
Certificate in Industrial Occupational Hygiene

Occupational Health and Safety Legislation

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Legislation refers to the laws, regulations, and standards that govern the protection of workers from harm in the workplace. This legislation is designed to ensure that employers take reasonable steps to prevent accidents, injuries, and illnesses from occurring in the workplace. In this explanation, we will discuss some of the key terms and vocabulary related to OHS legislation in the context of the Certificate in Industrial Occupational Hygiene.

1. Duty of Care:

Duty of care is a legal obligation that requires employers to take reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. This includes providing a safe working environment, safe systems of work, and adequate training and supervision. Employers must also ensure that their employees are not exposed to hazards that may cause harm.

2. Hazard:

A hazard is any source of potential harm or adverse health effects. Hazards can be physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, or psychosocial in nature. Examples of hazards include slippery floors, hazardous chemicals, sharp objects, loud noise, and workplace violence.

3. Risk:

Risk is the likelihood of harm or adverse health effects occurring as a result of exposure to a hazard. Risk is calculated by multiplying the likelihood of an event occurring by the severity of the harm that could result.

4. Hierarchy of Control:

The hierarchy of control is a framework for managing hazards in the workplace. It ranks control measures according to their effectiveness in eliminating or reducing risks. The hierarchy of control consists of five levels: elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment (PPE).

5. Elimination:

Elimination is the most effective control measure and involves removing the hazard from the workplace. This can be achieved by designing the workplace or the task in such a way that the hazard is no longer present.

6. Substitution:

Substitution involves replacing a hazardous substance or material with a less hazardous one. This can be achieved by using a different chemical, process, or equipment.

7. Engineering Controls:

Engineering controls involve modifying the workplace or the equipment to reduce the risk of harm. Examples of engineering controls include machine guarding, isolation, ventilation, and automation.

8. Administrative Controls:

Administrative controls involve changing the way people work to reduce the risk of harm. Examples of administrative controls include job rotation, training, and procedures.

9. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

PPE is the last line of defense against hazards and involves providing workers with equipment that protects them from harm. Examples of PPE include gloves, safety glasses, and respirators.

10. Hazard Identification:

Hazard identification is the process of identifying hazards in the workplace. This can be achieved through workplace inspections, incident investigations, and consultation with workers.

11. Risk Assessment:

Risk assessment is the process of evaluating the risk associated with a hazard. This involves estimating the likelihood and consequences of an event and determining the level of risk.

12. Control Measures:

Control measures are the steps taken to eliminate or reduce the risk associated with a hazard. Control measures can be administrative, engineering, or a combination of both.

13. Incident Investigation:

Incident investigation is the process of investigating incidents, accidents, and near misses in the workplace. The purpose of incident investigation is to identify the root cause of the incident and to develop control measures to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

14. Workplace Inspections:

Workplace inspections are the process of systematically examining the workplace to identify hazards and assess compliance with OHS legislation.

15. Consultation:

Consultation is the process of involving workers in the decision-making process related to OHS. This includes consulting with workers on hazards, risk assessments, and control measures.

16. Due Diligence:

Due diligence is the process of taking reasonable steps to ensure compliance with OHS legislation. Employers must demonstrate due diligence by implementing and maintaining an OHS management system.

17. OHS Management System:

An OHS management system is a systematic approach to managing OHS in the workplace. It includes policies, procedures, and programs that are designed to eliminate or reduce risks.

18. Workers' Compensation:

Workers' compensation is a system of insurance that provides benefits to workers who are injured or become ill as a result of their work.

19. Right to Refuse Work:

The right to refuse work is a legal right that allows workers to refuse to perform work that they believe is unsafe. Employers must investigate the refusal and take steps to eliminate or reduce the risk.

20. Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation is the process of modifying the workplace or the job to accommodate the needs of workers with disabilities.

Examples:

* An employer identifies a hazardous chemical in the workplace and implements a substitution control measure by replacing the chemical with a less hazardous one.

* A factory installs machine guarding to reduce the risk of injury to workers operating machinery.

* A construction company implements a fall prevention program as an administrative control measure to

reduce the risk of falls from heights.

* A worker is provided with a respirator as a personal protective equipment control measure to reduce the risk of inhaling hazardous substances.

* A hospital conducts a workplace inspection to identify hazards and assess compliance with OHS legislation.

Practical Applications:

* Employers can use the hierarchy of control to manage hazards in the workplace.

* Workers can use their right to refuse work if they believe that the work is unsafe.

* Employers can implement an OHS management system to ensure compliance with OHS legislation.

* Workers can participate in workplace inspections and incident investigations to identify hazards and assess compliance with OHS legislation.

Challenges:

* Employers may struggle to identify all hazards in the workplace.

* Workers may be reluctant to report hazards or incidents due to fear of reprisal.

* Control measures may be costly to implement.

* OHS legislation can be complex and difficult to understand.

Conclusion:

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Legislation is a critical component of the Certificate in Industrial Occupational Hygiene. Understanding the key terms and vocabulary related to OHS legislation is essential for ensuring compliance with OHS legislation and protecting workers from harm in the workplace. By implementing control measures based on the hierarchy of control, conducting workplace inspections, and involving workers in the decision-making process, employers can create a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.