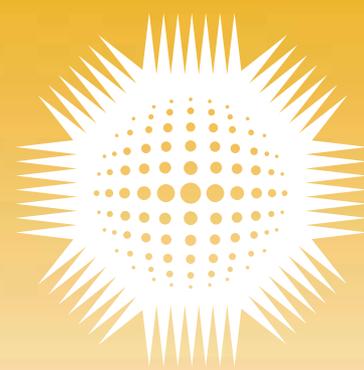


April - June 2015

Examiners Report NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety (NGC1)



nebosh



Examiners' Report

UNIT NGC1: MANAGEMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

APRIL – JUNE 2015



For: **NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety**
NEBOSH National Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management
NEBOSH National Certificate in Construction Health and Safety

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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) regulatory requirements.

This report provides guidance for candidates which it is hoped will be useful to candidates and tutors 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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Any enquiries about this report publication should be addressed to:

NEBOSH
Dominus Way
Meridian Business Park
Leicester
LE19 1QW

tel: 0116 263 4700
fax: 0116 282 4000
email: info@nebosh.org.uk

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.

This report has been prepared to provide feedback on standard date and on-demand NGC1 examinations sat between April and June 2015.

Feedback is presented in these key areas; examination technique, command words and learning outcomes and is designed to assist candidates and course providers to prepare for future assessments in this unit.

Candidates and course providers will also benefit from use of the 'Guide to the NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety' which is available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guide sets out in detail the syllabus content for NGC1 and tutor reference documents for each Element. Please note that this examination period covers both the January 2013 and the November 2014 specifications.

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 NGC1 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

Unit NGC1

Management of health and safety

Candidate performance

This report covers all examinations, both standard and on-demand examination sittings during April to June 2015.

Learning outcomes

Candidates performed well in these areas of the syllabus:

4.2 Explain the principles and practice of risk assessment

This part of the syllabus covers a wide range of content relating to risk assessment. It looks at the meaning of key terms such as hazard, risk and risk assessment and covers issues relating to risk assessors. The full process of risk assessment is covered along with the criteria for a 'suitable and sufficient' assessment. The content also covers special case applications to young persons, expectant and nursing mothers, disabled workers and lone workers.

Examiners reported a very positive response to this learning outcome, with a good understanding of the meaning of 'risk' and the stages of a risk assessment. Many candidates were able to provide a range of factors that may increase risks to pregnant employees and lone workers.

1.2 Explain the moral and financial reasons for promoting good standards of health and safety in the workplace

This part of the syllabus requires candidates to explain the size of the health and safety 'problem' in terms of the numbers of work-related fatalities, injuries and incidence of ill-health. This is followed by societal expectations for good standards and the business case for health and safety.

The Examiners generally found that questions from this area of the syllabus were well answered. In particular, those candidates who structured their answers around the legal, moral and financial reasons for maintaining good health and safety standards seemed to gain higher marks than those who did not.

A majority of the candidates demonstrated good knowledge of employer's liability insurance and were able to identify a wide range of uninsured costs to an organisation.

The following learning outcomes have been identified as being the most challenging area of the syllabus for candidates in this period:

1.3 Explain the legal framework for the regulation of health and safety including sources and types of law

This is a very broad area of study incorporating a wide range of content. This area covers the influence and role of the European Union in harmonising standards and requires the meaning of criminal, statute, common and civil law. Criminal and civil law liabilities follow along with the structure and role of their respective courts and the penalties/remedies that they can impose.

It appears that candidates find some areas of this learning outcome somewhat confusing. Common law duties were not well understood, with some candidates confused between the common law duties and examples of common law duties. Some candidates need assistance from course providers in distinguishing between what the law says and how it is applied in practice.

5.1 Outline the principles, purpose and role of active and reactive monitoring

The first part of this area of the syllabus covers active monitoring procedures of performance standards and the systematic inspection of plant and premises. The roles of inspections, sampling, surveys and tours within a monitoring regime are included, with particular reference to factors governing the frequency and type of inspection. The issue of effective report writing follows. Finally, a range of reactive monitoring measures including data on accidents, dangerous occurrences, near-misses, ill-health, complaints and enforcement action complete this part of the syllabus.

Many candidates were unable to give a reasonable outline of the main features of an inspection. It appears that the term 'main features' was misunderstood by some who either gave detailed explanation of the purpose of an inspection, or outlined what might be observed during an inspection. In such circumstances Examiners can award few marks. Features of inspections include that they are a physical examination of the workplace, a legal requirement and are normally scheduled at regular intervals.

Where Examiners sought 'active methods of monitoring other than inspections', the majority of candidates concentrated on accident statistics, that demonstrated a lack of ability to distinguish between 'active' and 'reactive' monitoring methods. Further, despite the question, some candidates offered 'inspections' as an active method suggesting that some did not read the question thoroughly.

Also, from Examiners' observations, it was evident that some confusion exists between inspections and audits (learning outcome 5.2). It is worth noting that in the revised NGC1 syllabus (November 2014 specification) learning outcome 5.1 requires candidates to be able to explain the distinction between audits and inspections.

4.3 Describe the legal and organisational requirements for recording and reporting incidents

Typical examples of specified major injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences are initially required by the syllabus, followed by the statutory and organisational requirements for recording and reporting incidents. The requirement for recording and reporting fatalities, specified injuries, 'over 3 or 7-day injuries', disease and dangerous occurrences are covered followed by the internal systems necessary for collecting, analysing and communicating data. Importantly, this area of the syllabus covers the collection of relevant information and its availability in a civil claim and what lessons might be learnt.

On a positive note, many candidates understood why accidents should be reported and the importance of reporting.

However, many answers revealed a lack of understanding of what constitutes a dangerous occurrence and the requirements for reporting one. A number of candidates referred to reportable injuries or diseases rather than dangerous occurrences and did not understand or provide the correct reporting requirements. This appeared to be weak area of most candidates for this examination period.

Course providers should help ensure that candidates can clearly distinguish between the reporting criteria for the different types of incident.

Examination technique

The following examination techniques were identified as the main areas of improvement for candidates:

Candidates misread/misinterpreted the question

Examiners reported that a large number of candidates either misread or misinterpreted some of the questions. It appears that many candidates are not thoroughly reading the question before answering and as a consequence, raising many irrelevant points. In extreme cases candidates set off at a tangent and do not gain any marks.

Perhaps it is understandable that under examination pressure and in the rush to get information onto paper, some candidates will misread or misinterpret the question. Candidates should get in to the habit of reading and re-reading the question until an understanding is achieved before committing pen to paper. This gives them the opportunity to answer the question that was set and not the one that they would like to see.

Under pressure, some candidates will focus on key words or phrases in the question, without really gaining an understanding of what the question is actually asking. For example, in a question concerning factors to be considered when developing a safe system of work, the candidate focuses on the phrase 'safe system of work' and provides an outline of the term rather than answering the question that was set.

Some candidates find it useful to produce a brief answer plan that encourages deeper thought and has the added advantage of acting as a memory aid. Course providers can assist candidates by setting and marking practice questions.

Candidates did not respond effectively to the command word

Many candidates do not comply with the command word and seem particularly confused by the meaning of 'outline'. A brief summary of the major aspects of whatever is stated in the question is required. An exhaustive description is not required and wastes examination time.

Candidates who misinterpret the term fall into two categories, those who produce bullet-pointed lists, often with too little depth, and those who write everything that they know about the topic and produce a lengthy, often incoherent, answer in the hope of gaining some marks. Either way, Examiners are unable to award full marks.

Many candidates would have benefited from better examination preparation, answering practice questions under the guidance of a tutor.

Candidates repeated the same point but in different ways

Repetition of the same point, but in a different way, was a common occurrence in many scripts. This could be the result of candidates providing lengthy responses in 'paragraph' style and not keep track of the points raised, or simply repeating the same point in a slightly different way in the hope of gaining extra marks. No extra marks are awarded and repetition wastes examination time.

Some candidates would benefit by answering in a more structured way that might allow them to identify the points raised in previous text and make it easier for the Examiner to mark.

Command words

The following command words are listed in the order identified as being the most challenging for candidates:

Outline

Examiners reported that this command word was the most challenging for candidates. Some produced answers that contained little depth or detail, giving answers that might satisfy an 'identify' question. Some persistently produce short bullet-point answers, ignoring the command word as if they have been taught to answer in this way.

Explain

Many candidates seem unable to provide the depth of understanding required by this command word and do not make the idea or relationship clear. Some answers do not provide much more than reference to an item, as is required by an 'identify' question.

Describe

This command word requires a detailed account of the distinctive features of a subject. The account should be factual, without any attempt to explain. Candidates should provide sufficient detail so that others would be able to visualise the subject. Occasionally, candidates waste examination time by explaining 'why' or 'how' in addition to what is required.

Give

Examiners reported this command word presented few problems for candidates with many able to give examples.

Identify

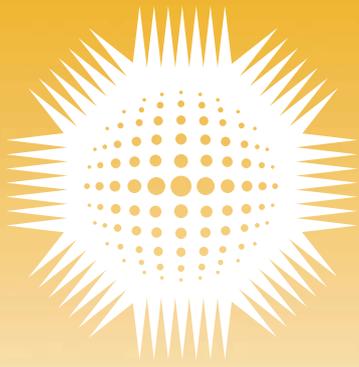
Candidates found this command word the least challenging. However, some wasted examination time by giving outline-type responses. To identify means to give reference to something, this could be its name or title.

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.

Conclusion

The feedback from Examiners highlighted that candidates taking the NGC1 examinations in April to June 2015 needed most improvement in the areas of the legal framework for the regulation of health and safety including sources and types of law (learning outcome 1.3); the principles, purpose and role of active and reactive monitoring (learning outcome 5.1); and the legal and organisational requirements for recording and reporting incidents (learning outcome 4.3).

With regard to examination technique, candidates sitting during this examination period should ensure that they read and re-read examination questions carefully and ensure that they have a full understanding of what is being asked before committing pen to paper. It is advisable that course providers and candidates gain access to and study the NEBOSH guidance on command words. Practice under the guidance of a tutor is the key to a full understanding of the command words. Finally, repetition of the same point but using different words only serves to waste valuable examination time.



nebosh

The National Examination
Board in Occupational
Safety and Health

Dominus Way
Meridian Business Park
Leicester LE19 1QW

telephone +44 (0)116 2634700
fax +44 (0)116 2824000
email info@nebosh.org.uk
www.nebosh.org.uk