

Guidance for Work Place Hazard Assessments

Occupational Safety and Health regulations require employers to conduct inspections of all work places to determine the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and to help in selecting the proper PPE for each task performed. For each work site, a certificate must be completed which lists the findings of the inspection and the specific protective equipment that is needed. This guidance document will assist you in completing this task. In order to assess the need for PPE at a work site, follow the steps below and document findings on the "Certification of Hazard Assessment" form.

1. Hazards

Conduct a walk-through survey of the areas in question. The purpose of the survey is to identify hazards to workers. Basic hazard categories include, but are not limited to the following:

- Impacts
- Penetration
- Compression (roll-over)
- Chemical
- Heat
- Harmful dust
- Light (optical) radiation
- Material handling
- Energized equipment

2. Sources of Hazards

A. During the walk-through, look for the following:

- Sources of motion that could result in workers hitting or being hit by objects
- Sources of high temperatures that could result in burns
- Types of chemical exposures
- Sources of harmful dust
- Sources of light radiation such as welding
- Sources of falling objects or potential of dropping objects
- Sources of sharp objects which might pierce the feet or cut the hands
- Sources of rolling or pinching objects which could crush the feet
- Electrical hazards

B. Conditions and equipment to observe include:

- Atmospheric conditions (dusts, gases, fumes, vapors, illumination, etc.)
- Pressurized equipment (boilers, pots, tanks, piping, hosing, etc.)
- Containers (storage areas and means of storage)
- Hazardous supplies and materials (flammables, explosives, compressed gases, corrosives, toxic chemicals, cryogenic materials, etc.)
- Buildings and structures (condition and layout of floors, doors, stairs, etc.)
- Electrical conductors and apparatus (wires, switches, etc.)
- Engines and motors
- Machinery (grinders, drilling machines, cutters, etc.)
- Material-handling equipment (hoists, lifts, etc.)
- Hand tools (tools, including portable power tools)
- Ground conditions (in outside areas)
- Elevated work areas (risks of falls)
- Water depth (hazards for water samplers)

3. Complete the Worksheet

The information gathered during the walk-through should be entered on the worksheet (attached). Using the worksheet, an assessment of the real and potential hazards associated with each type of risk is made.

4. Selection of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Once the hazards of the work place have been identified, the suitability of the PPE presently available must be determined, and new or additional equipment must be selected which ensures a level of protection greater than the minimum required to protect the employees from the hazards. Careful consideration must be given to comfort and fit of PPE in order to ensure that it will be used.

5. ANSI Standards for PPE

Newly purchased PPE must conform to the updated American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards which have been incorporated into the OSHA regulations as follows:

- Eye and Face Protection - ANSI Z87.1
- Head Protection - ANSI Z89.1
- Foot Protection - ANSI Z41
- Hand Protection - There are no ANSI standards for gloves; however, selection must be based on the performance characteristics of the glove in relation to the tasks to be performed. Consider requirements such as chemical resistance, dexterity requirements, coverage area, color, puncture resistance, and related criteria.

6. Respiratory and Hearing Protection

This work place inspection is not meant to include respiratory or hearing protection since the need for these is established through industrial hygiene monitoring. However, if work sites are inspected where high levels of chemicals or dust are present and may be inhaled by employees, or employees must work in very noisy environments for extended periods, there may be reason for concern. Consult Environmental Health & Safety for recommendations.