



Unit 240: Develop working relationships with colleagues

Problem solving

Reasons for communicating problems

- help, advice and support from others
- allows for re-planning
- no big shocks later
- save yourself stress.



Types of problem

- equipment failure
- staff sickness
- supplier problems
- breakdown in systems or procedures
- communication problems
- the specification for the work is altered/widened
- other people not fulfilling their commitments
- work has not been completed to specification and has to be redone
- constant distractions and interruptions
- unforeseen.

Category of problem

Problems are:

- minor or
- major.



Possible methods for resolving minor problems

- replanning/reprioritising own work
- gaining the support of others
- identifying a solution and seeking permission to implement it
- referring the problem on.

Major problems

Major problems can be identified as they typically:

- affect more than one person
- have a financial impact
- demand serious replanning to meet targets.

Major problems should be notified to the appropriate person.



Limits of authority

You need to be clear about the limits of your own authority in finding solutions to problems.

Your limit of authority is what you can do without having to ask the permission of someone more senior.

You should be able to identify procedures for referring problems and to whom they should be referred.

A problem should certainly be referred if

- the solution will cost money or affect many others
- it will impact seriously on the overall target
- there is no apparent solution
- there is a security, health or safety risk
- the solution is outside the your scope of authority.

Solve problems

In summary, to solve problems you will need to

- understand the problem
- identify the cause
- discuss possible solutions
- solve the problem.