

Safety for Operational Supervisors

Course book for the SOS-SCC exam (VOL-VCA)

Third Edition

Veiligheid voor Operationeel Leidinggevenden VCA

bc. A.J. Verduijn

Contact information:

Verduijn.info
Prins Bernhardstraat 57
2841 TG Moordrecht
The Netherlands
T: 0182-796798
E: info@verduijn.info
I: www.verduijn.info

Translation: Mattias Verduijn

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Table of Contents

1 VCA and Safety Legislation

1.1	Introduction	9
1.2	What is VCA?	10
1.3	Personal safety logbook and trainings	12
1.4	H&S legislation	12
1.5	Temporary agency workers	14
1.6	Tasks, rights and duties	15
1.7	The authorities	19
1.8	Work place inspections	20
1.9	Summary	22
1.10	Self-Test	23

2 Risks and Prevention

2.1	Introduction	29
2.2	Risk	30
2.3	Risk sources	33
2.4	High-risk activities	34
2.5	Cause and prevention of accidents	36
2.6	Safe working characteristics	45
2.7	Influencing behaviour	46
2.8	Work permit system (werkvergunning)	47
2.9	Policies	50
2.10	Safety rules	54
2.11	Summary	56
2.12	Self-test	58

3 Fire and Explosion

3.1	Introduction	65
3.2	When does a fire occur?	66
3.3	Classification & extinguishing equipment	70
3.4	Hot work watch	75
3.5	Environments with a risk of explosion	75
3.6	Summary	77
3.7	Self-test	78

4 Hazardous materials

4.1	Introduction	84
4.2	Intoxication hazard	84
4.3	Acute and chronic intoxication	85
4.4	Threshold values	86
4.5	Safety information sheet and Hazard diamond	88
4.6	Hazardous substances	90
4.7	Asbestos	93
4.8	Biological substances	94
4.9	Label	95
4.10	Measures to prevent intoxication	96
4.11	Danger of suffocation	98
4.12	Industrial gas cylinders	98
4.13	Oxygen concentration	100
4.14	Summary	101
4.15	Self-test	102

5 Equipment

5.1	Hand tools	109
5.2	Power tools	111
5.3	Powered hand-held tools	112
5.4	Fixed machines	118
5.5	Hoisting	120
5.6	Forklift truck	125
5.7	Pallet trolley	126

5.8	Summary	127
5.9	Self-test	128

6 Specific activities and circumstances

6.1	Introduction	135
6.2	Confined spaces	136
6.3	Working at a height	141
6.4	Welding and cutting	148
6.5	Demolition	150
6.6	Summary	152
6.7	Self-test	153

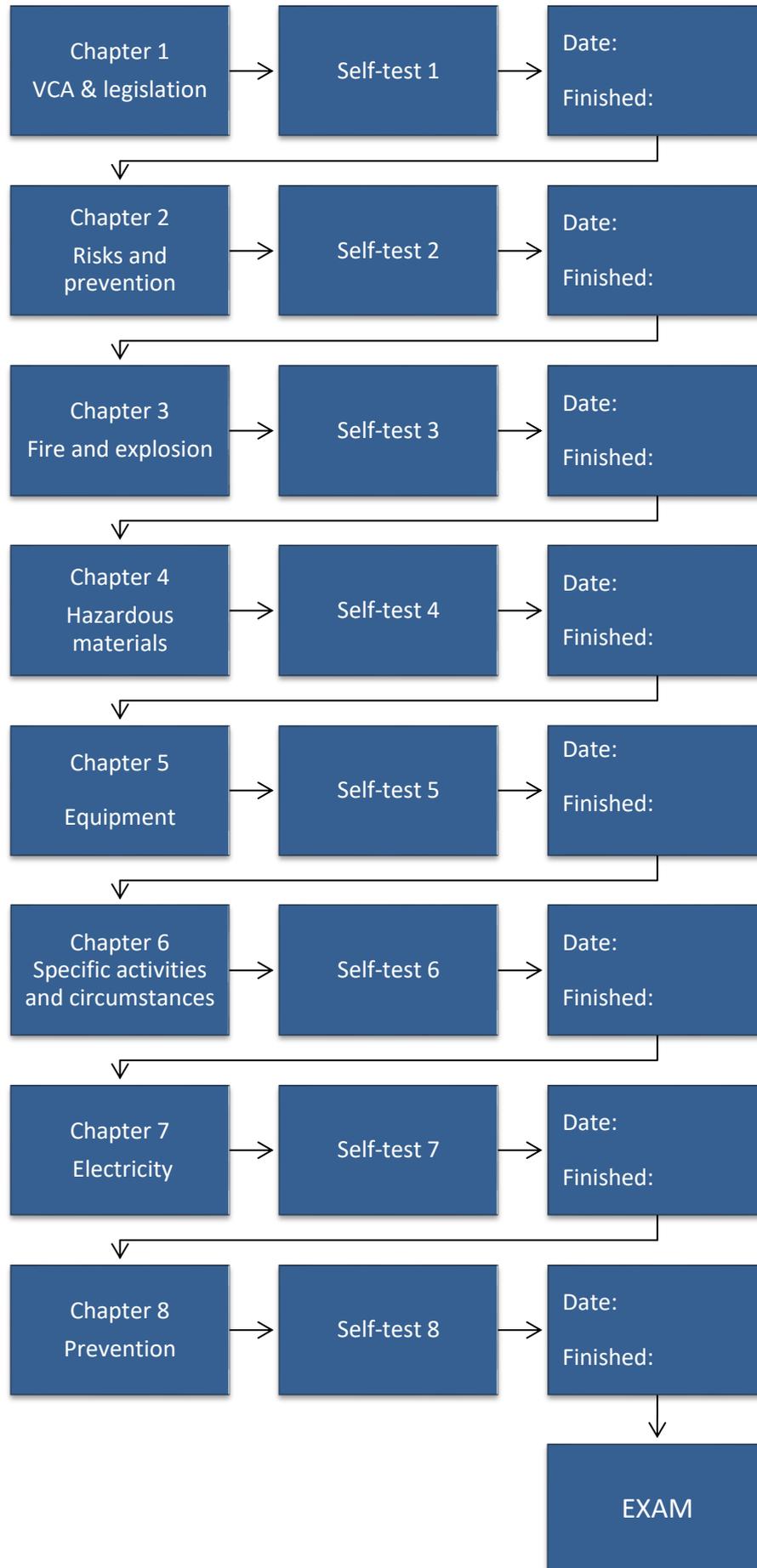
7 Electricity

7.1	Hazards.....	157
7.2	Passage of current through the human body.....	158
7.3	Short circuit.....	160
7.4	Static electricity.....	161
7.5	Safety measures when working with electricity	162
7.6	Temporary electrical equipment.....	164
7.7	Ionising radiation	164
7.8	Non-ionising radiation.....	166
7.9	Summary	167
7.10	Self-test	168

8 Prevention

8.1	Introduction	173
8.2	Physical and mental load.....	174
8.3	Stumbling and tripping.....	176
8.4	The workplace and noise	177
8.5	Vibrations.....	179
8.6	Climatologic conditions and illumination	180
8.7	Personal protective equipment (PPE).....	180
8.8	Signage.....	191
8.9	Summary	193
8.10	Self-test	194

Annex 1: Answers.....	201
Annex 2: Illustrations	203
Index	204



1 VCA and Safety Legislation

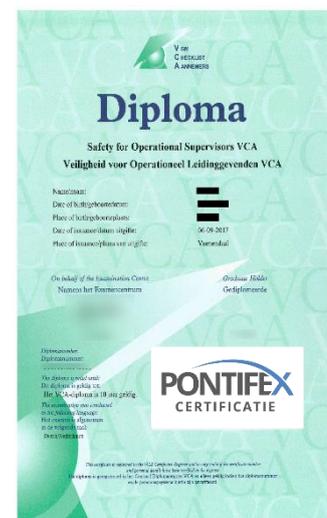
- 1.1 Introduction**
- 1.2 What is VCA?**
- 1.3 Personal safety logbook**
- 1.4 H&S legislation**
- 1.5 Temporary work**
- 1.6 Tasks, rights and duties**
- 1.7 Governmental inspection**
- 1.8 Work place inspections**
- 1.9 Summary**
- 1.10 Self Test**

1.1 Introduction

SOS-SSC / VOL-VCA

Welcome to the: Safety for Operational Supervisors SOS-SCC course. In this course you will be trained for the VOL-VCA certificate. In order to receive this certificate you will have to pass an exam. This exam consists of 70 multiple choice questions. In order to pass the exam you must answer at least 49 of these questions correctly.

This course consists of 9 chapters. At the end of each chapter there is a self-test. When you pass this test you may continue to the next chapter. A diagram of this is shown on the left page. There are eight chapters in this course, each with a self-test at the end. You go through each chapter in the same way. When you have



completed the self-tests and have gained good results for the practice exam, you are ready to do the VCA exam.

Schedule

Studying is the most effective when you set goals for yourself. Therefore, start by making a schedule. Write down in the diagram on the left page when you think you are going to finish with that chapter. Everybody learns at a different speed but as a guideline you can expect to need 2 hours of study per chapter. When you have successfully completed a chapter and its self-test, fill in the box at the end of the row. This way you will have a good overview of your progress.

1.2 What is VCA?

VCA certification

People need a safe and healthy way to do their work. Therefore when it comes to working there is increasing focus on safety, health and the environment. The VCA certification has been introduced to test companies in these areas.

VCA's definition:

- **VGM**
(veiligheid, gezondheid en milieu = safety, health and environment)
- **Checklist for**
- **Aannemers** (building contractors)



Safety System

The VCA certification consists among other things of a list of questions which is used as a screening system for building contractors. Building contractors are companies that perform construction activities for others (employers). VCA is a complete system that allows the service provider to demonstrate that when carrying out works, sufficient attention is paid to safety, health and environment. Such a system is called a safety management system. The purpose of VCA certification is the prevention of incidents. An incident is an accident with or without any damage or injuries.

The VCA certification is intended for companies whose employees perform risky activities or work in risky environments such as factories or construction grounds.

There are three levels of VCA certification, depending on the kind of company:

- VCA* (one star) is aimed at direct H&S (health and safety) care in work-floor activities.

- VCA**: On top of the VCA* requirements, the safety structures and systems are also checked.
- VCA Petro-chemistry: The strictest requirements apply for companies that perform risky activities in the petrochemical industry in addition to the VCA** requirements.

More and more companies are requiring from subcontractors that they are VCA certified. This way the company can show that it works according to the VCA rules. A part of this certification is that all those involved have the appropriate VCA certification. These are:

- For employees:
Basic elements of Safety SCC (B-VCA)
- For intermediaries or supervisors of temporary employment agencies:
Safety for Intermediaries and Supervisors SCT (VIL-VCU)
- For operational supervisors:
Safety for Operational Supervisors SCC (SOS-SCC) (VOL-VCA)

VCU certification

Employment agencies

Employment agencies are more and more expected to have well informed temporary workers (temps) in terms of H&S. VCU is a Dutch abbreviation which translates roughly as “Health and Safety Checklist for Employment agencies”. The VCU checklist lists the VCA rules for an employment agency. A VCU certified employment agency can show that their temps know the rules of H&S.

VCO certification

Principals

The principal also plays a major role for H&S. To show this he can get VCO certified. This is another Dutch abbreviation which translates roughly as “Health and Safety Checklist for Employers”. The purpose of this VCO certification is to make the employers provide the right working conditions. In this way, VCA certified companies and temps who are employed by VCU certified employment agencies can work safely on his area.

Supervisors

This course will train you for the Safety for Operational Supervisors SOS-SCC certificate.

1.3 Personal safety logbook and trainings

Safety logbook

Petro(chemical) companies in particular work with a safety logbook. This is a personal, green, booklet that the employee carries with him. This logbook states the trainings and medical procedures (e.g. vaccinations) which have been followed. The employer has made a schedule to ensure that this logbook is filled in promptly and correctly. When you have a safety logbook, this VOL-VCA course will be noted as well.

Trainings

Some activities are so risky that additional training is required. The authorities have therefore made training mandatory for a number of activities. The exam needs to be taken at a SSVV recognised exam centre. Examples of these activities are:

- Working with a forklift.
- Working with a reach truck or telehandler.
- Working with a hydraulic platform.
- Working on low pressure flanges.
- Working as an outside guard (confined spaces).
- Moving loads.
- Working with self-contained breathing protection (independent respiratory equipment).
- Measuring gas: explosion-hazardous and toxic substances and oxygen

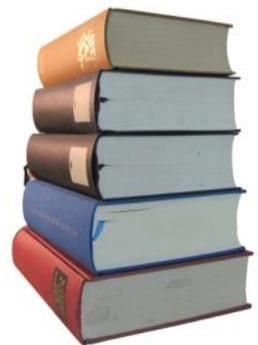
1.4 H&S legislation

Health and Safety

H&S stands for **H**ealth and **S**afety. In the Netherlands we are mainly concerned with the following laws:

- The working hours legislation
- The 'ARBO' law
- Environmental legislation.
- European Directives

These laws apply everywhere where people work, so they apply to both employers and employees. Interns, trainees, temporary agency workers and volunteers are treated as employees in these laws.



The working hours legislation

Resting Times

In the working hours legislation rules are included for work and resting times. The starting point of the law is the need to consider the personal and familial circumstances of the employee, like family care and a connection with health and safety.

This law indicates the maximum working hours per day and per week for each age group. Compliance is verified by the authorities.

Labour Conditions Law ('ARBO' law)

Accidents

Every year more than 50.000 accidents happen in which 3224 people are seriously injured and about 100 people die. The FNV (Dutch trade union) estimated in a report from 2010 that a further 3000 people die per year through consequential damages of working conditions! Think of working with chemicals or with asbestos or coming into contact with infectious diseases such as Q fever. To improve working conditions in the workplace the ARBO law applies in the Netherlands.

Principle

The principle of the ARBO law is a matter for employers and employees together. To constantly improve working conditions, two types of consultation exist (both with an agenda and minutes of the meeting).

- HSE (**H**ealth, **S**afety and **E**nvironment) meetings (toolbox meetings) where employers and employees come together to examine how working conditions can be improved.
- Dialogue between the employer and an employee representation. At this consultation, the following persons participate: the employer (Chairman), a delegation of employers, a delegation of employees and a delegation of experts (for example prevention consultants).

HSE meetings (toolbox meetings)

A VCA certified company is required to organize a HSE meeting (also called toolbox meeting) at least ten times a year. A toolbox meeting is a short meeting on the work-floor where the section management and operational employees are present. Health and safety topics are discussed in an informal manner. The purpose of these meetings is to educate employees and prevent them from working unsafely. It is important that everyone can contribute to these discussions, meaning an interactive meeting (top down and bottom up).

Focussing points are:

- Making of clear agreements that result in a written statement.
- Checking whether the message is understood.

Topics that can be discussed are:

- The use of personal protective equipment.
- Order and tidiness.
- Working methods.

- Procedures (also in case of emergency)
- Incidents and accidents.
- Working place inspections.

European directives

There are also European directives (guidelines) for safe working practices. Most of these have been incorporated into Dutch law. A part of these guidelines is the CE marking. All tools, equipment and PPE's that are traded in the European Union need to be tested and to bear the CE marking. This marking ensures that the product meets the necessary specifications. When you see this mark you can assume that the product is safe to work with.



Environmental Legislation

Environment

The Netherlands has more than 20 laws with the purpose to protect humans and the environment from harmful effects of activities. Emissions of and exposure to hazardous substances must be avoided wherever and whenever possible. Wastes must also be transported responsibly.

1.5 Temporary agency workers

Same protection

For temporary agency workers, the same protection applies as for regular employees. This is the responsibility of the hiring company. They must instruct the employee properly and provide for example personal protective equipment (PPE). The employment agency hands out information about the temp's tasks beforehand. The temp gets specific safety instructions when hired. In some cases the temp's task may differ from those originally assigned. This is only allowed when the temp and the employment agency are informed about this beforehand and a description is given for additional preventive measures. Agreements must also be made about who informs and who gives the instruction and PPE to the temp.

Education

The general education the employment agency needs to give the temp is:

- General health and safety rules.
- General regulations with fire and alarms.
- Notification of unsafe acts and situations.
- What actions to take with incidents during work and on the road to and from work.
- Data about the employment agency (establishment) and the contact name there.
- Policy statement of the employment agency.

- Need for and usage rules of personal protective equipment.
- Sector-specific education (e.g. icons).
- Information regarding the workplace: function requirements, hazards and management.
- Specific information from the hiring company.
- Specific regulations and rules from the hiring company.
- Explanations about the permits system of the hiring company.
- Handing over documentation.

1.6 Tasks, rights and duties

Teamwork

Employers and employees have to cooperate for the best labour conditions and environmental protection.

This means that in the work area:

- There is no danger to health and accidents are prevented
- Employees are protected from violation, harassment and undesired sexual behaviour and violence.
- The environment is protected as much as possible.

The ARBO law contains the duties and rights of both employers and employees.

Obligations of the employer

The employer is responsible for improving the health, safety and welfare of the employees and therefore has a prevention policy in place, integrated in the company policy. Parts of this are:

- A system-based prevention plan and execution of the policy by means of a system.
- Establishing an internal prevention department.
- Risks must be prevented as much as possible.
- Organises consultations and works together with the employee (representation).
- Performing a written risk analysis.
- Coordinating the collaboration of multiple employers in one area.
- Preventing accidents at the source.
- Adjusting workplaces, methods and equipment for the employees.



- Handing out protective equipment and ensuring it is used.
- Refraining himself from any violence, bullying or unwanted sexual behaviour.
- Notifying the authorities and researching serious accidents.
- Avoidance of monotonous and repetitive work as much as possible.
- Ensures suitable reception, education and instructions for (new) employees.
- Monitoring compliance with instructions.
- Having an absenteeism policy.
- Educating about the hazards at work and providing the right trainings.
- Registering incidents and accidents and reporting serious accidents to the authorities.
- Having an annual action plan for improving working conditions.
- Making sure that employees can undergo examination for the prevention and limitation of health risks.
- Organizing a toolbox meeting at least 10 times per year.
- Employs one or more safety experts. When the company doesn't have sufficient expertise internally, the employer hires people externally. These experts have the following tasks:
 - They support employer and employees in the application of the H&S legislation.
 - They assist with the risk stocktaking and evaluation.
 - They assist with accidents and incidents research.
 - They perform medical research.
 - They supervise employees who cannot perform their job because of illness.
 - They carry out medical supervision and suggest measures to prevent health issues while working.
 - They contribute to the prevention and the timely detection of illness.
- The employer is not only responsible to limit the risks for their own employees but also needs to take measures for the protection of:
 - The employees of other employers on the same workplace.
 - Visitors, suppliers, patients and nearby residents.

HSE tasks of operational supervisors:

- Formulates suggestions and advice to the employer.
- Investigates accidents and incidents and suggests measures.
- Checks working equipment and personal protective equipment.
- Gathers advice from prevention departments.
- Verifies that employees have the right abilities and information.
- Monitors compliance with instructions.
- Checks that employees understand the information and put it into practice.
- Organises the reception of beginning employees and appoints an experienced employee to accompany them.

- Contributes to risk control.
- Performs safety inspections.
- Organises toolbox meetings.

Duties of the employee:

- Proper and correct uses of tools and hazardous substances.
- Proper use and maintenance of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Participation in safety education and HSE meetings (toolbox meetings).
- Contributes in a positive way to the safety policy.
- Reports accidents and near-accidents.
- Immediately reports dangerous or unhealthy situations to the manager.

Employees have the following rights:

- The right of participation.
- The right to good information and education.
- The right to a safe and healthy working environment.
- Interruption of work: In case employees think the work is too dangerous, they have the right to interrupt the work under the following circumstances:
 - In the event of a threatening or serious danger to people There is no time to report it first.
 - Immediate report of the work to the supervisor.
 - The authorities must be informed.

If there is a dangerous situation, you are obliged to make use of this right. If you don't and accidents follow, you can be fined.

Bring yourself to safety and, taking into account your technical knowledge and the available resources, personally take appropriate measures to prevent the consequences of such danger.

Information and education

Employees have to be informed and educated on a regular basis. This is mandatory:

- At the start of the working activities (at jobbing, also with temps).
- After relocation or change of function.
- After the introduction of new or changed work equipment.
- After the introduction of new working procedures or new technology.

Good education is tailored to the kind of employee and to their abilities and experience. The education and guidance has to be clear, practical (so not only in writing), and tailored to the specific working activities.

Required parts of information and education are:

- General health, safety and welfare.
- The hazards in the workplace and the precautions.
- Regulations and rules made by the employer.

Improving motivation

To improve motivation of the employees, the supervisor can take into account the following things:

- Try to get as much information as possible about the abilities of the employees.
- Do not give your employees tasks that lay below or above their abilities,
- Considers opinions, suggestions, wishes and advice of your employees.
- Let your employees know how you think about them, also when it comes to H&S.
- Judge your employees as objectively as possible.
- Make sure that the employee is not affected in his value as a professional and human when giving criticism.
- Get a healthy bit of self-criticism.
- Prevent emotional situations.
- Don't be bossy.
- Try to listen attentively to what someone else has to say.
- Tell employees not only how they have to do something but also why.
- Set a good example

Education of new employees

When employees start working at a company for the first time it is self-evident that they need to be informed of the rules. This information consists of a general and a specific part.



Fig. 1: Education of new employees

General education:

- General health and safety rules within the company.
- General regulations in case of fire and alarm.
- Notification procedure at (near-) accidents and unsafe situations.
- Regulations on accidents on the way to and from work.
- The need for and use of personal protective equipment.

Specific education:

- Specific hazards in the workplace.
- Precautions taken.
- Specific work-bound health and safety rules.
- Specific health and safety for plants, machines and work equipment.
- Specific company-bound data about danger zones, evacuation routes, canteen, sanitary, etc.
- Information about the working place of the employee (function requirements, hazards, measures).

1.7 The authorities

Supervision

As of 1 January 2012, labour inspection is part of the Governmental Inspection Service Safety and Health (Arbeidsinspectie). The Governmental Inspection Service Safety and Health checks that companies comply with the ARBO law and the law of working hours. Inspections are performed in the case of reports, complaints, accidents and license applications by the Governmental Inspection Service Safety and Health.



Inspectie SZW
Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en
Werkgelegenheid

The Governmental Inspection Service Safety and Health (formerly Labour Inspectorate and from now on in the text just authorities) has the following powers:

- They have access to all buildings where people work and can take measurements, photographs and materials with them.
- They can ask for an ID.
- Make an order of compliance.
- Shut down work (when there is an immediate danger to employees or third parties).
- Give an administrative fine.

- Make an official report.

The authorities make a distinction between:

- Violations.
- Crimes or serious violations.

Violations

Warning

When there is a minor offense, the authorities can give a warning, possibly with an order of compliance. When there are more serious violations, the inspection may give a fine. The employer can appeal against this fine, but this does not delay the fine.

Fine

Employees can also be fined if they break rules.

Crimes or serious violations.

Crime

When there is a crime or a very serious offense, the inspector can make an official report and forward it to the public prosecutor. By doing this the evaluation turns into a criminal prosecution.

1.8 Work place inspections

Safety observations

The supervisor has to regularly perform workplace inspections and safety observation rounds to improve the safety in the workplace.



Fig.2: Work place inspection

Note the following things when doing this:

- Take enough time for the inspection round (approximately 30 minutes).
- Make it clear to the employees what's going on and explain the reason.
- Observe one person at the time, never an entire group.
- It's a regular and not an occasional task of the supervisor (every supervisor at least once per month).
- Observe preferably with two or three persons, but not more.
- Prevent disturbance of the work, don't hinder the employees.
- Observe the work and especially watch the H&S aspects.
- Your presence will lead to reactions. When adverse reactions occur, take time to discuss this at a later point in time. When your presence changes the work approach, say it.
- Make notes.
- Don't just look, but listen, interview, give advice and make agreements.
- Inform the person involved about the positive and negative safety aspects of the found work approach.
- Correct employees in a positive way.
- Pay attention to incidents that have happened.
- Communicate in a positive way to your employees.

Topics

Focus on the following topics for workplace inspections and observation rounds:

- Collective protective equipment.
- Personal protective equipment.
- Attitude of employees towards each other.
- Actions of employees.
- Machines, tools and equipment.
- Order and tidiness.
- Application of procedures.

Reporting

Make a written report of the workplace inspection and observation round and include the following items:

- Is working and behaving safely easy/difficult/impossible?
- Did the observer and the observed agree about working and behaving safely?
- Which measures will be taken?
- Which persons/services are responsible for these?
- Which persons/services are responsible for follow up on these actions?

1.9 Summary

- VCA means **VGM Veiligheid, Gezondheid en Milieu** (Safety, health and environment) **Checklist Aannemers** (Building contractors). A company that is VCA certified can prove it pays sufficient attention to safety, health and environment in its activities. The Safety for Operational Supervisors SCC (VOL-VCA) certificate is a part of this certification.
- The working hours legislation contains rules regarding work and resting times.
- The ARBO law contains the rights and duties of employers and employees in the areas of health, safety and labour conditions.
- Apart from the Working Hours Legislation and the ARBO law we also have to comply to European rules. An important part of these rules is the CE marking. All machines and tools that are used in the European Union, must be inspected in terms of safety. This approval is indicated by the CE marking.
- The authorities verify that the Working Hours Legislation and the ARBO law are respected. Violation of these rules may lead to penalties to both employers and workers by the inspection services.
- Environmental legislation serves to protect humans and environment from harmful activities like noise and the usage of hazardous substances. Companies must intervene actively to meet the goals of the environmental legislation.
- Temps enjoy the same protection as normal employees. The employment agency is responsible for the general education of the temp. The hiring company is responsible for specific education.
- Employers and employees work together in a VCA certified company to meet the H&S goals. They regularly deliberate in employer and employee consultation and toolbox meetings. The employer also executes workplace inspections to improve safety.

1.10 Self-Test

True / False questions	True	False
1. VCA means Veiligheids Certificering Aannemers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The ARBO law states that safety is only a concern of the employer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The employer must give a (job) hazard analysis and evaluate this regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. A duty of the employee is to follow safety information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. A CE mark is placed by the authorities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The employer must organize a HSE meeting, at least 5 times per year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Employees have the right to interrupt their assignment in case of serious danger.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. In case of not complying to the rules, the authorities can also fine employees.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The purpose of the environmental legislation is to prohibit the usage of hazardous substances.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Workplace inspections need to be performed at least twice a year.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The temporary employment agency is responsible for giving specific safety instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The purpose of a H&S (toolbox) meeting is to increase productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Exam Questions

1. Where does the H&S legislation apply?
 - a. In all public buildings.
 - b. In every building.
 - c. All locations where work is carried out.
2. What ability does a labour inspector have?
 - a. He can offer advice.
 - b. He can close a company.
 - c. He can ask for a valid identification.
3. What is an employee required to do according to the ARBO law?
 - a. Contribute in a positive way to the safety policy.
 - b. Make procedures about working safely.
 - c. Warn the authorities in case of serious accidents.
4. What right does an employee have according to the H&S laws?
 - a. Right to own approved tools.
 - b. Right to information and training.
 - c. Right to make decisions about the ARBO policy.
5. How should an employee respond in case of serious danger?
 - a. Warn the authorities.
 - b. Investigate how serious the danger is.
 - c. Immediately report to his superior.
6. Which subject is discussed in a HSE meeting?
 - a. The use of personal protective equipment.
 - b. The making of agreements about the division of labour.
 - c. Determining the working hours.
7. What is the purpose of environmental legislation?
 - a. Protecting humans and the environment from hazardous substances.
 - b. Controlling the production of hazardous substances.
 - c. Indicate how hazardous substances should be stored.

8. What is the task of the authorities?
 - a. Hold consultations with employers on activities with high risk and advise on the action to be taken.
 - b. Check agreements with the CAO and agreements concluded in the action plan.
 - c. Control fulfilment with the H&S laws and law of working time.

9. Safety, Health and Welfare, in a company are a concern of:
 - a. The employee and the authorities.
 - b. Employee and employer.
 - c. The works council.

10. Is an employer required to take measures for unauthorized persons that visit his terrain?
 - a. Yes, the employer is also responsible for the safety of unauthorized persons.
 - b. Yes, but only if there are no fences.
 - c. No, the employer is not responsible.

11. When may an employee interrupt the work?
 - a. When there is immediate danger to himself or others.
 - b. Only in situations that is dangerous to the employee himself.
 - c. Only when the manager is informed.

12. A company with 27 employees is focused on both direct H&S care on the workplace and on the safety structures and systems within the company. What certification applies?
 - a. VCA*
 - b. VCA**
 - c. VCA***

13. What has to be a characteristic of education according to the ARBO law?
 - a. It has to be mainly practical and not only in theory.
 - b. It has to be executed by an ARBO expert.
 - c. It has to be a brochure, including images or illustrations.

14. You are working within a petrochemical company. What activities require an additional work permit?
- Welding activities in areas with a large risk of fires. (y/n)
 - Working in a confined space. (y/n)
 - Cleaning an office. (y/n)
15. You are an operational supervisor of a team of experienced employees. You spot one of the employees working with a circular saw of which the date of inspection has just expired. What do you do? Multiple answers could be correct.
- You recommend the employer to provide a circular saw that adheres to the safety requirements. (a)
 - You stop the employee doing the job since this is a very dangerous situation. (b)
 - You hand the employee a new inspection sticker to apply to the circular saw. (c)
16. Your job is to inspect a gas pipeline in a crawl space of an apartment building. The crawl space smells very musty and is warm and damp. You do not trust the situation and decide not to carry out the job. Who should you inform about this?
- Your employer.
 - The inspection services.
 - The landlord.
17. Peter and his co-worker need to clean a space on a terrain that also houses a refinery. A work permit needs to be provided before they start working. What applies to this work permit?
- The work permit must be signed by both afterwards. (y/n)
 - The work permit must be copied and kept for three months. (y/n)
 - The work permit must be present at the workplace. (y/n)
 - The provider of the work permit must explain the activities. (y/n)
18. When must an employer alert a company doctor?
- To determine whether an employee is suited to work with a tower crane. (y/n)
 - To carry out periodical checks on persons working with hazardous substances. (y/n)
 - To examine laser devices. (y/n)

19. A client hires four different contractors. Employees of the four contractors work together at the same workplace. What obligations does the client have according to H&S legislation? Multiple answers could be correct.
- To coordinate the cooperation between the contractors when implementing health and safety measures. (a)
 - To supervise compliance to H&S legislation. (b)
 - To provide the contractors with the required PPE. (c)
 - To develop a health and safety plan for each employee of the contractors. (d)
20. Ben needs to weld in a confined space. He holds a work permit. What must Ben do before he starts working?
- a. Perform a LMRA before he starts working. (y/n)
 - b. Discuss safety measures with the provider of the work permit. (y/n)
 - c. Carry the work permit with him during the work. (y/n)