LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this element, you should be able to demonstrate understanding of the content through the application of knowledge to familiar and unfamiliar situations and the critical analysis and evaluation of information presented in both quantitative and qualitative forms. In particular you should be able to:

1. Explain the purpose of performance measurement in relation to health and safety objectives and arrangements.

2. Explain the need for, and the objectives and limitations of, health and safety monitoring systems.

3. Describe the variety of monitoring and measurement techniques.

4. Explain the requirements for reviewing health and safety performance.
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Purpose of Performance Measurement

KEY INFORMATION
Performance measurement serves several purposes:

- It is essential in order to establish whether the policy and its arrangements have been effectively implemented, including the adequacy of control measures.
- It provides information for the review process, which looks at the effectiveness of the entire health and safety management system and recommends changes that lead to improvements.
- It measures and rewards success.
- It maintains and improves health and safety performance.

MORE...
You will find the following two HSE guidance documents excellent background reading for this topic:

- Managing for Health and Safety (HSG65), available at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg65.htm

The first question you might ask is: Why measure health and safety performance? One obvious answer is: How else will you know how well you are doing? If you don’t measure performance, you will have no idea of how far away you are from where you want to be and whether your plans are actually working. Purposes of performance measurement include to:

- Assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of health and safety objectives and arrangements in terms of:
  - Hardware (plant, premises, substances).
  - Software (people, procedures, systems).
- Measure and reward success (not to penalise failure).
- Use the results as a basis for making recommendations for a review of current management systems.
- Maintain and improve health and safety performance.

ASSESSMENT OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OBJECTIVES AND ARRANGEMENTS
Assessing effectiveness of health and safety performance implies that we have both something that can be measured, and some goal or standard against which to judge that measurement.

The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) requires the employer to make a statement of his health and safety policy. INDG449 Health and safety made simple - The basics for your business (available at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg449.pdf), gives a suggestion for this statement which is designed for small enterprises only but is a good starting point for any business. (Larger organisations tend to want to say more and often integrate their statement into a combined safety, health, environmental and quality policy.)

The statement basically says that the company will comply with the requirements of Section 2 of HSWA. There is a legal duty to do this. A management system as outlined in HSG65 requires that this be spelt out in clear objectives. We need things that can be measured. It is often said that: “If it cannot be measured then there is very little chance that it will be done”, so we need to state objectively what we mean by:

- Safe plant and equipment.
- Safe handling and use of substances.
- Information.
- Instruction.
- Supervision.
- Training.
- Safe and healthy working conditions.
TOPIC FOCUS
A useful acronym to remember when setting objectives is SMART. Good objectives need to be:

- **Specific** - as to what you want to achieve.
- **Measurable** - so you know if they have been met.
- **Achievable** - attainable.
- **Realistic** - realistically achievable with the resources you have.
- **Timely** - set a reasonable timescale to achieve them.

There are legal standards for chemical contaminants and dust levels, and for noise. Under the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)** the exposure to some chemicals must be kept as low as reasonably practicable and must not exceed a certain level. The safety objective could be set lower than this standard. We then have an objective to aim for. If we achieve this consistently then an even lower standard can be set. In this way, we comply with the requirement to reduce the level to as low as possible.

Similarly, equipment will need to be tested periodically. For each piece of equipment the type of test, the frequency of testing, and the standard can be laid down. Training standards can be created. Legally, certain jobs can only be carried out by qualified or experienced workers. Refresher training and perhaps even re-testing can be used to make sure that practical skills are maintained. First-aid qualifications lapse unless they are renewed.

We can illustrate the idea of creating standards by looking at the argument put forward at a mining safety conference a few years ago when the chief safety engineer insisted that, for the coming year, he was setting an objective of five fatalities (maximum) for the coal-mining industry. He insisted that an objective of no fatalities, though desirable, was not a practical one. If five was achieved then the next year could be less. In the same way there were targets for other categories.

Measuring Performance Against Objectives
When setting objectives, we have to consider performance standards and indicators. It is easy to set and measure production standards and there are also standards that can be set for safety and health. Safety sampling and similar techniques can be used. HSG65 suggests the use of two measuring systems with the main purpose of measuring and rewarding success, not penalising failure:

- **Active** systems, which monitor the achievement of objectives and the extent of compliance with standards. Examples would be monitoring the safety of plant and equipment; compliance with safe systems of work; safe behaviour by employees.
- **Reactive** systems, which monitor accidents, ill-health, incidents and other evidence of deficient health and safety performance, such as hazard reports. Investigations into accidents should determine underlying causes; weaknesses; any need for training; and changes or replacement required in machinery, substances or working methods.

Arrangements for Actioning Objectives
The **HSWA** requires the employer to list his organisation’s arrangements for achieving the objectives. Performance measurement involves an assessment of the effectiveness and appropriateness of these organisational matters. If they do not work, they need to be made to work.

If each person in the safety organisation has a job specification and a list of tasks and duties, and there are expectations of achievement, then it is possible to measure how effectively these people have performed. What is needed is some form of ‘measurement by objectives’.

Periodically, there will be a review procedure and those who are filling a post but not performing a role may need to be replaced. The safety committee should consist of active members. If something needs to be done, then it should be made the clear responsibility of an individual. There is then a standard to measure performance, so the committee is more than just a ‘talking shop’.

The term “arrangements” can also mean everything that is stated in this section of the employer’s safety policy. The arrangements section usually includes such topics as:

- Accident reporting.
- Fire precautions.
- Training.
- Contractors and visitor arrangements.
- Dealing with any hazards in the operation (i.e. control measures).

Safe methods of work and permit-to-work schemes would also be detailed.
Control Measures

An assessment of the effectiveness and the appropriateness of the control measures of a company is another important area of performance measurement, although this may not be so easy to measure accurately. Someone has to be in control of the organisation, but this control also has to be delegated. Since one person is usually not able to complete the whole task of achieving the safety objectives, it will have to be divided up and some degree of control exercised.

- The **formal control system** can be either authoritarian or consultative. To be effective, each person needs to know those areas where he must conform to a predetermined plan and those areas where he can exercise some discretion.

- There will also be an **informal control system**, where working groups establish and enforce the group norms. The ideal situation is where the individual and group targets coincide with the organisational targets.

Measurement of the degree of control is probably best achieved by systematic reviews.

- A supervisor would carry out some form of **daily assessment**.

- The sectional manager would need to hold a **monthly review**.

- A **quarterly review** might be appropriate for a department.

- An **annual review** would be appropriate for the total organisation.

Control will involve a review of performance, and the setting of modified objectives for the next period of time. It is also the time to consider possible conflict situations and how these might be resolved, and any communication problems.

**REVIEW OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

The HSE publication, *Managing for Health and Safety* HSG65, details the methods of safety management which should be adopted, and contains a useful diagram which sets out the principles involved. (This diagram also appears in Element A1.)
We are concerned here with the elements of measuring and reviewing performance, key elements in any system of management. To manage anything, including health and safety, we must have objectives or a policy which sets out what we hope to achieve. We then construct a suitable organisation and put the plan into effect.

After a suitable time interval we have to review performance; either we have achieved what we set out to do, or we have failed. If we have achieved our objectives, we can congratulate ourselves and set stiffer objectives for next year. If we have failed we must find out why.

- Were the objectives impracticable?
- Were resources not available?
- Was the safety practitioner incompetent?
- Should he or she be replaced?
- Should we increase the safety budget?

Every element of the management system can be audited or examined in detail. We require a system which is continually being improved.
A management system for health and safety should be in existence. The one suggested in HSG65 is based on the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle so production managers should be used to operating along similar lines.

The safety practitioner needs to be in a position to recommend that safety matters, and risk management principles, are incorporated into the company management systems. The idea that good management involves accident prevention and loss prevention is a very sound one. This might involve adding safety and health objectives to a list of production objectives for each manager.

The integration of production and safety makes for a profitable and cost-effective organisation. You should be aware of the cost of accidents. If accident costs and other losses are deducted from any bonuses paid or credited to production managers, then the safety message is established and the safety culture of the organisation is assured.

MORE...

You will find it helpful to refer to RRC’s online Health and Safety Law and Case Law Guide while you are studying this course.

To access this learning resource login to RRC’s support website at:

www.rrc.co.uk

REVISION QUESTION

1. List three purposes for performance measurement.

(Suggested Answer is at the end.)