

Hazard Identification*



Every day we encounter hazards. Some are easily identified but others may be difficult to identify.

A hazard is something that puts a worker at risk of injury or occupational disease. Hazards can also damage equipment and property, increase insurance premiums and lead to serious injury or death.

Hazard categories

- Physical
- Biological
- Chemical
- Psychosocial

Physical hazard can cause harm through physical contact between a source of energy and a worker or object. E.g. radiation, slippery floors, temperature extremes, pressure extremes, sharp tools, and noise.

Chemical hazards in the workplace can cause illness or injury depending on state, entry, exposure and its toxicology. Chemical hazards include gases, aerosols, vapors, mist, dust, and fumes. They can be a solid, liquid or gas. The route of entry can be skin absorption, oral ingestion, inhalation, or injection through the skin.

Biological hazards are from plant, animal or microbiological agents that can be toxic to humans. Like chemical hazards, workers can inhale, inject, ingest, or absorb through skin.

Biological hazards include bacteria, viruses, insects, animals, plants, birds, and humans.

Psychosocial hazard is any condition that can cause harm to a worker's mental health. Psychosocial hazards include work factors which can affect the way workers respond to tasks or influence their behavior. This includes discrimination, harassment, violence, and work stress.

Control of hazards

The hierarchy of controls helps to determine what control measures to apply to mitigate each hazard. Controls at the top of the hierarchy are more effective than those at the bottom. A combination of control measures in the order determined by the hierarchy can increase their combined effectiveness. Consider and apply control measures as follows:

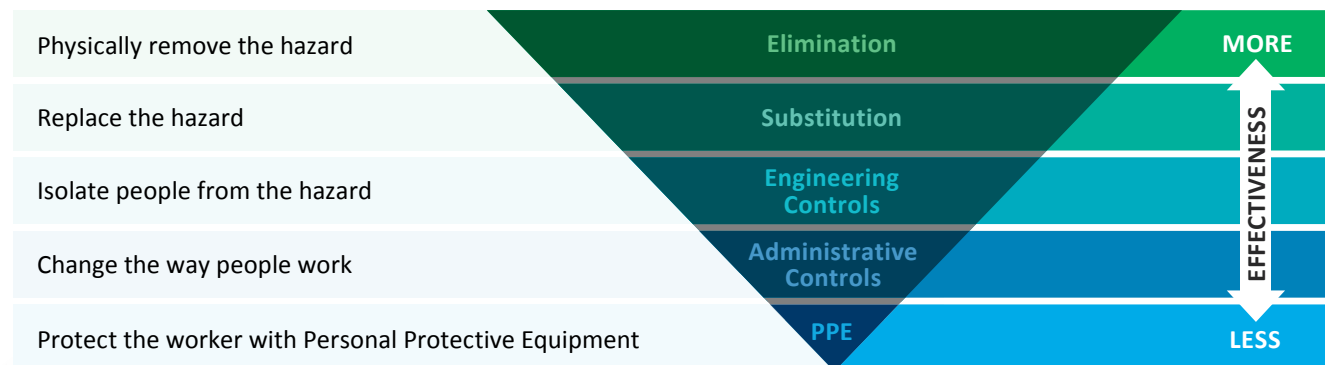
- Control the hazard at the source (elimination, substitution)
- Control the hazard at the worker (wearing of requisite PPE)

- Control the hazard along the path (engineering controls such as barricading the hazard from the worker)

Control measures are identified and indicated in the hazard identification/risk assessment and then reviewed to include in Safe Work Procedures.

- Use a team approach to identify, implement, and establish controls
- Train employees in the proper maintenance, use, care, and inspection of control measures as indicated in the assessments
- Implement a strict maintenance schedule to maintain equipment
- Ensure compliance with these control measures through managerial observations, crew talks, workplace inspections, and disciplinary action (as needed)

Hierarchy of Controls



For additional resources visit:

Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC: safetyalliancebc.ca

