

accidents don't have to happen

NEBOSH Diploma Practical: Maximum marks, minimum stress

- What do you need to know?
- Plan for success
- Gain top marks



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Introduction?

What is the NEBOSH Diploma Practical?

You've completed units A-C of the [NEBOSH Diploma](#), now it's time to put that knowledge into practice and complete a practical report. This is your guide on how to get the most out of unit D of the NEBOSH Diploma.

Unit D is your chance to bring together your knowledge and understanding from the other units and apply it to a practical workplace environment.

To some people, it's the most daunting and intimidating part of the entire NEBOSH Diploma, but it doesn't have to be that way. With the right planning and the right guidance you can achieve maximum success in this unit!

Candidates are required to use the knowledge gleaned in units A-C to make a detailed review of the health and safety performance of a workplace and produce a justified action plan to improve performance. The expected length of the assignment is around 8,000 words. Full NEBOSH guidance on the Unit can be found [HERE](#).

The level of work should be that expected of a competent occupational health and safety practitioner working within an organisation.

OK, so maybe it can sound a bit daunting, but fear not, here are our 10 tips for success that will help you achieve maximum marks with minimum stress...

Tips for success:

1. Plan for success

Before you even start doing any work, you need to pick an organisation that is suitable for the task in hand. Ideally, this will be the company you work for, however if you're out of work then you will have to find a suitable one. To pick the correct organisation you need to take into account a number of important factors:

- **Is the company large enough to carry out a review of health and safety management systems?**
- **Similarly, is the company too large to fully cover? If so, then maybe you could focus on a specific department or division.**
- **Is there a sufficiently wide range of hazards in the areas covered by units B (Hazardous agents in the workplace) and C (Workplace and work equipment)?**

When you've weighed up all of these factors and picked your organisation, make sure you talk to your tutor and come up with a plan on how you intend to approach the practical.

REMEMBER: Your tutor cannot read or amend your assignment, but they can tell you whether your proposal has sufficient depth and breadth of content for NEBOSH Diploma level.

Tips for success:

2. Style and substance

This may sound obvious, but remember to make your answer readable!

Don't forget this is an assignment, so it needs to be written in a formal style as if you are submitting it to a senior manager. **Don't** fill it with unnecessary technical jargon or clunky language.

You also need to think about how you are presenting the information. In many cases, bullet points or a table can help, as can organising your work into short paragraphs so as to avoid large chunks of text. If it's difficult for you to read, then it's going to be difficult for the examiner to read!

You can get some invaluable advice on the NEBOSH Diploma by reading our blog on [How to craft killer answers for your NEBOSH exams](#)

REMEMBER: Your work is being marked by a human being, not a machine

Tips for success:

3. Mark allocation

Whilst Unit D is a written assignment, in some ways you need to treat Unit D in the same way you would an exam or a test paper. As with the exams, marks are awarded both for the range of factors considered and for the quality of treatment. Further details on this can be found [HERE](#).

Before you start, you should formulate an action plan that outlines how you can maximise your marks for each section. Make sure you constantly refer back to your plan throughout the assignment.

The key is striking the right balance between range and depth. For example, a large number of factors treated with insignificant depth will not be rewarded with high marks.

The maximum number of marks for each section can be found on the following page:

Use the section headings given by NEBOSH. Don't try to be clever by changing them. The examiner needs to know which section he/she is marking.

Tips for success:

3. It's all about the marks

Section	Marks	Tick
Planning and presentation	8	
Introduction (aims, objectives, description of the organisation)	6	
Introduction (legislation and relevant legal cases)	4	
Main body (description and review of H&S management system)	6	
Main body (GAP analysis)	6	
Main body (hazard identification physical hazards – unit C)	8	
Main body (hazard identification health and welfare hazards – unit B)	8	
Main body (risk assessment physical hazard activity)	10	
Main body (risk assessment health and welfare activity)	10	
Conclusions	6	
Recommendations	6	
Action plan 1 H&S management system	6	
Action plan 2 Hazards and risks	6	
Executive summary	10	

Tips for success:

4. Executive Summary

The simplest way of approaching the Executive Summary is to think of it as an **overview of the important points of your work.**

When writing the Executive Summary you need to bear in mind the following:

- It should be aimed at somebody who is not necessarily an expert in the field
- It should state the implications of your review on the organisation
- Include any costs involved
- Explain the proposed course of action and benefits
- Present the summary in a non-technical, reader-friendly style, suitable for a busy manager to read
- It is the only part of the report that is length limited – it should be no longer than 1 side of A4: 10% of available marks will be deducted for every extra ¼ page

The Executive Summary is placed towards the front of your report, but in reality it will be the last part you write.

Tips for success:

5. Make a strong impression

It's an overused phrase, but it really does apply to your report, so make sure you nail your introduction. Get the introduction right and it sets up the rest of your report. Furthermore, it will be a great help when you reach your conclusion, as you can refer back to your objectives and evaluate your success.

Firstly, it needs a clear description of your methodology, including your methods of research and a short description of your chosen organisation or workplace. This enables you to set the context for the report. In describing the organisation or workplace you need to consider:

- Size
- Nature of the business
- Employee profile - an organisational chart can be included in the appendix
- Work patterns
- Production schedules
- Special circumstances that may affect health and safety
- Any legislation or case law that is relevant
- A couple of photographs may be useful, but don't go overboard. A sketch of the work site should be sufficient.

Remember you are being marked on your ability to put these in the context of the development of an effective health and safety management programme. An exhaustive list of laws and regulations is NOT expected, nor is a comprehensive history of the organisation.

Tips for success:

6. Know your hazards

A vital part of the report is identifying at least 15 hazards. You won't need to carry out a full risk assessment for each hazard, but you will need to **justify and prioritise** each hazard identified. There are a number of issues to consider:

- The hazards should be across a range of categories relevant to the organisation. A full risk assessment is not needed on each hazard.
- The hazards should be a combination of **Physical Hazards (Unit B)** and **Health & Welfare Hazards (Unit C)**.
- A [risk assessment template](#) will be useful in identifying what can cause harm in the workplace environment.
- A matrix may be useful to help you compare the hazards and score them. A scoring system is useful when it comes to prioritising the hazards.
- Two of the hazards need to be given High Priority, one of these needs to be a physical hazard and the other must relate to health and welfare.

If in doubt, read our [NEBOSH exam guides](#).

Tips for success:

7. Specify risks

The risk assessments for this unit must be completed on two of the hazards that have previously been identified and classed as high priority. Your physical hazard should relate to Unit C, whilst your health and welfare hazard needs to relate to those covered in Unit B.

You need to evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation in controlling these risks and propose additional methods to control the hazard and reduce the risks. Make sure you make use of any existing data for hazards that have already been quantified – e.g. Noise control.

You must also describe your methodology for each risk assessment and include references to publications, legislations, [ACOPs](#), and other technical documents you've used.

If your organisation has a specific law associated with it, then you must ensure that you use any relevant risk assessment guidance.

REMEMBER: Avoid presenting a generic risk assessment model. Present a specific risk assessment based on the nature of the hazard.

Tips for success:

8. Summing up

In conclusion, these should be a concise summary of your findings. Refer back to your aims and objectives and evaluate how well they were achieved. Do not introduce any new material or suggestions for improvements. Everything included here should already be in the main body of the report.

You must also describe your methodology for each risk assessment and include references to publications, legislations, [ACOPs](#), and other technical documents you've used. The rest of the conclusion should follow on logically from these findings – although make sure you cover every finding from the main report.

Print a copy of the report and highlight all of your findings – that will help make sure you cover all of them.

Tips for success:

9. Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendations should logically flow from your conclusions. A good set of recommendations should be:

- Practical
- Justified
- Cover all of the main findings
- Prioritised

You also need to include a cost benefit analysis which outlines what the organisation will gain compared to the costs involved.

Action Planning is the tool through which your recommendations should be implemented. It should include actions that need to take place to reduce the risks associated with the hazard. Remember to specify the person responsible for implementing the action - including the cost, action and timescale involved. **You may find that a table is the best way to set out your action plan.**

REMEMBER: Make your actions

SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timebound

Tips for success:

10. Final Pointers

You've done all the hard work, unit D is about bringing together the knowledge and understanding you have gained throughout the Diploma. Just make sure you plan ahead, manage your time effectively and stick to your plan. Also, remember to speak to your tutor when in doubt, they're there to help.

But before you go here are a final few things to check before you submit your report....

- Make sure your font style and font size are consistent throughout
- Make sure you've included all relevant references. This tells the examiner about the depth of research that you have conducted
- If you have conducted questionnaires then you could include one of them in your Appendix.

And if that's not enough, why not have a read of the following RoSPA guides:

[NEBOSH command word guide](#)

[NEBOSH Exam top tips](#)

[How to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment](#)

[Risk Assessment template](#)

About RoSPA

RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) is a registered charity and one of the UK's leading safety organisations. Through our [workplace safety training](#), [consultancy](#), [fleet](#), [awards](#) and [membership services](#), we work with organisations within the UK and overseas.

Why choose RoSPA training?

RoSPA offers one of the widest ranges of health and safety training courses and in-company safety training in the UK, from operative level right up to director and board level. We are one of the leading providers of NEBOSH and IOSH accredited courses, manual handling, safer people handling, auditor training and core health and safety training courses, covering a wide range of topics within the areas of risk assessment and the management of occupational safety.

We also lead the way in practical health and safety consultancy and audits. Tailored services provide a service that suits and ensures you're fully compliant and - above all - safe.

Which courses does RoSPA offer?

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