

RISK ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

1. Most work that we perform involves hazards. To perform work safely, the hazards must be identified so that the risks can be controlled effectively. Doing so shows respect for the sanctity of life, demonstrates love for our brothers, conserves dedicated funds, and protects the reputation of our organization. For most tasks, there are multiple methods for completing the work. The overseer is responsible to ensure that a risk assessment is completed to help determine the safest method for completing the work.

2. Once the safest method of work has been determined during the risk assessment, a risk assessment form, such as the *Job Hazard Analysis* (DC-83) or *Congregation Job Hazard Analysis* (DC-85) form, should be used to document risks associated with the selected method. This will assist in outlining (1) the steps involved in completing the work and (2) the equipment and/or control measures needed to perform the work safely.

3. If there are several departments or work areas where similar types of work are carried out, a model risk assessment reflecting the common hazards associated with these activities may be produced. Doing so does not mean that overseers can bypass the risk assessment process. Each overseer would review the model risk assessment and determine whether or not there are hazards or risks unique to the work being performed under his oversight. The overseer may need to adapt the risk assessment to accommodate unique circumstances.

IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

4. It is important to identify all the hazards associated with performing each task. Even in low hazard situations, risk assessments will help to lower the risks for those completing the tasks. Think through each step in the process to identify the failure points (conditions or actions that could compromise a person's safety). The assessment should include a consideration of the following:

- (1) **Manufacturer's Instructions/Data Sheets:** The manufacturer's instructions or data sheets for chemicals and equipment might list hazards associated with the product and include directions on how to use the product safely.
- (2) **Loss Experience:** Review available records of past incidents involving similar types of work, whether or not such incidents resulted in personal injury or other loss.
- (3) **Industry Experience:** Utilize industry resources where available to determine the hazards that may exist. An Internet search for "top hazards" associated with a task might provide some insight.
- (4) **Non-Routine Operations:** Review the work involved in performing maintenance, cleaning, or change-over operations.
- (5) **Health Issues:** Think about health problems that may develop over time, such as when one is exposed or subjected to high levels of noise, harmful substances, repetitive motions, or strain from overexertion.

- (6) **Organizational Safety Guidelines:** Review pertinent safety guidelines provided by our organization, such as *Global Life Safety and Loss Prevention Guidelines (A-120)* and related documents.

EVALUATE THE RISKS

5. Once all hazards have been identified, review who or what may be affected by the hazards. This will assist in determining the controls needed to keep people and property safe. Take into account the following factors:

- (1) Those exposed to a hazard might include persons who are inexperienced in the type of work being performed, persons whose native language differs from the language in which instruction or training is provided, persons with disabilities, outside contractors, or persons accustomed to working in a different environment, such as under their own supervision.
- (2) Those exposed to a hazard might be individuals who are not always present, such as visitors, outside contractors, the public, and maintenance workers.
- (3) The workspace might be shared by individuals who work in various departments.

6. Not all risks are equal. It is important to determine the potential loss that might result from each identified risk or hazard.

HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

7. When determining a course of action, it is important to do everything reasonable to protect others from harm. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the risk. More controls usually involve more restrictions, time, or money, and so must be balanced against the risk.

8. The risk assessment is based upon what can reasonably be expected to be known. It is understood that some risks are unforeseeable and thus cannot be anticipated.

9. During the assessment, use the hierarchy of controls listed below to determine the best means of addressing each risk. The controls are listed in order of the most effective for reducing the risk to the least effective for reducing the risk:

- (1) Avoid the risk. Is it possible to avoid the hazard completely by using a different method to complete the task? Can the task be eliminated altogether?
- (2) Control the risk by adjusting the method of working. For example, instead of working at height, can the work be performed from the ground using a pole?
- (3) Prevent access to the hazard. For example, can guarding or fencing be placed around a moving part?
- (4) Organize the work in such a manner that the exposure to risk is reduced. For example, can pedestrian routes be provided that are separated from vehicular traffic?
- (5) Utilize personal protective equipment. For example, will wearing a hard hat, safety goggles, or a harness reduce the risk?

RECORD KEEPING

10. Make a record of significant findings, including the hazards, how people may be harmed, and the controls that are in place. Records can be simple and focused on controls. They should be kept in a location that is accessible to all who use them.

11. A regular review of the risks associated with tasks should be completed. The use of new equipment, materials, or chemicals and changes to work procedures or the focus of the work may

present new hazards. To determine if a risk assessment needs to be reviewed, consider the following questions:

- (1) Have there been any significant changes?
- (2) Are there improvements in controlling risks that still need to be made?
- (3) Have any workers identified hazards or mentioned concerns?
- (4) Have there been any lessons learned from accidents or near misses?

RISK ASSESSMENT FORMATS

12. A variety of risk assessment formats may be available. The *Job Hazard Analysis* (DC-83) or *Congregation Job Hazard Analysis* (DC-85) form should be used for assessing most standard operational hazards. However, when higher hazards are expected to be encountered, such as when evaluating risks associated with a construction or maintenance project, a more detailed risk assessment format should be considered. Always choose the risk assessment format that best fits the task under review.

13. A narrative format is the most commonly used format within our organization. This format focuses on how the hazard can be controlled, with emphasis on a narrative explanation of the risks and the controls for reducing such risks. It could be used in situations where an ongoing task may have familiar low-level risks.

14. A risk matrix format is commonly used for higher hazard operations and larger projects. This format should only be undertaken by a qualified individual. It focuses on grading the severity and frequency of risks in order to create an easy-to-read, color-based grading system. This allows the reader to quickly identify the highest hazard in a task. This format could be used for an audit of a large operation where multiple tasks are being reviewed or for a maintenance or construction project to allow for the quick analysis and prioritizing of risks and to ensure that attention and resources are directed accordingly.