

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING.

Prashant Kumar Nayak¹, Mahendra Kumar², Brundaban Sahu³, Diptimayee Das⁴

^{1, 2, 3, 4} Gandhamardan Iron Ore Mines, OMC Limited, Suakati, Keonjhar, Odisha, India – 758018.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of health and safety training is to improve and enhance a person's skills and/or knowledge in order to enable that person to work safely. Health and Safety training is an essential element in the formation of safe systems of work. Not only can training help prevent injuries and ill health, but it should also prove a useful investment; for example, it can reduce the likelihood of errors being made, reduce the risk of accidents and their associated costs, contribute towards greater morale, and assist in the defence of negligence claims. Furthermore, most health and safety training can be provided in-house, thereby keeping expenses to a minimum. Training benefits from a planned, systematic approach. The first stage is to identify the training needs that exist within the company, which involves looking at the activities that employees carry out in order to determine the training they require to work safely. Once identified, the training needs should be prioritised. The next stage is to develop training programmes to address each of the training needs. Clear objectives should be set within each programme which, when achieved, will meet the training needs. The content of the training can then be planned with the aim of ensuring that each of the objectives is satisfied. It is important to ensure that the training methods and techniques adopted are appropriate for the type of training and the people being trained. The next stage is to carry out the training. The trainer must have adequate knowledge and presentation skills to deliver the training effectively. Finally, it is strongly recommended that all training provided is recorded. The effectiveness of the training, in terms of meeting the training objectives, should be evaluated. There are a variety of options for doing this, for example, examinations or tests, observing any changes in behaviour after training, examining subsequent trends in accident statistics, and obtaining the views of the employees who were trained.

INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of health and safety training is to improve and enhance a person's skills and/or knowledge to enable that person to carry out their work safely. This will help to ensure that an individual is competent to perform the work required of them. In addition, training can be used to help produce positive attitudes to safety in employees at all levels of the organisation, which will assist in fostering what is commonly referred to as a positive safety culture. In such a culture, safe behaviour is encouraged and expected. Thus, used properly, training can assist both directly and indirectly in achieving high standards of health and safety in the workplace. The provision of adequate training is an essential part of effective health and safety management and, for training to be successful, a considered, planned approach is necessary. Training should be viewed as an investment which in the long term will benefit the company. It can, for example: (1) Enhance an individual's performance of a task, reduce the likelihood of error, and hence contribute to greater efficiency and productivity; (2) Reduce the risk of costly accidents, injuries, and incidents

causing damage to plant and equipment; (3) Contribute towards greater confidence and improved morale in employees; and (4) Assist in defending negligence claims, for example, where it is alleged that an employee's lack of competence contributed towards an accident. An important point to be aware of is that training and the production of competent employees will not, on its own, be sufficient to achieve high standards of health and safety or indeed comply with the law. Training has its limitations and is no substitute for the provision of adequate physical controls and safe systems of work. It should be remembered that an organisation is only as effective as the people who work in it. Comprehensive training on all aspects of an employee's work is, therefore, critical to the effective running of the organisation. The guidance contained in this paper can be used to help meet all of the organisation's health and safety training needs.

IDENTIFYING TRAINING NEEDS

A systematic and planned approach should always be taken to training in order to ensure that adequate training is provided to all employees in relation to the work activities that they undertake and the environment in which they work. Figure 1 illustrates such an approach, which is based on: (a) identifying training needs; (b) developing a training programme; (c) carrying out the training programme; and (d) evaluating the training programme.

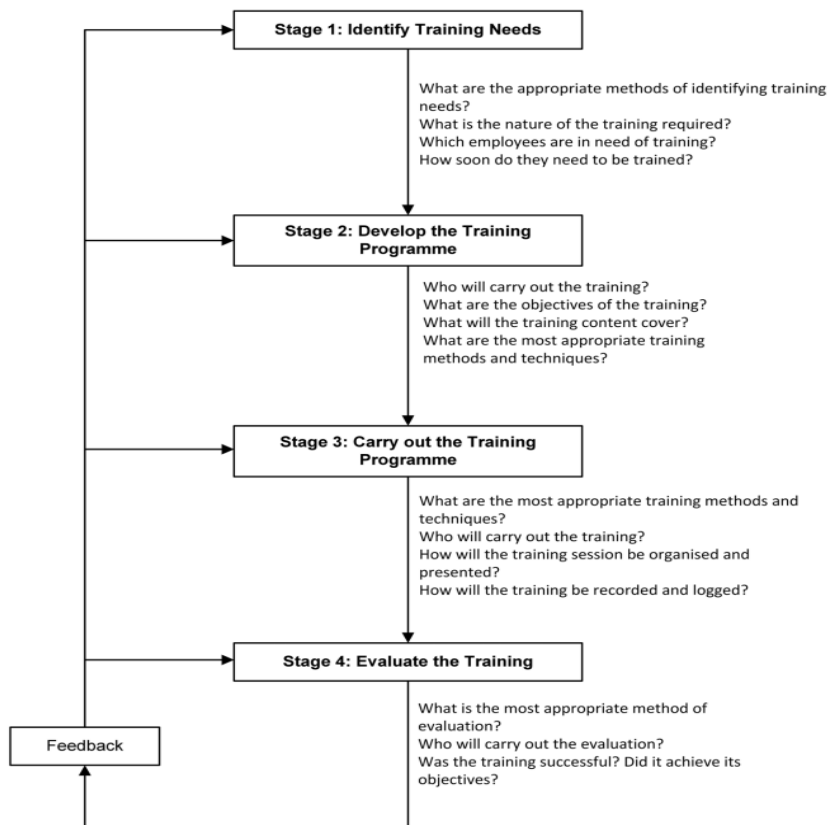


Figure 1. The training processes.

Identifying the types of training required:

Before a training programme can be developed, it is necessary to clearly identify employees' training needs. The most effective way of identifying such training needs is to carry out a training needs assessment. This is a comprehensive analysis of the specific training needs of all employees based on the work activities undertaken and the risks to which they are or may be exposed. Employers and the self-employed should include themselves in the assessment, and all managers should be included. For larger organisations, it may be easier to carry out generic assessments by grouping employees who undertake the same work activities rather than looking at a large number of individuals. If individuals within a large group undertake some specialist duties, separate consideration should be given to their training needs. There are various methods of examining work activities to identify training needs, the most important being risk assessment. Where risk assessments have already been carried out, consulting the findings should help determine which work activities require some form of training for the employees involved, as part of the preventative and protective methods needed to control the risk. Further risk assessments should be carried out if necessary. In addition, there are specific techniques such as job/task analysis which can be useful in identifying training needs. Job/task analysis involves breaking a work activity down into its component parts and observing employees to determine how the work is done, and where necessary questioning them as to why it is done in a particular way. This should enable the risks and the appropriate control measures (such as training) to be identified.

In addition to examining employees' work activities, training needs can also be identified through the following: (a) Consulting relevant legislation - Reviewing the legislation and any Approved Codes of Practice relevant to the tasks being carried out may reveal specific requirements for certain types of training to be provided; (b) Consulting records Examining accident and ill-health statistics may reveal a training need; (c) Forecasting Potential training needs can be identified by looking ahead at likely changes in the tasks carried out by employees, the equipment they use, changes in systems of work, and the introduction of new technology; (d) Consulting employees/employee representatives Employees' (and their managers') views on what their training needs are, and any requests from employees for health and safety training, should be taken into account; and (e) Health and safety policy The health and safety policy may state specific training requirements which the company expects to be met, and which may be more stringent than the legal minimum. The policy should also state the health and safety responsibilities of managers, who may require additional training in order to discharge those responsibilities effectively. The training needs assessment should indicate: (a) the work activities undertaken; (b) the appropriate risk assessment reference numbers (if applicable); and (c) crucially, the training required for anyone involved in the work activity or within the work environment and/or exposed to the associated risks. The training needs assessment will only provide an outline as to what training will be required. It should identify the specific subjects to

be covered. The details of the training needed can be identified later in the process when the training programme is developed. Table 1 outlines the types of health and safety training that are typically required in an organisation. In the table, the training has been categorised according to the different types of recipients, i.e.: (a) induction training; (b) ongoing training for employees; (c) ongoing training for managers; and (d) training for non-employees.

TABLE 1: Types of training commonly required.

Type of training	Training points to be included
Induction training	<p>General induction training should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. arrangements for first aid, fire, and evacuation (these should be covered on an employee's first day); 2. the accident reporting procedure and who to contact in the event of a health and safety problem or concern; 3. introducing the company safety policy, including employees' legal responsibilities; 4. arrangements for consultation between employers and employees on health and safety matters; 5. relevant health and safety legislation; 6. workplace safety rules; 7. welfare arrangements; 8. Conditions of employment relevant to health and safety, e.g. hours of work. <p>Health and safety training in matters specific to the tasks employees are expected to perform will often be required during induction as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. information on relevant hazards; 2. how the risks presented by those hazards can be minimised; 3. Specific training may also be required to comply with legal requirements. <p>Particular attention and priority should be given to any new recruits who are young employees, as young people tend to be more vulnerable to workplace accidents. If the new recruits are managers, additional training will usually be required on relevant subjects as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the safety management systems and any quality systems in operation; 2. legal responsibilities of the company and individual managers; 3. training arrangements; 4. the company's risk assessment arrangements, and how risks relevant to the manager's area of responsibility are controlled; 5. Disciplinary/grievance procedures relating to health and safety.
Ongoing training for employees	<p>Such training could involve any of the subjects listed under induction training. Other training which may be identified could involve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. safe working methods; 2. training in technical matters;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. the safe use of new machinery, equipment, and technology; 4. how to follow a new work procedure, such as a permit-to-work system; 5. Specialised training for appropriate personnel. <p>Training may be required in circumstances where an employee experiences a change of job role or takes on additional responsibilities, where such changes have health and safety implications.</p>
Ongoing training for managers	<p>It is important to ensure that managers and supervisors receive adequate training as they will not only be responsible for supervising work activities but will also have specific responsibilities that they must fully understand such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. liaison and consultation on health and safety with individuals and groups within the company; 2. liaison and cooperation on health and safety with individuals and groups external to the company such as enforcing authorities, suppliers, customers, contractors, or the public; 3. the manager's duties and role in internal accident reporting and investigation, and statutory reporting of injuries, diseases, and dangerous occurrences; 4. effective training and supervision of employees (managers need an appreciation of the risks present and control measures required); 5. recruitment and selection of employees who are suitable for the tasks required of them; 6. checking that work areas and work carried out under their control adhere to the company safety policy and procedures and legal requirements; 7. How to carry out or organise a risk assessment.
Training for non-employees	<p>It is vital that managers are given sufficient information, instruction, and training to enable them to discharge their health and safety responsibilities effectively. The level of training required will vary according to the extent of the responsibilities assigned to individual managers, the size of the company, and the complexity of its operations.</p> <p>Information about health and safety risks on the premises and the precautions required may need to be provided to a range of visitors, such as members of the public, contractors, and the self-employed working for employers. Over and above that, instruction and training may also need to be provided, for example, to temporary workers and contractors, to ensure that the risks they may encounter arising from the activities of the host company, and the risks that their activities may present to the company employees, are adequately controlled.</p> <p>Some issues that may need to be included are: (a) risks to non-employees' health and safety that exist on site; (b) emergency procedures; (c) safe working practices; (d) persons responsible for evacuation; (e) risks to</p>

	employees from the activities of non-employees. The employer must also ensure that, where necessary, the contractor provides information and training where their activities may affect the health and safety of others.
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Establishing the current level of training :

Having determined what types of training are required in relation to the different work activities and risks present, the next stage of the training needs assessment is to decide which employees are currently in need of that training. An employee has a training need where there is a gap between the knowledge and skills required in order to work safely and avoid unnecessary risk, and the employee's existing level of knowledge and skill. A review of employees' current training records may reveal that a considerable amount of the necessary training has already been provided although it may be worth considering the adequacy of such training, whether it is sufficient for the employee to work safely and whether it needs to be refreshed. Employees or their representatives may, therefore, need to be consulted to determine whether their training has covered the subjects identified by the training needs assessment, and whether they are in fact competent. If records are not kept, and there is any doubt about the employee's competence, then training should be given.

Refresher training :

Competence can be lost as well as gained. It will be lost particularly where the skills and knowledge acquired through training are rarely used, such as for emergency procedures. Training must therefore be repeated periodically, and arrangements will need to be established to provide such training. Refresher training is essential in keeping persons at the correct level of competence. The frequency of such refresher training should be at the discretion of the employer who has two main options for action:

- (a) retrain at pre-determined intervals: this may seem the easiest option to manage although it does have the disadvantage of being difficult to gauge the correct frequency as individual employees' capacity will vary; and
- (b) retrain when needed, for example, in relation to requests received from managers or employees, or where there are signs of deterioration in work performance: this is the most flexible option but requires a very high level of monitoring and supervision to ensure that any deterioration is not sufficient to cause a risk to health and safety.

Provision of training:

There are a number of options available to employers when considering how training should be provided. The most suitable in any given situation will depend on:

- (a) the training objectives;
- (b) the time and resources available for training;
- (c) the availability of in-house expertise;
- (d) the preferences of the trainees;
- (e) Whether the nature of the training required is specific or general, practical or theoretical.

Various types of training are available, and careful consideration will be needed in order to choose the most suitable type for meeting a particular training need. Training may be run in-house or externally.

1. In-house: where employees of the company have the necessary expertise in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience to competently deliver the training, then this should normally be the preferred route. If the necessary expertise does not exist in-house, it may nevertheless be worthwhile providing training for selected employees so that they are able to acquire the necessary expertise to deliver the training. The advantages of inhouse training include the fact that it can easily be tailored towards the specific needs of the company, can lead to increased buy-in from employees, and is usually the cheapest option.
2. Externally: if the necessary expertise is not available in-house, it may be necessary to seek specialist assistance from external sources such as health and safety training organisations and consultants, trade associations, trade unions, and institutions of further education. Such options may be suitable where only a small number of employees require the particular type of training concerned, and facilities are not available internally. An advantage is that employees may view external courses as being of greater importance than those run internally.

TABLE 2. Common problems associated with health and safety training

Problem	Solution
Safety training can be seen to be irrelevant and boring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the training relevant to the trainees' particular tasks. 2. Use actual examples of accidents and incidents that have happened in the workplace. 3. Illustrate with examples of safety suggestions put forward by employees and the benefits obtained. 4. Keep the audience involved. Change presentation methods.
There may be too much information to take in at once	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide a larger number of shorter-length training sessions. 2. Plan sessions to follow a natural progression of subjects. 3. Get trainees to carry out a practical exercise and report back to the group. 4. Provide assignments for trainees to complete. 5. Provide supplementary information. 6. Check to ensure that it has been understood.
"Safety is not my problem"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reinforce the company's safety policy (i.e. that safety is

	<p>everyone's responsibility).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Get trainees to carry out a practical problem-solving exercise. 3. Get trainees to carry out a risk assessment of their work activities and identify control measures. 4. Get trainees to make a presentation on a safety topic of their choice. 5. Obtain group and individual feedback.
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EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

The purpose of evaluation is to determine how effective the training has been in terms of meeting the training objectives (i.e. was the training successful?). For the majority of topics in which training may be provided, some form of evaluation of the training should be carried out. This can be achieved by:

1. an examination or test at the end of the training session – even after short courses, a simple test can prove useful;
2. observing employees' behaviour in the workplace (are trainees demonstrating that they understood the training by following the correct procedures and working safely?) and undertaking workplace inspections/audits;
3. examining accident, injury, and near-miss statistics to see if there are any improvements (it should be appreciated, however, that some training courses can lead to a short-term rise in accident figures as a result of employees being made aware of the reporting procedures);
4. examining whether there has been an improvement in efficiency and/or a reduction in errors made by employees;
5. Post-training evaluation of employees' knowledge, skills, and/or awareness through the use of questionnaires or discussion;
6. Obtaining the opinions of employees – did they find the training useful? – and of their supervisors. Employees could be asked for any suggestions they may have for improving the training arrangements and whether they feel they need any additional training in the subjects covered;
7. Assessment of any coursework.

It can be seen that a meaningful evaluation of the training period may take some time, depending on the methods used. The evaluation should seek to identify whether and where improvements can be made, particularly where there are indications that the training was not entirely successful. The results of the evaluation should be recorded and examined to see where improvements can be made to the training arrangements. The training arrangements should also be reviewed periodically to identify whether modifications are necessary, for example as a result of changes in work methods or new legislation.

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