
Examiners' Report

NEBOSH INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

UNIT IC: INTERNATIONAL WORKPLACE AND WORK EQUIPMENT SAFETY

JULY 2017



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Introduction

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

Courses leading to NEBOSH qualifications attract around 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 July 2017. This report covers both 2011 and 2015 specifications.

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.

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 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**
- (a) **Outline** *structural features* that protect a building from the spread of fire. (8)
- (b) **Outline** the behaviour of plastics in the event of a fire. (2)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 2.2: Outline the behaviour of structural materials, buildings and building contents in a fire; and 2.3: Outline the main principles and practices of prevention and protection against fire and explosion (Outline the main principles and practices of fire and explosion prevention and protection, in the 2011 specification).

Although the word 'structural' was italicised in part (a), the majority of candidates missed or misread the word and therefore proceeded to offer lengthy outlines about fire suppression, portable fire extinguishers and means of escape. While correct, these were not worthy of marks as they did not answer the question. Candidates' attention is drawn to the general advice regarding misreading and misinterpreting the question later in this report.

A number of candidates appear to question-spot and answer a different question on the behaviour of wood, steel and concrete in the event of a fire.

Those candidates who gained any marks were awarded them for mentioning compartmentation and protection of doors, corridors, steelwork and walls.

In part (b) answers consisted predominantly of lists. This limited the marks that could be awarded given that the command word for the question was 'outline'. Most candidates stated that plastics melt; although there was variation on the temperatures at which candidates believed that melting would occur.

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- Question 2**
- A lone worker is using a pallet truck to move pallets of frozen food products in a low temperature store. The temperature of the store is controlled at -5° Celsius.
- Outline** control measures to help the worker escape if they are accidentally locked into this low temperature store. (10)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 1.5: Explain the hazards, risks and controls for lone working; equivalent to 1.6 in the 2011 specification.

This was a challenging question for many candidates. Some did not seem to understand what a low temperature store room was. The key to answering this question was to outline the measures required to assist in the person escaping from the store room. Instead, many candidates included peripheral items such as medical fitness checks and personal protective equipment.

Control measures such as emergency lighting, adequate emergency exits and signs, specific instructions as to how to escape being issued to workers would all have gained marks. Few candidates identified the need for maintenance of exit doors and alarm systems and none identified the use of door strip heaters supplied for emergency doors.

Question 3

Large diameter concrete water pipes are being installed in a trench 2.5 metres deep during excavation works. Temporary shoring is provided by the use of drag boxes.

- (a) **Outline** workplace control measures that are necessary when drag boxes are used to provide temporary shoring. (4)
- (b) *Other than* temporary shoring, **explain** workplace control measures that could help reduce the risk of collapse of the trench. (6)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 5.1: Outline the criteria for the selection of suitable work equipment for particular tasks and processes to eliminate or reduce risks; and 9.6: Explain the hazards and control measures associated with construction work (equivalent to 9.5: Explain the hazards associated with construction work and the necessary precautions and safe working practices, in the 2011 specification).

This question guided candidates to the equipment used in temporary shoring. The 2015 syllabus leaning outcome 9.5 specifically refers to the hazards and controls associated with excavation including 'temporary shoring (drag boxes, piling)'.

In part (a) many of the candidates attempting this question did not appear to understand drag boxes and how they are used for temporary shoring. They only considered general trench work and the associated safe working. To be effective, drag boxes must be suitably constructed, of suitable size, mechanically sound and of adequate strength, etc.

There appeared to be some confusion in part (b) in reading the question, where some candidates gave answers to part (a) in part (b). This confusion possibly arose because they are asked about control measures in both parts, but part (a) asks for control measures when using drag boxes for temporary shoring, and part (b) asks for control measures in trench work *other than* temporary shoring. Candidates are again reminded to read and re-read questions carefully and take a special note of italicised or emboldened words.

Techniques to avoid collapse seem to be unfamiliar to many candidates. Benching in certain soils is often used and avoidance of moving or vibrating equipment in the vicinity.

Many responses cited *general* workplace controls for entering confined spaces and protecting workers from cable strikes (among others). These were not required. Candidates needed to provide answers relevant to the question asked.

Question 4 Mobile telescopic lighting towers are to be used on a busy highway to illuminate roadworks. The towers extend to a height of 9 metres.

22kV electrical power cables cross the highway and are as low as 7.5 metres above ground in some places.

- (a) **Outline** specific training requirements for workers who are required to move telescopic lighting towers in the vicinity of the live overhead cables. (3)
- (b) *Other than* training, **outline** control measures that should be considered when moving telescopic lighting towers in the vicinity of the live overhead cables. (7)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 8.4: Outline the main principles for safe working in the vicinity of high voltage systems (equivalent to 5.4: Explain the role of competence, training, information and supervision in the control of risks arising from the installation, operation, maintenance and use of work equipment, in the 2011 specification).

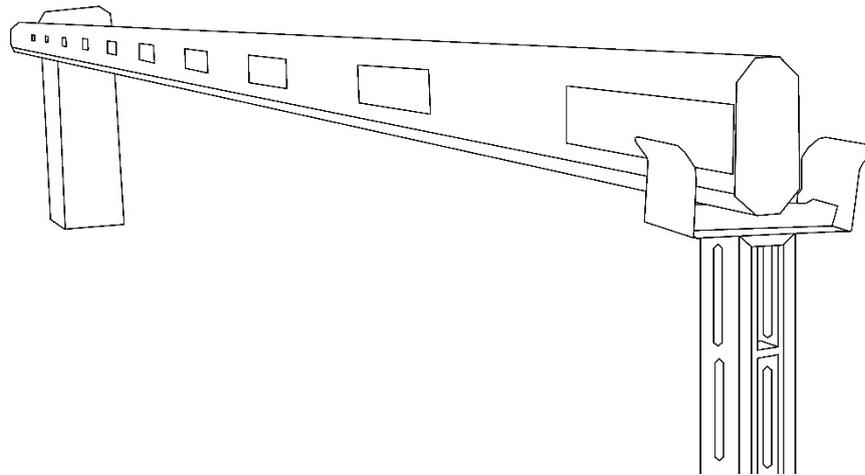
This question assessed two complementary parts of the syllabus. The first part asked for specific training requirements around moving telescopic lighting towers near to live overhead cables, for three marks. The second was control measures *other than* training, for seven marks. Many candidates did not appreciate that these were not equally marked and spent the same amount of time answering each.

Many answers to part (a) concentrated on general issues rather than focusing on the specific requirements within the scenario. Specifying training in the operation of lighting towers would have gained marks.

In part (b) most candidates correctly outlined barriers, fences and goal posts. Some candidates proposed isolating or removing the overhead cables, or simply eliminating the work rather than concentrating on valid control measures. Very few candidates mentioned other factors such as needing an increased safety distance in bad weather conditions.

Candidates need to be aware that citing general control measures such as 'permit-to-work' and 'safe systems of work' without context does not gain marks in these practical questions.

Question 5 Car park entry and exit is controlled by an automatic barrier of the rising arm type shown below.



The barrier has a control system with sensors, actuators and electronic controllers. Maintenance is occasionally required due to vehicle impact or storm damage.

- (a) **Outline** mechanical hazards associated with automatic rising arm barriers. (4)
- (b) **Outline** control measures that should be considered to help reduce risk before starting any maintenance activity on the barrier. (6)
-

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 (Describe, with examples, the principal generic mechanical and non-mechanical hazards of general workplace machinery, in the 2011 specification); 6.5: Explain the key safety characteristics of general workplace machinery control systems (equivalent to 6.6: Explain the key safety characteristics of general workplace machinery control systems, in the 2011 specification); and 6.4: Explain the principles of control associated with the maintenance of general workplace machinery.

Candidates and course providers need to note that the syllabus specifically refers to 'doors and gates' in relation to general workplace machinery. For clarity, a sketch was provided with this question.

Part (a) of this question clearly asked for the *mechanical* hazards associated with automatic rising arm barriers. The command word was 'outline'. Many candidates missed those two clear pieces of guidance in the question and in consequence did not gain good marks – typically listing non-mechanical as well as mechanical hazards.

In part (b) some candidates did not focus on the maintenance aspects of the question, preferring to consider control measures while the barrier was in normal operation.

Correct mechanical and electrical isolation and release of any stored energy were outlined by most candidates. Fewer candidates considered provision of safe access/platforms for replacing/releasing the existing barrier components.

Question 6 **Outline** what should be considered when developing a planned preventive maintenance programme for safety-critical machinery. **(10)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 5.3: Explain safe working procedures for the maintenance, inspection and testing of work equipment according to the risks posed.

Most candidates correctly outlined manufacturers' recommendations and legal/regulatory requirements. However, candidates missed out key issues such as failure rates, the need to have an inventory/asset and reliability/diagnostic methods for predicting breakdowns.

A number of candidates tried to answer by asking questions such as 'how old is the machinery?'. This does not fulfil the command word used in the question of 'outline'. For more information, see the Examination technique section later in this report.

Question 7 Vehicles are repaired for the public in a motor vehicle repair workshop. The process involves mechanical repair, preparation, spray painting and curing. The workshop is situated in a single-storey building with only one means of escape.

Following a serious fire, the organisation needs to review the fire prevention and fire protection measures in the workshop.

(a) **Outline** what should be considered when assessing the adequacy of the existing *means of escape*. **(12)**

(b) **Outline** what should be considered when assessing the adequacy of the existing *fire detection and alarm systems*. **(8)**

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 3.3: Outline the factors to be considered when selecting fixed and portable fire-fighting equipment for the various types of fire; and 3.4: Outline the factors to be considered in providing and maintaining the means of escape (Outline the factors to be considered in the provision and maintenance of means of escape, in the 2011 specification).

Candidates had difficulty in providing answers that were in context with and relevant to the scenario. For example, some candidates suggested that lifts should not be used, despite the question explicitly referred to a one-storey building. This was also illustrated by the length of some responses to the question; half page answers for a 20-mark question cannot achieve full marks. Providing answers that were in the context of the specific scenario outlined in the question proved to be the most successful strategy.

Part (a) was generally well answered, with candidates referring to the vehicle workshop, welding, flammables and vehicles. The challenging part was the application of generic matters concerning means of escape. Candidates included high rise accommodation, use of staircases and multiple fire exits. However, these were not part of the scenario.

Candidates had difficulty in part (b) with how to assess the adequacy of the fire detection/protection systems. An understanding was required of matters such as the number of call points, having detectors appropriate to the environments, separation distances, age and standard of the existing system, etc.

Some candidates wrote in great detail about the different types of fire detectors, perhaps influenced by rote-learned questions on that topic.

Question 8 Following a number of driving at work incidents, an organisation decides to implement driver assessment and training.

- (a) **Outline** what may help determine which workers need training. (8)
- (b) **Outline** contents of a typical driver training programme. (12)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 10.2: Outline the role and purpose of a work-related road risk policy and the key components of a work-related road traffic safety management system (Outline the factors associated with driving at work that increase the risk of an incident and the control measures to reduce work-related driving risks, in the 2011 specification).

This was a popular question, perhaps due to the perception that the subject is common-sense. However, the syllabus requirements are more systematic and demanding than just common-sense. For this reason, and although many candidates attempted it, few could provide the detailed answers that would gain more than half marks.

Many candidates did not consider driving outside the confines of a work site and included forklift trucks and other plant vehicles, such as telehandlers and JCB driving, on their worksite. There was a tendency to focus on site operations rather than driving on public roads for work.

Candidates should be familiar with the syllabus and as such learning outcome 10.2. Had they recognised this it would have helped to confirm that the topic concerned road risk/driving.

In part (a) aggravating factors that might lead to an increased risk such as high annual mileage driven, a history of damage reports, following an incident and following a compliant, would all have gained marks.

Part (b) did not ask for a list of do's and do not's about control measures. Contents of a driver training programme might include incident reporting, emergency contacts lists, insurance requirements, fatigue management, use of in-car communications, and daily checks, etc.

Again, candidates were limited in their answers if they stayed with a workplace environment.

Question 9 A road tanker is to be filled with petroleum (gasoline) at an installation.

- (a) **Identify** hazards associated with this operation. (4)
- (b) **Outline** how a vapour cloud explosion could be generated in this situation. (8)
- (c) **Outline** control measures that could reduce risks with road tanker filling. (8)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 2.1: Outline the properties of flammable and explosive materials and the mechanisms by which they ignite; and 4.2: Outline the main principles of the safe storage, handling and transport of dangerous substances.

This was a popular question that was generally well answered and seemed to be especially popular with candidates who appeared to have an oil/gas background.

Most candidates were awarded maximum marks in part (a), with hazards of overfilling and vehicles movement being common answers.

In part (b), marks were awarded for details of the confined and unconfined vapour-cloud explosion (UCVE). Sometimes it was not clear whether candidates understood minimum ignition energy or the concentration had to be between the explosive limits, as they repeated the same information in different ways. Some correctly outlined that a UCVE could travel long distances before being ignited.

Part (c) was better answered with many candidates outlining controls to reduce the risks. Answers included having pumps and hoses suitable for purpose, overfill protection, specified entry and exit routes or tankers, correct tanker positioning and so on.

Question 10	(a)	Outline the causes of instability in a forklift truck (FLT).	(8)
	(b)	Outline the content of a training programme for FLT drivers who are to operate a variety of forklift trucks.	(9)
	(c)	Identify THREE situations in which refresher training for FLT drivers would be appropriate.	(3)

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcome 7.1: Outline the main hazards and control measures associated with mobile work equipment (Describe the main hazards and control measures associated with commonly encountered mobile work equipment, in the 2011 specification).

This was a popular question and as learning outcome 7.1 states, covers both the *hazards* and *controls* of mobile work equipment.

Most candidates gained very good marks in part (a) where they correctly outlined the causes of lateral and longitudinal instability. Part (b) was more challenging although some candidates did outline Basic, Specific and Familiarisation with added content to show what is included at each stage.

Less successful answers stated the titles with very little content for an 'outline' and so missed out on available marks.

Part (c) was well answered with candidates identifying policy as a common answer. Other answers connected with added drug or alcohol-related offences did not attract any marks.

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- Question 11** A steam boiler is a type of pressure system used in industry where loss of containment can occur through mechanical failures such as overheating, creep and hydrogen embrittlement.
- (a) **Outline** why a steam boiler is classified as a pressure system. (3)
- (b) **Identify THREE additional** examples of mechanical failure to which a steam boiler is susceptible **AND**, in **EACH** case, **outline** the mechanism of the identified mechanical failure. (9)
- (c) **Outline** the content of a written scheme of examination form for the boiler. (8)
-

This question assessed candidates' knowledge and understanding of learning outcomes 5.5: Outline the maintenance, failure modes and prevention strategies when working with pressure systems; and in the 2011 specification, 11.3: Outline the key features and safety requirements for process pressure systems; and 11.4: Outline the likely causes of the failure of pressure systems, and the testing and prevention strategies that can be used.

There have been significant changes in the syllabus around this topic. The common areas relate to failure of pressure systems and the maintenance of pressure systems.

This was an unpopular question.

For part (a), a structured answer would have outlined that a steam boiler has a boiler drum, relief valves, internal tubes and steam pipework.

Part (b) was a technical question that required candidates to deconstruct the sentence into its component part that was handled successfully by those candidates who attempted it. Brittle, ductile and fatigue were popular answers. Steam-specific answers would have included corrosion fatigue and caustic embrittlement. The mechanism of corrosion fatigue includes the presence of a material-specific corrosive. The mechanism of caustic embrittlement occurs when the following are present: specific stress, a mechanism for concentration and free sodium hydroxide (NaOH) in the boiler water.

Written schemes of examination appeared to be well understood by the candidates who attempted part (c) of this question. Correct responses included identification of parts of the system to be examined and critical parts of the system (if modified or repaired) examined by a competent person before the system is used again.

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. Reading and re-reading the question encompasses taking due note of this emphasis.

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. The majority of 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 a number of 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 are able to 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. This is why 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.