

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

Discovering potential hazards is the cornerstone of a safe and secure workplace. Imagine being able to spot dangers and protect yourself and your colleagues from harm. Hazard identification involves closely examining your job, tasks, or surroundings and questioning whether anything could potentially jeopardize someone's well-being or result in damage.

A workplace hazard can be any practice, behavior, or physical condition with the potential to cause injury, illness, property damage, harm to the environment, or disrupt processes. We all share the responsibility of spotting and managing these hazards. Together, we can create a safer environment for everyone.

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION TOOLS

Many standard hazard identification tools exist that can aid in documenting the processes of hazard identification and control.

- ❖ **Inspection Checklists** are best for ensuring compliance with regulations, rules, and policies.
- ❖ **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Assessment** forms are a valuable communication tool for teaching employees what PPE they need to wear to perform their work safely.
- ❖ **Pre-task planning (PTP)**, is important, especially when procedures and conditions change frequently, to remind employees of the risks associated with the operations they will perform within a specific period.
- ❖ **Job Hazard Analysis**, also known as Job Safety Analysis (JSA), is an effective tool for accident prevention. It involves identifying current and potential hazards linked to a specific job.

TYPES OF HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE

- ❖ **Falls or Impacts**
- ❖ **Mechanical** – these hazards result in **caught-in, caught-on, and crush** incidents.
- ❖ **Vibration and Noise**
- ❖ **Toxics** – There are four routes of entry:
 - **Inhalation:** breathing toxins in.
 - **Ingestion:** eating or drinking.
 - **Absorption:** through the skin.
 - **Injection:** needles and other sharp objects.
- ❖ **Heat and Temperature**
- ❖ **Flammability / Fire**
- ❖ **Explosives** – including chemicals, dust, solids, vapors, gases, and equipment.
- ❖ **Electrical Contact** – including shock, ignition of combustibles, and overheating of equipment.

CONTROLLING HAZARDS

Two primary control strategies exist: controlling the hazard and controlling exposure to the hazard. The Hierarchy of Controls is a common framework that organizes these strategies into various groupings to address them effectively. In general, and whenever possible, it is more effective to control the hazard rather than controlling the exposure.

Hazard Controls

- ❖ **Elimination** – Physically removing the hazard from the workplace is *the most effective hazard control*. No hazard = no risk.
- ❖ **Substitution** – Similar to elimination, substitution involves replacing a hazard with something less hazardous.
- ❖ **Engineering** – Designing the workplace to *physically isolate people* from hazards. Examples include barriers or guarding.