



# Planning is Prevention

## Recognizing, Assessing and Controlling Workplace Hazards

### Simple yet effective...

Preventing accidents is good for your business. It saves money and increases employee morale. An important part of preventing accidents is identifying the hazards that are in your workplace, and understanding the risks they present.

A common approach to hazard analysis is called **R-A-C**, which stands for **Recognize, Assess and Control**. This simple, yet effective, approach helps you develop plans to prevent human, material and property loss. It helps you identify or recognize hazards in your workplace, assess or evaluate those hazards and then implement controls to help prevent accidents. This quick reference tool is an introduction to the process.

### I don't think I have any hazards...

Although your business may not appear to be particularly hazardous, every business has some potential hazards. Ask yourself the following questions:

- > Do people complain of pain, discomfort or fatigue when doing certain tasks?
- > Do your employees use tools that vibrate?
- > Are your employees required to do heavy lifting?
- > Do you have chemicals (cleaning fluids for example) in your workplace?

- > Are there slippery floors or stairways?
- > Are there areas of excessive heat or cold, or is there outdoor work?
- > Are electrical wires or plugs frayed?
- > Do your employees work at a computer station?
- > Are your employees exposed to sharps, such as needles?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions then you do have potential hazards in your workplace.

### Types of Health and Safety Hazards

The charts below tell you about the various health and safety hazards. It also gives an example of an injury or illness that might occur, and where you might look for these hazards in your workplace.

Hazard	About the Hazard
<b>Ergonomic</b>	<p>These occur when the work processes are poorly designed for the employee. Look for activities that require bending, reaching, lifting, twisting, pushing or pulling.</p> <p><b>Example of Injury or Illness:</b> Sprained or strained muscles, ligaments, tendons, joints or other soft tissue.</p> <p><b>Look for ergonomic hazards in:</b> Tool and equipment design, organization of work, physical demands of the job, design of the work environment.</p>
<b>Chemical</b>	<p>These occur when chemicals or designated substances are present in the workplace. For example, cleaning fluids and photocopier toner are chemical hazards found in just about any workplace.</p> <p><b>Example of Injury or Illness:</b> Skin rashes, nausea, faintness</p> <p><b>Look for chemical hazards in:</b> Supply and storage areas, machinery and equipment (fire extinguishers, battery and combustion motors), the work environment (ventilation, spill control and disposal).</p>
<b>Physical</b>	<p>Physical hazards include noise, vibration, temperature, radiation and energy sources.</p> <p><b>Example of Injury or Illness:</b> Deafness, stress, hyper- or hypo-thermia</p> <p><b>Look for physical hazards in:</b> Physical demands of the job, tool and equipment design, organization of work, design of work environment.</p>

Hazard	About the Hazard
<b>Biological</b>	<p>These include living things such as bacteria, viruses, spores, fungus, parasites and plants that may become health risks when they enter the body.</p> <p><b>Example of Injury or Illness:</b> Food poisoning, HIV, Hepatitis B</p> <p><b>Look for biological hazards in:</b> Food and material handling, kitchens and washrooms, waste disposal.</p>
<b>Machine</b>	<p>There are different types of safety hazards such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; <b>materials handling</b> – which occur when occur when people transport, move, lift, carry, push or pull objects,</li> <li>&gt; <b>energy</b> - occur when people come into direct contact with sources of energy including reactive and stored chemicals, electricity, hydraulics (water powered), pneumatics (air powered), thermal (heat or steam) and kinetic (motion)</li> <li>&gt; <b>mechanical</b> – which occur when people work directly with machines or work near machinery</li> <li>&gt; <b>work practices</b> – which occur when the work routines, processes and practices are poorly designed and exceed the individuals abilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Example of Injury or Illness:</b> Burn, bruising, crushing, skin loss, amputation, sprained or strained muscles, ligaments, tendons joints or other soft tissue.</p> <p><b>Look for these hazards in:</b> Physical demands of work; tools and equipment; design of work environment; organization of work, energy sources; missing, damaged or disabled guarding devices.</p>

## Starting to for R-A-C

Start recognizing, assessing and controlling your workplace hazards so that you can plan to prevent workplace accidents and illness.

## Recognizing...

Take a look around your workplace for obvious hazards. A good way to do this is by following the flow of work. Start where supplies, products or people enter the workplace. As you go through each area of your business write down the area and a list of potential hazards. The employees in the work area should be able to help. Your OSSA consultant can recommend tools for you to use for this process.

## Assessing...

Now that you have the hazard list, assess it! How serious is the problem? Gather as much information as possible. Is this a hazard that your employees have exposure to every day, once a week, once a month? What might happen as a result of this real or potential hazard? Can this hazard create other possible hazards? Can current controls be improved? Speak to your employees, and make notes.

## Controlling...

When a real hazard exists it needs to be controlled. You can control a hazard in three places:

- > At the source. This is the best place to control a hazard. Remove the source of the hazard, and replace it with something that is safe and healthy.
- > Along the path. Create a barrier to prevent employees from coming in contact with the hazard.
- > At the employee. Make sure that employees have the right Personal Protective Equipment and are using it correctly, and are aware of the hazard. Please remember controlling a hazard at the employee is a last resort.

## What do I do next?

You are legally required to conduct workplace inspections. A general workplace inspection should be carried out on a regular, scheduled basis. This is a good way to monitor your hazard prevention system. Your employees are also legally required to report hazards to you. By working together you and your employees can maintain a safe and healthy workplace together.

## OSSA Products

*Did you know that you are required by law to complete a workplace hazard assessment? To help you, OSSA has a Workplace Hazard Analysis form and resource guide available as a download from our website [www.ossa.com](http://www.ossa.com). We also have a variety of self-paced products available that will help you recognize, assess, and control your workplace hazards.*

### Basic Workplace Ergonomics Resource Kit

Product Code: **400-002-002-K-GE**

*This resource kit is designed to assist your organization in preventing the leading cause of workplace injuries in Ontario's service sector – Sprains and Strains. Prevention is simply a matter of identifying and controlling the hazards that contribute to these injuries. This kit provides the tools necessary to evaluate ergonomic hazards and help prevent risk through proper design.*

### Hazard & Accident Analysis Resource Kit

Product Code: **130-002-001-K-GE**

*This kit provides tools to recognize, assess and control workplace hazards using a 6-step problem solving process that helps set priorities for action and controls. It also provides tools for accident prevention and an in-depth look at accident investigation, job analysis and developing controls to prevent further injury and illness.*

*You can order these products and many others from our website at [www.ossa.com](http://www.ossa.com) or by calling our client services line at **1-888-478-6772**.*