

Pre-Risk Assessments

Toolbox Talk #16



Hazard identification and Risk Assessment are the basis of health and safety management. A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that the organization can weigh up whether it has taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Risk Assessment can be applied to cover the general workplace and specific tasks.

The 5 steps to Risk Assessment are:

1) Identify the hazards: Walk around your workplace or the site you will be working at. Look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Think about your previous accidents and health issues and evaluate whether these could come into play.

2) Decide who might be harmed and how: Identify the groups of people that could be at risk on this jobsite and how they could possibly be affected.

3) Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions: Can you get rid of the hazard altogether? Can it be controlled by switching equipment, wearing PPE, erecting barriers, etc.?

4) Record your findings communicate them as appropriate and implement them: It is important to document your findings so that something can be done about the potential risks, and you have records for future situations similar to the current one.

5) Review your assessment and update if necessary: Situations change all the time so be sure to make risk assessments an ongoing activity.

Examples of Health and Safety Hazards			
Chemical	Includes any form of chemical, such as compressed gases, solvents, lead and others.	Machine	Includes hazards from moving parts, like rotating shafts, belts and blades.
Physical	Includes noise, vibration, heat, cold and radiation.	Energy	Includes pneumatic or hydraulic pressure, steam, heat and electricity.
Ergonomic	Includes design of the workplace and jobs that involve repetition, force and posture.	Material Handling	Includes moving, stacking and storing of all goods including dangerous goods.
Biological	Includes organisms or toxic substances produced by living things that can cause illnesses or diseases in humans, such as bacteria, viruses and fungi.	Safe Work Responsibilities	Includes not following safe work procedures currently implemented, or working in an environment that does not have safe work practices in place or doesn't enforce them.

