



Competence Safe Working Practices

Many health and safety regulations call for a competent person to fulfil some general or specific function. The ordinary meaning of the term is someone who is capable of doing a job and who does it capably but the term is usually defined with more particular detail in the regulation from which it emulates. The important thing to keep in mind is that anyone who fulfils a health and safety function, or who is involved in an operation which is inherently hazardous, should be competent to perform that operation safely. Employers should do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that that is the case.

The term has now been defined under regulation as “someone who has sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities needed to assist an employer in compliance with legal requirements”, i.e. to work safely.

COMPETENCE

Competence may be defined as a combination of education, knowledge, skill and sufficient undertaking of the work to enable safe, effective implementation.

The extent to which any of the above factors is required will depend upon the specific health and safety responsibilities and the nature of the work.

If a Supervisor or Line Manager is unsure of the competence of their workforce they should carry out an assessment to determine the level of factors identified above and provide extra training, instruction or supervision as necessary (see also Training).

CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCE

A Certificate of Competence is an authority to conduct work relevant to a specific task.

Normally to be issued to a person who has successfully completed a relevant course of training at an approved training establishment or under the direction of an approved and suitably qualified technical instructor.