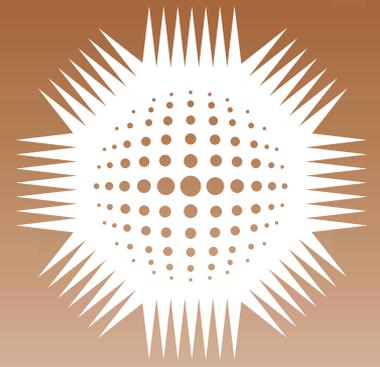


April - June 2015

Examiners' Report

NEBOSH National Certificate in Construction Health and Safety (NCC1)



nebosh



Examiners' Report

NEBOSH NATIONAL CERTIFICATE IN IN CONSTRUCTION HEALTH AND SAFETY

UNIT NCC1: MANAGING AND CONTROLLING HAZARDS IN CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

APRIL – JUNE 2015



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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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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 NCC1 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 Certificate in Construction Health and Safety' which is available via the NEBOSH website. In particular, the guide sets out in detail the syllabus content for NCC1 and tutor reference documents for each Element. Please note that this examination period covers both the May 2010 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 NCC1 'Example question paper and Examiners' feedback on expected answers' which provides example questions and details Examiners' expectations and typical areas of underperformance.

Unit NCC1

Managing and controlling hazards in construction activities

Candidate performance

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

Learning outcomes

Candidates performed well in these areas of the syllabus:

7.3 Outline the principles of fire prevention and the prevention of fire spread in construction workplaces

Candidates were expected to adopt control measures for combustible materials and ignition sources and performed well with this aspect when a practical scenario was outlined.

8.4 Outline control measures that should be used to reduce the risk of ill-health from exposure to hazardous substances

Candidates were expected to demonstrate an understanding of specific health issues and control measures associated with a variety of activities in the construction industry. This incorporates prevention of exposure, acknowledgement of exposure limits, principles of good practice and additional controls with substances associated with cancer and asthma.

Candidates revealed a solid understanding of health surveillance within the content of this learning outcome.

9.2 Outline the health effects associated with exposure to vibration and appropriate control measures

Candidates were expected to relay the effects on the body of exposure to vibration, with particular reference to hand-arm vibration and whole body vibration and the corresponding control measures to minimise risk.

Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of health effects and control measures with hand-arm vibration.

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

3.1 Explain the hazards and control measures for the safe movement of vehicles/plant within a construction environment, including when using public highways as a workplace

Candidates were expected to explain the hazards and control measures with the safe movement of vehicles and plant within a construction environment. These should have included hazards leading to loss of control or overturning of vehicles, collisions with other vehicles/plant, and loading and unloading issues.

Candidates tended to polarise around generic driver error and misuse of drugs issues rather than a wider variety of additional control measures.

5.2 Outline the hazards and control measures for hand-held tools, powered and non-powered

Candidates were expected to relay an understanding of control measures with nominated equipment such as pneumatic drill/chisel, electric drill, sander, pneumatic nail guns and chainsaws.

Some candidates experienced difficulty in identifying with some of these commonly used tools within construction, particularly the hazards and corresponding control measures required for safe use.

6.2 Outline the control measures that should be taken when working with electrical systems or using electrical equipment

Candidates need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of the control measures that should be taken when working with electrical systems or using electrical equipment including temporary electrical supplies.

Some candidates displayed limited understanding of the planning and preparation associated with electrical working. In addition, many candidates relayed incorrect responses relating to overhead and underground electrical services.

While candidates generally understood this learning outcome, the quality of some candidate responses suggested room for improvement for candidates and course provision.

Examination technique

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

Candidates did not respond effectively to the command word

Examiners reported that many candidates provided insufficient detail in answers in order to satisfy the required depth of information elicited by the command word in the question.

The learning outcomes in the syllabus guide dictate the depth of answer that a candidate would be expected to provide and the questions set contain command words that reflect these learning outcomes. All Examiners reported that candidates frequently responded with insufficient depth to the command word specified. For example, candidates frequently provided listed answers to an 'outline' command word and were not awarded all the marks available for the corresponding question.

In contrast, candidates occasionally provided excessive information for the command words such as 'give' or 'identify' and wasted valuable time, although overall marks awarded were unaffected. If a question or part of a question specifies identification of hazards or risks there is no need to identify control measures too. Unnecessary additional information consumes valuable time.

Course providers should ensure that learning materials complement the command words in the syllabus guide and sufficient time is given to advising candidates on suitable examination technique during a course of study.

Candidates misread/misinterpreted the question

Questions set for the NEBOSH Construction Certificate relate directly to learning outcomes specified within the associated syllabus guide. The syllabus guide requires that candidates are sufficiently prepared to provide the relevant depth of answer (see command words below) across a broad range of topic areas. For example, a candidate could be asked about the general topic area of maintenance but may be requested to elaborate on the specific application of maintenance applied to a practical scenario in the construction industry.

Examiners reported that the majority of answers did not relate to the specifics within the question and therefore marks were not gained. This approach may have been due to rote-learning but could equally be attributed to not reading the question correctly, resulting in lengthy answers that did not answer the question. Examiners reported that candidates did not appear to take enough care in reading the questions and understanding them before committing to write down an answer. Examiners reported that candidates still provided a lot of irrelevant answers.

Candidates are advised to allow sufficient time to read and re-read the question in order to understand the key requirements. Underlining or highlighting key words in the question can assist in keeping focused and simple mind maps or answer plans are useful. However, candidates must be conscious of the overall examination time too.

Candidates did not answer all of the questions

A number of candidates did not answer all the questions. Not attempting all the questions on the question paper will significantly disadvantage any candidate and deprive them of potential valuable marks. In addition, Examiners relayed that on more than one occasion candidates did not distinguish between parts (a) and (b) of the question with some answering part (a) with part (b) answers and vice versa.

Examiners remarked that course providers may need to consider taking more time to explain how to answer questions with candidates, or how to adopt an answer plan technique.

Command words

The command words below are listed in the order of being the most challenging for candidates:

Outline

Examiners reported that the command word 'outline' challenged many candidates. Insufficient detail was provided in response to the principal features or parts of the subject matter requested when 'outline' was specified in the question. Exhaustive descriptions are not required for 'outline' but limited answers like single words or listed answers do not satisfy the command word requirements.

If the use of the command word in everyday language or conversation is considered it may help the candidate understand what is required. Asked to '**outline** measures necessary to protect other persons at work' if a candidate answers with 'kick boards, netting and PPE' this would be insufficient as this represents a listed answer. However, 'the use of kick boards to prevent tools or equipment being kicked off elevated platforms, laying of fine mesh netting to prevent falling objects reaching pedestrians and safety helmets for visitors in the vicinity of the task' would be sufficient.

Identify

When providing a response to 'identify' the mental selection and naming of an answer that relates to the question should be sufficient. In most cases, one or two words would be sufficient to be awarded corresponding marks. Any further detail would not be required and impacts negatively on the time limit for completing the examination. For example, if the question was '**identify** factors affecting the stability of a scaffold' suitable responses would include component integrity, weather conditions and a stable base.

Give

'Give' is normally used in conjunction with a further requirement, such as '**give** the meaning of' or '**give** an example in **EACH** case'. Candidates were generally challenged with this command word when a meaning was required.

Describe

'Describe' requires a candidate to respond with a word picture that relates to an activity, process, etc.

If a candidate was asked to '**describe** control measures to minimise risk for workers potentially exposed to violence at work' and the response was 'security, training and worker history' this would not be in the context requested by the command word. However, if a candidate responded with 'utilising security staff to patrol the workplace in conjunction with closed circuit television to identify confrontational situations, suitable training for workers in avoiding confrontational situations and rehearsal of simulated confrontational situations involving utilisation of a suitable means of raising the alarm to summon help and detailed knowledge and management of workers, visitors who are historically prone to violence due to medical conditions, etc.' then this would gain marks.

Explain

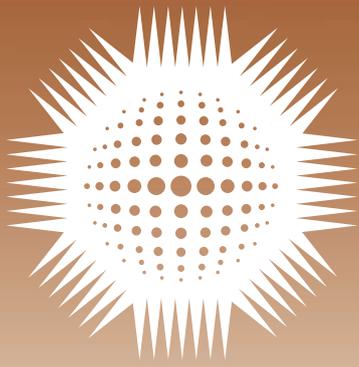
When a question specifies 'explain' the candidate is required to provide an understanding or make clear an idea or relationship. For example, '**explain** precautions necessary to control work at height', if a candidate responded with 'avoidance of the work in the first place, takes into account windy weather conditions, appropriate access to and from the work site' then this constitutes an outline but **not** an explanation. This would be insufficient to gain full marks as it does not provide a deep enough understanding or relationship from the specified command word or the context in which the question is asked. However, if a candidate responded with 'statutory legislation encourages avoidance of work at height so a variety of methods of avoidance should be considered; adverse weather should be considered because of the need to anchor scaffolding, provision of covering sheets in the event of rain and the possibility of lightning strikes and consideration of a suitably selected means of access based on a clear understanding of the task and the evaluated risks' this would merit the awarding of marks.

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 NCC1 examinations between April and June 2015 needed most improvement with vehicle/plant movement (learning outcome 3.1) where a greater understanding of hazards and control measures was required; hazards and control measures when working with specified hand-held power tools (learning outcome 5.2); and working with electrical systems (learning outcome 6.2) where more comprehension of control measures was required.

With regard to examination technique, candidates should concentrate more closely on focusing on reading, interpreting and understanding what the question is actually asking. Candidates frequently answered a question without acknowledging the command word and often responded with answers that did not relate to the question asked. Occasionally, the candidate unnecessarily wrote the question down or did not answer the question at all. Additional concentration on the command word and planning enough time to read, re-read and answer the questions would benefit candidates.



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