

TOOLBOX TALKS

Personal Responsibility

It is individuals who create a safe, or unsafe, place of work. That's not to say that accidents are always the responsibility of employees or the injured party involved in an accident – very often there may be root causes which lie with management responsibility that give rise to a set of circumstances that lead to an incident occurring – but individuals must also take responsibility for their actions (or omissions) and can be held accountable.

This is something that is recognised in law too through both The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASAWA) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Relevant sections from the Act are shown below, but what they basically say is that individuals must work in a manner, which does not put themselves or anyone else in danger. They must comply with all safety requirements advised by their employer and they must not misuse or abuse any article supplied for safety purposes, for example: misuse of a fire extinguisher to prop open fire doors or not using a safety helmet or other PPE as required.

HASAWA Section 7 – General Duties of Employees at Work

It is your duty whilst at work:

- To take reasonable care of your health and safety and that of any persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work
- You must co-operate with your employer in health and safety matters

ABM as an employer has a responsibility to provide health and safety training to all its employees; one recognised and an effective training method is that of the EH&S Focus Topic. It is therefore your duty to cooperate with your employer and attend these sessions and give them your full attention

HASAWA Section 8 – Duty not to Interfere with or Misuse Anything Provided

- You must not intentionally or recklessly interfere with, or misuse, anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare

At individual level then, everyone has a statutory duty to take reasonable care of themselves, and the environment which might be affected by their actions. Remember this “duty of care” extends to a requirement for you to always report any fault or defect which could endanger health or safety or damage the environment.

The person responsible for Health and Safety matters on a site is normally the customer's Health and Safety Manager or Site Manager. However, as we have seen, responsibility is not something solely for one individual - all of us have a responsibility and need to play a part in ensuring our workplaces are safe.

Personal Responsibility – Questions

Q1. Who can be said to create a safe or unsafe place of work?

A

Q2. What is the basic manner in which individuals must conduct themselves whilst at work?

A

Q3. Under section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, define the two main duties individuals must comply with whilst at work.

A1

A2

Q4 Under section 8 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, explain your duty stipulated in this act.

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Q5. Give an example of misuse of a Fire Extinguisher.

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Employee Name:

Employee Number:

Manager's Name:

Date: