Hazard Identification

The process of identifying and fixing potential hazards in the workplace is called hazards management – a simple procedure where you assess and control the risk of hazards to workers. A hazard is something that has the potential to harm the health and safety of people at work.

A hazard may include sources or situations with a potential for harm in terms of injury, ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of all of these.

All hazards, incidents and accidents involving SimWen Consulting Group, property and activities must be reported, investigated and recorded in accordance with the SimWen Consulting Group policies and procedures.

Carrying out regular safety inspection can identify unsafe conditions. A safety inspection is a procedure carried out in all organisations, the purpose of a safety inspection is to:

* Determine the hazards in the workplace
* Identify any unsafe acts
* Determine the risk associated with the hazard
* Put in place control measure to eliminate the risk or at the very least, reduce it.

**How to Identify a Hazard**

* Review hazard identification techniques and tool in consultation with staff and students in the area, and OHS specialists if required, to ensure staff and students are suitably comprehensive.
* Check records of injuries and illnesses that have occurred in the workplace that could help identify less obvious hazards.
* Regularly conduct inspections in the workplace, looking for any potential hazards that could cause harm. These could include; cables and cords, scattered chairs, bags on the floor, incorrect ergonomic furniture, etc.
* Use a checklist as a guide for types of general hazards when conducting inspections.
* Talk to other staff or students if they have noticed anything that they feel is unsafe as it may not be obvious to you.
* If a hazard is found, they must then be reported the Safety and Health Representative using a Hazard Report Form.

A hazard is placed in one of three categories based on the likelihood of risk, these categories are;

1. Category “A” – type hazard is regarded as dangerous and requires **immediate** corrective action.
2. Category “B” – type hazard is less dangerous and corrective action must be taken within **three weeks.**
3. Category “C” – type hazard must be corrected within **eight weeks**.

**Risk Management: Assessing Risk**

Hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control are three principles used in workplaces to manage safety and health.

Risk means a combination of the severity and likelihood of harm arising from hazard.

Risk assessment is the process of evaluating the severity and likelihood of harm arising from a hazard.

Risk assessment is the determination of [quantitative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantitative_property) or [qualitative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qualitative_data) value of risk related to a concrete situation and a recognized [threat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Threat) (also called hazard). *Quantitative risk assessment* requires calculations of two components of [risk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk) *R*, (1) the magnitude of the potential loss *L*, and (2) the probability *p* that the loss will occur.

**Step 1: Identifying or Spotting the Hazard**

The hazards can be identified by observing, inspecting, investigating, communicating and consulting with staff / students in the workplace and making a record of the hazards identified. Knowledge of the workplace hazards will assist, and hence be alert at work. Watch out for hazards in workplace and should be reported to immediate supervisor.

**Step 2: Assess and priorities Risk**

Analyzing the risk involves determination of the:

Consequences – outcome of an incident

Exposure – interaction with hazard

Probability – likelihood that consequences will occur once individual is exposed

Process - Use the Risk Score calculator for analyzing and evaluating risk. The objective of analyzing risk is to determine whether the risk is acceptable. It provides a qualitative tool that assists in prioritizing risk. The Risk Score Calculator determines the level of risk by defining consequences, exposure and Probability. The risk matrix is used to assess and priorities risks; then dealing with high priority risks first and then dealing with the least significant risks last.

**Step 3: Make the Changes**

Making changes means to work for fixing hazards to make the workplace safe.

**A procedure for controlling risks**

1st step – to eliminate and identify hazards

2nd step – to rank the risk associated with the hazards

3rd step – to use control strategies to remove hazards

Hazard identification is ongoing and progressive so it requires a multi-tiered approach. Hierarchy provides a comprehensive control measures with preferred order of control to eliminate and reduce the risk.

**Hierarch of Risk Controls**

**Elimination** – removing the hazard from the workplace.

* Modifying workstation design
* Modifying work organisation with task analysis and job redesign
* Modifying work shifts
* Replacing faulty equipment

**Substitution** – substituting or replacing a hazard with a less hazardous one

* Replacing equipment
* Replacing workstations with better designed

**Isolation** – Isolating or separating a hazard from people involved in the work

* Locating fax machines in specifically a way from employees
* Ensuring noisy work areas such as printer and photocopiers are located away from employees

**Engineering controls**- if the hazard cannot be eliminated, substituted or isolated, an engineering control is the most preferred measure.

* Repairing and maintaining equipment
* Promptly repairing network faults
* Installing a caustic shock prevention devices in telephone sets
* Reducing background noise levels
* Providing more space between operators groups or installing acoustic barriers
* Adjusting lighting to reduce glare

**Administrative controls** include introducing work practices that reduce the risk such as implementing measures to ensure procedures, instruction and training are provided.

* Implementing acoustic incident report and action plans
* Implementing or improving customer contact and dispute resolution procedures
* Implementing job rotation

**Personal protective equipment** provides personal safety devices.

In some instances, a combination of control measures may be appropriate.

**Monitoring and Review of Control Measures**

Deciding and implementing a risk control measure is not the end of the risk management process. It is important to monitor and review control measures to ensure preventing exposure to hazards. Level of risks should be prioritised. The high risk hazards need more frequent assessment.

**Every organisation should:**

* have a planned program of inspections and maintenance
* undertake a review of work environment changes
* have a regular review of the process for hazard identification
* review risk assessment and risk control measure to ensure it is effective
* review maintenance and repair program

**Diagram of Hierarchy Controls**

**Elimination**

**Substitution**

**Administrative**

**Personal protective equipment**

**Engineering**