Contents

Part 3 Safety in the Work Environment

Part 4 Hazards and Risk Assessments

Part 5 Specific Health and Safety Issues

Part 3

Safety in the Work Environment

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- Summarise the factors that contribute to safe and healthy working environments

- Outline the principles and procedures of good housekeeping in the workplace

- Explain the causes, prevention, emergency procedures, reporting and recording of accidents and dangerous occurrences

- Analyse the causes and prevention of fire-related events, including identification of emergency procedures, the fire triangle and fire equipment.

3.1 Safe and Healthy Work Environments

The main areas of interest in maintaining a safe work environment concern a collegial ownership of responsibility for safe practices, including an ongoing awareness of possible risks and hazards. Contributory factors can be seen as **proactive** – good housekeeping, recognising and preparing for specific risks and occupational hazards; and **reactive** – responding to, reporting and learning from accidents and critical incidents.

Monitoring and Measurements

The organisation's executive board of directors or other senior management team needs to ensure that it is kept informed of, and alerted to, relevant safety and health risk management issues. It is recommended that boards and other controlling bodies appoint one of their numbers to be a safety and health director. This officer will ensure that other directors are kept informed and that safety and health is actively managed on a daily basis. The board of directors or other senior management team needs to ensure that its safety and health responsibilities are properly discharged by:

- Reviewing its safety and health performance at least annually

- Ensuring that the safety statement reflects current board priorities

- Ensuring that its safety and health management system provides effective monitoring and reporting on safety and health performance or when circumstances change

- Appointing someone at senior management level who has executive responsibility for implementing its safety and health management system

- Ensuring that managers at all levels take their safety and health responsibilities seriously

- Being kept informed about any significant safety and health failures and of the outcome of the investigations into their causes

- Ensuring that safety and health risk management systems are in place and remain effective.

Procedures to monitor, measure and record safety and health performance regularly should be *developed, established and periodically reviewed*. The organisation should measure what it is doing to implement its safety and health policy to assess how effectively it is controlling risks, and how well it is developing a positive safety and health culture. A low accident rate, even over a period of years, is no guarantee that risks are being effectively controlled and that injuries, ill health or loss will not arise in the future. This is particularly true in an organisation where there is a low probability of accidents, but where major hazards are present. Here the historical record can be an unreliable, even deceptive, indicator of safety and health performance.

Like planning, *monitoring* safety and health performance against predetermined plans and standard should be a *line-management responsibility*. Monitoring also reinforces management's commitment to safety and health objectives in general and helps to develop a positive safety and health culture by rewarding positive work done to control risk. Two types of monitoring are required:

1. **Active systems** that monitor the design, development, installation and operation of management arrangements, safety systems and workplace precautions.

2.   **Reactive systems** that monitor accidents, ill health, incidents and other evidence of deficient safety and health performance.

Auditing and Reviewing Performance

Monitoring provides the information to let the organisation review activities and decide how to improve performance. Auditing and performance review are the final steps in the safety and health management *control cycle*. They constitute the 'feedback loop' that enables an organisation to reinforce, maintain and develop its ability to reduce risks to the fullest possible extent and to ensure the continued effectiveness of its safety and health management system. Audits, by the organisation's own staff or outsiders, complement monitoring activities by looking to see if the safety and health management systems are actually achieving the right results. Results from measuring performance should be combined with information from audits to improve the organisation's overall approach to safety and health management.

Audit Protocols

Audit protocols and procedures should be established, documented and maintained and should include the following:

● Allocation of resources

● Personnel requirements, including those of the audit team; auditors should have the appropriate training and skills so that they can assess physical, human and other factors and use procedures as well as documents or records wherever possible. Auditors should be independent of the activity being audited and should be able to access support from a wider range of specialists if necessary

- Methodologies for conducting and documenting the audits, which may include checklists, questionnaires, interviews, measurement and direct observation

- Procedures for reporting audit findings to those responsible to facilitate timely corrective action and improvement

- A system for auditing: tracking the implementation of audit recommendations to include addressing the possible need for changes to safety and health policy, objectives and other elements of the safety and health management system.

Audit Records

The organisation should establish and maintain audit records consistent with the safety and health management system records. Their retention times should be established and should comply with legal requirements.

3.2 Emergency Preparedness and Response

The organisation should establish and maintain procedures for responding to accidents and emergency situation, and to prevent and minimise the safety and health impacts associated with them.

Emergency planning should cover:

- Developing emergency *plans*

- *Testing and rehearsing* these plans and related equipment, including firefighting equipment and fire alarms

- *Training* personnel on what to do in the event of an emergency, particularly those people who have to carry out duties (e.g. firefighting teams, first-aiders)