Job Hazard Assessment Vs. Safe Work Procedures

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

A Safe Work Procedure (SWP) is a document that is used to capture all of the information related to the safe execution of the task. The SWP includes information such as the name of the task, hazards associated with the task, personal protective equipment required, training required, references to regulatory requirements, and identifies the person (typically a Chairperson or manager) who has approved the procedure. They are an excellent tool for training and refreshing workers on the proper way to carry out the task. SWPs must be current within three years, accessible to workers at all times, and amended when necessary.

The Job Safety Analysis is the act of getting a group of qualified individuals (supervisors, senior employees, safety personnel) together to:

1. Observe a task being performed.
2. Identify the potential hazards for each step in the task.
3. Assess the risk potential and severity of each hazard.
4. Brainstorm appropriate controls according to the risk levels identified.

The JHA development team should then take the information gathered from conducting the Job Hazard Analysis (or Analyses), and write an official Safe Work Procedure. This Safe Work Procedure will in all likelihood be an exact copy of the latest iteration of the JHA. It is the document that should be approved by senior management and circulated among the workers. It is the roadmap for performing a task safely. It remains unchanged until a subsequent JHA (which should be conducted regularly) identifies a new hazard or comes up with a better control.

Overview:

The Difference between Job Hazard Assessment & Safe Work Procedures

They are the same thing, but represent different stages on a timeline. JHA is the Process, and the Safe Work Procedure is the outcome.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Safe work procedures are based on a task analysis which breaks down the job into specific steps and the conduct of a risk assessment on each of the steps to identify hazards, assess the level of risk and determine suitable control strategies. This information is then included in the operating instructions provided to the employee and utilised both in training and competency assessments.

Where to start?

1. Identify tasks that require safe work procedures
2. Develop safe work procedures for tasks that are likely to harm your workers if any risks are not addressed. Many tasks are unlikely to expose your workers to risks, so documented safe work procedures are unnecessary.
3. Do a thorough inspection of the workplace and a complete review of all work tasks? Perhaps you have overlooked risks associated with:

   - handling chemicals
   - lifting and moving objects
   - working at heights
   - slips, trips and falls
   - housekeeping
   - electrical equipment.

4. Speak with your workers about the tasks they perform and identify those tasks that could place them at risk. Consider the aspects of each task that expose them to risk and determine the likely consequences if the risks are not managed. **This is known as risk assessment.**
5. Prioritize the tasks that require safe work procedures
6. Develop safe work procedures for the tasks that present the greatest risk and pose the most serious consequences, and gradually work through those that present less risk.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Four basic stages in conducting a JSA are:

- selecting the job to be analyzed
- breaking the job down into a sequence of steps
- identifying potential hazards
- determining preventive measures to overcome these hazards

Develop safe work procedures as follows:

- **Involve your workers** – they are more likely to follow a safe work procedure if they have been involved in its development, and they will often know the best and safest way to perform a task. Involve those workers who are experienced in performing the tasks.
- **Identify the elements of each task and the associated risks –** grocery shopping involves preparing shopping list, driving to shop and parking, obtaining trolley and pushing to shelves, lifting items from shelves, placing shopping on checkout, placing bags back in trolley, loading boot, driving back to house, unloading boot and carrying to house and packing

shelves.
- **Identify the hazards and risks that each of these activities pose to those performing the task.** Are there any risks of manual handling injuries from lifting and stacking? Is there the potential for vehicle accident, slips and trips etc?
- **Control the risks –** once the hazards and their associated risks have been identified and assessed, decide how to control them. Consider the most effective way of minimizing the risk of harm. Can the shopping be done in smaller loads, is an assistant required, can a trolley be used to carry the shopping from the car to the house?
- **Document your safe work procedures –** the easier your safe work procedures are to understand, the more likely your workers will follow them. List all the control measures you have identified, as a series of steps set out in the sequence they need to be used.
- **Distribute the safe work procedures for review –** have your experienced workers review the safe work procedures and make amendments as appropriate.
- Proper implementation of safe work procedures involves training and supervision.
- Your workers must be trained to do their work tasks safely and must demonstrate an ability to follow the safe work procedures. Simply reading the documented procedure is not enough and you must ensure that the safe work procedures are followed at all times. Discipline your workers when safe work procedures are not followed.
- Review your safe work procedures when there is a change to your workplace, or after an injury or near miss associated with the task. As a general rule, do a periodic review of all your safe work procedures to ensure they are current and effective. Involve your workers in this review.

Procedures:

- Safety Office will coordinate with the manager/supervisor to complete a job hazard analysis and risk assessment.
- Manager/supervisor will provide necessary resources (manager’s/employee’s time and space) to complete the analysis/assessment.
- Safety Office will retain record of the safe work procedures and the safe work procedures are reviewed with the manager/supervisor/employee.
- Manager/supervisor will provide training to employees in the safe work procedures and document the training. The Safety Office will be available for assistance if required.
- Manager/supervisor will ensure that the completed safe work procedures are followed, and are added to the job inventory for training new employees.

Record Keeping:

The Safety Office and manager/supervisor will keep all records for 5 years from date of implementation/training the following:

- Completed Job / Task / Hazard Analysis / Assessment Forms
- Completed Safe Work Procedures
- Training documentation

FINAL WORD

Ideally, all jobs should be subjected to a JSA. In some cases there are practical constraints posed by the amount of time and effort required to do a JSA. Another consideration is that each JSA will require revision whenever equipment, raw materials, processes, or the environment change.