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# Examiners' Report

## UNIT IGC1: MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

### SEPTEMBER 2018

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For: **NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety**  
**NEBOSH International Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management**  
**NEBOSH International Certificate in Construction Health and Safety**

## CONTENTS

Introduction	2
General comments	3
Comments on individual questions	4
Examination technique	10
Command words	13

# Introduction

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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 50,000 candidates annually and are offered by over 600 course providers, with examinations taken in over 120 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 that applies best practice setting, assessment and marking and applies to Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Accreditation regulatory requirements.

This report provides guidance for candidates and course providers for use 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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Any enquiries about this report publication should be addressed to:

NEBOSH  
Dominus Way  
Meridian Business Park  
Leicester  
LE19 1QW

tel: 0116 263 4700  
fax: 0116 282 4000  
email: [info@nebosh.org.uk](mailto:info@nebosh.org.uk)

## General comments

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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 other 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.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on the standard date IGC1 examination sat in September 2018.

Feedback is presented in these key areas: responses to questions, examination technique and command words and is designed to assist candidates and course providers prepare for future assessments in this unit.

Candidates and course providers will also benefit from use of the 'Guide to the NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' which is available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guide sets out in detail the syllabus content for IGC1 and tutor reference documents for each Element.

Additional guidance on command words is provided in 'Guidance on command words used in learning outcomes and question papers' which is also available via the NEBOSH website.

Candidates and course providers should also make reference to the IGC1 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

## Unit IGC1

### Management of international health and safety

- Question 1**
- (a) **Give** the meaning of the following terms:
- (i) health; (2)
  - (ii) safety; (2)
  - (iii) welfare. (2)
- (b) **Outline** workers' health and safety responsibilities. (6)
- (c) **Outline** an employer's health and safety responsibilities. (8)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 1.1: Outline the scope and nature of occupational health and safety; 1.3: Explain the role of national governments and international bodies in formulating a framework for the regulation of health and safety; and 3.1: Outline the health and safety roles and responsibilities of employers, directors, managers, supervisors, workers and other relevant parties.

Most candidates were able to gain marks for part (a), however while there were two marks available for giving the meanings of each of the three terms, answers provided were often too brief to gain both marks.

For part (a) (i), marks were available for stating that health is a state of well-being, and is the protection of people's bodies and minds from illness. However, many candidates only provided part of the meaning and were only awarded one mark.

A number of candidates listed examples of welfare facilities for (a) (iii) rather than giving the meaning of the term 'welfare' so did not gain any marks.

For part (b) there were marks available for workers' responsibilities such as taking care of their own health and safety and that of others, and co-operation with their employer.

Most candidates gained marks for this part of the question. There were six marks available for part (b) that, along with the command word 'outline', indicated the breadth of answer required. However, some candidates outlined too few points or only gave a list, not giving sufficient depth of answer to meet the requirements of the question.

Some candidates duplicated points in their answers but could only be awarded a mark once for a valid point. For example, outlining co-operation with the employer and then, later in the answer, describing *how* a worker might co-operate.

A few candidates appeared to misread or misunderstand this part of the question and did not outline workers' responsibilities.

Candidates' performance on part (c) of the question was similar to that on part (b), with some candidates not providing a reasonable outline, some providing too few points to gain most or all of the marks available, and a few misreading or misunderstanding the question.

Marks were awarded for various employer's responsibilities including the provision of a health and safety policy, and providing adequate supervision. As with part (b), some candidates repeated points in their answers, for which only one mark could be awarded.

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|-------------------|---|------------|
| <b>Question 2</b> | (a) <b>Identify</b> the three key sections of a health and safety policy.                                   | <b>(3)</b> |
|                   | (b) <b>Outline</b> ways in which line managers can implement their organisation's health and safety policy. | <b>(5)</b> |
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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.3: Describe the key features and appropriate content of an effective health and safety policy.

Most candidates could identify policy sections and therefore gained marks for part (a).

Some candidates did not answer the question asked, but gave answers regarding management systems, or reasons for good health and safety. These responses could not be awarded marks.

Part (b) was generally less well answered. Managers can implement their organisation's policy by leading by example, carrying out inspections, or other forms of active monitoring.

Many candidates provided too few valid points for part (b) to gain good marks. This could be because candidates' knowledge was limited, or it could indicate poor examination technique. Candidates should note that the marks available and the command word help indicate the breadth of answer required. Some candidates did outline a way to implement the policy and gained the mark available, but then went on to give a lot of unnecessary detail.

Some candidates did not outline the responsibilities of line managers, but of others within an organisation such as the CEO. Others wrote about different parts of health and safety policies and did not focus on what part (b) of the question required.

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|-------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Question 3</b> | (a) <b>Explain</b> the objectives of carrying out a workplace risk assessment. | <b>(4)</b> |
|                   | (b) <b>Identify</b> why a risk assessment may need to be reviewed.             | <b>(4)</b> |
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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.5: Explain the principles and practice of risk assessment.

Objectives in part (a) could have included, to prevent workplace accidents and ill-health, or to identify those at risk of harm.

The question required candidates to explain the objectives of a risk assessment, not how a risk assessment might be carried out. However, a number of candidates set out how a risk assessment is completed (eg five steps to risk assessment) and so did not gain marks.

Some responses limited the marks that could be awarded for part (a) because they did not include the depth of answer needed for an explanation.

Part (b) was generally better answered, with most candidates able to identify reasons why a risk assessment may be reviewed such as there being a number of incidents or a change of law.

Each part of this question had four marks available that, along with the command words, indicate the number of points needed. Candidates who only provide one or two points in their answer would not gain all of the marks available.

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**Question 4** A worker has been injured by slipping on a wet floor after cleaning.  
**Outline** possible root causes of the accident (management system failure). (8)

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.2: Explain the purpose of, and procedures for, investigating incidents (accidents, cases of work-related ill-health and other occurrences).

Possible root causes (management system failures) could have included unsuitable cleaning materials being supplied and poor risk assessment procedures.

A number of candidates included immediate causes of accidents in their answers, for which there were no marks. This may have been because of a misreading of the question, or it could be a lack of knowledge of root causes.

Some candidates provided answers that were very brief and/or unclear. For example, 'no training' is not sufficient to demonstrate what the candidate means and is not an adequate outline of a point.

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**Question 5** (a) **Identify** types of emergency in the workplace for which people may need to be evacuated. (4)  
(b) **Outline** why it is important that workers receive training on emergency procedures. (4)

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.10: Outline the need for emergency procedures and the arrangements for contacting emergency services.

Part (a) was generally well answered, with some candidates gaining all four marks available. Types of emergency that may have been identified included security alert or fire.

Part (b) was not as well answered by most candidates. Some candidates wrote about what might be included in a training course on emergencies or the different parts of an emergency plan. These candidates therefore missed the marks available.

This part of the question has the command word 'outline'. Some candidates provided brief lists of points which limited the marks that could be awarded.

Marks were available in part (b) for reasons such as training being required by the organisation's Safety Management System, with it also helping to reduce the risk of panic or confusion in an emergency.

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**Question 6** **Outline** what an organisation should consider when assessing the competence of a contractor at the pre-selection stage. (8)

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.1: Outline the health and safety roles and responsibilities of employers, directors, managers, supervisors, workers and other relevant parties.

Marks were available for a reasonable outline of things to consider at pre-selection stage such as the contractor's accident/incident record and whether they had been subject to any enforcement agency actions.

A number of candidates gave examples of active management of contractors while work is in progress, rather than at the pre-selection stage, as asked in the question.

Other candidates provided points in their answers that were not clear. For example, 'check documentation' or 'check records' is not sufficient to gain a mark.

Once again the marks available indicate that more than only one or two points are needed to gain good marks. However, some candidates did not provide an adequate response.

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**Question 7**      **Identify** possible costs to an organisation of work-related ill-health.      **(8)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.2: Explain the moral, social and economic reasons for maintaining and promoting good standards of health and safety in the workplace.

This question was generally well answered, with many candidates gaining good marks.

Possible financial and non-financial costs include production delays, as well as insurance excess.

The question asked about work-related ill-health; some candidates instead detailed costs only relevant to accidents or other types of incidents.

Some candidates gained a mark for identifying a possible cost, but then went on to write a lot of detail about different aspects of that cost. Those candidates would have used more time by going into additional detail, which could not be awarded any additional marks. Some did not give enough information in their answers, and were not clear, simply stating 'losses' or 'costs', which are not specific enough to answer the question.

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**Question 8**      **Outline** what needs to be considered when organising first aid in a workplace.      **(8)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.11: Outline the requirements for, and effective provision of, first aid in the workplace.

Answers to this question varied greatly. There were some very good answers, with candidates providing a good breadth of considerations. However, other candidates' responses were too limited to gain many marks.

Marks were available for things to be considered such as the type of work carried out and likely injuries to be suffered at the workplace, or shared arrangements (where two organisations share a workplace).

Some candidates did not answer the question, but instead outlined the contents of a first-aid box, or how to give first aid. These candidates could not be awarded the marks available for this question.

As with other questions, a number of candidates provided too few points to gain a good mark, or did not give the depth of answer needed for the command word 'outline'.

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**Question 9**     **Outline** reasons why accidents in a workplace should be reported and recorded. **(8)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.3: Describe the legal and organisational requirements for recording and reporting incidents.

A common valid reason provided in answers was that reporting and recording will help prevent similar accidents happening. Fewer candidates outlined other valid points such as the recording of accidents in order to identify patterns.

Some candidates did not answer the question asked, but instead responded with how to investigate an accident or how to prepare an accident report. It is essential that candidates read questions carefully and fully understand what is being asked.

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**Question 10**     **Identify** information that could be considered when reviewing an organisation's health and safety performance. **(8)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.2: Examine the purpose of, and procedures for, regular reviews of health and safety performance.

This question was generally not well answered with many candidates gaining low marks.

Some candidates provided answers that did not address the question asked. This may reflect a lack of understanding of the question topic. For example, some candidates provided details of actions to be taken following an accident.

Marks were available for information such as whether the organisation's health and safety objectives have been met. Active monitoring data would also typically be reviewed.

It may be useful for candidates and course providers to specifically ensure that the content of learning outcome 5.2 is understood. Without full understanding, candidates who have not been personally involved in reviewing health and safety performance may have difficulty providing a suitable response during an examination.

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**Question 11**     Posters are commonly used to communicate health and safety information in the workplace.

(a)     **Outline** benefits of using posters to communicate to workers. **(3)**

(b)     **Outline** limitations of using posters to communicate to workers. **(5)**

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.4: Explain how health and safety behaviour at work can be improved.

Performance on this question varied, with some candidates gaining marks for both parts of the question and a good mark for the question overall, while other candidates had difficulty.

Part (a) had marks available for benefits such as image-based posters having no language barrier, and that posters can be easily replaced.



Part (b) had marks awarded for limitations of posters including posters may not be seen due to their location, and posters' messages can become over familiar and so ignored by those who do see them.

Some candidates did not answer the question, providing details of types of posters that might be found in a workplace, rather than benefits or limitations.

Both parts of the question start with the command word 'outline' and a reasonable outline of points was needed in answers. As with other questions in this sitting, some candidates did not follow the requirements of the question and only listed words in their answer.

## Examination technique

The following issues are consistently identified as the main areas in need of improvement for candidates taking Certificate level qualifications:

### Candidates misread/misinterpreted the question

Candidates misreading or misinterpreting the question is by far the most common cause of candidates not gaining the maximum marks available.

NEBOSH questions are systematically and carefully prepared and are subject to a number of checks and balances prior to being authorised for use in question papers. These checks include ensuring that questions set for the Certificate level qualifications relate directly to the learning outcomes contained within the associated syllabus guides. The learning outcomes require candidates to be sufficiently prepared to provide the relevant depth of answer across a broad range of subject areas. For example, a candidate could be asked about the causes of stress, or could be asked about the effects of stress. A question could require a response relating to the principles of fire initiation, or a question could require a response relating to the spread of fire. Therefore, a candidate should focus not only on the general topic area (eg stress, fire) but also the specific aspect of that subject to which the question relates.

Candidates must also pay attention to the command word. For example, a question could ask candidates to '**identify** the hazards associated with demolition work', or a question from the same element could ask candidates to '**outline** the control measures required during demolition work'. Candidates appear to focus solely on the object of the question (demolition) and do not pay sufficient attention to the subject (hazards or control measures in the examples given) or the command word ('identify' or 'outline' in the examples given). There is often some confusion between hazard and risk. If a question requires an outline of hazards for a given situation, candidates must be careful not to provide risks, or even in some circumstances precautions, as they will not be able to attract marks.

Examiners suggest that while many candidates do begin their answer satisfactorily and perhaps gain one or two marks, they then lose sight of the question and include irrelevant information. Although further points included in an answer can relate to the general subject area, these points are not focused on the specific learning outcome and marks cannot be awarded. However, some candidates appear to misread or misinterpret several questions. This situation is more likely due to candidates preparing for the examination with a number of memorised answers obtained through rote-learning, that again can provide answers that are loosely associated with the subject matter but do not provide answers specific to the question. Such an approach is clearly evident to an Examiner and demonstrates little understanding of the subject matter and marks are not awarded.

Candidates are advised to allow sufficient time to read and re-read the question in order to determine the key requirements prior to committing their answer to paper. Preparing a time plan before the examination will indicate how many minutes are available for each question and then part of this time allocation can be given to reading the question. Underlining or highlighting key words can assist in keeping focused on the salient points and simple mind maps or answer plans can also be useful. Maps and plans should be kept simple so as not to use up too much examination time.

### Candidates did not respond effectively to the command word

A key indicator a question will be the command word, which is always given in **bold** typeface. The command word will indicate the depth of answer that is expected by the candidate and relates to the amount of detail that should be included in each point of the answer.

The learning outcomes in each element of all syllabus guides include the relevant command word that dictates the level of detail that should be covered in a course of study and the depth of answer that a candidate would be expected to provide in an answer to an examination question.

Examiners report that candidates continue to incorrectly observe the command words and therefore compromise their ability to gain the marks available. The majority of cases where command words are not observed relate to insufficient detail being given by a candidate in their examination answer. A significant number of candidates, irrespective of the command word given in the question, provide all answers in the form of a brief list of one or two words. This would normally not be sufficient to gain marks where the command word given was 'outline', 'explain' or 'describe', all of which require answers of more than one or two words.

Some candidates do provide too much information, which would not be required where a command word limits the expected answer to 'give' or 'identify'. Candidates would not be penalised for providing excessive detail but this would not be an efficient use of the time allocated.

Course providers should ensure that learning materials complement the command words in the syllabus guide and the NEBOSH guidance on command words and that sufficient time is given to advising candidates on suitable examination technique during a course of study.

### **Candidates unnecessarily wrote the question down**

Developing a time plan is a key element in preparing for an examination. Advice included on Certificate question papers suggests that 30 minutes should be allocated for the answer to the long 20-mark question, and 90 minutes should be allocated to the answers for the remaining ten, 8-mark short questions. Therefore there are around 9 minutes available to answer an 8-mark question. This time will be required for reading the question properly at least twice, developing an answer plan, and then committing the answer to paper while regularly referring back to the question in order to maintain focus. Therefore any inefficient use of this time should be avoided.

The efficient use of this time is essential in order to ensure that all questions can be answered within the 2 hours available. Many candidates feel it necessary to write out the question, in full, prior to providing their answer and although this practice will not lose marks it will lose valuable time. A significant number of candidates do not answer all of the questions in the time permitted and do not complete the question paper, some of whom obviously run out of time.

### **Candidates provided rote-learned responses that did not fit the question**

It is clear that there are a significant number of candidates who seem to recite answers in the examination that have been rote-learned in advance and do not answer the question.

While knowledge of material forms a part of the study for a Certificate-level qualification, a key aspect being assessed is a candidate's **understanding** of the subject and reciting a pre-prepared and memorised answer will not show a candidate's understanding. In fact, if a candidate gives a memorised answer to a question that may look similar, but actually is asking for a different aspect of a topic in the syllabus, it shows a lack of understanding of the subject and will inevitably result in low marks being awarded for that answer.

### **Candidates repeated the same points but in different ways / Candidates provided the same answer to different questions**

There are instances where candidates repeat very similar points in their answers, sometimes a number of times. This is easily done in the stressful environment of the examination. However, once a point has been successfully made and a mark awarded for it, that mark cannot be awarded again for similar points made later in the answer.

Candidates are advised to practise examination technique in their preparations to avoid this kind of pitfall. Writing an answer plan where points can be ticked off when made, or structuring an answer so that each point made is clearly shown, for example by underlining key points, can be of great use. This technique aids candidates and makes it much clearer in the stress of the examination for candidates to see which points have been made and reduce the chances of the same point being made several times.

### **Candidates did not answer all of the questions**

It has been noted that a number of candidates do not attempt all of the questions and of course where a candidate does not provide an answer to a question, no marks can be awarded. This seriously affects the potential marks available and the possibility of achieving a pass. Course providers must emphasise the importance of attempting all questions in order to maximise the opportunity to attract marks.

There can be several reasons for this issue: running out of the allocated time for the examination, not knowing the answer to the question, or forgetting to answer a question.

Questions can be answered in any order and answers can be written in any order in the answer book provided. Candidates are advised to clearly keep track of questions they have attempted, such as marking them on the question paper that would minimise the risk of inadvertently missing a question to answer.

If the subject of the question is unfamiliar or the answer is not known, then it will be challenging to provide an answer. This can result from rote-learning and preparing for an examination with a number of memorised answers, or simply not being adequately prepared for the examination across the breadth of the syllabus. There is always the risk of a candidate 'going blank' in an examination situation, in which case candidates should be prepared with some techniques to help. Rather than trying to remember what was taught or what has been read, ask yourself 'what would I do, in this situation?'. Reference to personal application or experience is sometimes enough to stimulate an answer that otherwise may have been missed. Alternatively, candidates can go back to first principles and break a question down into elements such as 'people', 'equipment', 'materials' and the 'working environment'. Approaching a question in small sections can minimise the risk of being overwhelmed by it as a whole.

Running out of time can be avoided by having an examination time plan and working to it. The question paper advises that you should spend 30 minutes on the long answer (question 1) and 90 minutes on the remaining ten short answer questions. This will provide around 9 minutes per short answer, follow the clock and when the time per question has expired, move on. Answering a question partly is better than not answering at all.

### **Candidates did not allocate enough time to the question / Time management**

In a number of cases question 1 is left until last or later in the question paper and does not appear to be answered completely. Other candidates appear to rush the last one or two questions by providing very brief or bullet point answers, even when these questions require an outline. This indicates a lack of time management. It is advised that course providers and candidates spend time developing the skill of writing answers to questions bearing in mind the number of marks and time available. A 20-mark question requires significantly more detail than an 8-mark question.

Candidates might benefit from writing abbreviations to save time and to recognise that there is no need to write out the question at the beginning of their answer. Standard abbreviations such as HSE, RIDDOR, COSHH, PPE and DSE are acceptable.

### **Candidates' handwriting was illegible**

Sometimes Examiners have difficulty in reading the handwriting of some candidates. Although allowances are made for candidates under the pressure of an examination, course providers must remind candidates that their writing needs to be legible or valuable marks may not be picked up during marking.

There is a minimum literacy requirement for candidates on NEBOSH qualifications. As stated in the syllabus guides the standard of English required by candidates studying for Certificate level must be such that they can both understand and articulate the concepts contained in the syllabus.

NEBOSH recommends to accredited course providers that candidates taking this qualification should reach a minimum standard of English equivalent to an International English Language Testing System score of 6.0 or higher in IELTS tests in order to be accepted onto a Certificate level programme.

For further information please see the latest version of the IELTS Handbook or consult the IELTS website: <https://www.ielts.org/about-the-test/test-format>

Candidates wishing to assess their own language expertise may consult the IELTS website for information on taking the test: <https://www.ielts.org>

Course providers are reminded that they must ensure that these standards are satisfied or additional tuition provided to ensure accessible and inclusive lifelong learning.

## Command words

Please note that the examples used here are for the purpose of explanation only.

### Outline

The command word 'outline' is by far the most challenging for candidates. Referring to the NEBOSH guidance on command words available on the NEBOSH website, 'outline' means *"To indicate the principal features or different parts of"*.

Many candidates do not give sufficient detail in order to warrant an 'outline' answer. The NEBOSH guidance on command word states that *"an exhaustive description is not required. What is sought is a brief summary of the major aspects of whatever is stated in the question"*.

If the use of the command word in everyday language or conversation is considered it may help the candidate understand what is required. If asked to '**outline** the risks to an operator when manually closing a valve' an answer such as 'cuts, bruises, burns and strains' would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, 'cuts from contact with sharp edges of the hand wheel, bruises from impact with adjacent plant items, burns from contact with adjacent uninsulated pipe work and strains from using excessive force' would be sufficient.

### Explain

The command word 'explain' requires the candidate to provide an understanding of the subject of the question and will usually be used in conjunction with 'why' or 'how'. Such as '**explain** how an interlocked guard operates' or '**explain** why a forklift truck may overturn'.

Some candidates approach an 'explain' question the same as an 'outline' and provide a number of individual points rather than providing an explanation as to how something operates or why something occurs. While some candidates do answer such questions sufficiently and satisfactorily, other candidates have difficulty in explaining in a logical sequence and many repeat the same point.

### Identify

'Identify' questions require the name or title of an item, such as, '**identify** the effects of electricity on the human body', or '**identify** the features of a vehicle route'. In most cases one or two words will be sufficient and further detail will not be required to gain the marks.

For example, if asked to '**identify** types of equipment found in an office' appropriate answers could be personal computer, printer, telephone, photocopier, etc. There would be no need to embellish those points with a description of the equipment or its function.

However, in contrast to 'outline' answers being too brief, many candidates feel obliged to expand 'identify' answers into too much detail, with the possible perception that more words equals more marks. This is not the case and course providers should use the NEBOSH guidance on command words within their examination preparation sessions in order to prepare candidates for the command words that may arise.

### Describe

The command word 'describe' clearly requires a description of something. The NEBOSH guidance on command words says that 'describe' requires a detailed written account of the distinctive features of a topic such that another person would be able to visualise what was being described.

If asked to describe the clock in the examination room, a person would have little difficulty in doing so and would most probably refer to its shape, its size, the colour of the clock and the style of numerals. Answers to such a question would almost certainly not result in general unconnected information about clocks, the history of clocks, or an explanation of why the clock is present in the room. Candidates should consider the general use of the command word when providing examination answers.

## **Give**

'Give' questions require a statement that is relevant to the subject asked for in the question but additional explanation is not required. Often, 'give' questions ask for the meaning of a particular term. While detailed explanation of the application of the term would not be required, a correct knowledge of the term itself is needed in order for the Examiner to award marks.

For additional guidance, please see NEBOSH's '*Guidance on command words used in learning outcomes and question papers*' document, which is available on our website: <https://www.nebosh.org.uk/i-am/a-student/> - from this page the document can be found by clicking on the relevant Qualification link, then on the 'Resources' tab.