

Risk Control

Job Safety Analysis

Introduction

Many job related injuries occur because employees are not trained in the proper job procedures. This is true particularly for new employees. One way to prevent these injuries is to conduct a job safety analysis, which has proven to be an effective tool for eliminating or minimizing workplace hazards. The following information describes how to conduct a job safety analysis.

Functions

The job safety analysis has 2 functions. First, it provides written documentation as to the safest manner in which to perform a task or job. Second, the job safety analysis provides a method for training new employees in the hazards of their new jobs and in the procedural and equipment safeguards to be used to avoid the hazards.

Process

The primary steps in completing a job safety analysis are:

1. Determine the jobs to be analyzed;
2. Break each job down into a sequence of steps;
3. Identify the hazards associated with each step; and
4. Recommend safe work procedures, controls, and safeguards to minimize or eliminate the hazards.

When determining the jobs to be analyzed, develop a list that prioritizes the jobs according to the need for a job safety analysis. Assign the highest priority to jobs having the highest rate of accidents and disabling injuries. Dangerous jobs, newly created jobs, and those where significant changes have been made also should receive priority. Eventually, a job safety analysis should be conducted for all jobs in the workplace.

Once a specific job has been selected for analysis, break the job down into basic sequential steps. Determining job sequences is best accomplished by directly observing the job while it is being performed and seeking employee input. When seeking employee input, explain to employees what the job safety analysis is and that the intent is to make the job as safe as possible. Inform employees that the job is being studied, not employee work performance.

Use a job safety analysis worksheet or form to help document your observations and employee comments.

Typically, a job safety analysis worksheet has 3 headings:

- sequence of basic job steps
- potential hazards
- recommended procedures or safeguards

The average job has 5-8 steps. If more steps are needed to accurately describe the work, consider splitting the job into segments and analyzing each segment separately.

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After listing all job steps, identify the hazards in each step. Identify all actual and potential hazards whether they result from an unsafe act or unsafe condition or both.

The next phase of the job safety analysis is to develop recommended procedures and safeguards. Determine whether the job can be performed in another way to eliminate hazards or whether safety equipment and precautions are needed to reduce the hazards. Describe the recommended procedure or precaution in terms of acts or behavior, to help the employee who is learning the job. Be specific - merely writing "use caution" or "be careful" is not useful information.

After job safety analyses are completed, review the analyses with employees performing the jobs to ensure each step is included for all hazards identified.

The completed job safety analysis is an excellent tool for training new employees in safe work procedures for a particular job. A job safety analysis also can be useful in an accident investigation. By referring to the completed job safety analysis, a supervisor often can determine whether a worker failed to follow a recommended procedure or whether the analysis overlooked a hazard. In the latter case, the job safety analysis must be updated to make it more comprehensive.

To remain effective, job safety analyses should be reviewed periodically and updated as needed.

References

- US Department of Labor, OSHA form 3071, "Job Hazard Analysis" (2002 Revised).
- Associated General Contractors of America, videotape, "STEP BY STEP: Job Safety Analysis" (1993).

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