

Recognizing Workplace Hazards: An Overview

This slideshow is intended to support safe and healthy workplaces in Nova Scotia.

It is an information and awareness resource that links to the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Division, the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety websites. Hyperlinks to these sites are in blue and underlined.

This slideshow may be downloaded and used to help begin the conversation about workplace health, safety and injury prevention.

Welcome!

Knowing how to recognize and identify health and safety hazards in workplaces helps keep ourselves and others safe at work. This includes:

- Understanding types of hazards,
- Knowing hazards are impacted by contributing factors
- Assessing risks so we can see potential for harm,
- Thinking about what's in front of us, and
- Making hazard recognition a daily part of our work!

A hazard is any source of potential damage, harm or adverse health effects on something or someone under certain conditions at work. A hazard can cause harm to people and to organizations.

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2016

Health hazards:

- Chemical
- Physical
- Ergonomic
- Biological

Safety hazards :

- Machinery
- Energy
- Material handling
- Work practices

Hazards also influenced by PEMEP:

People: actions taken/not taken

Equipment: state/maintenance/proper/improper

Materials: state/maintenance/proper/improper

Environment: state/condition

Process: proper/improper/followed/not followed

All workplaces have contributing factors!

Recognizing hazards and assessing risk

Risk is the *chance or probability* that a person will be harmed ...if exposed to a hazard. It may also apply to situations with property or equipment loss.

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2016

Risk assessment is proactive. It's what we do to recognize, identify and measure hazards, so we can put safety controls in place.

| | Level of exposure | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------|------------|--------|----------|
| Severity for injury | Frequent | Likely | Occasional | Seldom | Unlikely |
| Major | E | E | H | H | M |
| Serious | E | H | H | M | L |
| Minor | H | M | M | L | L |
| Negligible | M | L | L | L | L |

“E” = extreme risk
 “H” = high risk
 “M” = moderate risk
 “L” = low risk

Seeing hazards and assessing risk go hand in hand at work!

| Hazard | Task being assessed | Risk assessment score | Priority for action |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Chemical | | | |
| Physical | | | |
| Ergonomic | | | |
| Biological | | | |
| Machinery | | | |
| Energy | | | |
| Material Handling | | | |
| Work Practices | | | |

All tasks have hazards;
doing risk assessment supports proper safety measures....

| Hazard | Task being assessed | Risk assessment score | Priority for action |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Chemical | Cleaning a work surface | | |
| Physical | Climbing a ladder | | |
| Ergonomic | Sitting and typing | | |
| Biological | Cleaning washrooms | | |
| Machinery | Using dolly to move items | | |
| Energy | Trying to fix photocopier | | |
| Material Handling | Moving boxes of paper | | |
| Work Practices | Working cash alone | | |

... it helps us understand what tasks can have higher risk for us, and

| Hazard | Task being assessed | Risk assessment score | Priority for action |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Chemical | Cleaning a work surface | 'M' (minor + likely) | |
| Physical | Climbing a ladder | 'H' (serious + likely) | |
| Ergonomic | Sitting and typing | 'E' (serious + frequent) | |
| Biological | Cleaning washrooms | 'L' (seldom + minor) | |
| Machinery | Using dolly to move items | 'M' (seldom + serious) | |
| Energy | Trying to fix photocopier | 'H' (occasional + major) | |
| Material Handling | Moving boxes of paper | 'E' (frequent + serious) | |
| Work Practices | Working cash alone | 'E' (frequent + serious/major) | |

...it can help us determine a *priority* for how we respond to hazards.

| Hazard | Task being assessed | Risk assessment score | Priority for action |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Chemical | Cleaning a work surface | 'M' (minor + likely) | 3 |
| Physical | Climbing a ladder | 'H' (serious + likely) | 2 |
| Ergonomic | Sitting and typing | 'E' (serious + frequent) | 1 |
| Biological | Cleaning washrooms | 'L' (seldom + minor) | 4 |
| Machinery | Using dolly to move items | 'M' (seldom + serious) | 3 |
| Energy | Trying to fix photocopier | 'H' (occasional + major) | 2 |
| Material Handling | Moving boxes of paper | 'E' (frequent + serious) | 1 |
| Work Practices | Working cash alone | 'E' (frequent + serious/major) | 1 |

Effective hazard recognition needs us to be:

- Understanding of the types of hazards,
- Knowing that contributing factors impact hazards
- Assessing risks so we can see potential for harm,
- Thinking about what's in front of us, and
- Making hazard recognition a daily part of our work!

To learn more about hazard recognition and workplace health and safety law, please visit:

[Nova Scotia LAE Safety Branch and OHS Division](#)

[NS OHS Act and Regulations](#)

[Government of Canada](#)

Employment & Social Development (ESDC)

What's next?

What changes could be made in your workplace with this information?

If you'd like more information about workplace health and safety please view our other injury prevention resources or email info@wcb.gov.ns.ca.

References and Resources:

WCB Nova Scotia : www.worksafeforlife.ca

WCB Nova Scotia: www.wcb.ns.ca

Call toll-free Halifax 1-800-870-3331 and Sydney 1-800-880-0003

[Small Business Safety Toolkit](#)

[Small Business Safety Toolkit Cost Calculator](#)

NS LAE - Safety Branch: OHS Division:
www.novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety

View OHS News: www.gov.ns.ca/lae/healthandsafety/ohsnews.asp

Email: ohsdivision@gov.ns.ca

Call toll-free: Nova Scotia 1-800-952-2687 and 902-424-5400

Canadian Centre Occupational Health & Safety: Nova Scotia E-Learning:
http://www.ccohs.ca/catalog/courses_list_nova.php