NEBOSH Open Book Examination 06 August 2020, 09:00 BST

**SCENARIO**

You have recently moved to a new job. You are now responsible for health and safety at a large, busy retail store that is located on the outskirts of a large town served by good roads. The store sells do-it-yourself (DIY) and hardware goods, such as tools, equipment, and hazardous chemicals, to the local businesses and the general public. The organisation that owns the store has 100 stores nationally and 10 in your area.

The main part of the store is open to customers to view and buy goods. At the back of the store, through an automatic-opening door, is a large warehouse, where stocks of goods are arranged on racks of shelving. Only store workers are allowed in the warehouse. Warehouse workers use forklift trucks (FLTs) to move goods from delivery trucks into the warehouse. When the store is closed to customers the goods are moved into the main part of the store to restock shelves.

You report to the overall Store and Warehouse Manager. The warehouse workforce consists of:

- 20 workers (including 2 shift supervisors) split equally between two 12-hour shifts (08:00 – 20:00 and 20:00 – 08:00) on a rota basis of 4 days on, 4 days off.

Since you started your new job, you have seen a lot of examples of rule-breaking in the warehouse. For example, you have seen goods stacked in aisles and blocking designated walkways. Workers have to avoid many obstacles as they walk through the warehouse, causing them to step into vehicle routes. Workers have told you that there are frequent near misses between FLTs and workers, and collisions with products causing damage and spillages. There are no written records of any of these.

There have been many injuries recorded over the years. Most recently, a repeat of a more serious collision occurred involving a young FLT driver. The brakes were applied too late, as the driver was distracted by their mobile phone, the FLT skidded on an oil spillage and knocked goods over onto a passing worker.

On this occasion the worker’s leg was broken, which required urgent hospital treatment. The hospital is 5 miles (approximately 8km) away from the store. The worker is expected to be off work for six weeks to recover from the injury. The injured worker is seeking legal advice in order to make a claim for compensation.

Worker absence and turnover is high in the warehouse. There are no health and safety worker representatives. Warehouse workers have told you that they have complained to management about working conditions many times. They rarely see management in the warehouse. You cannot find any written records of complaints.

You have tried to convince the overall Store and Warehouse Manager that something needs to be done to improve health and safety in the warehouse. You are told that there is no money for ‘that kind of thing’, and even if it were available, it would cause too much disruption to business.

As a result of the recent FLT collision, you were visited by a labour Inspector who has made a formal order that requires workplace changes to improve the health and safety of the workers. The Inspector thinks it is only a matter of time before workers are more seriously injured or even killed in the warehouse. The Inspector also observed that the written risk assessments are too general and do not reflect the actual risks in the warehouse. The Inspector wants to see a more effective health and safety management system at their next visit.

You have discussed with the Inspector possible improvements to health and safety in the warehouse. The proposed solution involves segregating FLTs and workers with barriers, pedestrian walkways, designated crossing places and separate entrances for workers and FLTs. In addition, you tell the Inspector that you will review health and safety performance, internally and externally, in order to make comparisons.