
Examiners' Report

NEBOSH INTERNATIONAL GENERAL CERTIFICATE IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



UNIT IGC1: MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

MARCH 2009

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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.

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. This would be followed by implementation and operation, where 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 improvement that would need to be made.

Question 3 *Outline why it is important that all persons are aware of their roles and responsibilities for health and safety in an organisation.* (8)

Making all persons in an organisation aware of their roles for health and safety will assist in defining their individual responsibilities and will indicate the commitment and leadership of senior management. A clear delegation of duties will assist in sharing out the health and safety workload, will ensure contributions from different levels and jobs, will help to set up clear lines of reporting and communication and will assist in defining individual competencies and training needs particularly for specific roles such as first aid and fire. Finally, making individuals aware of their own roles and responsibilities can increase their motivation and help to improve morale throughout the organisation.

Question 4 *Two organisations share the same workplace. Outline how they could co-operate to achieve good health and safety standards.* (8)

In order to achieve good health and safety standards in the workplace, the two organisations could: hold regular meetings, share information and risk assessments and avoid carrying out incompatible processes; prepare and agree joint site rules for the workplace for example for assembly points and smoking areas; set up joint procedures for the management of visitors and contractors; agree on procedures for the management of traffic and the movement of vehicles; carry out joint inspections and monitoring of the workplace; draw up joint emergency procedures; agree a policy for the management of waste and obtain advice on health and safety matters from a shared consultant.

Question 5 *Give the reasons why hazards to the health of workers may not be identified during a workplace inspection.* **(8)**

There are a number of reasons why hazards to the health of workers may not be identified during a workplace inspection such as: the nature of the hazard may not be well understood as for example with those arising from contact with biological agents; a lack of measuring equipment such as for noise; the fact that effects may be chronic rather than immediate; the hazard not being visible as with certain gases or that arising from radiation; over familiarity as, for example, from exposure to sunlight; the individual susceptibility of certain workers; a particular task which was not in progress and the workers not available during the inspection; the unwillingness of individuals to admit there are problems with their health; the fact that health is given a low priority in the organisation; the person carrying out the inspection concentrating on the more immediate and often safety hazards; and ultimately the lack of competency of the inspector.

Question 6 (a) *Give the meaning of the term 'permit-to-work'.* **(2)**
(b) *Identify THREE types of work that may require a permit-to-work, AND give the reasons why in EACH case.* **(6)**

A permit-to-work is a formal documented planned procedure designed to protect personnel working in hazardous areas or carrying out high risk activities.

For part (b), candidates were expected to identify types of work where a permit-to-work system might be required such as work in confined spaces where there is a danger of being overcome by fumes or gases or by a shortage of oxygen; work on live or high voltage electrical equipment where there would be a danger of electrocution; hot work involving welding or cutting operations, where the risk of sparks may ignite nearby flammable materials; maintenance work on dangerous process plant or production machinery where it may not be possible to keep the normal standards of protection in place and work at heights.

Question 7 (a) *Identify TWO main purposes of first-aid treatment.* **(2)**
(b) *Outline the factors to be considered when carrying out a risk assessment of first-aid requirements in a workplace.* **(6)**

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.

Good answers to part (b) would have referred to the number of trained first-aid personnel and first-aid facilities in relation to, for example, the size of the organisation; the distribution and composition of the workforce including the special needs of employees such as trainees, young workers and the disabled; the types of hazard and level of risk present; the past history of accidents and their type, location and consequences; the proximity of the workplace to emergency medical services; the special needs of travelling, remote or lone workers; the need to train the first aid

personnel in special procedures; and the ability to provide continued cover over different shifts and for sickness, leave and other absence.

Question 8 *Outline the main health and safety responsibilities of:*

- (a) employers; (4)
- (b) workers. (4)
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The main health and safety responsibilities of an employer are to provide and maintain safe plant and equipment, to carry out risk assessments and to introduce safe 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 for employees. Additionally, reference should have been made to the responsibility to prepare and revise a health and safety policy; to cooperate with and consult with employees; to secure competent health and safety advice and to cooperate with other employers at the workplace.

As for workers, their responsibilities include taking reasonable care of themselves and their fellow workers and to refrain from misusing equipment provided for their health and safety; cooperating with their employer; reporting accidents and dangerous situations to their employer or other nominated member of management; to comply with site rules and to refrain from taking alcohol or drugs during and immediately before working hours.

Question 9 *Identify EIGHT health and safety hazards relevant to the role of a long distance delivery driver.*

(8)

Health and safety hazards relevant to the role of a long distance delivery driver include: the duration of the journey and the hours of driving; issues connected with the route to be followed and the different road conditions; the weather and other environmental factors; inadequate vehicle maintenance and the possibility of breakdown; the manual and/or mechanical handling of the goods being carried and other hazards associated with them such as exposure to chemicals; physical hazards such as exposure to noise and vibration; lone working with a possible absence of communication and supervision; the lack of emergency procedures including the provision of first aid; security hazards including the possibility of violence and psychological hazards such as stress.

Question 10 *Identify reasons why workers may fail to comply with safety procedures at work.*

(8)

There are many reasons why employees may fail to comply with safety procedures at work and better answers recognised most of them such as: inadequate resources whether of tools, equipment or employees; unrealistic or ill-considered procedures; a perceived lack of commitment to health and safety by management and emphasis on other priorities such as production; the lack of adequate information and training and a perceived lack of consultation; a poor safety culture within the organisation; fatigue, illness and stress; lack of concentration because of boredom and repetitive work

tasks; poor working conditions; mental and/or physical capabilities not taken into account; inadequate supervision and a failure to enforce compliance with the procedures; peer group pressure; a failure to recognise risks and ultimately a wilful disregard of the safety procedures.

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- Question 11** (a) **Outline** why an organisation should have a system for the internal reporting of accidents. (4)
- (b) **Identify** the reasons why workers might not report accidents at work. (4)
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There are a number of reasons why an organisation should have a system for the internal reporting of accidents. These include the compilation of accident statistics and the identification of trends; to satisfy legal requirements; 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 part (b), candidates were expected to identify reasons such as: the employee being unaware of reporting procedures or the fact that no procedure was in place; peer pressure and a reluctance to take time off from the job in hand; possible retribution or blame by management; to preserve the company's or department's safety record particularly when an incentive scheme is in operation; to avoid receiving first-aid or medical treatment for whatever reason; over-complicated reporting procedures, and lack of obvious management response to earlier reported accidents.