ESSENTIAL STANDARDS no.12

Safety Alerts

Thames Water

KEY MESSAGES

- Only issue a safety alert to cascade essential information which requires immediate action.
- Safety alerts must be clear, concise, accurate and timely.
- Brief all relevant safety alerts to employees.
- Keep records to confirm that appropriate action was taken to remove the danger.

1. Introduction

Communicating health and safety information is an essential element of any effective health and safety management system. You can cascade information using a wide range of media, so it's important to select the most appropriate one to ensure the message is received by those who need to take action.

One option is a safety alert that cascades essential information that requires immediate attention. However, if the safety alert process is not understood and followed correctly, it can lead to vital communications being missed or even ignored. In order to be effective and avoid danger, safety alerts must be:

- Clear
- Concise
- Accurate
- Timely

2. When to Issue

ONLY issue a safety alert when there is a specific safety issue that could result in a serious or fatal injury if immediate action is not taken. Managers must cascade ALL relevant safety alerts to their employees.

3. Contents of a Safety Alert

Safety alerts should contain the following information:

- A title – be as specific as possible
- A contact name to take requests for further information
- Date of issue
- A description of the danger
- Information about the incident, the operation of plant, process or equipment
- Action to be taken and by whom
- A briefing record or confirmation that action has been taken

The danger

Include a short concise statement about the nature of the danger. For example, what the danger is and what harm can result. Note: check the facts relating to an incident or issue before you issue the alert.

Incident information

This is a summary of the incident, the operation of plant, process or equipment stating the facts. You should also include the following information where relevant:

who was involved

when it occurred

what was involved (plant, buildings or equipment, etc.)

how it occurred

where the incident occurred

Where the safety alert relates to a defect in plant or equipment, clearly state the exact model or models affected and, where possible, a list of the serial numbers, the manufacturer, the supplier details and relevant purchase dates.

Action to be taken

Clearly state the action required by whom and by when. This may be specific to a particular item of plant or relate to the way in which a particular activity is done. For example, "if you have product x, withdraw it from service and place it in secure quarantine". Make instructions for people to take action clear and unambiguous.

Briefing record

Include a provision to confirm that communication has taken place in ALL safety alerts. For example, a confirmation section could say a toolbox talk took place and confirm that appropriate actions have been taken to remove the danger.
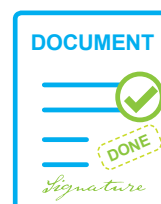
4. Health and Safety Hub

All safety alerts produced by Thames Water and its Partners are posted via the Health and Safety Hub in order to share learnings and continuously improve. *http://www.healthandsafetyhub.co.uk*