

Maintenance Questions

Get your workforce involved in answering the following questions – remember to allocate responsibility and put timescales against any improvements you find.

It is suggested that you select one maintenance task and use these questions to audit it. Remember, this audit is practical, not a desk top study!

5 Basic Rules	Question to answer	Your Answers - What did you find during your audit of maintenance in your business?	Improvements to your Business – how you can save time, money and lives	Timescale for improvements; Name of Person responsible for it
Planning - Define the Task	What needs done? When? How long will it take? Who is doing it? E.g. in-house employees, contractors Who will be affected by the work? E.g. other employees, the public, vulnerable people. Will production be affected or stopped during this maintenance work?			
Planning - Risk Assessment	What emergency situations or problems may arise? How will these affect the safety of those involved? How will production/productivity be affected?			
	What are the physical, chemical, biological, psychosocial hazards that need considered and controlled? How do the risks vary between regular preventive maintenance and breakdown/corrective maintenance? What are the hazards from potential emergency situations?			
	Does this maintenance involve Asbestos? Does this maintenance involve Work at Heights? Does this maintenance involve the need to physically isolate people from hazards such as energy sources, dangerous or unstable machinery, and locations?			
	Are contractor risk assessments available? Is your risk assessment documented and used to produce the safe system of work (SSoW)?			
Planning - Safe	Do you have a safe system of work (SSoW) in place to			

Systems of Work (SSoW)	control the risks? (Many jobs require simple systems, others more in-depth). Are workers monitored to ensure SSoW and site rules are observed?			
	Do you need any or more than one of the following systems to control the risks? Signs; Physical Barriers; Safe Stop; Lock-Out Tag-Out; Control of Contractors; Permission to Proceed; Permit to Work			
	Have you a SSoW that covers emergency situations?			
Planning - Time and Resources	How long is needed to do this job? What are the consequences if the maintenance job overruns? What resources are needed to do the job? E.g. number of people; specialist engineer; lifting equipment? Are you hiring in equipment? How do you ensure the appropriate tools/equipment is used, with the correct instructions? If an emergency situation or problem arises, what additional resources will be required? How do you ensure that the time and resources are available for normal maintenance and if problems/emergencies arise?			
Planning - Communication	If in-house employees are doing the work, or may be affected by it... How do you consult workers and keep them informed? Is employee consultation planned?			
	If you are sub-contracting to maintenance contractors , to do the work.... How are the contractors individual workers communicated with? How are Contractors supervised?			
	Who is in command and is responsible for the work? Does this change if a problem or emergency arises?			
Planning – Competence	What competence level (training and experience) do the maintenance workers need to have?			

and Adequate Training	How are contractors checked to ensure their competence/training? What induction or tool box talks are required? Does this training cover the SSoW, site rules, say who is in control, what to do in an emergency situation? If Contractors are involved, how is this training done?			
Key Hazards - Asbestos	Is asbestos in the building or machine you are maintaining? Where is it? Ask to see the relevant plans, drawing or report. Will the maintenance work disturb or damage the asbestos? Do you use the information in the Asbestos Management Plan when you plan building maintenance jobs?			
Key Hazards - Work at Heights	Does your maintenance task involve Work at Heights, including work at depth e.g. in a trench? How do you decide what access equipment is right for the job, or are you just using whatever you have to hand? Do you hire the equipment in? Are trained operators hired?			
Key Hazards - Isolation	How do you secure the work area to prevent unauthorised access? How do you ensure safe access and egress for workers? How do you isolate i.e. keep your staff/contractors separate from the hazards?			
	Do you/your staff always isolate machinery before doing maintenance? Have all maintenance staff got their own isolation padlocks and tags?			
	Do you use permits to work where appropriate? E.g. confined spaces			
Making the Work Area Safe	How do you prevent unauthorised access? Do you need to put in place safe routes for pedestrians? How do you keep the area clean and safe? How is power locked off? How are moving parts secured?			

	Is temporary ventilation required? Does your working platform require edge protection?			
Using the Appropriate Equipment	Are the tools and equipment right for the job? Are they in good condition? Are they appropriate to the work environment e.g. do not create sparks?			
	What personal protective equipment is required?			
Working as Planned	Do the maintenance workers know what the SSoW says? Is this SSoW worked to? What shortcuts are used by maintenance workers? Suggest a problem or emergency situation to the maintenance workers. What action will they take? Check this against your SSoW Do our managers and supervisors stop maintenance work if it isn't being done safely?			
Final Check	Who conducts final checks? (Name/Job title) What do they check? Is this final check part of your safe system of work?			
Review	Do you hold review meetings on maintenance to highlight improvements in your processes? If so, do you document the improvements and act on them? Do you audit your systems?			