

**March 2017**  
**Examiners' Report**  
NEBOSH International  
General Certificate in  
Occupational Health  
and Safety (GC2)



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# Examiners' Report

## UNIT GC2: CONTROLLING WORKPLACE HAZARDS

MARCH 2017

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For: **NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety**  
**NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety**

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# 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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## 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 standard date GC2 examination sat in March 2017.

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 National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' and 'Guide to the NEBOSH International General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' which are available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guides set out in detail the syllabus content for GC2 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 GC2 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

## Unit GC2

### Controlling workplace hazards

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<b>Question 1</b>	(a)	<b>Give</b> the meaning of the term ‘work-related upper limb disorder’ (WRULD).	<b>(2)</b>
	(b)	<b>Explain</b> why a checkout operator may be at risk of developing a WRULD.	<b>(8)</b>
	(c)	<b>Identify</b> ill-health effects that can be associated with WRULDs.	<b>(5)</b>
	(d)	<b>Outline</b> appropriate control measures that could help reduce the risk of WRULDs among checkout operators.	<b>(5)</b>

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.1: Explain work processes and practices that may give rise to work-related upper limb disorders and appropriate control measures.

In part (a) to this question, candidates were asked to give the meaning of the term ‘*work-related upper limb disorder*’, with answers expected to make reference to the region of the upper limbs, together with the recognition that this medical condition is caused, or made worse by work. Some candidates referred to the back and the legs: although these would be subject to MSD they cannot be included with the region of WRULD and did not gain marks. Although included in the term ‘*work-related upper limb disorders*’, several candidates did not make reference to the fact that WRULDs are caused, or made worse by work.

In part (b) of this question, the example of a checkout operator was given and candidates were asked why someone with this occupation may be at risk of developing a WRULD. Many candidates referred to repetitive tasks, poor posture, incorrect seating and infrequent breaks, gaining marks. However, such reasons are generic to many work tasks and it appeared that candidates were answering a question more related to display screen equipment, rather than a checkout operator. If candidates had visualised the task of a checkout operator then more marks would have been gained (eg by including reference to the force required in moving items).

In part (c) an identification of the ill-health effects that can be associated with WRULDs was required. Marks were available for reference to aches and pains in specific areas of the body covered by upper limbs, including fingers, arms, elbows, shoulders and neck. Answers could have included reference to soft tissue, muscles, etc. Such conditions can have other effects, such as tingling sensations or numbness, etc in the areas of the body covered by WRULDs. A number of candidates, rather than identifying health effects associated with WRULDs, gave medical conditions that could affect the upper limbs, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tenosynovitis and arthritis, which did not gain marks. Some candidates gave examples of medical conditions *not* associated with the upper limbs, such as manual handling injuries including hernias, prolapsed disc and sciatica, which again did not gain any marks.

In part (d) candidates could provide generic control measures that could help reduce the risk of WRULDs that would apply to any occupation, such as job rotation, etc, which would have gained some marks. However, only a few candidates applied the control measures that would reduce the risks of WRULD to the subject of checkout operators (eg self-checkout, remote scanners, etc) that would have gained additional marks.

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- Question 2** (a) **Outline** factors that should be considered to help ensure that a new item of work equipment is suitable for use. (5)
- (b) **Outline** control measures to help ensure that an item of work equipment remains in a suitable condition. (3)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.1: Outline general requirements for work equipment.

In part (a) of this question, candidates were asked to consider the suitability of a new item of work equipment. There are two aspects to consider: the first relates to the item of work equipment itself and the second relates to the requirements for ensuring new equipment is compliant. Most candidates could give one or two factors relating to the equipment. However, few candidates could add any further factors that related to the suitability of a new item of work equipment being compliant. Such answers could have included reference to the equipment being appropriately marked for the market in which it is being supplied (eg the CE mark for equipment supplied with the European Economic Area), for example.

Part (b) required an outline of control measures that would help ensure that an item of work equipment remains in a suitable condition. The majority of candidates gained at least 2 or 3 marks, predominately referring to inspection, maintenance and pre-user checks. Some candidates who referred to these points provided insufficient information for an 'outline' question.

- 
- Question 3** **Outline** precautions that should be taken in order to help reduce the risks to workers who work at sub-zero temperatures in cold stores. (8)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.1: Outline common health, welfare and work environment requirements in the workplace.

This was one of the better answered questions that seemed to be understood well by the majority of candidates. Answers included reference to warm clothing, taking frequent breaks and adequate levels of supervision. Many candidates gave answers that were more suited to other cold temperature situations as weather conditions were frequently included in answers. However, many of the precautions already referred to would have been applicable to indoor and outdoor activities where cold temperatures would have been present and as such marks were awarded.

Precautions when working in cold stores should also include the possibility of being locked in the cold store and exposure to refrigerant gas, for example, which very few candidates included in their answers.

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**Question 4** *A small quantity of paint is applied by brush to components in a workshop. The safety data sheet supplied with the paint indicates that it is both carcinogenic and an irritant. Workers have been observed regularly licking the tip of the paint brush during use and wiping excess paint from the components with their fingers.*

- (a) **Give** the meaning of the following terms:
- (i) *carcinogenic*; (2)
  - (ii) *irritant*. (2)
- (b) **Explain** why the observed method of working may increase the risk of ill-health. (2)
- (c) **Identify** ways in which the health of these workers can be monitored. (2)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 7.1: Outline the forms of, the classification of, and the health risks from exposure to, hazardous substances; 7.2: Explain the factors to be considered when undertaking an assessment of the health risks from substances commonly encountered in the workplace; and 7.4: Outline control measures that should be used to reduce the risk of ill-health from exposure to hazardous substances.

Understanding the harmful nature of substances and the possible routes of entry of the substance into the body are essential elements of an assessment of the exposure to hazardous substances. The scenario to this question gave examples of two hazard classifications of substances and indicated possible routes of entry during the work with the substance.

In part (a) candidates were required to give the meaning of the two hazard classifications, '*carcinogenic*' and '*irritant*'. However, this was not well answered and, aside from correctly stating that a carcinogenic substance can cause cancer, very few other marks could be awarded with candidates having more difficulty with the understanding of the term '*irritant*'. A number of candidates referred to an irritant substance as causing irritation, which would not be sufficient to gain the marks available.

Many candidates made no reference to the scenario in part (b) and gave generic answers only. Very few candidates gained full marks in this part of the question.

In part (c) of this question the majority of candidates did refer to health surveillance as a way in which the health of these workers could be monitored and a mark would have been awarded for this response. However, health surveillance is a generic term covering a number of techniques for monitoring the health of workers and candidates could not give specific examples of the type of health surveillance.

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**Question 5** *An extension has been added to the existing building of a nursing home.*

**Outline** factors that should be considered when reviewing the fire risk assessment for the nursing home. (8)

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This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 6.2: Outline the principles of fire risk assessment.

This question related to the need to review a fire risk assessment when a change in workplace circumstances would require it; specifically, the addition of an extension to an existing nursing home.

Many candidates outlined the content of a fire risk assessment or gave the stages of a fire risk assessment in their answer which was not asked for. Marks could not be awarded for such an approach to this question.

The addition of an extension to a nursing home will result in larger premises, potentially altered layout and additional residents. The review of the fire risk assessment should include identifying whether travel distances have changed, or escape times have increased and whether additional fire precautions are required, for example, as well as additional ignition sources and fuels, etc.

- 
- Question 6** *An industrial washing machine has been installed on to the concrete floor of a factory in order to clean the workers' work clothes. When the machine is in use, workers are exposed to excessive noise levels that are emitted from the machine.*
- (a) **Identify** possible effects on the health of the workers from long-term exposure to the noise. (4)
- (b) **Outline** practical measures that could be taken in order to help reduce the levels of noise to which the workers are exposed. (4)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 8.1: Outline the health effects associated with exposure to noise and appropriate control measures.

The scenario referred to a large washing machine that had high noise levels, yet a number of candidates included reference to compressors and power drills in their answers. This may have been due to candidates being familiar with other questions being included in their study materials. However, this would not have compromised the ability to gain marks in part (a) – health effects from long-term exposure to noise. The majority of candidates could identify deafness and stress, yet few candidates could accurately identify the clinical effects of long-term noise exposure such as temporary threshold shift.

In part (b), candidates were expected to give practical measures in order to reduce the noise levels to which the workers are exposed. Where a sufficient outline was provided, those candidates who followed a general hierarchy of controls would have gained the marks available. However, this was not always the case. Most candidates could provide examples of measures at either end of the general hierarchy, including outsourcing the washing of overalls. However, answers covering the technical aspects of noise reduction were less well answered, with the techniques of insulation, absorption and isolation not widely understood.

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- Question 7** *Outline precautions that should be included in a safe system of work on a 230v electrical circuit.* (8)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.2: Outline the control measures that should be taken when working with electrical systems or using electrical equipment in all workplace conditions.

Few candidates provided reasonable answers to this question, which may indicate a lack of preparation on electrical safety.

Those candidates who gained reasonable marks included in their answers that work on a 230v electrical circuit should be primarily carried out with the supply dead, isolated and proved dead, with no live working permitted unless there is no other option. Where live working may be justified (by risk assessment), then suitable precautions should be implemented that could include workplace issues such as suitable lighting and being accompanied by a second person, for example.

In this sitting it was very common to see answers include reference to residual current detectors (RCDs), double insulation and low voltage equipment. These are relevant to the safety of electrical hand tools, but not when working on an electrical circuit, and so would not gain marks. Candidates appear to be able to recall electrical safety features, but there appears to be limited understanding of their application or functionality.

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- Question 8**     *Substance misuse by workers can have a significant effect on health and safety.*
- (a)     **Identify** types of substances that could be misused by workers.     (2)
- (b)     **Outline** control measures that an employer could take in order to help reduce substance misuse in the workplace.     (6)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.3: Explain the effects of substance misuse on health and safety at work and control measures to reduce such risks.

A number of candidates took a narrow view of part (a) and limited their answers to chemical substances that may be found in a workplace. Due to this approach, many answers referred to classifications of substances (toxic, irritant, etc) and missed that the question related to substance misuse. Some candidates recognised the subject as substance misuse, but limited their answer to drugs and alcohol, which did not acknowledge that workplace substances, such as solvents, can also be misused. Reference to drugs alone was not sufficient to gain the marks as candidates would be expected to recognise that drugs can be obtained both illegally and legally.

Candidates who performed well in part (a) of this question usually gained reasonable marks in part (b) with reference to screening, disciplinary procedures, etc. Those candidates who misunderstood the first part of the question had difficulty with the second part, identifying safe working measures for the use, handling and storage of substances, for which marks could not be awarded.

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- Question 9**     *Employers are required to have arrangements in place to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery or to stop dangerous parts if a person enters a danger zone.*
- Describe** the principles of operation of:
- (a)     sensitive protective equipment (trip device);     (2)
- (b)     a two-handed control;     (2)
- (c)     an interlocked guard;     (2)
- (d)     a protective appliance.     (2)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.4: Explain the main control measures for reducing risk from machinery hazards.

In general, candidates had difficulty on this question.

Part (a) required a description of the principles of operation of sensitive protective equipment and also referred to the common term of 'trip device' in order to aid candidates understanding of this type of safety feature. However, many candidates focused solely on the term 'trip device' (without reference to the context of machinery safety) and provided answers relating to residual current detectors (RCDs) and fuses - neither of which were relevant to this question and marks were not available. Those few candidates who gave answers relating to 'sensitive protective equipment' were awarded marks.

In part (b) candidates were expected to understand that the principle of operation of a two-handed control device was that one operator must use both hands simultaneously in order to start and continuously use a machine, thus ensuring that the operator's hands cannot contact the machine while it is running. A number of candidates referred to a two-handed control device as a device for two persons to use together to make the work easier, for which no marks could be awarded.

Candidates gained better marks for part (c) recognising that an interlocked guard is linked somehow to the power supply of the machine.

Protective appliances in part (d) of this question would collectively include jigs, holders and pushsticks, or other types of appliances. The majority of candidates did not know the principles of operation of protective appliances and either did not attempt this part of the question or related to RCDs and fuses once more, which did not gain any marks.

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**Question 10** *Health surveillance has indicated that workers may have inhaled excessive quantities of wood dust over a long period of time.*

- (a) **Identify** health risks that may have been identified by the health surveillance. (2)
- (b) **Outline** ways in which excessive exposure to the wood dust could have been identified prior to the health surveillance. (6)
- 

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 7.4: Outline control measures that should be used to reduce the risk of ill-health from exposure to hazardous substances; and 7.5: Outline the hazards, risks and controls associated with specific agents.

The scenario given in this questions relates to long term exposure to excessive quantities of wood dust. In part (a) candidates were required to identify possible health risks from such exposure and those candidates who gave generic or vague answers, such as cancer or lung problems would not have gained marks. Answers needed to include specific health effects from exposure to specific substances.

Pro-active means of identifying a dust exposure problem is preferable to re-active means and part (b) of this question required candidates to outline ways that the dust problem could have been identified prior to the health surveillance. This part of the question was not well answered by a number of candidates who gave answers relating to risk assessment, safe systems of work or provided examples of dust reduction means, none of which were relevant to the question.

Candidates need to think practically about ways of identifying excessive dust levels in a workplace. Indicators such as visible dust in the atmosphere or settled dusts on surfaces would have gained available marks. Other means of identification such as checking the test results of ventilation systems would have been gained marks, but these issues were rarely included in candidates' answers.

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**Question 11** *Outline reasons why a forklift truck may overturn on a road.*

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**(8)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.1: Explain the hazards and control measures for the safe movement of vehicles in the workplace.

This question was answered reasonably well by the majority of candidates. Those candidates who thought of the issue of overturning of forklifts trucks in terms of the workplace, the vehicle and the work activity gave a sufficient breadth of answer (sufficient number of points raised) and together with a reasonable depth of answer (attention to command word) gained well above average marks.

However, a number of candidates limited their answer to little more than a list of issues and could not be awarded all of the marks as a result. Answers could have included reference to hitting roadside obstructions and excessive cornering speed, for example.

## 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: [http://www.ielts.org/institutions/test\\_format\\_and\\_results.aspx](http://www.ielts.org/institutions/test_format_and_results.aspx)

Candidates wishing to assess their own language expertise may consult the IELTS website for information on taking the test: <http://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

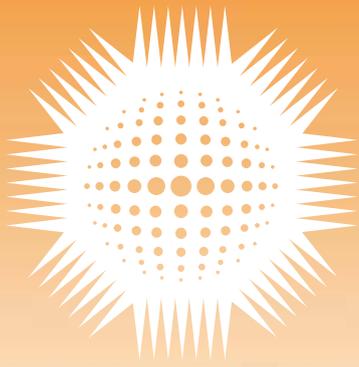
The command word 'describe' clearly requires a description of something. The NEBOSH guidance on command words says that 'describe' requires a detailed written account of the distinctive features of a topic such that another person would be able to visualise what was being described.

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: [www.nebosh.org.uk/students/default.asp?cref=1345&ct=2](http://www.nebosh.org.uk/students/default.asp?cref=1345&ct=2).



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