



Participate in workplace communications

AHCWRK205A

By the end of this topic, you should be able to:

- Follow routine spoken messages
- Perform workplace duties following routine written notices
- Obtain and provide information in response to workplace requirements
- Complete relevant work-related documents
- Participate in workplace meetings and discussion

- There are a range of different ways that communications occur in the workplace – within the work team and between clients and/or suppliers, such as:
 - **Verbal communication**
 - For example: Face to face, video conferencing, meetings, telephone, two-way radio
 - **Non-verbal communication**
 - For example: Hand signals, body language, flags, barricades, lights, alarms, whistles
 - **Written communication**
 - Plans, specifications, instructions, forms, reports, memos, policies and procedures, manuals, websites, email, letters, signs

Communication is the process of exchanging information and ideas

- Effective verbal communication consists of the following:
 - Speaking clearly
 - Ensure the message is clear, concise and professional
 - Asking questions to confirm understanding
 - Ask questions to clarify your own understanding
 - Ask questions of those listening to you to ensure they understand your message
 - A smile does not always mean that a person understands the message – they may be too ashamed to ask questions out of fear
 - Use workplace approved communication processes and equipment

Active listening

- It is impossible to talk and listen at the same time
- To listen effectively, you must concentrate on what is being said
 - Pay attention
 - Make eye contact with the person speaking
 - Ask questions if you need clarification, but wait until the speaker is finished – be courteous, they may be about to provide the answers you seek
 - Take notes if the information is complex or exact details are required
 - Provide feedback – repeat what you have heard to ensure clarity
- Be aware of non-verbal cues
 - Facial expression contribute to more than 50% of the message

Hearing is the physical process of sound waves going into our ears.
Listening is the psychological process of attaching meaning and remembering what we hear.

Non-verbal communication

- Be mindful of non-verbal communication – avoid sending mixed messages
 - It's not uncommon to hear someone say "Yes" but shake their head horizontally which indicates "No" in a non-verbal way
- Consider the non-verbal communication used by those listening to you
 - Facial expressions and posture can easily convey moods
- Be aware of cultural differences with regards to non-verbal communication
 - Eye contact may demonstrate that someone is listening, but is considered rude in some cultures
 - Thumbs up may acknowledge a message positively, but is considered rude in some countries

- Effective written communication consists of the following:
 - Professional and polite wording
 - Poorly worded or constructed emails can send the wrong message or tone – writing does not convey facial tones
 - Simple, concise and easy to understand wording
 - Avoid too many technical terms
 - Avoid slang, offensive/discriminatory language
 - Use of commonly understood symbols, such as:



Acute toxicity



Corrosive



Flammable



Danger to
human health



Warning

- Before presenting information in writing, have clear instructions about the:
 - Purpose of the document
 - Audience who will read the document
 - Stakeholders who are affected by the document
 - Context of the document and what it will be used for

- Every workplace will require forms/documents to be filled in
 - Know which forms to fill in, where to find them, and when forms are required
 - Examples include: Order forms, hazard/incident/injury report forms, log books, records of completed work
- When filling in a form/document:
 - Read the form/document carefully
 - Complete all the required details
 - Only include necessary information
 - Write clearly and simply
 - Check that you have completed it correctly
 - Submit it to the appropriate person, or file it as directed
 - Matters of urgency (e.g. safety) should be reported to your supervisor

- Every workplace will have meetings, as well as formal and informal discussions
- Effective meetings demonstrate the following:
 - A clearly defined purpose
 - Send out an agenda in advance to give attendees time to prepare (i.e. advise of meeting time and topics to be addressed)
 - Take minutes to track attendance, what took place and has been agreed to
 - Enforced start and finish times
 - This allows people to fit meetings within their workload
 - Issues and agreed actions should be followed up at a later, scheduled meeting
 - Participants who are managed
 - Give all parties the opportunity to express their opinion
 - Ensure meeting participants use manners and show respect
 - Clear conflict management strategies should be in place

Choosing your communication method

- It is important to choose an appropriate communication method based on the type of information to be conveyed
- For example:
 - Hand signals or flags would be appropriate to send short messages to a person within visual range
 - A two-way radio or horn would be appropriate to use when someone is not in visual range
 - However, these methods may not be appropriate for detailed messages
 - A meeting would be appropriate to share information with many people at once
 - Multiple people can be involved and the information can be shared visually and orally
 - Information can be confirmed with questioning
 - A computer may be required to access certain forms and documents
 - Electronic access allows documents to be accessible by staff, without printing multiple copies
 - A log book is referred to by workers when using machinery/equipment

- Be aware of the causes of communication breakdown, for example:
 - **Unclear messages**
 - Organise your thoughts – unclear direction can result in problems, such as complaints or poor work performance
 - Speak clearly – break down directions into a sequence of steps that can be easily followed
 - Use concrete examples
 - **Complicated messages**
 - Keep it simple
 - **Unsuitable location or timing**
 - Pick the right time or place to talk about something
 - **Not considering the message recipient**
 - Be mindful of their background and/or abilities (e.g. culture, age, education, language, beliefs)
 - Cultural differences can affect the way that a message is interpreted, especially body language
 - Check that the other person understands what you are saying