Construction

**Conduct workplace communication**

Welcome.

This module will assist you to review and revise content in the area of ‘**Conduct workplace communication’** in the NSW HSC Construction syllabus.

You will have studied the competency [CPCCCM1014A Conduct workplace communication](https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CPCCCM1014A), which addresses the scope of learning.

This module is broken up into:

* Important notes regarding the HSC focus area
* Key terms and concepts; constructing a mind map
* Activities
* Putting the theory into practice

**How to use the resource**

Work through the notes and the suggested activities in any order.

Spread your revision over a number of sessions rather than sitting at one subject for lengthy periods.

Discuss your responses with your teacher, fellow students or an interested family member.

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# Important Notes: HSC Focus Area

You should use the information in this module as a prompt and guide when revising your **study notes** or **text-book information** or **other resources** provided by your teacher. You can also access industry specific information at [SafeWork NSW](https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/your-industry/construction), [Department of Industry, Innovation and Science](https://www.business.gov.au/Planning/Industry-information/Building-and-construction-industry), [Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW](https://www.antidiscrimination.justice.nsw.gov.au/), [Industrial Relations NSW](https://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/), and [Australian Council of Trade Unions](https://www.actu.org.au/)

The HSC examination in Construction is based on a set of examinable units of competency (see table below) from the Construction (240 indicative hours) course.

Examinable Units

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Code | Title |
| CPCCCM1012A | Work effectively and sustainably in the construction industry |
| CPCCCM1013A | Plan and organise work |
| CPCCCM1014A | **Conduct workplace communication** |
| CPCCCM1015A | Carry out measurements and calculations |
| CPCCCM2001A | Read and interpret plans and specifications |
| CPCCCM2005B | Use construction tools and equipment |
| CPCCWHS1001 | Prepare to work safely in the construction industry |
| CPCCOHS2001A | Apply OHS requirements, policies and procedures in the construction industry |

This module helps revise the focus area ‘**Conduct workplace communication**’ (based on [CPCCCM1014A Conduct workplace communication](https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CPCCCM1014A)).

This unit of competency specifies the outcomes required to communicate effectively with other workers in a construction workplace environment. It includes gathering, conveying and receiving information through verbal and written forms of communication.

The scope of learning describes the breadth and depth of the HSC Content, the minimum content that must be addressed, and the underpinning knowledge drawn from the associated unit(s) of competency.

The full scope of learning is available from Construction Curriculum Framework 2020 HSC exam and beyond, Syllabus Part B, [Mandatory units of competency ‘Conduct workplace communication](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/0cee7aa0-5b92-4ecc-9af2-54495a9c8136/VET+Construction+11-12+Syllabus+component+Conduct+workplace+communication+PDF.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=)’.  © [2019 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/mini-footer/copyright)

The following extract is taken from Syllabus Part B, [Mandatory units of competency ‘Conduct workplace communication’.](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/wcm/connect/0cee7aa0-5b92-4ecc-9af2-54495a9c8136/VET+Construction+11-12+Syllabus+component+Conduct+workplace+communication+PDF.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=)

Required knowledge for this unit is:

* bulletins
* checklists
* communication devices
* company procedures
* construction terminology
* emergency procedures
* job safety analysis (JSA) and safe work method statements
* material safety data sheets (MSDS) and materials handling methods
* memos
* OHS requirements
* project quality requirements
* signage
* work instructions
* workplace policies.

# Key terms and concepts

You can use the following information to revise the key terms and concepts from this unit of competency. Perhaps you could:

* Copy the table into your own file, remove all the key terms, then fill in the blanks (without peeking at the original file) with your own answers.
* Copy the table into your own file and remove the definitions. Write a definition in your own words – it doesn’t have to word perfect but should show you understand the concept.
* You could add an example of this term or concept relevant to the construction environment. If the key term was ‘abbreviation’ your construction example might be ‘abbreviations are a short form of saying something eg using ‘JSA’ for ‘Job Safety Analysis’.

## Constructing a mind map

Creating a mind map is a great way to organise your knowledge and understanding of the content of a topic.

* draw up your own mind map showing the connection between the various concepts listed
* use the key terms and concepts to add to your mind map
* add examples or case study prompts to show how the concept is applied in the construction working environment

You could use software such as a hierarchy chart, download ‘MindNode’ or similar or use a large sheet of paper (or several A4 sheets taped together)!

It is important to try to include all the detail you can, so add definitions, case studies or examples to prompt your memory. Include the information downloaded from the [unit of competency](#competency) and also from the [Scope of Learning](#Scope) and [Key Terms and Concepts](#terms).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key term or concept | Definition |
| Abbreviation | Shortened form of a word | |
| Agenda | List detailing the order of business for a meeting | |
| Attentiveness | Paying attention, listening, watching, engaging | |
| Audible | You can hear it | |
| Barriers to communication | Anything that interferes with the transfer of intended information from a sender to a receiver | |
| Bulletin | A short official statement or broadcast summary of news; a regular newsletter or report issued | |
| Checklist | A list of items required, things to be done, or points to be considered, used as a reminder. | |
| Communication | Imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium | |
| Communication methods | Verbal, non-verbal, written, visual communication | |
| Communication equipment | Physical plant and equipment for disseminating information eg mobile phone, 2-way radio | |
| Comprehensive | Detailed, in full | |
| Construction terminology | Terms pertaining or relating specifically to the construction industry | |
| Emergency procedures | Actions to be conducted in a certain order or manner, in response to a reasonably foreseeable emergency, a situation that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment. | |
| Evaluation | Assessment, judgment | |
| Gestures | Hand movements | |
| Jargon | Industry specific terminology | |
| Job safety analysis (JSA) | A procedure which helps integrate accepted safety and health principles and practices into a particular task or job operation | |
| Logical | Ordered, rational, intelligent | |
| Material safety data sheets (MSDS) | A written document that outlines information and procedures for handling and working with chemicals | |
| Mime | Gestures and body movements used to communicate | |
| Memo | A brief written record or note | |
| On-site meetings | Site meetings help facilitate better communication and a shared sense of purpose and the successful management of construction projects. | |
| Paraphrasing | Repeating in your own words | |
| Policies and procedures | Policies are the rules that a business implements to help it reach its long-term goals, and procedures are the specific methods for how employees should go about their daily duties | |
| Project quality | Project quality management is the process through which quality is managed and maintained throughout a project; at its most basic level, quality means meeting the needs of customers | |
| Reporting | Give a spoken or written account of something | |
| Safe work method statements | A form of safety statement used within the construction industry in Australia, outlining all high-risk activities that will be carried out within a given workplace, as well as the associated hazards and the controls put in place to mitigate risks. | |
| Safe work practices | Safe work practices (SWP) are usually written documents showing how to perform a task with minimum risk to personnel, equipment, materials, environment and processes | |
| Signage | Signs (eg identification, warning, or direction) or a system of such signs used to show information about something | |
| Signals | A gesture, action, or sound that is used to convey information or instructions. | |
| Symbol | An emblem or mark we all recognise. | |
| Teamwork | People working well together to achieve a common goal. | |
| Verbal communication | Spoken, stated by word of mouth. | |
| WHS requirements | Details of procedures or administration (eg licences, record keeping) to support WHS regulations. | |
| Work instructions | A description of the specific tasks and activities within a job | |
| Workplace information | Information that people can learn, know about, or understand about the workplace | |
| Written communication | The process of conveying a message through the written symbols | |

# Activities

1. Use these words to fill in the following ‘[introduction to effective communication’](http://www.ownerbuildercourses.com/uploads/1/0/7/7/1077804/cpcccm1014a_conduct_workplace_communicationv1.3.pdf).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Use these words |  |  |
| successful | signage | physically |
| information | Communication | Feedback |
| convey | clearer | combined |

Communication is the means by which we interact with one another.   
( ) can refer to:

* the act of communicating, that is ( ) relaying information such as talking or writing
* the ( ) being communicated, such as the contents of a speech or a plan
* the method of communicating. Safety, ( ) and barrier requirements.

Communication can only be considered ( ) when the receiver of the information understands exactly what the sender of the information intended.   
( ) from the receiver of the information to the sender of the information can determine if the communication was successful.

Workplace communication is how we ( ) or share information in the workplace. People use a wide variety of ways to communicate with each other. Sometimes these are used alone or ( ) together to make the message or information ( ).

1. You are in your first year of working on a construction site. Your boss has just given you a set of instructions.
   1. Assuming the instructions are in a written document, what would you do to make sure you had understood them correctly?
   2. If the instructions had been given to you verbally, what could you do to make sure you had understood them correctly?
   3. If you were carrying out a task using a set of written instructions, and you thought that some steps were missing, where could you find the missing information?
2. Communication takes place in a variety of ways on a worksite. Give examples of each of the following:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of communication | Example 1 | Example 2 | |
| Written |  |  |
| Non-verbal |  |  |
| Verbal |  |  |

1. Find two construction site illustrations (be careful of copyright) for each of the following:
   1. Gestures
   2. Signals
   3. Signage
   4. Diagrams
2. When you are communicating visually (eg using hand signals) how would you make sure you had the other person’s attention? If you were unsure of a **visual** communication you had received, how you would clarify the communication?
3. Look up the definition of ‘policy and procedures’ then complete the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Example of a workplace policy to be followed on a construction site | How would you be given this information? |
|  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Example of a workplace procedure to be followed on a construction site | How would you be given this information? |
|  |  |

1. You are required to take measurements for a brick fence, then work out the number of bricks required. Your supervisor has asked you to write all this down, so he can place an order. Is this a form of communication? Explain why/why not.
2. Open and closed questions are used at various times in the workplace. Open questions usually extract additional information. Fill in the missing examples.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Open | Closed |
| How did you injure yourself? |  |
|  | Are you sick today? |
|  | Should I use this brush? |
| Which of these two adhesives works best for this job? |  |

1. Your boss makes this site meeting statement: ‘we have to get the concrete poured on level two by Friday this week, but we have to make sure the steel fixers have finished by midday on Thursday. What is the goal and what action is required?
2. Think back to an on-site meeting that you have witnessed or been a part of. Discuss:
3. the purpose of the meeting.
4. who attended?
5. key topics that were discussed.
6. how did people contribute to the meeting?
7. outcomes of the meeting and how these were recorded.
8. how effectively did the meeting achieve its purpose?
9. Rewrite the following instruction in a logical and simple order.

* Ask the site supervisor for the plans
* After our morning tea break
* Bring them back here
* Go to the site office

1. What sort of report would you complete if you found a safety hazard on a worksite?

Hint: there may be more than one answer.

1. Writing instructions can be simplified by remembering to include ‘the five’ categories – ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘who’ and ‘how’. Write a set of instructions asking a colleague to pick something up from the hardware site.
2. Match the ‘barrier’ to communication with the explanation. Draw a line between the matching answers or construct your own table using copy and paste.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier to communication | Definition | |
| Language background | Communicating with another person with an attitude of disinterest or unwillingness will be ineffective. Anything in your mind which gets in the way of communication. |
| Stereotyping | If the means of communication is highly time consuming, then it becomes a barrier to efficient working. If the participants are time poor, they will pay less attention to the process. |
| Physical barriers | Inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered to be unfair. |
| Inconsistency | A preconceived idea that attributes certain characteristics (in general) to all the members of that group eg ‘old people don’t know how to use technology’. |
| Psychological barriers or emotions | Providing too much or too little information is equally disruptive to effective communication. |
| Personal beliefs and culture | [Special](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/special) words and [phrases](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/phrase) that are used by [particular](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/particular) [groups](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/group) of [people](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/people), [especially](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/especially) in [their](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/their) [work](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/work) eg JSA, lump hammer |
| Semantics and interpretation | Properly constructed working drawings go a long way to prevent communication problems during a project. |
| Time pressure | Conﬂict can arise from differences in core beliefs and can result in poor communication. |
| Bias | Subtext is content hidden beneath the actual dialogue or text; you may ‘read between the lines’ and hear something negative which hasn’t actually been spoken. |
| Incomplete or incorrect drawings/plans | Anything in the physical world (ie not in your mind) that stands between you and effective communication eg weather, temperature, natural noise or work site noise. |
| Too much information | The environment or your own thoughts can prevent you from comprehending and properly understanding what is being said. |
| Jargon or workplace specific terminology or abbreviations | A culturally diverse population will include people from different ethnic groups and nationalities whose first language may not be English. |
| Negative subtext | While modern technology has dramatically changed the way we communicate through writing, most employment situations will involve at least some handwriting, and many require the communication of critical information. |
| Distractions or inattention | Being told one thing at one time and then a different message at another time. |
| Unclear handwriting | Difficulties in communication arise when the sender and the receiver of the message use words or symbols which carry different meanings to each. |

1. There are two new employees on the worksite. what strategies would you use to ensure that you’ve been understood by each of them?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| New employee is: | Strategies for clear communication |
| A first year apprentice who studied construction at school |  |
| A mature aged man whose first language is not English. |  |

1. Simplify (and rewrite) the following written report by removing anything irrelevant

Hey mate, I finished painting that orrible ugly big house. Used five cans of white paint and one can of blue and one of the cans had a big dent in it; someone should complain about that. Oh, by the way, I mean the house on Black Street, number 4 maybe. I finished it on Tuesday afternoon at twenty-three minutes past two. It was a xxx hard job!

1. Click on the link to the [chem-supply](https://www.chemsupply.com.au/documents/HL0201CH34.pdf) [SDS for Hydrochloric Acid 25-36%](https://www.chemsupply.com.au/documents/HL0201CH34.pdf) and answer the following.
   1. What is the emergency contact number?
   2. What type of sign (pictogram) is displayed on this product?
   3. List the first aid measures for exposure to this substance.
   4. At what temperature should the product be stored?
   5. The word ‘corrosive’ is used throughout the document. Define ‘corrosive’.
2. The following are all types of written information you may use on a construction site. Provide a definition/example for each of how it is used.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Written information | How it is used |
| Delivery docket |  | |
| Emergency contact list |  | |
| Hazardous materials register |  | |
| Instructions |  | |
| Invoice |  | |
| Plans |  | |
| SDS |  | |
| Specification |  | |

1. A variety of [safety signs](https://www.australiansafetysigns.net.au/) are used in a construction environment. Identify at least three in each category. Look for signs which:
2. indicate you must **not** do something (prohibition/stop signs: white background, red circle with cross bar)
3. warn you of a danger (caution signs: yellow background, black symbol)
4. provide emergency information (green and white)

indicate what you must do (mandatory signs: circle with a blue background and white symbol)

1. What is the difference between a ‘simple on-site meeting’ and a ‘tool-box meeting’?
2. [Details of toolbox meetings](https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/52745/form-6-record-of-tool-box-talk.pdf) must be recorded and maintained. Highlight which details must be included in these records.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Which details need to be recorded |  |  |  |
| date | time | location | topic/s |
| attendee names | menu items served | actions required | issues addressed |
| signatures of attendees | date actions need to be completed | other issues addressed | number of toolboxes at the meeting |

1. The construction industry has its own industry specific terminology. Complete the following by providing either the term or the explanation for each.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Explanation |
| pour |  | |
|  | A weight on a string used to determine true centre | |
| direct a lift |  | |
| box up |  | |
|  | A piece of timber or steel laid horizontally between vertical wall studs to provide equal spacing and provide a solid frame for wall linings | |
| cap |  | |
| birdsmouth |  | |
| float |  | |

1. Where would you find the following information?

# Putting the theory into practice

The following questions are from [past years’ NSW HSC examination papers](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/resources/hsc-exam-papers) for this subject. HSC exams are intended to be rigorous and to challenge students of all abilities. To better understand a question, you should look for key words and identify the aspect of the course to which these relate. You are then in a position to formulate your answer from relevant knowledge, understanding and skills.

All questions in ‘Putting the theory into practice’ are acknowledged © [2019 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/mini-footer/copyright)

## Multiple Choice

1. Why is a site meeting most commonly held?
   1. To order materials
   2. To plan the work schedule
   3. To discuss future wage rates
   4. To communicate changes to work practices
2. Which of the following is a form of non-verbal communication?
   1. Signage
   2. Telephone
   3. Two-way radio
   4. On-site meeting
3. How can a Gantt chart be used in the construction industry?
   1. To indicate safety regulations
   2. To identify the location of construction signs
   3. To identify the maintenance schedule of power tools
   4. To indicate the sequencing of major building activities
4. What is the first thing to be done by management before using a new chemical on a construction site?
   1. Contact the union for advice
   2. Use personal protective equipment (PPE)
   3. Consult the material safety data sheet (MSDS)
   4. Complete a safe work method statement (SWMS)
5. Which of the following includes two essential pieces of information required when contacting emergency services to attend an accident at a construction site?
   1. Nature of injuries, location
   2. Nature of incident, name of local doctor
   3. Contact name, family emergency contact number
   4. Nearest cross-street, injured person’s years of employment
6. Which is the best method of communication to place an urgent order for materials?
   1. Email
   2. Phone
   3. Facsimile
   4. Text message
7. What is the benefit of asking open questions?
   1. To ensure one-word answers
   2. To reduce confusion with answers
   3. To encourage less feedback from the receiver
   4. To promote more feedback from the receiver
8. For which of the following would it be most important to use face-to-face communication?
   1. Placing a materials order
   2. Issuing a certificate of compliance
   3. Informing workers about new start times
   4. Addressing a sensitive issue with a worker
9. Five lengths of timber each measuring 2065 mm are required for a job. Which of the following should be entered on the order form to give the least amount of waste?
   1. 5/2.065
   2. 5/2.1
   3. 5/2.4
   4. 2/4.2
10. What is the most suitable way to report a serious workplace injury to a supervisor?
    1. Send a facsimile
    2. Make direct contact
    3. Send a text message
    4. Discuss at a toolbox meeting

## Questions from Section II

These questions should be answered in the suggested number of lines (handwritten) as it gives a guide to the length of your response.  
  
Plan out your answer and key points before you commence writing.

You may need to bring together knowledge from several areas of study/competencies to do justice to the answer.

Question 1

Describe features of both formal and informal on-site meetings. (4 marks)

Question 2

* 1. Why is clear and concise communication important when working on a construction site? (2 marks, 2 lines of writing)

* 1. Identify ONE form of written communication and explain its use when working on a construction site. (3 marks)

Question 3

* 1. What is the purpose of the hierarchy of risk control? (2 marks, 4 lines of writing)

* 1. What criteria can an employer use when evaluating the work performance of employees? (3 marks)

*Question continued over*

* 1. Explain, using examples, factors that may cause conflict or misunderstanding in the construction industry. (5 marks)

Question 3

Explain the benefits of having regular on-site team meetings on a construction site.

Provide examples to support your answer. (6 marks)

Question 4

Explain how a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies can lead to effective communication on a construction site. (6 marks)

## Questions from Section III

In the HSC –

* there will be one structured extended response question (15 marks)
* the question will have an expected length of response of around four pages of an examination writing booklet (approximately 600 words)

## Questions from Section IV

In the HSC –

* there will be one structured extended response question in Section IV (15 marks).
* the question will have two or three parts, with one part worth at least 8 marks
* the question will have an expected length of response of around four pages of an examination writing booklet (approximately 600 words) in total.

This will provide you with the opportunity to:

* demonstrate knowledge and understanding relevant to the question
* communicate ideas and information using relevant workplace examples and industry terminology
* present a logical and cohesive response

You will note that these questions usually require you to bring together knowledge from several areas of study/competencies to do justice to the answer. You should allow about 25-30 minutes for a question in Section III and the same for Section IV of the exam.

In each of the following, map out your answer using post-it notes or a sheet of paper. Pay particular attention to incorporating a variety of aspects of your Construction curriculum into the plan. Consider why we have included this question within this ‘**Conduct workplace communication’** module and what other areas of study you would need to draw upon.

Question 1 (15 marks)

During an excavation on a construction site, a gas line explodes resulting in a number of workers being injured.

* 1. Describe the emergency procedures to be followed in response to this critical incident. (3 marks)
  2. What documentation and communication will be required by management after the immediate response to this critical incident? (4 marks)
  3. Explain the risk management assessment process that should have been implemented to prevent the accident. (8 marks)

Question 2 (15 marks)

Describe how builders and tradespeople can ensure quality work standards and ethical work practices on a construction site.

Question 3 (15 marks)

Describe the possible effects of conflict in the construction industry.  
In your answer, consider

* causes of conflict
* consequences of conflict
* solutions to conflict.

Question 4

The photograph shows a pedestrian pathway on a construction site.

Workers on pedestrian pathway adjoining construction site

Illustration from NSW HSC Construction Examination 2018

* 1. Identify ONE hazard and its potential risk to workers on this pedestrian pathway. (2 marks)
  2. How would you communicate work-site information to workers and visitors on this work site? (5 marks)
  3. Explain a method for assessing the risks and hazards on this work site by:
     1. assessing potential risks
     2. prioritising the most dangerous hazards (8 marks)

Question 5

Use the following document to answer part (a) and (b).

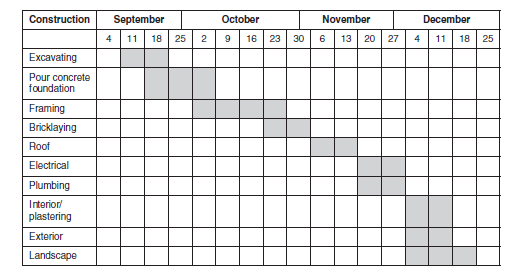


Illustration from NSW HSC Construction Examination 2019

1. Identify the type of document shown and describe its use in planning a large-scale construction project. (6 marks)
2. Explain why it is necessary to use different modes of communication in the construction project described in the document above. (9 marks)