Supplement for the RMS study book for the

NEBOSH International General Certificate 6th Edition

Contents

There have been only minor amendments made to the October 2018 specification as part of NEBOSH redevelopment, focusing on learning outcomes, legislation and restructuring of content. The current specification is now June 2025, please refer to the NEBOSH website for further information.

This document contains only new content and any key amendments to supplement the RMS study book for the NEBOSH International General Certificate Sixth Edition.

Supplement

USE OF THE TERM 'INCIDENT'

There are various terms that can be used interchangeably when referring to incidents. This includes accident (generally used when there has been actual harm/ill-health/damage caused) or near miss/close call (generally used when there has been the potential for harm/ill-health/damage to be caused but it did not actually occur in that instance).

NEBOSH has, therefore, adopted the approach taken in the 'Occupational health and safety management systems' (ISO 45001) standard in that an incident is:

An event that happens in the workplace that causes (or has the potential to cause) harm, injury, ill-health or damage.

When the term 'incident' is used in an assessment, the context of the question and other supporting information will provide context for the term. For example, if a question in a scenario-based assessment is asking about the outcome of an incident, information will be provided in the scenario to give context. This could be something like 'the worker fell from a ladder and broke their leg'.

The term 'accident' may still occur in the syllabus if this is a recognised term or part of a title, eg, Reason's model of accident causation etc.

1 Element 1: Why we should manage workplace health and safety

1.1 - Morals and money

Moral and societal expectations [NEW CONTENT] of good standards of health and safety

General Argument

The main reasons why organisations should manage workplace health and safety are:

1) Moral

Work-related injuries and ill-health result in a great deal of pain and suffering for those affected. Clearly, we must all do everything we can to avoid this.

2) Societal/Legal

One of the ways societies express their expectations is in the form of legal requirements of good standards of health and safety, which aim to protect the health and safety of workers and others that might be affected by the organisation's work activities.

3) Financial

Incidents at work cost a great deal of money, particularly when the costs of fines and compensation are considered. There are also many other less obvious costs that can be very significant, including the costs relating to interruption to production, harm to the quality of our products or damage to the environment. Costs can be enormous - and perhaps already are many times larger than most individuals expect.

MORAL AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS OF GOOD STANDARDS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY

Moral

The moral reason for achieving good standards of health and safety in work activities is founded on the desire to prevent harm to those that may be affected by the work activities.

Workplace injuries and ill-health can result in a great deal of pain and suffering for those affected. A worker should not have to expect that, by coming to work, their life is at risk. They should also not expect to be affected by hazardous substances that could shorten their life or cause long-term harm. Nor should others be adversely affected by work activities. Injuries and ill-health could impact on a worker's ability to work and mean their family must take care of them. The financial hardship due to this is likely to lead to pressure on their home life and socially, in turn affecting their and their family's well-being.

Worldwide the scale of workplace harm and therefore the human cost is enormous. The ILO established that nearly 3 million people die of work-related injuries and diseases each year. In addition, the ILO estimates that nearly 400 million workers worldwide sustain non-fatal work injuries.

The following information is provided as an example of the scale and type of one country's harm to workers. The UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) statistics revealed that 124 workers were killed at work during the year 2024/25, an increase of 12 from the previous year. In addition, a further 92 people who were not at work were killed in work-related incidents.

This refers to members of the public who were in a workplace but were not working themselves. The construction industry (35) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (15) accounted for most of these. 95% of victims were male of which 40% were over the age of sixty. Falls from height, being struck by a vehicle and being struck by a moving object accounted for approximately 53 of these deaths. In the same period there were 604,000 non-fatal injuries reported. Slips, trips and falls on the level accounted for 30% of all non-fatal injuries. The second most common injuries were sustained whilst lifting, handling or carrying, representing 18%, struck by a moving object represented 11% of injuries, and violent acts made up 9% of the non-fatal injuries.

In addition to work-related injuries, it was reported in 2024/25 that 1.7 million people were suffering from an illness (long-standing as well as new cases) they believed was caused or made worse by their current or past work. Of these illnesses over 0.72 million of them were new conditions that started during the year. In 2023, 2,218 people died from mesothelioma, a type of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos fibres that usually starts in the membrane located between the lungs and chest wall. Thousands more people died from other occupational cancers and diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which is a work-related lung disease caused by breathing in certain dusts, fumes, chemicals or gases.

A total of 33.7 million days were lost due to work-related harm, 30.8 million days lost were due to work-related ill-health and 6 million due to workplace injury. The total cost of work-related ill-health and injury was estimated at £21.6 billion in 2024/25.

The statistics detailed are relevant to the UK but irrespective of the country involved, the types of injuries arising from incidents tend to follow broad trends. Falling from height, being struck by a vehicle and being struck by a falling object are primary causes of work-related deaths, whereas manual handling and slips, trips and falls are significant causes of other injuries leading to lost time.

It can be seen by the statistics outlined that harm to people from work-related activities is very large and provides a strong moral reason to ensure good health and safety in the workplace.

Taking care not to harm people through work activities is a widely accepted moral custom of conduct and the right thing to do. This is reflected in many of the world's religions and cultures. This moral reason to prevent harm is usually further reinforced by societal expectations of behaviour, which requires the consideration of others that may be affected by interaction with them. In particular, this includes work activities and how they may harm those involved or affected by the activity.

Reflecting moral needs, the ILO ratified a declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work, which includes the right to a safe and healthy working environment. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998 and amended in 2022, is an expression of commitment by governments, employers' and workers' organisations to uphold basic human values - values that are vital to our social and economic lives. It affirms the obligations and commitments that are inherent in membership of the ILO, namely:

- Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour.
- Effective abolition of child labour.
- Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- A safe and healthy working environment.

Ensuring good health and safety standards at work should therefore be seen as the right way for organisations to conduct themselves and harming people through work activities as the wrong way. The Chief Executive Officer/Top Manager and other Directors/Managers of an organisation are responsible for the governance of that organisation. Society expects that the organisation will be operated with due regard to health and safety and the leadership team of the organisation has a moral (and often legal) duty to achieve health and safety in their workplaces.

Examples of positive moral management of health and safety that can lead to good standards include:

- Prioritising health and safety on an equal basis to other business needs, for example production.
- Giving time to manage health and safety proactively.
- Considering risks and prioritising collective control measures to minimise risks.
- Considering and minimising the effects work and working hours has on worker fatigue and stress.
- Providing resources for equipment and other needs to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.
- Providing health and safety systems of work and procedures.
- At the earliest opportunity providing workers and managers with the training, so they have the knowledge and skills to keep themselves and others safe and healthy.
- Providing new workers with time with a suitable trainer to develop skills and competence.
- Providing adequate and suitable supervision.
- Listening to workers concerns about health and safety.
- Treating workers with respect when they raise concerns about health and safety.

- Involving workers in decisions affecting their health and safety.
- Obtaining assistance from a health and safety professional when required.
- Promptly dealing with hazards that arise.
- When incidents happen, not blame workers before investigating the root causes.
- Learning from incidents and putting in measures to prevent a recurrence.
- When incidents happen and workers are harmed, treating them with dignity and supporting them, for example by promptly providing them with first-aid or getting external medical help.

Societal

Societal expectations of good standards of health and safety vary across the world. In established market economies societal expectation of standards of health and safety is at its strongest, causing organisations to have good standards that prevent injury and ill-health. In developing market economies, the societal expectations of good standards of health and safety may be more of an aspiration and have less influence, leading to a smaller number of organisations achieving good standards.

Societal expectations tend to influence health and safety standards in two ways:

1) Strategically, the general mass of the public influence societal expectations concerning tolerance or intolerance of specific workplace risks or situations, for example, intolerance of risks of work-related major disasters.

2) Locally, these influences tend to surround tolerance or intolerance of the practices of a specific organisation. This influence is often strongest following an incident in an organisation and has led to the closure of some smaller organisations.

This societal expectation is often expressed in both civil law and criminal law as, without the potential for litigation or regulatory action, many employers would not act upon their moral obligation to provide protection. In many countries, it is a specific legal requirement to safeguard the health and safety of workers and others that might be affected by an employer's work activities.

2 Element 2: How health and safety management systems work and what they look like

2.1 - Key components of health and safety management systems

The benefits and limitations [NEW CONTENT] of formal/certified and informal health and safety management systems

Limitations

The limitations of formal management systems is that they could be overly bureaucratic and less responsive to the need to change. They could require specialist knowledge and expertise related to the external standards the formal system needs to conform to or comply with. Informal systems may only require a lower level of resource, time and expertise, particularly as an organisation with an informal management system primarily needs to ensure that their expectations are being met by the system.

The external standards may be complex and less relevant for smaller, low risk organisations and cause an organisation to implement overly complicated processes and procedures that are less relevant and may not work well in practice. If the formal system requires organisations to subscribe to periodic certification this can introduce additional costs.

3 Element 3: Managing risk - understanding people and processes

3.2 - Improving health and safety culture

The impact of the following on health and safety culture:

- Use and effectiveness of different types of internal communication.

Digital media

Digital media can be a particularly effective tool for communicating health and safety messages as it can be viewed by a single person or used for larger audiences. Digital media is often made available through the internet, enabling it to be provided from a main source in an organisation to individuals that are difficult to communicate with by traditional means because of their location or work patterns. A form of digital media that is growing in use is electronic products that take a student through structure learning and provide them with an on-line assessment for them to confirm their understanding.

These e-learning products are a form of digital media that lends itself to the induction of workers/contractors and providing awareness.

Company intranet

Intranets use Internet Protocol technology to share information, operational systems, or computing ser-vices within an organisation. A company intranet is a powerful internal communications tool, which can unify the whole team, provide access to essential health and safety information and improve health and safety performance. An intranet can help managers and workers find information more easily and ultimately perform their health and safety duties more effectively. They are particularly useful in enabling the provision and maintenance of the most up to date health and safety policy documents and procedures to be made available. The intranet assists with document control as it enables a single controlled copy to be made available on demand to multiple users.

The same system can be used to communicate health and safety issues and solutions on a timely basis by posting alerts, newsletters and health and safety instructions to the intranet. An intranet can also be used to provide web-based health and safety tools that can assist in the management of health and safe-ty, for example, tools to assist in the risk assessment process or produce reports on health and safety. The intranet enables remote reporting and therefore communication of pro-active and reactive health and safety matters, including incidents that may take place in the workplace.

4 Element 4: Health and safety monitoring and measuring

CONFIRMATION OF INCIDENT DEFINITIONS (IMMEDIATE, UNDERLYING AND ROOT CAUSES)

There are no universal definitions of immediate, underlying and root causes. For clarity, NEBOSH use the definitions from HSG245 on page 6 (Investigating accidents and incidents: A workbook for employers, unions, safety representatives and safety professionals HSG245):

- Immediate cause: the agent or injury or ill health (the blade, the substance, the dust, etc).
- Underlying cause: unsafe acts and unsafe conditions (the guard removed, the ventilation switched off, etc).
- Root cause: the failure from which all other failings grow, often remote in time and space from the adverse event (eg failure to identify training needs and assess competence, low priority given to risk assessment, etc).

8 Element 8: General workplace issues

8.3 Safe working in confined spaces

The main hazards and associated risks [NEW CONTENT] with working within a confined space

Hazards and associated risks of confined spaces

The main hazards and associated risks with working within a confined space include:

Hazard	Associated Risk
Flammable vapours, dusts, or excess oxygen	Fire or explosion, potentially leading to severe burns, fatalities, or structural damage
Excessive heat	Heat stress or heatstroke, which can cause confusion, loss of consciousness, or death if not addressed promptly
Toxic gases, fumes or vapours, or oxygen deficiency	Asphyxiation, respiratory failure, or unconsciousness, often without warning due to the insidious nature of gas exposure
Rising liquid levels	Drowning, especially where workers cannot evacuate the space quickly due to restricted access
Free-flowing solids, for example, grain, sand	Entrapment and asphyxiation from being engulfed, which can occur rapidly and without chance of escape
High dust concentrations	Respiratory issues such as asthma, silicosis, or other long-term lung damage particularly relevant in environments like flour silos or cement hoppers
Moving parts of machinery	Serious injury or fatality from impact, crushing, or entanglement, especially in tight working conditions where escape or reaction time is limited
Steam or hot gases	Burns or scalds, which may be severe depending on the exposure and temperature
Restricted entry/exit or space limitations	Delayed escape or rescue in emergencies, increased difficulty in using PPE effectively, and potential for panic or injury due to limited mobility

11 Element 11: Electricity

11.1 Hazards and risks

Workplace electrical equipment, including portable: overheating of portable equipment when charging) [NEW CONTENT].

OVERHEATING OF PORTABLE EQUIPMENT WHEN CHARGING

Overheating of portable equipment when charging is a growing concern on construction sites, particularly with the increasing use of battery-powered tools and devices. Overheating of batteries used in portable equipment can lead to the equipment reaching high temperatures that could cause the equipment or surrounding materials in contact with it to melt or ignite. In addition, these high temperatures could cause the battery's electrolyte to break down, leading to short circuits and fires. Where the internal heat generated by the process of charging is not dissipated, it can lead to thermal runaway, where it causes further heat build-up in the battery and decomposition of the electrolyte. This, in turn, builds up gases and internal pressure inside the battery, resulting in fire or explosion and release of toxic gases. If a lithium-ion battery experiences thermal runaway it can very quickly catch fire and produce temperatures of 500°C.

Overheating of batteries can occur due to a number of reasons:

- Using charging equipment that is not compatible with the batteries and delivers too rapid a charge. This can overcharge the battery causing more heat to be generated than can be dissipated.
- Using charging equipment that is faulty and fails to stop the charge when the correct level of charge is achieved.
- Charging equipment in unsuitable conditions can lead to excessive heat build-up - such as in direct sunlight, in workplaces with hot processes or high ambient temperatures.
- Damage to and aging of batteries can compromise internal structural integrity and increase resistance, causing increased heat when charging.

To prevent overheating, charging should take place in well-ventilated, designated areas away from combustible materials, using manufacturer-approved chargers and undamaged leads. Equipment should be regularly inspected for signs of wear, overheating, or damage, and workers should be trained to follow safe charging procedures.

A.1 Changes to the Unit IG2 Assessment

CHANGES TO THE UNIT IG2 RISK ASSESSMENT

Now entitled GIC2, this assessment will continue as a practical risk assessment but with changes to the marking which will move from met/not met to a points-based marking system, with a mark breakdown document automatically issued to the learner.

The pass mark will be 60%.

UNIT GIC2 - RISK ASSESSMENT

The aim of this unit is to assess a learner's ability to complete successfully a health and safety risk assessment in their workplace and to prioritise (with justification) **one** action. The risk assessment should not take place until you have completed your studies of the whole of the IGC syllabus (elements 1 to 11).

The time allowed by NEBOSH to complete the assessment is not restricted, but it is advised that learners should aim to complete the full risk assessment documentation within **four hours**. This indicates an acceptable amount of time that could produce an acceptable result.

The actual time taken will depend on the learner, the type of workplace and the method used to produce the risk assessment, i.e. either handwritten or electronic format.

Always refer to your Learning Partner for instructions on when to carry out the risk assessment and the deadline for submission of your completed submission, please make sure you are clear about when and where you will carry out the risk assessment.

The risk assessment format is based on the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) recommended approach. . You can refer to the risk assessment guidance and examples on the HSE website 'Managing risks and risk assessment at work'.

It is essential that you refer to the NEBOSH supporting document - Unit GIC2: Risk assessment - Guidance and information for learners and Learning Partners, available for download from the NEBOSH website (www.nebosh.org.uk).

The stages of the assessment are as follows:

Stage 1. Background

Stage 2. Risk assessment.

Stage 3. Hazard prioritisation.

Stage 4. Communicate, check, review.

Figure A-1:GIC2 Risk assessment stages.
Source: RMS.

The following will give you some tips on what to address at each stage.

1. Description of the organisation and the risk assessment methodology used

Background: You must give a clear and concise description of the organisation which will "paint a mental picture" for the examiner. You may create a pseudonym for the organisation if you are concerned about confidentiality.

You should also cover how many workers are employed by the organisation, their typical roles, and a description of the area or process to be included in the risk assessment.

Methodology used: In this section you need to describe how you carried out the assessment. As a minimum, you should include: the sources of information that you consulted, who you spoke to and how the hazards and controls were identified.

Stage 2. Risk assessment

This is the section where you must carry out a thorough risk assessment of the organisation by completing **all** the columns on the risk assessment form provided.

Column 1 – Hazard category and hazard description

You must address at least **ten** different **hazards** that cover at least **five** different **hazard categories**.

Remember, hazards are usually defined as "those things that have the potential to cause harm". Hazard categories are the topic headings which can be found in elements 5 to 11 of the NGC syllabus or as listed on page 11 of the NEBOSH GNC2 guidance.

Column 2 - Who might be harmed and how?

At this stage you must think about those who could be affected by the hazard. Of course, this will include those workers who are doing the task, but you should also consider other people who may be more vulnerable, i.e. contractors, pregnant workers, young people, people with disabilities, etc.

You should then describe the task that is being done and the consequences of exposure to the hazard, for example, the physical injury or ill-health effect.

Columns 3 and 4 – "What are you already doing" and "What further actions/controls are required?"

Columns 3 and 4 work together. If you identify a hazard that is well controlled, there will be a lot of information in column 3 and little in column 4. Conversely, if a hazard is not controlled adequately, there will not be much information in column 3 but column 4 will contain a lot more.

Learners should avoid generic phrases being repeatedly used, for example, 'monitor' and 'train staff'.

You should give appropriate clarification by giving examples of appropriate monitoring and the type of training required.

Column 5 – Responsible person's job role

It is important for learners to understand that it is not their job to action all of recommendations. In this column learners should state the job title of the person responsible for ensuring that the actions are completed. The seniority of the person in the organisation should reflect the importance of the action(s) allocated to them. For example, formulating policy should be the responsibility of a director, whereas carrying out regular workplace inspections is the role of the office manager.

Column 6 – Timescales for further actions to be completed

Learners should identify timescales that are both practical and realistic to ensure that appropriate actions can be taken. You must select one of the following time frames as appropriate:

- **Immediate:** Actions that should be taken within hours to a few days, in order to address urgent risks that could cause immediate harm.

- **Medium term:** Actions that are typically implemented within a few weeks to a few months. They may require some planning/resources but are not as urgent as immediate actions.
- **Long term:** Actions that are planned and executed over several months to years and may involve significant changes to processes, infrastructure, or culture.

3. Hazard prioritisation with justification

At this stage learners should select **one** hazard from the risk assessment which is the highest priority then refer to Element 1 of the IGC syllabus and discuss the moral, legal and financial arguments to justify your selection. When discussing the legal argument, you must mention relevant legal standards.

Learners should also consider the likelihood and severity of loss occurring. For example, this discussion should consider the number of workers at risk, the severity of harm that may occur, the frequency and duration of exposure to the hazard, etc.

4. Communicate, review and check

The final part of the assessment is to: set a realistic review date for the risk assessment and say why you have chosen that review date, indicate how the findings of the risk assessment are to be communicated (verbal or written up date and the methods to be used, for example, email, noticeboards), who needs to know the information, and indicate how you will follow up on the risk assessment to check that the actions have been carried out.

An assessment pack is available from the NEBOSH website which includes everything required to complete the GIC2 assessment including guidance, helpful hints and tips, and the forms to use. This pack can be downloaded from the NEBOSH International General Certificate resources section available on the NEBOSH website.