



COMPETENCY: a panel discussion

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Presented by:

John Boerefyn, CRSP, CHSC

Professional Member

President CSSE



Competence review

Worker competence is defined in some OH&S legislation as “sufficiently trained to perform work safely without supervision”.

Competence for EH&S professionals has a higher expectation of performance, based on job requirements, qualifications and professional status.



What is the position?

HR people focus on hiring individuals with skills and abilities to fit position requirements.

Is it a corporate position with management responsibilities, or is it field level with operational responsibilities?

Does the position oversee program implementation or does it require strategic planning and development abilities?

Basic competencies

The CRSP examination has 10 competencies required of certified safety professionals in Canada:

1. Accident Theory
2. Environmental Practices
3. Ergonomics
4. Fire Prevention and Protection
5. Health Promotion
6. Law and Ethics
7. Occupational Health Safety and Environment Systems
8. Occupational Hygiene
9. Risk Management
10. Safety Techniques and Technology

Basic competencies cont'd

Various study programs are available at educational institutions and professional organizations, including:

- 📖 College and university level Certificate and Diploma programs.
- 📖 Courses and studies for professional designations.

Education delivery includes classroom instruction, distance education and on-line learning.

Basic competencies cont'd

CSSE's Professional Member category is based on the following criteria:

- Formal Education
- HSE Designations
- Practical HSE Work Experience
- Continuing Education

Basic competencies cont'd

CSSE offers specific education courses:

- 📄 Applied Risk Communication Skills
- 📄 Obligations and Liabilities of the OH&S Professional
- 📄 Consulting Skills for OH&S Professionals
- 📄 Health & Safety Program Evaluation
- 📄 CRSP Prep course

(These courses are developed by safety professionals for safety practitioners.)

General competencies

Generally, expertise is expected in:

- Technical areas of EH&S
- Setting objectives and action plans
- Promoting and working the plan
- Problem solving
- Public relations
- Negotiating skills

(captures personal attributes as well as competencies)

Core competencies

My view of core competencies that an EH&S professional should possess:

- 📄 EH&S technologies and sciences
- 📄 Program assessment and development
- 📄 Performance measurement and analysis
- 📄 Business management (plans and objectives)
- 📄 Effective communication skills
- 📄 Influencing skills - being a change agent



Competency gap

The most challenging competency to develop is successful application of learned knowledge and EH&S principles in a competitive business environment.

(EH&S Politics 101 and Organizational Survival Skills should be required courses offered to EH&S professionals.)

Competency gap cont'd

Organizations have fundamental operating principles, sometimes referred to as: Core Values, Corporate Pillars.

Measurement of corporate business performance is often expressed on a summary scorecard (report to shareholders).

The ability to integrate EH&S with operating principles and business performance measures is a critical skill.

Future Developments

- 📄 The CSSE Education Committee continues to develop high calibre courses.
- 📄 We network with ASSE and IOSH to learn their members' expectations and society responses.
- 📄 CSSE has representation on a CSA standards committee and a TGD harmonization committee.
- 📄 We are pursuing relationships with educational resources, particularly on-line offerings like UNB.
- 📄 CSSE is a member of project Minerva (integrating safety management into secondary education).

Future Developments

- 📄 Our members are engaged in discussing professional standards.
- 📄 We network with other EH&S professional organizations and promote discussion on standards and competence.
- 📄 Educational institutions ask for CSSE involvement in developing curriculum
- 📄 We're raising the bar with CSSE professional development conferences.



Closing on competence

The efforts of CSSE and the educational community are focussed on professional development that promotes learning and skill development, resulting in a higher level of competency.

Successful application of available and acquired knowledge in a competitive business environment is one sure measure of competence.