

Activity P2

Who's responsible?

Teacher and trainer notes

Some learners view workplace safety as an issue for someone else, commonly their employer, supervisor or an official. This activity introduces learners to an understanding of roles and responsibilities in accident prevention, in particular, raising awareness of their own role in workplace safety.

The activity requires learners to operate at a level above simple recognition and recall of facts. It asks them to analyse, reason and justify decisions about responsibilities and to form opinions. These are higher level reasoning skills.

The activity is particularly effective in promoting and internalising positive attitudinal change. Learners become aware that their responsibility as a worker is less that of 'compliance' with a set of rules and more a proactive promoter, or 'guardian', of safety.

Learning objectives

Learners should be able to:

- explain some reasons why accidents happen at work
- decide what responsibility means for themselves and for employers
- suggest some ways to prevent accidents at work.

Materials required

Each learner will need:

- a copy of the learner resources for *Who's responsible?*
- a mini-whiteboard.

Each group will need:

- a set of *Who's responsible?* cards, printable from CD ROM *Resources*.
- example session plan from CD ROM *Resources*.

Time needed

About an hour.

Starting points

The activity is described in detail in the learning materials. You can use this activity during induction with learners who have little or no experience of the workplace or with learners who have been working in engineering for a while. It helps people to reflect on their everyday responsibilities and draws on their experience.

You can also use this activity to monitor attitude change over time as learners bring back and share their experience of the workplace with others.

Suggested approach

You will need to plan how you group your learners. It is particularly helpful to group more experienced and less experienced learners together as they will learn from each other. Groups of three work best and the cards should be shared out between them. Everyone needs to see and handle the cards and to be drawn into the discussion.

Ask learners to read out, discuss and decide which of the three headings each hazard comes under.

- My responsibility.
- Employer's responsibility.
- No one's responsibility.

They should be able to explain why they have placed cards under the different headings. This will help you to explore their reasoning and degree of understanding.

There is no right or wrong answer to the activity but learners need to come to the realisation that, ultimately, health and safety is the responsibility of every individual in the industry, whether in a motor vehicle workshop or manufacturing facility, or as a mobile engineer.

As groups discuss and classify the cards, your role is to monitor the discussions and to facilitate by using open questions rather than intervening directly. You may choose to be more challenging with employed or more experienced learners while less experienced learners may need more support to reason through the issues.

Putting the card statements into a context may help learners. Using “What if ...” questions encourage thought and reflection:

“What if your workmate had spilled some oil but got called away to do another job?”

“What if the instructions in the manual were difficult to understand?”

“What if the boss insisted you must do a job you hadn’t been trained for because the firm had to meet a deadline and there was no one else available?”

After groups have agreed and arranged their own cards, the pace of the session and the discussion can be maintained by moving the groups around to view the other groups’ decisions. Learners can be invited to suggest changes, although they must justify their suggestions.

Developing the session

Next focus attention on the hazards remaining under ‘no one’s responsibility’. For example, you might ask:

“You’ve said that working in poor light is no one’s responsibility because you expect it to be gloomy by 4 pm in winter when you’re out on a breakdown or site visit. Who’s responsible if you have an accident?”

If learners find this part of the activity difficult, try asking:

“If there had been an accident due to ..., who would be questioned by investigators? What conclusions might they come to?”

“If your friend were involved in an accident due to ... would you be happy to accept that no one was at fault?”

The ultimate objective is to have no hazards remaining as 'No one's responsibility', while a new category may have been created: 'joint responsibility of myself and my employer'.

Consolidating and checking learning

Ask learners to reflect on their conclusions. The main learning point from this activity is that health and safety is everyone's responsibility.

Also ask them to consider how they came to that conclusion. For example, did they:

- talk about workplace experiences?
- ask questions?
- think about lots of different examples?
- change their minds?
- argue with each other?
- make suggestions?
- listen to other people's points of view?
- make decisions based on the best evidence available?

Learners might now make a written record of their decisions by completing the responsibility checklist in the learning materials and applying their understanding to the accident prevention task.

Differentiating the activity

You will need to consider how you group your learners together. You may, for example, decide to place particular quiet or assertive learners in the same group to develop personal and interpersonal skills, or to place those who are employed in the same group.

You will also need to consider the literacy ability of your learners. Consider placing more confident readers in groups with less confident readers. Both can benefit as less confident readers will feel able to test their understanding safely and more confident learners might take on the role of mentors and reinforce their own understanding.

If all your learners are likely to find the task challenging, or you are short of time for the activity, issue fewer cards. Divide one set of hazard cards between several groups to

classify and then move groups around to review and comment on the other group's solutions. This is an energising activity.

What learners might do next

Encourage learners to use blank cards to create their own hazard cards relating to their own area of work and ask colleagues to classify them.