



HSE Operatives Safety Prep

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Practice Questions

Try all 30 first, then check the answer key at the back.

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1. What is the PRIMARY purpose of wearing a hard hat on a construction site?

- A. To identify which trade you work in
- B. To keep your head warm in winter
- C. To protect against sunburn
- D. To protect against falling objects and head impacts

2. Before using a ladder, what is the MOST important inspection check?

- A. Check the ladder's purchase date
- B. Check if anyone else needs it
- C. Check for damaged rungs, bent stiles and cracks
- D. Check the weather forecast

3. What THREE elements make up the fire triangle?

- A. Water, foam and powder
- B. Heat, fuel and oxygen
- C. Smoke, flame and ash
- D. Wood, paper and plastic

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4. Which type of fire extinguisher should be used on electrical fires?

- A. CO_2 extinguisher
- B. Water extinguisher
- C. Foam extinguisher
- D. Wet chemical extinguisher

5. What angle should a leaning ladder be positioned at for safe use?

- A. 45 degrees
- B. 90 degrees
- C. 60 degrees
- D. 75 degrees



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6. What does a PAT test sticker on electrical equipment show?

- A. The equipment's power consumption
- B. The equipment's warranty period
- C. The equipment has been tested and the next inspection date
- D. The equipment's purchase price

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7. You discover a damaged electrical cable on site. What should you do FIRST?

- A. Move it to a different location
- B. Switch off and isolate the equipment
- C. Repair the cable with electrical tape
- D. Continue using it carefully

8. What is the MAIN purpose of a safety harness when working at height?

- A. To arrest a fall and prevent hitting the ground
- B. To carry tools while climbing
- C. To identify workers at height
- D. To meet insurance requirements

9. Before accessing a mobile tower scaffold, what MUST you check?

- A. That it is the tallest tower on site
- B. That no one else is using it
- C. That it was erected recently
- D. That it has been inspected and displays a valid inspection tag

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10. What is a hot-work permit required for?

- A. Work with heating equipment
- B. Work in the summer months
- C. Work involving welding, grinding or other ignition sources
- D. Work in high temperatures



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11. What is the MAXIMUM weight you should manually lift without a risk assessment?

- A. 15 kilograms
- B. There is no safe maximum; each lift needs a risk assessment
- C. 25 kilograms
- D. 50 kilograms

12. When should safety boots with steel toe caps be worn?

- A. When there is a risk of foot injury from falling or heavy objects
- B. Only when operating machinery
- C. Only during winter months
- D. Only when the supervisor is present

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13. What should you do if you hear the site fire alarm?

- A. Finish your current task first
- B. Investigate the cause of the alarm
- C. Wait for your supervisor to tell you what to do
- D. Stop work immediately and go to the assembly point

14. What is the purpose of edge protection on a working platform?

- A. To support scaffold boards
- B. To hang safety notices
- C. To prevent people and materials from falling
- D. To mark the boundary of the work area

15. You need to work on an electrical circuit. What is the FIRST step?

- A. Tell your supervisor
- B. Isolate and lock off the circuit
- C. Wear rubber gloves
- D. Work quickly

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16. What class of fire extinguisher is suitable for wood and paper fires?

- A. Class A
- B. Class B
- C. Class C
- D. Class F

17. What is the minimum height at which fall protection measures are required?

- A. 5 metres
- B. 1 metre
- C. 10 metres
- D. 2 metres

18. Safety glasses with side shields are required to protect against what hazard?

- A. Chemical splashes only
- B. Bright lights
- C. Flying particles and debris
- D. Ultraviolet radiation only

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19. Before climbing a ladder, how far should the top extend above the landing point?

- A. At least 50 centimetres
- B. At least 1 metre
- C. Level with the landing point
- D. At least 3 metres

20. What is the correct use of a fire extinguisher?

- A. Pull the pin, aim at the base of the fire, squeeze and sweep
- B. Aim at the top of the flames and spray
- C. Shake vigorously then spray at the smoke
- D. Hold upside down and spray from distance

21. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, what is the PRIMARY duty of an employer?

- A. To provide free safety equipment to all visitors
- B. To guarantee that no accidents will ever occur
- C. To insure employees against any workplace injury
- D. To ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees so far as is reasonably practicable



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22. Which regulation specifically covers the management of construction projects and assigns duties to clients, designers and contractors?

- A. COSHH 2002
- B. RIDDOR 2013
- C. CDM 2015
- D. HASAWA 1974

23. What does a red circular sign with a white horizontal bar indicate on a construction site?

- A. A warning of a hazard
- B. A prohibition - something that must NOT be done
- C. A mandatory action that must be followed
- D. A safe condition or emergency exit

24. What shape and colour is a warning sign used on construction sites?

- A. Yellow triangle with black border
- B. Blue circle with white pictogram
- C. Red circle with white bar
- D. Green square with white pictogram

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25. Why is a site induction important before starting work on a construction site?

- A. It is only required for management staff
- B. It replaces the need for risk assessments
- C. It is optional if you have worked on site before
- D. It informs workers of site-specific hazards and emergency procedures

26. What is the main purpose of a toolbox talk?

- A. To check that workers have the correct tools
- B. To record hours worked by each operative
- C. To provide a short safety briefing on specific tasks or hazards
- D. To replace the need for method statements



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27. In the hierarchy of risk control, which measure should be considered FIRST?

- A. Warning signs and barriers
- B. Elimination of the hazard
- C. Provision of personal protective equipment
- D. Administrative controls and training

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28. According to the hierarchy of risk control, where does the use of PPE rank?

- A. Last resort after all other measures have been considered
- B. First choice as it is the most effective control
- C. Second after warning signs
- D. It is not part of the hierarchy

29. What is a risk assessment?

- A. A legal document that prevents all accidents
- B. A list of tools needed for a job
- C. An insurance policy for the site
- D. A process to identify hazards and evaluate risks

30. Who should review and sign a method statement before work begins?

- A. The operative doing the work alone
- B. It does not require any signature
- C. The supervisor or site manager
- D. Only the health and safety executive



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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. D — To protect against falling objects and head impacts

Hard hats are designed to protect the head from falling objects and impact from overhead hazards, which is their primary safety function on site.

2. C — Check for damaged rungs, bent stiles and cracks

Checking for damaged or missing rungs, bent stiles, and cracks is essential to ensure the ladder's structural integrity and prevent falls.

3. B — Heat, fuel and oxygen

The fire triangle consists of heat, fuel, and oxygen. Removing any one of these elements will extinguish a fire.

4. A — CO_2 extinguisher

CO_2 extinguishers are safe for electrical fires because they do not conduct electricity and leave no residue that could damage equipment.

5. D — 75 degrees

The safe angle for a leaning ladder is 75 degrees, which follows the 1:4 rule (one unit out for every four units up) to prevent slipping or tipping.

6. C — The equipment has been tested and the next inspection date

A PAT test sticker indicates that portable appliance testing has been completed and shows the next inspection date to ensure continued electrical safety.

7. B — Switch off and isolate the equipment

Immediately isolating damaged electrical equipment from the power source prevents electric shock and fire hazards.

8. A — To arrest a fall and prevent hitting the ground

A safety harness is part of a fall arrest system designed to arrest a fall and prevent injury by stopping the user from hitting the ground or lower level.

9. D — That it has been inspected and displays a valid inspection tag

Ensuring the tower has been inspected and displays a valid inspection tag confirms it is safe to use and meets regulatory requirements.

10. C — Work involving welding, grinding or other ignition sources

Hot-work permits are required for tasks that could generate ignition sources, such as welding, grinding, or cutting, to control fire risks.

11. B — There is no safe maximum; each lift needs a risk assessment

There is no specific safe maximum weight limit. Every manual handling task requires a risk assessment to consider the load, task, individual, and environment.



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12. A — When there is a risk of foot injury from falling or heavy objects

Steel toe cap boots must be worn whenever there is a risk of foot injury from falling objects, crushing, or penetration, which is common on construction sites.

13. D — Stop work immediately and go to the assembly point

Upon hearing the fire alarm, all site personnel must immediately stop work, leave tools behind, and proceed directly to the designated assembly point.

14. C — To prevent people and materials from falling

Edge protection, consisting of guardrails, toe boards, and mid-rails, prevents people and materials from falling from the edge of elevated work platforms.

15. B — Isolate and lock off the circuit

Safe isolation is the first and most critical step before working on electrical circuits. It ensures the power is disconnected and cannot be accidentally restored.

16. A — Class A

Class A fire extinguishers are designed for fires involving ordinary combustible materials such as wood, paper, and textiles. Water and foam extinguishers are Class A.

17. D — 2 metres

In the UK, fall protection measures must be in place for any work at height where a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury, typically considered as 2 metres or more.

18. C — Flying particles and debris

Safety glasses with side shields protect eyes from flying particles, dust, and debris that can approach from multiple angles during cutting, grinding, or drilling operations.

19. B — At least 1 metre

The top of a ladder should extend at least 1 metre (approximately 5 rungs) above the landing point to provide a secure handhold when stepping on or off.

20. A — Pull the pin, aim at the base of the fire, squeeze and sweep

The PASS technique (Pull pin, Aim at base, Squeeze handle, Sweep side to side) is the correct method for operating a fire extinguisher effectively and safely.

21. D — To ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees so far as is reasonably practicable

HASAWA 1974 requires employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees.

22. C — CDM 2015

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015) sets out the legal framework for managing health and safety on construction projects.

23. B — A prohibition - something that must NOT be done

Red circular signs with a white bar are prohibition signs that indicate an action that must NOT be taken, such as no entry or no smoking.

24. A — Yellow triangle with black border

Warning signs are yellow triangles with a black border and pictogram, used to alert workers to hazards such



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as electrical risks or slippery surfaces.

25. D — It informs workers of site-specific hazards and emergency procedures

Site inductions inform workers of site-specific hazards, emergency procedures, welfare facilities and rules, ensuring they can work safely from day one.

26. C — To provide a short safety briefing on specific tasks or hazards

Toolbox talks are short, focused safety briefings that communicate specific hazards and safe working methods for particular tasks or conditions.

27. B — Elimination of the hazard

The hierarchy of risk control requires elimination of the hazard as the first and most effective control measure, before considering other options.

28. A — Last resort after all other measures have been considered

PPE is the last resort in the hierarchy of control because it only protects the individual wearing it and relies on correct use and maintenance.

29. D — A process to identify hazards and evaluate risks

A risk assessment is a systematic examination of workplace activities to identify hazards, evaluate risks and determine appropriate control measures.

30. C — The supervisor or site manager

Method statements must be reviewed and signed by the supervisor or site manager to ensure safe systems of work are understood before tasks commence.



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