



# Recognizing Hazards

No one wants to be injured on the job, but it some times happens on construction sites. One common reason for this is, hazards aren't always recognized as a hazard that's why it is important to identify hazards so steps can be taken to protect workers.

## A hazard is a situation, task or object that has the potential to cause injury.

Hazards are not always obvious. Recognizing a hazard is the first step in controlling it. Some things that help you recognize hazards are:

- Construction experience
- Health and Safety Training
- Having knowledge of company policies and OSHA regs (*What you learn in training*)
- Asking co-workers and supervisors what they think.
- Remember that health hazards such as asbestos and silica are hazards.
- Make a pre- task plan at the beginning of the shift. (*This will help you identify hazards*)

## Assessing Hazards

Assessing hazards means to evaluate their significance. When you have identified a hazard, assess its extent and severity.

- Determine the seriousness of the hazard and the urgency in fixing it.
- Examine which workers can be exposed to the hazard, and for how long.
- Ask yourself how the hazard will be affected by other conditions such as; weather, heavy equipment or more activity in the area.

## Eliminating or Protecting Employees from Hazards

Eliminating the hazard should be your first choice. If that isn't possible or feasible then steps must be taken to protect the worker.

- Eliminate the hazard, ie: Trip hazards due to poor housekeeping ... Clean it up Extreme noise ... Use quieter equipment or, if possible move the loud equipment farther from the work area.
- Protect using PPE, for example: Extreme noise ... Ear plugs or Muffs, Silica or other respiratory hazards ... Respirators (*Don't forget respiratory evaluation and fit testing*)
- Identify the best-practice safety rules that apply to the hazard.

## Points to Take With You:

- Recognize the hazard; evaluate your work area and work procedures.
- Assess the hazard; can you work around it? How dangerous is the hazard? Will it become worse?
- Try to eliminate the hazard first, and then use PPE to protect from the hazard.

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