



TRAINING MANUAL

HOW TO IDENTIFY HAZARDS

Definitions:

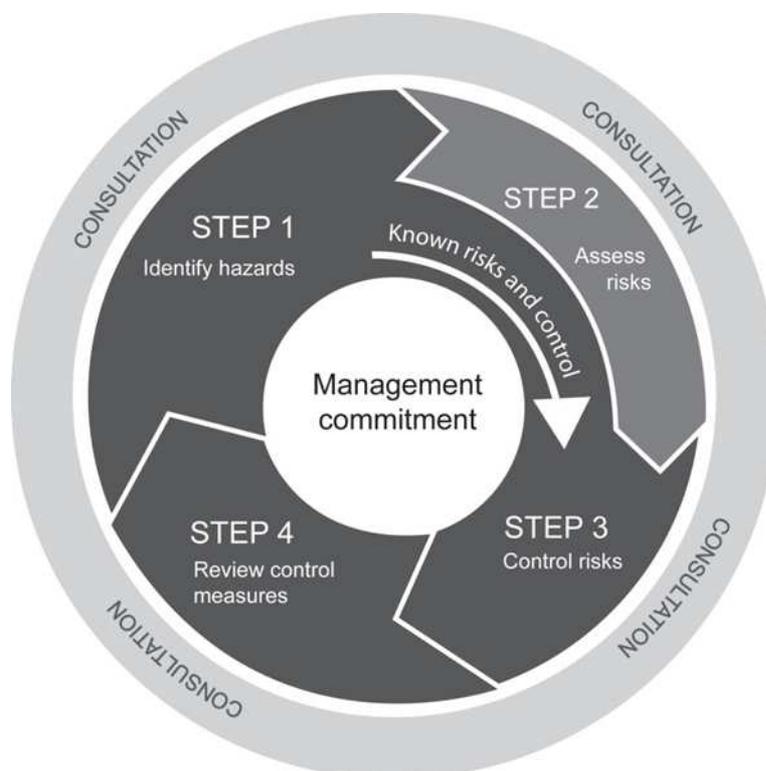
HAZARD	Anything which has the potential to cause injury or illness to people or damage to property or the environment.
RISK	The chance of someone becoming injured or ill as a result of a workplace hazard. NOTE: The significance of the risk is determined by considering the likelihood of it happening and the consequences if it happens.
RISK CONTROL	The action taken to eliminate or reduce the likelihood that exposure to a hazard will result in injury or illness to people or damage to property or the environment.

A step-by-step process

A safe and healthy workplace does not happen by chance or guesswork. You have to think about what could go wrong at your workplace and what the consequences could be. Then you must do whatever you can (whatever is 'reasonably practicable') to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks arising from your business or undertaking.

This process is known as *risk management* and involves four steps:

- **Identify hazards** – find out what could cause harm
- **Assess risks** – understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening
- **Control risks** – implement the most effective control measure that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances
- **Review control measures** to ensure they are working as planned.



Risk management is a proactive process that helps respond to change and facilitate continuous improvement. It will be planned, systematic and cover all reasonably foreseeable hazards and associated risks.

STEP 1 – HOW TO IDENTIFY HAZARDS

Identifying hazards in the workplace involves finding things and situations that could potentially cause harm to people. Hazards generally arise from the following aspects of work and their interaction:

- physical work environment
- equipment, materials and substances used
- work tasks and how they are performed
- work design and management

Some hazards are part of the work process, such as mechanical hazards, noise or toxic properties of substances. Other hazards result from equipment or machine failures and misuse, chemical spills and structural failures.

A piece of plant, substance or a work process may have many different hazards. Each of these hazards needs to be identified. For example, a production line may have dangerous moving parts, noise, hazards associated with manual tasks and psychological hazards due to the pace of work.

Table 1 below lists some common types of workplace hazards.

Table 1 Examples of common hazards

Hazard	Potential harm
Manual tasks	Overexertion or repetitive movement can cause muscular strain.
Gravity	Falling objects, falls, slips and trips of people can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, concussion, permanent injuries or death.
Electricity	Potential ignition source. Exposure to live electrical wires can cause shock, burns or death from electrocution.
Machinery and equipment	Being hit by moving vehicles, or being caught by moving parts of machinery can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, permanent injuries or death.
Hazardous chemicals	Chemicals (such as acids, hydrocarbons, heavy metals) and dusts (such as asbestos and silica) can cause respiratory illnesses, cancers or dermatitis.
Extreme temperatures	Heat can cause burns, heat stroke or fatigue. Cold can cause hypothermia or frost bite.
Noise	Exposure to loud noise can cause permanent hearing damage.
Radiation	Ultra violet, welding arc flashes, micro waves and lasers can cause burns, cancer or blindness.
Biological	Micro-organisms can cause hepatitis, legionnaires' disease, Q fever, HIV/AIDS or allergies.
Psychosocial hazards	Effects of work-related stress, bullying, violence and work-related fatigue.

STEP 2 – HOW TO FIND HAZARDS

Inspect the workplace

Look at how you actually work, how plant and equipment is used, what chemicals are around and what they are used for, what safe or unsafe work practices exist as well as the general state of housekeeping.

Things to look out for include the following:

- Does the work environment enable workers to carry out work without risks to health and safety?
(E.g. space for unobstructed movement, adequate ventilation and lighting)
- How suitable are the tools and equipment for the task and how well are they maintained?
- Have any changes occurred in the workplace which may affect health and safety?

Hazards are not always obvious. Some hazards can affect health over a long period of time or may result in stress (such as bullying) or fatigue (such as long working hours). Also think about hazards that we may bring into your workplace as such as new, used or hired goods.

As you walk around, you may spot straightforward problems and action should be taken on these immediately, for example cleaning up a spill, putting away items into their correct place. If you find a situation where there is immediate or significant danger to people, move those persons to a safer location first and attend to the hazard urgently.

Make a list of all the hazards you can find, including the ones you know are already being dealt with, to ensure that nothing is missed.

Consult workers

Ask other workers about any health and safety problems they have encountered in doing their work and any near misses or incidents that have not been reported.

Worker surveys may also be undertaken to obtain information about matters such as workplace bullying, as well as muscular aches and pains that can signal potential hazards.

Review available information

Information and advice about hazards and risks relevant to particular industries and types of work is available from regulators, industry associations, unions, technical specialists and safety consultants.

Manufacturers and suppliers also provide information about hazards and safety precautions for specific substances (safety data sheets), plant or processes (instruction manuals).

Reporting

Complete the FIRST page only of the *QMS F-006 Hazard Near Miss Reporting* and hand to your Supervisor, Safety Rep or Workplace Safety Advisor.

Further Information

- Safety Management System Policy
- Procedure OP002 Hazard Reporting