CrewSigned

Hazard Recognition Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

You cannot control a hazard you have not noticed. Almost every injury report we read has a line in it where somebody could have seen the problem coming. The cord was frayed for a week. The guardrail was missing since Tuesday. The floor was slick every morning. Hazard recognition is the skill of seeing those things before they hurt someone, and like any skill, it gets better with practice.

The hard part is that we get used to our surroundings. After a few days on a site, our eyes skip over the open hole and the pile of scrap because they have always been there. New workers often see hazards that the rest of us walk past. So today, try to look at this site like it is your first day.

Here is a simple way to do it. Before you start a task, stop for one minute and look around in a circle. Look up, look down, look all around. Then ask yourself a few questions. What could fall, or what could I fall from? What could move, start up, swing or roll? What is energized, pressurized, hot or sharp? What am I breathing, touching or hearing? What is different from yesterday? What happens if something goes wrong, and how do I get out?

Pay special attention to change. New crews, new equipment, a new phase of work, bad weather, a rushed schedule and work that is not routine are when hazards show up. Maintenance and cleanup jobs are a big one, because they are done less often and with guards off.

Once you spot something, act on it. If you can fix it safely, fix it now. If you cannot, protect people from it by blocking it off or marking it, and then tell me so we can deal with it. Do not assume someone else already reported it.

We will also do walk-arounds together, and I want you to point out what you see, even small things. There are no dumb reports. The goal is to catch the problem when it is a pile of scrap, not when it is a broken ankle.

Practice this every day. Hazards do not wait for the safety meeting.

Discussion questions

1. What changed on this site since yesterday that could create a new hazard?
2. Walk us through the hazards of the first task you will do this morning.
3. What hazard have you stopped noticing because you see it every day?

OSHA standard

OSHA Hazard Identification and Assessment guidance
https://www.osha.gov/safety-management/hazard-identification

SOURCES

OSHA Hazard Identification Training Tool: https://www.osha.gov/hazfinder
Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs (OSHA 3885): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3885.pdf

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Hazard Recognition Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

DATE

TIME

PRESENTER

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