

Hazard Control Measures

Information obtained from a job hazard analysis is useless unless hazard control measures recommended in the analysis are incorporated into the tasks. It is important to recognize that not all hazard controls are equal. Some are more effective than others at reducing the risk.

The order of precedence and effectiveness of hazard control is the following:

1. Engineering controls
2. Administrative controls
3. Personal protective equipment

Engineering controls include the following:

- Elimination/minimization of the hazard—Designing the facility, equipment, or process to remove the hazard, or substituting processes, equipment, materials, or other factors to lessen the hazard;
- Enclosure of the hazard using enclosed cabs, enclosures for noisy equipment, or other means;
- Isolation of the hazard with interlocks, machine guards, blast shields, welding curtains, or other means; and
- Removal or redirection of the hazard such as with local and exhaust ventilation.

Administrative controls include the following:

- Written operating procedures, work permits, and safe work practices;
- Exposure time limitations (used most commonly to control temperature extremes and ergonomic hazards);
- Monitoring the use of highly hazardous materials;
- Alarms, signs, and warnings;
- Buddy system; and
- Training.

Personal Protective Equipment—such as respirators, hearing protection, protective clothing, safety glasses, and hardhats—is acceptable as a control method in the following circumstances:

- When engineering controls are not feasible or do not totally eliminate the hazard;
- While engineering controls are being developed;
- When safe work practices do not provide sufficient additional protection; and
- During emergencies when engineering controls may not be feasible.

Use of one hazard control method over another higher in the control precedence may be appropriate for providing interim protection until the hazard is abated permanently. In reality, if the hazard cannot be eliminated entirely, the adopted control measures will likely be a combination of all three items instituted simultaneously.