



As we move into the peak of the construction season, it is crucial to refresh our safety knowledge as it pertains to hazard identification. The importance of hazard identification plays a key role in reducing accidents and injuries in the workplace. To take appropriate corrective actions, employees must first recognize and review practical ways to mitigate the hazards they may face. Here are some common hazard areas that all construction and transportation workers should review as part of their continued daily work activities.

- **Hierarchy of controls.** The goal of any safety control is to reduce an employee's exposure to a hazard. The intention is to eliminate or substitute hazards first, then implement engineering controls like machine guards. Administrative controls, such as rotation schedules, are particularly important to help decrease employees' exposures to environmental hazards. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is also used to account for hazards that could not be mitigated by any other control methods.
- **Ergonomics concerns.** Exposure to noise and vibrations from different types of tools and heavy equipment can lead to several types of persistent physical and ergonomic injuries. This can lead to strains and sprains to different body parts.
- **Slip, trip, and fall hazards.** Slip, trip, and falls are the most common accidents at work sites. Some general tips include but are not limited to:
 - Be aware of uneven surfaces and changes in the terrain
 - Use designated walk areas
 - Keep your head up and look where you are walking
- **Vehicle Safety**
 - Inspect vehicles and equipment regularly before use
 - Report any issues and have them addressed. If it is a deadline item, immediately notify your foreman/supervisor.
 - Wear your seatbelt
 - Ensure that employees are trained and certified on pieces of equipment in accordance with OSHA and industry requirements. This can also include your own individual organization's policy which must meet or exceed OSHA standards.

- Maintain a safe distance from moving vehicles
- Never place yourself between a vehicle and a fixed object
- Communicate your movements to the operator or spotter
- **Specialized Competent Person Trainings.** Work sites should be staffed with competent persons that are trained and have the authority to take corrective action immediately. Additionally, competent persons have the authority to train employees on the subjects listed below. Competent person training topics should include:
 - Fall Protection
 - Trenching and excavation
 - Scaffolding
 - Cataloger and Confined Spaces (*Note - although there is no competent person training per se regarding confined spaces, the training outlines important, assigned responsibilities that must be in place to prevent potentially catastrophic situations that could lead to a fatality.)
- **Environmental Hazards.** There are several environmental hazards that all employees should plan for when working outside in the elements. They include:
 - Insects (ticks, bees, spiders, gypsy moths, etc.)
 - Animals (stray dogs, snakes, etc.)
 - Poisonous plants (poison ivy, poison oak, etc.)
 - Exposure to heat/hot environments
- **Preventive measures for environmental hazards** include but are not limited to:
 - Use of gloves
 - Use of repellants (skin and clothing)
 - Doing self-checks for ticks
 - Proper footwear and clothing (i.e., long sleeve shirt and gloves working in or near woods or brush area)
 - Use of sunscreen
 - Proper hydration standards
 - Employee job rotation methods

Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility. By staying vigilant and being aware of the above concerns, employers can ensure a safe and productive work environment for all. Hazard identification should go beyond the first day of orientation. Rather, it is a continual process that requires each new or experienced employee to consistently review prior to the start of work activities. Please do your part by staying vigilant and remember the primary goal is for everyone to go home safely at the end of each workday. Have a safe and productive construction season.