



British Safety Council

Level 3 Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health

June 2009 Examination

Chief Examiner's Report

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The panel of examiners reported a slightly better performance on the short-answer paper with 83% of candidates passing this component. However, many candidates underperformed on the risk assessment task with only 44% of candidates achieving the pass standard on this component.

72% of candidates achieved the qualification, the distribution of grades being as follows:

Distinction	0 %
Merit	10 %
Pass	62 %

In concentrating primarily on common areas of weakness, this report aims to help future candidates prepare for the examination.

General Comments

Some candidates are still losing marks by not answering the question set – see comments for Questions 4(a), 5(a) and 10(c). Others are failing to observe command words, the most common fault being unqualified listing, rather than fully outlining.

Most candidates scored well on Questions 7 and 11, the more 'practical' questions. However, Questions 1, 4 and 10 revealed weaknesses in candidates' knowledge and understanding of quite basic health and safety management.

Despite having performed well in the short-answer questions, a number of candidates underperformed in the risk assessment task leading to a fail grade overall.

Component 1 (Short-answer questions)

Question 1

- (a) **The quickest way to report an incident under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) is by telephone. Outline TWO other ways of reporting an incident to the enforcing authority. (2 marks)**

Well answered by most candidates who outlined methods such as post, e-mail or online.

- (b) **A fracture is one type of major injury reportable under RIDDOR. Identify FIVE other types of major injury reportable under the Regulations. (5 marks)**

Many candidates were unable to identify other types of major injury reportable under RIDDOR such as amputation, electric shock or loss of sight.

- (c) **In relation to RIDDOR, explain what is meant by an 'over-three-day injury'. (5 Marks)**

This question divided candidates into two camps: those who thought that the three days did not include the weekend and those who thought that it did. Examiners were looking for reference to employees and the self employed and the injured person being away from their normal duties for more than three days (NOT three days or more) which would include any days they would not normally work such as weekends, rest days or holidays, not counting the day of the injury itself.

Question 2

- (a) **Outline the main objectives of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. (3 marks)**

Well answered by most candidates who framed their answers around securing the health, safety and welfare of people at work and protecting people other than those at work against risks arising from workplace activities.

- (b) **Explain what is meant by the phrase 'so far as is reasonably practicable'. (3 marks)**

Well answered by the majority of candidates who explained the need to balance risk against cost in terms of time, effort and money.

- (c) **Complete the table by matching the following duties against the relevant section of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. (6 marks)**

Generally well answered.

Question 3

- (a) **Falls from height can often be traced back to management failures. Describe the management failures that can lead to falls from height. (6 marks)**

Generally well answered. Most candidates described a range of failures including lack of safe systems, lack of risk assessment, lack of inspection, lack of training, lack of supervision and condoning unsafe behaviour.

- (b) Describe a hierarchical approach to managing the risk of falling from height. (6 marks)**

Generally well answered. Most candidates were able to describe a clear hierarchical approach that included a range of control measures clearly linked to managing the risk.

Question 4

- (a) The description of the work to be done and the order in which the work is to be done are two of the areas contained within a health and safety method statement.**

Outline FOUR other areas that you would expect to find within a health and safety method statement. (4 marks)

This question was poorly answered by a number of candidates who based their answers around a health and safety policy, rather than a method statement. Some candidates mentioned the work to be done and the order in which the work is to be done, despite these examples appearing in the stem of the question. Better candidates outlined areas such as supervisors and their duties, disconnection of services, first aid and emergency procedures.

- (b) Explain how a method statement is different from a permit-to-work. (4 marks)**

Most candidates were able to define a method statement and a permit-to-work, but only the better candidates clearly explained the difference between the two.

- (c) Safe design and installation, and competent and well-trained staff are two of the areas that you would expect to find covered by a safe system of work. Identify FOUR other areas that should be covered by a safe system of work. (4 marks)**

Generally well answered. Most candidates identified a range of areas including the correct use of plant, tools and equipment; planned maintenance; heating, lighting and ventilation; and the issue and use of PPE.

Question 5

- (a) Describe the measures you would take to prevent fire in the workplace. (8 marks)**

Many candidates failed to answer the question set. The question was about measures for preventing fire. Many candidates strayed on to measures for detecting or fighting fire, for which no credit could be given.

- (b) Complete the following fire classification table. (4 marks)**

The majority of candidates were able to identify Class B fires (involving liquids or liquefiable solids) and Class F fires (involving cooking fats and oils), but many failed to correctly identify Class C fires (involving gases) and Class D fires (involving metals).

Question 6

- (a) **Describe how you would set about improving the health and safety culture of an organisation. (8 marks)**

Generally well answered. Better candidates focused on improvements through education, empowerment, reinforcement and leading by example.

- (b) **Outline the difficulties you might face when trying to change the health and safety culture of an organisation. (4 marks)**

Generally well answered. Better candidates outlined factors such as lack of senior management commitment, lack of financial and non-financial resources, poor communication channels and worker apathy.

Question 7

- (a) **An engineer has been electrocuted while using a portable electric power tool.**

Outline the possible causes of this accident. (6 marks)

Some candidates struggled to outline more than one or two possible causes. Better candidates outlined a range of immediate and underlying causes covering both defective wiring and damaged equipment, as well as a range of human factors.

- (b) **Describe suitable control measures for reducing the risks associated with the use of portable electric power tools. (6 marks)**

Generally well answered. Better candidates described a range of measures such as proper installation of wiring and fixed equipment, correct earthing, the use of double insulation, residual current devices, correctly rated fuses, and competent and trained persons.

Question 8

- (a) **Explain what is meant by a 'tort' and state which tort is most commonly associated with health and safety. (3 marks)**

The majority of candidates correctly identified the tort of negligence as being most commonly associated with health and safety. Better candidates explained that a tort was a civil wrong doing by one party against another.

- (b) **Failure to comply with the obligations imposed by statute law is a breach of statutory duty. Outline what the claimant must establish in order to claim for breach of statutory duty. (4 marks)**

Poorly answered by many candidates. The claimant must establish that the statute was broken, the breach caused the claimant injury, the claimant was a class of person the statute was intended to protect, and that the type of injury was one the statute was intended to prevent.

- (c) **State the maximum fines that can be imposed in a Magistrates Court and in a Crown Court for a breach under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. (2 marks)**

Examiners ignored references to custodial sentences and awarded marks where candidates correctly stated the maximum £20,000 fine in a Magistrate's Court and an unlimited fine at Crown Court.

- (d) **The penalties imposed by the courts can be influenced by the degree of risk, the extent of the danger and the extent of the breach(es). Outline THREE other factors that influence the severity of penalties imposed by the courts. (3 marks)**

Generally well answered. Examiners gave credit for aggravating factors (e.g. failing to take heed of warnings) and/or mitigating factors (e.g. a previously good safety record).

Question 9

- (a) **Outline the action that an employer must take when the lower exposure action value reaches a daily or weekly exposure level of**

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|------------------|
| i) | 80dB(A) | (2 marks) |
| ii) | 85dB(A) | (2 marks) |

Generally well answered. Most candidates knew that hearing protection needs to be made available and that information and training is required when the lower exposure action value reaches 80dB(A). Likewise, most candidates knew that at 85dB(A) employers must ensure that hearing protection is worn as well as provide information and training.

- (b) **Outline the ill-health effects associated with vibration. (4 marks)**

Most candidates were able to outline a range of ill-health effects including pain and numbness, pins and needles, reduced grip strength, carpal tunnel syndrome, blanching or numbing of the fingers, and whole body vibration.

- (c) **Outline suitable measures to control the health risks associated with vibration. (4 marks)**

Well answered with most candidates referring to engineering solutions, reduced exposure times, and information, instruction and training.

Question 10

- (a) **Explain the purpose of a risk assessment. (2 marks)**

Most candidates identified the key purpose of hazard identification, but few mentioned identification of persons at risk, how they might be harmed or the evaluation of existing controls.

- (b) **Outline the general requirements under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 in relation to risk assessment. (4 marks)**

Most candidates outlined the requirement for employers to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of risks to the health and safety of employees and non-employees and that the assessment should be reviewed. Only the better candidates mentioned the need to conduct specific risk assessments for (e.g.) young people or new and expectant mothers.

- (c) **Hazard identification is the first stage in the risk assessment process. Outline the different ways of identifying hazards in the workplace. (4 marks)**

This question was poorly answered with many candidates simply outlining a range of hazards, rather than ways of identifying hazards. Better answers referred to a range of methods including personal observation, interviews with the workforce, and reference to safety data sheets and near miss data.

- (d) **Outline the circumstances in which you would review a risk assessment. (2 marks)**

Better candidates outlined circumstances such as the implementation of a new process, new employees engaged on a process, or following an accident or near miss.

Question 11

- (a) **Identify TWO activities that could cause a user of display screen equipment (DSE) to suffer back problems. (2 marks)**

Well answered by most candidates. Possible activities include stretching, leaning, twisting, bending or prolonged sitting in the same position. Marks were not awarded for references to height of the chair or position of the monitor (non activities).

- (b) **An office manager has asked for your advice in relation to the design of a DSE workstation for a new administrative assistant who is due to start next month.**

Outline the advice you would give to this office manager in relation to good DSE workstation design. (10 marks)

Weaker candidates either offered a limited range of examples or a broad range of examples with little or no detail. Better candidates clearly outlined a good range of examples linked to the equipment used, the desk, the chair and the environment. The best answers included reference to software and to regulatory requirements and best practice.

Question 12

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 states that employers are not allowed to discriminate against people with a disability who apply for a job, or against existing employees who are, or who become, disabled.

- (a) **Explain what is meant by the term 'disability', as defined in the DDA. (2 marks)**

Many candidates did not attempt this question. Those who did answer understood that disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment, but few elaborated on the substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- (b) **Outline a range of adjustments that an employer might make to accommodate a disabled person in the workplace. (6 marks)**

Better candidates outlined a range of practical measures included adjustments to premises (e.g. providing ramps and disabled toilets), allocating some of the disabled person's duties to another person, altering their working hours, assigning them to a different place of work, allowing them to be absent during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment, and acquiring or modifying equipment.

(c) Outline the main causes of stress in the workplace. (4 marks)

Generally well answered. Common causes include demands of the job, lack of support, threat of redundancy and strained relations with managers and/or peers.

Component 2 (Risk assessment task)

Describe the hazard

Many candidates are still identifying multiple hazards in this first section. If candidates introduce more than one hazard it makes it very difficult for the examiner to know which hazard is being controlled later in the exercise and can also invalidate the severity and likelihood ratings. **The rule is ONE clearly described hazard.**

Identify the persons at risk and explain how they might be harmed.

Candidates are still failing to explain how the persons at risk might be harmed. Some candidates simply stated that people 'could be harmed' but failed to explain how or what that harm would be. Omitting the 'harm' element also costs candidates valuable marks in the risk rating element, as the examiner is unable to confirm if the severity rating matches the original harm. Some candidates also failed to include members of staff working in the warehouse as persons at risk.

Identify the existing control measures and explain how they are intended to control the risks.

The majority of candidates were able to identify a good range of existing control measures and explain how they were intended to control the risks. Weaker candidates either omitted to explain how the existing control measures were intended to control the risks or included a range of control measures that they thought should have been in place, rather than identifying those that were already in place.

Describe any additional control measures required and explain how these will reduce the risks.

Most candidates were able to suggest a good range of practical control measures. A number of candidates made no attempt to explain how these additional measures were intended to control the risks and so examiners were only able to award one mark out of a possible four.

Risk Ratings

Risk ratings were generally appropriate although some candidates continue to reduce the severity rating when only the likelihood will change as a result of their proposed control measures.