





Competence

The UK perspective

John Lacey

President – IOSH

28 September 2004



In UK legislation the MHSWR 1999 require an employer to appoint a competent person to assist him in health and safety provision and define this as:

“A person shall be regarded as competent where he has sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to assist in undertaking the measures referred to in the regulations”



In UK civil case law a definition of competence is:

“Someone who is a practical and reasonable man who knows what to look for and how to recognise it when he sees it”

Gibson vs Skibs A/S Marina and Orkla Grobe A/B and Smith Coggins Ltd (1966).



- These definitions contribute to the overall IOSH position on competence
- The main source of definition of competence is from the national occupational standards.

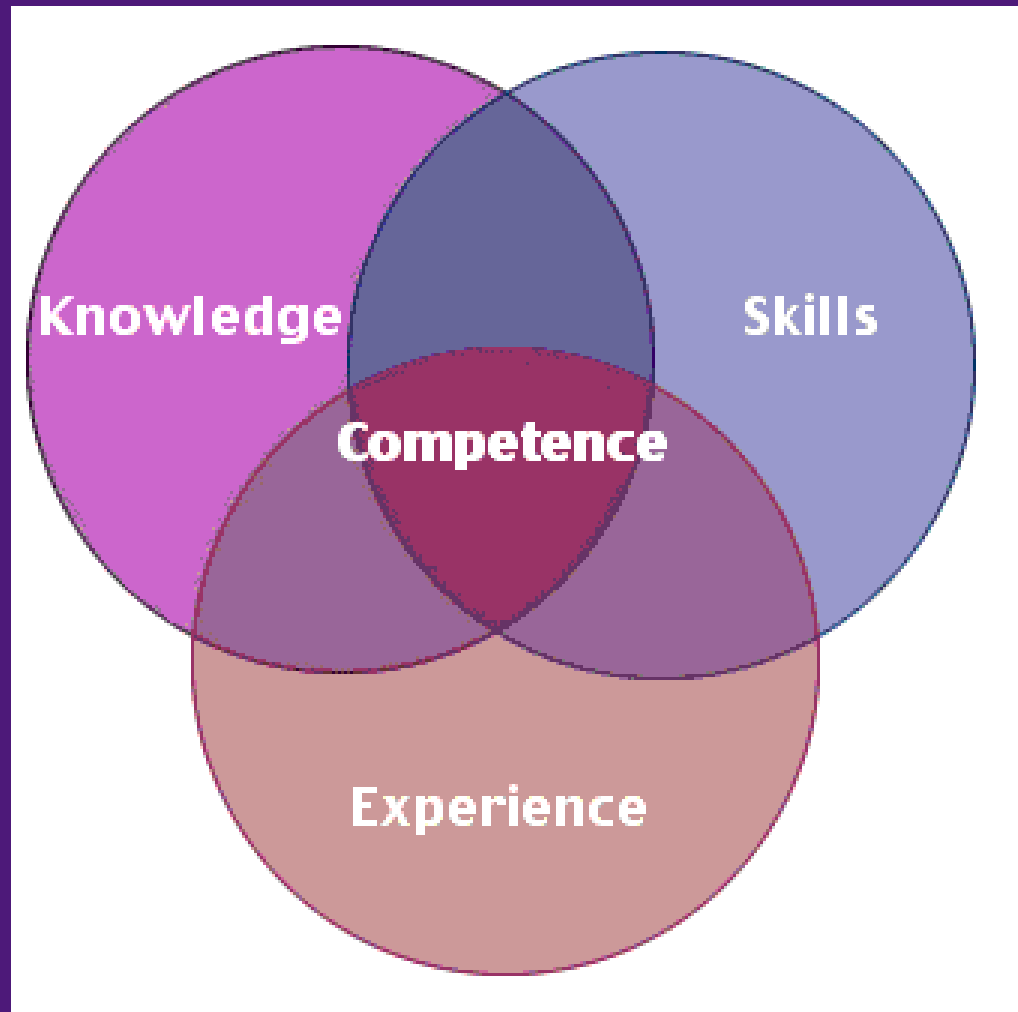


These standards at level 4 in Occupational Health and Safety Practice developed by the national agency ENTO in consultation with IOSH form the benchmark for IOSH membership categories.



All OHS Practitioners must demonstrate competence to these standards both initially (IPD) and on a continuous basis (CPD).

Competence is defined as a combination of:





- Where knowledge is:
 - current
 - relevant
 - specific
- Obtained by:
 - educational programmes
 - training programmes
 - learning on the job



- Skills are often specific to the sector but reflect the ability to put into practice the knowledge acquired by a practitioner
- Experience is relevant to the job to be undertaken.



The current national standards at level 4 and IOSH accreditation requirements are based on safety management systems and include:

- Policy and culture
- Communication
- Risk assessment and management
- Monitoring
- Audit and review



There are also a set of standards at the lower level 3 competence for those with a role in health and safety. IOSH recognises this within its structure