



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Hierarchy of Controls

There are multiple safeguards to control any one hazard. Each level of these safeguards serves to protect employees. Some safeguards or controls are more effective than others.

The hierarchy of controls outlines the controls used to mitigate a hazard from most effective to least effective.

The Hierarchy of Hazard Control seeks to protect workers by ranking the ways in which hazards can be controlled, providing employers with a framework for reducing risk to employees.

The Hierarchy Contains Five Items:

1. Elimination;
2. Substitution;
3. Engineering controls;
4. Administrative controls; and
5. Personal protective equipment.

Eliminate the Hazard:

The best way to control a hazard is to eliminate it. This can be achieved by making changes to the work process so that the task is no longer carried out or by physically removing the hazard altogether.

Elimination is the most effective way to control hazards and should be used whenever possible.

Substitute (One Risk for a Lesser One):

Substitution is the second most effective method for controlling hazards. It is similar to elimination but rather than removing the risk altogether, it involves substituting one risk for another.

Say, for example, that your employees work with a highly hazardous solvent and that you discover a less dangerous one that will still do the job. By swapping the chemicals, you will not be eliminating the risk entirely, but you will be reducing it.

Engineering Controls:

If a hazard cannot be eliminated, isolated, or substituted, the next best approach is to use engineering controls.

Engineering controls are implemented by making changes to the design of equipment or a process to minimize its hazard. Although engineering controls are the most expensive solution, they provide the

advantage of reducing future cost.

The two basic types of engineering controls are process control and ventilation.

Process control involves changing the way a job activity or process is performed to reduce hazards, such as the use of electric motors rather than diesel motors to eliminate diesel exhaust emissions.

Ventilation is a method of control that strategically adds and removes air in the work environment, such as the use of local exhaust fans to control titanium dioxide dust in a paint manufacturing factory.

Administrative Controls:

If engineering controls cannot be implemented, move on to considering administrative controls.

These, however, do not actually remove or reduce the hazards, so they are less effective in comparison to other control measures in the hierarchy.

Administrative controls involve making changes to the way in which people work and promoting safe work practices through education and training.

Administrative controls may involve training employees in operating procedures, good housekeeping practices, emergency response in the event of incidents such as fire or employee injury, and personal hygiene practices such as the washing of hands after contact with hazardous materials.

Personal Protection:

This is the least effective method of controlling hazards because of the high potential that personal protective equipment (PPE) will become damaged.

If PPE is inadequate or fails, the worker is not protected. PPE can also often be uncomfortable, which can place an additional physical burden on the worker. Therefore, PPE should only be used in combination with other control measures from the hierarchy or if there are no other more effective ways to control the hazard.

Remember:

Having a safety program in place is a necessity, but it pays to make sure that it is also a strategic one.

The Hierarchy of Hazard Control gives employers and safety professionals a tool to effectively tackle their workplace hazards.

Prioritizing control methods does not just make for a safer workplace; it also reduces costs and minimizes waste.

So, the next time you need to deal with a hazard, start by asking yourself, "Can we do anything to eliminate the hazard?" and, if not, start working your way down the list.

BEFORE YOU DO IT...TAKE TIME TO THINK THROUGH IT!!

