

Training, Information and Compliance

A Brief Guide



Employers know that they should provide health and safety training; they also know they need to take steps to help ensure compliance in order to avoid workplace claims and/or possible prosecution. Over the years I have witnessed various approaches to achieve the above, ranging from excellent to total apathy. I have also experienced organisations spending large chunks of their budget on training without any real strategy.

When it comes to compliance the areas of legislation are many, depending on the workplace activity, therefore are beyond the scope of this article. However below are some simple guidelines we should consider when planning for the future

The Law

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 requires that *'it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees'*.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 *requires you to provide whatever information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of your employees.*

This is expanded by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, *which identify situations where health and safety training is particularly important, e.g. when people start work, on exposure to new or increased risks and where existing skills may have become rusty or need updating.*

Reasonably practicable is defined in case law *Edwards v National Coal Board (1949) All ER 743*

The Costs of Poor Health and Safety Management

- Dissatisfied staff – increased turnover
- Loss of business/closure
- Loss of production
- Legal costs – fines, compensation
- Increased number of accidents
- Cost of treatment, clean-ups etc.
- Personal injury and suffering, loss of wages and domestic disruption.

The cost to Britain is an estimated 14.1 billion for workplace illness and injuries a year, which is a staggering amount of money (9.3 + 4.8 respectively)

The Benefits of Good Health and Safety Management

- Higher staff morale and retention
- Good reputation and satisfied customers
- Increased productivity
- Legal compliance
- Reduced risk of accidents
- Reduced costs.
- Lower insurance premiums
- Helps promote a strong health and safety culture

Training

The Health and Safety Executive defines training as follows;

'Training is helping people to learn how to do something, telling people what they should or shouldn't do, or simply giving them information'.

The reference to *simply giving them information* is an important point because when instruction is mentioned people often envisage running down to the bank and paying a training provider when in fact this is not always necessary. A simple verbal explanation with an instruction sheet will sometimes suffice, for example, you purchase a new photo copier with controls that may be slightly different to the old one. It is fine for an experienced user to give instruction however it is good practice to record that the instruction has taken place recording time, date, to whom, by whom and signed.

'Training should be relevant and effective, relevant in respect of the competency required by the individual to carry out their role effectively and safely'. (HSE)

Take time to consider whether the training you are proposing is appropriate to the employees role e.g. would an operative generally require the same level of health and safety knowledge as an operations manager.

Does the training fit with any future development plans, either for the individual (planned role change) or the organisations competency strategy?

We all have different learning styles and capabilities so consider whether the employee comfortable with the training level you are proposing and what adjustments might need to be made.

Face to Face or E-learning

I am not going to be hypocritical and say that my company does not supply e-learning courses because we do. The fact is this has become a preference for some organisations and individuals. However, if I'm totally honest I truly believe the value of face to face training and human interaction cannot be underestimated.

Further information can be found by clicking on the following link;
<http://www.scorpionsafety.co.uk/scorpion-articles.shtml>

Planning

The cost of training can be a strain on any organisations budget therefore it is important the type of training you chose is right for the business and the employee.

Here are some simple questions that should be asked when deciding on your training strategy;

- Why is the training required
- Who should I train
- What level of training is required to improve staff competence
- Is the training relevant to the employee role
- How will the training be delivered
- Is the training regulated by a reputable Awarding Organisation

Feedback

Feedback is a very important tool for monitoring the effectiveness of any training that has taken place. I always encourage candidates to complete evaluation forms and more importantly to be truthful with their comments. This not only gives the awarding organisations the opportunity to learn and improve on their training products but also helps the tutor to improve on their own performance.

Feedback is a two way process therefore the process shouldn't stop just because the course has ended and the examinations have taken place.

Compliance

With the recently introduced changes to the sentencing laws compliance has become even more of a concern for employers. These changes affect not only employers but also possible prosecution of employees.

Giving employees relevant and effective health and safety training will help to reduce the risk however where there are gaps in their knowledge why not consider a Competent Person Service. This can be a cost effective way to resolve issues while allowing employers and employees to get on with their job. A competent person service is normally paid for by way of a monthly payment. The health and safety advisor will be available to give support and answer questions via email or over the telephone, subject to individual terms and conditions.

For more information regarding this service please email
mick@scorpionsafety.co.uk

As stated at the beginning of this article the scope of legislation is too large to include in this article therefore it is important that professional advice is sought in areas of doubt.

Fire Safety

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order requires the 'responsible person' to carry out a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks on the premises. This is usually carried out annually, either in-house or by a competent external provider Further information can be found by clicking on the following link;

<http://www.scorpionsafety.co.uk/fire-safety.html>

Basic Fire Awareness is usually included in most Level 1 and 2 Health and Safety in the Workplace courses. However those who have specific responsibilities e.g. Fire Warden/Marshal should undertake further training to include this role. Further information regarding fire training can be found by clicking on the following link;

<http://www.scorpionsafety.co.uk/courses.html>

Summary

I believe that health and safety doesn't have to be over complicated or unnecessarily expensive. There are some requirements in law that are absolute and cannot be ignored regardless of cost, however if we get the basics right other issues can be dealt with in isolation. I say this because there will always be the odd situation that crops up that need to be resolved, this can often be done by making a simple phone call to a health and safety professional.

I confess to some self-promotion nevertheless I hope this article has been of some help. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Michael Kersey
Director

E. mick@scorpionsafety.co.uk

P. 01394 617171

W. www.scorpionsafety.co.uk

T. @MickSafety

Did you know that in 40% percent of ill health in the workplace was attributed to stress (2013/14) and that teaching and education was one of the highest sectors

References;

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics/cost.htm>
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/37/section/2>
indg 345 **Health and safety training** A brief guide

Labour Force Survey <http://www.hse.gov.uk/Statistics>