



COUNTY OF NORTHERN LIGHTS

POLICY

HAZARD ASSESSMENT

CREATED: 2/9/2025

REVISED:

TOTAL PAGES: 10

The hazard assessment and control process is a systematic and documented approach aimed at preventing work-related illness or injury to workers and other individuals present at the work site. This process is a fundamental responsibility in every workplace and serves as a critical component of the overall Safety Management System (SMS). By identifying existing or potential hazards, the hazard assessment process allows employers to allocate resources effectively to safeguard health and safety.

A hazard is defined as any situation, condition, or object that may pose a risk to health and safety. Hazards are typically categorized based on the type of energy or risk they present to workers. Examples include physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, and psychosocial hazards. Additionally, the overall environment, including factors such as noise, lighting, and temperature, should be considered a potential hazard.

Understanding and identifying these hazards is crucial for maintaining a safe worksite. Workers must be made aware of any known or potential hazards they may encounter during their tasks. They should also be fully informed about the specific health and safety measures or procedures established to protect them and others on the job.

Legal Requirements under Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Legislation

Under Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act, employers have a legal responsibility to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all workers present at the workplace. These legal obligations are further detailed in the OHS Regulation and OHS Code, which outline specific requirements for workplace safety management, hazard identification, and risk control.

Employer Responsibilities under the OHS Act (Section 3)

Employers are required to:

- **Ensure the health and safety of workers:** This includes taking all reasonable precautions to protect workers from known hazards at the work site.
- **Inform workers of hazards:** Employers must ensure that workers are made aware of all known or reasonably foreseeable health and safety hazards that may affect them.

Failure to meet these obligations can result in enforcement actions by Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE (OHS CODE) REQUIREMENTS

The Alberta OHS Code further specifies how employers must comply with these responsibilities, including implementing a formal occupational health and safety program where applicable and conducting regular hazard assessments.

Section 7 — Hazard Assessment, Elimination, and Control:

- Employers are required to conduct a hazard assessment to identify existing or potential hazards at the worksite. The assessment must consider the various risks present, including physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, and psychosocial hazards.
- Following the hazard assessment, employers must either eliminate or control the identified hazards. If elimination is not practical, appropriate control measures, such as engineering controls, administrative controls, and the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), must be implemented.
- Employers are required to keep the hazard assessment documented and must ensure it is readily available to all workers and the prime contractor, if applicable.

Section 15 — Risk Assessment and PPE:

- Employers must conduct a risk assessment to determine the need for PPE where workers may be exposed to hazards that cannot be eliminated or controlled through other means.
- The employer must ensure that appropriate PPE is provided and that workers are trained in its proper use, maintenance, and limitations.



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Training and Communication Requirements

In addition to the hazard assessment and control measures, the OHS Code mandates that employers:

- **Train workers** on the hazards they may face and the safety protocols in place to protect them, ensuring they understand how to properly use the controls, including PPE.
- **Communicate safety information:** Employers must ensure that workers, the prime contractor (if applicable), and the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) have access to information about workplace hazards and control measures.

The Importance of Conducting Hazard Assessments

Regardless of the size or type of business, every workplace contains situations, conditions, or elements that may pose risks to the health and safety of workers or others nearby. Employers, supervisors, workers, and other parties at the work site—including prime contractors and subcontractors—must be aware of these workplace hazards to address them properly.

Hazard assessments allow employers to focus their efforts on critical areas and to develop training programs, conduct inspections, create emergency response plans, and implement other safety measures tailored to the specific hazards at their work sites. By systematically identifying and controlling hazards, organizations not only comply with legal obligations but also enhance overall workplace safety.

The Role of the Safety Management System

All workplaces have inherent hazards that can endanger health and safety. It is the legal responsibility of employers, supervisors, and workers to identify and manage these risks. The Safety Management System (SMS) plays a pivotal role in determining the hazards present in the workplace. As the foundation of an organization's safety efforts, the SMS focuses on:

- **Hazard Identification:** Recognizing all actual and potential hazards through thorough examination of work processes, equipment, and environments.
- **Hazard Control:** Implementing appropriate measures to eliminate or mitigate identified hazards.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly reviewing and updating safety practices to adapt to new hazards or changes in operations.

Effective hazard control reduces the frequency and severity of incidents, leading to a corresponding decrease in human injuries and financial costs. By diligently performing hazard assessments and complying with OHS legislation, organizations promote a safer, healthier work environment for everyone involved.

Benefits of Hazard Assessment and Control

Hazard assessments play a crucial role in identifying potential risks in the workplace, allowing for the implementation of measures to eliminate or control hazards before they cause harm. Conducting hazard assessments and applying appropriate control strategies offers several key benefits that contribute to a safer, more productive work environment:

- a. **Operational Improvements:** Hazard assessments drive continuous improvement in day-to-day operations. By systematically evaluating workplace risks, organizations can refine maintenance routines, streamline work procedures, improve employee training programs, optimize process designs, make informed purchasing decisions, and enhance housekeeping practices. When workers see the tangible impact of hazard assessments, they are more likely to engage in proactive behaviors, such as cleaning spills or removing obstacles, which significantly contribute to a safer and more organized workplace.
- b. **Reinforcing Worker Value and Engagement:** A thorough hazard assessment process demonstrates the employer's commitment to the health and safety of workers, reinforcing that their well-being is a top priority. When employees see that safety is taken seriously and that their health is valued, it fosters a sense of inclusion and ownership in workplace health and safety programs. This, in turn, leads to greater participation and engagement in safety initiatives, creating a more collaborative and cohesive work environment.



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- c. **Heightened Focus on Health and Safety:** Hazard assessments help to highlight specific areas where health and safety improvements are needed, directing attention to potential risks that might otherwise go unnoticed. By identifying these areas, hazard assessments encourage constructive dialogue and awareness among workers and management about safety concerns. This focused attention leads to the development of targeted strategies to improve workplace safety and raise the overall standard of health and safety practices across the organization.
- d. **Increased Workplace Efficiency and Consistency:** A well-executed hazard assessment process contributes to a more consistent, efficient, and effective workplace. By mitigating risks and preventing health and safety incidents, the number of productive hours lost due to worker illness or injury is significantly reduced. This not only improves operational continuity but also enhances the efficiency of daily tasks, as fewer disruptions occur due to accidents or unsafe conditions. Over time, this leads to a smoother and more reliable workflow, benefiting both employees and the organization as a whole.
- e. **Cost Savings and Financial Benefits:** Effective hazard assessments contribute to reducing workplace incidents, which in turn lowers the number of Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) claims filed by employees. With fewer incidents and claims, organizations can benefit from lower insurance premiums and other associated costs. Additionally, minimizing workplace injuries and illnesses reduces absenteeism and the need for temporary replacement workers, resulting in further cost savings. These financial benefits not only support a safer work environment but also contribute to the long-term sustainability and financial health of the organization.

Hazard assessments are a vital component of any workplace safety program. They provide the framework for identifying and addressing risks, improving operational efficiency, fostering worker engagement, and ultimately reducing costs. When consistently applied, hazard assessments lead to a safer, more productive, and financially sound organization.

TYPES OF HAZARD ASSESSMENTS

Hazard assessments are a critical component of workplace safety and are conducted at various levels depending on the nature and scope of the work. There are two primary types of hazard assessments: formal hazard assessments and field-level hazard assessments. Each type serves a distinct purpose and is applied at different stages of the work process to identify, evaluate, and control risks.

Formal Hazard Assessments

Formal hazard assessments involve a comprehensive and detailed examination of an organization's overall operations to identify potential hazards. This process is designed to thoroughly evaluate the risks associated with specific jobs or tasks, and to develop, implement, and monitor appropriate control measures.

Key features of formal hazard assessments include:

- **Task Breakdown:** Jobs or work types are broken down into individual tasks or steps to ensure that every aspect of the work process is thoroughly analyzed.
- **Collaboration:** Formal hazard assessments often involve input from multiple stakeholders, including management, supervisors, workers, and, where applicable, members of the health and safety committee. This ensures a well-rounded perspective on potential hazards and effective control strategies.
- **Extensive Process:** Due to their comprehensive nature, formal hazard assessments require a significant amount of time and resources to complete. They often involve reviewing job procedures, historical incident data, and conducting inspections to identify hazards.
- **Control Measures:** Once hazards are identified, formal hazard assessments focus on developing long-term control measures, such as engineering solutions, administrative policies, or the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **Ongoing Monitoring:** The effectiveness of the control measures is continuously monitored and revised if necessary to ensure that identified risks remain mitigated.



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Formal hazard assessments are generally conducted when new tasks are introduced, when operations change significantly, or at regular intervals as part of the organization's overall safety management program.

Field Level Hazard Assessments

Field-level hazard assessments (FLHA) focus on hazards that arise due to changing circumstances at a specific worksite. These assessments are dynamic and responsive to the evolving nature of field operations and are conducted at the point of work.

Key features of field-level hazard assessments include:

- **Timing:** Field-level hazard assessments are conducted before work begins at a site, when conditions at the worksite change (such as weather, equipment, or layout changes), or when non-routine tasks are introduced.
- **Immediate Focus:** The primary goal of FLHAs is to quickly identify any new hazards that may have emerged due to current site conditions. These hazards are assessed in real-time, and immediate control measures are implemented to ensure the safety of workers before work proceeds or continues.
- **Worker Involvement:** Workers are often actively involved in conducting field-level hazard assessments as they are most familiar with the specific conditions they face. This engagement helps ensure that hazards are recognized and controlled on the spot.
- **Rapid Action:** Unlike formal hazard assessments, FLHAs are designed for quick decision-making and action. Identified hazards are eliminated or controlled immediately, typically through administrative controls, safe work practices, or the use of appropriate PPE.
- **Adaptability:** These assessments are adaptable to varying and unpredictable conditions, making them an essential tool for maintaining safety in dynamic and high-risk environments.

Field-level hazard assessments are particularly important in industries where site conditions can change rapidly, such as construction, oil and gas, and emergency response. By conducting an FLHA before starting work or when conditions shift, workers ensure that any new risks are addressed, creating a safer work environment.

Conclusion

Both formal hazard assessments and field-level hazard assessments are essential tools for identifying and mitigating workplace hazards. While formal assessments provide a thorough and structured analysis of an organization's overall operations, field-level assessments are focused on immediate risks that arise due to changing site conditions. Together, these two types of assessments ensure that hazards are effectively managed both in the planning stages and during day-to-day operations, helping to protect workers and maintain compliance with health and safety standards.

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

Hazards can exist in all areas of a job site, and identifying and managing these risks is crucial to maintaining a safe work environment. The Hazard Identification Program is a proactive initiative designed to engage workers and subcontractors in the continuous identification and control of hazards to prevent injuries, incidents, or losses. The primary objective of this program is to reduce workplace incidents by utilizing the collective ability of workers and subcontractors to observe, identify, and document hazards before they result in harm.

Purpose of the Hazard Identification Program

The purpose of the Hazard Identification Program is to:

- **Reduce incidents** by empowering every worker and subcontractor to play an active role in identifying potential hazards in their work environment.
- **Enhance safety** by fostering a culture where hazard recognition is a shared responsibility, contributing to the continuous improvement of workplace safety.
- **Prevent injuries** and losses through early detection and elimination of hazards before they cause harm.

Hazard Detection Methods



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The Hazard Identification Program offers multiple opportunities to identify hazards through the following tools and processes:

- **Pre-Job Hazard Assessments (PJHAs):** Conducted before work begins, PJHAs provide a comprehensive review of potential hazards specific to the job tasks. These assessments help ensure that all foreseeable risks are accounted for and addressed before starting the work.
- **Field-Level Hazard Assessments (FLHAs):** These are conducted in real-time at the worksite before tasks begin and whenever conditions change. FLHAs ensure that workers are aware of immediate hazards specific to the work being performed and that appropriate controls are implemented to eliminate or mitigate the risks.
- **Regular Inspections:** Scheduled inspections at the worksite further support the identification of hazards. These inspections may be carried out by supervisors, safety representatives, or designated personnel, with the goal of maintaining a constant focus on safety and hazard control.

Worker and Subcontractor Involvement

At the core of the Hazard Identification Program is the active involvement of all workers and subcontractors. The program ensures that:

- **Active Participation:** Workers and subcontractors are not passive observers but are expected to actively participate in the hazard identification process, taking responsibility for their safety and the safety of their colleagues.
- **Hazard Communication:** All workers and subcontractors affected by identified hazards are promptly informed about the nature of the hazards and the measures in place to control or eliminate them. Clear communication ensures that everyone on site is aware of the risks and how to mitigate them.
- **Documentation of Participation:** Worker participation in hazard identification is documented by recording their names on written hazard assessment reports, including PJHAs and FLHAs. This documentation serves as a record of the worker's involvement and the completion of hazard identification activities.

Training and Competency

To ensure effective participation in the hazard identification process, all workers will receive training in the following areas:

- **Hazard Identification Process:** Workers will be trained to recognize and report hazards, conduct assessments, and participate in the documentation process.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Training will include the proper selection, use, and care of PPE required to mitigate specific hazards identified during the assessments.
- **Completion of Field-Level Hazard Assessments (FLHAs):** Workers will be instructed on how to complete FLHAs correctly, ensuring that they understand the importance of evaluating site conditions and identifying potential risks before beginning work.

The Hazard Identification Program is an essential component of workplace safety, providing a structured approach to hazard detection and control. By actively involving workers and subcontractors in the identification of hazards and providing them with the necessary tools and training, the program fosters a safer work environment. Through continuous hazard detection, documentation, and communication, the program helps prevent injuries, reduces incidents, and promotes a culture of safety and accountability at every worksite.

HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

There are four primary methods of hazard control used to minimize risks and create a safer workplace:

1. **Elimination or Substitution:** This is the most effective form of hazard control, as it involves removing the hazard entirely or substituting it with a less dangerous option. For example, eliminating the use of a toxic chemical and replacing it with a safer alternative reduces or removes the risk at its source.



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2. **Engineering Controls:** These involve redesigning the work area, installing guards on machinery, or making changes to the materials or equipment used. The goal of engineering controls is to remove the hazard from the work environment or isolate it from workers by designing the hazard out of the system.
3. **Administrative Controls:** These are procedural measures designed to minimize exposure to hazards. Examples include implementing general and specific rules, developing standard operating procedures, and job rotation to limit the amount of time workers are exposed to hazardous conditions like noise or vibration. By changing the way tasks are performed, the risk of injury can be significantly reduced.
4. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** PPE provides direct protection to the worker and should be used as a last resort after other control measures have been implemented. Examples of PPE include safety glasses, CSA-approved steel-toed boots, hard hats, respiratory equipment, and gloves. Workers must also receive proper training in the correct use and care of PPE to ensure its effectiveness in protecting against hazards.

Each control method plays a crucial role in workplace safety, with a focus on eliminating hazards where possible and using other controls to minimize risks when elimination is not feasible.



COMPLETING FORMAL HAZARD ASSESSMENTS

The formal hazard assessment and control process is a systematic, documented approach designed to prevent work-related illnesses or injuries to workers and others at a worksite. As a fundamental component of health and safety management systems, this process ensures that hazards are identified, evaluated, and controlled to maintain a safe working environment. Conducting hazard assessments helps prioritize safety initiatives by allocating resources to eliminate or mitigate risks effectively.

Employers are required to document the results of hazard assessments and demonstrate the actions taken to eliminate or control any identified hazards. A comprehensive report detailing the results and control measures must be prepared for reference and compliance purposes.

The steps for conducting a hazard assessment are as follows:

Step 1: Create an Inventory of Jobs and Tasks

The first step in conducting a formal hazard assessment is compiling an inventory of all jobs within the organization. This includes documenting the tasks associated with each role and the number of workers performing those tasks. The assessment should focus on tasks scheduled for the immediate future, rather than tasks planned for much later, to ensure that immediate risks are addressed. It is often helpful to start with the five to ten tasks that pose the highest risks.

Step 2: Identify Hazards

Each task should be examined to identify any potential health or safety hazards that workers may encounter. Involving workers who regularly perform these tasks is essential, as their insights help ensure that all hazards are identified. Additionally, hazard identification tools, such as hazard identification tables or checklists, can be utilized to ensure a thorough evaluation of risks.

Step 3: Assess Hazards



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Once hazards have been identified, it is essential to assess the level of risk each poses. This involves considering several key factors: the likelihood of the hazard causing harm, the conditions under which harm could occur, and how quickly an unsafe situation could develop. Additionally, it is important to evaluate the potential type of harm involved, the number of workers who could be affected, and whether there is a history of accidents or incidents related to the hazard. Ongoing monitoring should also be considered to ensure risks are properly managed over time. After evaluating these factors, the hazard should be ranked based on *frequency, severity, and probability* using a standardized assessment scale. This ranking will help prioritize hazards, ensuring that the most critical risks receive prompt attention.

Frequency of Exposure Rating

The frequency rating takes into account the number of workers performing the task, how often the task is performed, and how long workers are exposed to the hazard. The following table outlines a rating system for frequency:

FREQUENCY OF EXPOSURE			
Number of People Doing the Task	Number of Times Done/Person/Day Doing the Task		
	Less than 6	6-10	More than 10
Less than 2	1	1	2
3	1	2	3
More than 3	2	3	3

FREQUENCY OF EXPOSURE RATING



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Severity/Consequences Rating

The potential outcome or impact of an incident is assessed using the following scale:

SEVERITY / CONSEQUENCE					
Score	Injury	Health Loss	Damage	Business Impact	Environmental Impact
1	None	None	None	None	None
2	First Aid	Minor	\$100+	\$5000+	Minor Damage Internal \$1000+
3	Medical Aid	Regular Interruptions	\$5000+	10,000+	Moderate Damage Internal \$5000+
4	Lost Time	Regular Interruptions	\$10,000+	Moderate	Serious Damage \$10,000+
5	Disability	Serious Impact	\$20,000+	Serious	External or Internal \$25,000+
6	Fatality	Catastrophic	\$30,000+	Major	External or Internal \$50,000+

SEVERITY/CONSEQUENCES RATING TABLE

Probability of Loss Rating

The likelihood of an incident occurring is determined based on the complexity and danger of the task:

PROBABILITY OF LOSS	
0	Low Probability (have never seen it and do not expect it)
1	Moderate Probability (have seen it, but not common)
2	High Probability (have seen it more than once)

PROBABILITY OF LOSS RATING

Step 4: Prioritize Hazards

Based on the information gathered from the assessment, determine the risk rating for each task. The Hazard Rating is calculated using the following formula:

Hazard Rating = Frequency + Severity + Probability

This combined score results in a criticality rating for each hazard, allowing for prioritization. Hazards with higher criticality ratings receive prompt attention, while less critical hazards can be addressed over time.

It is imperative that Senior Management and Supervisors are knowledgeable about the critical (high hazard) tasks conducted in the workplace.

HAZARD/ CRITICALITY RATING	DESCRIPTION
A	High Hazard: Imminent danger requiring immediate corrective action (score ≥ 8)
B	Medium Hazard: Serious risk that should be addressed as soon as possible (score of 5–7)
C	Low Hazard: Less severe risks that can be managed with regular attention (score of 0–4)

Step 5: Determine Controls

Once hazards are prioritized, the next step is to implement appropriate controls to either eliminate or reduce the risks. Control measures fall into four main categories (as noted in 2.2):

1. **Elimination:** Removing the hazard entirely.
2. **Engineering Controls:** Implementing physical changes to the work environment.
3. **Administrative Controls:** Adjusting work procedures, policies, or training.



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4. **PPE:** Providing protective gear to workers.

It is important to evaluate the situation and, when necessary, apply a combination of control measures to effectively manage the hazard and minimize risk.

Step 6: Review Hazard Assessments

Formal hazard assessments must be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they remain relevant and effective in identifying and controlling workplace hazards. Regular reviews help ensure that safety protocols reflect current work practices and risk conditions. Formal hazard assessments should be reviewed under the following circumstances:

1. **At Regular Intervals:** Hazard assessments must be reviewed at reasonable intervals, at least every 36 months, to prevent unsafe conditions from developing and to ensure the assessment results and control measures remain current.
2. **Introduction of New Work Processes:** When new work processes or procedures are introduced, the hazard assessment must be reviewed and updated to account for any new risks associated with the changes.
3. **Operational Changes:** When there are significant changes to the operation, such as the introduction of new equipment or modifications to existing processes, the hazard assessment must be revised to reflect the new working conditions.
4. **Identification of Previously Unrecognized Hazards:** If site-specific hazard assessments, inspections, or incident investigations reveal previously unrecognized hazards, the formal hazard assessment must be updated to include these newly identified risks.

Regular reviews and updates of formal hazard assessments are essential to ensure they remain compliant with applicable health and safety regulations and continue to effectively identify and control workplace hazards. By maintaining an up-to-date assessment, organizations can address emerging risks, operational changes, and any newly identified hazards. This process is critical in protecting workers and ensuring that safety measures are consistently aligned with best practices and industry standards. Furthermore, regular updates help reinforce the commitment to a safe work environment and ensure that hazard controls remain effective in preventing incidents and injuries.

COMPLETING A FIELD-LEVEL HAZARD ASSESSMENT

A field-level hazard assessment is conducted at the job site to identify hazards that may not have been considered in the formal hazard assessment. This assessment ensures that all workers are aware of potential risks introduced by the specific work environment or conditions. It is critical that all workers participate in the field-level assessment along with their supervisor. The assessment is carried out before work begins and is repeated at appropriate intervals, particularly when new work processes are introduced, operational changes occur, or before any significant additions or alterations to the job site, or for any non-routine tasks.

The aim is to ensure that all workers are aware of potential hazards and that effective control measures are implemented before work begins, safeguarding health and safety on-site.

Step 1: Identify Task or Job

Begin by clearly identifying the specific task or job to be performed. This includes understanding the work environment, the equipment to be used, and the conditions under which the task will be carried out.

Step 2: Inspect the Worksite

Conduct a thorough inspection of the worksite. Look for any potential hazards that may not have been identified in a formal hazard assessment. Consider physical hazards (e.g., slips, trips, falls), environmental hazards (e.g., weather, temperature, lighting), equipment-related hazards (e.g., malfunctioning machinery), and process-related hazards (e.g., hazardous materials or chemicals).

Step 3: Involve Workers



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Engage all workers involved in the task, as well as supervisors, in the hazard identification process. Workers are often familiar with the specific risks they face and can provide valuable input. Involving them ensures that all hazards, including less obvious ones, are identified.

Step 4: Identify and Assess Hazards

Determine all potential hazards that could affect the safety of workers. These might include new or unfamiliar conditions, environmental factors, or task-specific risks. Assess the severity and likelihood of each hazard causing harm, considering how quickly an unsafe condition could develop and how many workers could be affected.

Step 5: Implement Control Measures

Once hazards are identified, they must be assessed on-site, and appropriate controls must be implemented immediately. Controls are designed to either eliminate the hazard or reduce the risk to a safe and acceptable level before work begins. Controls may include:

Control measures fall into four main categories (as noted in 2.2):

1. Elimination
2. Engineering Controls
3. Administrative Controls
4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Step 6: Document the Assessment

Record the results of the FLHA, including identified hazards, the control measures implemented, and the names of all workers involved in the process. This documentation serves as a reference for future assessments and can be used to ensure accountability.

Step 7: Worker Participation and Sign-Off

Once the FLHA is completed, all participating workers must sign off on the document to confirm their involvement in the process and their understanding of the identified hazards and control measures. This ensures that every worker is aware of their responsibilities and the safety protocols in place.

Step 8: Communicate with Workers

Share the results of the hazard assessment with all workers involved. Ensure that they fully understand the hazards identified and the controls implemented. Clear communication is essential to ensure everyone follows the safety measures.

Step 9: Monitor and Review

Continuously monitor the worksite and task for any changes that could introduce new hazards. Repeat the FLHA if conditions change, new hazards are identified, or a non-routine task is introduced. Adjust control measures as needed to maintain safety.

By following these steps, including active worker participation and sign-off, a field-level hazard assessment ensures that all potential hazards are identified, communicated, and controlled, creating a safer work environment for all.

Chief Elected Official

Chief Administrative Officer