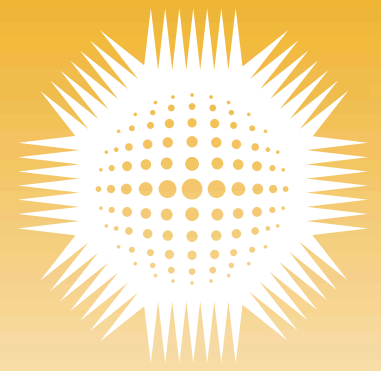


September 2012

Examiners' Report

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



nebosh



Examiners' Report

NEBOSH NATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



UNIT NGC1: MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

SEPTEMBER 2012

For: NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety
NEBOSH National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management
NEBOSH National 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 around 35,000 candidates annually and are offered by over 500 course providers, with examinations taken in over 100 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 Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

Where appropriate, NEBOSH follows the latest version of the “GCSE, GCE, *Principal Learning and Project Code of Practice*” published by the regulatory authorities in relation to examination setting and marking. 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 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 one or more of the questions 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 a sufficient degree of understanding. Candidates should prepare themselves for this vocational examination by ensuring their understanding, not rote-learning pre-prepared answers.

Candidates should therefore note that Examiners' Reports are **not** written to provide 'sample answers' but to give examples of what Examiners were expecting and more specifically to highlight areas of under performance.

Common pitfalls

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 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. Similarly the command word 'identify' requires more information than a 'list'.
- 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.
- Candidates should note that it is not necessary to start a new page in their answer booklet for each section of a question.

Unit NGC1

Management of health and safety

-
- Question 1**
- (a) **Describe** the legal requirements whereby employers must prepare a written statement of their health and safety policy. (2)
 - (b) **Explain** the purpose of the 'statement of intent' section of the health and safety policy. (2)
 - (c) **Identify** the main content of the 'statement of intent' section of the health and safety policy. (8)
 - (d) **Outline** the typical responsibilities of a managing director that should be included in the health and safety policy. (8)
-

In part (a), most candidates gained two marks for mentioning the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) and correctly stating that it is a legal requirement to provide the statement in writing if there are five or more employees.

In part (b), candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the purpose of the 'statement of intent' as setting a framework for health and safety management within an organisation.

There are a range of items stated in a typical statement of intent and they predominantly relate to the commitment an organisation is making towards employee safety. There was some confusion in part (c), with some answers including the contents of the arrangements section of the policy, rather than the statement of intent.

Some of the answers to part (d) tended to repeat much of what had previously been stated, rather than focusing on the managing director and his/her specific responsibilities. The managing director has overall responsibility for the policy and health and safety within an organisation. A few relevant specific responsibilities would be to sign the policy statement, to take part in the review of the policy and to ensure that roles and responsibilities for health and safety were clearly defined and communicated.

This question focuses on a key requirement that affects all employers within the UK. It was broken down into four sections to cover the scope of this topic area within the syllabus and it highlighted some lack of knowledge on this important area of the syllabus.

-
- Question 2**
- (a) **Outline** the purpose of employers' liability insurance. (2)
 - (b) **Identify SIX** costs of a workplace accident that might not be insured. (6)
-

For the majority of organisations, employers' liability insurance is a legal requirement to cover the cost of any compensation claims from employees who may get injured at work or due to work activities. There was some confusion in the answers to part (b), which specifically asked about costs that were not insurable, hence compensation and its associated legal costs were not relevant. Some candidates divided their answers into direct and indirect costs but this was not required. Costs such as retraining of staff, lost production and staff morale were all relevant.

-
- Question 3** *With respect to the management of risk within the workplace:*
- (a) **Outline** the meaning of the term 'hierarchy of control'; (2)
- (b) **Outline**, with examples, the standard hierarchy that should be applied to control health and safety risks in the workplace. (6)
-

A suitably full outline was not always given, with some answers to part (a) being identical to those given in part (b), rather than actually outlining the meaning of the term 'hierarchy of control'. Candidates should have outlined a range of controls that, when implemented, start with the most effective and work through to the least effective. There was a good overall awareness of a typical hierarchy of control, which normally starts with the principle of eliminating the hazard completely but some marks were lost where these issues were not outlined sufficiently or where no examples were given. The use of the command word needs to be considered before an answer is given, as just giving general terms such as "training" and "PPE" are not sufficient to gain full marks on a question requiring an outline answer.

- Question 4** **Outline** factors that may determine the level of supervision an employee should receive during their initial period within an organisation. (8)
-

There are a range of factors to consider when arranging for supervision when an employee joins an organisation. These could include their age and level of experience, as well as the complexity of the job to be performed. Overall, the answers to this question were of a high standard, with candidates aware of the typical range of relevant issues.

- Question 5** (a) **Outline** the 'five' steps involved in the assessment of risk from workplace activities (as described in HSE's 'Five steps to risk assessment' (INDG163). (5)
- (b) **Identify** the significant findings which should be recorded. (3)
-

The fundamentals of risk assessment play a part in every UK organisation and are potentially one of the main activities of those involved in the management of health and safety within the workplace. There was some confusion on the main stages of the risk assessment process with some answers deviating into the hierarchy of control, instead of focusing on the risk assessment process itself. Part (b) identified an area of weakness as to what details should specifically be recorded. Reference to the standards in the approved Code of Practice that accompanies the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) would be beneficial to candidates and course providers.

- Question 6** *An employee was seriously injured in an accident at work whilst operating an item of work equipment.*
- Identify** the documented information that might be used by the employer (or their insurers) to defend a civil claim. (8)
-

This question was designed to enable candidates to use their broad knowledge of the syllabus and the various pieces of written information, documentation and records that may be kept by organisations and potentially relevant should a civil claim occur. Candidates were able to identify with ease a full range of documents, such as risk

assessments and maintenance reports that might be used to defend a claim and gained good marks for this question.

Question 7 *Engineers in a motor vehicle workshop carry out a variety of repair and maintenance activities.*

Giving practical motor vehicle workshop examples in **EACH** case, **outline** the duties placed on these employees by the:

- (a) *Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;* (4)
- (b) *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.* (4)
-

Part (a) did not pose a problem for the majority of candidates. Some, however, quoted duties under Section 2 of the HSWA for the employer instead of the employees. Some gave very lengthy answers, which, although good in some cases, did not always answer the question. The question asked for the duty and an example of when this might occur. Just giving the example without reference to a part of the HSWA was not sufficient to answer the question. In part (b), very few candidates referred to Regulation 14 requirements of the MHSWR, which support those established in the HSWA.

Question 8 *Outline the contents of a typical permit-to-work form.* (8)

Permits-to-work are used to control work in hazardous areas. This question was generally well answered, with a wide range of the issues that may be included on a permit outlined, including the description of the task, the task location and time period of the planned work. The question required an outline of the key issues. This did mean that candidates who merely provided a list of headings were unable to gain all the available marks. Attention to the command word is essential as lists without explanation will very rarely be enough to fully answer a question of this nature.

Question 9 (a) **Explain** the meaning of the term 'health and safety culture'. (2)

(b) **Outline** the possible causes of a deterioration in a previously positive health and safety culture. (6)

In part (a), candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the term 'health and safety culture'. Correct statements explained shared attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of both the individual and the organisation. Part (b) proved difficult for some, with some answers focusing on how to create a positive culture rather than why one would deteriorate, meaning opportunities to gain marks were lost. Possible causes of a deterioration in the health and safety culture include a lack of consultation, a failure to provide resources, a lack of training and a lack of commitment from management.

Question 10 *Outline the reasons why an organisation may decide to implement a formal Health and Safety Management System such as that given in 'Successful Health and Safety Management' (HSG65).* (8)

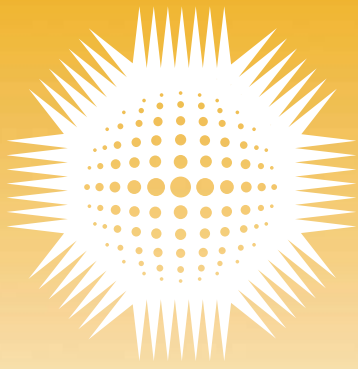
This question was often misunderstood, with the majority of candidates incorrectly giving an answer referring, sometimes in great detail, to "POPIMAR". The question, however, requires an understanding of the concept of the safety management system. This knowledge needed to be used to answer the question, which asked why an organisation may wish to implement such a system. An organisation may do so to assist in meeting legal requirements, developing a safety culture and formalising their approach to managing health and safety issues.

Question 11 *Identify EIGHT reactive measures that can be used to monitor an organisation's health and safety performance.*

(8)

There seemed to be a general lack of understanding of the term '*reactive monitoring*' or this term was not picked up as being a key part of the question. Even when reactive monitoring was identified, candidates very often included active or proactive monitoring as well, with audits and inspections being mentioned on a regular basis. Reactive measures are all concerned with adverse events or accidents that have already occurred. For those clear about the term reactive, there were plenty of high quality answers covering issues such as accident trends, near misses, sickness absence and the cost of civil claims.

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