

RIICOM201D Communicate in the Workplace

Reference Material



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COMMUNICATE IN THE WORKPLACE

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1. Introduction

This training resource outlines the processes to assist you to communicate information in the workplace. The material examines your obligations with regard to complying with legislation and company policies.

This training forms part of the RII30709 Certificate III in Mine Emergency Response and Rescue.

On completion of training, you will be able to:

- plan and prepare for workplace communications
- communicate information using communication equipment and systems
- carry out face-to-face communications
- complete written documentation.

The material contained in this resource is generic in nature and does not reflect the specific procedures and requirements of an individual organisation. Where there are specific requirements, you must refer to your organisational and site policies and procedures.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the information contained in this manual, consult with your trainer or supervisor.



NOTE

This training resource is a guide only. Always follow site procedures when you perform your work.

4. Communication Equipment and Systems

Communication equipment and systems vary from site to site. The following information provides a general overview of commonly used communication devices used within industry.



NOTE

Follow your site communication procedures.

Inspect communication equipment for serviceability, defects and faults. Common faults include poor and inadequate signal or frequency and broken or exposed cables/aerials.

Do not use any equipment that is in an unsafe condition. Rectify faults that you are authorised to fix in accordance with site procedures and manufacturer. Report and record damaged or defective equipment according to your site procedures.

4.1 Telephone Systems

If phones are part of the communication system at your site, they must be used safely following site procedures. Follow the site policies and practices in relation to using a phone system on site.



4.1.1 Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are a useful tool for communicating with others on and off site and are primarily used by supervisors and management. Do not use mobile phone when driving a vehicle or operating equipment unless the phone has a hands free facility.

4.2 Two-way Radio

The radio is a vital communication link for people on a work site. If you are required to use a two-way radio onsite, you must:

- know the site area and emergency radio channels
- only use the radio when absolutely necessary
- keep messages brief and to the point
- remain within hearing range of the radio at all times
- not interrupt other people's transmissions
- not use unsuitable language at any time
- wait for confirmation before proceeding
- acknowledge communication directed at you.



If you discover a defective radio, tag the radio 'Out of Service' and submit a defect report.

4.3 Emergency Response

In an emergency, communicate the details to relevant personnel immediately.



NOTE

Respond to an emergency following site procedures.

A typical emergency response may include the following actions.

- Notify emergency response using the most effective communication device.
- When you have established contact, provide the following information:
 - your name
 - location and nature of the accident or emergency
 - type of injuries
 - number of persons injured
 - what assistance is required (ambulance, fire, rescue)
 - what hazards exist.
- Maintain the communication link until told otherwise.
- Alert nearby personnel and follow evacuation procedures if necessary.



4.4 Email

You may be required to access your site's email system. Use email according to your organisations computer use policy. The following are some guidelines for appropriate email use.

- Keep emails brief and to the point.
- Use plain English.
- Read your email before sending to make sure it has a clear meaning and no spelling mistakes.
- Do not send inappropriate or confidential information.
- Do not forward emails from an unknown source as they may contain computer viruses.



4.5 Signs

A sign displays a distinct message. A sign displaying a safety message carries the same authority as a direct instruction from your supervisor. Report damaged signs according to site procedures.



NOTE

Signs are placed for your protection. Always keep signs clean and in good condition. Do not remove a sign unless you are authorised to do so.

The following table displays a sample of signs that are commonly used on sites, along with a brief description.

Description	Example	Description	Example
<p>Mandatory Signs</p> <p>Indicate an instruction that must be carried out.</p>		<p>Prohibitory Signs</p> <p>Indicate an action or activity that is not permitted.</p>	
<p>Warning Signs</p> <p>Indicate a hazard or hazardous condition that is not likely to be life threatening.</p>		<p>Danger Signs</p> <p>Warn of a hazard or hazardous condition that is likely to be life threatening.</p>	
<p>Emergency Information Signs</p> <p>Indicate the location of, or direction to, emergency related facilities such as exits, safety equipment or first aid facilities.</p>		<p>Fire Related Signs</p> <p>Indicate the location of fire alarms and fire fighting equipment and facilities.</p>	
<p>Traffic Signs</p> <p>Indicate speed limits, road conditions and road rules.</p>		<p>Hazard and barrier tape temporarily identifies safety hazards, or defines an area into which you should not enter.</p> <p>Demarcation tape is used to permanently define the boundaries of areas</p>	

5. Face-to-Face Communications

Working on a site requires good communication and cooperation between all members of the work team. The quality of the face-to-face communication between people can affect job safety and efficiency as well as make a difference to the work team's morale. Face-to-face communications not only involves oral and listening techniques but also signalling systems that include visual and audible forms of communication.

5.1 Effective Communication Skills

The following recommendations will make of face-to-face communication more effective.

- Engage the listener.
- Get straight to the point.
- Use correct or site-accepted terminology.
- Use simple English.
- Give clear and exact instructions.
- Summarise instructions you have been given so that both you and the person giving the instructions are clear on all points.
- If you need to pass the information on to other personnel, confirm that you will do this, and do it promptly.
- Do not raise your voice in ordinary conversation.
- Do not hold important conversations in excessively noisy environments.
- Be prepared to listen.
- Do not assume what is about to be said.
- Be an active listener – concentrate on the conversation.

5.1.1 Active Listening

Active listening is a method of listening in a responsive and interactive way to help improve mutual understanding. Active listening focuses the attention on the speaker while providing them with signals that you are listening and understanding what they are saying.

Active listening:

- shows respect for the speaker
- shows that you are paying attention
- encourages further communication
- enables you to give an appropriate response and feedback.

Some methods that you can use to improve your listening skills are:

- show that you are ready to listen
- stop talking when someone speaks to you
- ask questions to clarify points that you don't understand
- take notes to demonstrate that you are interested in what is being said.



NOTE

Acknowledge that you have understood what has been said. If you don't understand, ask for clarification.

5.1.2 Questioning Techniques

Use questions to check that you understand the meaning. This is called 'active listening'. Questions can be closed, open or reflective. Some examples of commonly used questions are shown in the following table.

<p>Closed Questions</p>	<p>Closed questions lead to a yes or no answer, or other specific information. Examples of closed questions that could be used to check understanding are:</p> <p>Q. Do you understand what I just said? A. Yes/No.</p> <p>Q. Do you have any questions? A. Yes/No.</p> <p>An example of a closed question that could be used to check a speaker's meaning is: Q. Do you mean that.....? A. Yes/No.</p> <p>Starting questions with the following words will usually result in specific information or a yes/no answer: <i>do, did, is, are, has, have, was, would, could, when.</i></p>
<p>Ask closed questions if you want specific answers or facts, or you don't have much time.</p>	
<p>Open Questions</p>	<p>Open questions result in the other person talking more and giving more information. They are used when you want the other person to open up more and tell a 'story' in their own words. An example of an open question that could be used to check understanding is:</p> <p>Q. Can you tell me what you understand my instructions to be? A. (Would be a paraphrasing of the instructions given).</p> <p>An example of an open question that could be used to check a speaker's meaning is: Q. What do you mean by.....? A. (Answer would be an explanation of the concept requested).</p> <p>Open-ended questions start with: <i>how, why, what, tell me about.</i></p>
<p>Ask open questions when you want involvement, suggestions or clarification from the other person.</p>	
<p>Reflective Questions</p>	<p>Reflective questions generally begin with "So" and contain a paraphrasing of what you have just heard. For example: "So you want me to give a toolbox talk to the team?"</p>
<p>Use reflective questions when you want to clarify what was said.</p>	

5.4.3 Hand Signals

When working in or around vehicles and mobile equipment you may be required to give or take directions from a spotter. The important thing to remember is to take direction from one person only.


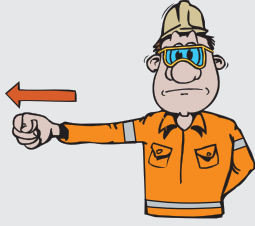
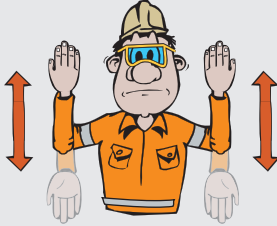



NOTE

Before starting the task, check that all members of the work group have agreed on the hand signals to be used.

Hand signals may be used in conjunction with whistles. Whistles are mainly used when working with cranes and lifting equipment. If you are required to use whistles and hand signals as a form of communication, follow the site procedures.

The following table provides some examples of typical hand signals that may be used on site.

Steer Rear to Right		Steer Rear to Left	
Reverse (Palm in)		Stop	
Hand Signals			

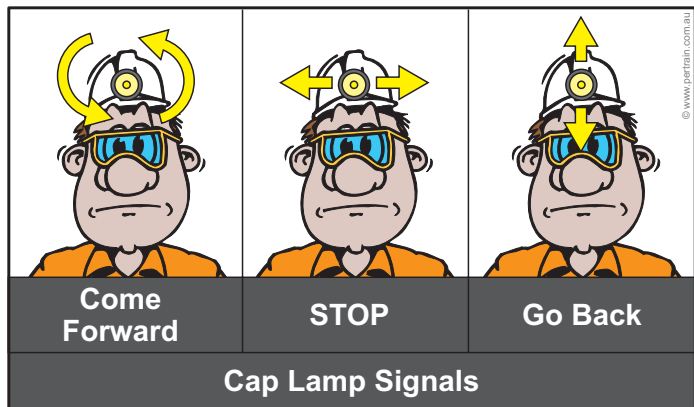
5.4.4 Cap Lamp Signals

Cap lamps not only help operators see when working in underground mines, but are also used as communication devices. Cap lamps signals are used to:

- signal drivers of vehicles and other personnel of intentions
- gain permission to enter work areas
- communicate during an emergency.

The three signals that are used have the following meanings.

1. Circular head motion - come forward.
2. Side to side - stop.
3. Up and down - go back, retreat.



NOTE

If you see a cap lamp light shaking erratically or moving rapidly in different directions, stop immediately and ask if assistance is required.

5.4.5 Blasting Signals

Communications for blasting include barricades and signage. Before blasting a siren will sound from just before the blast until the firing of the shot is complete. Following the blasting operation the person in charge of the shot will broadcast the 'all clear' message to site personnel.



Blasting Notice

6. Written Communication

During a shift you may be required to write and complete documents and forms. When you have to produce written communication, it is important to write clearly, simply and use plain English.

Follow these guidelines for effective written communications.

- Write simply so that others can understand.
- Write clearly.
- Get straight to the point.
- Put information in a logical order.
- Write the way you speak.
- Use small words rather than complicated words.
- Avoid jargon unless you are sure that your reader will understand it.



NOTE

Complete the documentation according to site requirements and pass the information to others in a timely manner.

6.1 Reports

Complete reports legibly, logically and with enough information to make them useful. In many cases a form is available for you to fill in the required information, for example an incident report. Reports provide valuable feedback to improve safety and productivity and enable effective planning for the future. Some of the reports you will encounter are described below.

6.1.1 Defect Reports

Defect reporting systems will vary from workplace to workplace. However there are some similarities in procedure.

The defect should be rectified immediately, or if this is not possible the defective equipment should be tagged Out of Service.

- Replace with an operational item.
- Complete a defect report should be completed according to site procedure.



Fill out the defect report and forward it to your supervisor or maintenance department as required by your site procedures.

6.1.2 Hazard Reports

A hazard report provides a means of communicating an uncontrolled hazard to your supervisor and management. The purpose of reporting the hazard is to prevent an unsafe condition or behaviour from becoming an incident or an emergency. Controls must be put in place to permanently reduce or eliminate the hazard.

HAZARD REPORT	Reported by: _____	Date: / /
	Company: _____	
	Location: _____	
	Person involved (if any): _____	
	Equipment involved (if any): _____	
	Environmental/Community impact: _____	
	Brief description: _____	
	Immediate action taken: _____	
	Further actions required: _____	
	How would you describe the risk? <input type="checkbox"/> Extreme <input type="checkbox"/> Very High <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low Is the risk controlled? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <small>The reverse side of this form must be completed by your supervisor.</small>	

6.1.3 Incident Reports

Incidents include injuries to personnel, environmental damage and damage to equipment. Incident reporting systems vary from workplace to workplace. However, they all serve the same purpose. An incident report may help to

- determine the cause of the incident
- determine the severity of the incident
- ensure that a similar event does not occur.

A site safety officer may interview you if you have been involved in an incident. The purpose of this interview is to gather sufficient information to prevent the incident from reoccurring.



NOTE

Follow your site procedures for reporting hazards and incidents.

INCIDENT REPORT		No. _____
<small>Incident Report to be on Manager's desk within 24 hours</small>		
<small>Part 1: To be completed by person reporting incident and copies distributed as shown below Part 1.</small>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Injury / Disease <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment Damage <input type="checkbox"/> Near Miss / No Damage <input type="checkbox"/> Loss / Theft / Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Safety <input type="checkbox"/> Complaint Dust <input type="checkbox"/> Complaint Noise <input type="checkbox"/> Complaint Other <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Incident <input type="checkbox"/> Non Compliance Enviro License <input type="checkbox"/> Hazard Environmental		
<input type="checkbox"/> Non Compliance Procedures <input type="checkbox"/> ProcNo: _____ ProcName: _____		
Date/Time Reported: _____ Hrs / /	Incident Date/Time: _____ Hrs / /	
Person Reporting Incident: _____		Injured Person: _____
Name of company: _____		MRU/Section: _____ Shift: <input type="checkbox"/> Day <input type="checkbox"/> Night
Witness: _____		Contractor: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Location/Zone: _____		Your Risk Rating Potential Consequences: _____ L / M / H
Task: _____		Equip/Plant Involved: _____
Describe Incident (Attach photos of incident/hazard if possible): _____		What immediate control measures were taken to prevent recurrence/re-escalation? _____
<input type="checkbox"/> If injuresseriously made in Accident Register Field Room First Aid Treatment: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Signature: _____ Date: / /		
<small>Following completion of Part 1 above, person reporting incident/hazard to be immediately distribute copies as follows: WHITE - Immediate Manager/Contact Supervisor GREEN - HSE MRU/FRM - Your Copy YELLOW - MRU Manager/Supervisor - Remains in Book OR alternative local copies except BLUE on Immediate Manager's desk in Incident/Hazard Tray in First Aid Room (or VHS Security)</small>		
<small>Part 2: To be completed by Immediate Manager</small>		
<input type="checkbox"/> NWS Office advised (if injury/disease/damages event) <input type="checkbox"/> Manager/Comms advised (if theft/property damage) <input type="checkbox"/> HSE Adviser/ Workplace Rehab. Consulted (if disabling injury) <input type="checkbox"/> General Manager advised within 24 hours of injury/loss/damage <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Issues Supervised (in case of env. incident/leak)		
Equip/Plant Damaged: _____	InjType: _____	Agency: _____
Minor? Y/N _____ Days _____	LTE Y/N _____ Days _____	RR: Y/N _____ Days _____
WC: Y/N _____ Days _____	RISK ASSESSMENT: An assessment of the consequences/potential consequences established to follow by risk rating. Attach completed F003 Risk Assessment Guide.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptable Risk (No further action required, sign then forward to HSE MRU J)	<input type="checkbox"/> Low Risk (Complete actions taken below, sign then forward to HSE MRU J)	<input type="checkbox"/> Medium / High Risk (Complete actions taken below, sign then forward to HSE MRU Manager)
The following initiatives have been taken to address the risk of recurrence and/or escalation of the incident/hazard: _____		
Immediate Manager/Contact Supervisor: _____		Signature: _____ Date: / /
<small>Part 3: To be completed by responsible MRU Manager and forwarded to Person Accountable for Investigation.</small>		
Person Accountable for Investigation: _____	To ensure report completed by: _____	Date: / /
MRU Manager: _____	Signature: _____	Date: / /
Nominated Accountable Person to attach F134 Pages 2 & 3 and F075 Cause & Effect Template		
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6.1.4 End of Shift Reports

Just as you require information from the previous shift in order to carry out your work, the next shift will require information from you.

The work outcome of the oncoming shift is highly dependant on the quality of the information that is supplied during your shift handover, including all the documents completed during the shift.

Some work rosters allow for cross shift face-to-face discussions with your colleagues on the other shift. Other sites provide all information in the pre-shift briefing because schedules do not allow cross-shift meetings. Always make sure that the information you communicate is clear and accurate.

Information from shift handovers is very important in the planning procedure. When you have finished your shift:

- complete a shift-handover report, including:
 - work outcome, including work not completed or amended by the supervisor
 - hazards and changes in work conditions
 - changes in work processes
 - condition of the equipment
- fill out records, shift reports and other documentation according to site procedures
- report any environmental damage or potential impacts of the work on environmentally sensitive areas
- complete and submit maintenance and defect reports.



6.2 Tags and Locks

Tags and locks communicate to operators and other personnel that equipment is isolated, out of service or faulty and ensure that individuals operating or working on equipment can do so in safety.

Equipment is isolated and tagged to protect maintenance personnel and operators from unexpected start-up or discharge of stored energy. Potential sources of energy that require isolation include:

- electricity (e.g. batteries, cables)
- stored pressure (e.g. hydraulic systems, high pressure water, compressed air)
- falling objects (e.g. tools, raised implements, rocks)
- counterweights/counterbalances (i.e. removal of material or tension from one side of a fulcrum or pivot point).

You must know where the isolation points are on the equipment you are operating. Once all potential sources of energy are isolated (locked), attach the appropriate tag to the isolation point. This will communicate a warning and information to other personnel involved in the work task who have access to the equipment. The isolation and tagging process is also known as 'Lockout' or 'Tag Out'.



NOTE

You must know and apply your site isolation and tagging procedure.

6.2.1 Personal Danger Tags and Locks

The Personal Danger tag is your own insurance against injury and a direction to others that the equipment is not be started or operated.

Use the Personal Danger tags in accordance with site procedures.



DANGER

Plant, equipment and isolating devices with a personal danger tag attached must not be used, switched on or interfered with.



6.2.2 Out of Service Tags

Out of Service tags are placed on the isolation point(s) of defective equipment to communicate that, if operated, the equipment could cause personal injury, equipment damage, or adversely affect some part of the operation. Out of Service tags can be attached by any person.



DANGER

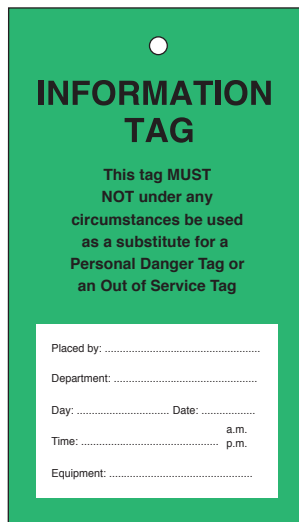
Do not use Out Of Service Tags in place of Personal Danger Tags.



6.2.3 Information Tags

Information tags provide a means of communicating information that should be brought to the attention of personnel who work with or around the particular equipment item. Equipment or machinery that has an Information tag attached may still be used or operated once the information has been read and any instructions followed.

Inspect the tag's condition during walkaround inspections and replace the tag if it is showing signs of deterioration.



Information communicated on these tags includes:

- restrictions placed upon the equipment use
- changes in operational sequences
- identification of equipment that requires maintenance
- variations to operational speeds.



NOTE

Tags and locks vary from workplace to workplace. This information is to be used as a guide only and applied according to site procedures.

7. Summary

This training resource has covered information for communicating clearly in the workplace. Effective communication in the workplace is the key to achieving the full support and involvement of all personnel for safe and efficient operations. Ask your trainer if you require any clarification before completing the assessment.



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