



Health & Safety CHECKLIST

EMPLOYERS



Why you need staff with good
literacy skills

Literacy, Language and Numeracy for Employers



**SKILLS
ACTIVE™**
AOTEAROA
On-Job Qualifications
for Active Careers

What is workplace literacy?

Literacy means the reading, writing, speaking, listening, information technology, problem-solving and numeracy (maths) skills a person needs to do their job effectively.

Every job in the recreation, sport and fitness industries needs these skills. Think about these tasks that your staff have to do every day:

- Understand workplace rules and procedures
- Fill out forms, contracts or time sheets
- Write reports
- Follow instructions
- Ask questions and provide great customer service that leads to repeat business
- Read notices, instructions, timetables or job sheets
- Take orders and handle cash
- Give instructions to customers, other staff or suppliers
- Count and record stock
- Take part in team meetings
- Work on a computer
- Find solutions to workplace problems
- Interpret weights and measurements
- Calibrate equipment.

All of these tasks rely on good literacy skills. They affect how well people can do their job, how they work with other people and how quickly they learn new skills.

Why does literacy matter?

Staff who don't have adequate literacy skills may:

- Not understand written or verbal instructions
- Be slower at doing their job
- Make more mistakes in their work
- Not be able to communicate effectively
- Be afraid of taking on new tasks
- Lack the confidence and self-esteem to create great customer relationships.

Lack of these skills can affect your bottom line. Staff with gaps in core literacy and numeracy skills may be hardworking, loyal and valued employees. But low levels of literacy can prevent staff from taking on new challenges. They limit your opportunities to promote and upskill staff, and they slow your growth. They can lead to higher levels of customer frustration and more accidents and wastage.





New Zealand's economic success depends on having a flexible, skilled and adaptable workforce.

Yet statistics show that:

- **43% of New Zealand adults have low document literacy**
- **51% of New Zealand adults have low numeracy levels**

This means many adults are below the minimum level needed to fully meet all of the everyday demands of modern work and life.

Giving your staff the opportunity to improve their literacy and numeracy levels will allow them to make a greater contribution to your organisation. Raising literacy and numeracy skills will lead to a more flexible, skilled and adaptable workforce.

Research has shown that improving workforce literacy works best when it takes place in the workplace and alongside normal training.

Why do some people have lower literacy levels?

A low level of workplace literacy does not mean low intelligence. A person may have low literacy skills because, for example:

- They have recently arrived from a non-English speaking country
- Their schooling was interrupted because of sickness, family situations or having moved around a lot
- They have a 'hidden' disability such as poor eyesight, hearing or dyslexia (a reading disability)
- They come from a family background with low literacy levels or where English is not spoken at home.

People with low LLN skills have often developed strategies to avoid embarrassment and manage their daily lives, such as getting other people to do paperwork, or never speaking up or asking questions in meetings.

Addressing literacy is not about showing people up; it's about giving them the confidence to extend their skills into new areas.



How Skills Active can help

Every trainee who signs up to a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification through Skills Active now gets the opportunity to check their reading skills before they start their training, by doing a short computer-based assessment.

They can do the assessment at home, or at work if they have computer access and time there. Skills Active will help each trainee to understand what the results mean and discuss any support they may need.

As the employer, you will receive general information about the literacy levels of trainees in your workplace who have been assessed. This will help you get a picture of any issues that need to be addressed. The Learning Support Advisor or Skills Active's national Literacy and Numeracy Advisor will discuss the types of help that are available where staff may need it.



For a person to admit that they need to improve their literacy and numeracy skills takes courage. As an employer, you may have to take the initiative. Our Learning Support Advisors around New Zealand and our Literacy and Numeracy Advisor can work with you individually to look at the support and tools you might need to 'grow' the literacy skills of your staff. They will be happy to tell you more about the literacy assessment tool and how it works.

Skills Active also has free help through its website for **all** trainees doing on-job qualifications, on topics such as how to manage their time, how to listen effectively, and how to read for a purpose. You can download this free information for use in your workplace from our 'Getting Qualified' page at www.skillsactive.org.nz

Training resources for Level 2 and 3 qualifications delivered through Skills Active also have literacy and numeracy help 'embedded' in them, so trainees can enhance their literacy and numeracy skills as they complete their qualification.

Need more information?

Your Skills Active Learning Support Advisor will be happy to tell you more.



On-Job Qualifications
for Active Careers

0508 4SKILLS
(0508 475 4557)

skillsactive.org.nz
info@skillsactive.org.nz

What other help is available?

Other useful sources for advice, support and free resources on literacy and numeracy for all employees include:

Skills Highway:
www.skillshighway.govt.nz

The national website for adult literacy and numeracy:
www.literacyandnumeracyforadults.com

The government's Skills Strategy website:
www.skillsstrategy.govt.nz

The Tertiary Education Commission:
www.tec.govt.nz

The Department of Labour:
www.dol.govt.nz

Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey:
www.educationcounts.govt.nz

New Zealand Council for Trade Unions
Learning Representatives:
www.learningreps.org.nz

Literacy Aotearoa:
www.literacy.org.nz

Workbase New Zealand:
www.workbase.org.nz



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