



Training & Competence Building in Safety

Some Basic Requirements

- All people using any equipment at work must be adequately trained to ensure health and safety in its use, supervision or management
- Some work activities require detailed formal training
- However, for most everyday activities involving work equipment adequate training can be / is delivered in-house using the manufacturer's instructions and the background knowledge / skills of more experienced workers and managers
- People should be competent for the work they undertake. Training (*along with knowledge, experience and skill*) helps develop such competence
- However, competence may (*in some cases*) necessarily include medical fitness and physical / mental aptitude for the activity

Need for Adequate Training

Employers' must ensure that all persons who use the work equipment have received '**adequate training**' for:

- *Health and Safety*
- *Safe Methods to be adopted when using work equipment*
- *Risks associated with such usage*
- *General precautions to be taken*

The requirements for '**adequate training**' will vary according to the following:

- *Job or activity*
- *Existing competence of workers*
- *Circumstances of work (e.g. degree of supervision)*
- *Work equipment etc.*

Training Techniques - Essentials

Training techniques used can vary according to:

- *Risk accompanied*
- *Complexity of the task*
- *Work equipment used*
- *Existing competence of staff*

Training techniques include:

- *Self-study, e.g. reading manufacturer's manual and associated instructions*
- *Simple in-house instructions and demonstration with supervision*
- *Formal in-house training provided by competent, qualified or experienced staff – often coupled with some form of documented competence assessment*
- *Externally provided training (usually with a competence assessment) provided by suitably qualified people*

Training Techniques - Essentials (Contd...)

- Training may be undertaken on or off the job but should normally take place within working hours and at no cost to the employee
- Training to be refreshed at suitable intervals to ensure the competency level of workers
- Changes in work equipment, system of work or introduction of new equipment require additional training to ensure health and safety
- All people using/ supervising/ managing work equipment should be sufficiently competent in respect of safety. Competence may include (*in some cases*) minimum medical fitness (*e.g. for driving vehicles*) and have either/ both physical and mental aptitude (*e.g. the ability to climb and work at height to operate a tower crane*) as well as knowledge and skill
- Competence, although, is not defined for work tasks where there are minimum training requirements, which assist in gaining sufficient competence to undertake tasks safely and without any risk to self and others

Why is competence important?

Definition of Competence:

‘Competence’ can be defined as the ability to undertake responsibilities and perform activities to a recognized standard on a regular basis. It is a combination of **skill, experience and knowledge.**”

Inadequate management of competence not only contributes to disasters but also to fatalities, personal injuries and ill health

Managing human failures is essential to prevent major accidents, occupational accidents and ill health; which can cost businesses money, reputation and potential threat to their continued existence

Successful businesses achieve high productivity and quality by:

- **Ensuring health and safety**
- **Combining good technology with the best work systems**
- **Developing a skilled workforce with well-designed jobs matching individuals’ abilities**

Why is good communication important?

- Communication is very important in a wide range of critical tasks and activities related to safety
- Spoken and written communication can be critical in maintaining safety
- General communication includes various safety information, communications between team members or between different teams during operations or maintenance work and emergency communications
- All personnel including employees, contractors and visitors, should have access to key information to help them negotiate the hazards in the work place safely
- Key findings from risk assessments, induction at site, evacuation drills, emergency instructions, safety warnings etc. should be accessible to all employees

Why is Organizational Culture important?

An organization's culture can have as big an influence on safety outcomes as the safety management system

- **'Safety Culture'** is a subset of the overall organizational or company culture
- Generally, many companies refer to inclination of their employees to comply with rules or act safely or unsafely as 'Safety Culture'
- However, the culture and style of management is significant (*for e.g. a natural, unconscious bias for production over safety, or a tendency to focus on the short-term and being highly reactive*)
- Success normally comes from good leadership, good worker involvement and good organizational communication

Learning Organizations

- A **learning organization** not only values and encourages learning from its own experiences, but looks beyond itself for lessons, and avoids complacency
- Near misses, incidents and accidents should be thoroughly investigated by those trained in investigation techniques
- Importantly, the lessons learnt from such investigations should be communicated widely and recommendations should be implemented swiftly

Learning organisations are characterised by 'chronic unease', for example, they actively seek out information even in areas that appear to be running smoothly. They also 'amplify weak signals' - straining to hear and learn from apparently weak signals, e.g. from the frontline.

In an organization that does not learn, incident investigations highlight a failure to implement earlier recommendations

Barriers to organisational learning

- An undue focus on the immediate event rather than on the root causes of problems;
- Latching onto one superficial cause or learning point;
- Failure to address the issues of blame, accountability, responsibility and discipline;
- A culture of individual ‘error’ rather than one that takes a systems approach;
- ‘Scapegoating’ rather than addressing deep-rooted organisational problems;
- Changes among key personnel within organisations and teams;
- Ineffective communication and other information difficulties;
- Tackling small individual issues, rather than addressing more fundamental change;
- Pride in individual and organisational expertise leading to denial, and a disregard for external sources of lessons;
- Not listening to ‘bad news’ and a failure to challenge existing systems, procedures and structures;
- Inability to recognise the financial costs of failure, thus losing a powerful incentive for organisations to change.

Conclusion

- Training & Competence building (especially in Safety) plays a major role in the success of an organisation in today's competitive scenario
- Competence building particularly in the area of safety can lead to a better, safe & productive environment where all employees contribute to their maximum towards organizational growth
- The role of the employer is vital and organisations need to be **proactive** rather than **reactive** in creating an environment where the safety & health of each employee is ensured



Thank You