



UNION OF THE ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY
eurelectric



For Health
in the electricity industry
& Safety





HEALTH & SAFETY AND TRAINING

HEALTH & SAFETY AND TRAINING

Policy statement EURELECTRIC - EPSU - EMCEF

Preamble

EURELECTRIC and the European Federation of Public Service Unions agreed on a health and safety and training statement in 1996, cosigned with Employment Commissioner Flynn. Many developments took place since that time:

- EMCEF joined the trade union side as social partner;
- Liberalisation of the Electricity Sector and the EU Directives to create an internal market have led to restructuring of the Electricity Sector;
- New health and safety directives have been adopted;
- The EU has been enlarged from 12 to 25 Member States with the prospect for a number of other countries to join.

The social partners therefore agreed to consider the statement and its fitness for the future. They agreed that it continues to reflect what should be expected regarding health and safety and training in the Electricity Industry. The document sets out general principles as well as specific training issues. It is based on national experiences and the directives of the European Union in the field of health and safety. It is not intended to prejudice national practices and legislation.

EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF firmly believe training is important to sustain the high level of health and safety in the Electricity Industry. They wish that the document contributes to the on-going debates between the social partners on training for health and safety in the different countries

For EPSU

Jan Willem GOUDRIAAN
Deputy Secretary General

For EMCEF

Jean-François RENUCCI
Deputy Secretary General

For EURELECTRIC

Knut HERSTAD
Chairman of Working Group on
Social Affairs & Human Resources

Brussels, 13 December 2006

Introduction

1. Developments in the European Electricity Industry (EI) place new demands on workers, their unions, and companies and their employers' organisations.

EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF have discussed the new challenges facing workers and companies in the ESI in the context of health and safety. Both organisations wish to stimulate debate on issues of common interest.¹

New Directives^A have been adopted on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from asbestos, physical agents (vibration, noise and electromagnetic fields). The inter-sectoral social partners adopted an agreement on stress which has been endorsed by the electricity social partners. Its application in the Electricity Industry will be evaluated after July 2007.

We recommend those engaged in health and safety and vocational training to consider if all the new rules and regulations have been integrated into training programmes.

Health and Safety Objective

2. This document is a statement of general principles on health and safety of workers in all aspects of their work, which may assist the social partners locally in ensuring the health and safety of workers in all aspects of their work especially with regard to illness and injury, improving the quality of their working life taking into account gender differences and in sustaining and improving the health and safety performance of the EI. The document is jointly discussed and agreed.

^A Directive 2003/10/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 February 2003 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (noise) (Seventeenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)

Directive 2003/18/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 March 2003 amending Council Directive 83/477/EEC on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work (Text with EEA relevance)

Directive 2002/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (vibration) (sixteenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) - Joint Statement by the European Parliament and the Council

Directive 2001/45/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 amending Council Directive 89/655/EEC concerning the minimum safety and health requirements for the use of work equipment by workers at work (second individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC) (Text with EEA relevance)

Corrigendum to Directive 2004/40/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields) (18th individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)

Directive of 29 April 2004 on the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens or mutagens at work (Sixth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Council Directive 89/391/EEC) (codified version)

General Principles of Training for Health and Safety

3. Although overall responsibility for the health and safety of workers rests with their employers², employees and their organisations play an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of measures to improve health and safety. Environmental design and work organisation to eliminate hazards, as well as considerable dependence on attitudes and behaviour of all those concerned in work is implicit in preventive health and safety.³

Workers will cooperate in all tasks imposed by the safety regulations, and, in cooperation with the employer, contribute to ensure a working environment and working conditions which pose as little risk as possible to health and safety⁴.

EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF recognise the important contribution of education and training of management and the workforce in ensuring high standards in health and safety to ensure that employees understand clearly their duties and responsibilities for health and safety of themselves and others. One objective should be to contribute to a better awareness of (information on) health and safety and to disseminate and promote knowledge or prevention measures on topics relevant to the electricity industry. Adequate and appropriate training shall be provided by the employer.

Training of workers

4. Health and safety training may take many forms as appropriate to local circumstances and the nature of the role performed by the individual. The content and training methods used will vary according to the target audience. It is generally desirable that such training should be integrated into vocational training programmes rather than be considered as an add-on item.

Such training should be repeated periodically where necessary and given in a way which is easily understandable. All workers in the ESI should be given appropriate training in health and safety. In this regard, specific attention should be paid to women, youths and migrant workers. Increasing numbers of women are expected to enter the energy sector and there is evidence of strengthened mobility amongst the European workforce, lastly the energy sector has an ongoing need to recruit and train younger workers. Health and safety representatives shall be consulted on the planning and organisation of training programmes.⁵

5. The training should assist workers to be able⁶:
- to know the risks involved, as well as the causes of accidents and ill health in the electricity industry;
 - to acquire knowledge on the principles of accident, injury and disease prevention,⁷ including the ability to identify the risks and use prevention techniques;
 - to take the necessary action in case of serious and imminent danger;
 - to understand the relationship between the partners involved in Health and Safety in the company;
 - to safely use equipment;
 - to know the legal obligations as well as agreements, codes of practice and authoritative guidance of health and safety;

- to establish and maintain safe places of work and safe systems of work.
 - to know where and how to receive health surveillance.
6. Training shall be given, where relevant, on issues such as⁸:
- health and safety requirements for the workplace;
 - use of work equipment by workers at work;
 - use by workers of personal protective equipment at the workplace;
 - manual handling of loads where there is a risk ;
 - work with display screen equipment;
 - health signs;
 - risks related to working with electricity
 - risks related to exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work;
 - risks related to exposure to noise at work;
 - risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work;
 - social and psychological risks, stress and violence at work.

Employers shall ensure that only workers having received adequate training and instructions may have access to areas where there is a serious and specific danger. This is also important in the case of outsourced and contracted-out work. EURELECTRIC / EPSU / EMCEF strongly recommend that health and safety representatives are consulted and involved in designating the areas where there is a serious and specific danger.

7. Specific attention should be paid to training in case of:
- a transfer or change of job of a worker or group of workers;
 - a new site;
 - new work equipment and/or change of equipment;
 - use of new technologies, materials and/or products.
8. Training on health and safety shall cover those workers with a fixed-duration employment relationship or a temporary employment relationship. This will ensure that they have, as regards health and safety at work, the same level of protection as that of other workers in the user undertaking and/or establishment.⁹
9. On recruitment workers are to be informed of:
- the employer's policy/strategy for prevention of accidents and occupational injuries and diseases;
 - the company rules and procedures for dealing with the above;
 - the organisational arrangements including the role of the safety representatives, and the role of the works council/shopstewards and trade unions. This will include the ways and means to communicate health and safety problems to the safety representatives.

10. Where work is subcontracted, the overall responsibility for the health and safety of that subcontractors' employees lies with the subcontractor. There is, however, an obligation on the client company to co-ordinate health and safety matters. Workers from outside the undertaking should therefore receive appropriate instruction regarding health and safety for the work site on which they will deploy activities. If a company in the ESI uses a contractor or sub-contractor it should specify the rules and regulations on health and safety in the industry and used by the company in the contract or tender. The sub-contractor will have to prove his record in upholding and maintaining these standards. This includes the training and education given to the workers on health and safety. The contracting company can require additional training on health and safety to familiarise workers of the sub-contractor with the rules and regulations of the place where the work is carried out.¹⁰ Work force health and safety representatives of both the sub-contractor and the client-company should be able to monitor this.

Training of workers representatives

11. EURELECTRIC and the EPSU recognise the important role and contribution played by workers' safety representatives in health and safety in the workplace. Training of workers representatives in health and safety is either provided by the trade unions or jointly with the employer.¹¹ Apart from the above (Training of Workers) it covers:
- the roles and responsibilities of the various parties in the electricity sector companies in the field of health and safety;
 - representing workers and their interests;
 - communication skills.
12. To allow the workers' representatives to play an adequate and effective role their training needs to be appropriate for the tasks assigned to them¹² Sufficient provisions need to be made for the health and safety representatives to enable them to carry out new tasks such as:
- the consultation of workers for risk evaluation;
 - preventive services.
13. To allow the health and safety objectives to be attained, safety representatives with a specific health and safety responsibility and working in different undertakings and sharing a work place, shall, where practicable be given the possibility for joint training courses related to health and safety at that specific work place. The training shall contribute to identification and prevention of health and safety risks involved in the sharing of the work place.

Training of Managers/Supervisors and Health and Safety Advisers

14. EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF regard a high level of health and safety as an integral part of the services provided by the companies in the ESI. Companies should have competent personnel who can deal with health and safety matters. Occasions might arise for which the companies enlist competent external services or persons. The companies should, in the health and safety area consult as appropriate the workers and/or their representatives on the external services or persons they wish to enlist and on the measures the external services or persons propose.

15. The training of manager, supervisors and health and safety advisers should as required:
- enable risks to be identified, then avoided or reduced and controlled;
 - include an understanding of the role of the workers' safety representative and the wider consultation mechanism in the company;
 - assist in the integration of health and safety at every stage of the processes in the ESI, from inception through to completion and eventual demolition;
 - lead to a high level of competence which includes expertise in:
 - * on-site audits and inspection;
 - * the assessment of hazards and the development of control measures for risk;
 - * analysing management systems and the setting up of procedures for improved health and safety.

Their educational and training programme needs to take account of the depth and application of knowledge that such advisers, manager and supervisors require especially given the range of hazards that they may be asked to advise upon.

16. EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF note that significant changes in the nature and scope of training given to those who are responsible for managing and controlling risk and for those who advise them might be necessary to achieve the high level of health and safety in the ESI. Education and training are important to change the culture and social behaviour of those working in the industry. Those who train managers, professionals and health and safety advisers should not overlook creating the right psychological approach to health and safety.

Training methods and techniques

17. The parties acknowledge that a wide variety of methods and techniques are used in health and safety training in different companies in the European Union. They emphasise that workers' experiences are the starting point for the development of skills, knowledge and attitudes that will achieve effective and sustained change at the work place, including an improved and lasting awareness of health and safety at the work place.
18. The training needs to be worker centred¹³. The own experience of participants is to serve as basis for development of health and safety concepts and actions. To this end trainers can employ a variety of student centred active learning methods such as group work, course meetings and on the job training to deal with the subject matter of health and safety. A problem solving approach is regarded as most effective in dealing with workplace health and safety problems. It focuses not only on technical issues but also on organisational issues and contributes to understand the matter so that effective action can be taken.

Effectiveness of training

19. For the training to be effective it needs to be appropriate and adequate to ensure workers are able to contribute to improved health and safety at work. However, the effectiveness of training can be influenced by a variety of factors such as the managerial culture, the activeness of safety representatives and the support of the workforce¹⁴

It might be helpful to consider the following points, where relevant, to evaluate the effectiveness of training:

- the training courses should reflect new rights, demands and insights, changed national and European regulations and risk assessment implications;
- the method of training should be worker centered and address real needs;
- time off for workers and workers' representatives should be adequate;
- the work load of workers and workers' representatives should not interfere with the training;
- timely refresher courses are needed¹⁵;
- the courses may include good practice from outside the company and industry where relevant;
- access to training in the health and safety area, should be open to workers and workers' representatives who need (more) training. The access to training can be the subject of discussion between the social partners.

Recommendations

20. Renewed push for health and safety is important for the attractiveness of the sector

EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF hope that this document contributes to achieving a higher level of health and safety in the Electricity sector. EURELECTRIC and the EPSU/EMCEF recommend that their members strive to ensure the highest level of health and safety of workers in all aspects of their work in the ESI recognising the different impact on women and men. They regard training and education as an important and indispensable means to achieve and sustain a good health and safety performance. As part of the process of raising awareness of health and safety and training they recommend to their affiliates:

- it is necessary to integrate information and training on health and safety into vocational (including initial and continuous) training;
- workers and workers' representatives need to be informed and consulted on health and safety training for workers. They can make proposals and should be given appropriate health and safety education and training which is comprehensible to those concerned.

21. EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF will compile examples of good practice with extra focus on health and safety at subcontractor level as a learning platform which demonstrates a safe, productive and competitive working environment. Whilst recognising that best practice has to be determined in accordance with local needs, these reference workplaces can service as useful models and can be integrated into training courses for workers and workers' representatives where appropriate.

22. EURELECTRIC and EPSU/EMCEF will monitor the follow-up to the Health and Safety and Training document and develop the recommendations to contribute to a higher level of health and safety. This will take place in the permanent standing committee health and safety with representatives from the parties. This should include female representatives.

Notes and Remarks

1. Terms of Reference EPSC/EURELECTRIC Task Force
2. Framework Directive 89/391, article 5 on General provisions, (1) and article 6 General obligations on employers
3. The Temporary and Mobile Construction Sites directive in requiring health and safety to be planned, coordinated and implemented from the design stage through to the execution has brought together all parties and requires all parties to consider in health and safety terms the consequences of their decisions on others who might be affected.
4. Framework Directive 89/391 article 13 on Workers obligations
5. Article 11 (e). Workers or workers' representatives with a specific responsibility for the safety and health of workers shall take part in a balanced way, in accordance with national laws and/or practices, or shall be consulted in advance and in good time by the employer with regard to: - the planning and organisation of the training referred to in article 12 (of the Framework Directive 89/391)

As regards information and consultation, attention is drawn to the Joint Opinion of ETUC/UNICE/CEEP concerning Training and Motivation, and Information and Consultation, 6 March 1987. It defines information and consultation in part B. In article 4 it states that "The participants note that, in most countries in the Community and also in many industrial sectors, there exist various forms of information and consultation procedures and negotiating practices. Whilst acknowledging the diversity of the existing procedures, they consider that best use should be made of the existing procedures"

6. Most of the principles following are based on existing programmes in which unions participating in the dialogue were involved. They are also covered in a forthcoming publication of the TUTB. And some of the principles were also covered in a seminar of the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers and the European Construction Industry Federation in Pont Royal, 22-23 November 1993.
7. Not all injuries are caused by accidents e.g. work related upper limb disorders.
8.
 - minimum safety and health requirements for the workplace 89/654
 - minimum safety and health requirements for the use of work equipment by workers at work 89/655, article 7
 - minimum health and safety requirements for the use by workers of personal protective equipment at the workplace 89/656, article 4 (5) on adequate information and article 4(7) employer informs of risks against which the wearing of the PPE protects; 4 (8) and arrange for training
 - minimum health and safety requirements for the manual handling of loads where there is a risk particularly of back injury to workers 90/269, article 6 (2)
 - minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment 90/270, article 6 (2)
 - minimum requirements for the provision of safety and/or health signals at work 92/58, article 7
 - protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to chemical, physical and biological agents at work 80/1107 and amendment 88/642 article 2 amending point 4.
 - protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to noise at work 86/188, article 4 (1a)
 - protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to carcinogens at work 90/394, articles 11 and 12
 - protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work 90/679, article 9

This list is not exhaustive and merely serves to give examples of the issues on which workers and workers'

representatives need to receive specific training where exposure to these and other risks takes place.

9. Directive 91/383 supplementing the measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of workers with a fixed-duration employment relationship or a temporary employment relationship.

10. The employer shall ensure that workers from outside undertakings and/or establishments engaged in work in his undertaking and/or establishment have in fact received appropriate instructions regarding health and safety risks during their activities in his undertaking and/or establishment. (article 12 (2) Framework Directive 89/ 391).

11. Joint health and safety training of supervisors and safety delegates as often provided in the Nordic countries under the leadership of trade union tutors and using labour education techniques is generally successful and meets a favourable response from supervisors as well as trade union delegates" Trade union training in health and safety, a survey of European practice in Training for Workers' Representatives, Trade Union Technical Bureau of the ETUC, November 1995.

Even though the health and safety training courses are often provided by the trade unions in certain cases the supervisors can take part.

In the UK it is the Health and Safety Advisory Committee (of the sector) which issues joint recommendations on training. These recommendations are revised from time to time. The initial training is based on a self study pack which is jointly designed. It includes: a video covering role of the safety representative, a course book, TUC book Hazards at work, guide for mentors, copy of regulation, guidance and code of practices.

12. Workers' representatives with a specific role in protecting the safety and health of workers shall be entitled to appropriate training. (article 12 (3) Framework Directive 89/391 EEC).

13. Other terms for this approach which are used include: problem centered / active learning / discovery learning.

14. The systems of workers' representation differ in Europe. Specific safety committees exist in certain countries such as the Danish Sikkerhedsgruppen, the French Comité d'hygiène, de sécurité, et des conditions de travail and the German Arbeitsschutzausschuß, while in other countries the works council has specific powers for health and safety such as in the Netherlands.

The TUTB publication "Trade union training in health and safety, a survey of European practice in Training for Workers' Representatives" (November 1995) identifies trade union training as one of the factors crucial to effectiveness in health and safety. It draws on evidence of surveys which indicate that managers are very positive about trained trade union representatives.

"Although there are few reliable studies that indicate a positive relationship between joint consultation and improvements in objective health and safety standards, there are an increasing number of studies that show a relationship between trade union membership and health and safety performance".

15. An example of good practice is National Grid Company. The company called Safety Representatives together for a one-day refresher course. It was chaired by the trade unions. It included plenary sessions on company policies and syndicate group discussions of the "six-pack" legislation with a detailed conference report. It will now be repeated every two years and use examples of best practice throughout the company. Another example is the Health and Safety campaigns of ENEL. They include large numbers of workers.