

Time Management: Taking Time for Hazard Assessments Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

A serious injury takes months to recover from, sometimes longer. A hazard assessment takes two minutes. The math is simple, but in the moment, when the pressure is on, that two-minute pause feels like the hardest thing to do. This talk is about why it is worth it every single time.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Most workers who skip hazard assessments are not lazy. They are confident, experienced, and in a hurry. Those are exactly the conditions that lead to incidents.

Confidence From Experience The number one reason workers skip hazard assessments is confidence. You have done this job a hundred times. But conditions change: a new spill, a different tool, a worn surface. Experience tells you what usually happens. It does not tell you what is different today.

Pressure to Start Fast

When the pressure to start is high, a deadline, a supervisor watching, a crew waiting, workers feel like stopping to assess is wasting time. That pressure is real. But so is the hazard you did not see because you did not look

Conditions That Change Without Warning

A job you did last week may look the same today but be completely different. A new material in the work area, a wet floor, a missing guard, a changed procedure overnight. These things show up without warning, and they become hazards only if you do not catch them first.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Taking time to assess is not a delay. It is the job. Here is how to make it stick.

Make It a Non-Negotiable First Step Before you touch anything, stop and look. This is not a suggestion. It is the first step of every job, every time. It does not matter how many times you have done the task before. What matters is what is in front of you right now. Build the habit until stopping to assess feels automatic, not optional.

Know What You Are Looking For

- **Check the work area:** floor condition, lighting, overhead hazards, nearby workers
- **Check the equipment:** guards in place, no damage, correct for the job
- **Check the materials:** right product, right quantity, proper labeling, no visible damage
- **Check yourself:** do you have the right PPE, do you understand the task, are you fit to work

Speak Up If Something Has Changed If you notice something during your assessment that was not there before, or something that does not look right, stop and report it. Talk to your supervisor before the work starts, not after something goes wrong. Safe work depends on current information. Your observation matters.

Use the Assessment to Set Your Pace A good hazard assessment does more than spot risks. It also helps you plan the job. You think through the steps, identify what you need, and spot anything that could slow you down or create a problem mid-task.

Push Back on Pressure to Skip

- If someone tells you to skip the assessment because they are in a hurry, that is not their call to make
- You have the right and the responsibility to take the time to assess before you start
- A simple statement like 'Give me two minutes to check this over' is all it takes

Reassess When Conditions Change

- If something changes mid-job, a new person enters the area, a tool breaks, a spill happens, stop and reassess
- Your initial assessment only covers what was there at the start
- Conditions change and your assessment needs to keep up

FINAL WORD

Two minutes before the job starts could be the most important two minutes of your day. Take the time. Look at what is in front of you. The hazard you catch before you start is the one that never gets the chance to hurt you.
