

# EXPLOSIVES HAZARDS

## Fact Sheet No 12: Safe Systems of Work.

Safe systems of work are the methods (including the tools and equipment) and controls by which tasks or activities are undertaken safely. Safe systems of work are made up of a number of elements, which in combination, ensure the health and safety of the people undertaking the task or activity, and of other people who could be affected by that task or activity.

Safe systems of work are developed from the Risk Assessment for a task or activity. The Risk Assessment identifies the hazards in the workplace, including those arising from the task or activity, and the precautions and controls necessary to prevent accidents or to minimise their consequences.

Safe systems of work are a combination of the following:

### Written Procedures, Methods and/or Permits:

Hazardous routine tasks or activities are normally controlled by written procedures – Operating Instructions, Authorised Control Procedures, Manufacturing Instructions, Process Instructions, Maintenance Instructions, etc.

Hazardous non-routine tasks are normally authorised and controlled by a Permit to Work, which may be supported by ancillary permits – Hot Work or Flame Permit, Tool Permit or Pass, etc, and a method statement.

These documents identify the method (including the tools and equipment which are permitted to be used) by which a task or activity is to be undertaken to ensure health and safety. They contain key information on the safety precautions to be taken during the task.

### Competence and capability of the people undertaking the task.

The people undertaking the task must have sufficient information, instruction, training and experience to enable them to undertake the task or activity competently in accordance with the written procedures or permit to work. They must also be both physically and mentally capable of undertaking the task.

### Supervision.

All tasks and activities must be supervised. Supervision is a balance between self-supervision by the people undertaking the task, and imposed supervision by a team leader, supervisor or line manager. An amount of imposed supervision is always required, but actual level should be determined by the level of risk, balanced against the competence and capability of the people undertaking the task or activity. Imposed supervision is important for the reinforcement of the safety precautions, procedures and rules.

If you are unsure about any part the safe system of work under which you work, including the written procedures, and the instructions and information that you have been given, ask your supervisor or safety representative. If the safe system of work is inadequate, or any part, or parts of the safe system of work are not followed or complied with, then there is a serious risk of an accident.