



Creating A Safer Environment with Safety Meetings

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), one of the most effective ways to promote a safe working environment is to get involved in company safety meetings. Since safety is our top priority, we've gathered some tips to help you make the most out of your company safety meetings.

Why Safety Meetings?

These informal, brief meetings allow you the opportunity to stay up to date on potential workplace hazards and safe workplace practices, such as machinery use, tool handling, equipment use and safety-minded attitudes—basically anything that may contribute to incidents or illnesses in your workplace.

Work as a Team

Each person in the workplace, from employees to supervisors and management, must work together to achieve the safety goals at your establishment. With everyone pitching in ideas and suggestions, you can solve problems and get through tough situations.

Regardless of your job title, working safely is everyone's responsibility!

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Loss Control & Risk Management Solutions

There is never a one size fits all approach to developing a safety system. The common elements existing in almost all health and safety systems are management leadership, worker participation, hazard identification and assessment, hazard prevention and control, education and training, and program evaluation and improvement. These elements are both interrelated and interdependent but necessary to ensure the success of any program.

Call us today to discuss your organization's loss control and safety programs or learn more about the services and experience our team has to offer.



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Hierarchy of Controls

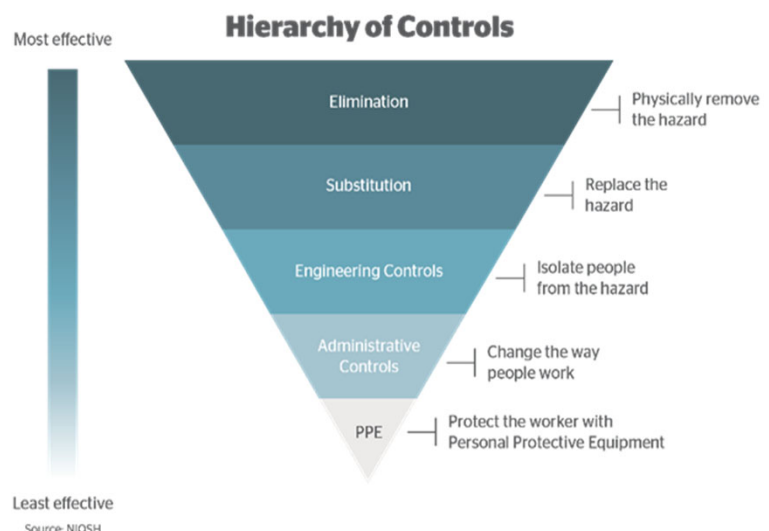
The hierarchy of controls is a widely accepted system for minimizing or eliminating employee exposure to particular hazards. The hierarchy of controls examines hazard control methodologies from a tiered perspective, ranking them from most effective to least effective as follows:

- A. Elimination**—Elimination refers to physically removing a specific hazard from your workplace altogether. This is one of the most effective ways to manage on-the-job risks and involves altering policies, procedures, materials, parts, products, equipment or tools you use to help workers perform their duties safely.
 - Example: Hazardous Chemical – If the chemical is no longer used in the workplace, remove the chemical completely.
- B. Substitution**—Substitution refers to replacing materials, processes or equipment with a less hazardous equivalent. This is typically used when elimination is not possible.
 - Using the same chemical hazard example outlined above, substitution could involve swapping the chemical used in the workplace for a less toxic one that's just as effective.
- C. Engineering controls**—Engineering controls refer to denying access to a specific hazard. This can include redesigning equipment or work processes to reduce the frequency of dangerous tasks, or isolating a hazard altogether by installing screens or barriers.
 - Using our chemical hazard example, engineering controls could involve installing a ventilation system.
- D. Administrative controls**—Administrative controls refer to changing the way your employees work to limit specific hazards. These are implemented when engineering controls can't be used and relate to establishing new processes and procedures for safe work. Administrative controls could include altering policies, posting signage and training employees.
 - Under our chemical hazard example, administrative controls might involve limiting an employee's exposure to the chemical in question.

- E. Personal protective equipment (PPE)**—In general, providing employees with PPE is considered to be the least effective hazard control method. PPE plays an important role in worker safety and can protect workers from common workplace hazards.
 - For our chemical hazard example, PPE could include the use of a respirator.

Follow the steps below to use the hierarchy of controls to address workplace hazards:

- 1. Identify Hazards and Control Options**—Determine the types of hazards that are present in your workplace. Then evaluate your control options by collecting, organizing and reviewing the following sources of hazard information.
- 2. Select Controls** — Eliminating or substituting hazards where possible. If elimination and substitution can't be accomplished, firms should prioritize controls based on the hierarchy of controls, emphasizing engineering and administrative controls before the use of PPE.
- 3. Develop a Hazard Control Plan** — Developing a control plan will help outline and communicate how your selected hazard controls will be implemented organizationally.
- 4. Implement Selected Controls** —Hazards should be addressed based on their severity and potential to harm workers.
- 5. Ensure Existing Controls Are Effective** — conduct regular inspections to confirm that any controls you've implemented are working as designed.



Lockout/Tagout Safety

Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) is used to prevent the unexpected startup or activation of a machine or equipment during service and/or maintenance operations that might cause injury. In short: lockout/tagout makes certain that no one performing service or maintenance work gets injured or killed.

Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout)

Machines and equipment used in the workplace will inevitably require maintenance. Many of these machines can be dangerous for employees to work on due to having to reach into areas of operation where possible hazards exist.

Controlling hazardous energy, also known as lockout, ensures that maintenance can be performed safely and that a machine's sources of energy are locked and can't be turned on.

In some situations, lockout may not be possible. When this happens, the tagout process is used. Tagout refers to simply tagging a machine with language instructing employees not to use it, while the former physically prevents use.

Hazardous Sources of Energy

When applying lockout to a machine, it is important to understand all of its sources of energy. Possible hazardous sources of energy that employees may be dealing with include

- Electrical
- Hydraulic
- Mechanical (e.g., moving parts)
- Pneumatic and gas
- Gravity
- Chemical (e.g., acids, bases or solvents)
- Thermal (e.g., heat or extreme cold sources)
- Steam

Cord and Plug Exception

If a piece of equipment is connected to a power source using a cord and plug, and the exposure to hazardous energy can be controlled by unplugging the cord and having exclusive control of the plug, lockout is not necessary.

Training Requirements

All employees must receive LOTO training but there are three different levels that apply to the three types of employees OSHA recognizes.

1. **Authorized employees** are those who perform maintenance work and who will initiate lockout procedures. These can be maintenance or production employees performing service/maintenance work.
2. **Affected employees** are those who work in areas where LOTO is performed.
3. **Other employees** are those who may pass through LOTO areas and simply need to know not to touch padlocks or attempt to re-energize equipment that has been locked out.

Are You Authorized?

It is important to remember that the tag and lockout device should be removed only by the person who originally attached them. The supervisor—and only the supervisor—may remove these devices in case of illness or absence of the person who attached them.

Take Time for Safety

Many people do not want to take time to go through the safe lockout procedures. Others may hurriedly attempt to make adjustments, which they aren't authorized to handle, or do not take the time to shut off machines before making repairs. Sooner or later, people in a hurry are involved in accidents.

Never assume that other people will see you making adjustments and will know that they should not turn on the machine.

Did you know...?

In 2023, the OSHA standard for Lockout/Tagout had 2,554 violations.

How to Avoid This Violation

1. Create a LOTO program that protects employees from all sources of hazardous energy.
2. Create written procedures that cover the control of hazardous energy.

Avoiding Electrical Shock

As employees go about their work tasks that involve electric tools, electrical outlets or wiring, you may not give much thought about the hazards electricity can pose. Yet, it's vital to take the proper safety precautions to avoid an electrical shock—a potentially life-threatening injury resulting from direct contact with a high-voltage source.

Electrical Shock Explained

According to OSHA, electricity travels in closed circuits, normally through a conductor. However, sometimes a person's body—an efficient conductor of electricity—mistakenly becomes part of the electric circuit. An electrical shock can occur when a person's body completes the current path with one of the following components:

- Both wires of an electric circuit
- One wire of an energized circuit and the ground
- A metal part that accidentally becomes energized
- Another conductor that is carrying a current

Electrical Safety Measures

A key factor in preventing electrical shocks is maintaining electric tools. As such, always examine tools for these conditions:

- Defective or broken insulation
- Improper or poorly made connections to terminals
- Broken or otherwise defective plugs
- Loose or broken switches
- Sparking brushes



If any of these conditions exist, have the tool repaired, employees must report it to a supervisor and—above all—do not use it. Be sure to follow these measures:

- Do not use frayed wiring or outlets with burn marks, cracked casing or sparks coming off them. Avoid two-prong outlets when possible.
- Refrain from repairing or adjusting portable electric tools while they are plugged in.
- Do not use portable electric tools in the presence of flammable vapors or gases (unless they are designed for such use).
- Keep portable electric tools, plugs and wiring away from water and damp surfaces at all times. Never touch these items with wet hands.
- Use the required personal protective equipment for all electrical tasks, even if it may seem unnecessary.

If you or a co-worker receives an electrical shock, it's crucial to seek immediate medical attention. Even if the victim does not exhibit signs of injury or harm, internal injuries may have resulted from the shock.



Confined Space Identification

A confined space incident is not very common, but it can be the most deadly of all worksite incidents. This is because the hazards tend to be underestimated and misunderstood. Many fatalities linked to confined spaces involve not one, but two victims: the worker and the rescuer. Knowing the difference between a confined space and a permit-required confined space is important for your safety when working in these environments.

Confined Space Characteristics

OSHA standards define confined spaces as meeting the three following criteria:

- The space is large enough for an employee to enter.
- The space has limited means of entry. This requirement is sometimes misunderstood as meaning that the space has only one entrance and exit, but it actually refers to the physical ease with which workers can get in and out. Needing a ladder or having to duck under a low doorway are examples of limited means of entry and exit.
- The space is not designed for continuous occupancy, such as due to a lack of ventilation, lighting or sufficient room to work and move around.

Examples of confined spaces include:

- Storage tanks
- Ship compartments
- Pits
- Silos
- Degreasers
- Boilers
- Storm drains
- Ventilation and exhaust ducts
- Manholes
- Tunnels
- Underground utility vaults
- Pipelines
- Tanks
- Basements without steps

Permit-Required Confined Spaces

A permit-required confined space includes one or more of the following characteristics: contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere; contains material that could engulf an entrant; has a design that could cause an occupant to become trapped or asphyxiated; and/or contains other serious health or safety hazards.

Examples of permit-required confined spaces include:

- Sewers
- Rendering plants
- Workplaces where portable tanks are fabricated and serviced

The confined space has a hazardous atmosphere, such as:

- **Oxygen deficient**—Concentration less than 19.5%
- **Oxygen enriched**—Concentration greater than 23.5%
- **Flammable**—Gas, vapor or mist greater than 10% of its lower explosive limit, or airborne combustible dust at a concentration greater than or equal to its lower explosive limit
- **Toxic gas**—Carbon monoxide or other hazards that can cause death, incapacitation or impairment

How to Avoid This Violation

OSHA requires several safeguards to ensure safety in confined spaces that could pose hazards to a worker, including the following:

- **A written confined-space permit program**—OSHA requires a written program that identifies and evaluates the hazards that may be present. It also requires testing the atmospheric conditions of a confined space, and includes instructions for summoning rescue and emergency services.
- **Entry permits**—Employees must receive an entry permit, signed by the entry supervisor, before performing work in a confined space.
- **Worker training**—Employers must provide all necessary training for employees who may enter a permit-required confined space.

ATMOSPHERIC HAZARDS:

Odorless Gases

The presence of toxic gas is especially dangerous because the substances often exist in a confined space with limited escape paths.

Workers have the potential for exposure to many kinds of toxic gases, so it is important to recognize warning signs to some of the most common types so you can act quickly if you suspect exposure.

Atmosphere Hazards

Exposure to chemical vapors, gases or particulates above the permissible exposure level (PEL) can cause damage to your health and impair your ability to exit the confined space. Notably, almost all substances can be toxic at some concentration.

Due to the lack of ventilation in many spaces, concentrations of toxic substances may be higher than they would in a normal atmosphere.

Two common toxic substances found in confined spaces include carbon monoxide and hydrogen sulfide.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that's produced by the incomplete burning of material containing carbon, such as natural gas, gasoline, kerosene, oil, propane, coal or wood. It displaces oxygen in the blood when breathed in, depriving the heart, brain and other vital organs of oxygen. Per OSHA, the PEL for carbon monoxide is 50 parts per million.

Symptoms of exposure include:

- Headache
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Confusion
- Loss of consciousness

Hydrogen Sulfide

Hydrogen sulfide is a colorless, flammable and extremely hazardous gas that has a rotten egg smell. It occurs naturally in crude petroleum, natural gas and hot springs. In addition, hydrogen sulfide is produced by the bacterial breakdown of organic materials, and human and animal wastes (e.g., sewage). Per OSHA, the PEL for hydrogen sulfide is 10 parts per million.

Low levels of exposure symptoms:

- Eye irritation
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

High Levels of exposure Symptoms:

- Unconsciousness
- Breathing difficulties
- Death

Engineering Controls

Many atmospheric hazards have few or no warning signs, making them particularly dangerous. To detect and control atmospheric hazards, an air monitor must be used.

Air quality must be monitored before workers are permitted to enter a confined space. Air must be continuously monitored during entry. This should be done from multiple heights, as some chemicals may be lighter or heavier than air.

Ventilation is occasionally used to improve confined space atmospheres. Positive pressure ventilation is the most effective. When ventilating, the fan intake must be located in clean air.

As with any workplace hazard, always be sure provide your employees with the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent toxic gas exposure. With poisonous gases, you might not realize you are in danger until it is too late.



OSHA'S FINAL RULE:

Worker Walkaround Representative

On March 29, 2024, OSHA announced its final rule that clarifies the rights of employees to authorize a representative to accompany an OSHA compliance safety and health officer (CSHO) during a walkaround inspection of their workplace. The final rule is scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on April 1, 2024. The rule will go into effect **May 31, 2024**.

Overview

OSHA gives employers and employees the right to authorize a representative to accompany OSHA officials during a workplace inspection. The final rule clarifies that employees may authorize another employee to serve as their representative or select a third-party nonemployee.

The representatives may join the CSHO during inspections if, according to the CSHO's judgment, there is sufficient reason to believe they can contribute to the inspection process.

In addition, the final rule also makes it clear that third-party involvement may be warranted due to the third parties' relevant expertise, experience or language skills concerning workplace hazards or conditions. OSHA states it determined that these final rule clarifications facilitate workplace inspections by empowering employees to choose representatives who can effectively assist the CSHO during physical inspections.

The final rule's revisions better align OSHA's regulation with the OSH Act and enable the agency to conduct more effective inspections. In addition, OSHA states that this final rule creates a return to a more fair, balanced approach that Congress had originally intended.

Employer Next Steps

Employers should review the new rule and allow employees to identify and select a trusted and knowledgeable representative to assist in facilitating a CSHO's information-gathering in case of an OSHA inspection.

Mediterranean Chicken and White Bean Salad



Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup skinless cooked chicken (diced into ½-inch pieces)
- 15.5 oz. can low-sodium white beans (drained, rinsed with cold water)
- 1 cucumber (peeled, diced into ½-inch pieces)
- ¼ red or white onion (peeled, chopped into ½-inch pieces)
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. dried basil or parsley leaves
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper

Preparations

- Put all ingredients in the bowl and gently toss.
- Serve it immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to two days.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Total calories	297
Total fat	11 g
Protein	20 g
Sodium	288 mg
Carbohydrate	31 g
Dietary fiber	8 g
Saturated fat	2 g
Total sugars	2 g

Source: MyPlate

April is National Distracted Driving Month

The National Safety Council recognizes April as Distracted Driving Awareness Month. This event is intended to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and encourage motorists like you to minimize potential distractions behind the wheel.

There are three main types of distractions that can interfere with drivers' attentiveness behind the wheel, including:

1. **Visual distractions**—These distractions involve motorists taking their eyes off the road.
2. **Manual distractions**—Such distractions entail motorists removing their hands from the steering wheel.
3. **Cognitive distractions**—These distractions stem from motorists taking their minds off driving

Distracted Driving Prevention Tips

- Put away your phone
- Plan your trip before you leave
- Don't fumble with your playlist
- Secure passengers
- Avoid multitasking
- Stay focused

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reported that more than 2,800 people are killed and 400,000 are injured in crashes involving a distracted driver each year. It's crucial to take steps to prevent distracted driving.

Notable Dates This Spring:

- April 24: Administrative Professionals Day
- May: [Building Safety Month](#)
- May: [National Electrical Safety Month](#)
- May 5-11: [National Hurricane Preparedness Week](#)
- May 6-10: [Construction Safety Week & National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls](#)
- May 31: Worker Walkaround Rule Takes Effect
- June: [National Safety Month](#)

What does one electrician say to another when they run into each other out in public?



Watt's up!!