

# Safety Circular

July 2021

## Hazard Identification & Workplace Safety

One of the "root causes" of workplace injuries, illnesses, and incidents is the failure to identify or recognize hazards that are present, or that could have been anticipated.

A critical element of any effective safety and health program is a proactive, ongoing process to identify and assess such hazards.

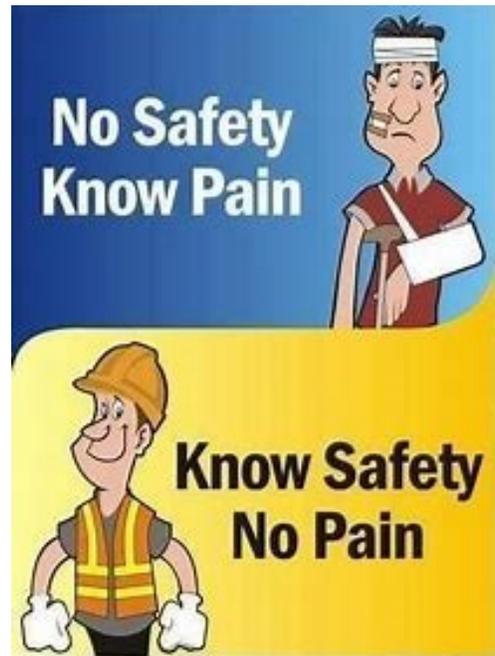


### Where to Begin:

#### 1. Collect existing information about the workplace:

Collect, organize, and review information with workers to determine what types of hazards may be present and which workers may be exposed or potentially exposed. Information available in the workplace may include:

- Equipment and machinery operating manuals.
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) provided by chemical manufacturers.
- Self-inspection reports and inspection reports from insurance carriers, government agencies, and consultants.
- Records of previous injuries and illnesses, such as OSHA 300 and 301 logs and reports of incident investigations.
- Workers' compensation records and reports.
- Patterns of frequently-occurring injuries and illnesses.
- Exposure monitoring results, industrial hygiene assessments, and medical records (appropriately redacted to ensure patient/worker privacy).
- Existing safety and health programs (lockout/tagout, confined spaces, process safety management, personal protective equipment, etc.).
- Input from workers, including surveys or minutes from safety and health committee meetings.
- Results of job hazard analyses, also known as job safety analyses.





# INSPECTION

## 2. Regularly inspect the workplace for safety hazards

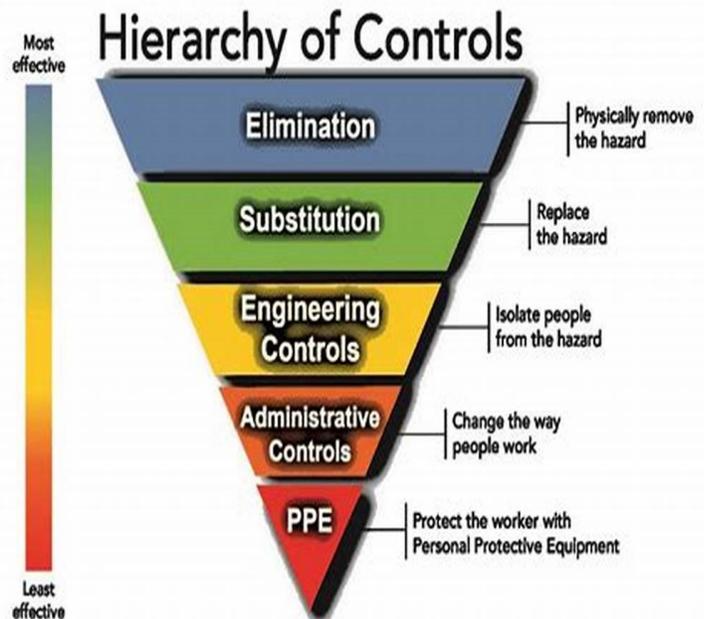
Hazards can be introduced over time as workstations and processes change, equipment or tools become worn, maintenance is neglected, or housekeeping practices decline. Setting aside time to regularly inspect the workplace for hazards can help identify shortcomings so that they can be addressed before an incident occurs.

## 3. Conduct incident investigations

Workplace incidents, including injuries, illnesses, close calls/near misses, and reports of other concerns provide a clear indication of where hazards exist. By thoroughly investigating incidents and reports, you will identify hazards that are likely to cause future harm. The purpose of an investigation must always be to identify the root causes (and there is often more than one) of the incident or concern, in order to prevent future occurrences.

## 4. Characterize the nature of identified hazards, identify interim control measures, and prioritize the hazards for control

The next step is to assess and understand the hazards identified and the types of incidents that could result from worker exposure to those hazards. This information can be used to develop interim controls and to prioritize hazards for permanent control. Traditionally, a hierarchy of controls has been used as a means of determining how to implement feasible and effective control solutions.



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The Safety Circular, a publication of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Risk Management Department, is published monthly in an effort to promote and enhance risk management awareness on issues relating to TDCJ employees. Design and layout of the Safety Circular is performed by Kim Roberson, Risk Management. Comments, suggestions and safety related items are welcome.

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References: ♦tdcj.texas.gov ♦osha.gov ♦cdc.gov