



**British Safety Council**

**Level 3 Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health**

**February 2010 Examination**

**Chief Examiner's Report**

# **BSC Level 3 Certificate in Occupational Safety and Health**

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### **Chief Examiner's Report**

The panel of examiners reported another increase in the standard of performance of most candidates across the short answer paper with 88% passing this component. There was also an improved overall performance in the risk assessment with 61% of candidates passing this component.

81% of candidates achieved the qualification, the distribution of grades being as follows:

Distinction	0%
Merit	35%
Pass	46%

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

#### **General Comments**

Most candidates scored well in questions relating to health and safety legislation, showing an improvement in comparison to previous papers.

In addition to a better understanding in this key area, good examination technique (such as highlighting key command words), also helped increase the general performance. Weaker candidates are failing to observe command words, the most common fault being unqualified listing, rather than fully outlining.

## Component 1 (Short-answer questions)

### Question 1

- (a) **Outline the circumstances in which an inspector from an enforcing authority may seize an article. (2 marks)**

Well answered by most candidates. Higher scoring candidates cited a relevant circumstance, such as: 'to use it as evidence'.

- (b) **Apart from the power to seize an article, identify SIX powers given to an inspector from an enforcing authority. (6 marks)**

This was well answered by the majority of candidates whose answers included: to enter premises at any reasonable time; or at any time if they considered there was a danger; request police assistance; and carry out examination and investigation.

- (c) **The penalties imposed by courts on employers are influenced by aggravating and mitigating factors. Explain what is meant by aggravating and mitigating factors. (4 marks)**

This was well answered by the majority of candidates. Higher scoring candidates explained what the employer had not done, such as failing to take warnings into account (aggravating); and what they had done, such as an early guilty plea (mitigating).

### Question 2

**A full-time member of staff working on the reception desk in a busy hotel has complained to her line manager about a constant pain in her hands, wrists and arms when using the computer.**

- (a) **Outline the factors that may be causing this problem. (4 marks)**

Generally well answered by the majority of candidates who were able to outline a range of factors that may have been causing the problem.

- (b) **As the health and safety manager for the company, describe the actions that you would take to address this problem. (8 marks)**

Weaker candidates had simply listed a few generic actions, especially where the actions did not always address the original problem of pain in the hands, wrists and arms. Higher scoring candidates gave a wide range of actions and control measures and included the need for a DSE risk assessment.

### Question 3

- (a) **Employees must be provided with information, instruction, training and supervision. Although not specifically defined within health and safety legislation, explain in practical terms what is meant by:**
- (i) **information** (2 marks)
  - (ii) **instruction** (2 marks)
  - (i) **training and supervision** (2 marks)

Many candidates were unable to correctly explain, in practical terms, what information, instruction, training and supervision mean. Higher scoring candidates explained that information is factual material including manuals and warning labels and instruction is what employees should or should not do to work safely.

- (b) **Outline the circumstances in which an employer is required to have a written health and safety policy and outline what that policy must show. (4 marks)**

Well answered by most candidates who gained three or four marks out of four.

- (c) **Outline TWO intentional acts by a contractor or visitor that would make them liable to prosecution under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. (2 marks)**

This question was poorly answered by candidates who lost marks by failing to outline two events. Higher scoring candidates included examples such as: 'prop open a fire door with fire equipment' and 'refusing to wear PPE, such as safety shoes'.

### Question 4

- (a) **Explain why working at height is such a high-risk activity. (4 marks)**

Higher scoring answers included reference to falls from height resulting in the most fatalities in construction work, the nature of the work and the dangers relating to working on or near scaffolding, platforms, fragile roofs and roof edges. These candidates also explained associated secondary risks to others from working at height.

- (b) **Describe a range of suitable measures to reduce the risks from working at height. (8 marks)**

This question was poorly answered by a number of candidates who identified a limited range of measures, rather than describing a wide range of suitable practical and management control measures.

### Question 5

- (a) **Identify FOUR specific risk assessments that an employer may need to conduct in addition to their general risk assessments. (4 marks)**

Well answered by the majority of candidates. Some candidates failed to gain marks where they did not clearly identify four specific areas.

- (b) Apart from your own employees, identify FOUR other groups of people that you might consider when conducting a risk assessment. (4 marks)**

This question was poorly answered by a number of candidates who identified their own employees rather than groups of people apart from these employees. Higher scoring candidates identified contractors, neighbours, members of the public and employees of other employers sharing premises.

- (c) Describe how you would set about identifying the hazards at the start of a risk assessment. (4 marks)**

Another question that was poorly answered by the majority of candidates. A number of candidates listed the basic risk assessment 'five steps' rather than describing how you would set about identifying the hazards at the start of a risk assessment.

### Question 6

- (a) Outline TWO ways in which reversing can be eliminated on a construction site. (2 marks)**

Well answered by the majority of candidates who outlined that reversing can be eliminated by implementing a one-way traffic system or by creating a turning area.

- (b) Describe a safe system of work that could be introduced on a construction site where the reversing of vehicles CANNOT be eliminated. (6 marks)**

Well answered by the majority of candidates. Higher scoring candidates included a detailed description of a range of practical control measures and good management systems within their answer. These candidates used examples such as good communication between the driver and banksmen. Lower scoring answers referred to the 'use of banksmen' but did not link this to communicating with the driver.

- (c) Outline SIX circumstances which may lead to a forklift truck becoming unstable. (6 marks)**

Poorly answered by a number of candidates who referred to "poor maintenance" or "a lack of training" without outlining the consequences of "poor maintenance" or "a lack of training". Higher scoring candidates included circumstances such as overloading, excessive speed, turning too fast, load off centre, and moving over uneven ground/pot holes.

### Question 7

- (a) Identify SIX factors that you would consider when selecting suitable personal protective equipment. (6 marks)**

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who identified compatibility with other PPE, comfort/ease of use or wear and whether or not the equipment is CE marked.

- (b) Candidates were asked to complete the table by identifying SIX hazards, the area of the body that needed protecting and the personal protective equipment (PPE) that you would recommend. (6 marks)**

This question was well answered by the majority of candidates who identified most, if not, all of the three factors relating to each hazard.

### Question 8

- (a) **A group of school children have come into contact with a hazardous substance during a visit to a factory. Outline the factors which will determine the level of harm. (6 marks)**

Poorly answered by the majority of candidates. Weaker candidates often concentrated on the hazardous substance rather than on any other factors. Some higher scoring candidates considered whether or not children were already wearing any PPE and that, if they were, the exposure would be rendered harmless.

- (b) **Explain the need for investigating incidents of this type. (6 marks)**

Another poorly answered question, with a number of candidates concentrating on how you would investigate an incident like this rather than why. Higher scoring candidates explained that by identifying the causes, unsafe acts and unsafe conditions you could help reduce future incidents. Some candidates also stated that an investigation would also help companies when dealing with insurance claims to gain marks.

### Question 9

- (a) **Outline the effects of inadequate occupational health provision on:**

(i) **people (3 marks)**

(ii) **organisations (3 marks)**

Generally well answered by most candidates. Weaker candidates cited examples such as 'being absent from work' but then failed to outline how this 'absence from work' would affect the individual.

- (b) **Outline the benefits of effective occupational health provision for organisations. (6 marks)**

Generally well answered by the majority of candidates who scored well in this question.

### Question 10

- (a) **Describe suitable measures to control the risks from:**

(i) **slips and trips (3 marks)**

(ii) **manual handling (3 marks)**

(iii) **electricity (3 marks)**

(iv) **falling object (3 marks)**

Well answered by most candidates with a number scoring full marks. Weaker candidates suggested risk assessment as one of their control measures. However, control measures are normally established, and/or reviewed, and/or improved as a result of a risk assessment.

## Question 11

- (a) Candidate were asked to complete the following statement:

A near miss is commonly defined as an \_\_\_\_\_ which does not cause injury or damage but has the \_\_\_\_\_ to do so. (2 marks)

Higher scoring candidates correctly identified an unplanned incident or event for the first mark and potential for the second mark.

- (b) Explain what is meant by direct and indirect costs in relation to accidents. (4 marks)

Well answered with candidates giving clear examples of direct costs associated with the accident supported by other examples of indirect costs that were seen as being isolated from the accident and often occurring afterwards.

- (c) Outline THREE acts or omissions and the resulting unsafe conditions. (6 marks)

Generally well answered with candidates giving examples such as poor housekeeping, resulting in a slip or trip hazard and the removal of a safety guard by one person, resulting in the exposure of moving parts to another.

## Question 12

- (a) With reference to examples, outline how workplace activities can pollute the environment. (6 marks)

Many candidates failed to answer the question set. Weaker candidates either failed to give examples of any activity, or they failed to give a workplace activity as an example. Higher scoring candidates outlined a range of workplace activities and how they link to land, air, water, visual and noise pollution.

- (b) Electricity and water are often wasted in the workplace. Outline ways in which this waste can be prevented.

(i) electricity (3 marks)

(ii) water (3 marks)

Generally well answered with the majority of candidates outlining how workplace activities can be changed/controlled to prevent waste.

## **Component 2 (Risk assessment task)**

### **Describe the hazard**

Many candidates are not scoring full marks in this section as they do not describe the hazard. Higher scoring candidates identified two clear hazards from a range that included examples of manual handling, slips, trips and falls, electrical safety and working at height.

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

A small number of candidates are still failing to explain how the persons at risk might be harmed. These 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. It is also important for candidates to link the harm to the original hazard selected.

### **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.

### **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 a small number of candidates failed to apply a '5' rating when death had been linked to the hazard.