How to Conduct a Job Hazard Analysis

WHAT’S AT STAKE

A job hazard analysis (JHA), sometimes called a job safety analysis (JSA), is a thorough work plan that is the cornerstone of any safety program. It’s based on the idea that any job can be separated into simple steps, potential hazards associated with those steps can be identified, and solutions can be developed to control those hazards.

You may believe that conducting a JHA is a task best left to your supervisor, but you have an important role to play.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Your experience in doing a job gives you unique knowledge of what can go wrong from a safety and health standpoint. Some hazards might be obvious, but you probably encounter situations that haven’t been considered by others. If you keep that knowledge to yourself, someone else might discover the hazard the hard way.

EXAMPLE

A 40-year-old male died from injuries sustained when he fell off a ladder. He was part of a crew shoveling snow from a building roof

overhang. The ladder being used to access the roof did not have safety feet.

The victim climbed the ladder to the roof, while a co-worker stabilized the ladder below. As he readied to step off, the ladder started to slide and the victim's feet became entangled between the rungs. He fell to the icy surface below, landing on his back. He later died from his injuries. The investigators reported that the potential for injury using a ladder without safety feet might have been uncovered in a job hazard analysis.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

To conduct a JHA, you must first take a good look at each individual step of a job. Often there are many more steps than expected. You need to know who does what and when they do it. For example, this could include all aspects of:

- Gathering the material
- Production
- Assembly
- Packaging
- Preparing a product for delivery

No step in the process is too small when developing a JHA.

While one employee performs the task, the other JHA team members observe and note what they are seeing, using words describing actions such as "lift the load" or "rinse the bucket."

Once you've identified each step in a process, you must consider every potential hazard and how to eliminate it. For example, you could ask at each step:

- Is a guard needed?
- Where is the power source?
- Are other employees in the area who could be in the path of danger if something goes wrong?
- Is PPE needed? If so, what type? How about training?

FINAL WORD

Your input into safety issues is essential. If you’re aware of situations where other workers have had close calls or been injured as a result of hazards they weren’t aware of, ask your supervisor about the possibility of participating in a JHA.