

## **ESTABLISHING COMPETENCE**

### **Its not about attending a one day course**

One of the most common questions we get is when a refresh of a training course is required. The answer may be “never”. There are of no mandatory periods – for the simple reason that competence is developed in many ways, such as working on the job. Sitting in an NZQA endorsed course for 6 hours with virtually everyone passing is not proof of competence.

We get asked about “Work and Height” training – but there is no one qualification for this.

We get asked about a “Forklift License” - but aside from a Class Endorsement on the drivers license (allowing you to drive on the road) there is none.

We get asked how to determine a person working in a job there is no relevant formal qualification for – which is most labouring work.

### **So what are the options for determining competence?**

For trades and roles with a formal training structure leading to a formal qualification, such as the trades or nursing, training is fundamental. And will include a significant practical “on the job” element.

Where there is no such training structure, competence requires checks on whether someone can apply their skills correctly in real-world conditions. To this end 1 on 1 observation on the job by an experienced person using a competency checklist for verification of competency. This can be done on a regular basis (e.g. 6 or 12 monthly). It may be done for someone starting a new job, returning from a long break, following an incident or near miss or when introducing new equipment or procedures.

The verification of competency process is an effective model for establishing competence. Training is likely to be part of the process as well, but it certainly does not stand on its own.