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forum



Embedding Competency
Handbook
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Embedding Competency Handbook Contents



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1 Introduction

There are many hazards and risks within the resource management and recycling industry, and health and safety remains of the utmost priority. As such, a group called the SWITCH Forum (Scottish Waste Industry Training Competence, Health & Safety) has been established to support the industry and enhance the safety, training and competence of the people who work within it.

As part of its commitment to people development SWITCH has, with industry partners, developed a Competence Framework.

Competences are the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours essential to perform certain functions that are critical in specific roles. They are what is expected of a person in various areas and levels of performance. It is widely recognised throughout the vocational education and training system that competence is based on “assessment, consistently, over time, in the workplace”.

In many industries the acceptance of a common standard for competence and training across employers has led to significant financial benefits to both asset owners and supply chain partners. This has been achieved through:

- Reduction in duplicate/unnecessary training
- Increased speed in getting people to work
- Enhanced competence resulting in a reduction in down time from incidents

The Competence Framework is a tool developed by SWITCH that can be used to enhance the training, skills and safety of the workforce; providing assurance to employers and regulators in Scotland of the skills and competence of the workforce across the resource management industry.

This handbook has been designed to provide guidance and support to personnel involved in the administration, implementation and delivery of this Competence Framework. These may include managers, supervisors, assessors, mentors and /or other personnel involved in the process. The handbook details the many benefits to both the employee and the organisation of introducing a Competence Framework and the processes involved in its implementation and delivery.

It is important to ensure that prior to implementing the SWITCH Competence Framework, staff and/or trade union consultation may be required. The consultation process is not covered within this document.

2 Benefits of using a Competence Framework

Significant benefits can be gained from using the Competence Framework, designed by the resource management industry, both for an individual employee and the organisation that employs them.

For an individual, the SWITCH Competence Framework provides clarity as to what is expected from them and ensures each employee with the same job role is treated equitably as they will be striving for the same standards. The framework will support the development of competence of employees across the organisation by identifying each person's strengths and areas for improvement across their range of job role activities.

This information can be used to identify consistently high performing employees who are excelling in their job role and are potentially suitable for further development within the organisation.

Equally it will identify individuals that need further support or development to meet the required standards set by the industry.

From an organisation's perspective, the Competence Framework provides consistency across the organisation by defining a set level of competences for each level job role requirement. This clarity supports the organisation by setting standards which help managers to interpret and assess their staff against the same criteria and allows development to be focussed in the specific areas required.

The overall effect of this process is to raise performance across the workforce, minimise health and safety incidents, reduce the cost of unnecessary training and provide customers with an improved, consistent standard of service.

Organisations can use the Framework to:



Support job design and recruitment activities



Assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of training, in particular induction training



Support the identification of areas for development



Support ongoing performance management and assessment



Inform training needs and training programme design



Support career planning

3 What is a Competence Framework?

The term “competence” in this guidance is defined as the application of an individual’s technical skill, knowledge, attitude and behaviour to perform the activities of their job role to a recognised standard, on a consistent basis.

A Competence Framework is a performance management tool which can be used as part of a Competence Management System to define, measure and monitor the “competence” of a person against a set of known standards within an industry.

The SWITCH Competence Framework has been designed to measure the base line competences required to carry out a range of job role activities. The framework allows each component to be assessed against a known standard and provide a measurable indication of a person’s competence. The framework specifies the core competences

for a given role within the industry and provides a visible measure of competence.

The Framework was developed through extensive consultation within the resource management industry across Scotland and was also developed from existing documentation e.g. National Occupational Standards (NOS); Occupational Functional Mapping; existing job descriptions; qualifications and input from questionnaires designed specifically for this purpose.

Designed to be a simple and usable tool; the SWITCH Competence Framework provides a standardised approach to the assessment of base line competences across the industry. The focus of the SWITCH Framework is on key entry level roles and disciplines, providing generic core competences and some discipline specific areas such as:

Household Waste & Recycling (HWRC)	Street Cleaning
Collection	Driving
Plant & Machinery	Materials Recovery (MRF)

The Framework Levels

The Framework has 3 levels defined as:

Level 1

Has very little autonomy and works at a basic operative level, carries out duties as instructed by the supervisor.

Level 2

Has the skills and knowledge to carry out work unsupervised and could be leading a small team of others, maintaining productivity and resolving problems as they arise. They will usually report to the manager.

Level 3

Has responsibility for controlling and administering teams or a group of staff. Plans and directs the work of a group of individuals, monitoring their work, providing feedback and taking corrective action when necessary.

The Framework

This has been designed to support a range of operator job roles and includes competence criteria for the following areas -

- Complying with Health, Safety & Environmental legislation
- Complying with Emergency procedures
- Maintaining a safe and healthy work environment
- Receiving and processing waste
- Working with other people
- Manual handling and lifting
- Providing customer service
- Working at height
- Manual collection of waste
- Mechanical handling of waste
- Manual street cleansing
- Loading a waste transport vehicle
- Transportation of waste
- Operation of plant and machinery
- Control of vehicle movement
- Reporting & recording of information
- Supervision of operations
- Mentoring and coaching
- Risk Assessment

The Competence Framework identifies the minimum required standards for each area of competence, thereby providing a standardised set of criteria by which all employees can be assessed against.

4 Implementing a Competence Framework



Delivering training to your workforce does not automatically assure they are competent. While people may be competent at a point in time, they do not necessarily retain a satisfactory level of competence over time.

The level and nature of the competence of staff in an organisation will be continually changing, therefore they need systems and processes to ensure competence can be demonstrated and maintained.

Good companies will also ensure that competence management activities focus on further development of staff as part of continued professional development.

Competence Management Approach

To get the best out of this Competence Framework, organisations should implement a competence management approach that encompasses the following key stages:

Stage 1	Review the range of activities for each job role
Stage 2	Develop the framework criteria for each specific job role
Stage 3	Review/develop training against the requirements identified
Stage 4	Assess individuals against the criteria in their job role
Stage 5	Develop a training/development plan to fill any gaps
Stage 6	Record, monitor and revise levels of competence

Competence Management Approach

Stage 1 - Review Job Roles

The first stage is to identify the type and range of competences required for each job role to be mapped against the framework.

The competences can be grouped and will usually consist of core competences which are fundamental to the organisation, common competences which are applicable across a range of job roles and job specific competences which are unique to that role.

Stage 2 - Develop Framework Criteria

By identifying the range of competences required by each job role in the framework it is then possible to develop the criteria which an individual can be measured against to establish their level of competence in each area of their job role.

Stage 3 - Develop / Review Training

By examining the individual components of competence required by each job role it is possible to identify each roles' specific training requirements and identify whether any gaps exist in the current training programmes.

Stage 4 - Assessment Using the Competence Framework

There are a range of methods in which the competence framework can be used to assess each individual against their job role criteria. In this particular model we have used the methods of

employee assessment through discussion with the employee's Supervisor or Manager to review and agree the level of competence against each criteria.

Stage 5 - Develop a Training / Development Plan

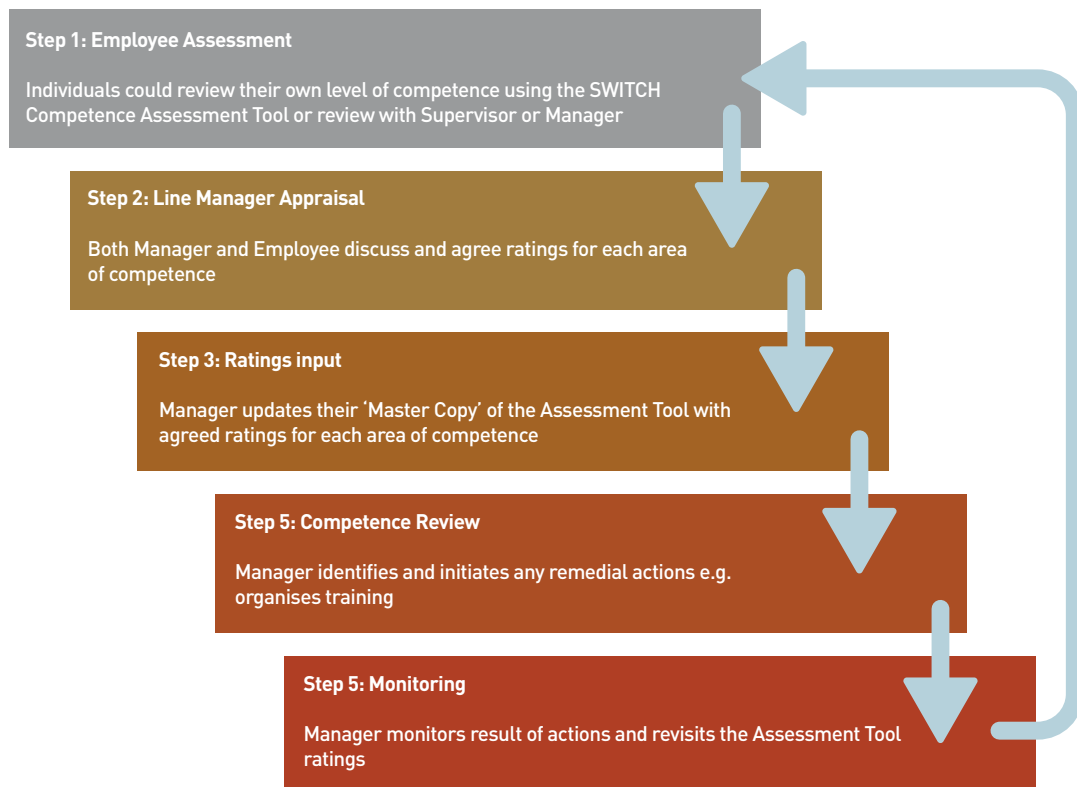
Following the assessment of each individual using the framework criteria, it will be possible to identify the strengths and areas for improvement of each individual in each specific area of their job role. This will identify any shortfalls in the competence levels required and allow a plan to be developed to support the development of the individual and fill any gaps.

Stage 6 - Record, Monitor and Revise

The Competence Framework provides a simple ongoing method of reviewing and recording the levels of competence of each individual across a workforce. The framework can be reviewed and updated on an annual basis or more regularly as evidence is generated which establishes an increase or decrease in an individual's levels of competence.

Using the SWITCH Competence Framework

The following section is a guide to implementing Stage 3 (as described in the previous diagram); putting the approach into action using the SWITCH Competence Framework. There are five key activities involved in the implementing Stage 3:



The SWITCH Competence Framework has been designed to provide a simple and effective process to capturing and recording each employee's current level of competence.

The framework has been developed into an assessment tool questionnaire, which is populated with the relevant criteria for each job role to be assessed and it is this criteria against which all individuals carrying out that job role will be assessed.

Step 1: Employee Self-Assessment

It is very important that individuals undertaking this evaluation feel empowered in the process and are able to give their honest appraisal of their own abilities without external influence. For this reason it is suggested that, in the first instance if possible, each individual undertakes a self-assessment. This can be conducted by directly inputting their answers into the spreadsheet or a printed copy of the questionnaire.

This initial assessment will not be recorded as the final result but is a way of accurately capturing each individual's own view of their current level of competence before a joint review takes place with a line manager. This provides each line manager with a valuable insight into where each of their employees feel they are and provides a platform for further discussion.

Each competence criteria is built into a question and requires one of four possible ratings to be input (1, 2, 3 or N/A), as shown below:

COMPETENCE RATING DESCRIPTIONS:	1	I have very little knowledge or experience of this and would need some guidance or further training to achieve it
	2	I have enough skill and /or knowledge to do this confidently on a regular basis without any support
	3	I am very confident I can do this and feel I have developed such a high level of knowledge and / or experience that I could help others do this also
	n/a	Competence not required for my job role

Some of the competence criteria will be purely knowledge based while others will require a judgement to be made on skills, attitude and behaviour as well as the application of knowledge (an example is shown below):

1. COMPLY WITH LEGISLATION	1.1 Operate in accordance with the organisation's safe working practices and procedures	2	2
	1.2 Comply with statutory legislation and regulations including environmental, criminal and highways legislation	2	

- Entering the rating number 1 next to a criteria indicates that the individual has very little knowledge or experience of the topic the question is covering and will need some further development to be competent.
- Entering the rating number 2 next to a criteria indicates that the individual is able to complete this criteria comfortably on a consistent basis without any additional development or support.

2. COMPLY WITH EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 2.1 Identify and respond to emergency situations/accidents in accordance with approved organisational procedure
- 2.2 Understand and comply with the organisational procedures for reporting accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences

- Entering the rating number 3 indicates that the individual has developed a good level of expertise in this area and is possibly able to help and support others to achieve competence.

6. WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE

- 6.1 Recognise behaviours in individuals that could lead to conflict and know how to avoid or diffuse potential situations
- 6.2 Contact a supervisor and communicate any potential difficulties that may arise from carrying out planned work

3	
3	
	3

- Entering N/A indicates that this particular criteria is not required in the individual's current job role and therefore a level of competence is not required.

18. SUPERVISION OF OPERATIONS

N/A

N/A

By carefully reading each question, reflecting on how competent the individual is at that job requirement and then entering either 1, 2, 3, or N/A, the framework will automatically build a record of the individual's current level of competence across all criteria for their job role.

Step 2: Line Manager Appraisal

If each candidate has completed the input of their self-assessment ratings, the results should be sent to their assigned line manager to review and arrange for a desk top appraisal with each of their employees. At times, this may not be appropriate or possible and if this is the case supervisors and line managers should support employees to go through the assessment process.

The desk-top appraisal provides the opportunity for each line manager to discuss the rating score provided and discuss and agree the final rating for each criteria. Where a candidate has recorded a rating which their line manager does not agree with, the candidate will need to provide factual evidence to support the rating they have input.

In isolated cases where a rating cannot be agreed, the rating should be referred to a person in the organisation who has a high level of knowledge and experience in the competence area of the question. Acting as an independent 'critical friend', this person should review the evidence presented by the employee and their manager and make a final decision on the rating to be awarded.

Step 3: Ratings input

Once ratings have been agreed the Manager should input them into their own electronic version of the Assessment Tool, recorded alongside other team members.

Step 4: Competence Review

Once all the ratings have been input into the Competence Framework the line manager will be able to review the strengths and /or areas for improvement in each specific area of the job role in the Dashboard tab of the framework tool, shown below.

In the example on the next page we can see Employee 1, Stephen Jones has had an appraisal result indicating that he has achieved competence in the majority of the areas assessed. However there are two specific areas of competence which require further development (rated 1) and one specific competence where it has been agreed the candidate has attained a higher level of expertise.

With further review of the completed assessment it will be possible to pinpoint the exact areas requiring further development, so that full competence can be achieved. Remedial action to close the gaps in competence could include further training, toolbox talks, mentoring, coaching etc.

Reference Number	Employee Name	Competencies																			
		1. COMPLY WITH LEGISLATION	2. COMPLY WITH EMERGENCY PROCEDURES	3. COMPLY WITH ENVIRONMENTAL	4. MAINTAIN HEALTHY & SAFE ENVIRONMENT	5. RECEIVING AND PROCESSING WASTE	6. WORK WITH OTHER PEOPLE	7. MANUAL HANDLING AND LIFTING	8. PROVIDE CUSTOMER SERVICE	9. WORKING AT HEIGHT	10. MANUAL COLLECTION OF WASTE	11. MECHANICALLY HANDLE WASTE	12. MANUAL STREET CLEANSING	13. LOADING WASTE TRANSPORT VEHICLES	14. TRANSPORTATION OF WASTE	15. OPERATION OF PLANT & MACHINERY	16. CONTROLLING VEHICLE MOVEMENT	17. REPORTING & RECORDING OF INFORMATION	18. SUPERVISION OF OPERATIONS	19. MENTORING AND COACHING	20. RISK ASSESSMENT
Required Competence Level		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	n/a	2	2
Average Competence Level		2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	n/a	1	1
Employee 1	David Smith	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	n/a	n/a	2

Step 5: Monitoring

Crucial to the success of a Competence Framework within your organisation is the commitment to assessing competence on an on-going and continuous basis. It is recommend that the steps outlined in this section are repeated annually, whereby the Manager monitors the results of any action taken to improve competence and revisits the Competence Assessment Tool.

Further Information on SWITCH

The SWITCH Website hosted by Chartered Institute of Wastes Management (CIWM)

http://www.ciwm.co.uk/ciwm/communities/centres/scotland_centre/switch-forum.aspx

The tool can also be downloaded at zerowastescotland.com

SWITCH Network

The SWITCH Network is free to join for anyone working in the resource management sector. It is open to frontline, supervisory and senior level staff, and to individuals or organisations with an interest in health and safety, education, training and competence of the resource management industry.

As a member of the SWITCH Network you will have easy access to health and safety guidance, case studies, articles and publications and you will receive regular updates on the latest developments and industry events.

Email: switch@zerowastescotland.org.uk