



NEBOSH HSE AWARD IN MANAGING RISKS AND RISK ASSESSMENT AT WORK



A course book for the NEBOSH HSE Award in
Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work



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Foreword



NEBOSH HSE Award in Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work, is an introductory level qualification that looks at health and safety risk management at work and the step-by-step process to be adopted for controlling health and safety risks caused by workplace hazards.

This qualification has been designed to assist staff or volunteers involved in managing workplace risks, and who undertake risk assessments, to confidently identify sensible and proportionate precautions to control the risks in the workplace. The syllabus and accompanying workbook have been developed by NEBOSH, in conjunction with Great Britain's health and safety regulator, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and is based on published HSE guidance.

On completion of the course, learners will:

- understand that risk management is about taking practical steps to protect people from real harm and suffering rather than a bureaucratic back-covering exercise;
- understand how to identify hazards that may need controlling and the resources that can be used to assist in this;
- use simple, HSE tools and methods to confidently manage risk in a low to medium risk premises;
- evaluate risks in a proportionate and sensible manner.

Why manage health and safety risks

A guide to the symbols used in this course book

THOUGHT PROVOKER

These ask you to think about what you have been learning, to relate it to your own experience.



ACTIVITY

Carry out an activity to reinforce what you have just read.



EXAMPLE

Real or imagined scenarios that give context to points made in the text.



KEY TERMS

Definitions of key process safety terminology.



In this element we will explore risk assessment terminology and the moral, legal and business reasons for managing health and safety risks. We will then introduce the steps required to manage health and safety risk and how competency can be used as a control measure in helping to manage and assess risk. Finally we will discuss the value of worker consultation and when its important to consult.

Learning outcomes

On completion of this element, you should be able to:

- 1.1 Understand risk assessment terminology, the moral, legal and business reasons for managing health and safety risks
- 1.2 An introduction to the steps for managing risk
- 1.3 Health and safety competency and the need for health and safety competence.
- 1.4 The value of worker consultation

ACTIVITY

Think about things you have already done today. Were there things which presented some degree of risk and what did you do to minimize the risks of harm?



Basic definitions

Risk management

There are a number of definitions for risk management. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO), describes it as “the identification, evaluation, and prioritization of risks followed by coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability or impact of unfortunate events or to maximize the realization of opportunities”.

Or

“The purpose of risk management is the creation and protection of value. It improves performance, encourages innovation and supports the achievement of objectives” (ISO 31000-2018).

The above definition considers business risks as well as those related to the health and safety of people and the environment. The health and safety regulator for Great Britain, the Health and Safety Executive, has a more transparent definition which we can use, in that “risk management is about taking practical steps to protect people from real harm and suffering – not bureaucratic back covering”. So for the purposes of this qualification, we will consider risk management to be about **ensuring that the health and safety of workers and the public are properly protected.**

Health

The most common definition of health comes from the World Health Organization, namely: “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease, or infirmity.”

Safety

Safety is not merely the absence of accidents, but the results of ALL persons taking positive actions to identify accident causes and implement suitable preventative measures.

Welfare

Welfare is the availability of facilities and the presence of conditions required for reasonably comfortable, healthy, and secure living.

Risk

A risk is the chance, large or small, that somebody (not necessarily a worker) or something, such as equipment or the environment, could be harmed by hazards, together with an indication of how serious that harm might be.

Hazard

A hazard is “anything that might cause harm”. The HSE defines harm as

1. Harm to a person: Any physical or psychological injury or damage to the health of a person, including both temporary and permanent injury.
2. Harm to a thing: Damage to a thing may include damage to facilities or systems; for example, environmental, financial, data protection breach, etc.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment is a term used to describe the overall process where you:

- systematically identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification);
- analyse the risk associated with each hazard (risk analysis);
- evaluate and prioritise the risk(s) of the hazards(s) (risk evaluation)
- determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard, or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated (risk control).

Risk control

Risk control, also known as hazard control, is a part of the risk management process in which methods for neutralising or reducing identified risks are implemented. Controlled risks remain potential threats, but the probability of an associated incident and/or its consequences, have been significantly reduced.

Competence

Competence can be described as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely.

Basic definitions

Risk management

Organisations have a duty to put in place suitable arrangements to manage health and safety and in this regard a common-sense and practical approach should be adopted. Risk management should be part of the everyday process of running an organisation and an integral part of workplace behaviours and attitudes. Whatever your industry, or the size or nature of your organisation, the keys to effectively managing for health and safety are:

- leadership and management (including appropriate business processes);
- a trained/skilled workforce;
- an environment where people are trusted and involved.

And underpinning all of these elements, is an understanding of the profile of risks an organisation creates or faces. This links back to wider risk management principles and the steps involved in undertaking risk assessments.

EXAMPLE

Inspection and paperwork required for a small screw to be put into a wall



The problem A university worker asked their employer for a small screw to be screwed into a wall so they could hang something from it.

The response The worker was informed that this involved “changing the structure of the building” which comes with health and safety concerns (e.g. screwing into electrical wiring). It would therefore require an inspection by qualified personnel and the appropriate paperwork to be produced.

The correct response This would seem excessive given the small size of the screw and the assumption that this produces a structural change in the building itself and could cause harm. The information provided by the university is unhelpful and disproportionate. If there was genuine safety concerns about location of asbestos or electrical wiring behind walls, it should have been made clear. If it is simply a more general policy of not wanting the decoration of the walls to be damaged, this should also have been made clear rather than hiding behind bureaucracy/blaming health and safety.

Basic definitions

Every business and organisation faces the risk of unexpected, harmful events, including harm to workers, visitors, plant and equipment and the environment, that can cost the company money or cause it to close permanently. Risk management allows organisations to attempt to prepare for the unexpected by minimising significant risks and extra costs before they happen.

Risk management should be integral to an organisation's decision-making processes and be a systematic and structured process. We will all have witnessed 'Health and Safety' as incorrectly being used as a convenient excuse to stop what are essentially sensible activities going ahead. Key to risk management is for a sensible and proportionate approach; this can be more simply described as a 'balanced approach'. This means ensuring that paperwork is proportionate, does not get in the way of getting the job done, and it certainly does not mean risk elimination at all costs.

KEY TERMS

HSG65 is one of HSE's most popular guides. It is designed to help those who need to put in place or oversee their organisation's health and safety arrangements.

The guidance explains the Plan, Do, Check, Act approach and shows how it can help you achieve a balance between the systems and behavioural aspects of management. It also treats health and safety management as an integral part of good management generally, rather than as a stand-alone system.

Reasons for managing health and safety risks

Moral reasons

Most organisations and the people who work for them try to do what they believe to be the right thing. They operate so that people and the environment are not harmed by their activities. Some people call this moral. Others call it ethical or humanitarian.

In the UK in 2019/20 there were:

- 1.6 million working people suffering from a work-related illness;
- 2,446 mesothelioma deaths due to past asbestos exposures (2018);
- 111 workers killed at work;
- 693,000 working people who sustained an injury at work;
- 65,427 injuries to employees reported under RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

Sadly, many people across the world are killed or seriously injured at work each year. The International Labour Organization (ILO), a United Nations agency that brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member states, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all, suggests that every day, people die as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases, resulting in more than 2.78 million deaths per year. This number exceeds the average annual deaths from road accidents, war and HIV/AIDS combined. It estimates that there are also a further 374 million non-fatal work-related injuries each year, resulting in more than four days of absences from work. The human cost of this is obviously enormous.

ACTIVITY

Think about the moral and business reasons for managing health and safety risks, what do you think they could be?

Basic definitions

Business reasons

Good health and safety practice is also good business. Accidents and ill health are costly. These costs are categorised as direct and indirect. Direct costs are calculable costs arising directly from the accident, e.g. sick pay, repairs to damaged equipment, fines, and legal fees. Indirect costs are consequential, but do not generally involve the direct payment of money, e.g. lost orders, business interruption leading to loss of production.

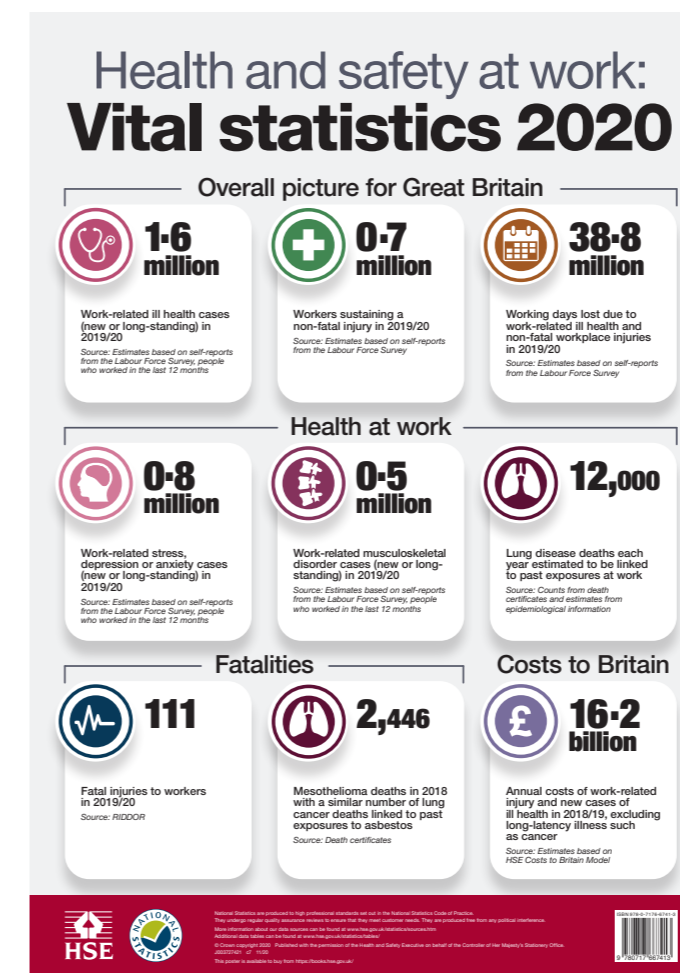
In the UK, the estimated cost of injuries and ill health from current working conditions is £16.2 billion (2018/2019). In turn, the ILO states that the economic burden of poor occupational safety and health practices is estimated at 3.94 per cent of global gross domestic product each year (at the time of writing, this was estimated to be circa \$3.17 trillion).

Poor health and safety performance through poor risk management can lead to other impacts on the business. The organisation may also suffer a loss of reputation with customers and neighbours, and bad publicity. This may have an adverse impact on future orders. Poor health and safety performance could also result in increased insurance premiums, an additional cost to the business.

An organisation with a poor reputation or which suffers a major incident may find its value reduced or, for a quoted company, the price of its shares may be heavily affected. For example, the price of shares in British Petroleum (BP) on the New York Stock Exchange fell by 51% in the 40 days following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in Louisiana.

Legal reasons

Many countries of the world have laws to ensure that employers do as much as they can to prevent people being injured as a result of their work. These laws are also there to protect the general public from workplace dangers. They achieve this by imposing legal duties on employers and workers and a system of penalties (such as fines and imprisonment) for non-compliance. Although it should not be the only driver, the threat of these penalties can be a big motivator for better health and safety performance.

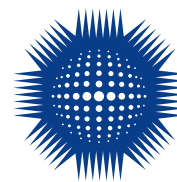


HSE publishes annual statistics on health and safety in Great Britain and they can be accessed via their website. Shown here is the summary publication 'HSE Vital Statistics Poster 2020'.

Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work follows the syllabus for the NEBOSH HSE Award in Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work qualification. It provides the knowledge you need to help you gain the qualification.

The book contains practical activities and examples and gives definitions for key terminology. It can be used as part of your studies during a taught course or as a study aid for eLearning and distance learning.

Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work is designed to provide straightforward, practical health and safety risk management skills so you can go beyond risk assessment, to effectively control the health and safety risks caused by hazards in your workplace. HSE and NEBOSH hope that the book will also become a valuable reference source once you are back in the workplace.



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