

RRC TRAINING

GUIDE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY 2009



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Foreword

Every month the cost of getting health and safety wrong is writ large in the pages of my magazine, *Safety and Health Practitioner*. Often the damage caused by health and safety incidents could have been avoided or at least reduced by training.

But choosing the right kind of training, and the right provider, isn't a light decision to make – whether it be for you or your staff. One bonus of the growth in health and safety training courses and providers is that you are spoilt for choice. The flipside of extended choice is making sure that a limited budget is spent the right way, and you are not left battling with the beancounters for extra funds if you or your employees haven't had the right training.

Health and safety has a habit of crossing boundaries: disciplines, continents and languages. And while today's call centres might be located in yesterday's coal mining areas, and incidents be on the decline, the legal climate is hotter than it used to be. Rightly, regulations and requirements are a lot tighter – without any signs of a let up. And claims for personal injury are more prevalent. Social pressure also means that the spotlight on an organisation's safety record is never far away.

Training isn't always the answer, of course. There's no point in trying to place a sticking plaster on an open wound. Before leaping to the internet or a training prospectus, a careful risk assessment needs to be undertaken. What are the risks that you need to reduce or avoid? Is there something very basic that should be done first?

For instance, if you are looking to reduce injuries caused by employees bypassing a guard, it's probably not worth considering a behavioural safety training course first off if they are doing so because it speeds up the production process. Nor would a court look very kindly on your organisation if you were in the dock following a, sadly all too common, guarding injury.

And what about you? Are you trained enough to do the job you do? Or perhaps, the job you would like to be doing? A scan through the busy appointments section of SHP or our website compared to a few years' ago show that employers are fairly demanding of those responsible for health and safety. Gone are the days when experience was considered sufficient to be the health and safety manager. As the profession has grown, so have the entry requirements become stricter.

As the blackboard has become the flat screen, training delivery has changed. With e-learning, for instance, training can now be undertaken remotely – something particularly advantageous, and potentially cheaper, if you or your employees are on remote sites. Or, how about blended learning, allowing a combination of modern and traditional teaching techniques. But the more established methods of training may also be equally valid for your needs.

Whether you decide to opt for old or new, the pages that follow offer a useful flavour of what lies in store.

Godric Jolliffe

Former Editor, *Safety and Health Practitioner*

For more information on SHP please visit
www.shponline.co.uk

Introduction



The health and safety of workers, as well as those whom their work affects, must be of paramount importance for any business or organisation, whether it's a garage proprietor responsible for a team of mechanics, or a multinational company with employees worldwide.

Employers clearly have a moral obligation to provide a working environment that is as safe and healthy as possible, as deficient health and safety management can have devastating results for the individuals and families involved.

However, efficient health and safety management is not only crucial from a moral point of view but also from a financial perspective. Health and safety has a direct bearing on the bottom line, as problems can impact on reputation, image and customer relationships. Furthermore, a survey by the Health and Safety Executive found that 90% of the 1,700 respondents believed that health and safety was important for staff productivity and morale.

A positive health and safety culture comes from a sound knowledge base, which in turn is the result of effective training. But, with a myriad of training options available, there are so many ways to make the wrong choice, waste time and money and end up with qualifications that are of no value.

This guide is intended for those concerned with health and safety performance in a company, be it large or small, as well as those considering the need for professional qualifications in health and safety. By looking at the current issues and trends, the legal requirements and the different qualifications and options available, we aim to steer you through the pitfalls of selecting a reliable, respected training provider, and help you to identify what training is best suited to you and/or your staff, and to select the best ways to obtain it.

Gary Fallaize

Managing Director, RRC Training

What drives Health and Safety Training?



Each and every company needs some form of health and safety training. According to figures published by the Health and Safety Commission, 229 people were killed at work in 2007/08 and 6 million working days were lost as a result of a workplace injury.

Statistics compiled by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) consistently demonstrate that the industries which pose the highest risk are: construction; agriculture and extractive and utility supply industries. However, the statistics also make clear that high numbers of workplace injuries and even fatalities are not exclusive to those industries.

The Drivers for Companies and Individuals

In addition to the above figures, there are a number of trends and issues driving health and safety training up the agendas of both companies and individuals.

Companies

According to one survey, the majority of company directors understood the negative impact of poor health and safety on productivity and efficiency – factors which directly influence profitability.

And whilst many of these risks can be insured against, it is likely to be cheaper to fix the problem at source. Indeed, in a study by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), uninsured costs were between 8 and 36 times the insured costs. Costs such as investigation time, hiring replacement or temporary staff, fines, lost orders and so on often aren't appreciated but all cost money.

In an increasingly litigious world, there is a greater likelihood that a health and safety issue will result in legal action. However, any companies, big or small, which have undergone appropriate health and safety training will be looked upon far more favourably in the event of such an incident. Being able to show that staff have undergone health and safety training demonstrates that the company has the right attitude to health and safety, and significantly helps to minimise the chance of charges of negligence being levelled against them.

Training is increasingly forming an important part of a company's community liaison or CSR – demonstrating its credentials as a responsible employer and a valuable member of the local community.

Individuals

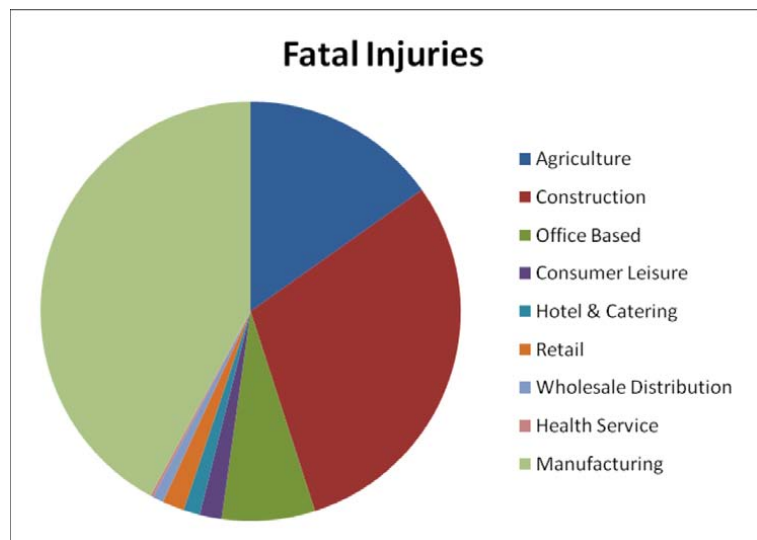
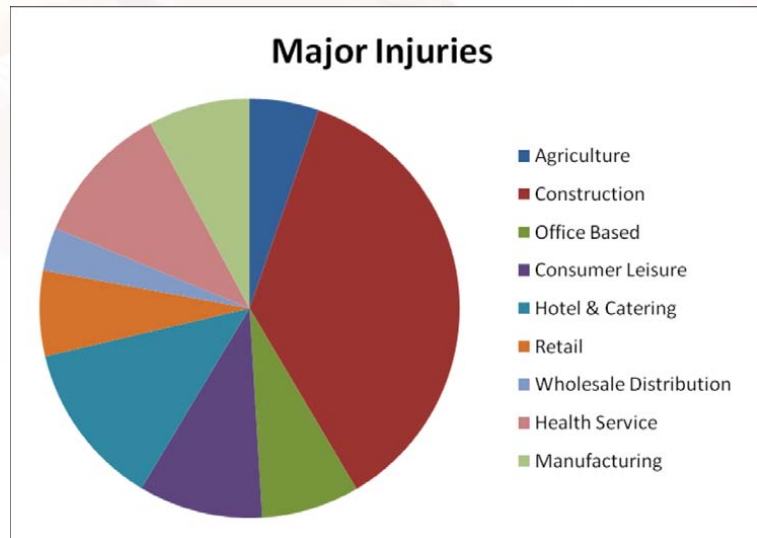
Organisations increasingly require people who have responsibility for health and safety to have a recognised qualification accredited by a national body.

There is a buoyant market for well-trained health and safety professionals. Membership of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the UK's leading professional body, currently stands at 28,000. Membership figures have been rising by around 1,500 per annum, a trend which is predicted to continue.

Typical Workplace injuries/fatalities per year

There is an expectation amongst the media and the public at large that organisations will take their corporate social responsibility (CSR) seriously, and a general perception that adequate health and safety training must form a fundamental part of this.

Any organisation with a reputation to protect cannot afford to ignore health and safety training. The intense criticism levelled at companies such as railway maintenance contractors following accidents, demonstrates just how closely a company's health and safety record is allied to its public image.



Note:
These statistics have been compiled for different industries over different time frames, so the pie charts shown are based on typical annual incidence rates.

“A positive health and safety culture comes from a sound knowledge base, which in turn is the result of effective training.”

Trends in Health and Safety



Important trends are also shaping the type of health and safety training being deployed.

With a growth in outsourcing, there is an expanding demand for 'passport schemes'. Many companies now insist that all contractors or short-term and temporary workers complete these short health and safety induction courses before even being allowed on site. This trend began with high-risk industries, such as oil refineries, construction sites and chemical factories, but now extends to many low-risk environments, such as broadcasting, and even office-based environments, where cleaners or call centre staff are expected to undergo such courses.

Large organisations are identifying critical risk areas pertinent to them and requiring bespoke elements to training courses to cater for these needs. Once again, this does not just apply to stereotypically high-risk arenas but across the board – for instance the health service may need special attention to be paid to manual handling, and banks or call centres may require particular attention to be given to the use of VDUs.

There is a growing trend for health and safety professionals to take on an environmental function.

With globalisation, organisations having international operations are seeking an international training standard that is recognised everywhere.

Multinational companies are increasingly integrating recognised syllabuses with their own health and safety procedures and practices and requiring tailor-made training for this purpose.

“Recognised health and safety awards and qualifications range from a one-day course to years of study.”

The Choice of Qualifications

The table below outlines the relationship between typical Health and Safety Qualifications and positions within the organisation. The 'Course Level' relates to the approximate level on the UK Qualifications and Credit Framework)

Course Level	Description	Suggested Programmes Include	Professional Memberships
Level 1	Basic health and safety awareness aimed at all workers.	IOSH Working Safely, RRC Key-to-Safety (Introductory Level)	None
Level 2	Aimed at those with additional responsibilities for the safety of others (i.e. charge-hands and supervisors).	IOSH Managing Safely, RRC Key-to-Safety (Intermediate Level)	None
Level 3	Aimed at those who have health and safety responsibilities as a large part of their work or as members of a safety team.	NEBOSH National General Certificate, NEBOSH International General Certificate, NEBOSH Construction Certificate, NEBOSH Certificate in Fire Safety and Risk Management, RRC Key-to-Safety (Advanced Level), NVQ Level 3 Health and Safety at Work	Tech IOSH and Associate Membership of IIRSM (subject to experience and CPD).
Level 4	Aimed at those who have health and safety responsibilities or are managing the health and safety function.	NVQ Level 4 in Occupational Health and Safety Practice	Graduate member level of IOSH (Grad IOSH) and full Membership of IIRSM (subject to experience and CPD).
Level 5	Aimed at those intending to become full time safety practitioners and have strategic management responsibility for the health and safety function.	NVQ Level 5 in Occupational Health and Safety Practice	Full Membership of IIRSM (subject to experience and CPD). It is likely this would also be accepted by IOSH for graduate member status (although not specifically stated).
Level 6	Professional qualification for those intending to become full-time safety practitioners. A demanding course that requires good written English.	NEBOSH National Diploma in Occupational Health and Safety	Grad IOSH and full Membership of the IIRSM (subject to experience and CPD).
Level 7	A very academic qualification intended for health and safety managers rather than practitioners. A demanding course that requires good written English.	MSc	
Level 8	A very demanding course that requires excellent written English.	PhD	Full Membership of IIRSM (subject to experience and CPD). It is likely IOSH would accept this for graduate member status (although not specifically stated).

The Choice of Qualifications (continued)

If what you want is a generic, recognised qualification, be prepared for employees to study some elements that may seem irrelevant to your workplace.

For instance, dangerous chemicals and noise levels may not be pertinent to the person responsible for health and safety in a finance company, but it is necessary to study these elements to gain many formal health and safety qualifications. A generic qualification is designed to be applied to many industries, with the advantage that it will allow the holder a wide choice of roles within health and safety.

Since the early 1990s, the idea of basic health and safety training aimed at specific occupations and industries has gained in popularity, with some accrediting bodies, such as IOSH, now offering tailored options for specific industries.

Corporate Training Needs



There is a common law duty of care to ensure that every worker has competent co-workers.

Legal Requirements

The Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 forms the bedrock of what must be provided, and states that in order to safeguard employees, every employer must provide proper information, instruction, training and supervision. Employers also owe duties towards people who are not their employees, for example, to contractors. At the very least this will involve the exchange of information, but typically includes site induction training.

Hundreds of regulations build on this – from management of health and safety at work, manual handling and control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH), to display screen equipment and first-aid.

Assessing Training Needs

A company's safety policy and risk assessments should identify to what level each member of the workforce needs to be trained. The table earlier provides a guide

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

According to Bill Callaghan, former Chair of the Health and Safety Commission, "sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them". So keep a sense of perspective. In some cases, all you'll need to do is assess risks and keep records. The worst option is to do nothing at all.

Don't feel you need to call in expensive consultants immediately. Your local HSE will give free advice – their website www.hse.gov.uk is particularly helpful.

To work out how much health and safety training is needed in your company, simply consider the work you do and how risky it is (some small businesses with high risks include roofing, garages, building, etc.). Consider where you work (outside, especially in wet weather, is a far greater risk) and how the work is done.

“Sensible health and safety is about managing risks, not eliminating them.”

Corporate Training Needs (continued)



Larger Companies

Consider how many qualified health and safety professionals you need for your particular business. Do you have enough?

Don't be afraid to ask for a bespoke training programme. It needn't be prohibitively expensive.

Is the health and safety function delegated or centralised? If it's a centralised function, make sure there are people with health and safety training at a local level who can oversee day-to-day practices and ensure that policies and procedures are implemented.

Multinationals

Every one of your employees needs some basic knowledge.

Don't just focus on qualifications. For a positive health and safety culture, look at the particular risks within your organisation and make sure staff know how to deal with them.

Consider a training structure with several levels through which employees can progress as required.

Remember to take into account the need for language skills – health and safety training should not be complicated by difficulties in understanding the terminology.

Delivery Methods



In an ideal world, all those needing training would meet in a classroom. But the costs for this option can be prohibitive, especially when the costs of time off work, travel and accommodation are taken into consideration.

Distance learning

Distance learning overcomes some of the problems described above but can create new issues. The solitary learner can become very isolated, for example, and lose motivation. However, an effective distance-learning programme will include ways of overcoming these problems, by providing a clearly defined timetable, giving high levels of proactive tutor support and having a senior manager mentor the programme. The latter is perhaps the most important in demonstrating the company's commitment to training and encouraging participants to complete the training.

E-learning

E-learning is in effect another method of distance learning. The tutor-led model of e-learning does, however, effectively overcome some of the drawbacks of traditional distance learning by creating virtual communities where learners and students can meet to discuss topics. This emulates some of the benefits associated with classroom training, although it still requires the learners to remain motivated. Again, the involvement of a senior manager in mentoring the programme can be very effective.

Blended learning

A structured combination of various teaching methods, such as distance learning, e-learning and taught courses, can offer the best of both worlds and is arguably the most effective method of training for companies. A properly structured programme will ensure that the benefits of the individual delivery methods are used to their utmost effect in relation to the course being taught.

“A properly structured training programme will ensure that the benefits of the individual delivery methods are used to their utmost effect in relation to the course being taught.”

Training Costs



Around £20 million is spent on NEBOSH health and safety courses per annum, and estimates suggest that over £100 million is spent annually on health and safety training in the UK alone.

Different Training Methods Compared

Teaching new skills to existing staff may be best accomplished by tutor-led training, but this is often the most expensive method, as the figures that follow suggest. (Please note that the costs used are indicative.)

If you were to send 10 employees on a training course lasting one week (i.e. 5 days' training), costing £800 per participant, you would need to pay £8,000 for the training.

However, this is only the start of the full cost. Your organisation would also lose 400 hours of work time which, at a modest £15-per-hour rate for each employee, equates to a total of £6,000 for employee time. The cost of the training is therefore £14,000. If overnight stays and evening meals are also necessary, a further £3,000 (assuming £60 per person per night) would be incurred, increasing the overall bill to £17,000.

Whilst these costs are easy to establish, others (such as lost production) are less easy to quantify. Nevertheless, it is clear that when viewed in this way, the 'total' cost of classroom training makes it prohibitively expensive for many organisations.

This cost can be reduced by agreeing a daily tutor rate instead of a per capita rate and arranging for the course to be run at your own premises. In this case, the price of training would fall from £8,000 to £4,500 (based on a day rate of £900) and the £3,000 previously allocated for overnight stays would be saved.

On this basis, the cost would fall to £10,500 for one week's training for 10 people. Whilst this is more reasonable, it remains a significant investment and potentially still beyond the reach of many companies.

Keeping Training Affordable



How can we create a scenario in which employees get the training they want and need, and still keep it affordable for the company?

Perhaps the most cost-effective method is distance learning. The equivalent of a 5-day taught course with full tutor support can cost as little as £250 per person. Our 10 employees can therefore complete the course for as little as £2,500.

The costs to the company in terms of time would be the same (unless there as an agreement for the employees to study outside of working hours), but this could be managed far more effectively, for example by allowing 1 hour per day to study over a period of seven weeks.

E-learning tends to be more expensive than distance learning but cheaper than taught programmes. Having said this, the cost is very much dependent on the learning model used and the amount of tutor interaction, so do not be fooled into thinking that the cheapest e-learning option is necessarily the best.

Blended learning courses allow the organisation to determine when and how often staff are off site and their training provider can then develop a course to meet both the learning objectives and the company's work requirements. Costs can vary depending on the mix of the various elements used, but for our 5-day example, for 10 delegates (including an induction day and a final day to review the key aspects of the course and deliver any final assessments) the cost of the course would be around £3,800 (2 days of training at £900 each, plus 10 reduced distance-learning programmes at £200 each). You would also need to bear in mind that if the 'blend' included a taught element, the costs of the employees' time (and perhaps accommodation too) would need to be considered in addition.

Conclusion

With the obvious benefit of "the best of both worlds", it is not difficult to see why the blended learning approach has proved to be so popular with both corporate organisations and individuals.

(All figures quoted are purely illustrative. Accurate costs can be given on request.)

"The blended learning approach has proved popular with both corporate organisations and individuals."

Individual Training Needs



Individual employees will require health and safety training that is appropriate for the tasks that they perform and the level of responsibility that they hold. This is the employer's responsibility and must be provided in accordance with the law.

In addition, a company may choose to sponsor an individual employee to undertake health and safety training leading to a recognised professional qualification. The demand for health and safety expertise in-house increases as companies become increasingly focused on health and safety and its effective implementation in the workplace.

More companies now than ever before have international operations and the demand for health and safety practitioners with internationally recognised qualifications is growing.

Employees with an interest in health and safety can be encouraged to widen their knowledge by studying for a qualification relevant to the industry, such as the NEBOSH National Certificate in Construction Safety and Health. Company training managers can advise on training methods and, although not funding the training, may provide an incentive in the form of a bonus or opportunities for promotion.

“The demand for health and safety practitioners with internationally recognised qualifications is growing.”

Finding the right training provider – a checklist

- Does the provider specialise in delivering health and safety training?
- Is the provider accredited by a professional body, such as NEBOSH, IOSH, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), etc.?
- Is quality approved in any way? Local colleges will be inspected by Ofsted and OfQual. Private providers should be approved by some external quality control body, such as ISO, British Accreditation Council or ODLQC. (Remember to check the quality control body's website to see what the approval really means.)
- What are the trainer's experience and qualifications?
- Is the trainer experienced in delivering courses to the corporate market?
- Can the course be tailored to your company's specific needs?
- What are the pass rates of past students and how are these figures calculated (how many students over how many exam sittings)?
- Precisely what does the course involve? (e-learning can mean anything from a book supplied with an e-mail address to a fully integrated, tutor-led training programme.)
- If you are looking for a global provider, can they handle assessment and delivery overseas?
- What language(s) is the training provided in? Can it be translated into the language(s) you need?
- Is the course suitable for those not studying in their native language?
- If you are opting for the distance or e-learning route, what physical attendance, if any, is required to sit exams and assessments?
- What is the pricing, and will this include training materials, exams and professional body membership?
- Can the provider meet all of your needs if your requirements change later on?
- Is there flexibility to modify the course, and what will this cost?
- How frequently are course materials updated and revised?
- Does the provider offer a full range of health and safety courses, enabling you to source all your needs from a single provider?
- Can the provider handle the number of students you wish to enrol?
- What are the payment terms?
- Will you have unlimited contact with the tutors and trainers?
- Will the provider undertake the training of your in-house trainers?
- Does the provider offer an updating facility to keep the materials you have purchased up-to-date?
- Does the provider offer an opportunity for continuing professional education?

About RRC Training

RRC Training, formerly known as RRC Business Training, is the highly respected, leading health and safety and environmental training provider in the UK.

Approved by the ODLQC and accredited by NEBOSH, IOSH and the CIEH, RRC Training has always been a leader in the development of advanced training delivery methods and continually evolves its services in training and consultancy, self-paced learning and taught courses.

Operating internationally and with over 80 years' experience in delivering education and training, RRC delivers effective training to both individuals and multinational corporations.

RRC's bespoke corporate programmes encompass a comprehensive portfolio of courses covering every requirement from entry-level topic introductions to the prestigious NEBOSH National Diploma.



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TRAINING

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