SAFE SYSTEMS OF WORK

WHAT IS A SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK?

The definition of a Safe System of Work is:-

The integration of personnel, articles and substances in a laid out and considered method of working which takes proper account of the risks to employees and others who may be affected, such as visitors and contractors, and provides a formal framework to ensure that all steps necessary for safe working have been anticipated and implemented.

In simple terms a Safe System of Work is a defined method of doing a job in a safe way.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

A Safe System of Work is a 'set of definitive instructions' to follow to complete a task safely.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (Section 2) requires employers to provide safe plant and safe systems of work. In addition many Regulations under the Act, such as the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, require information and instruction to be given to employees and others.

Many of these Safe Systems of Work will need to be written and become a formal document.

A particular Safe System of Work could be linked with another Safe System/s of Work or Method Statement/s and Permit/s to Work if required for the particular task they are being written for.

HOW ARE THEY DEVELOPED?

They are derived from risk assessments and consulting managers and operational staff and once all the relevant information has been gathered the Safe System of Work is written.

The aim is to identify all foreseeable hazards, to the health and safety of employees and others, of the whole task by looking at:-

- ➢ plant and equipment
- ➢ complexity of the task
- ➢ employee capabilities
- ➢ working environment
- ➢ substances to be used
- ➢ training
- ➢ supervision

and then develop a safe workable method to either eliminate or minimise the hazards.

WHO IS TASKED WITH THEIR DEVELOPMENT?

Normally management is responsible to provide Safe Systems of Work. This due to the fact that they and operational staff generally know how the detailed way in which a task should be done.

The competent person for health and safety would normally assist the managers in the drawing up of guidelines for Safe Systems of Work with suitable forms and should advise management of the adequacy of the safe systems produced.

We at CSATS can either help in the development of a Safe System of Work or carry the task out for you but obviously with your help as you and your staff will probably have a better understanding of your work systems and how a particular task should be undertaken.

PREPERATION, RECORDING, COMMUNICATION AND MONITORING

It is wise to have a suitable checklist for the preparation of Safe Systems of Work to ensure everything is covered when finding out all the facts.

All Safe Systems of Work should be recorded and/or documented and where possible they should be incorporated into the operating procedures of the organization. This is so that:-

 ➢ health and safety is seen as an integral part of and not a 'bolt on' to normal operating procedures
 ➢ the need for operators and supervisors to refer to separate manuals is minimised

Communication of the Safe System of Work must be disseminated down to all employees so that they are fully aware of the laid down safe system that applies. Also all people should receive training on how the system is to operate and this applies not only to those directly involved in carrying out the task but also to supervisors/managers who are tasked to oversee the works.

Monitoring of Safe Systems of Work is required to ensure that they remain effective and this will involve:-

 ➢ Reviewing and revising the systems themselves to ensure they stay up to date
 ➢ Inspection to identify how fully they are being implemented

All organizations are responsible to ensure that their Safe Systems of Work are reviewed or revised as appropriate.

If you require further information on how CSATS Health and Safety Consultants can help you in meeting your health and safety requirements please contact us on 07785 580376 or consultancy@csats.co.uk

CSATS Ensuring Safety @ Work