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# UNIT EC2: ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICAL APPLICATION

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## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this unit is to help you prepare for your NEBOSH Environmental Certificate Unit EC2: Environmental Practical Application.

**Some people think that this unit is simple, don't bother to prepare themselves properly, and fail as a result.**

**Make sure you don't fall into this trap!** While the process you have to move through is straightforward, in order to succeed you need to understand what NEBOSH expect. If you work carefully through these notes, we are confident that you'll be a successful candidate!

These notes are designed to give you guidance on completing your practical application, including:

- how you should go about planning it;
- what it should include; and
- what needs to be submitted when.

The practical application is not something that should be left to the end of your studies. You should start thinking about it **now**.

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# Unit EC2: Environmental Practical Application

## AIM OF THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The aim of the practical application is to test your ability to carry out two activities:



### An environmental review of your workplace:

- What are the actual and possible environmental issues?
- Are they adequately controlled?
- What, if any, remedial action is required?



### A written report to management:

- Outlining what you found in your review.
- Explaining why action is needed (and persuading management to do it!).
- Identifying what they need to do to resolve the issues you have identified.

You have to write the report after you have carried out the environmental review, so allow yourself three hours to complete the whole assessment.

The following table outlines the key stages involved in completing the practical application, along with some useful tips about how to tackle each one.

| Stage                                         | Key Tips                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Choose the review area.                       | The area should be just the right size; not so large that it is overwhelming and not too small to provide enough information. |
| Complete the NEBOSH proforma (questionnaire). | Complete this as you walk around the practical area. Make sure you adequately justify your answers in the comments boxes.     |
| Write the report.                             | Use the template (which you can find on the NEBOSH website) and follow the guidance below for each section of the template.   |

Let's look at these stages in detail, starting with the environmental review.

# Unit EC2: Environmental Practical Application

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

For this assessment you have to show NEBOSH that you can competently complete an environmental review of a workplace, identifying any issues of concern and what needs to be done about them – and how quickly action should be taken. This gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to apply the knowledge you have gained from studying the EC1 syllabus. You are expected to recognise actual and possible controlled and uncontrolled environmental issues as part of the review.

You will have already covered the types of environmental issues you are likely to come across in the workplace in Unit EC1 of your course, so we will not go into the detail of those here. Instead, we are going to concentrate on how you should approach the environmental review to give you the best chance of success.

## Choosing the Review Area

The environmental review on which your practical application will be based needs to be conducted at a place of work of your choice. Ideally, this will be your own place of work, but in making your selection NEBOSH recommend you bear the following points in mind:

- The chosen area must be:
  - Accessible to you.
  - Sufficiently simple and small to allow you to complete the practical application within approximately three hours. If the site you have chosen spans a large area, you should select a small section of this, such as a warehouse or single production depot. On smaller sites, you could cover the whole site in your review.
- Management must be willing to co-operate by providing information and giving their time.
- You should obtain prior agreement from senior management.
- The date of the review should be decided in advance and management given an indication of the information that will be required.
- There may be constraints affecting the practical application which you need to be aware of, such as issues of confidentiality. It may help to:
  - Reassure the manager responsible for your proposed review area that no names or other forms of reference to the company or location are required.
  - Mention that copies of findings could be made available for their use, although management must appreciate that this environmental review is for educational purposes only, and is not an assessment recognised for legislative or regulatory purposes.

If any further confidentiality restrictions apply, you will need to contact your tutor immediately to see if appropriate measures can be agreed with NEBOSH.

Any problems should be identified at the outset, and guidance sought from NEBOSH.

It is important that your practical application is able to fully integrate all the elements contained within the NEBOSH Certificate in Environmental Management syllabus.

## Completing the NEBOSH Proforma

As you carry out your environmental review, you need to complete the NEBOSH Candidate Environmental Review Proforma, which will provide you with notes to work from when it comes to completing your management report.

**Remember that these notes will be submitted to your examiner, who will use them to decide how effective your management report is, so they must be clear and legible!**

The proforma is designed to cover the principal topics contained in the syllabus and to help you to structure your work.

### HINT AND TIPS

You will find it useful to look through the proforma before deciding on the location for your practical application, as it will give you an idea of the sorts of things NEBOSH expect you to cover.

If there are any aspects of the proforma that you are unsure of, you should contact your tutor who will be happy to discuss it with you.

- The proforma consists of a series of questions which you should use to structure the review.
- The questions are designed to be answered by simple 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not applicable' responses.

Where a 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not applicable' does, or does not, apply, you should express the reason why in the Comments box. This is where you should list information to support an answer. Note that there is no requirement (nor marks available) for additional diagrams, plans, etc.

Remember that you should use the NEBOSH proforma as a guide – the practical application is assessed on your ability to apply theoretical knowledge.

## Undertaking the Environmental Review

Once you are happy with what the proforma expects of you, you should begin to make initial preparations for your practical application. This may involve anything from obtaining formal agreement from the managers responsible for the chosen area, to thinking about convenient dates when you could complete the review.

### HINT AND TIPS

You will find it useful to take a copy of the NEBOSH proforma so that you can complete it as you go through the review (leaving you with a clean copy to submit as your final version if you wish).

You should work your way systematically through the proforma. **Remember:** it has been designed to ensure that you cover all the principal areas of the syllabus and structure your report in the correct way.

Your completed proforma should clearly identify:

- The nature and location of each environmental issue.
- The degree of risk associated with the environmental issue.
- Preventive and protective environmental measures already in place.

Remember that:

- The questions in the proforma are designed to be answered by simple 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not applicable' responses.
- **You must always complete the comments boxes** below the questions to justify your answer.
- You may **handwrite or word-process** the proforma.

### HINT AND TIPS

It is important that you make full use of the comments boxes, as you need to describe what you have seen during the review and explain your reasoning for answering questions in the way you have. It will be impossible for you to write a sufficiently detailed report on the basis of 'Yes' or 'No' answers!

On the following pages you will find examples of completed questions from the proforma, showing the type of supporting information you might include in the comments boxes.

You will find a sample copy of the **actual proforma** on the NEBOSH Website.

Some of the sections (or individual questions in a section) may not apply to your chosen review area. This is not important, as it is your ability to apply theoretical knowledge in the practical application that will be marked, not the actual answers to the questions contained in the form.

If a question or section is not relevant, you should simply **write a note to indicate** this, explaining why it is not relevant. In the same way, you may come across additional points when completing your review which are not specifically mentioned on the proforma.

# Unit EC2: Environmental Practical Application

## USEFUL ADVICE FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### Do's

- ✓ Do take a watch so you can manage your time effectively.
- ✓ Do take a clipboard.
- ✓ Do take the NEBOSH proforma.
- ✓ Do note down the finish time so you don't run out of time.
- ✓ Do have a general look around before you begin so you don't miss aspects.
- ✓ Do pace yourself.
- ✓ Do use all your senses.
- ✓ Do look for the simple stuff.
- ✓ Do look over, under, inside and behind objects and equipment.
- ✓ Do look in cupboards and stores.
- ✓ Do note down good controls in your comments boxes as well as bad.
- ✓ Do remember it's about quality, not quantity.
- ✓ Do write enough detail in each Comments box.
- ✓ Do look after yourself; workplaces can be dangerous environments for people who are unfamiliar with them.

### Don'ts

- ✗ Don't waste time making trivial observations - they will not gain you any extra marks.
- ✗ Don't lose track of time – try to complete the assessment in three hours.
- ✗ Don't leave too many sections as 'Not Applicable'. If this is the case, you may have selected a workplace with inadequate environmental aspects.
- ✗ Don't worry if one or possibly two sections are not applicable – just justify why they are Not Applicable in the comments box.
- ✗ **Don't leave Comments boxes empty** – you may lose marks by doing this.
- ✗ Don't endanger yourself.



## REPORT TO MANAGEMENT

Hopefully you've now got a good understanding of what you need to do in the environmental review, but your work is not yet finished! Once you've completed the review, you need to write a report to management, based on your findings, that successfully persuades them to take appropriate action. To do this, you'll need to explain why such information is needed and identify the remedial measures that should be implemented.

The report should be concise and will be marked in terms of its value to management (not to the examiner)!

NEBOSH recommend that you include the following information:

- **Place and date of review.**

- **Introduction.**

A description of the chosen area and the activities taking place to set a context for the practical application.

- This might include: number of employees, location and size of the site, nearby sensitive areas, description of the activities, etc.

- **Executive Summary.**

This should be a short summary of the whole report. A senior level manager should be able to read just the Executive Summary and gain a good idea of what you did, what you found, where good practice was noted, what the significant problems are and broadly what you recommend.

- **Main findings of the review.**

This should be the longest section of the report.

You should state what you found and clearly identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the management system. **This should be clearly based on the proforma** – there should be no new issues introduced at this stage. Include balanced arguments on why action is needed and explain the effect it would have on the standards of environmental control at the workplace and the possible effects on the business overall.

- **Conclusions.**

Clear and concise conclusions which clearly relate to the review findings and are effective in convincing management to take action. **You should not mention any findings in this section that have not been stated in the main findings section.**

This section should not be as long as the main findings section, but should be more than one sentence.

- You might conclude that the site is generally well run (or not) and specify any key aspects that are inadequately controlled, giving consideration to legal requirements, liabilities and best practice.

- **Recommendations.**

A plan which presents realistic recommendations to improve the environmental compliance and culture in the chosen area and includes estimated costs and priorities. Include appropriate resource implications, such as the amount of recommended training, if relevant.

- Recommendations should be realistic and should relate to the weaknesses you identified in the Main Findings and Conclusions. Don't forget to include costs and priorities – exact costs don't need to be given, just a rough estimate.

### HINT AND TIPS

Remember that no additional information/appendices should be included with your report, apart from your completed NEBOSH proforma.

On the next page you will find the sheet that will be completed by the assessor of your project. Read it carefully, as it will give you an indication of the marks that are allocated for each section of your project.

You need to bear in mind that when marking the practical application, NEBOSH will be mindful of the fact that you have had every opportunity to check every fact you put in the report. Therefore, while a little leniency may be granted with regard to the specific titles or years of legislation in the examination, NEBOSH will not grant such leniency with regard to the practical application. It is therefore vital that you check and double-check the accuracy of every element of your report, before you submit it.

Marks will not be deducted for poor spelling or grammar but you will lose marks if the examiner can't read or understand your completed report or proforma.

# Unit EC2: Environmental Practical Application

## FINAL REMINDERS

### Planning Your Practical Application

- ✓ Begin thinking about potential locations for your practical application immediately and talk to the managers of the proposed review site to obtain their co-operation.
- ✓ Study the course material until you are approximately halfway through Unit EC1.
- ✓ Contact your tutor to discuss your progress and ensure you are still on the right lines.
- ✓ **Complete your study of Unit EC1** before undertaking the review.

### Carrying Out the Review

- ✓ Conduct the environmental review and complete a rough copy of the proforma.
- ✓ Begin writing the report based on your observations from the proforma.
- ✓ Produce final copies of both the proforma and the report and submit by the day you sit your EC1 exam. Ensure that your NEBOSH candidate number is printed clearly at the top right-hand corner of each page.

**Note:** Remember that your tutors are there to help you do as well as you can. Don't be afraid to contact them if you have any problems with the practical application.