

Sortation Hub Operative

Explanation crib sheet to confirm it is a Level 2

1. Knowledge skills, occupational competency and autonomy and accountability
2. A brief summary of the job role
3. The 12 month journey from probation to qualified.
4. UK Mail sortation hub photos (DHL) A45 Coventry sortation centre

Knowledge descriptor	Skills descriptor	Occupational competence	Autonomy and accountability
<p>Knowledge and understanding of the facts, procedures and ideas in the occupational field to complete well defined tasks and address straightforward problems.</p> <p>Aware of a range of information that is relevant to the area of work or study Interpret relevant information and ideas</p>	<p>Select and use relevant cognitive and practical skills to complete well defined, generally routine tasks and address straightforward problems.</p> <p>Identify, gather and use relevant information to inform actions</p> <p>Identify how effective actions have been</p>	<p>Occupational competence which involves the application of knowledge, skills, procedures and ideas in a significant range of varied work activities and contexts which are generally well defined.</p> <p>Some of the activities are complex or non-routine</p> <p>Address straightforward problems</p>	<p>Take responsibility for completing tasks and procedures</p> <p>Exercise autonomy and judgement subject to overall direction or guidance</p> <p>May collaborate with others perhaps through a work group or team</p>

Knowledge

The sortation process is not straightforward, it takes at least a year to learn the job.

Labelled/addressed mail, packages or parcels from various incoming sources enter the sortation system, and through automated and manual processes are sorted into the order in which they can be delivered to their intended destination. Each part of the sortation process has an associated set of defined machine operations and work duties/manual tasks and a sortation hub operative must know what each of these are. Each workplace has specific equipment and the operative must know the function, names and operating instructions for each piece of sortation equipment and know how labels are used in the sortation process. As sortation hubs process a wide range of mail, packages and parcels including stamped or franked mail, packets and parcels as diverse as newspaper media and food, further knowledge of identification of hazardous, volatile, fragile or perishable items is key in this fast moving flow of items.

Skills

Operatives need to be able to read and interpret instruction related to the sortation operation and to the use of equipment. They must monitor data displayed on the machine to check whether it is working correctly and to the required speed. They need to read labels, identify problems, take action to remedy problems within defined limits; clearing jams and blockages on the belts and fixing minor

mechanical errors as they occur and re-setting machines. They need to know when to escalate problems to supervisors beyond those limits.

Occupational Competence

A feature of a sortation system is the volume of items sorted and the speed of sortation. Having understood the system and learned how to use the machines, occupational competence comes with the ability work at the speed required and take fast, effective action in the event of machine or other malfunction. In the event of failure to ICT or sortation machines, an operative must be capable of manually sorting items.

Autonomy and accountability

A sortation hub operator has a clearly defined autonomy in the sortation process. They work on clearly defined tasks in operating each piece of equipment, and linked to these, carry out clearly prescribed tasks related to fault-finding and basic maintenance. The sortation system requires each operative to perform their own tasks correctly and at the correct speed or the whole sortation system will not operate to the accuracy and speed required. They need to communicate clearly and effectively with colleagues as soon as a problem or issue arises.

2. The job role. Detail

Sortation Hub Operative: Main duties and responsibilities.

- Working with roller cages, mail bags, and loading booms.
- Working with conveyor belts, chutes, and sortation equipment.
- Work with mail automation systems, including high & low volume sorting speeds.
- Comply with sortation procedures, e.g. goods correctly located and routed.
- Identify labelling for parcels and packets.
- Identify volume and weight of parcels using sortation equipment to value, cost, and chosen service match.
- Setting sortation equipment before and after operation cycles.
- Basic maintenance of sortation equipment to agreed procedures
- Cleaning sortation equipment to achieve longevity and sustainability.
- Report problems or issues relating to compliance or health and safety to supervisor for sortation equipment.
- Work with ICT devices for belt sortation and sequencing
- Load and unload goods safely and efficiently, using bags, cages and trays to sortation belts.
- Read and respond to machine data for sortation equipment.
- Identify and avoid damage to packages and the goods within,
- Ensure own and others health and safety.
- Working to strict security and integrity for mail, parcels, and packets.

Duration – from probation to qualified 12 months.

Having discussed the job role and the KSBs that will be set out in the standard, the employer group concluded that the apprenticeship will require at least 12 months training prior to the EPA gateway. This view was reached in the light of the following considerations:

- A review of current employment practice showed that the training and probationary period for this role is established as being at least 12 months before employees are considered fully competent.
- Quotes from employers describing their probationary periods
- Short case study of the elements of the training and probationary period for this job role in a major sortation hub as set out below.

3. The twelve month journey to competent sortation hub operative

A fully competent sortation hub operative has come through a probationary period which takes at least twelve months. This enables them to be able to work in any part of the sortation process to the required standards of speed and accuracy. The main element of the training are:

Months 1-3

Manual loading and unloading

The start of the sortation role probationary period involves manually loading and unloading mail from vehicles to conveyor belts which must be done in a safe and efficient and secure manner. Trolley cages, mail bags and tote box equipment is often involved.

Months 4-9

Competence in label and service level match

The majority of sortation hubs use postcodes to identify origin and destination of mail, packages and parcels, so a key part of the sortation process is the verification of postcodes, making postcode knowledge an important attribute for sortation hub operatives. Further labelling detail is important to judge service request, value and weight, further hazard and fragility labelling must be identified.

Months 10-12

Working on sortation belts and chutes

Sortation hubs have belt and chute equipment which handles, checks and sorts incoming mail, packages and parcels into the correct loads and sequences for delivery. When the sortation system is running operatives work with colleagues to ensure that mail, packages and parcels flow correctly through the system and need to signpost problems as they arise. With increasing competency operatives need to be able to tend, operate, and deal with minor problems on each of the various pieces of equipment used in their sortation hub cycle. Dealing with blockages and parcel damage, cleaning cycles of the belts and chutes.

Because smaller hubs often have a mixture of automatic and manual sortation systems and as a back-up in the event of failure of automated systems, operatives must be able to manually sort mail, packages and parcels quickly and accurately to complete their probationary period.

Off the job training

The employer group then considered the way knowledge and skills will be gained through teaching and training in and away from the direct workplace and concluded that the training that would need to take place 'off-the-job' would be at least 20% of the on-programme part of the apprenticeship. We envisage that off-the-job training will take place in employer premises away from the direct work station as well as in company training centres room training or through attendance at a college or a private training provider premises. As employees, the apprentices will attend company briefings, team meetings and pre-shift briefings which will contribute to their off the job learning programme. With some variation to reflect the specific organisation in which they work, we have identified off-the-job training units which will cover the following knowledge and skills:

4. Further photos of sortation hub, from boom loaders to chutes and roller cage movements for the sorting belts

UK Mail (DHL) sortation hub A45 Coventry

Photos captured in the day time, sortation shift done, nothing stored, boom loaders and roller cages shown.

No pallets, no storage, no fork trucks. This is a very different space to a storage warehouse.

