’s health and safety risks, include a commitment to the prevention of injury and ill-health and to comply at least with applicable legal requirements. The next stage “planning” would include the introduction of procedures for hazard identification and risk assessment and for identifying and accessing the legal and other health and safety requirements that were applicable to the organisation. It would also be necessary to establish health and safety objectives for relevant functions and levels within the organisation. In “implementation and operation”, senior management would have to demonstrate its commitment, ensure effective lines of communication throughout the organisation and seek effective consultation with and participation by the workforce. “Checking” would be concerned with monitoring the extent to which the organisation’s health and safety objectives are being met and the effectiveness of the risk control measures that have been introduced while a “management review” would be an examination of the results of internal audits and an evaluation of compliance with applicable legal requirements and other requirements to which the organisation subscribes, assess the extent to which objectives have been met and decide on further improvements that would need to be made.

Those candidates who had experienced difficulty in identifying the key elements of the systems in answer to the first part of the question had obvious difficulties in outlining their contents. In general there was often confusion between measuring and reviewing and many candidates did not have a clear understanding of the audit procedure.

In contrast answers to part (c) were to a good standard, with most candidates able to identify measures such as the use of recognition and reward, consultation and involvement, the provision of training and adequate levels of effective supervision, the setting of realistic targets and deadlines and management leading by example.

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**Question 2**

***Outline the initial actions that should be taken following a major injury caused by an accident at work.***

**(8)**

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In answering this question, candidates were expected to outline actions such as: isolating services, making the area safe and securing it with barriers or other means; administering first aid treatment and contacting the emergency services; informing the next of kin; informing management and the safety representative; notifying the enforcement authority by the quickest practicable means; collecting initial evidence such as photographs, sketches and the names of witnesses and setting up the accident investigation.

The question was generally well answered though some candidates offered outlines of the accident investigation process itself and referred to the need to take action to avoid a similar occurrence once the investigation had been completed. These were matters considered to be too far removed from the “initial” actions as stipulated in the question.

- 
- Question 3** (a) **Give TWO** reasons why an employer should implement safe systems of work. (2)
- (b) **Outline SIX** sources of information that should be consulted when developing a safe system of work. (6)
- 

In answering part (a) of the question, candidates could have given reasons such as to secure compliance with relevant statutory requirements such as Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act; to comply with the common law duty of an employer to provide safe systems of work; as a control measure to reduce accidents, probably as a direct result of a risk assessment; and to communicate a standardised procedure to employees. Candidates generally found difficulty with this part of the question and could cite only compliance with statutory requirements.

Answers to part (b) were to a better standard, with most candidates able to identify sources of information such as; statutory instruments, ACOPs and HSE guidance; manufacturers' information; European and other official standards; industry or trade literature; results of risk assessments; accident statistics and health/medical surveillance records; the results of consultation with the employees involved; results of monitoring; maintenance records and enforcement agencies and other experts. A few candidates described the process of developing a system of work instead of outlining sources of information as the question required whilst others provided a list rather than an outline.

- 
- Question 4** **Outline** the factors that may increase risks to pregnant employees in the workplace. (8)
- 

In answering this question factors that could have been outlined included: exposure to chemicals such as pesticides, lead and those that cause intracellular changes (mutagens) or affect the embryo (teratogens); biological exposures (eg hepatitis); exposure to physical agents such as ionising radiation and extremes of temperature; manual handling; ergonomic issues relating to prolonged standing or the adoption of awkward body movements; stress issues; issues associated with the use and wearing of personal protective equipment; acts of violence; working shifts and/or excessive hours and a failure by the employee to advise the employer of the pregnancy.

The question was generally well answered though there were a number of candidates who did not supply the detail required to satisfy an "outline" question while others did not read the question with sufficient care and referred to control measures that might be introduced rather than to factors that might increase risks to pregnant employees.

- 
- Question 5** **Identify** the factors that influence safety related behaviour at work. (8)
- 

This question required candidates to identify factors which might influence safety related behaviour at work. Answers varied in quality and better answers were structured round the general headings of individual, job, organisational and environmental factors.

Individual factors include age and/or past experience and training; perception of risk; physical capabilities or disabilities; sensory defects; attitude and aptitude; lack of motivation; fatigue and the effects of drugs or alcohol. Job factors would relate to the carrying out of monotonous operations leading to familiarity and boredom or situations with many distractions and interruptions while organisational issues include insufficient staffing levels, inflexible or over-demanding work schedules, lack of interest shown by management and supervision and peer group pressures. Environmental issues include extremes of heat, humidity and noise, poor lighting and restricted workspace.

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**Question 6**     *Identify the reasons an employee might require additional health and safety training at a later stage of employment within an organisation.*     **(8)**

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In answering this question, candidates were expected to identify reasons such as the introduction of new processes, equipment and methods of work; as a result of a job change which might involve the allocation of additional responsibilities for example an appointment as a first-aider; following the introduction of new legislation; following an accident or incident; where risk assessments indicate that additional control measures are necessary; where refresher training is required such as for fork lift truck operators and first aid personnel; as a result of staff appraisals and to counteract the possibility of employees becoming complacent and lax in following established procedures for health and safety.

Most candidates provided good answers though some appeared to misunderstand the question and referred to initial or induction training that should be provided for young or new employees.

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**Question 7**     (a)     *State the employees' duties under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.*     **(2)**

                  (b)     *Identify SIX employee responsibilities which could be included in the 'organisation' section of a health and safety policy.*     **(6)**

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Regulation 14 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations requires employees to use all machinery, equipment, dangerous substances and safety devices in accordance with the training and instructions that they have been given by the employer. It also requires employees to inform their employer (or a specified employee with health and safety responsibilities) of work situations that could present a serious and immediate danger, as well as any shortcomings that they might reasonably recognise in the existing arrangements for health and safety. Some candidates answered this part of the question by reference to the Health and Safety at Work etc Act rather than to the Regulations.

For part (b), candidates could have identified responsibilities such as ensuring their own safety and that of other employees; cooperating with the employer and refraining from interfering with or misusing anything provided in the interests of health and safety; wearing personal protective equipment where this is provided; reporting accidents and near miss incidents; reporting hazards and defects in risk control measures that have been provided; and keeping the workplace clean and tidy. A few candidates confused responsibilities with roles and identified various positions that an employee might fill such as fire marshal or first-aider.

- 
- Question 8** *In relation to a risk assessment undertaken to comply with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999:*
- (a) **identify FIVE** criteria that will determine whether it is 'suitable and sufficient'; (5)
- (b) **outline THREE** circumstances that may require a risk assessment to be reviewed. (3)
- 

Every employer is required to complete suitable and sufficient risk assessments. Most candidates appeared to be familiar with the process of carrying out a risk assessment as itemised in the "five steps", but few seemed to be aware of the criteria contained in the ACOP to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations which are designed to ensure the suitability and sufficiency of any assessment that is prepared. A risk assessment, to be deemed suitable and sufficient, should indicate the competence of the assessor together with information on any specialist advice that has been sought; should identify all significant hazards and risks arising from or connected with the activity to be carried out; identify all the persons at risk including employees, other workers and members of the public with reference to those who might be particularly at risk; evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of existing control measures and identify other protective measures that may be required; enable priorities to be set; record the significant findings of the assessment; and identify the period of time for which it is likely to remain valid.

Answers to the second part of the question were generally to a good standard though some candidates again did not provide sufficient detail for an outline answer. Candidates could have referred to circumstances such as changes in the method of working together with the use of different substances; the introduction of new or the modification of existing plant; the availability of new information on hazards and risks; following accidents or cases of ill-health or as result of monitoring or health surveillance; the availability of new or improved techniques for the control of risks; changes in legislation and after a lapse of time.

- 
- Question 9** *Outline FOUR active (proactive) monitoring methods that can be used in assessing the health and safety performance of an organisation.* (8)
- 

Proactive methods that might have been outlined included: audits involving comprehensive and independently executed examinations of all aspects of an organisation's health and safety performance against stated objectives; inspections carried out on a regular or scheduled basis which identify existing conditions and comparing them with agreed performance objectives; safety surveys focusing on a particular activity such as manual handling, training programmes and employees' attitudes towards safety; sampling where specific areas of occupational health and safety are targeted; tours involving unscheduled workplace inspections to check on issues such as wearing of PPE and housekeeping; benchmarking where an organisation's performance in certain areas is compared with that of other organisations with similar processes and risks; health or medical surveillance using techniques such as audiometry and blood or urine analysis and environmental monitoring involving the measurement of noise and dust levels.

Answers to this question were disappointing with many candidates confusing proactive and reactive monitoring methods. While some could name the different

monitoring methods they were then unable to continue and detail the differences between them.

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**Question 10** *In relation to health and safety, **outline** the role of the following:*

- (a) *employment tribunals;* (4)
- (b) *criminal courts.* (4)
- 

The role of employment tribunals in relation to health and safety is to hear and adjudicate: on appeals against improvement and prohibition notices; appeals on behalf of trade union safety representatives and representatives of employee safety; appeals for unfair dismissal on the grounds of health and safety and claims by individuals for detrimental treatment on the grounds of health and safety. The tribunals may allow or dismiss the appeals and may award compensation where this is deemed to be appropriate. Answers to this part of the question were poor with many suggesting that tribunals existed to award compensation to employees making claims of negligence against their employers.

For part (b), the role of the criminal courts is to regulate the standards of health and safety set by the state, by hearing cases involving breaches of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act and Regulations, determining guilt and imposing punishment of the individuals or organisations involved in the form of fines or custodial sentences. The courts may also allocate costs and impose compensation orders. Answers to this part of the question were to a better standard though some candidates still suggested that the criminal courts were involved with common law cases of negligence.

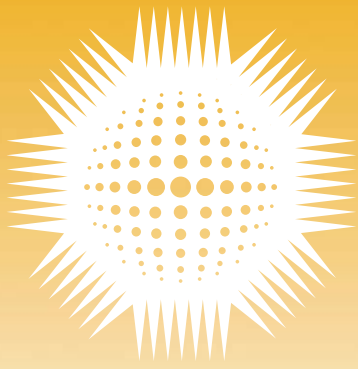
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**Question 11** ***Identify** the information that should be contained in the 'arrangements' section of a health and safety policy.* (8)

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This question was generally not well answered. Those candidates who did understand what was required identified a number of items of information that might be contained within the arrangements section of a policy such as arrangements for: carrying out risk assessments; controlling exposure to specific hazards for example, noise, radiation, hazardous substances, manual handling; monitoring standards of health and safety; use of safety and personal protective equipment; reporting accidents and unsafe conditions; controlling contractors; ensuring the safety of visitors; maintenance; the provision of welfare facilities; dealing with emergencies; training; consultation with employees and environmental control including dealing with waste.

Many candidates confused the arrangements with the organisation and statement of intent sections of the policy while a few identified the information that should be contained in all three.



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