

4.3.2.3 Accountability and responsibility

In order to ensure effective development and implementation of an OHSMS it is necessary for the organization to define the areas of accountability and responsibility of those personnel involved in the OHSMS operation.

While ultimate accountability for OHS rests with the employer, the organization should—

- (a) define, designate, document and communicate OHS responsibilities and accountabilities, authority to act and reporting relationships for all managers, supervisors, employees, contractors, subcontractors and visitors e.g. job descriptions should use industry and enterprise competency standards which contain OHS competencies (see Clause 4.3.2.5);
- (b) have a process in place that monitors and communicates any changes in designated responsibilities and accountabilities should these be impacted on by changes in the OHSMS or processes;
- (c) be able to respond in a timely and effective manner to changing or unusual circumstances or events;
- (d) assign a person at the most senior management level particular responsibility for ensuring that the OHSMS is implemented and performs to expectations, in all locations and spheres of operation within the organization;
- (e) ensure operational managers are responsible and accountable for effective implementation of the OHSMS and OHS performance; and
- (f) hold accountable, within the scope of their responsibilities, employees at all levels for OHS performance in support of the overall OHSMS.

4.3.2.4 Consultation, motivation and awareness

Improving an organization's OHS performance requires the cooperation of all employees and the development of a supportive organizational culture. An organization needs to recognize that knowledge and experience throughout the workforce is a valuable resource and employees should be encouraged to participate in the development and implementation of an organization's OHSMS through consultation and involvement in the setting of objectives and targets.

People are more likely to embrace change if it is not imposed upon them. Involving employees in decisions about changes, and responding to people's concerns, helps to establish common goals between managers and employees.

The objectives and targets should be understood and supported by the organization's employees and they should be encouraged to accept the importance of their achievement both in terms of the

organization's OHS performance and the benefits this brings to the environment in which they work.

Employees need to be made aware of exposure to possible harm in their work environment including physical, chemical, biological and psychological hazards. They should have an understanding of these hazards and their controls as they relate to their work environment and be able to recognize and take action to avoid work practices or activities likely to lead to incidents.

Employees should—

- (a) be involved in the development, implementation and review of policies and procedures for hazard identification, hazard/risk assessment and control of hazards/risks;
- (b) be consulted where there are any changes that affect workplace OHS;
- (c) select those who will represent them on OHS matters; and
- (d) be informed as to who is/are their employee OHS representative(s) and specified management representative(s).

There should be documented procedures, agreed to by employees, for employee involvement and consultation in OHS issues. Information regarding the arrangements should be made available to interested parties.

Those representing the employees and employer should receive appropriate training to undertake effectively their involvement in the development, implementation and review of OHS arrangements.

4.3.2.5 Training and competency

The organization in consultation with employees should identify training needs in relation to performing work activities competently, including OHS training.

Procedures should be in place to ensure that OHS competencies are developed and maintained.

Personnel should be assessed as competent, on the basis of skills achieved through education, training or experience, to perform assigned tasks taking into account the OHS obligations, hazards and risks associated with the work activities.

Procedures should be developed for providing OHS training. These procedures should take into account—

- (a) the characteristics and composition of the workforce which impact on occupational health and safety management; and
- (b) responsibilities, hazards and risks.

The organization should ensure that all personnel (including contractors and visitors) have undertaken training appropriate to the identified needs.