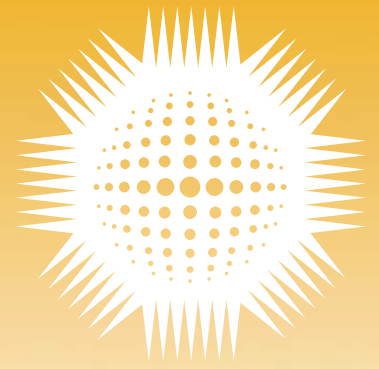


March 2009

Examiners' Report

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



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Examiners' Report

NEBOSH LEVEL 3 CERTIFICATE IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

PAPER NGC1: MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

MARCH 2009



For: NEBOSH Level 3 Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety
NEBOSH Level 3 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). 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) **Explain** the term 'health and safety culture'. (4)
- (b) **Outline EIGHT** possible causes for a deterioration in a previously positive health and safety culture. (8)
- (c) **Identify EIGHT** circumstances that may lead to the review of an organisation's health and safety policy, other than a deterioration in a positive health and safety culture. (8)
-

For part (a) of the question, an acceptable explanation would have been that the health and safety culture of an organisation is the product of individual and group values, attitudes, perceptions, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of, the organisation's health and safety management. Many candidates provided only a brief outline of a health and safety culture while others wrote of health and safety management systems rather than culture.

In answering part (b), candidates were expected to outline causes such as : the lack of visible leadership and commitment at senior level; changes in the management structure or roles; the lack of effective communication prior to and during change; the fact that health and safety was not given the same priority as other objectives such as production or quality; the lack of consultation with and involvement of the workforce; the failure by management to implement and maintain risk controls and to investigate accidents to identify their causes and to introduce appropriate remedial action; a reduction in the workforce leading to work overload; a high staff turnover and external influences such as a downturn in the economy leading to job insecurity. Answers to this part of the question were not to a good standard with many candidates referring only to a lack of management commitment but little else. Some did not appear to appreciate the importance of the keyword "deterioration" while others focussed on how a poor culture might be identified rather than what would cause an existing positive culture to deteriorate.

In answering the last part of the question, candidates could have identified circumstances such as: significant changes in the organisation including changes in key personnel; after the introduction of new or changed processes or work methods or after relocation in new premises; following changes in legislation or published guidance; where risk assessments, monitoring exercises or accident investigations show that the policy is no longer effective or relevant; following enforcement action and after a sufficient period of time has elapsed since the previous review to suggest that another one is due.

-
- Question 2**
- (a) **Explain**, using an example, the meaning of the term 'risk'. (3)
- (b) **Identify** the key stages of a workplace risk assessment. (5)
-

For part (a), the meaning of the term 'risk' is the probability or likelihood that an unwanted event will actually occur together with the severity of its consequences in terms of injury or damage. An example to support the explanation might have been, for instance, "the likelihood of someone being killed by coming into contact with electricity". Some candidates explained the meaning of hazard rather than risk and the severity of the outcome was often not mentioned.

A good answer to part (b) would have identified the key stages of a workplace risk assessment such as identifying the hazards associated with the activities and tasks performed at the workplace; identifying who might be harmed including operators, maintenance staff, cleaners and visitors; evaluating the likelihood and probable severity of the harm that might be caused, assessing the adequacy of existing control measures and deciding whether additional controls should be introduced; recording the significant findings of the assessment and carrying out a review at a later date and revising the findings when necessary. Answers to this part of the question were generally to a reasonable standard though there were still a few candidates who showed little understanding of the key stages involved in the completion of a risk assessment while a few explained the hierarchy of control.

-
- Question 3** (a) **Outline** the reasons why accidents should be reported and recorded within a workplace. **(4)**
- (b) **Outline** factors that might encourage employees to report accidents. **(4)**
-

There are a number of reasons why an organisation should have a system for the internal reporting and recording of accidents. These include the compilation of accident statistics and the identification of trends; to meet the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995; so that an investigation may be carried out to prevent a recurrence or to identify weaknesses in the safety management system; for use in civil claims or to satisfy insurance requirements; to help in the identification and reduction of loss; and to inform the review of risk assessments.

For the second part of the question, candidates were expected to outline factors that might encourage employees to report workplace accidents such as: making them fully aware of the procedures and requirements for reporting; ensuring that the procedures are accessible and convenient and contain clear lines of reporting; allowing them time off from the job in hand to make the report; ensuring a positive management response to the report with action taken where necessary to prevent a recurrence and with no suggestion of victimisation or blame; and removing any disincentives to report such as for example the award of bonuses for “accident free” time worked. Answers provided for this part were not as good as those provided for part (a) with many candidates unable to provide the detail necessary for an “outline” question.

-
- Question 4** **Identify** the main health and safety issues to be included in an induction training programme for goods delivery drivers using small vehicles, both on and off-site. **(8)**
-

In answering this question, candidates should have identified issues such as the health and safety policy of the company and its culture; the employees’ legal duties as contained in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations; information on the internal traffic routes and site rules including speed limits together with the signage and markings used; the specific workplace hazards such as restricted areas, the presence of hazardous materials and load security; the precautions to be taken in the manual handling of goods; the need to carry out periodic checks of the vehicle and the procedures for the reporting of defects and unsafe conditions; the wearing of personal protective equipment such as gloves and hi-visibility clothing; the procedures to be followed in the event of an accident or emergency; the company’s policy with respect to alcohol or substance misuse, smoking, the use of mobile phones and the carrying of passengers; lone

working issues including security, communication and the need to check in on return to base; and information on the arrangements for first aid and welfare.

Whilst there were many good answers to this question there were some candidates who appeared not to have noticed the reference to “induction” in the question whilst a few restricted their answers to one type of vehicle, namely a fork lift truck.

-
- Question 5**
- (a) **Give the meaning of the phrase ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’.** (2)
- (b) **State the general and specific duties of employers under section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.** (6)
-

For part (a), an acceptable answer would have been based on the balance of risk against cost in terms of time, trouble and money.

For part (b) good answers should have stated initially the employer’s general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees and then gone on to refer to the specific duties to provide and maintain safe plant and systems of work; to ensure the safe use, storage, handling and transport of articles and substances; to provide and maintain a safe workplace, including access and egress; to provide a safe working environment with adequate welfare facilities, and to provide information, instruction, training and supervision. Additionally, reference should have been made to the requirements to prepare and revise a health and safety policy; to consult with employee representatives and to establish a safety committee when required so to do.

-
- Question 6** *Various sources of information may be consulted when developing a safe system of work.*
- (a) **Identify FOUR internal sources of information, and;** (4)
- (b) **FOUR external sources of information.** (4)
-

In answering part (a) of the question, candidates could have identified internal sources of information such as: the company policy and standards; the results of risk assessments, inspections and audits; the results of any job safety analyses that have been completed; accident statistics and reports and medical surveillance records; maintenance records; the CDM health and safety file where one exists and the outcome of consultations held with the workforce.

For part (b), reference could have been made to statutory instruments, ACOPs and HSE guidance; information from manufacturers and suppliers; European and other official standards; industry or trade association guidance and benchmarking; and enforcement agencies and other professional bodies and experts.

Answers to this question were generally to a good standard, though a few candidates did show some confusion in distinguishing between internal and external sources of information.

Question 7 *An employee who works on a production line has notified her employer that she is pregnant. **Outline** the factors that the employer should consider when undertaking a specific risk assessment in relation to this employee.* **(8)**

Factors that an employer should consider in undertaking a specific risk assessment in relation to pregnant employees include exposure to chemicals such as pesticides, lead and those that cause intracellular changes (mutagens) or affect the embryo (teratogens); the risk of biological exposures for example to hepatitis, leptospirosis or HIV; exposure to ionising radiation or to a physical environment involving extremes of temperature, humidity, noise or vibration; ergonomic issues relating to prolonged standing or the involvement of awkward body movements; the nature of the task to be performed including the intensity and variety of the work and the involvement of manual handling; psychological issues including stress; issues associated with the use and wearing of personal protective equipment; the working of excessive hours including night work and shift work and the arrangements for the provision of adequate rest breaks.

Candidates who did not do so well in answering this question were those who did not distinguish between the factors to be considered and the controls to be introduced as a result of the consideration and concentrated only on the latter.

Question 8 (a) **Give** the meaning of the term 'health and safety audit'. **(2)**

(b) **Identify THREE advantages AND THREE disadvantages** of an external auditor carrying out a health and safety audit. **(6)**

A health and safety audit is a systematic critical examination of a health and safety management system, involving a structured process for the collection of independent information with the aim of assessing the effectiveness and reliability of the system and suggesting corrective action when this was thought to be necessary. Few candidates were able to give an appropriate meaning.

Answers to the second part, however, were much better with most candidates able to identify that the advantages of using an external auditor to carry out a health and safety audit are that he/she is more likely to possess the necessary auditing skills and credibility; will not be inhibited from criticising members of management or the workforce; is more likely to be up to date with legal requirements and best practice in other companies and will view the organisation's performance with a fresh pair of eyes. However, he/she will be disadvantaged in that he/she is unlikely to be familiar with the workplace, tasks and processes; will be unable to note improvements or deterioration unless the same auditor is used in successive audits; may have difficulty in obtaining the full cooperation of the workforce; may be unfamiliar with the industry and seek unrealistic standards and may well be more costly than an internal member of staff.

-
- Question 9**
- (a) **Identify the TWO** types of enforcement notice that may be served by an inspector, stating the conditions that must be satisfied before **EACH** type of notice is served. (4)
- (b) **Outline FOUR** powers available to an inspector when investigating a workplace accident other than the serving of an enforcement notice. (4)
-

This was one of the better answered questions on the paper though a few candidates did show a lack of knowledge of the notice procedure. An inspector may serve an improvement or a prohibition notice. To serve an improvement notice, they must be of the opinion that there is a breach of relevant statutory provisions, or that there has been a breach that is likely to be continued or repeated. For a prohibition notice to be served, the inspector must be of the opinion that there is, or is likely to be, a risk of serious personal injury.

For part (b), there is a range of powers available to an inspector when investigating a workplace accident that allow them for instance: to enter premises at any reasonable time or when it is suspected that there is a dangerous situation and to take any authorised person with them; to order that premises or equipment be left undisturbed for the purpose of the investigation; to undertake any necessary examinations or inspections; to take measurements and photographs; to take samples of articles or substances from the premises; to inspect or take copies of documents; to require persons to answer questions and to take declarations; and to institute proceedings against the employer or others when these are thought to be necessary.

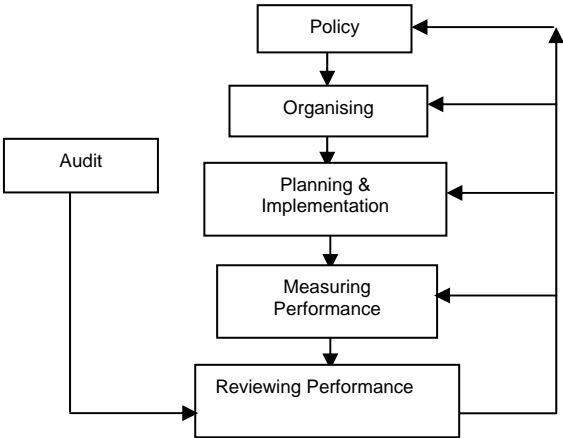
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- Question 10** *An organisation is considering expanding onto a shared site.*
- (a) **Outline** the factors to consider when carrying out a risk assessment of the first-aid provision on the site. (6)
- (b) **Identify** the **TWO** main functions of first-aid treatment. (2)
-

In answering part (a) of the question, candidates could have outlined factors such as: the number, composition and distribution of the workforce; the types of hazard and level of risk present; the proximity of the site to emergency medical services; the facilities and resources such as first aid personnel that might be shared with other occupants; the special needs of the workforce; the needs of non-employees; and the ability to provide continued cover over different shifts and for sickness, leave and other absence. There were some candidates who struggled with this part of the question and tended to outline the factors to be considered in carrying out a general risk assessment for first aid rather than those applicable to the scenario of a shared site.

For part (b), the two main functions of first-aid treatment are, firstly, the preservation of life and/or the minimisation of the consequences of injury until medical help is obtained and, secondly, the treatment of minor injuries that would not receive or do not need medical attention. While answers were generally to a good standard, there were a few candidates who had difficulty in identifying the two main functions required.

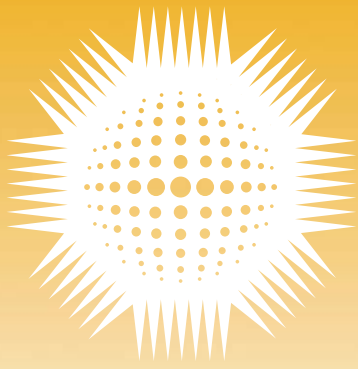
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- Question 11** (a) *With the aid of a **diagram**, outline the relationship between the key elements of the health and safety management system in HSE's 'Successful Health and Safety Management' (HSG65).* (4)
- (b) ***Outline** the potential economic benefits for an organisation implementing a successful health and safety management system.* (4)
-

In answering part (a) of the question, candidates were expected to produce the following diagram clearly identifying the key elements of the health and safety management system in their correct sequence and indicating the various feedback loops.



Answers were generally to a good standard though there were some candidates who did not include the feed back loops in the diagram while others produced some very inventive lines.

For part (b), candidates could have outlined potential economic benefits such as increased productivity with improved morale and a reduction in downtime; lower sickness rates; an improvement in product quality; a reduction in costs following accidents or legal actions involving civil claims or enforcement procedures; reduced insurance premiums; an enhanced corporate image and a lower staff turnover. Whilst the question required an outline, there were candidates who produced only a list.



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