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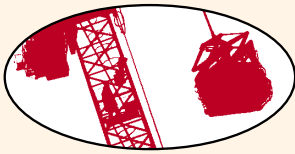
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Using Consultation to Improve Safety on Construction Sites

Joint Safety Council for the Construction Industry
CHASE Co-operative Health and Safety Engagement



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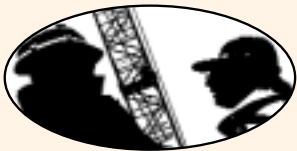
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Introduction

The Joint Safety Council for the Construction Industry is pleased to present this guidance manual on safety consultation. Our council is a partnership between employers and trade unions, with representatives from the Construction Industry Federation and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. We have the common objective of improving safety in the construction industry.

This manual is the final part of a three-part project on safety consultation in the construction industry and has been supported by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. The project involved a number of pilot training courses and the development of training course material for joint training of workers' safety representatives and safety advisors. Further information about the project is available from the websites of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (www.ictu.ie) and the Construction Industry Federation (www.cif.ie).

The material contained in this manual is designed as a resource for construction companies and workers' safety representatives who wish to improve their safety performance by developing and using consultation and communications structures at site level. We believe that safety advisors, safety officers and workers' safety representatives will find the information and advice presented here useful and relevant as they strive to make the best use of the possibilities presented by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2001.

When developing this manual we were fortunate to have contributions from a number of highly experienced safety advisors and safety representatives who participated in pilot training courses. Their assistance has influenced the contents of this manual and we are very grateful to them for their help.

We are also grateful to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work for supporting this project.

Fergus Whelan
Project Director
Co-operative Health and Safety Engagement (CHASE)



Objectives

The objectives of this programme are to promote understanding between company safety advisors and safety representatives, appreciate each other's perspectives, and facilitate working closer together on health and safety issues to achieve our common aim.



Why Consult about Safety?

A brief summary of the legal background

Section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989, obliges employers to consult workers about arrangements for their protection and the co-operation required by everyone in carrying out such arrangements. The Act obliges employees to take care of their own safety, the safety of others, and to co-operate with their employer to achieve a safe and healthy workplace.

Workers have the right to make representations to their employer on any matter concerning their safety, health or welfare in their place of work and the employer is duty-bound, as far as is reasonably practical, to take account of such representations.

The Act does not prescribe specific procedures to permit consultation. Guidelines produced by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) say that the type of consultation procedure is best determined at local level. However, the HSA suggests joint safety committees as one example.

The rights and obligations indicated above are repeated and reinforced in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 1993, and Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2001.

Therefore there are obligations on both employer and employee concerning safety in the workplace. Both share the common objective of having a safe place of work and, in order that this may be achieved, there should be ongoing consultation on this issue.

Safety advisors

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2001, require employers who employ more than 20 people on any one site, or 30 people on multiple sites, to appoint a safety officer whose role it is to advise the contractor on health and safety issues. This advisor may be a full time safety officer or, in smaller companies, a manager or supervisor who, as well as dealing with day-to-day issues, has a health and safety brief.



Safety representatives

The 1989 Act provides for the selection of safety representatives by the employees to represent their interests regarding health, safety and welfare at work. The Act obliges employers to facilitate employees in the election of their safety representative. The existence of a safety representative does not remove the obligation on the employer to consult workers or interfere with the right of any individual to make representations to his or her employer.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2001, extend the obligations about site safety consultation and specify how the selection of a site safety representative should take place. As specified in the 10th Schedule, it is a matter for the project supervisor, construction stage (PSCS), to facilitate workers to decide on the election or selection of a site safety representative. This can be done by:

- election by all
- selection through union procedures
- agreed selection through group of union arrangements
- if no person is selected, nomination of an individual by the PSCS

Note: Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2001, if there are normally more than 20 workers on a site, the PSCS must ensure a site safety representative is elected or selected.



Consultation: the Practical Issues

Safety within an organisation should be everybody's business. It should not be seen as an issue solely for the safety officer, safety advisor or safety representative. Management should plan and budget for it. Safety should be a priority consideration when organisational change or equipment changes are being considered. Employees should co-operate with management towards achieving a safe workplace.

Indeed, the culture within the organisation should involve everyone in the drive to eliminate accidents and occupational ill health. For this to succeed, there needs to be a working consultation mechanism in place to avoid the "them and us" scenario. Commitment, as in any walk of life, is won through consultation, consensus and co-operation.

Most accidents occur because people do not know about a danger, or they do not know how to cope with it. Usually before an accident occurs there are a number of warnings in the form of incidences or near misses. The problem is that the warnings are either not communicated to the right people or, if they are, they are not heeded. Structures need to be put in place to ensure the necessary information gets to, and is properly communicated with, the people who need to know.

Protection begins with information and training

Everyone on entering the place of work should be provided with sufficient information, instruction and training to permit them to work safely. This must be supplemented with ongoing information and training. Information provided must be in a form easily understood by the persons receiving it and must be relevant and appropriate to the type of work that people are employed to do.

Everyone should have a copy of, or have easy access to, the safety statement. Staff should be regularly briefed on hazards and proper safety practices. Staff should be invited to make suggestions for improvements in safety and health protection and such suggestions should be considered and, if found to be feasible and beneficial, implemented.

The safety of contract employees or members of the public should also be taken into consideration. Anyone who enters the workplace should be alerted to any hazards, which might exist. Someone should be given clear responsibility for implementing this policy.

Consultation is a two-way process

Employers have a legal duty to consult their workers, and be consulted by them, on health and safety issues. The safety representative and the safety officer or advisor have a particularly important role in the consultation process but consultation should not end there.

The mechanisms for consulting employees will depend on the size of the company, the type of work, the kinds of hazards, and the consultative structures already existing.





A safety representative has particular rights to be consulted and to make representations to his or her employer. The law states that an employer "shall consider and, if necessary, act upon any representations made to him by a safety representative." Guidance from the HSA suggests that this implies an employer must either take the necessary action, or give reasons to the safety representative for why no action is being taken.

There must also be consultation about the operation of health and safety protection services, including the appointment of any outside agencies. Representatives must also be consulted about the measures taken to train and instruct staff about how to protect themselves.

Representations made to employers or project supervisors (design or construction stages) must be considered fully. Decisions made based on representations should be relayed by the employer or project supervisor (design or construction stages) to all concerned, including employees, contractors, managers and supervisors.

Safety Representative Committee

There may be situations on a construction site where more than one safety representative is present. This could occur where a site safety representative is elected under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations, 2001, while safety representatives are also elected under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989, representing individual contractors' employees.

In this situation it is suggested that the safety representatives be permitted to form a committee, chaired by the site safety representative. Prior to any health and safety meeting which involves the project supervisor, construction stage, the committee could meet, discuss concerns, and the site safety representative could present any matters of concern on behalf of the committee to the project supervisor, construction stage, at the health and safety meeting.

The project supervisor, construction stage, could use the site notice-board to indicate how each of the concerns highlighted were addressed, or decide on some other way of providing feedback to everyone on site.

Why Consult?

Research proves it works

A study, *Safety Behaviour in the Construction Sector**, commissioned by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and its Northern Ireland equivalent, the Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland (HSENI), says many positive things about safety representatives. The study looked at safety on a number of building sites in the Republic and Northern Ireland. It compared reported safety behaviour with the perceptions of workers and management, the risk management system and safety enforcement.

The study found that:

“the variable with strongest relationship with safety compliance is the presence or absence of a safety representative”

“a safety representative on site is associated with better compliance”

“safety representatives are associated with a greater likelihood of reporting risky situations and a lower likelihood of simply continuing to work in such situations”

“the presence of a safety representative is also strongly related to the effectiveness of response to audits and reported hazard”

“The role of safety representatives in ensuring the job goes smoothly, in facilitating communication, hazard reporting, and playing a strong informal disciplinary role was repeatedly highlighted in the interviews”

The report ascribes the success of worker consultation in particular to: pressing management to do what they said they were going to do; encouraging workers to report hazards; communicating effectively with workers; and advising them against unsafe practices.

**Safety Behaviour in the Construction Sector* by Nick McDonald, Department of Psychology, Trinity College, Dublin and Victor Hrymak, School of Food Science and Environmental Health, DIT, is available on the web at <http://www.hsa.ie/pub/publications/conbehav.pdf>





What is the Role of a Workers' Safety Representative?

The primary functions of the safety representative are to:

- work with the company safety advisor or officer to improve safety
- consult and make representations to management on safety matters
- support the prevention of accidents and ill health
- highlight safety problems and, where possible, identify ways to overcome them
- investigate accidents and dangerous occurrences (see section 13 (5) B of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989)
- liaise with the Health and Safety Authority inspector and, on request, accompany the HSA inspector on a tour but not on an investigation
- carry out safety inspections, the time and frequency of which are to be agreed with the employer



IT IS BEST TO CARRY OUT SITE INSPECTIONS JOINTLY WITH THE SAFETY ADVISOR OR OFFICER. THE JOINT SAFETY COUNCIL RECOMMENDS THAT SUCH JOINT INSPECTIONS BE REFERRED TO AS SAFETY TOURS

A checklist to help with joint safety tours is provided at the back of this booklet.

SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES RARELY INVESTIGATE ACCIDENTS AND, IF THEY DO, THEY CAN FIND THEMSELVES DRAWN INTO GIVING EVIDENCE IN CIVIL PROCEEDINGS. THE JOINT SAFETY COUNCIL THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THAT SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD NOT CARRY OUT AN INVESTIGATION ON THEIR OWN. IT MAY BE APPROPRIATE FOR THE SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE TO BE INVOLVED IN A JOINT INVESTIGATION IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES.

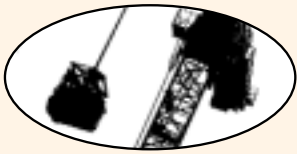


The Role of the Safety Officer or Advisor

The primary responsibility for health and safety at work rests with management. However, in the construction industry today management may need the help of suitably qualified safety professionals, known as safety officers or safety advisors. The term 'advisor' is becoming more commonplace, perhaps because of its connotations of suggesting and influencing rather than of being an authority figure.

The role of the safety advisor is to:

- advise the company on safety compliance
- understand the principles of the 'duty of care' towards people at work
- facilitate the safety consultation process
- advise on the application of the General Principles of Prevention outlined in the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 1993
- communicate safety messages to the workforce
- monitor safety on site
- monitor the safety training of staff
- influence senior managers and line managers
- initiate regular site inspections in conjunction with workers' safety representatives where appropriate
- participate in consultative structures to maximise their usefulness
- monitor all internal data on accidents
- liaise with Health and Safety Authority inspectors
- investigate accidents and prepare reports.



Safety Consultation Structures

Safety advisors, safety officers and safety representatives should co-operate with each other in pursuit of the common objective of maintaining a safe workplace. To achieve this co-operation, a consultation structure should be established on every site. This may require regular meetings with an efficient order of business where safety can be discussed, decisions taken, and responsibility allocated to people to implement the decisions.

Most projects will have regular meetings where the activities of sub-contractors are co-ordinated by the main contractor. Safety should always be on the agenda of such meetings; and the site safety representatives and the safety officer or safety advisor should attend this part of the meeting.

Ideally, however, and certainly on larger projects, the safety consultation structure should involve meetings where safety is the main item of business.

A senior management representative who can make decisions concerning resources – preferably the project supervisor, construction stage (PSCS) – should chair this meeting. The safety advisor or safety officer should act as secretary to the meeting and ensure that the safety representative has an opportunity to place matters of concern on the agenda.

The following factors need to be considered when deciding the structure of the site safety meeting:

- size and complexity of the project
- number of workers on site
- number of appointed safety representatives

Where there is only ONE safety representative on site:

It is recommended that not more than 14 days should pass without a safety meeting being held. Depending on the nature of the site, it could be sooner. The summary minutes and actions arising from this meeting should be posted in an accessible location visible to everyone on site.

Where there is MORE than ONE safety representative on site one of the following meeting structures should be adopted:

Joint Safety Committee Meeting

Ideally, a joint safety committee meeting should have balanced participation but the number of management members must not exceed the number of worker members. It is recommended that not more than 14 days should pass (or depending on the nature of the site it could be sooner) without a joint safety committee meeting.

Rotated Safety Representative

Where there is ONE rotated safety representative on site, the structure and timing of the meeting is similar to that outlined above. However, prior to the scheduled meeting time, the on-site safety representatives should meet for 15 minutes to discuss the main issues that need to be raised. When their agenda has been formalised, they must appoint a delegate to go forward to the meeting.

It is recommended that this function be rotated amongst the safety representatives so that they get a better understanding of the consultation process and the project. This principle should also be adopted for safety tours. When the meeting has finished, the other on-site safety representatives should meet again with the delegate for 15 minutes to be briefed on the outcome of the meeting.

Safety Representative(s) from Subcontracting Companies

Site management, or management's safety representative, should find out from the management of any sub-contract company if any of their workers on site is an elected safety representative.

If so, management of the sub-contract company should be requested to inform the safety representative to introduce himself or herself to site management or the nominated safety representative. The sub-contractor's safety representative **MUST** identify himself or herself to site management, or his or her nominated representative for safety, as soon as is practicable, ideally at the site induction.





Template: Safety Meeting Agenda

1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and agree minutes of last meeting • Progress report from personnel nominated to carry out actions from last meeting • If any items remain to be done, record this in the minutes and check they are done by the next meeting
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the outcome of safety tours
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences, including those submitted by contractors. This is reactive to events that have already occurred
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss up-coming phases of activity. This is proactive in that preventative measures can be planned and put in place
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan joint safety tour programme
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor welfare facilities
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor safety plan, site safety rules and safe systems of work
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication in the place of work .Each meeting should decide what message or messages need to be communicated and plan an appropriate communications strategy e.g., toolbox talks, notices
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor training needs, e.g., Safe Pass, Construction Safety Skills Certificates
10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other business

What is Communication?

Communication involves the exchange of opinions, ideas and information between two or more people. It may be carried out orally, in writing, or graphically using pictures or photographs. Effective communication involves high levels of listening by all parties involved in a balanced exchange. A lack of communication or misunderstood communication leads to failures and, in the safety context, this could mean a serious accident or fatality. Therefore, for the communication process to work on site, there needs to be understanding on all sides.

What is Formal Communication?

Formal communication is any communication used as part of a structured system to relay information. The following are examples of formal communication in the construction context.

Company induction

This involves the orientation of a new employee within the company. It should include:

- the structure of the company
- how the organisation works
- the work of the company
- all procedures of the company
- contact names
- the role of the new employee
- safety statement
- generic hazards and risks of work carried out
- the safe systems of work to avoid dangers
- emergency procedures
- training on specific tools and equipment

Site induction talk

A site induction talk is devised by the project supervisor, construction stage, or contractor, and should identify all the hazards, risks, and safe systems of work to be





followed on that site. It must identify the emergency procedures of the site, location of first aid stations, emergency alarms, assembly points, etc. It should identify the site safety representative and the main supervisors on the site, their roles, and how they may be contacted.

Induction talks should be carried out whenever a new person enters a site, as the measures taken may differ from site to site. Though there may be similarities between sites, even subtle differences can have serious consequences in an emergency.

Toolbox talks

These are meetings held on a regular basis by employers with employees to provide health and safety information. When used effectively, they can be the centre-pin of two-way communication and 'real' consultation.

In recent years, construction industry employers have taken giant leaps forward in providing employees with health and safety information on workplace hazards. Unfortunately the talks, typically 15 minutes long, are often didactic, that is, talking at people, rather than talking with, and listening to, people. For example, a supervisor may select a part of the safety statement, stand up in front of a group of employees and read off a list of do's and don'ts perhaps on the safe use of a ladder. The supervisor then gets all participants to sign a sheet indicating that they have heard and understood the information given, and that is the end of it, and all go back to work.

This is not the most effective way of using the toolbox talk and it is a wasted opportunity to consult with employees. Certainly the supervisor must read down the list and provide information needed to use a ladder safely, but by giving an extra five minutes for employees to voice any difficulties they can see in following the instructions could prove invaluable. For example, while the toolbox talk could have instructed employees to tie ladders securely, employees might know that there is no rope left in the stores to give effect to this advice; thus giving the supervisor the opportunity to buy more rope. Or consider the scenario of being told that 'all defective ladders must be disposed of immediately'. Employees might know that there are not enough additional ladders available to take such action.

Safety representatives could suggest to supervisors or employers that a section be

provided on toolbox sign-in sheets to record comments made, and issues raised. This could provide a record for the employer to show consultation and actions taken should a HSA inspector require proof of consultation.

Notice-boards

Simple notice-boards are another powerful tool in the health and safety communication arsenal. A site notice-board in a prominent position, and not obstructed visually in any way, provides a mechanism for advising everyone of progress in health and safety, upcoming events, representations made, actions taken, minutes of health and safety meetings, and the outcomes of accident investigations.

Notice-boards should never become cluttered with information. An untidy notice-board is difficult to read and pressing relevant information is lost.

Safety signs

Signs are another vital tool in health and safety communication. Signs can get information out quickly, be used to remind people of important rules, or warn people about dangers. Signs are limited given that they provide only one-way communication. Alone, signs cannot provide an adequate communication system. For instance, some employees might not know what a sign means. Or there could be non-English-speaking workers unable to read an English language sign.

When using signs for health and safety, all workers must be advised of the purpose of the different signs used. Employers should follow the European sign regulations, which involve the use of the same symbols in all EU countries. The European sign regulations were transposed into Irish law by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Safety Signs) Regulations, 1995.

The EU system for signs and signal boards are based on the familiar traffic light colours – red for prohibition, yellow for caution and green for positive action. Blue was added for mandatory signs or to convey information. Sign shapes are also standardised – discs for prohibitions and instructions, triangles for warnings, squares and rectangles for emergency and informative signs.





The regulations have requirements governing signs on containers, pipes, illuminated and acoustic signs, verbal communication, loud signals, and on the identification and location of fire fighting equipment. They also regulate signs for obstacles and dangerous locations, which govern the marking of traffic routes. The regulations should be checked for details. Employees must be advised on the meaning and use of signs by the employer, a point especially highlighted in the regulations.

What are the basic principles regarding the use of safety signs?

The objective of a system of safety signs is to draw attention rapidly and unambiguously to objects or situations capable of causing specific harm. A system of safety signs may only be used to give information related to safety. Under no circumstance is a safety sign a substitute for the requisite protective measures.

The effectiveness of the system is dependent on the provision of full, and constantly repeated, information to all persons, and is dependent upon signs being removed if no longer required.

Just as with personal protective equipment, under the General Principles of Prevention of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 1993, safety signs must be considered a last line of defence.

Suggestion box

This communication tool can provide an opportunity for employees to make suggestions or inform employers of problems. While the suggestion box is a good idea in providing an opportunity for workers to communicate, it can be slow in producing results.

Voice-mail service

The age of technology provides innovative means of communication. Voice-mail services can be very useful for company safety advisors and safety representatives, for whom contact with workers may be difficult due to distance between sites. A voice-mail could be set up with only the safety advisor or safety representative having access to it, to maintain confidentiality. A worker with a concern could leave a message for the



safety advisor or safety representative, and the advisor or representative could contact that worker when the opportunity arose,

Helpline number

The helpline is another innovation that some employers might consider to support the safety advisor or safety representative. A number could be made available which could be called if a safety representative had a query or wished to report an issue to someone of greater authority than was available at site level.

Mobile phone

A piece of equipment often seen on construction sites, the mobile phone can bring with it additional dangers due to lack of concentration while working. Should a safety representative be fortunate enough to have been provided with a mobile phone by the employer, it should not be abused, as it is an expensive means of communication. The mobile should not be used while operating heavy equipment or vehicles, or when working in hazardous areas.

For the sanity of the safety representative, it is recommended that the phone be switched off after work, unless special arrangements have been made, as calls can come at inconvenient times.



Examples of other formal communication options

Intended in no way to be an exhaustive list, the following are other means of communication an employer could consider:

- health and safety meetings.
- complaints procedure.
- e-mail.
- walkie-talkie.
- hand signals.
- loudspeaker.
- videos.

What is Informal Communication?

Informal communication is communication without a deliberate or organised structure. Ad hoc and spontaneous, it has no plan behind it. Examples are rumours and canteen gossip.

The safety representative is in an ideal position to hear the concerns of workers. As a fellow worker, the representative has access to canteen talk and site gossip. Unfortunately, when a supervisor enters a canteen, conversations frequently change.

If a safety representative becomes aware of an issue through canteen talk, he or she could advise the safety advisor or project supervisor, construction stage, of workers'

concerns. They must not act as a spy, but rather as a worker representative: there is no need to name names.

Should a safety representative become aware of some issue in this way, it is advisable that the representative tells workers of their intention to raise it with the safety advisor or project supervisor, construction stage.

What is Non-verbal Communication?

Non-verbal communication comprises subconsciously imparted messages. For example, a makeshift notice-board can convey that the board is of no real importance and the employer or project supervisor, construction stage, could not care less. Or, the supervisor who tells workers to wear their helmets but does not personally wear one is tacitly telling workers that helmets are not important. Or consider the safety representative who advises the employer or project supervisor, construction stage, of the dangers of working at heights but who personally can be seen flouting that danger.

Actions speak louder than words. It is important that a safety representative leads by example and models good health and safety behaviour at all times, following all safety guidelines and never taking a risk with their own well-being.

In addition, if a safety representative is a danger to themselves, or others, a supervisor will not take his or her representations seriously and health and safety will not improve.

Training

Employers and project supervisors, construction stage, who invest in their employees by providing training convey a very powerful message. It shows that they value their employees and are willing to invest in their safety, health and well-being. Training is itself a form of communication that speaks louder than words as a manifest commitment to health and safety. Training can be on-the-job, in-house, off-site or conducted by external consultants. All training methods have a value. The choice as to which forms of training to employ can greatly depend on an employer's capacity.

Note: No single method of communication will result in an effective system. Some combination of methods will be required.





Harnessing Conflict for Positive Safety Outcomes

It is often said that conflict over safety should not arise as managers, supervisors and workers have a common interest in making the job as safe as possible. However, the Barrington Commission said that “co-operation between workers and managers on these (safety) issues is desirable but it is necessary to recognise that there can be divergence of interest and to structure the system accordingly”.

As time and resources are finite, there will often be conflict over how limited time and resources are to be allocated.

The traditional view is that conflict is harmful to the organisation and should be avoided if possible. However, conflict in organisations is not only inevitable, as Barrington suggests, but it can be positive and help to produce creativity and motivation.

Safety advisors or safety officers may experience conflict when they:

- point out shortcomings to managers, line managers, sub-contractors or workers
- seek remedial action to resolve problems
- suggest time and resources are required for positive safety outcomes
- record incidents and accidents where people feel they are being blamed

The safety representative may be perceived as creating conflict when he or she:

- identifies problems
- seeks responsive actions
- creates awareness of hazards amongst employees
- points out failures of management
- seeks time and resource commitments for dealing with problems

The traditional adversarial approach to conflict resolution associated with industrial relations is not suitable for resolving many conflicts over safety. This type of 'bargaining' will usually result in a compromise solution. Compromises are rarely acceptable when dealing with safety matters. When a conflict arises over safety on site,

the safety officer or advisor and the safety representatives should take note of the following:

- conflict is not necessarily harmful and might produce a positive safety outcome
- people should be regarded as acting in good faith
- criticism should not be interpreted as a personal attack
- status should be ignored – the view of the most junior member of staff is as valid as that of the most senior. This does not mean that a person's view is correct but that it should be treated with respect.
- safety problems can often be resolved by using objective criteria such as legislation, codes of practice such as on scaffolding or roof work, or advice from the Health and Safety Authority



Site Safety Inspection

As part of the agenda of work of the Joint Safety Council and the Construction Safety Partnership Plan, it was proposed that the Council would agree a standard site safety inspection format for use within the industry. The following is the format that resulted and is offered with the objective of achieving a consistent inspection regime on construction sites. The document is not intended to be an exhaustive list of items requiring review and the user can adapt the list to suit their operation. This being said, the headings identified are areas that require special attention as statistics indicate that failures in these areas of operation most often result in accidents or ill health.

Inspection regime

Formal inspections of the construction site or operations, at reasonably regular intervals, are a mechanism for augmenting day-to-day checks, examinations or inspections that occur as part of any task. These may use a checklist of the format





proposed here to facilitate consistency.

The advantages of a regular inspection regime are that it assists in the consistent maintenance of workplace conditions, highlights problem areas and helps raise awareness among all employees of the need to maintain and improve safety standards. It may also assist in highlighting safety offenders.

Disadvantages include that they can become purely routine or are not acted upon. Site inspections carried out without prior notice, at different times and on different days of the week, avoid the shortcoming of predictability. In practice, a combination of both regular and random inspections is advisable.

Who should do site inspections?

For inspections to be effective, a competent person must carry them out. Such a competent person will have practical experience and know the theory of the works inspected. He or she must be competent to detect errors, defects, or weaknesses, assess their significance, and advise on how to rectify problems.

Remedial actions following inspection

There is little point in identifying areas of concern if nothing is done about them. A clear understanding of what remedial actions are required is fundamental to safety inspections. Risks must be removed or reduced to an acceptable level and the workplace made safer. A plan of what needs to be done by whom and by when may be required. The following illustrate the different priorities likely to be found on sites:

Requiring immediate action ~

~ situations likely to result in imminent fatality or serious injury to the public or workers if immediate action is not taken

Requiring prompt action (within 24 hours) ~

~ hazards exist and prompt action is required but no imminent danger

Requiring action within 7 days ~

~ Possibility of minor loss or injury

Recurring item ~

~ if an item happens again and again, the reason for the reoccurrence needs to be identified

Joint Safety Council Site Safety Inspection Sample Checklist

Company: Date:

Site: Time:

Site Manager: Inspection by:

Project Supervisor, Construction Stage:

Remedial Action Category:

1. Requires immediate action.
2. Requires action within 24 Hours.
3. Requires action within 7 days
4. Recurring Item

The following headings have been provided as guidance. While not exhaustive, these represent high priority areas for safety management:

ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS
Safety Documentation health and safety plan Safety Statements Risk assessments Project commencement notice to HSA (CR Form) Other		
Training and Information Site safety induction Safe Pass cards Construction Skills cards Toolbox talks Other		
Communication and Consultation Site safety representative Safety meetings Site monitoring Follow-up actions Other		





ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS
Accident Recording and Investigation Accident book IR 1 / IR3 (for noting accidents or dangerous occurrences) Other		
Welfare Facilities Canteen Toilet and washing facilities Drying room Drinking water First aid facilities Other		
Security Site and Public Safety Hoarding and fencing Safe access for pedestrians Warning signs Security arrangements Parking Other		
Housekeeping		
Personal Protective Equipment Hard hats Safety footwear High visibility vests Job specific equipment Other		
Work at Height Ladders Alloy towers Trestles Edge protection Rope protection Safe systems of work Other		
Scaffolding Competent erector Scaffold condition Interference Regularly inspected (CR8) Other		

ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS
Powered Access Equipment Site conditions adequate Competent operators Certification Weekly inspections (CR4B) Other		
Electricity and Services Temporary electricity Protection to overhead lines Underground services Tools and cables Warning signs Lighting Other		
Traffic Management Speed limit Separation Warning signs Lighting Other		
Excavations Propped or battered Edge protection Soil away from edge Services identified Inspections Other		
Plant and Lifting Appliances Competent operators Certification on site Weekly inspections Other		
Hazardous Substances Hazardous material identified MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) information Instruction to users Storage Other		





ITEM	ACTION	COMMENTS
Emergency Planning Emergency plan Permits to work Fire extinguishers Alarm Other		
Health Issues		

General Comments/Clarification:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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