

Job Hazard Analysis: How To-s

There is a great deal of talk about Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) or Job Safety Analysis (JSA). These terms can be used interchangeably and really represent opposite sides of the same coin; looking for Hazards to keep your employees Safe. Simply stated a JHA is an organized look at what could cause harm to employees in their work place and work activities. It's a way to determine if you have taken sufficient precautions to keep your people safe or if more needs to be done.

An important aspect is to decide if a hazard is significant and whether it has been dealt with appropriately so that the risk is acceptably low. Hazard and risk are two terms that will come up often when discussing employee safety. A hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm to an employee.

Common workplace hazards may include impact with falling or flying objects being caught in or between a stationary or moving object and falls from heights. A risk is the likelihood of an employee being exposed to that hazard and being harmed.

When preparing to perform a JHA, it is important to keep some things in mind:

- It should assess risks that could be present in all work activities. This may result in the identification of particular areas that will need a more detailed, specific assessment.
- It may not be possible to eliminate all problems completely. In this case it is necessary to do all that is "reasonably practical" to remove a hazard or to minimize the risk.
- A JHA relates to two aspects of employee safety; the management of employee safety by preventing injuries and the protection of their long-term health by preventing contact with potentially harmful substances (asbestos) or situations.
- Risks to health like occupational stress or contact with infectious diseases need to be considered as well as the more obvious job-related safety issues like material handling chemical contact or fire safety.

There are many different ways to perform a JHA and many different individuals that can perform one. It is possible to hire a professional to complete your JHAs; this may be a good choice if your employees are involved in many different or complex processes. There are independent safety companies that can be hired as well as help from less obvious sources like your insurance company or the local fire department. A professional can complete some of the necessary JHAs and give tips on how to complete the rest and leave a template that will make completing them even easier.

OSHA provides many programs that can be very helpful in completing your JHAs including strategic partnerships, workplace consultations, Voluntary Protection Programs, training and education. It is also quite feasible for you and your employees to conduct your own JHAs. There is plenty of information available to help get the small business owner started on this process.

Once you've determined who will do the JHAs, you must decide how to do them. Independent consultants and OSHA consultants will have their way of doing things. If the JHA will be conducted in house, there are many sources of information that can be used. One possibility that is available to Association members is eSafetyline website that is managed by Intec, this association's safety consultants. Part of the overall Safety Program available on the site is a step-by-step guide to conduct an effective JHA. Also included on the site are many other tools to help a company to streamline the process.

OSHA has identified five steps to help any company or business to get started working on their JHAs.

1. Involve your employees. It is crucial to involve your employees in the hazard analysis process. They know better than anyone the ins and outs of the job and this knowledge is invaluable in finding hazards. This helps to ensure a quality analysis as well as getting workers to "buy in" to the solutions for the hazards that they find.
2. Review your accident history. Past incidents can be the best indicators of possible issues in the future.
3. Conduct a preliminary job review. Brainstorm with the employees for ideas to eliminate or control those hazards that are already obvious to them.
4. List, rank and set priorities for hazardous jobs. This will help to identify those jobs that should be the highest priority when conducting the analysis.
5. Outline the steps or tasks. When beginning a JHA, the job must be broken down into the individual tasks needed to complete the job. This can be made easier by watching an employee complete the job and documenting the tasks necessary to complete it.

No matter who completes your company's JHAs or how they get done, it is a very important part of your company's overall safety plan to have a full set of JHAs for all tasks on the jobsite.

For additional help with safety and OSHA compliance, take advantage of the resources available through NCMA. These resources include the NCMA Block Plant Safety Software. The software is available from NCMA at (703) 713-1900 at a cost of \$150 for up to 3 plants/year (nonmember \$450).