



Workplace Inspection

There are many good reasons why the workplace should be inspected on a regular basis. First and foremost is the fact that regular inspections will help to ensure a good standard of Housekeeping.



- Operators should carry out daily inspections of equipment before they commence work e.g. checks on the safety devices on guillotines and presses
- Supervisors should check that personal protective equipment is being used - this should be done on a random basis throughout the day
- Management should carry out random checks on premises and equipment each week

Regular inspections allow hazards to be spotted before more serious consequences occur. (e.g. if employees adopt new working practices, the inspection can spot this and assess the change in risk).

Preparing an inspection checklist

For each area to be inspected, a checklist should be prepared. The checklist should include the most significant hazards and the controls that are expected in the area. The checklist should highlight physical features (e.g. checking guards) and also check that the correct working practices are being followed.

Using a checklist will help people detect hazards (e.g. specialised sensing equipment may be needed such as a radiation detector) and recognise when a situation is hazardous in which case

specialist training or guidance may be necessary.

Before an inspection is carried out it is essential to identify what is to be inspected. An inventory or 'Look at' guide should be prepared which may include:

- Environment
- Containers
- Electrical Equipment
- Floors and Stairs
- Fire Prevention
- Machinery Guards, etc.

Then decide on what to 'Look For' in relation to the item under inspection. For example, in the case of Electrical Equipment the "Look For" list might include:

- Missing covers
- Damaged cable/casing
- Poor joints/connectors
- Means of isolation
- Date of last examination, etc.

Preparation of the Look At/Look For guide provides a checklist for use during the inspection and assists in identifying training needs for the personnel performing the inspection as well as giving an indication of any specialist equipment needed during the inspection.

Having prepared a checklist for unsafe conditions a similar checklist can be prepared to look at unsafe actions. Such a list might include:

- Use (or failure to use) of general protective equipment
- Use (or failure to use) of guards and safety devices
- Horseplay
- Contravention of local rules
- Misuse of equipment, etc.





Inspecting to Prevent Accidents

Inspections provide an effective accident prevention programme since they will identify the following:

- Defects in plant, materials and operations
- The competence of personnel
- The potential for accidents
- The risks involved

Traditionally an inspection to identify defects (unsafe conditions/unsafe actions) is followed by the implementation of corrective action. (e.g. a defective ladder found during an inspection would be removed and repaired (or destroyed, preventing the possibility of an accident).

Removing the defective ladder may well create a safer place of work, but this will only be effective if the true or underlying cause is determined and controlled to ensure that another defective ladder does not appear.

In order to discover defects and ensure they are corrected and not repeated it is necessary to ensure that:

- a safe and healthy place of work is being maintained
- health and safety is being managed effectively

These may be considered as the objectives of any accident prevention programme using the inspection as the start point.

The programme also includes an action plan to identify remedial measures and

give an indication of the priority attached to each.

Taking Control after the Inspection

Following the preparation of appropriate checklists and completion of the inspection, a variety of unsafe conditions/unsafe actions will have been noted. Corrective actions are apparent and action taken as appropriate. The underlying causes need to be identified and managed to reduce the risk of further defects and, eventually, accidents.

Inspection Records



When inspections are carried out, a copy of the checklist for the area should be taken and each of the items on the list checked.

The checklist is a useful aide memoir but there will always be other matters that will appear unsatisfactory and these should be recorded on the inspection report form.

Action should be taken as soon as possible for any unsatisfactory items identified in an inspection.

