TOOLBOXTALK

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

You already know a lot about staying safe. You know you can fall from an edge, moving equipment can strike you, electricity can shock you, and chemicals can hurt you. Use what you have been taught and what you have learned from experience. But good hazard identification also means recognizing the limits of what you know. Sometimes the hazard is obvious, but the right way to control it is not.

Before starting work, ask yourself three questions:

1. What can hurt me — and what might I not know about?
2. What will keep me safe from it?
3. What could change?

START WITH WHAT YOU KNOW — THEN GO FURTHER

Look at the entire task. What could fall, move, swing, roll, or shift? Where could you fall? What could cut, crush, burn, shock, or strike you? What could you breathe, get in your eyes, or get on your skin? Use your training. Most workers know far more about hazards than they realize.

Then ask whether you know enough to choose the right control. You know you need fall protection, but do you know which available anchor gives you the best protection considering your position and how far the system could extend during a fall? You recognize antennas and radiofrequency hazards, but do you know how far away you need to stay? You know chemical vapors can be harmful, but do you know whether your ventilation or respirator actually protects you from those vapors?

Recognizing what you do not know is part of recognizing hazards. Do not guess. Find out.

USE THE KNOWLEDGE AROUND YOU

Your supervisor is normally one of the more knowledgeable and experienced people on the job. Part of the reason that person is supervising the work is because they are expected to recognize hazards, understand the controls, and help the crew work safely.

Pay attention when your supervisor reviews the hazard and control analysis. Bring what you already know to that discussion, but listen for something you may have missed. If you do not understand why a control was selected, ask. If you know another condition exists that was not discussed, bring it up.

The supervisor also cannot see everything. You are closest to your work. You may notice the damaged cord, loose material, person entering the area, changing wind, leaking hose, or different condition first. The supervisor brings knowledge and experience; the crew brings its own knowledge and what it is seeing right now. We need both.

WHAT WILL KEEP ME SAFE?

Once you identify a hazard, make sure there is a control that actually addresses it. An unprotected edge is a hazard; fall protection is the control. Silica dust is a hazard; wet methods or dust collection are controls.



Do not stop at "we have PPE" or "we are tied off." Ask whether the control works for the actual exposure you have.

WHAT COULD CHANGE?

Hazard identification continues after work starts. Equipment moves. Weather changes. Other trades arrive. Materials are removed. Access changes. The work itself changes.

When conditions change, ask the three questions again. If the hazard or the control has changed, involve your supervisor and adjust the plan before continuing.

DO

- Use what you already know and have been taught.
- Look beyond the most obvious hazard.
- Ask when you do not know the right control.
- Listen to the supervisor's hazard review.
- Speak up about conditions others may not see.
- Reassess when the work changes.

DON'T

- Guess about a hazard or control you do not understand.
- Assume recognizing the hazard means you know the solution.
- Treat the hazard review as paperwork.
- Stay quiet when something was missed.
- Continue when the control does not match the hazard.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are the three questions you should ask when looking at a task?

   a) What can hurt me? What will keep me safe? What could change?

2. Why is recognizing a hazard not enough by itself?

   a) The control must actually protect you from the hazard.

3. When should you reassess the hazards and controls?

   a) When the work or conditions change.

Talk Given By:	Date:
Company Name:	Location:
Printed Name	Signature

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