**Steps to Conducting a Job Hazard Analysis**



As an employer, you are legally required to take steps to correct all known [hazards in your workplace](https://www.osha.gov/as/opa/worker/employer-responsibility.html). A job hazard analysis is an efficient way for you — and your employees — to take a look at all workplace activities and understand where the hazards may lie.

[Implementing a JHA](https://inclassnow.com/courses/jsa-1.2/job-hazard-analysis/syllabus) at your job site may seem like a daunting task, but it doesn’t have to be. Every job hazard analysis can be broken down into four actionable steps to help employers and employees navigate this important step toward safety.

**Which jobs should you analyze?**

Deciding which job to start with may seem like the most intimidating step, but don’t overthink it. Review your accident logs and take note of near-misses, including those that might not have been officially recorded. This will give you a good idea of which jobs are typically more hazardous.

Interviewing employees is another smart step to take in this process. These are the people doing the jobs day in and day out so they probably have a good idea of how hazardous the job actually is.

In addition to those jobs that you can identify as more hazardous, be sure to also consider:

* Newly created jobs
* Jobs with recently changed procedures
* Complex jobs that require written instructions
* Jobs with entirely new personnel

**What are the tasks involved with that job?**

Once you have determined which jobs to analyze, you need to break down each job into a series of steps. This can be done by simply observing an employee (or employees, if necessary) in action. Be sure the observer is someone who serves in a safety role or is a direct supervisor familiar with the job. This will ensure the steps are recorded properly.

During the observation, the notetaker of course should be recording each step of the process, but this is also the time to document shortcuts employees might take or steps not normally considered, such as setting up or cleaning up equipment.

Make sure everyone involved reviews the notes after the observation is complete. You want a job’s tasks to be clear but avoid making them too generic or too specific. Try to keep the number of individual tasks under 10. Any more than that and you might want to consider breaking up the job into multiple phases for easier manageability.

**What are the hazards of each task?**

Now that you have clear documentation of the job and all the steps involved, it is time to get to the meat of the JHA. Evaluate each step in the job process and think about the potential hazards of that step.

Many times, this will be obvious — such as operating heavy machinery — but don’t discount the seemingly innocuous things like repetitive bending and lifting or other ergonomic issues.

While the inherent dangers will vary with every job and with each specific task, some questions to ask yourself might be:

* Are there pinch points or the potential for body parts to be caught between moving machinery?
* Is there a potential for [slips, trips or falls](https://safetyskills.com/slips-trips-and-falls-in-the-construction-industry/)?
* Does the task expose employees to excessive [noise](https://safetyskills.com/hearing-protection-oil-gas/) or vibration?
* Is there potential for exposure to hazardous substances?

At this point in the JHA, you may want to revisit the accident and injury logs. Where did things go wrong? What can be improved? By reviewing real-life scenarios relating to that job, you can accurately assess the dangers. Employees who regularly do the job in question can also be a great resource at this step, as minor injuries or near-misses may not always be recorded.

**How can you implement controls?**

Once you have evaluated each step of the job, you can now implement controls to minimize or eliminate the hazards in order to keep your workers safe. For example, if a worker has to repeatedly bend over to pick up material, you may need to reconsider the storage location of those materials.

This is where you will use the [hierarchy of hazard controls](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hierarchy/default.html), which aims to control occupational dangers. First, you should try to eliminate, or completely remove, the hazard. Of course, this is often not possible, so substitution is the next step. Think of something like replacing lead-based paint with a nontoxic product.

Engineering controls create a physical barrier between the worker and the hazard, such as installing guard rails. The danger is still present, but it is physically less likely to occur. One step below this is administrative controls, which is simply the implementation of safer work practices, like signs or increased training.

Finally, and perhaps what people most often think of when it comes to hazard controls, is personal protective equipment (PPE). Appearing at the very bottom of the hierarchy, PPE is the least effective means of controlling hazards. However, it is often much easier to implement, and various types can be utilized in a number of workplace scenarios.

**Don’t Stop with the JHA**

So you have completed your analysis, determined what the major hazards are and how you want to move forward to fix them. Now what? In order to move ahead as safely as possible, you must be sure your workforce is aware of your findings and the actions you will be taking.

Not only does every worker [have the right](https://www.osha.gov/workers/) to up-to-date workplace hazard information, it also helps you to know that everyone is on the same page when it comes to dangers in the workplace. After all, would you rather have 70% of workers know the dangers of a certain job or have 100% be aware and cover all your bases?

As you begin to implement safety controls, no matter where they fall within the hierarchy, you should continually keep your employees updated on the steps that are being taken. You may choose to send out regular emails, post updated signs in high-traffic areas or have in-person meetings.

No matter your method, making sure all employees are involved makes them know you care for them and their safety.

**Train Your Employees**

Sometimes conducting a job hazard analysis will reveal large gaps in safety, while other times you may find that a job is being conducted as safely as possible. No matter what, you can be sure that a well-trained employee is always going to be safer than a poorly trained employee.

Taking [online safety training](https://safetyskills.com/) is convenient as each of your employees can receive training on a wide range of topics that apply to them, from [lockout/tagout](https://safetyskills.com/importance-lockout-tagout/) to understanding [regulations](https://safetyskills.com/osha-safety-regulations-training-requirements-best-practices/)for their specific job.

Another benefit to taking training online is how easy it is to repeat training as often as is needed — or as often as you would like. Some regulations require [training](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha2254.pdf) to be conducted [at least annually](https://safetyskills.com/osha-annual-training-requirements/), but because you never know when an inspection could occur, it is never a bad idea to brush up on safety training even when not required.

In addition to hundreds of course options for your employees, we also offer training on how to conduct a job hazard analysis if you want a more in-depth guide on using a JHA to protect your workers.
It’s never a wrong time to evaluate your current safety program, or implement a new one, to protect your employees. .