Competence assurance

Assessing compliance with HSE competency requirements and inspections.

During 2012-2015 all Top-Tier COMAH sites and a third of Lower-Tier sites will be subjected to a competence check inspection (Part A inspection) by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to confirm that a Competency Management System (CMS) is being effectively managed and implemented. The inspection will involve a walk and/or talk through a safety critical task to confirm that staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to undertake critical tasks adequately. Any inspections that uncover significant failings in the competence of the person undertaking the task, or the ways the work is set out or controlled eg. Risk assessment, operating procedures or plant design, will result in improvement notices or a further more in-depth competence inspection (a Part B inspection). This comes after the 2010 HSL Annual Operational Intelligence report showed that human error was “by far, the most frequent cause for loss of containment events.”

This was closely linked to inadequate procedures, poor plant design and unsuitable risk assessment.

What we offer
ABB offer an independent 3rd party assessment of an organizations CMS with regards to people, plant and procedures, so that any highlighted gaps can be addressed before a HSE inspection. To ensure a broad a picture as possible we will conduct a two part gap analysis, using our range of tried and tested tools that can be tailored.

1. CMS review
To be competent organisations must have systems and processes in place that bring together safety critical operations, safety critical maintenance and process safety management. In addition to the expected elements of training and performance appraisal, these should include; management of change, maintenance management systems, and contractor management. The HSE will be evaluating the extent to which the systems and procedures (the CMS) are being effectively managed and implemented. By conducting a series of affirmative inquiry interviews with a cross section of the organisation we will evaluate what systems and processes are in place and how well they meet the needs of the business and the requirements of the HSE.

2. Critical task review
Competence and the effectiveness of the CMS is demonstrated through the operations, maintenance and process safety tasks carried out on site. ABB will follow through a sample of these tasks and rate them against the HSE success criteria:

- Procedures
- Competency statements
- Understanding
- Adherence to procedures
- Plant / process design
- Resources
- Checks and reviews
A typical study requires 2-3 days on site and will provide an understanding of where organisations are now in relation to competence and provide a prioritised action plan if any gaps exist. ABB can also provide support and expertise to implement any resulting actions or conduct further studies into areas of concern, by calling upon a wide range of skills within our business.

Benefits
- Reduces risk of incidents and accidents
- Improved knowledge and understanding of competence and the HSE requirements
- Provides assurance for company and HSE that competence management system exists and is being effectively managed and implemented
- Aids in future planning and budgeting as areas in need of improvement are prioritised
- Reduced risk of legal breaches, regulatory intervention and improvement notices
- Can help avoid a time intensive and costly HSE Part B inspection

Why ABB?
ABB is able to combine technical, operational, functional and process safety management capability with expertise in training and people change management. Our team of experienced specialists with operational heritage will use their experience to make pragmatic technical judgements and offer solutions that are cost effective.