

TOOLBOX TALK: Hazard Recognition

Introduction

One of the main reasons for workplace injuries, illnesses, and incidents is workers not being able to identify or recognize hazards related to a given task or work. Hazard identification and risk assessment are the basis of health and safety management. Before beginning any job, employees should always evaluate their work areas for potential hazards. A risk assessment is simply another way of saying to conduct a review of what could cause harm to people during particular work assignments or tasks. Based on these risk assessments the employer can weigh up whether it has taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm to their employees.

The Hazards

Some common hazards found on construction sites include, but is not limited to:

- Falls from height
- Breathing in harmful contaminants
- Trench cave-ins
- Open holes
- Being struck by mobile equipment
- Defective tools
- Slip/trip hazard
- Hazardous substance
- Falling objects
- Manual handling
- Electrical hazard
- Entrapment hazard
- Fire hazard
- Hazardous weather
- Drowning hazard

For your given workplace or task, consider if any of the above hazards are present. Be sure also to include any unique hazards for the job at hand.



Control Measures

A hazard assessment is performed by recognising and assessing the existing and potential hazards of a worksite and implementing controls with the goal to prevent an incident or accident to occur. Once all the hazards have been defined; a risk assessment need to be conducted. Simply put, it is the likelihood of a hazard to causing harm and how severe it is. As part of the risk assessment consider following:

- Who and how many people could be affected by the hazard (consider vulnerable people such as young people, disabled, pregnant women etc.)
- How often will people be exposed to the hazard
- Potential effect of the hazard (consider whether it could kill, badly injure, cause minor injury or not cause personal harm)
- Peoples likely behaviour (consider the health and safety culture, are short cuts likely to be taken etc.)

When the risks have been defined, the ones above an acceptable level will need to be mitigated. Following approach (starting from the top) should be used to address any unacceptable risks:

- Elimination: Physically remove the hazard.
- Substitution: Replace the hazard.
- Engineering controls: Isolate people from the hazard.
- Administrative controls: Change the way people work.
- Personal protective equipment: Protect the worker with PPE.

The Law

- Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

Even though the office provides RAMS a dynamic risk assessment needs to be carried out by yourselves prior to starting work. The risks may have changed since a site visit had taken place. You are likely doing this already without realising it, please take into account your surroundings and the hazards that are present and put control measures in place so that the work can be done safely.

If the difference between the RAMS and the conditions you are expecting to work in, please contact the office so that the RAMS can be amended accordingly.

Sign off Sheet: Hazard Recognition

Name	Signed	Dated
Aiden Candler		
Ben Tatum		
Darren Pitcher		
Dean Higgs		
Geoff Grimwood		
Ilie Bursuc		
James Hutchings		
Jason Woods		
Matt Collett		

BY SIGNING THE ABOVE, I ACCEPT THAT I UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REQUIRED OF ME AND I AGREE TO COMPLY.