



Hanover County Safety & Risk Management Communication

Safety & Risk Topic of the Week:

Hazards are all around us at work and home, and the threats can take many different forms. It can be a cord stretched over a walkway, a repetitive process, a worksite that is too cold or a burnt out lightbulb on an outside path. A hazard can be defined as any existing or potential condition that, by itself or by interacting with other variables, can result in death, injury, property damage or other loss. That's why it is so important for all of us to always be on the lookout.

No matter what work environment you are in, hazards can be categorized into four different types:

- Chemical: For instance, inhaling, ingesting or having your skin come into contact with some kind of chemical substance
- Physical: This could be slipping or falling, being struck by or against something, being exposed to fire or electrical hazards
- Biological: For example, being exposed to bloodborne pathogens, molds, wastewater, plant or insect poisons
- Ergonomic: This could be working in an awkward posture, repetitive work, forceful exertions or work station design

Common hazards seen in the workplace include:

- Overall Environment: lighting, noise, temperature and humidity
- Workstation Design: control and display design, location and orientation of work surfaces, chair design, task/job design
- Movement and Repetitions: force, vibration, postural demands, physical demands, work pace, tool design, size and shape of work objects, weight of work equipment and objects
- Machinery and Equipment Design: Movement required to operate, force required to operate, vibration, postural demands and pace required to keep up with equipment

Don't forget to also look to your own body condition for possible hazards. For instance, not getting the proper rest or feeling a new pain can be the first sign that something is wrong.

When hazards are identified, it is critical to ensure they are taken care of through one or all of the following methods:

- Engineer hazards out, or completely change the process or the environment to eliminate the hazard. Or substitute the hazard by replacing it with a safe alternative.
- Apply administrative controls, where you use policies or procedures to prevent exposure to hazards. This might include having a system to properly handle chemicals or having worker rotation on a repetitive project.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment, such as wearing gloves or eye wear to create a barrier between you and the hazard.

It's best to report hazards as soon as they are noticed. Don't assume that someone else has seen and reported it already, even if it seems obvious to you. It's better to have multiple reports on the same hazard than none at all. Prompt reporting ensures the hazard is corrected quickly to avoid potential injury or loss

Hazards will always be out there, but if we recognize them and address them, we can keep each other safe!

Safety & Risk Fact of the Week:

Although most safety guidelines and standards place hazard recognition as the first step of risk management, researchers found that only 6.7% of supervisors could identify all the site hazards on a jobsite.



Safety & Risk Spotlight:

Below are two minute videos on common workplace hazards. Try out your hazard recognition skills today!

- [Electrical Safety](#)
- [Office Hazards \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Office Hazards \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Housekeeping](#)
- [Lifting](#)
- [Fire Safety](#)