

Level 3 Technical Certificate

(Learning Materials)

Glass Sector Level 3 Certificate in Glass Related Operations.

The indicative answers to Unit 1 underpinning knowledge questions.

UNIT 1: Maintain Health and Safety in the Glass Related Working Environment.

Outcome 1: Develop and improve personal performance taking account of health and safety issues.

Q. State the prime objective of the H&SAWA 1974.

A. The prime objective of the Act is to set out the general duties of employers to ensure the health and safety and welfare of themselves and others who may be affected in any way by what they do or fail to do. The duties are qualified in the Act by the principle of “so far as is reasonably practicable”. The Act applies to all work activities and premises and everyone at work has responsibilities under it including the self-employed and employees.

Q. State the individuals’ responsibilities in monitoring and maintaining health and safety regulations.

A. Individuals are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do.
- Co-operating with their employers on health and safety.
- Correctly using work items provided by their employer, including personal protective equipment (PPE), in accordance with training and instructions.
- Not interfering with or misusing anything provided for their health safety or welfare.

Q. State the prime objective of the Health and Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1997.

A. These Regulations have been revoked and the requirements are now included in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The regulations implement the health and safety provisions of the European Directive on the Protection of Young people at Work.

A young person is defined as anyone under 18 years and a child as being just under or just over the minimum school leaving age (MSLA), nominally 16 years.

Employers are required to carry out specific risk assessments related to young people under the age of 18 years before they start work or work experience. Particular attention should be given to the relative inexperience of the young person and the lack of training and safety awareness. Any previous or inherent health or ability problems should also be considered. The outcome of the assessment will determine the type of work the young person can undertake. Employers should advise the individuals and their parents or guardians of the findings.

If a significant risk still exists after the introduction of control measures then the young person should not be allowed to do the work.

Young people are prohibited by law from engaging in a number of work activities. Where the prohibitions don't necessarily apply is where the young person is above the minimum school leaving age and the work is part of their training. In this case the work must be carried out under the supervision of a competent person and any residual risks reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level. Children under the MSLA must never do work involving these risks whether they are employed or under training such as work experience.

In all matters concerning young people at work, employers should ensure that they are given a good grounding in the health and safety requirements of a job and that these are understood.

Q. State where hazards may exist and the best ways of minimising risks.

A. Dangerous situations of one kind or another will exist in all workplaces and will depend upon the activity being undertaken. Typical safety hazards may cause slips, trips or falls or a fire. Similarly health hazards include poor seating, lighting, ventilation and biological controls

Many hazards are presented by working on construction sites and also with machine operation and maintenance activities. Other hazard factors are: handling and transporting goods and materials, working on gas and oil fired equipment, pressurised plant, loud noise levels, vibrating machinery, sources of radiation, electricity, chemicals and harmful substances, explosive materials,

The best way of minimising a risk is firstly to do away with the hazard providing that this is at all possible. This can be done by re-examining how a job is done and changing a process and methods or procedures, or using different tools and equipment or materials, etc. If the hazard cannot be removed altogether then the risk analysis should indicate where it is possible to change the conditions so that the hazards encountered are reduced to minimal level and to introduce controlling measures such as the wearing of PPE etc. The re-training and monitoring of the workforce would be needed.

Q. List the difference between hazardous and non-hazardous waste e.g. the potential for contamination and safe disposal.

A. Hazardous waste is categorised in a number of different ways i.e.: Explosive, Oxidising, Flammable, Irritant and Corrosive, Harmful and Toxic, Toxic, Carcinogenic, Corrosive, Infectious, Toxic for Reproduction, Mutagenic, Ecotoxicity and a few others. They would include: gas emissions into the atmosphere, lead, asbestos, radioactive substances, chemical substances, pesticides, contaminated water, contaminated cleaning materials, medical substances, oils and greases, solvents, certain paints and other surface coatings, cleaning agents and other such items listed under the COSH Regulations etc.

In general this waste would be likely to cause harm to people and animals, the atmosphere or to the environment unless stored and disposed of in an approved and safely controlled manner. Waste disposal agencies and sites are strictly licensed. The new landfill regulations that came into force on 16 July 2004 means that it is no longer possible to dispose of hazardous waste together with non-hazardous waste. The result is that the number of landfill sites accepting hazardous waste, has been greatly reduced. Substances that are particularly hazardous are covered by specific regulations. The managers of businesses are required to assess the hazards related to the waste produced, reduce or eliminate the hazard, categorise the waste, and arrange for its safe disposal.

Non-hazardous waste would generally include: glass, wood, paper common metals such as iron or steel, most plastics (some can leach harmful substances into the environment), brick

and other hardcore substances, approved water-based products and anything not listed as hazardous in the latest regulations. Recycling would be regarded as the most appropriate method of disposing of the waste. Advice and guidance on all waste disposals can be obtained from the Environment Agency.

Q. Explain how to lift loads safely using manual handling techniques.

A.

1. Stop and think before lifting/handling. Plan the lift. Do you need help? Is the area free from obstruction? How far is the load to be carried?
2. Keep the load as close to the body as possible when lifting. Keep the heaviest side nearest. Slide the load towards you into the best position for lifting.
3. Adopt a stable position, feet comfortably apart with the leading leg slightly forward. If necessary, move the feet during the lift to maintain stability.
4. Adopt a good posture. A slight bending of the back, hips and knees is preferable to either fully flexing the back (stooping) or the hips and knees (squatting).
5. Get a good hold of the load.
6. Raise the load without flexing the back any more and avoid twisting or leaning sideways. Keep the head up and look forwards. Move your feet to change direction.
7. Move smoothly and do not jerk.
8. Carry the load to where it is required, put the load down and then adjust its position.

Q. State why it is necessary to advise others of ones whereabouts and how such information can be provided.

A. The notification of whereabouts will be necessary for safety reasons in case of emergency situations such as fire evacuation or for someone working in a dangerous situation in case of accidents. Otherwise, to enable necessary communications to take place such as an updating of work information, the provision of advice and guidance on a job, meeting delivery schedules and not wasting time looking for someone

Q. Describe potential hazards and to whom they should be reported e.g. unsafe equipment, unsafe practices, spillages etc.

A. (Note: The list below is not exhaustive but candidates would be expected to identify at least the main health, safety and welfare hazards associated with their particular work activity and workplace.)

Typical hazards could be: an untidy workplace, overcrowded workplace, items left lying on the floor, trailing leads and cables, faulty equipment, bad practices, ill health caused by biological agents (legionnaires disease etc.) unguarded machines, the moving parts of machines, lack of maintenance, vibrating machinery, portable tools, vehicle movement, passageways/walkways being obstructed, chemicals and other harmful substances, inflammable items, unsafe loads, bulky or heavy items, sharp objects, uneven floors and ground, fumes and contaminated air, dust, extreme heat or cold, radiation, electricity or gas powered equipment, excessive noise, handling and transporting goods and materials, falling from a height, being hit by falling objects, poor heating, lighting and ventilation, poor work layout, bad hygiene facilities, lack of training, bad communications, mental health and stress etc.

Anyone noticing a potential hazard must report it immediately through the designated channels. This would normally be to a supervisor or manager or possibly to a nominated safety representative.

Q. State the personal protective equipment (PPE) available for tasks that are hazardous to health and safety and name the circumstances when they should be worn.

A. (Note: Candidates would be expected to provide a comprehensive answer that is related to their particular field of work activity and its specific needs).

Eyes: Protect against;	Protect with; safety spectacles, goggles face screens or helmets. Chemical or metal splashes dust, projectiles, gas and vapour and radiation.
Head and Neck: Protect against;	Use; helmets, bump caps, hairnets, sou'westers and cape hoods. Impact from falling or flying objects, head bumping, hair entanglement, chemical drips or splashes, climate or temperature.
Ears: Protect against:	Wear; ear plugs or muffs or defenders. Impact noise or noise of high intensities or pitch.
Hands and arms: Protect against:	Use; gloves, gauntlets, mitts, wrist cuffs, armllets. Abrasion, temperature extremes, cuts and punctures, impact, chemicals, electric shock, skin irritation, disease or contamination, vibration, risk of product contamination.
Feet and legs: Protect against:	Wear safety boots and shoes with steel toe caps (and steel mid-sole plus other attributes), gaiters, leggings, spats and clogs. Cuts and punctures, falling objects, slipping, heavy loads, metal and chemical splashes, vehicles, electrostatic build-up, and wet conditions.
Lungs: Against:	Use; disposable respirators, half masks or full face mask respirators fitted with a filtering cartridge or canister, powered respirators, fresh air hose equipment, self contained breathing apparatus. Dusts, gases and vapours.
Whole body: Protect against;	Wear; conventional or disposable overalls, boiler suits, warehouse coats, donkey jackets, hi-visibility clothing, aprons, chemical suits and thermal clothing. Impact or penetration, bad weather, heat, cold, chemical or metal splashes, spray from pressure leaks or spray guns, contaminated dust and air, excessive wear or entanglement of own clothing.

Note that all PPE provided and worn should fit properly, be suitable for its purpose and meet the necessary standards. Persons should be trained in its correct use. The equipment should be properly looked after, maintained and regularly inspected. Worn or damaged PPE should be repaired or replaced as necessary.

Q. Outline the main provisions of each of the following:

Note; the various regulations are subject to regular revision and the answers to this question should be related to the most up-to-date copy of the appropriate regulation. Reference should be made to the guidance notes and Codes of Practice as published by the HSE.

1. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

These regulations explain many of the duties which were implied in the HASAWA Act 1974 and provide a framework within which employers can manage the health and safety aspects of their undertaking. Overall, they have the effect of requiring employers and the self-employed to assess the risks at work (Regulation 3) and to devise and implement appropriate control measures (Regulation 4). The duties of employees are also set out in greater detail (Regulation 14). The regulations include such matters as; health and safety arrangements, health surveillance, health and safety assistance, information for employees, capabilities and training, protection of young persons, risk assessment for new and expectant mothers. Other of these regulations is related to the consequential amendment and revocation of certain other different regulations where they affect one another.

2. The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations.

These regulations apply to all workplaces except domestic premises (private dwellings) and other exclusions as per Regulation 3. They expand on the duties of employers imposed under Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The regulations are intended to protect the health and safety of everyone in the workplace, including disabled persons and to ensure that adequate welfare facilities are provided for people at work. Employers have a duty to ensure that workplaces under their control comply with these regulations. Tenant employers are similarly responsible. Landlords and owners of premises are also responsible for matters within their control. Tenants should cooperate with one another and with the landlord. A risk assessment would show that the workplace may need reorganisation to satisfy requirements. Facilities should be readily accessible but can be located in neighbouring workplaces if required.

Main aspects covered by the regulations include:

- Maintenance of the workplace, equipment, devices and systems.
- Ventilation, temperature in indoor premises and lighting, windows etc.
- Cleanliness and waste materials, sanitary conveniences and washing facilities.
- Room dimensions, space, workstations and seating.
- Facilities for rest, eating, changing clothes and their storage.
- Provision of drinking water.
- Condition of floors and traffic routes, walkways, escalators, doors, gates,
- Organisation of traffic routes and pedestrian walkways.
- Protection against falls and falling objects.

3. The Provision and use of Work Equipment Regulations.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) are made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The primary objective is to ensure that work equipment should not result in health and safety risks regardless of its age, condition or origin. PUWER applies to the provision and use of all working equipment including mobile and lifting equipment. It applies to all workplaces and work situations where the HSW Act applies and extends outside GB to certain offshore activities in British territorial waters and on the UK Continental Shelf. The Regulations cover anyone with responsibility directly or indirectly for work equipment and its use. This includes; employers, employees, the self employed, those who hire work equipment and other specified duty holders.

Main aspects covered by the regulations are:

- Suitability, maintenance, inspection specific risks, training, information and instructions.
- Conformity with EC requirements, dangerous parts of machinery and protection against specified hazards.
- High or very low temperatures, starting and stopping controls and emergency stops.
- General controls, isolation, stability, lighting, maintenance operations, markings.
- Warnings, regulations specific to mobile work equipment, miscellaneous items.

4. The Manual Handling Operations Regulations.

These regulations apply to the manual handling of loads by human effort as apposed to mechanical handling by crane etc. The human effort may be applied directly to the load or indirectly by hauling on a rope or pulling on a lever. For example, the use of a sack truck may reduce but not eliminate manual handling since effort will still be needed to move the truck. The application of human effort for a purpose other than transporting or supporting a load does not constitute a manual handling operation; e.g. turning a handle or pulling on a rope to lash down a load on a vehicle.

These Regulations should not be treated in isolation and reference should be made to the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations regarding the conducting of risk assessments. The MHOR set no specific requirements such as weight limits but they focus on the needs of the individual and set out a hierarchy of safety measures for manual handling and employers are required to:

- avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable;
- make a suitable and sufficient assessment of any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided;
- reduce the risk of injury from those operations as far as is reasonably practicable.

Risk assessments may need to take account of individual capabilities and physical attributes.

Employees also have a duty to use the systems, procedures and practices as introduced, and also to communicate with the employer.

The self-employed are responsible for their personal safety and should take the same steps as employers to safeguard themselves. However an employer may be responsible for a self-employed person who is working for them.

The regulations generally cover:

- the duties of employers and employees, avoidance of manual handling, risk assessment, reducing the risk of injury;
- the provision of information about the load, training, reviewing assessments, exemption certificates, extensions outside GB and repeals and revocations.

5. The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations.

These Regulations are made under the HSAW Act 1974 and apply to all workers in GB except the crews of sea-going ships and are based on an EC directive on the use of PPE

There are a number of disapplications where alternative, specific Regulations apply such as The Noise at Work Regulations etc.

PPE includes items worn for the protection of health and safety such as: aprons, clothing for adverse weather conditions, gloves, safety footwear, safety helmets, high visibility coats etc.

Also included are: eye protectors, life-jackets, respirators, underwater breathing apparatus and safety harnesses.

Employers are required to ensure that suitable PPE is provided to all employees exposed to H&S risks at work. The self-employed are also required to provide their own suitable PPE. No charge can be levied on employees for the provision of PPE which is used only at work.

PPE should be regarded as a “last resort” to protect against residual risks to H&S after other measures have been taken to remove or reduce the risks. Engineered controls and safe systems of work should be considered first.

The PPE must comply with the UK legislation implementing the EC Directives concerning its design and manufacture. The PPE should be fit for the purpose to which it is put and be comfortable to wear. It should be maintained in a good state of repair or replaced if necessary. Those using the PPE should be consulted on its selection and specification. Employers must ensure that employees receive adequate information, instruction, and training in its use; both theoretical and practically.

Main aspects covered by the regulations are:

- the provision, assessment, maintenance and replacement and accommodation for PPE;
- Information, instruction and training, the use of PPE, reporting loss or defects;
- Exemption certificates, extensions outside GB, modifications and revocations etc.

6. The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations.

These Regulations on DSE, place a duty on employers to ensure the protection of health and safety of employees and also the self-employed who habitually use DSE for the purposes of an employers undertaking as a significant part of their work. In this context a self-employed person is described as an operator and an employee as a user. Employers must decide which of their employees are DSE users and also whether they make use of other users or operators.

In the regulations and with few exceptions, DSE means any alphanumeric or graphic display screen regardless of the display process involved. What comprises a workstation is also defined whether it be situated on the employers premises, at a persons home or another employers premises. Employers are also directed to ensure that they comply with general duties place upon them by other overlapping Acts and Regulations.

The Regulations require employers to minimise the risks in DSE work by ensuring that workplaces are well designed. They have to analyse workstations, and ensure that they meet minimum requirements by reducing the risks. This includes: looking at the whole workstation including equipment, furniture and the work environment; the job being done; and any special needs of individual staff. Employees should be encouraged to participate in the risk assessments.

Other compliances are:

- Planning the work to provide breaks or a change of activity (excludes self-employed).
- Arrange eye tests if requested and provide special spectacles if needed (excludes self-employed).
- Provide health and safety training and information.

Employees should make full use of the equipment provided and adjust it to get the best from it and avoid potential health problems. Training should cover such matters. If DSE users think that they have problems connected to their work they should talk in the first instance to

their supervisor, manager or safety representative. If this doesn't help, then users and employers should get assistance from the relevant authorities.

7. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)

These regulations require employers to control exposure to hazardous substances to prevent ill health. They have to protect both employees and others who may be exposed, by complying with the regulations. There are many substances listed as hazardous such as cleaning agents, fumes, dust and bacteria etc. and they are to be found in nearly all work environments. Exposure to certain substances can cause skin irritation, asthma, loss of consciousness, cancer or infection etc.

Substances are classified as dangerous to health under the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations (CHIP). COSHH applies to virtually all of these substances except lead and asbestos that have their own regulations. Other regulations may apply to some substances because of the different risk factors such as being explosive etc.

To comply with the COSHH Regulations, employers are expected to follow eight steps as follows;

1. Assess the risks to health arising from hazardous substances in their workplace.
2. Decide what precautions are needed to offset the risks.
3. Prevent exposure as is reasonably practicable, or adequately control it.
4. Ensure that the control measures are used and maintained.
5. Monitor the exposure of employees where necessary
6. Carry out appropriate health surveillance where shown to be necessary.
7. Prepare plans to deal with accidents, incidents and emergencies.
8. Ensure that employees are properly informed, trained and supervised.

Employers must consider who could be exposed to dangerous substances including contractors, visitors and the general public as well as employees. In preventing or controlling exposure they should use appropriate work processes, adequately control exposure at the source, provide personal protective equipment and meet exposure standards and limits. Those employing five or more people must make and keep a record of the main findings of a risk assessment, either in writing or on a computer. The record should be made as soon as is practicable after the assessment and be sufficiently detailed.

Outcome 2: Maintain communications with others and contribute to the reporting of health and safety issues.

Q. State reporting procedures and how to complete a record in the accident book for self and others.

A. Candidates shall be able to describe how to report injuries/diseases occurring in the workplace (i.e. factory, site or office) and communicate what the arrangements are for obtaining first aid. They should know about:

- The location of first aid equipment
- The facilities available
- First aiders or appointed persons
- Instructions and notices
- Records of cases treated
- The provision of adequate first aid equipment
- The provision of adequately trained first aid personnel
- The provision of information about first aid provision to employees.

They should explain how injuries occurring at work, however small or large, should be recorded in the workplace accident book, HSE reference B1 510; to establish that the injury did take place in work time, in case of later dispute over benefits or compensation. They should be familiar with the format of the accident book and what the record should contain i.e.

- The date and method of reporting
- The date, time and place of the event
- Personal details of those involved and a brief description of the nature of the event or disease.

They should know that the entry should be made by the injured person, but if this is not possible then by someone else as long as they record their name and address at the same time.

Candidates shall describe the requirements of RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) and the incidents reportable under the regulations, i.e.

- Death or major injury
- Injury requiring more than 3 days off work
- Disease
- Dangerous occurrences
- Gas incidents.

They should be able to give examples of the following under RIDDOR:

1. Major injuries i.e.
 - Fracture other than to fingers, thumbs and toes.
 - Amputation
 - Loss of sight (temporary or permanent)
 - Any other injury requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
 - Unconsciousness caused by exposure to harmful substances or biological agents.
 - Any penetrating eye injury.
2. Dangerous occurrences i.e.
 - Collapse or partial collapse of a scaffold over 5 metres high.
 - Collapse, overturning or failure of load bearing part of lift/lifting equipment

- Any plant or equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines.
- Unintended collision of a train with any vehicle
- Explosion, collapse or bursting of any closed vessel or associated pipe work.

3. Reportable diseases i.e.

- Poisonings
- Lung diseases-occupational asthma, pneumoconiosis, asbestosis
- Some skin diseases-occupational dermatitis, skin cancer
- Certain muscular skeletal disorders
- Infections such as hepatitis, tetanus, legionella
- Hand-arm vibration syndrome

Q. State what to do in emergency situations e.g. fire, floods, spillages of hazardous materials, power supply faults.

A. Candidates shall be able to explain the typical procedures to adopt if they become involved in any of the above situations or any other situation particular to their industry activity or employer such as; the release of gas and fumes, explosions, collapsing buildings, trenches or scaffolding and radiation leaks etc. They should know:

- Their responsibilities to themselves, other fellow workers and the general public.
- Who to report to
- What and where the first aid facilities are
- When and how to set off alarms and what they sound like
- What are the evacuation procedures
- Where the emergency exits are and the need to keep them clear for use.
- What and where any emergency equipment is situated and how to use it.
- Where the emergency congregation points are
- How to shut down plant and equipment and how to start up again when possible.
- How to call the required emergency services if necessary; telephone etc.
- What to do in lone or after hours working situations.

Q. State which of the emergency services should be alerted and who has the authority to alert them.

A. The candidate shall be able to state the specific service required and the order of priority for an applicable range of emergency situations. They shall also know who is authorised to alert the emergency services e.g. police, fire ambulance or other as may be required.

Q. State the information that will be required by the emergency services e.g. fire and ambulance.

A. The candidate will be able to explain the typical information that they will need to pass on to the particular emergency service e.g.

- Services required
- Their name and contact telephone number
- The address where the emergency is situated
- The nature and extent of the problem.

They will also know the need to keep calm and to stay by the telephone until they have ensured that all the necessary information has been communicated and confirmed.

Q. State why it is important to use information systems to record accidents and emergencies e.g. cause of accident, future actions and accident/insurance investigations.

A. The main reason for recording data on accidents and emergencies is so that an investigation can be conducted to identify the cause so that actions can be taken to prevent a recurrence of the same incident. Near misses where no one is injured should also be recorded for the same reason. Regulations under RIDDOR may also apply. An accident is an unplanned event that interrupts normal activity. Accidents that result in injuries or damage always involve the presence of hazards.

An accident investigation seeks to:

- Gather information and establish the facts
- Isolate the essential contributory factors
- Determine the corrective actions
- Implement the corrective actions.

In gathering the facts the investigations must be conducted in an impartial and objective manner. The accident scene may need to be isolated. Take photographs or draw diagrams as appropriate. Information should be gathered from the injured party, witnesses, supervisors and management. The investigation should be carried out as soon as possible whilst the information is still fresh in people's minds. Persons connected with the accident should be interviewed alone. Interviewers should ask open ended questions and not pre-judge the situation; just note the facts of the case. Specialist personnel may be required in some circumstances. The objective at this stage is not to apportion blame but to establish what action to take to prevent a recurrence. However, the facts may be used later regarding any insurance claim and investigation.

Having established the facts, the information should be evaluated to determine both the immediate and underlying causes of the accident. Thereafter recommendations should be clearly communicated to all concerned and changes made to prevent a recurrence. The situation should be monitored to ensure corrective actions have been effective.

Other benefits arising out of accident investigations are.

- A raising of safety awareness
- Improvements to the work environment
- Improvements in operational safety procedures
- Better training
- Increased productivity by modifying operations, machinery and equipment.
- Improved workforce moral and less cynicism.

Q. State how to communicate clearly and effectively and recognise the degree of urgency.

A. A simple definition of communications is;

“The creation of understanding in someone else's mind in order to promote action.”

Candidates will therefore be able to explain:

- The means by which communications take place i.e. face-to-face discussions, telephone conversations, group meetings, verbal messages, handwritten or typed documents, the internet, texting, drawings, diagrams, sketches and pictures and symbols etc.
- The need for the communications and who it is aimed at
- The communications network that is in a typical organisation
- The importance of keeping lines of communication to a minimum
- The importance of listening carefully to conversations to ensure understanding.
- What and why the information is needed, its importance and order of priority

- The common range of documents that may be used and which are most important.
- Remembering and recording the information
- Being able to write or print clearly in order that the information can be easily read and understood
- The need to construct messages etc using words and phrases that will easily be understood by the recipients.
- Why jargon should not be used.
- How misunderstandings can lead to big problems in an organisation.
- The importance of following approved systems and procedures

Q. State the importance of accuracy, confirmation and confidentiality when dealing with messages.

A. Probably verbal messaging either by telephone or direct contact is the method of communication that commonly leads to creating problems and misunderstandings by the wrong information being passed on. This is because people in general are prone not to listen properly to what is being said to them. Listening well can be a lot more difficult than speaking and requires a lot more effort. People stop listening for various reasons e.g.:

- Having preconceived ideas about what the caller/speaker is going to say
- Something distracting in the workplace
- The caller/speaker having an uninteresting voice
- Nervousness and lack of experience and confidence

One of the best solutions to poor listening and to losing the meaning of the message is to take some notes right from the beginning of the conversation. This would mean having a memo pad and writing implement available. In order to ensure accuracy it is a good idea to repeat the message back to the sender and confirm understanding.

Candidates need to be aware that tone of voice can influence a conversation and convey inner feelings especially on the telephone e.g.

- Enthusiasm or boredom
- Tiredness or alertness
- Aggression or calm
- Whether they are confident or unsure.

In direct conversation, body language can convey similar ideas.

In order to provide an efficient service a lot of background preparation work will be needed e.g.

- A good knowledge of the organisation, its products or services and what other colleagues and staff do.
- An up to date internal contact list and telephone directory.
- Ensuring a pad and pen are available for noting messages.
- Developing a good telephone manner
- Creating confidence in own abilities
- Knowledge of the organisations customers
- Knowing how and what to learn

Being able to summarise and confirm actions is an important attribute and to ensure that the actions are followed through by reminding whoever was responsible for taking action.

Many messages are of a confidential nature to a company or individuals and those given the responsibility of taking or passing on messages should ensure that they maintain this confidentiality and show the highest integrity at all times.