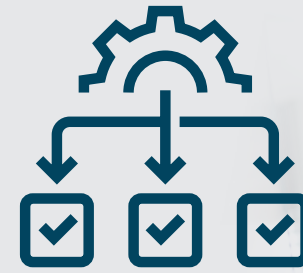


HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

The hierarchy of controls is a valuable tool for decision-making when aiming to reduce risk. It is considered best practice to follow the hierarchy in order, starting from the most effective control methods, rather than defaulting to the easiest or most convenient options. While organizations should consider each level, controls often work best in combination. For example, installing physical barriers (engineering controls) may be most effective when paired with safe work procedures (administrative controls) for operating around those barriers. Additionally, the hierarchy applies not only to **physical hazards**, but also to **psychological risks**, such as stress or harassment, making it a versatile framework for comprehensive workplace safety.



Physical/psychological hazards

**MORE
EFFECTIVE**



**LESS
EFFECTIVE**

EXAMPLES:

Is it possible to eliminate the physical or psychological hazard?

Elimination

Physical: Remove a broken ladder to eliminate a fall hazard.
Psychological: Eliminating excessive overtime to prevent burnout.

Is there a safer way to perform the task by changing products, processes or services to reduce risk? Can you fundamentally redesign work processes, including roles, responsibilities and the work environment? Consider whether these substitutions or redesigns might introduce new hazards.

Substitution/re-design

Physical: Replacing a hazardous chemical with safer alternatives and using an electric motor to cut diesel exhaust emissions.
Psychological: Flexible scheduling, job rotation, redesign processes or tasks to make them less demanding.

How can employers physically change the workplace to prevent workers from exposure to hazards, and how can they prevent or limit access to these hazards? Are there alternative ways to interact with hazards, and can you adjust existing practices by substituting safer alternatives or increasing resources to meet demands?

Engineering controls/adjustments

Physical: Barriers, enclosures, guards, ventilation, mechanical lifting devices and guardrails such as machine guards to prevent contact with moving parts.
Psychological: Collaborative spaces, inclusive leadership practices and ergonomic improvements, for example, workspaces that reduce sensory overload.

Is there technology that employers can implement to improve workers' ability to detect the hazards? Has the organization trained everyone involved to recognize the risk control that increases awareness?

Systems that increase awareness

Physical: Lights, indicators and audible alarms such as back up beepers on vehicles.
Psychological: Employee and Family Assistance Plan (EFAP) posters, harassment and violence zero tolerance notices.

Have you considered, developed and implemented policies, safe work procedures and practices, training, housekeeping and emergency preparedness, and have you trained affected workers to understand the requirements and expectations?

Administrative controls/education

Physical: Implement rotating shifts to reduce repetitive strain injuries.
Psychological: Establish clear communication protocols and workload expectations to reduce role ambiguity and stress.

Have you selected personal protective equipment (PPE) to improve the ability to avoid harm, control inadvertent exposure and reduce the severity of harm, and can you provide workers with opportunities to build resilience to withstand psychological hazards?

PPE/promotion

Physical: Provide respiratory protection, eye protection, hand protection and body protection for handling hazardous products.
Psychological: Provide access to EFAP and counseling services. Provide resources and training to build resilience and enhance self-care.