IOSH Managing Safely Refresher: When Do Managers Need One?

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Plenty of businesses sent their managers on IOSH Managing Safely a few years ago, filed the certificates and moved on. Then a customer questionnaire, a tender or an accreditation renewal arrives with a different question: not "do your managers hold IOSH Managing Safely?" but "when was it last refreshed?" That is the gap the IOSH Managing Safely Refresher is designed to close, and it catches out more businesses than you would expect.

Does an IOSH Managing Safely certificate actually expire?

Strictly, no. The certificate carries no expiry date, and there is no specific law that forces a manager to retake the course. But Regulation 13 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to provide health and safety training that is adequate, and to repeat it periodically where appropriate. Knowledge fades, legislation and guidance move on, and people move into bigger roles with more people reporting to them. Training that was adequate three or four years ago is not automatically adequate now.

That is why IOSH itself recommends a refresher roughly three years after the full course, and why so many customers, supply chain frameworks and accreditation schemes have quietly adopted that three year mark as the point a certificate starts to look stale. If you supply into construction, manufacturing or facilities management, it is increasingly common for a principal contractor or tier one customer to ask for refresher dates as part of their own due diligence, not just the original pass

certificate.

What a compliant refresh cycle looks like in practice

A compliant arrangement is not just a filing cabinet of old certificates. It is a live training matrix, usually held by HR or whoever owns health and safety, listing every manager and supervisor who holds IOSH Managing Safely, the date they passed, and the date they are next due a refresher. Someone named should own that matrix and be responsible for chasing bookings before the three year point arrives, not after a customer asks.

Three years is a sensible default, but it is a ceiling, not a target. Higher risk environments, such as those covered on our construction and manufacturing and engineering sector pages, may justify refreshing sooner, particularly where a manager has taken on a new site, a new team or new processes since they last trained. The review should also be triggered outside the normal cycle by a change of role, a significant incident or near miss, an audit finding, or feedback from an accreditation assessor. Treat the three year point as a default diary entry, and treat those other triggers as reasons to move the date forward.

What is covered on the refresher day?

It is a single day for people who already hold IOSH Managing Safely. Rather than starting from scratch, it revisits each part of the full course quickly and practically, refreshed against current guidance and examples from the delegates' own workplaces:

- why safety management matters, morally, legally and financially
- assessing risks and choosing proportionate, workable controls
- a manager's legal responsibilities, including where personal liability can arise
- identifying common workplace hazards relevant to the delegate's own site
- investigating incidents and near misses and finding the real root cause
- measuring safety performance and keeping improvement going rather than stalling
- protecting the environment alongside protecting people

The day finishes with a short multiple-choice assessment. Delegates who pass receive a dated IOSH Managing Safely Refresher certificate, which is the specific piece of evidence customers and auditors are actually asking for when they query a renewal date.

Who should attend, and who should not

The refresher suits managers, supervisors and team leaders who passed the full course, ideally around three years ago, and who are still working in a role where they manage people, risk or both. It is particularly useful for anyone who has since been promoted, changed site or taken on broader responsibility, because the day is pitched at how they work now, not how they worked when they first trained.

It is not the right route for everyone. If a manager passed a long time ago, if their certificate is now

well out of date, or if they never actually completed the full course in the first place, a one day refresher will not rebuild the foundations properly. In those cases the full IOSH Managing Safely course is the right choice, and a good provider will tell you so rather than sell you the shorter option.

What commonly goes wrong

The most common failure is simply drift. A manager passes Managing Safely, nobody records a review date, and three, four, then six years pass with nobody noticing until a customer audit flags it. By that point a refresher may no longer be appropriate and the business is looking at the full course again, with more cost and more time away from the job.

A second common problem is treating the refresher as a box-ticking formality rather than genuine retraining. Sending a manager on the day without asking them to bring real examples from their own site, or without following up afterwards on what they learned, wastes the value of the course. A third is only training managers and overlooking supervisors and team leaders who carry out day-to-day risk assessment and toolbox talks, even though they are the ones closest to the hazards. Finally, businesses sometimes assume that an unrelated short online module, or a general induction refresher, satisfies the same need. It does not; IOSH Managing Safely Refresher is a specific, assessed IOSH course, and that distinction matters when an accreditation body or principal contractor asks for evidence.

Who is responsible, and what records to keep

Responsibility for arranging and funding the refresher sits with the employer, under the general training duties in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Line managers should flag role changes that might bring a refresher forward, and senior management should expect to see the training matrix as part of routine health and safety reporting, not just when a customer asks for it.

Keep the actual certificates, not just a spreadsheet entry, for as long as the individual is employed and ideally for some years afterwards, since accreditation assessors and insurers sometimes ask for historical evidence during a claim or audit. If you are pursuing or renewing a construction or facilities accreditation, build the refresh cycle into your wider accreditation evidence pack rather than leaving it as a separate, easily forgotten item.

Practical tips for booking

- Pull together a list of who holds Managing Safely and when they passed. Anyone at or beyond the three year mark is due.
- Group managers together where you can; on-site training for a group is usually the most cost-effective option and lets the trainer use real examples from your own workplace.
- Check the exact wording of any customer or accreditation scheme requirement, so you book the course they actually expect rather than assuming.
- Plan the next cycle immediately after the day. A date in the diary three years ahead avoids

the same scramble next time.

Integral Safety is an IOSH approved training provider based in Coalville. We deliver the one-day IOSH Managing Safely Refresher at your premises for businesses across Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Derby and the wider East Midlands, using examples from your own workplace. Get in touch with the number of managers due a refresh and roughly when, and we will come back with dates and a clear price.

Talk to Integral Safety Ltd

We are health and safety consultants based in Coalville, Leicestershire, working with businesses across the East Midlands. If anything in this guide applies to your workplace, we can help.

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This guide is general information about UK health and safety law and practice, correct as at 11 November 2026. It is not advice on your particular circumstances. The latest version is at https://integralsafetyltd.co.uk/blog/iosh-managing-safely-refresher-when-do-managers-need-one.