

Training, competence, verification & appointment

The level of knowledge and experience of a supervisor is of equal importance to the competency level of the team undertaking the work activity. Effective supervisors are those who have the skills, knowledge, training, experience and leadership qualities to suit the job in hand. Good communication and people management skills are also important qualities for supervisors.

In addition to trade or industry knowledge there is also a requirement to possess several softer/management skills. This further supports the supervisor in discharging the role, in addition to supporting and developing their teams.

These include:

- > Time management
- > Presentation skills
- > Difficult conversations / coaching
- > Conflict management
- > Mental health awareness
- > Employers cultural change journey

Verification and confirmation

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to ensure effective, planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative measures identified as needed in a risk assessment - this will include supervision.

Following identification, appointment and training investment for an appointed supervisor, it is important for the organisation to observe the application of all the above into the business. This approach follows 'Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Evaluation Model' (arguably the most widely used and popular model for the evaluation of training and learning), address level 3 - Behaviour. Kirkpatrick suggests that 'Behaviour evaluation is the extent of applied learning back on the job'.

This approach facilitates benchmarking competence and progression against the organisation's procedures and identifying best practice for wider supervisor cohort sharing.

QBE have produced an observation-based assessment to support organisations with this critical step.

Examples of activities observed are:

- > Looking for use and understanding of safety terminology.
- > Understanding the role of a supervisor - exemplar safety behaviour.
- > Observing the relationship with safety - why does it matter?.
- > Planning and organising works activities.
- > Defining a hazard.
- > Defining a risk.
- > Permit to work receipt and application.
- > Certificate of isolation receipt and application.
- > Observe morning/safety briefing delivery.
- > Discuss activity RAMS and highlight key risks and subsequent controls.
- > Observe team and contractor interactions - behaviours.
- > Review and observe safety inspection and site walkaround - hazard perception.

Following successful completion of the assessment process, supervisors should be formally recognised with an appointment, declaring their commitment to the role of a supervisor and be issued with appropriate means for identification e.g., coloured safety helmet (black) or armbands to enable them to be identifiable on site, or by displaying their appointment on the site organisational chart, or H&S noticeboards.

QBE have produced a draft assessment to support this critical step, supporting clients in confirming supervisors are demonstrating and deploying the required behaviours and actions to effectively supervise their work areas.

It would be suggested that this process is repeated 3 yearly to ensure retention and demonstrable competency, or if there is a significant event where the actions of a supervisor are deemed to have contributed.

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