

Collective **inspiration**

Glossary of **Safety Terminology**

Health & Safety Briefing No. 00
April 2009

Introduction

This glossary is intended as a quick reference to definitions of general safety terms which are in common usage.

The glossary is put forward as guidance only and is not claimed to be exhaustive.

The annotation in brackets after a term acknowledges the source of the definition, as below:-

(a) BS 3138, 1992 Glossary of terms used in management services. 54 pp. BSI, 1992 ISBN 0-580-20215-1	(d) Hendy J. Redgraves (Health and Safety) Redgrave's Health and Safety. 3rd edn. Butterworths, 1998. ISBN 0-406-89969-X
(b) BS 5304, 1988 (obsolescent) Code of practice for safety of machinery. 168 pp. BSI, 1988 ISBN 0-580-16344-X	(e) HSE IND[G] 113L Your firm's injury records and how to use them.
(c) Ridley, J. Health and Safety at Work. 4th edn. Butterworth-Heinemann, 1994. ISBN 0-7506-0746-7	(f) BS 5588. Fire precautions in the design, construction and use of buildings, various parts

General Safety Terms

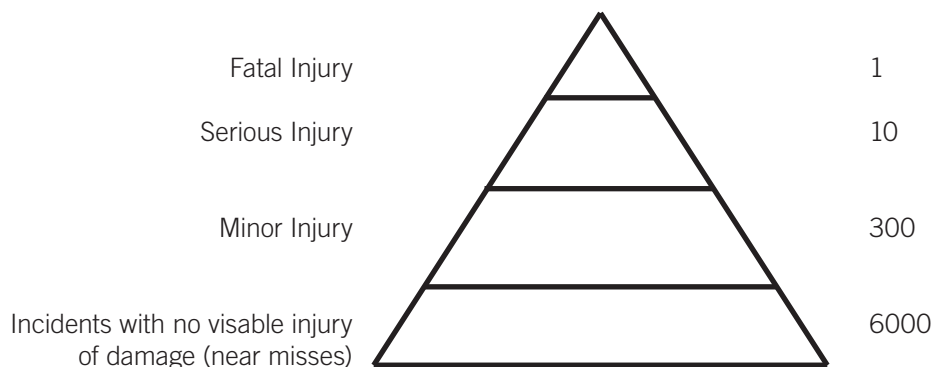
A

ABSOLUTE DUTY: No defence available against non compliance with statutory requirements.

ACCIDENT (c):

- An unplanned unexpected event which may result in loss, injury or damage.
- Contact with energy resulting in a loss (injury, damage).
- Contact with substances resulting in a loss.
- Or any combination of the above.

ACCIDENT TRIANGLE: Indicates statistical relationship and severity of accident:



ACOP: Approved Code of Practice

ALARP: As Low As Reasonably Practicable. (see also SFAIRP). The two terms mean essentially the same thing and at their core is the concept of “reasonably practicable”; this involves weighing a risk against the trouble, time and money needed to control it. Thus, ALARP describes the level to which workplace risks is controlled (HSE).

ALLERGEN: An antigen (molecule capable of being recognised by the immune system) that causes an allergic reaction.

APPOINTED PERSON: One who is trained in accordance with the appropriate schedule, competent to carry out the duties and appointed in writing.

APPROVED CODE OF PRACTICE: A Code of Practice (COP) prepared by management, unions and HSE, that has been approved and accepted by The Health and Safety Commission (HSC).

C

CARCINOGEN: A substance or physical agent that causes cancer.

CARCINOGENIC: Inherent potential of a substance or physical agent to be a carcinogen.

CDM: Construction (Design and Management) Regulations.

CODE OF PRACTICE: A body of rules for Practical Guidance only and not having the force of law although failure to comply may be used in evidence in legal proceedings.

COMAH: Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations 1999

COMPETENT PERSON: A practical and reasonable person with sufficient documented training and experience, who knows what to look for, how to recognise it when they see it, and how to deal with it to make it safe. They also know and work within the limits of their competence.

COSHH (c): Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.

D

DANGER (b): A state or condition in which personal injury and/or asset damage is reasonably foreseeable.

DERMATITIS: Inflammation of the skin. When the condition is due to contact with a substance at work it is called ‘occupational’ or ‘industrial’ dermatitis.

E

EMAS: Employment Medical Advisory Service

ERGONOMICS (a): The study of the relationship between workers and their occupation, equipment and environment and particularly, the application of anatomical, physiological and psychological knowledge to the problems arising there from.

ERROR: Mistake; error of judgement leading to action resulting in an accident and its subsequent effects.

ERROR RATE PREDICTION: A forecast of the possibility of error based on statistical data.

EWR: Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

F

FIRE PRECAUTIONS: The measures taken and the fire protection features provided in a building (e.g. design, systems, equipment and procedures) to minimise the risk to the occupants from and outbreak of fire.

FIRE PREVENTION: The concept of preventing outbreaks of fire, of reducing the risk of fire spreading and of avoiding danger to persons and property from fire.

FIRST AID: The skilled application of accepted principles of treatment on the occurrence of an accident or in the case of sudden

illness, using facilities or materials available at the time.

FREQUENCY RATE (e):

$$= \frac{\text{Number of injuries in the period} \times 100,000}{\text{Total hours worked during the period}}$$

H

HARM: Injury or damage.

HAZARD (b):

- The exposed danger, a condition or practice with potential for loss.
- A situation that may give rise to Personal injury or asset damage or both.

HF: Hazards Forum

HSC: Health and Safety Commission

HSE: Health and Safety Executive

HSPAG: The IET Health and Safety Policy Advisory Group

I

IIDB: Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit statistics

IIG: Inter-Institutional Group on Health and Safety

INCIDENCE RATE (c):

$$= \frac{\text{Total number of accidents} \times 1000}{\text{Number of persons employed during the period}}$$

INCIDENT: An event where there is no shown damage, injury or loss, but which may cause problems to an organisation.

ISA: Independent Safety Auditor

L

LFS: Labour Force Survey

LOCK OFF: A system whereby controls such as switches or valves can be physically and intrinsically locked in the 'OFF' position as part of a SAFE SYSTEM of work.

LOSS: Personal injury and/or asset damage.

M

MANUAL HANDLING: Any means of transporting or supporting a load manually. Lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving by hand or bodily force.

MEAN DURATION RATE (c):

$$\frac{\text{Total number of days lost}}{\text{Total number of accidents during the period}}$$

MEANS OF ESCAPE (f): Structural means whereby a safe route is provided for persons to travel unaided from any point in a building to a place of safety.

MISTAKE: A human action that produces an unintended result.

N

NARCOTIC: Agent that depresses brain functions eg. organic solvents.

Glossary of **Safety Terminology**

A Health and Safety Briefing provided by The Institution of **Engineering and Technology**

www.theiet.org/factfiles

The Institution of Engineering and Technology is registered as a Charity in England & Wales (no 211014) and Scotland (no SC038698).

NEAR MISS: An incident, which does not show a visible result, but had the potential to do so.

NEGLIGENCE: The omission to do something, which a reasonable person, guided upon those considerations which ordinarily regulate the conduct of human affairs would do, or something, which a prudent and reasonable man would not do.

NHS: National Health Service

O

OH: Occupational Health

ONS: Office of National Statistics

P

PAT: Portable Appliance Testing

PERMIT TO WORK: A formal written or verbal authority to operate a planned procedure, which is designed to protect personnel, working in hazardous areas or activities. Authority for a safe system of work.

POLICY: A statement of corporate intent, which will be adopted and pursued as advantageous or expedient.

PRACTICABLE (c): Technical feasibility without reference to costs.

PUWER: Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998

Q

QUALIFIED WORKER (a): One who is accepted as having the necessary physical attributes, who possesses the required intelligence, training and education, and has acquired the necessary skill and knowledge to carry out the work in hand to satisfactory standards of safety, quantity and quality.

QUANTIFIED RISK ASSESSMENT: Resulting from calculations allied to error rate predictions.

R

RBI: Risk Based Inspection

REACH: Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals regulation. The regulation gives greater responsibility to industry to manage the risks from chemicals and to provide safety information on the substances.

REASONABLY PRACTICABLE (c): A computation made in which the quantum of risk is placed on one scale, and the disadvantages involved in the measure necessary for averting the risk is placed upon the other. A balance between: risk and cost, inconvenience, effect on production.

RIDDOR (c): Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

RISK (b): The potential for harm, not actual harm. Risk reflects both the likelihood that harm and/or damage will occur and its severity.

RISK ASSESSMENT: A process where hazards are identified and risks evaluated, with the objective of eliminating or reducing the risks as low as is reasonably practicable.

S

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK: A method of working that eliminates or reduces the risk of injury.

SAFETY: Freedom from risk of injury or asset damage/loss.

SAFETY AUDIT: Monitoring of the implementation of a safety policy by subjecting each area of an activity to a systematic critical examination with the purpose of minimising loss, and providing a quantified assessment of performance.

Glossary of **Safety Terminology**

A Health and Safety Briefing provided by The Institution of **Engineering and Technology**

www.theiet.org/factfiles

The Institution of Engineering and Technology is registered as a Charity in England & Wales (no 211014) and Scotland (no SC038698).

SAFETY CASE: Formal explanation of methods to be adopted to reduce risk of accident often used in high potential risk situations e.g. Petro-chemical, Nuclear Installations.

SAFETY COMMITTEE: A committee representative of all staff with the objective of promoting co-operation in investigating, developing and carrying out measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the employees.

SAFETY CULTURE: This term has no widely agreed definition. It may be described as a product of the individual and group values, attitudes, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of an organisations health and safety programmes.

SAFETY INSPECTION: Systematic assessment of safety standards for plant, place of work, working. Carried out by a manager and not a safety adviser/engineer.

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (SMS): Management of Safety in order to promote a strong Safety Culture and achieve high standards of safety performance.

SAFETY MONITORING: Periodic checks on observance of corporate safety standards and procedures.

SAFETY POLICY: A legal requirement on an employer to prepare, and keep up to date a written statement of their policy regarding the health and safety of their employees. The requirement for a written statement is for 5 or more employees.

SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE: A person appointed by a recognised trade union, who is recognised by the employer under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 and who fulfils the function conferred upon them by the Regulations.

SAFETY SAMPLING: Systematic sampling of particular dangerous activities, processes or areas.

SAFETY SURVEYS: General inspections of the particular dangerous activities, processes or areas.

SAFETY TOURS: General Health and Safety inspections.

SEVERITY RATE (c):

$$= \frac{\text{Total number of days lost} \times 1000}{\text{Total number of man hours worked}}$$

SFAIRP: So Far As Is Reasonably Practicable (see ALARP).

SHE: Safety, Health and Environment

SWORD: Surveillance of Work Related & Occupational Respiratory Diseases

T

THOR: The Health and Occupational Report network

ToR: Tolerance of Risk

TOXIC: Inherent potential of a substance to cause harm.

TOXIN: Substance that causes harm.

W

WORKPLACE: The workplace may be described as any place where people are at work.

WEEE: The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment directive aims to minimise the impact of electrical and electronic goods on the environment, by increasing re-use and recycling and reducing the amount of WEEE going to landfill.

These Briefings contain a summary of recent Health & Safety issues, provided for general information purposes only, and should not be relied upon as legal advice. The IET has tried to make the Briefings accurate and informative, but they have not been prepared by a lawyer and may not constitute an up-to-date summary of the law. The IET accepts no liability for your use of these Briefings. Further details and information on broader Health & Safety issues can be obtained from the Government's Health and Safety

Glossary of **Safety Terminology**

A Health and Safety Briefing provided by The Institution of **Engineering and Technology**

www.theiet.org/factfiles

The Institution of Engineering and Technology is registered as a Charity in England & Wales (no 211014) and Scotland (no SC038698).

Executive. Legal advice should be obtained on any specific issue.

For further information about the IET's Health and Safety Policy Advisory Group only please contact:

Health and Safety Policy Advisory Group Secretary
Policy Department
IET
Michael Faraday House,
Six Hills Way,
Stevenage.
SG1 2AY
policy@theiet.org

© The IET 2009