

## Ensure your own actions reduce risks to health and safety

**Note: This unit has been taken from the National Occupational Standards developed by ENTO, the standards-setting body for employment and associated areas. The format of the unit is different to that used by the Management Standards Centre (MSC) for the units the MSC has developed.**

Elements in this unit are:

- 1 Identify the hazards and evaluate the risks in your workplace
- 2 Reduce the risks to health and safety in your workplace

### UNIT OVERVIEW

Fundamental to this unit is an understanding of the terms “hazard” and “risk”. They have been defined overleaf and it is VERY IMPORTANT that they are understood before undertaking the unit.

#### This unit is for

Everyone at work (whether paid, unpaid, full or part-time). The scope of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 covers “all persons” whether employers, employees, self-employed, contractors, etc. Amongst other things the Act seeks to secure the health, safety and welfare of people whilst they work and protect other people against risks to health or safety arising from the activity of people at work. This unit does not require the candidate to undertake a full risk assessment, it is about having an appreciation of significant risks in the workplace and knowing how to identify them and deal with them.

#### This unit covers

The health and safety duties for everyone in the workplace. It describes the competences required to ensure that:

- your own actions do not create any health and safety risks,
- you do not ignore significant risks in your workplace, and
- you take sensible action to put things right, including: reporting situations which pose a danger to people in the workplace and seeking advice.

#### This is what you need to show

In **element 1** you need to show that you understand the health and safety requirements and policies in the workplace, and that you check your own working practices and work area for any risk of you or others being harmed. You should be able to identify the risk arising from any hazards you have identified and know which you can deal with safely yourself, and those which you must report to the “responsible person” for attention.

**Element 2** requires you to show you have taken steps to reduce those health and safety risks with which you might come into contact during the course of your work. It covers carrying out tasks safely and in accordance with instructions and workplace requirements.

#### This is what you need to do next

Read the section on “Key Words and Phrases”. This explains how some words and phrases have been used in this unit and will help you understand it more easily.

### KEY WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH YOU MIGHT SEE USED FREQUENTLY WITHIN THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK UNITS

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the body appointed to support and enforce health and safety law. They have defined two important concepts as follows:

**Hazard** "a hazard is something with potential to cause harm".

**Risk** "a risk is the likelihood of the hazard's potential being realised".

Almost anything may be a hazard, but may or may not become a risk. For example:

- 1 A trailing electric cable from a piece of equipment is a hazard. If it is trailing across a passageway there is a high risk of someone tripping over it, but if it lies along a wall out of the way, the risk is much less.
- 2 Toxic or flammable chemicals stored in a building are a hazard, and by their nature may present a high risk. However, if they are kept in a properly designed secure store, and handled by properly trained and equipped people, the risk is much less than if they are left about in a busy workshop for anyone to use – or misuse.
- 3 A failed light bulb is a hazard. If it is just one bulb out of many in a room it presents very little risk, but if it is the only light on a stairwell, it is a very high risk. Changing the bulb may be a high risk, if it is high up, or if the power has been left on, or low risk if it is in a table lamp which has been unplugged.
- 4 A box of heavy material is a hazard. It presents a higher risk to someone who lifts it manually than if a mechanical handling device is properly used.

#### **Workplace**

This word is used to describe the single or multiple areas in which you carry out your work.

#### **Working practices**

Any activities, procedures, use of materials or equipment and working techniques used in carrying out your job. In this unit it also covers any omissions in good working practice which may pose a threat to health and safety.

#### **Workplace policies**

This covers the documentation prepared by the employer on the procedures to be followed regarding health and safety matters. It could be the employer's safety policy statement, or general health and safety statements and written safety procedures covering aspects of the workplace that should be drawn to the employees' (and "other persons'") attention.

#### **Other persons**

This phrase refers to everyone covered by the Health and Safety at Work Act including: visitors, members of the public, colleagues, contractors, clients, customers, patients, students, pupils.

#### **Personal presentation**

This includes personal hygiene; use of personal protection equipment; clothing and accessories suitable to the particular workplace.

#### **Responsible persons**

The person or persons at work to whom you should report any health and safety issues or hazards. This could be a supervisor, line manager or your employer.

### KEY POINTS REGARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS

#### “Health and Safety At Work Act 1974”

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is the main piece of legislation under which nearly all the other regulations are made. It is for this reason that only this piece of legislation is specifically referred to in this unit.

Employers have a legal duty under this Act to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of the people for whom they are responsible and the people who may be affected by the work they do.

Under this Act it is also important to be aware that all people at work, not just employers, have a duty to take reasonable care to avoid harming themselves or others through the work they do.

Risks should be reduced “so far as is reasonably practicable”. This term means the duty-holder (in most instances the employer) can balance the cost against the degree of risk although obviously any Health and Safety Inspectors would expect that relevant good practice is followed.

According to the Act:

**Employers** must safeguard so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all the people who work for them and “other persons”. This applies in particular to the provision and maintenance of safe plant and systems of work, and covers all machinery, equipment and substances used.

**People at work** also have a duty under the Act to take reasonable care to avoid harm to themselves or to others by their working practices, and to co-operate with employers and others in meeting statutory requirements. The Act also requires employees not to interfere with or misuse anything provided to protect their health, safety or welfare in compliance with the Act.

#### Other Legislation

There is an array of health and safety regulations and codes of practice which affect people at work. There are regulations for those who, for example, work with electricity, or work on construction projects, as well as regulations covering noise at work, manual handling, working with VDUs, or dealing with substances hazardous to health, etc. The specific requirements for all or any of these can be obtained from HSE local offices.

As many of the regulations are only relevant to certain workplaces or working practices no specific reference has been made in the Knowledge Requirements to any of these regulations. The phrase “your responsibilities for health and safety as required by any specific legislation covering your job role” is intended to relate to those specific pieces of legislation important to your workplace and/or working practices which you should be able to find out about.

### KNOWLEDGE REQUIREMENTS

#### Essential knowledge and understanding for this unit

**To ensure your own actions reduce risks to Health and Safety you should know and understand the following aspects of health and safety legislation:**

- a your legal duties for health and safety in the workplace as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- b your duties for health and safety as defined by any specific legislation covering your job role.

**To ensure your own actions reduce risks to Health and Safety you should know and understand the following relating to risks to health and safety:**

- a what hazards may exist in your workplace;
- b the particular health and safety risks which may be present in your own job role and the precautions you must take;
- c the importance of remaining alert to the presence of hazards in the whole work place;
- d the importance of dealing with or promptly reporting risks;
- e the requirements and guidance on the precautions.

#### Evidence requirements

- You should satisfy the assessor that you can consistently meet the standards.
- Evidence should be drawn from real working practices, and evidence must be provided across all the performance criteria in both elements. Your assessor must see performance evidence for the number of range items, as specified in both elements, appropriate to your own workplace context.
- Answers to questions and other forms of evidence may additionally be used to demonstrate an understanding of the essential knowledge required for the unit, and for the specific knowledge required for each element.

#### Assessor guidance

- In order to demonstrate competence the candidate must be able to show consistent competent performance.
- In this unit evidence from performance is required and should be the primary source of evidence, but this will often be supported by questioning or other forms in order to gather evidence of the candidate's ability to perform competently across all the range items listed.

### ELEMENT 1: IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS AND EVALUATE THE RISKS IN YOUR WORKPLACE

#### Performance criteria

You must ensure that:

- 1 you correctly name and locate the persons responsible for health and safety in the workplace;
- 2 you identify which workplace policies are relevant to your working practices;
- 3 you identify those working practices in any part of your job role which could harm yourself or other persons;
- 4 you identify those aspects of the workplace which could harm yourself or other persons;
- 5 you evaluate which of the potentially harmful working practices and the potentially harmful aspects of the workplace are those with the highest **risk** to you or to others;
- 6 you report those hazards which present a high **risk** to the persons responsible for health and safety in the workplace;
- 7 you deal with hazards with low **risks** in accordance with workplace policies and legal requirements.

#### Range statement

**Risks** resulting from:

- I the use and maintenance of machinery or equipment;
- II the use of materials or substances;
- III working practices which do not conform to laid down policies;
- IV unsafe behaviour;
- V accidental breakages and spillages;
- VI environmental factors.

#### Specific knowledge for this element

You must know and understand:

- a agreed workplace policies relating to controlling risks to health and safety;
- b responsibilities for health and safety in your job description;
- c the responsible persons to whom to report health and safety matters.

#### Evidence requirements

Evidence must be provided to demonstrate competence in identifying hazards with reference to working activities or aspects of the workplace and acting upon your decisions as to whether the hazard presents a high or low risk.

Performance evidence must be provided against each of the performance criteria. The assessor will also need to be satisfied that you have the necessary knowledge and understanding to perform competently in respect of all the range items listed in this unit.

You must show from the range that you have:

- identified a minimum of two types of **risks** resulting from those listed.

Performance evidence must be provided from real working practices.

### ELEMENT 2: REDUCE THE RISKS TO HEALTH AND SAFETY IN YOUR WORKPLACE

#### Performance criteria

You must ensure that:

- 1 you carry out your working practices in accordance with legal requirements;
- 2 you follow the most recent **workplace policies** for your job role;
- 3 you rectify those health and safety risks within your capability and the scope of your job responsibilities;
- 4 you pass on any suggestions for reducing risks to health and safety within your job role to the responsible persons;
- 5 your personal conduct in the workplace does not endanger the health and safety of yourself or other persons;
- 6 you follow the **workplace policies** and suppliers' or manufacturers' instructions for the safe use of equipment, materials and products;
- 7 you report any differences between **workplace policies** and suppliers' or manufacturers' instructions as appropriate;
- 8 your personal presentation at work
  - ensures the health and safety of yourself and others,
  - meets any legal duties, and
  - is in accordance with **workplace policies**.

#### Range statement

**Workplace policies** covering:

- I the use of safe working methods and equipment;
- II the safe use of hazardous substances;
- III smoking, eating, drinking and drugs;
- IV what to do in the event of an emergency;
- V personal presentation.

#### Specific knowledge for this element

You must know and understand:

- a the specific workplace policies covering your job role;
- b suppliers' and manufacturers' instruction for the safe use of equipment, materials and products;
- c safe working practices for your own job role;
- d the importance of personal presentation in maintaining health and safety in the workplace;
- e the importance of personal conduct in maintaining the health and safety of yourself and others;
- f your scope and responsibility for rectifying risks;
- g workplace procedures for handling risks which you are unable to deal with.

#### Evidence requirements

Evidence must be provided to demonstrate competence in reducing the risk to health and safety.

Performance evidence must be provided against each of the performance criteria. The assessor will need to be satisfied that you have the necessary knowledge and understanding to perform competently in respect of all the range items listed in this element.

You must show evidence that you have followed a minimum of four types of **workplace policies**.

Performance evidence must be provided from real working practices.