



SAFETY / ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLBOX TRAINING – INFORMAL HAZARD ASSESSMENTS

SUPERVISOR INSTRUCTIONS:

- Use toolbox trainings to encourage safety / environmental discussions during monthly meetings with employees
- Submit the employee sign-in sheet to your designated administrative assistant /training coordinator as a record of training

Think Smart, Before You Start!

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requires employers to assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which would necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). It is important that supervisors and employees also learn to recognize and mitigate safety hazards.

Before beginning any job, employees should always evaluate their work areas for potential hazards. This is an informal hazard assessment and can be completed in a short period of time. Two basic components of any hazard assessment are hazard recognition and hazard control.

Hazard Recognition

HEALTH HAZARDS – Anything that can lead to illness, disease or other adverse health effects.

1. **Physical** – Noise, vibration, temperature extremes (hot or cold) and radiation.
2. **Chemical** – Solids, liquids, vapors, gases, dusts, or fumes (inhaled, ingested or absorbed).
3. **Biological** – Bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, venomous wildlife, and poisonous plants.
4. **Ergonomic** – Work area design (i.e. frequent lifting and repetitive movements).
5. **Stress** – Organizational (i.e. work demands) or physical (i.e. noise) stressors.

SAFETY HAZARDS – Anything that can lead to traumatic types of injuries. Safety hazards are generally categorized or identified by the specific conditions in the workplace.

1. **Work Practices** – Guidelines, policies, or safe work procedures.
2. **Material handling** – Lifting, carrying, lowering, pushing and pulling.
3. **Mechanical hazards** – Moving components of machines.
4. **Energy hazards** – Sudden or unexpected movement of machine components.
5. **Confined Spaces** – Locations that are oxygen-deficient or where hazardous gases, vapors, dusts or fumes can accumulate.

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INFORMAL HAZARD ASSESSMENT

A quick way to identify the hazards is to observe the job site and consider the task; and then ask some questions related to the particular job function. For example:

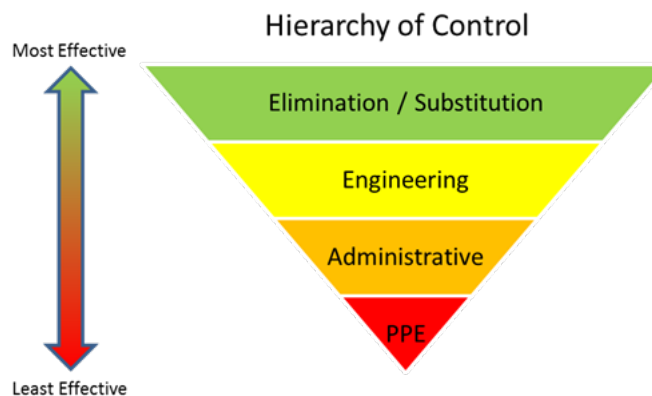
- Will employees be required to work from heights or exposed to unprotected edges?
- Are obstacles or materials nearby where employees could trip and fall?
- Will employees be working on wet or slick surfaces?
- Will employees be required to work outdoors in severe or inclement weather?
- Are tools and equipment in good condition with no frayed wiring or sharp edges?

Also consider what other contributing factors may trigger an unwanted event.

- Are there other people that may enter the work area?
- Do the employees have the proper knowledge or experience to perform the required task?
- Are there distractions, either external or internal, that may increase the likelihood of an unsafe behavior? (i.e. time constraints, performance review time, recent lay-offs, etc.)
- Is the equipment new? (i.e. operating procedures reviewed, employees trained, etc.)
- Are safe work procedures known, flawed or non-existent.

Preventive Measures

Once the hazards have been identified, follow the established hierarchy of controls to select the most effective control method for each identified hazard.



Common Workplace Hazards and Controls

<i>WORK ACTIVITY</i>	<i>HAZARDS</i>	<i>CONTROLS</i>
Cleaning and waxing floors in residential housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifting/carrying equipment and furniture • Vibration • Awkward/static postures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request assistance when moving heavy or awkward equipment. • Wear anti-vibration gloves. • Maintain equipment to minimize vibration and ensure proper function. • Job rotation.

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<i>WORK ACTIVITY</i>	<i>HAZARDS</i>	<i>CONTROLS</i>
Cutting grass or using other lawn equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High noise • Vibration • Flying debris • Snakes, insects • Using oil and gas • Electrical exposures • UV radiation (sun) exposures • Heat stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear hearing protection/anti-vibration gloves/safety boots, long pants. • Clear/remove rocks, sticks and other debris from area before mowing. • Watch for snakes/insects. • Use sun screen on exposed areas of skin. • Mix or fill equipment with gas/oil in well ventilated areas and clean up spills immediately. • Follow protocols in Heat Stress Program. • Use PPE as indicated on the SDS. • Ensure all electrical cords are in good condition.
Maintaining HVAC equipment on rooftops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall from heights • Using fixed ladders • Carrying equipment • Heat stress • Chemical exposure, such as coil cleaner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear fall protection harness and proper tie-off for fall arrest or fall restraint. • Erect and use designated area warning lines/stanchions. • Use rope/bucket for hoisting equipment. • Follow protocols in Heat Stress Program. • Use PPE as indicated on the SDS. • Wash hands after using chemicals.

Questions for Discussion

- 1) A mechanic is sanding with a handheld belt sander. After 5 minutes, he notices that the sander is vibrating and his fingers are beginning to feel numb. He decides to put on a pair of anti-vibration gloves and continue working. Did the mechanic make the right decision?
 - **The mechanic did not make the right decision.** PPE, such as anti-vibration gloves, should be the last line of defense when controlling a hazard. The mechanic should have considered other means of preventing his exposure to the vibration, such as replacing the sander with one that functions properly or performing maintenance on the sander to decrease the vibration.

- 2) True or False. Outdoor conditions cannot be controlled. Therefore, the outdoor temperature does not need to be included in a hazard assessment.
 - **False.** Outdoor temperatures should be included in a hazard assessment, because extreme hot or cold temperatures can be a health hazard for workers. It is true that they cannot be changed, but there are measures that can be put in place to prevent harm to workers due to outdoor conditions, such as job rotation, breaks, and PPE.

- 3) When should an informal hazard assessment be performed?
 - **The assessment should be performed prior to beginning an assigned task.**