
Examiners' Report

NEBOSH INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

UNIT IC: INTERNATIONAL WORKPLACE AND WORK EQUIPMENT SAFETY

JANUARY 2018



CONTENTS

Introduction	2
General comments	3
Comments on individual questions	4
Examination technique	11
Command words	14

Introduction

NEBOSH (The National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health) was formed in 1979 as an independent examining board and awarding body with charitable status. We offer a comprehensive range of globally-recognised, vocationally-related qualifications designed to meet the health, safety, environmental and risk management needs of all places of work in both the private and public sectors.

Courses leading to NEBOSH qualifications attract around 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

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, which is an essential requirement at Diploma level.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on the standard date examination sitting in January 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 Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety' which is available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guide sets out in detail the syllabus content for Unit IC and tutor reference documents for each Element.

This Unit makes reference to a number of international statutory instruments (Directives, Conventions, Recommendations and Protocols). As part of the preparation for examination, it is highly recommended that candidates and course providers consult them.

Whilst legislative references are not specifically mentioned in the syllabus content it is helpful if candidates have an awareness of their own local laws and regulations, as these are likely to be underpinned by the international conventions referred to in the syllabus.

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 refer to the Unit IC 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

Unit IC

International workplace and work equipment safety

Question 1 An organisation provides an overnight security guard service.

The duties of the security guard include locking the building at night, patrolling the perimeter, conducting visual checks during the night and unlocking again in the morning.

- (a) **Explain** why the security guard is at greater risk of harm as a *lone worker* in these circumstances. (3)
- (b) **Outline** what the organisation could provide to minimise the *lone working* risks of the security guard. (7)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.5: Explain the hazards, risks and controls for lone working.

This question was based around an everyday scenario that candidates appeared to understand well. Part (a) covered the risks of lone working. The command word 'explain' requires candidates '*to provide an understanding. To make an idea or relationship clear*'. The expectation was that candidates would explain how lone workers were more likely to be at risk at work through for example, violence/physical attack; having no assistance in the event of a medical emergency; or in the event of an emergency not having someone to assist or to summon help. However, very few candidates were able to do this.

Part (b) was concerned with control measures. A number of candidates referred to providing guards with a 'buddy' but this did not address the scenario of lone working that was presented in the question.

Better answers would have included points such as high-reliability communication devices/adequate coverage of communication devices; procedure for booking on and off shift with base and so on.

The issue of providing security guards with guns and dogs were popular but incorrect responses.

This topic was popular with candidates. However, the candidates that excelled were those who focused on the specific scenario rather than providing a generic answer.

Question 2 A battery-powered lift truck is being used in a potentially flammable atmosphere.

- (a) **Outline** sources of ignition from the battery-powered lift truck. (4)
- (b) **Outline** the protection that should be applied to the battery-powered lift truck to help minimise the risk of an explosion. (6)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 2.1: Outline the properties of flammable and explosive materials and the mechanisms by which they ignite; and 2.3: Outline the main principles and practices of prevention and protection against fire and explosion.

Many candidates find Element 2 'Fire and Explosion' particularly challenging. Some candidates appeared to be 'question spotting' and attempted to provide answers to a question they were familiar with and not *this* question. The key information in the stem of the question was that the lift truck was a battery-powered one. Therefore, reference to diesel-powered features such as spark arrestors for exhaust systems were irrelevant.

The question was structured to help candidates think about ignition sources leading on to the control of explosion. In part (a) ignition sources included overheating motors; static build up, etc.

In part (b) protection of the drive motor in an explosion proof housing, use of electrically conducting materials for tyres to reduce static, speed limiters etc would have gained marks.

Some candidates concentrated on the hazards associated with battery charging such as loose connections when plugged in. Area classification was not considered by many candidates and few considered that the truck itself produced the flammable area while it was being operated.

A minority of candidates deviated from the battery-powered lift truck issues and focused on building protection.

Question 3 A contractor is working on an electrical distribution board and proposes to carry out live working.

Outline a safe system of work when working on the live electrical distribution board. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 8.3: Outline the issues relevant to the installation, use, inspection and maintenance of electrical systems.

Learning outcome 8.3 is one that many candidates find challenging. The key phrase in the question was to 'carry out live working' and consequently a great deal of time was wasted writing comprehensive answers based purely on isolation procedures.

Most candidates mentioned the use of a permit-to-work, but did not identify it as an 'authorisation permit'. Many answers correctly referred to insulated tools, and accompaniment of second trained person, for example. Almost all candidates recognised the need for competent workers and many included knowledge and experience in this concept.

Course providers and candidates are encouraged to spend more time and attention on this learning outcome when preparing for examinations.

Question 4 A dental surgery uses a small steam steriliser to disinfect dental instruments. The steriliser is labelled with a CE mark, and has a written record with it in the form of a logbook.

(a) **Outline** why the steriliser would be considered a pressure system. **(3)**

(b) **Outline** the purpose of the CE mark. **(2)**

(c) **Outline** what records need to be contained in the logbook. **(5)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 5.2: Explain how risks to health and safety arising from the use of work equipment are controlled; 5.5: Outline the maintenance, failure modes and prevention strategies when working with pressure systems; and 6.1: Outline the principles of safety integration and the considerations required in a general workplace machinery risk assessment.

This was a question based around the use of a steriliser (or autoclave). The intention was to present candidates with an everyday example of a small pressure system and to examine several learning outcomes across Elements 5 and 6.

Part (a) was well answered with most candidates understanding why a steriliser would constitute a pressure system. Most answers referred to the presence of steam, in a pressurised vessel with ancillary safety devices.

Candidates found part (b) challenging. Very few candidates referred to the free movement of the product throughout the EU. It was note-worthy that a number of candidates chose not to answer part (b) at all.

In part (c), very few candidates referred to a written scheme of examination or to periodic testing.

The key message for candidates and course providers is that 'pressure systems' remains on the 2015 syllabus and it is therefore an examinable subject.

The point to reinforce is that most workplaces contain pressure systems of one sort or another (hydraulic systems, lifts, presses, air conditioning units, refrigerators and so on). Pressure systems is therefore a topic relevant to practitioners studying this vocational qualification.

Question 5

An organisation uses a powered guillotine to trim paper to the correct size.

Outline control measures that can be taken to help minimise risk when operating the guillotine.

(10)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 6.2: Outline the principal generic mechanical and non-mechanical hazards of general workplace machinery; and 6.3: Outline the main types of protective devices found on general workplace machinery.

Learning outcome 6.2 is very broad in its requirements. It concerns:

*“Common machinery hazards in a range of general workplaces: drills (radial arm, pedestal), circular saws, **guillotines** <our emphasis>, disc sanders, abrasive wheels, lathes, automatic doors and gates, mechanical and hydraulic presses, portable power tools, CNC machines, robotics.”*

From the candidates' answers, very few had any insight into the operation of guillotines. In consequence, most answers were generic and not tailored to the safe operation of guillotines. The point to convey to both candidates and course providers, is that a programme of study for this qualification should include some consideration of the types of machinery listed in the syllabus.

Most candidates recognised the need for competent operators and maintenance personnel. A minority could outline guarding concepts (eg fixed), and their differing application to a guillotine. Most candidates mentioned sweep arms and the provision of an emergency stop button within operator reach.

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- Question 6** A fire protection contractor has recommended the provision of portable water and carbon dioxide fire extinguishers to be placed in a multi-storey office block.
- (a) **Identify** the class of fire that the *water* extinguisher is designed for **AND give** an example of a material that is included in this class. (2)
- (b) **Outline** advantages of a *carbon dioxide* extinguisher. (2)
- (c) **Outline** factors to be considered in siting the extinguishers. (6)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 3.3: Describe the factors to be considered when selecting fixed and portable fire-fighting for the various types of fire.

Part (a) was a highly structured and specific question that required candidates to identify the class of fire and to give an example of the material in the class. Most candidates appreciated the requirement to complete both elements and successfully gave Class A together with an example.

Part (b) was generally well answered, although some candidates gave too much detail about the mode of operation of the extinguisher. For example stating "no need to shake before use". Better answers referred to carbon dioxide causing less or little damage when used.

For part (c) most candidates concentrated on just a few of the considerations and missed the thrust of the question, which concerns a multi-story office block. Without considering this, candidates were unable to obtain the marks that were available for points such as extinguishers should be in the same place on each floor and that all extinguishers should have the same type with the same method of operation.

Reading and re-reading the question and **tailoring general principles to the specific situation** is necessary for this qualification.

- Question 7** A container port handles a wide range of ships' cargo including dangerous substances that are flammable, explosive and toxic.
- Outline** the *on-site* organisational arrangements that the Port Authorities need to make to prepare for an emergency. (20)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 4.4: Explain the need for emergency planning and the typical organisational arrangements needed for emergencies.

This was a popular and optional question on Section B. However, candidates had difficulty with this question. The content of the syllabus listed under learning outcome 4.4 refers to:

"The need for emergency preparedness within an organisation with reference to ILO Convention C174 Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents (1993) and the ILO Code on the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents (1991)."

The requirements laid out in the ILO Code of Practice (CoP) and its contents appeared to be unfamiliar to candidates. Candidates and course providers should direct their attention to 'Section 8: Emergency Planning' in the CoP.

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- Question 8** An airport has an automated baggage handling system. A part of the system is a series of large vertical storage racks, where baggage is placed on to trays. These trays are then put on and taken off the racking by baggage handling robots.
- (a) (i) **Identify FOUR** principles of safety integration. (4)
- (ii) **Outline** how principles of safety integration could apply to the robots. (4)
- (b) **Outline** key features for the baggage handling robots to operate safely. (12)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 6.1: Outline the principles of safety integration and the considerations required in a general workplace machinery risk assessment; and 6.5: Explain the key safety characteristics of general workplace machinery control systems.

This was a particularly challenging topic for candidates. The 'Principles of Safety Integration' are given in full in the syllabus and while not specifically referenced, they are identical to those listed in 'Annex I: Essential Health and Safety Requirements Relating to the Design and Construction of Machinery' of the European Machinery Directive.

The command word was 'identify' so in part (a), simple statements that the design considers normal and foreseeable misuse, instructions consider normal and foreseeable misuse, etc gained marks.

Part (b) required candidates to take the general principles and to apply them to robotics. In relation to constructed to being fit for purpose, answers could have included that the robot was strong and stable, for example.

Part (c) gave candidates the opportunity to outline how baggage handling robots could be operated safely.

It appeared that the word 'robotics' put candidates off this question. Candidates and course providers are reminded that robotic safety is specifically included in learning outcome 6.2.

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- Question 9**
- (a) **Outline** conditions that must be present for a primary dust explosion to occur. (5)
- (b) **Outline** additional conditions necessary for secondary explosions to occur. (5)
- (c) **Outline** design features that would minimise the likelihood and effect of a dust explosion. (10)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 2.1: Outline the properties of flammable and explosive materials and the mechanisms by which they ignite; and 2.3: Outline the main principles and practices of prevention and protection against fire and explosion.

This was a very popular question within Section B and was selected by most candidates.

Part (a) was generally very well answered but a few candidates confused dust cloud with vapour cloud. Those gaining full marks usually began their answer with the dust explosion pentagon. Many candidates referred to dust as flammable and not combustible and went on to discuss flammable limits. Better answers stayed focused on combustible material with detail of dust particle size.

Part (b) was less well answered as candidates were rarely able to relate the secondary explosion to the primary explosion. The difficulty appeared to be the ignition source of the secondary explosion with very few candidates relating this to combustion of products of the primary explosion. Some candidates went on to discuss drifting of dust clouds off-site to external sources of ignition, again confusing dust and vapour.

There were some excellent answers based on turbulence and airborne suspension of particles.

Part (c) presented some very exact answers with candidates often gaining good marks. These answers were focused on design and included sloping surfaces, suppression systems, dust tight ducting and designs to withstand explosion.

Less successful answers focused on *processes* including cleaning, general housekeeping, fire-fighting, evacuation and training - which are not design related.

Question 10 Construction work is due to take place to repair the footpath of a single carriageway road. The road is near to a busy school in a residential area. Trucks and buses use the road occasionally.

Outline control measures that should be put in place to help ensure the safety of *members of the public*.

(20)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 9.2: Outline the principal duties and specific responsibilities for the effective management of health and safety on construction sites; and 10.1: Outline the factors to be considered in a workplace transport risk assessment and the controls available for managing workplace transport risk.

This was a popular question. However, many candidates pictured a construction site not a public highway and answered accordingly. Pre-notification to the school and surrounding residents was considered by many but they did not describe the methods of this notification.

Candidates needed to appreciate that the question asked for control measures to ensure the safety of *members of the public* and not construction workers.

Some answers digressed onto control measures for work at height, confined space entry, control of substances and gas monitoring which is inappropriate for working on a pavement. Others included measures to protect the workforce such as hi-vis jackets.

Mistaken answers included training the children and providing them with PPE and dust masks when they enter the construction areas.

Those candidates who had difficulty concentrated on traffic movements rather than residents and pedestrians, etc and digressed into detailed responses concerning conducting risk assessments and writing method statements.

It is an obvious but important point that the context of the question is reflected in the mark scheme. To do well, answers need to be employing general concepts and applying them to the *specific scenario* given in the question.

Question 11 A truck-mounted crane delivers bulk materials to a construction site. The materials are stored in flexible one-tonne bags. The crane is operated from the ground with a pendant controller.

Outline control measures for safe delivery of bulk materials using this crane.

(20)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 7.2: Outline the main hazards and control measures associated with lifting equipment; and 10.1: Outline the factors to be considered in a workplace transport risk assessment and the controls available for managing workplace transport risk.

It has been noted that candidates tend not to prefer long questions where there is an open-ended question, preferring instead those that are broken down into steps. Nevertheless, this was a popular choice for this sitting.

Better answers focused on the safe delivery of the bulk materials in line with the scenario given. This included reference in context to safe working load, centre of gravity, accessories and the lifting environment all contained within a risk assessment.

Candidates went on to outline the details of competency required, banksman and pendant operator communication, and controls over the load itself.

Limited answers focused on the site, often commencing with signing in, induction, fatigued driver, tachograph, vehicle maintenance, rest periods and permit-to-work. It appears that some candidates focused, incorrectly, on 'construction' and 'truck' with little attention to the actual scenario.

The importance of reading and re-reading the question carefully and providing answers that are in context with the question as *given*, cannot be over-emphasised.

Examination technique

The following examination techniques are consistently identified as the main areas in need of improvement for candidates:

Candidates misread/misinterpreted the question

Careful and thorough preparation for the examination is vital for candidates. Accredited course providers should assist candidates in setting out and applying sound revision and examination practice and preparation techniques to ensure that they are well prepared for the examination. This includes ensuring that candidates carefully read the question to determine exactly what is being asked and answer accordingly.

Examiners noted that there was evidence of candidates not understanding the question that was asked and therefore providing an answer that was not relevant to the question.

The range of English language skills demonstrated in the examination by candidates varies enormously. Examiners often find themselves faced with scripts where candidates do not appear to have understood the question and struggle to write a coherent answer in English. Candidates for this examination should satisfy the required IELTS Level 7 language requirements. Course providers are reminded that it is incumbent on them to provide appropriate advice and guidance to candidates to help ensure that they stand a reasonable chance of success in the study of the NEBOSH Diploma.

There were numerous examples of quite long, detailed answers that suggest practical experience but do not focus on the question being asked. This may be a result of candidates either not reading the question properly, or because of possible language issues where candidates do not understand what the question is asking.

The examination is assessing candidates on their understanding of 'managing' health and safety and a number of candidates did not seem to grasp this resulting in long, detailed answers on such issues as 'what to look for in an audit' rather than how to prepare for and manage an audit.

Examiners ask questions based on the syllabus. Points, no matter how valid, but unrelated to the question being asked, will not attract any marks. Candidates should note that where there is emphasis in a question (eg by the use of italics), it is to guide candidates towards a particular point. This emphasis guides candidates towards the points that Examiners are specifically looking for in an answer. Reading and re-reading the question helps candidates to comprehend any emphasis being given in the question.

Candidates' handwriting was illegible

The examination situation is a stressful time for candidates and while the examination is not a test of the English language or handwriting, scripts must be legible for Examiners to mark them fairly. As the examination progresses, candidates can become both mentally and physically tired. In an increasingly electronic age, professional people do not have the same need to write text in longhand. However, to pass this examination it is an essential and necessary part of the preparation to rehearse writing questions in full and in the time allocated.

When practicing examination technique, candidates should hand-write their answers and get feedback from their course providers on legibility (as well as how they performed).

Course providers need to identify those candidates whose handwriting is illegible and provide them with appropriate advice. Examiners cannot award marks for answers that they are unable to read.

Candidates unnecessarily wrote the question down

There are 15 minutes to answer a 10-mark question in Section A and 30 minutes available to answer a 20-mark question in Section B of the question paper. This time will be required for reading, re-reading and understanding the question, developing an answer plan on the answer booklet and finally committing the answer to the answer booklet. The efficient use of time is essential in order to answer the 9 questions within the 3 hours available. Examiners reported that candidates felt it necessary to write the question out in full, before providing the associated answer, and this limits the time available.

Course providers should remind candidates that it is not necessary to include a question with their answer.

Good examination technique is followed where the candidate frames the answer in the context of the question, rather than rewriting the whole of the question. As with the other examination technique points above, good examination technique is developed through practice and good preparation.

Candidates repeated the same point but in different ways

In some cases, candidates tended to make the same point more than once, eg training. Once a valid point has been made and the mark awarded Examiners will not be able to award the mark again. Unless otherwise stated, most questions require candidates to respond with a wide range of issues to gain high marks. Consequently, candidates should take care when using terms that contain numerous points that should be made separately.

Accredited course providers should brief candidates on examination technique by way of understanding what points are mark worthy in an answer and those that are not.

Candidates did not respond effectively to the command word

A key indicator in an examination 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.

Generally, there has been an improvement in response to command words, but some candidates continue to produce answers that are little more than a list even when the command word requires a more detailed level of response, such as 'outline' or 'explain'. This is specifically addressed in the following section dealing with command words, most commonly failure to provide sufficient content to constitute an 'outline' was noted. Failure to respond to the relevant command word in context was also a frequent problem hence information inappropriate to the question was often given.

Course exercises should guide candidates to assessing the relevant points in any given scenario such that they can apply the relevant syllabus elements within the command word remit.

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

Examiners report a high incidence of candidates writing down answers they have memorised from previous Examiners' Reports. These answers often relate to a similar, but different question, to which the memorised answer is not wholly applicable. For example, it may require a different aspect of the topic or relate to a different scenario.

Candidates are expected to apply their knowledge and understanding to the actual question given, not the question they think they see. For this reason, it is extremely important that candidates understand and are able to apply their knowledge, and not just memorise. Course providers should help candidates apply their knowledge to a range of different scenarios to aid understanding of the topic.

Candidates did not allocate enough time to the question

Some candidates were unable to give answers of sufficient depth to warrant good marks and sometimes spent more time on questions carrying fewer marks than was warranted by the command word.

Candidates need to take note of the fact that answers in Section A are worth 10 marks and those in Section B are worth 20 marks. The Examiners' expectation is that more detailed answers are required in Section B. Some candidates spend a disproportionate amount of time in writing long answers to Section A questions at the expense of time spent on the more in-depth answers demanded in Section B. Proper preparation and 'mock' examinations can help to correct this.

Accredited course providers should ensure that candidates are given adequate opportunity to develop examination skills to ensure that answers are provided to the depth and breadth required.

Structured Answers

It is important for candidates to structure their answers as this helps cover all the requirements of the question without losing focus. It is good examination technique to look for the principles or the concepts that underpin the topic and to use those as a basis for delivering a structured answer.

Candidates answered by posing a question

Candidates need to resist the temptation to present their answers as merely a series of questions. 'Outline' requires candidates *'To indicate the principal features or different parts of'* and this is not done through posing questions to the Examiners.

Command words

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

The following command words are listed in the order identified as being the most challenging for candidates:

Outline

Outline: To indicate the principal features or different parts of.

Most candidates are familiar with the requirements of 'outline'. However, a number of candidates expect that by listing or giving bullet points that will be sufficient. At this level of qualification candidates are expected to be able to construct sentences around their answers.

An 'outline' question requires candidates to give the main issue and then provide the key features in the context of the question. Where a question that requires candidates to '**outline** the issues to be addressed in the development of an audit system' the response should provide adequate context to the issues in order to gain the marks. An answer that merely includes issues such as 'scope, training, commitment, etc' will not gain good marks since while the issues are relevant there is no context to the issues in relation to the question asked.

Candidates should provide context to the point being made to demonstrate understanding of the subject.

As required by a Diploma level qualification candidates should be able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the subject matter and therefore be able to summarise and contextualise technical points in the field of health and safety. Those candidates who did provide good outlines to questions demonstrated understanding of the topic without going into too much detail.

If asked to '**outline** the purpose of local exhaust ventilation' in a given scenario, an answer such as 'contaminant removal, exposure limits' would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, removal of contaminant at source (as far as possible) and ensuring exposure limits are not exceeded would higher gain marks.

If asked to '**outline** how health risks from exposure to lead should be managed...' in a given scenario, an answer such as medical tests, PPE, RPE would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, surveillance tests for lead in blood/urine, the use of PPE such as overalls, the use of RPE such as respirator with appropriate particulate/fume filters would gain marks.

Explain

Explain: To provide an understanding. To make an idea or relationship clear.

Many candidates are still not properly prepared for this command word. A list of points (no matter how relevant) will not satisfy Examiners when the command word is 'explain'. So for example, where candidates were asked to explain the circumstances where heat and smoke detectors would be inappropriate, Examiners were looking for candidates to explain that heat detectors would be inappropriate in environments where temperatures fluctuate suddenly during normal work activities. Just saying 'workshops', for example, is not enough to provide an answer to an 'explain' question.

Commonly, candidates do not provide adequate detail in relation to this command word, eg '**explain** limitations of relying on accident numbers only as a measure of health and safety performance'. An appropriate response would provide the reader with reasons why relying solely on accident numbers would not provide a comprehensive view of the organisational performance in health and safety, eg accident numbers do not indicate incidence of ill-health and accident data may go up following initiatives following underreporting, etc.

Candidates are generally unable to provide clear answers where this command word is used but that may be due to lack of knowledge rather than not understanding what is required, since an explanation requires the candidate to provide reasoning for their answer. For example, when a question specifies 'explain' the candidate is required to provide an understanding or make clear an idea or relationship. For example '**explain** how malaria is transmitted to humans'. If a candidate responded with *mosquito bites humans* this would be insufficient to merit full marks as this does not provide a deep enough understanding or relationship from the specified command word or the context in which the question is asked. However, a candidate would get full marks if they elaborated on this stating that the disease originates with the plasmodium parasite that is then transmitted to humans via a bite from a feeding female mosquito that carries it; the parasite then transferring to the human blood stream, travelling to the liver.

Describe

'Describe. To give a detailed written account of the distinctive features of a subject. The account should be factual without any attempt to explain.'

Candidates are required to provide a word picture in response to this command word and therefore the candidate needs to have a good understanding of the subject of the question in the examination in order to gain good marks. Typically, a limited response to this command word will be an inadequate amount of detail in the answer.

For example, when asked to describe the contents of a safety policy candidates should provide the Examiner with relevant information about the contents of the policy, eg 'the policy should contain details of the organisational commitment to health and safety'. This would be supported with specific targets and commitment resource to ensuring compliance as a minimum but developing the health and wellbeing of the employees, etc'. An answer that goes no further than listing the subjects of to be covered in the policy would not attract good marks in the examination.

In the examination, lists and single word answers will rarely satisfy the requirement of the Examiners in terms of answering the question at this level. It is noticeable that the well prepared candidate has less trouble deciphering command words and tends to gain good marks whereas those candidates who use single word answers will tend not to have the knowledge to write anything further in the context that is required.

Give

Give: Only a short answer is required, not an explanation or a description.

'Give' is normally used in conjunction with a further requirement, such as '**give** the meaning of' or '**give** an example in **EACH** case'.

In some circumstances candidates may spend too much time giving unrequired detail in response to this command word. It is often used in conjunction with the meaning of a phrase or statement and candidates can over-elaborate the required answer. Time management is important in the examination and candidates should ensure that they respond with appropriate brevity where the command word and available marks suggest that is all that is required.

When asked to '**give** the meaning of motivation', it would appropriate to say that 'motivation is the driving force that leads an individual to behave in a certain way'. It would not be appropriate to discuss in detail different motivational theories.

On the whole most candidates respond well to this command word, often by offering a definition. There is evidence where candidates go into too much detail that left those candidates writing large amounts of text for very few marks.

Identify

Identify: To give a reference to an item, which could be its name or title.

As with 'give' above it is not uncommon for candidates to over-elaborate their answers in response to this command word. It is adequate for a candidate to provide the key point to the Examiner without further developing the point with supporting theory or examples unless they are specifically asked for.

When providing a response to 'identify' the mental selection and naming of an answer that relates to the question should be sufficient. In most cases, one or two words would be sufficient to be awarded corresponding marks. Any further detail would not be required and impacts negatively on the time limit for completing the examination. For example, if the question was '**identify** possible effects on the body when someone is exposed to lead' suitable responses would include developmental effects in unborn babies, anaemia, nausea/vomiting in order to be awarded a mark.

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.