



Public Sector Safety Talks - APERMA

Eliminating Hazards

Not a day goes by that we don't come across some form of hazard at work, at home and during our day-to-day activities. Some hazards require a trained eye to identify, but more often than not we simply don't notice them—even if they're obvious.

Have you ever come upon a wet spill on the floor and kept on walking? Do you think just because no one has been hurt at work that the environment must be safe? The brain has a tendency to rationalize the familiar. Hazards disappear into the background as we become accustomed to seeing them.

Unintentional injuries are the fourth leading cause of death for all ages, and the #1 cause of death for people age 1–44. Many of these can be prevented by becoming aware of our surroundings and learning to see hazards. And, we can train ourselves to do just that.

Hazards at Work

Hazards can vary quite a lot depending on the work environment. First, you have to know what the hazards are for your particular work environment. If you are a safety leader, that means getting out from behind your desk and walking all areas of the organization.

Talk to employees and observe their behaviors

- Get an understanding of any injuries that have occurred
- Discuss hazard classification
- Gear safety training to the specific needs of your organization; one size does not fit all
- Incorporate safety into employee wellness programs

Even if you're not a safety manager, it's important to be on the lookout for hazards and get in the habit of reporting them. Here are some things to look for:

- Falls are the #2 cause of workplace death (after vehicle crashes). Examine scaffolding, ladders and walking surfaces.
- Fire hazards come in various forms; examine electrical panels and wires, compressed gas containers, chemical storage and other potential sources of fire.
- Machines must have guards around moving parts, like drill bits or rotating shafts.
- Make sure the work area is clear of trip hazards and exits are not blocked; housekeeping is of critical importance.



Please contact Jim Bergemann or Kathi Williams at 800-274-2788 with any questions regarding the above material.

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