What Can Hurt Me Today Meeting Kit



THE QUESTION

What can hurt me? It may seem very dark and negative to ask yourself this right as your workday is starting or when starting a new work task, but it can be the difference in recognizing the hazard that could injure you or someone else. Asking this question should trigger you to stop and really look around your work area and consider what dangers you are dealing with. Identifying uncontrolled hazards should be the top priority. **TAKING OWNERSHIP OF MITIGATING HAZARDS**

Taking ownership of these hazards and seeing them through to get connected is necessary for safety. Identifying hazards is not worth much if you do not see to it that they are properly addressed. Even if you spot something and make a mental note to avoid that hazard, it could seriously injure someone else in the area. Take the time and energy to properly mitigate the hazard so not only will you not be affected by it, but also your coworkers.

HAZARD KNOWLEDGE

There is a hazard at the root of almost every workplace death, injury or sickness. A hazard can take many forms. Sometimes more than one hazard can combine to make an even bigger hazard. You need to know about the hazards in your workplace before you start working.

COMMON WORKPLACE HAZARDS

Repeating the same movements over and over, especially if you are in an awkward position or you use a lot of force. Think of someone who bends down all day, or someone who lifts heavy things over and over again, especially above the shoulders or below the knees.

Slipping, tripping or falling. Think of something as simple as spilled coffee on the floor, a cluttered work area, or a raised platform with no guardrails.

Working near motorized vehicles. Think of being hit by a dump truck that is backing up on a construction site….or someone getting hit by a forklift truck in a warehouse or on a loading dock.

Using or working near machinery. Many workers have been killed or seriously injured by the equipment they operated.

Workplace violence. It can happen in many workplaces such as to a gas station attendant working alone at night, or to a health care worker or a home care worker.

TYPES OF WORKPLACE HAZARDS INCLUDE:

- **Safety hazards** such as those caused by inadequate machine guards, unsafe workplace conditions/practices.
- **Biological hazards** caused by organisms such as viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites.
- **Chemical hazards** caused by a solid, liquid, vapour, gas, dust, fume or mist.
- **Ergonomic hazards** caused by physiological and psychological demands on the worker, such as repetitive and forceful movements, awkward postures arising from improper work methods, and improperly designed workstations, tools, and equipment.
- **Physical hazards** caused by noise, vibration, energy, weather, heat, cold, electricity, radiation and pressure.
- **Psychosocial hazards** that can affect mental health or well-being such as overwork, stress, bullying, or violence.

RECOGNIZING VERSUS TAKING OWNERSHIP – FIVE QUESTIONS

- What are the hazards of this job?
- Is there any special training needed for this job?
- Do I have the right protective equipment for this job?
- If I have any questions about safety, who do I ask?
- Can you think of any other health and safety questions you should ask? For example, “How do I report an injury?”, “What do I do in an emergency?”.

HAZARD PROTECTION FOR EMPLOYEES

The best way is to get rid of or eliminate the hazard completely.

If the hazard can’t be eliminated, your employer can try to reduce the hazard. This can be done by reducing how much of the hazard you are exposed to. An example of this is turning up the ventilation system in a factory, or putting a barrier around a dangerous piece of equipment. These are called “engineering controls”.

Another way to reduce hazards is to reduce how long or how often you come in contact with the hazard. This can be done by arranging the work differently so that you are not exposed as long. These are called “administrative or work practice controls”.

If the hazard still exists after trying to control it through elimination, engineering controls and administrative or work practice controls, your employer may require you to use protective equipment and/or protective devices.

OTHER HAZARD PROTECTION

Your employer may have some of the workplace health and safety procedures in writing. These procedures are about the work you do and the machines and equipment you use.

If your job involves using equipment, your employer and supervisor must instruct you on how to operate that equipment safely. One way to get information on the safe use of machinery is from the operator’s manual. It tells you about hazards and has instructions on how to use the equipment safely.

Another important way that you can learn about hazards is through training. Sometimes your employer will give you the training at your workplace; sometimes you will be sent somewhere else for training

If you see a hazard on the job or a “close call”, report it to your supervisor or employer right away. “Prevention Starts Here” when everyone knows about hazards.

FINAL WORD

While a positive mindset and attitude are important for success in the workplace, asking yourself critical questions such as “what can hurt me today?” can trigger you to take the extra time to really evaluate a work task. Take ownership of hazards in your work area and see to it that they get fixed.