Not a Big Deal Until It Is Meeting Kit

Most of us have heard of the saying “it is not a big deal until it is”. There are always issues that are recognized, but nothing is done to correct them in a timely matter.

UNADDRESSED HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE

The list of reasons for why hazards are walked past and left unaddressed can be a long one. A few common related responses when asking why a hazard is left unaddressed are:

- “It’s not a big deal”
- “It has always been like that, no one is worried about it”

The problem with these responses is that it shows that there is complacency towards the situation.

HAZARDS ARE A BIG DEAL

Often times the upper management of a company has high expectations for their worksites to work safely however, hazards are left unaddressed at an individual site level or in part of a facility. When an injury occurs due to a hazard that has been recognized but not corrected this is when it becomes a big deal for everyone involved.

EMPLOYEES BEWARE OF HAZARDS

Employees must be vigilant for workplace hazards which include the following:

1) Safety Hazards

Safety hazards are one of the most prevalent workplace dangers. They encompass unsafe conditions that can lead to injury, illness, or death.

Confined Spaces

- Silos
- Water supply towers
- Vats
- Boilers
- Manure pits
- Ditches
- Trenches
- Shipping containers

A confined space is not designed for continuous human occupancy. It’s advised to never work in a confined space unless a hazard assessment and control program is implemented. Some risks include:

- Crush injuries
- Electrocution
- Entanglement
- Inhalation of poor air
- Heights

Roofers, painters, firefighters, and construction workers are at high risk for falls. They work from ladders, scaffolds, and roofs. Even with the proper training, slips and accidents can happen at high heights.

2) Ergonomic Hazards

Ergonomic hazards are those caused by strain put on your body. Be aware of how your body position and working conditions strain your body. Examples of ergonomic hazards include:

- Repetitive or awkward movements
- Poor posture
- Frequent lifting, reaching, pushing, or pulling
- Non-adjustable chairs and desks

Secretaries, bus drivers, delivery drivers, janitors, and stock clerks are susceptible to Ergonomic hazards. Even entertainers like musicians and athletes can fall victim to these hazards.

3) Biological Hazards

Biological hazards involve the risks that come from working with

humans, animals, or plants. They are most common in hospitals, nursing homes, and research labs.

- Blood and other bodily fluids
- Viruses
- Bacteria
- Fungi
- Mold
- Animal droppings

4) Environmental Hazards

- UV rays. Working outside can take its toll and increase your chances of developing skin problems.
- Extreme temperatures. You can experience health issues like heat stroke or cold-induced asthma.
- Loud noises. Farmworkers, pilots, and even elementary school teachers can be exposed to loud noises for long periods of time. Long-term exposure will likely lead to hearing problems and may require a hearing aid to live a normal life.

OTHER EMPLOYEE HAZARDS

1. **Distractions**– Mental distractions stemming from what is going on in our home life can serve as a huge disruption to getting tasks done safely at work.
2. **Complacency**– Complacency leads to taking shortcuts or not following normal work procedure.
3. **Poor Housekeeping-** Poor housekeeping leads to many different hazards.
4. **Poor Preplanning-** When the hazards of a new task are not evaluated prior to work beginning, hazards are going to be left uncontrolled. Poor preplanning can also lead to issues with not having the correct equipment, tools, materials, personnel, training, and a lack of time to get the job done.
5. **Taking Shortcuts-** A major unsafe act that results in many workplace injuries is taking shortcuts.

FINAL WORD

We do not always have total control over each and every situation, but there is always something we can do to try to bring it to light or get it corrected. Choosing to take action can make the difference in preventing an injury.