

Meeting the Challenges of Reaching Low-Wage Workers  
Using Community Health and Safety Trainings

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**Abstract**

Meeting the Challenges of Reaching Low-Wage Workers

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Community-based occupational health trainings offer an innovative approach to reaching underserved populations who may have inadequate access to more traditional methods of health and safety education. The community-based organization (CBO) partners in this project maintain established connections to low-wage worker communities and are best suited to influence hard-to-reach workers. The goal of this collaboration between CBOs and the occupational health and safety expertise at the University of Washington (UW) was to design an interactive and innovative occupational health and safety training empowering low-wage workers in a wide array of industries to make improvements to their work situations. The curriculum, “Safety

Strategies as Work: Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace,” concentrates on the connection between work and health, educates workers on their rights, introduces skills to identify job hazards and recognize effective safety strategies, and promotes resources for taking action to reduce harm. This training program focused on increasing low-wage workers’ awareness and degree of concern surrounding the connections between workplace hazards and health, so they can take action and begin to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. Through a community-engaged curriculum development process, this training applies occupational health and safety training principles with CBOs’ intimate knowledge of community needs to meet the challenge of reaching low-wage workers through health and safety trainings.

## **Introduction**

Community-based occupational health trainings offer an innovative approach to reaching underserved populations who may have inadequate access to more traditional methods of health and safety education. The one-hour training curriculum developed for this project targets low-wage workers and focuses on awareness of worker rights, job hazard identification, and utilizing safety strategies to improve occupational health and safety for vulnerable workers. This project integrated technical expertise from researchers at the University of Washington with the cultural insight and established connections to workers from community-based organizations (CBOs). Through a collaborative process, this training program focused on increasing low-wage workers' awareness and degree of concern surrounding the connections between workplace hazards and health, so workers in a wide variety of occupations and industries can take action and begin to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses.

## **Background on Low-Wage Workers**

Low-wage workers are a diverse population employed in a multitude of industries such as housekeeping, food service, and low-level retail and healthcare positions. While the definition of low-wage varies depending on the wage cutoff used, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated up to 36 million workers in the US to be considered low-wage, or almost 30% of the US workforce, in 2013 (Vincent Fusaro and H. Shafer, 2016). As the landscape of the U.S. labor economy shifts from industrial sectors toward the service sector, low-wage jobs will continue to be a growing proportion of the US labor market.

Overrepresented by minorities, women, and immigrants, low-wage workers are particularly vulnerable to workplace injury, illness, and stress. Due to poor working conditions

and high hazard work environments, low-wage workers have notably high rates of injury and illness, and these workers contribute significantly to the estimated cost of occupational injuries illness in the US, or more than \$39.1 billion in 2010 (David Michaels, PhD, 2015; Leigh, 2012). Employment in contingent, high turnover, or low job control positions and employment in small businesses potentially challenged to maintain regulatory standards make low-wage workers “hard-to-reach” and contribute to their inadequate access to health and safety information, training, or services for low-wage workers.

These workers require innovative outreach and resources to overcome the heterogenous nature of their demographic backgrounds and industries they represent. The CBO partners in this project maintain established connections to low-wage worker communities and are best suited to influence hard-to-reach workers. These trusted organizations already serve low-wage workers and can communicate in the same language and culture as the workers, so training CBOs to deliver these health and safety trainings offers a significant advantage in meeting the needs and overcoming some of the challenges of reaching this project’s target population.

## **Project Overview and Design**

The project was initiated by the Fair Work Center, a Seattle-based CBO with the mission of empowering workers to achieve fair employment, to enhance their and their partner CBOs’ ability to address the health and safety needs of low-wage workers. An established research connection between the Fair Work Center and University of Washington (UW) lead to a cooperative project improving CBOs health and safety outreach. Primary stakeholders included the five CBOs (Fair Work Center, Working Washington, Puget Sound Sage, LGBTQ Allyship, and the Latino Community Fund), the University of Washington Department of Environmental

and Occupational Health Sciences, and the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries who provided grant funding for the project through the Safety and Health Investment Projects grant program.

The goal of this collaboration between CBOs and the occupational health and safety expertise from researchers at the UW was to design an interactive and innovative occupational health and safety training empowering low-wage workers in a wide array of industries to make improvements to their work situations. CBO involvement and ownership in the project strengthens the capacity for CBOs to train workers in health and safety and leverages their outreach potential allowing CBOs to tailor their one-hour trainings to the individual needs of their worker populations. To achieve this, the overall project design had three components focused on building the capacity of CBOs to serve workers:

- Part 1: A Train-the-Trainer course for CBOs to deliver the health and safety trainings to workers,
- Part 2: One-hour health and safety trainings for low-wage workers, and
- Part 3: Two-hour problem-solving clinics for low-wage workers.

The focus of this paper is on Part 2, the educational curriculum for the one-hour trainings promoting health and safety awareness and providing resources for low-wage workers to prevent and mitigate workplace hazards. CBO staff were trained during a 10-hour train-the-trainer course on health and safety education, theory, and outreach and how to teach the one-hour curriculum prior to delivering health and safety trainings to workers through their networks. In addition to and as a follow-up to these one-hour trainings, the Fair Work Center will offer two-hour problem-solving clinics to workers interested in enhancing their health and safety knowledge and problem-solving skills. The three components of this project center around conveying the content

of the curriculum designed to enhance health and safety knowledge, hazard recognition, and problem-solving skills among vulnerable low-wage worker populations.

## **Methods for Curriculum Development**

The collaborative nature of this project necessitated an iterative curriculum development process with the CBOs to meet the unique needs of the target audience: adult low-wage workers in diverse workplaces. Drawing on traditional health and safety education techniques, utilizing adult learning principles, and addressing the structural and power barriers vulnerable workers face were essential for creating a relevant and useful educational curriculum. The curriculum aimed to use a lay health worker model where the CBOs would deliver the information to their communities following a modified OSHA 10 training model. OSHA 10 trainings focus on teaching hazard recognition and prevention and epitomize traditional health and safety education. Integrating important considerations for low-wage workers into an OSHA 10-style model and emphasizing psychosocial hazards which are often underrepresented in health and safety training provided the basis for the curriculum development process.

The original curriculum was based on similar health and safety training programs which put an emphasis on basic hazard recognition and the influence of psychosocial hazard, such as “Preventing Violence in the Workplace: A health and safety curriculum for young workers” by U.C. Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) & Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MASSCOSH), the Massachusetts Worker Education Roundtable’s “Workplace Health and Safety ESOL Curriculum,” and NIOSH’s “Youth at Work - Talking Safety: A Safety and Health Curriculum for Young Workers, Washington Edition.” Some of these resources were targeted at youth workers, but unifying principles inspiring this



project's curriculum include interactivity and discussion, a focus on worker rights, and empowerment well-suited to our target audience of adult low-wage workers.

Regular communication with the Fair Work Center and pilot testing of the one-hour curriculum with multiple CBO staff helped inform the UW research team on revisions to content needs, appropriateness and feasibility of the training, and messaging around worker empowerment in the face of real and challenging barriers to improving workplace health and safety. It became clear through the curriculum development process it was necessary to go beyond traditional job hazard identification and controls to include basic worker rights and the nuances of taking action.

Adult learning principles, as theorized by Malcolm Knowles' Adult Learning Theory, state that education to be effective for adults, they must feel involved in the learning process and the learning must be relevant to their lives. Adults are able and willing to draw on a wealth of accumulated experience, and discussion and visual models are integrated into the curriculum to both engage and create an active rather than passive learning environment. Internal reasons motivate adults to learn, so educators should acknowledge the experience of their participants and create learning challenges with a problem-centered focus (Spies & Botma, 2015). This curriculum creates space for sharing work-related stories and experience and allows workers to draw on their own knowledge to solve hazard problem within workplace hazard scenarios.

Relevancy is created through focusing on applicable work situations, and furthermore, worker barriers must be acknowledged both by the curriculum and the trainers to validate the difficult situations some worker face in making meaningful changes to improve health and safety in the workplace. Structural power barriers, such as racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, lack of support from employers, or fear of retaliation are important

considerations for workers seeking change or help from their employers to mitigate hazards. Limited English language-ability and cultural barriers, especially for recent immigrants who may come from very different regulatory environments, may contribute to a workers' ability to comprehend and communicate their needs (O'Connor, Flynn, Weinstock, & Zandoni, 2014). Time constraints, lack of protections for some types of hazards or some types of worker contract types, the complexity of health and safety regulations, and documentation status all add difficulty for workers seeking solutions. Through acknowledgement of these barriers, trainers can direct the dialog towards realistic solutions to complex hazard scenarios.

Health and safety education may be motivated by a) knowledge transfer/skills development, b) attitudinal change (degree of concern), and/or c) social action or "empowerment" (O'Connor et al., 2014). This curriculum aimed to include all three motivations into the curriculum with the option to emphasize any component as necessitated by the worker population being trained. Knowledge transfer is the easiest goal to achieve in trainings, and some workers may require basic knowledge of the connection between workplace hazards and health. Attitudinal change and social action or empowerment are more challenging to achieve, but with the insight and involvement of CBOs into the worker communities, this curriculum provides the health and safety content, problem-solving principles, and motivational messaging workers can use to begin to take action to address health and safety issues in the workplace.

### **The One-Hour Health and Safety Curriculum**

The one-hour curriculum, entitled "Safety Strategies as Work: Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace," was modeled on similar workplace health and safety training programs. Adaptability of the training to the worker audience and CBO material, technology, and time constraints necessitated a flexible curriculum with customizable workplace scenarios. The

curriculum concentrates on the connection between work and health, educates workers on their rights, introduces skills to identify job hazards and recognize effective safety strategies, and promotes resources for taking action to reduce harm. Each training will center around scenario-based learning using individualized workplace scenarios and fictional worker stories to fit the audience's needs. CBOs are taught how to develop their own scenarios and fit unique hazards and worker stories into the curriculum framework.

The curriculum is focused on building awareness around the connection between workplace hazards and health, and includes action-oriented messages meant to develop attitudinal change around the workers' abilities to take action to improve the health and safety of their workplaces. Three take-away messages tie the curriculum content together and are emphasize throughout the training. The three take-away messages are:

- Workers have the right to receive health and safety information and use their rights to ensure protection from hazards in the workplace.
- Workers in our society do not share an equal risk of injury and illness. Safety and health at work depend on who you are and your work situation. In all cases, there are actions you can take to improve safety and reduce risk in your workplace.
- Workplace injuries and illness are unacceptable. Safety strategies and support are available for reducing harm in the workplace.

The following section a brief description of each part of the curriculum, its primary purpose, and the resources used to develop the content. The full version of the “Safety Strategies as Work: Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace” is found in the appendix.

*Introduction to Health and Safety on the Job* – The introductory section of the curriculum establishes a supportive learning environment, engages the audience, and introduces the training topic. The training opens with a discussion on what an ideal safe workplace looks like by asking the participants, “What does safe mean to you?”, to prime the participants to think about the connection between work and health. This sets the stage for the training to be relevant to the participants’ lives and starts to acknowledge and draw on their accumulated experiences. A Workshop Assessment of five questions pertaining to the curriculum content follows and assesses the participants’ individual health and safety knowledge prior to the training. This type of quiz, which is reviewed by participants at the end of the training, is a classic way to reinforce important information and allow participants to assess their knowledge acquisition pre- and post-training (O’Connor et al., 2014).

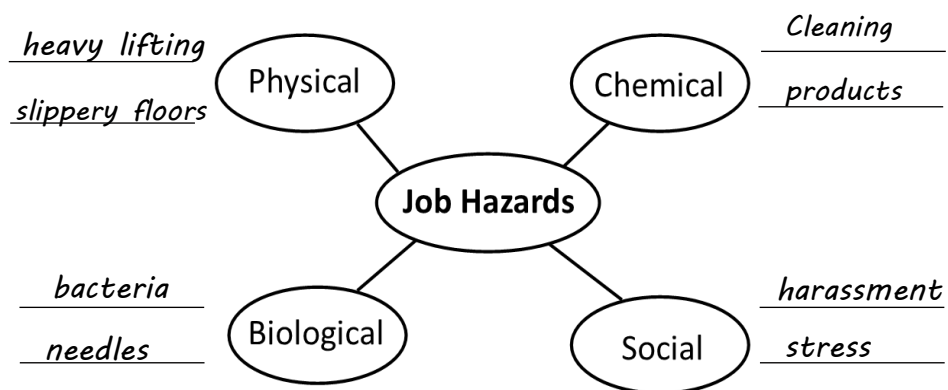
*Worker Rights* – After the introduction and a discussion on what a healthy and safe workplace looks like, the curriculum turns towards the rights workers have for their employer to maintain such a healthy and safe workplace. The worker rights section came out of feedback from the pilot training of the one-hour curriculum with the CBOs, and it was evident that the training would be inadequate without information on worker rights for underserved workers (O’Connor et al., 2014). This section emphasizes the employer responsibility for maintaining a safe workplace and is important for empowering workers to know their rights and aims to educate participants on their rights under the Washington State Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) through discussion of the groups experience with their rights on the job. Since this curriculum is specific to Washington State workers, the nine worker rights listed in the curriculum fall under three primary categories: the worker’s right to information, a safe workplace, and to take action. This information is revisited throughout the curriculum and helps

with the development of safety strategies in understanding the employer's responsibility to the worker.

*Identifying Hazards on the Job* – Job hazard identification is a classic approach for training on health and safety as it facilitates reflection on the wide-variety of hazards workers may be exposed to in the workplace. Most importantly, it links together the connection between workplace exposures and health by generating discussion on the hazards workers explicit and sometimes unrecognized hazards workers face each day and potential health effects they may be experiencing. This section introduces a workplace scenario to utilize a problem-solving approach to learning and bolsters the relevance of the discussion for the workers.

Figure 1 shows how the four categories of job hazards are presented in this curriculum: physical, biological, chemical, and social hazards. Notably, social hazards refer to psychosocial hazards, such as stress, harassment, violence, and work organization, for which health and safety regulation are often ambiguous but are increasingly linked to adverse health outcomes. Low-wage workers in particular face psychosocial hazards, and examining these hazard during the training fosters an attitudinal change around the importance of psychosocial hazards and their connection to health.

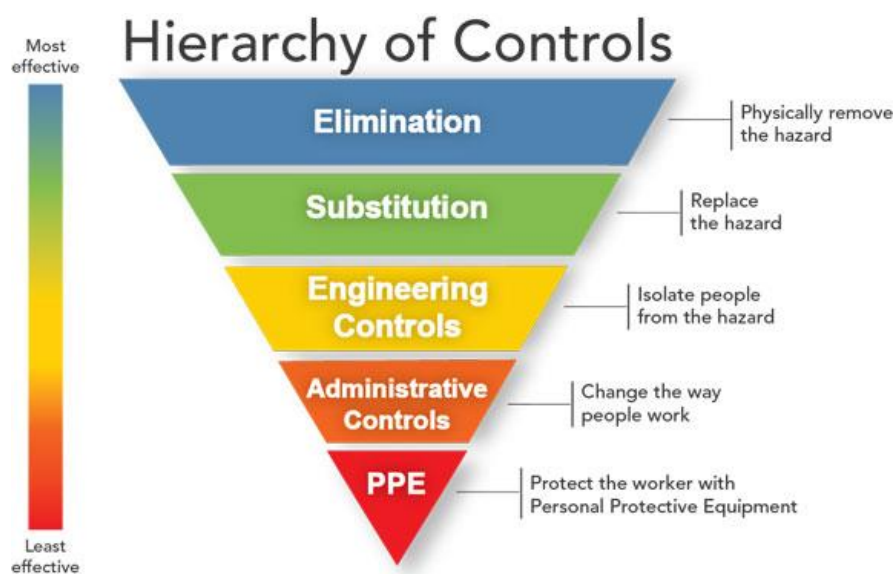
**Figure 1. Four categories of workplace hazards with examples**



*Understanding Effective Safety Strategies* – Safety strategies are ways to reduce or eliminate hazards in the workplace, and offer a systematic approach to reducing illness and injury. In this section, participants work in small groups to discuss worker stories and scenarios illustrating hazardous situations. Active learning is encouraged by the problem-solving process through discussion of hazard controls and the safety strategy methodology. The focus of this section is to learn how to prioritize hazards and safety strategies and to instill the message that employers have a significant role and responsibility for making changes in the workplace to reduce hazards.

The hierarchy of controls as modeled by the CDC in Figure 2a is a tool used by employers and occupational health specialist to prioritize hazard control methods, was adapted for simplicity and clarity for this training’s target audience. The classic upside-down pyramid figure of the hierarchy of controls using an arrow to delineate the most effective controls from the least effective controls was modified to become the Safety Strategies graphic used in this

**Figure 2a. The hierarchy of controls for used by employers and occupational health specialist for hazard mitigation (CDC, 2016)**



curriculum, as shown in Figure 2b. The Safety Strategies graphic supplemented the arrow with a numbered list, used simplified terminology, and included pictures to increase accessibility of these principles for workers.

**Figure 2b. Safety Strategies graphic developed for the curriculum**



One of the challenges in using this new graphic is that these safety strategies are employer-focused, meaning workers may not be able to implement a strategy without employer support. Even though a viable solution to a problem may be obvious, vulnerable workers may face significant challenges in asking for solutions from uncooperative or unsympathetic employers. Prioritizing safety strategies depends on the hazard and workplace situation, and due

to structural barriers or power dynamics within the workplace, optimal controls may be unavailable to workers. The Safety Strategies aim to guide workers towards the most effective solutions available to them in the workplace.

*Taking Action* – Each unique hazard scenario dictates how workers prioritize seeking help, and the Taking Action section suggests resources and allows workers to practice prioritizing safety strategies for mitigating hazards in the workplace. An important message for low-wage workers is to consider taking collective versus individual action in the workplace. This section reiterates the potential barriers workers may face in taking action and allows for discussion on how to overcome these barriers to make realistic and effective change. Here is an opportunity for trainers to promote what assistance their organization or partners can offer to workers and, ideally, emphasize taking action as part of the learning process.

*Conclusion* – The curriculum concludes with a re-examination of the Workshop Assessment from the beginning of the training where workers can reflect on their knowledge acquisition. The conclusion underscores the mission of empowerment education with a call to action, and trainers provide contacts, resources, and further opportunities for education and assistance with taking action on workplace hazards.

### **Challenges of Developing the Training**

This one-hour curriculum originated from the need for accessible and adaptable health and safety training for low-wage workers, and throughout the curriculum development process challenges arose attributed to the heterogeneity of the target population, competing stakeholder priorities, the nuances of worker rights, lack of regulation of psychosocial hazards, inherent structural and power barriers in the workplace, and the difficulty conveying attitudinal change



around taking action. As discussed, low-wage workers are a diverse population employed in a variety of industries facing a broad range of physical, biological, chemical, and psychosocial exposures, so developing an innovative training program for a heterogeneous group of workers proved challenging. To address this challenge, CBO trainers who are trained in principles of health and safety may adapt the curriculum content to fit the individual needs of their workers using tailored workplace examples and worker scenarios. The innovation of this curriculum lies in its flexibility. This, combined with the expertise of the CBO trainers who understand participant literacy and language needs as well as the relevant structural barriers workers may face, make this training appropriate for a heterogeneous group of low-wage workers.

Interweaving the complexity and specificity of health and safety rules and regulations with an empowerment message was a priority for all stakeholders involved, but having many stakeholders necessitated clear communication of objectives for the curriculum and consensus around the key messages of the curriculum. There were many benefits to including a variety of stakeholders on this project, but it also created challenges in developing a standardized curriculum flexible to the advocacy needs of CBOs. This final curriculum is advocacy-oriented which was a natural fit for CBOs who provided perspective and expertise on how to reach low-wage workers, but the advocacy messaging had limitations. For example, encouraging direct organizing and unionization was too controversial and politically charged to be approved for a state-funded grant project. Furthermore, the interest of CBOs in worker rights provided a good opportunity to for the UW research team to develop expertise and consensus on this topic.

As the curriculum developed, CBOs provided valuable feedback on the need for information on worker rights to foster empowerment and a belief by workers that they do have the right to a safe workplace. However, creating a simple, straightforward list of the rights every

worker maintains posed a challenge. Rules and regulations may be hazard or industry specific or vary from worker to worker, but DOSH's Core Rules for worker rights provided the research team with the clearest outline of worker rights applicable to almost all workers. The list of nine principle worker rights taught in the curriculum clarify the responsibility of employers to their employees but does leave gaps in addressing the empowerment needs of some workers or hazards, especially regarding psychosocial hazards.

This training emphasized the connection between psychosocial hazards and worker health, but there are no regulatory codes or standards for many of these hazards. The challenge was to address these hazards and convey that no existing code does not mean there is nothing that can be done to improve the situation. The "General Duty" clause, a catch-all portion of basic federal and state health and safety regulations stating that employers are required to maintain a work environment free from recognized hazards, is very difficult to enforce for psychosocial hazards. Therefore, implementing best practices may be an appropriate solution despite the lack of explicit worker rights, but providing meaningful guidance for vulnerable workers who face unsympathetic employers or fear of retaliation can be challenging.

The employer responsibility to workers is an important component of employing both the safety strategies and taking meaningful action. Power dynamics within the workplace may put workers at a disadvantage, so addressing when workers may not be able to make or ask for feasible change is vital. This is situation dependent and should be addressed by trainers when discussing unique hazard scenarios, but from a curriculum development standpoint, however, it is difficult to offer explicit instructions on steps for taking action. Thus, resources and suggestions were offered for taking action in lieu of a step-by-step guide.

The time constraints of completing a training within one hour and with the curriculum's primary focus on building awareness and attitudinal change around the connection between workplace hazards and health omits time for instruction on developing leadership skills or discussing solutions to individual worker problems. While leadership skills for organizing and taking action are an integral part of worker empowerment and overcoming structural barriers, these competencies are left for subsequent trainings and individual counseling (O'Connor et al., 2014). Based on feedback from the CBOs, information on power dynamics and when a worker has the right to refuse work or may consider walking away from a job will be added to subsequent versions of the curriculum. To increase empowerment, building the skills for taking action will be part of the 2-hour clinics during another phase of this project as a follow-up to the one-hour trainings.

## **Conclusion**

This one-hour health and safety training curriculum, *Safety Strategies at Work: Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace*, incorporates adult participatory learning techniques and traditional health and safety education to teach worker rights, job hazard identification, safety strategies, and how to utilize community and regulatory resources to mitigate hazards. Paolo Friere, educator and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, emphasized that education is not neutral, and this training takes an advocacy stance in encouraging a worker's right to take action to improve safety and health on the job (Wallerstein, 1988). Addressing barriers to taking action and providing supportive resources are vital for engaging low-wage workers, and job hazard recognition and utilizing safety strategies are ineffective without addressing the barriers and limitations preventing workers from putting these new skills into action.

Through emphasizing worker rights, this curriculum promotes attitudinal change and focuses on empowering workers to acknowledge their right to a safe and healthy workplace and to understand that workplace injuries and illness are unacceptable. Regulation and enforcement do not protect workers from every hazard they encounter and are particularly limited in addressing psychosocial hazards, such as harassment and stress. Through a community-engaged curriculum development process, this training applies occupational health and safety training principles with CBOs' intimate knowledge of community needs to meet the challenge of reaching low-wage workers through health and safety trainings.

## Resources

CDC. (2016). Hierarchy of Controls. Retrieved from

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hierarchy/>

David Michaels, PhD, M. (2015). Adding Inequality To Injury: the Costs of Failing To Protect Workers on the Job. *Occupational Safety & Health Administration*.

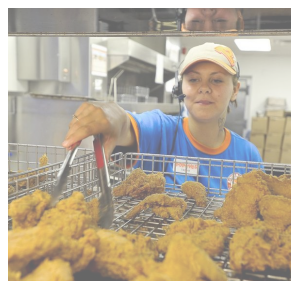
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O'Connor, T., Flynn, M., Weinstock, D., & Zandoni, J. (2014). OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS. *NEW SOLUTIONS*, 24(1), 83–106. <https://doi.org/10.2190/NS.24.1.d>

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## **Appendix**



Photos: AdobeStock

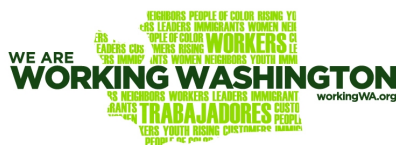
# SAFETY STRATEGIES AT WORK:

## Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace



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**FAIR WORK  
CENTER**



**NORTHWEST CENTER FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES  
University of Washington School of Public Health



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The curriculum was inspired by:

Workplace Health and Safety ESOL Curriculum. Jenny Lee Utech, Mass. Worker Education Roundtable, ©2005. Handout 9. Worker Rights Under OSHA.

“Preventing Violence in the Workplace: A health and safety curriculum for young workers” by U.C. Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) & Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MASSCOSH).

OSHA's 11: An OSHA 10 curriculum for young workers. Northwest Center for Occupational Health and Safety, Pacific Northwest OSHA Education Center.





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# Safety Strategies at Work:

## Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace

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### Course Overview

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As a community-based organization (CBO), this one-hour curriculum can help you address the health and safety needs of low-wage workers, a group of workers who have little access to health and safety information, training, or services. This one-hour curriculum will enhance health and safety knowledge, hazards recognition, and problem-solving skills among vulnerable worker populations. This curriculum aims to increase workers' degree of concern about safety and health, so they can take action and begin to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. The take-away messages for this program are:

- Workers have the right to receive health and safety information and use their rights to ensure protection from hazards in the workplace.
- Workers in our society do not share an equal risk of injury and illness. Safety and health at work depend on who you are and your work situation. In all cases, there are actions you can take to improve safety and reduce risk in your workplace.
- Workplace injuries and illness are unacceptable. Safety strategies and support are available for reducing harm in the workplace.

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### Course Goals

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify examples of the four types of job hazards in a workplace scenario.
- Recognize the worker rights under Washington State Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) and acknowledge the right to a safe workplace.
- Utilize the four main safety strategies for reducing or eliminating hazards at work in a workplace hazard scenario.
- Explain what to do if you see something at work that could hurt you or make you sick or distressed, including where to go for help.

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## Course Materials

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- ☐ One-Hour Curriculum
- ☐ Nametags (optional)
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Pencils/pens
- ☐ Workshop Assessment Forms
- ☐ Worker Rights Handouts
- ☐ Fair Works Center contact cards (optional)
- ☐ Additional resource handouts for workers
- ☐ Flipchart Option:
  - ☐ Flipchart paper
  - ☐ Markers – at least 6 in multiple colors
- ☐ PowerPoint Option:
  - ☐ PowerPoint slides
  - ☐ Projector and screen
  - ☐ Whiteboard/flipchart paper and markers (optional)

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## Preparation for Offering a One-Hour Course:

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1. Select a workplace scenario that matches the needs of your participant population. Familiarize yourself with the Job Hazards list, Worker Rights Chart, workplace scenarios, and Safety Strategies.
2. If you are using flipchart paper, pre-write/draw each page and have them ready in order of use.
3. If you are using the PowerPoint presentation, select the scenario picture slide for the scenario you plan to use.
4. If you are using the PowerPoint presentation, confirm all AV equipment.
5. Print the Workshop Assessment forms and cut in half.
6. Print the Worker Rights Handouts.
7. Obtain the Fair Works Center contact cards (optional).
8. As participants arrive at the training, have the nametags available (optional).

# Safety Strategies at Work: Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace

A One-Hour Health and Safety Curriculum for Workers

## AGENDA

Activity	Time	Materials
<b>Introduction to Health and Safety on the Job</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introduction<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Ground Rules</li></ul></li><li>• Who is responsible and who holds power<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What is a safe workplace?</li><li>○ Warm-up Discussion</li></ul></li><li>• Pre-Workshop Assessment (5 min)</li></ul>	10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flipchart paper</li><li>• Markers</li><li>• PowerPoint Slides (optional)</li><li>• <b>Workshop Assessment forms</b></li><li>• Pens/pencils</li></ul>
<b>Worker Rights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worker rights under DOSH</li><li>• Distribute Worker Rights Handouts</li></ul>	10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Worker Rights Handouts</b></li><li>• Flipchart paper</li><li>• Markers</li><li>• PowerPoint Slides (optional)</li></ul>
<b>Identifying Hazards on the Job</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is a job hazard? – 4 types</li><li>• Identify hazards in a workplace scenario</li></ul>	10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flipchart paper</li><li>• Markers</li><li>• PowerPoint Slides (optional)</li></ul>
<b>Understanding Safety Strategies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use the safety strategies to discuss solutions to a workplace hazard scenario</li><li>• Discuss worker rights related to job hazards and safety strategies</li></ul>	15 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flipchart paper</li><li>• Markers</li><li>• PowerPoint Slides (optional)</li></ul>
<b>Taking Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss how worker rights influence taking action to mitigate hazards</li><li>• Discuss additional resources</li></ul>	5min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Resource Handouts</b></li><li>• Flipchart paper</li><li>• Markers</li><li>• PowerPoint Slides (optional)</li></ul>
<b>Post-Workshop Assessment Conclusion</b>	5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Workshop Assessment forms</b></li><li>• Pens/pencils</li></ul>
		<b>TOTAL ~60 min</b>

# Introduction to Health and Safety on the Job

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## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Establish a supportive learning environment.
- Discuss worker experiences with health and safety in the workplace and who is responsible for safety on the job.
- Describe how work affects their health.

**Time Needed:** 10 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- Workshop Assessment forms
- PowerPoint slides (optional)

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## Preparing to Teach This Lesson

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Before you present this lesson:

- Write the ground rules on a piece of flipchart paper and display it for the group to see.
- Prior to the workshop, fill out the Trainer Organization with the name of your agency on the Workshop Assessment forms.

## Instructor Notes

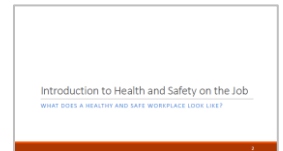
### A. Introduction (2 minutes)

1. Introduce yourself and your organization.
2. First, establish ground rules for the workshop. An example might be one mic, or one speaker at a time. *Refer to the ground rules written on the flipchart paper.* Ask for additions to the list of ground rules.
3. Ask for agreement on these ground rules.



PowerPoint Option:

Slide 2



## PowerPoint Option:

Slide 3



## B. Why Job Health and Safety (3 minutes)

- 1) This is a workshop about exercising your rights and staying safe at work, with an emphasis on how to prevent or reduce risks on the job.
- 2) Do a five-minute warm-up discussion on what a healthy and safe workplace looks like in an ideal world. Call on one or two participants to describe their work. Trainers want to encourage workers to share their experiences while also keeping the discussion brief.
  - “What does a safe and healthy workplace look like?”
  - “What makes it safer than other jobs?”
  - “What does staying safe mean to you?”
  - “Who is responsible for health and safety on the job?”
  - “Who has the power to make a healthier workplace, and why do they have the power?”

Participants will likely respond to the above questions with job hazards and outcomes examples that make the workplace dangerous or hazardous. If they do, try to turn it around to describe what a *safe* workplace looks like.

- 3) Record main points from the discussion on a flipchart page titled “Staying Safe at Work”.
- 4) Explain to the participants that this workshop will help them learn more about how to recognize and prevent safety and health problems at work.



### This section adapted from:

“Preventing Violence in the Workplace: A health and safety curriculum for young workers” by U.C. Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) & Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MASSCOSH)



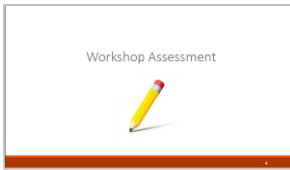
## **Responsibility for Safety in the Workplace**

**Who is responsible for health and safety on the job?** It is the responsibility of the employer to create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace, and workers can do their part to make sure their employers are aware of hazards and violations. The worker rights section in this curriculum will outline the rights all workers in WA State have and discuss standards which employers have the responsibility to maintain.

**Who has the power to make a healthier workplace? Why do they have power?** Power dynamics between a worker and an employer are based on a hierarchical employment relationship. Additional power dynamics that can complicate this relationship include racism, sexism, homophobia/ transphobia, and other forms of discrimination. It is important to acknowledge structural barriers that may prevent workers from exercising their rights. We also acknowledge that many of the systems designed to support and protect worker health, including certain health and safety laws, do not address power dynamics.

## PowerPoint Option:

Slide 4



## C. Pre-Workshop Assessment (5 minutes)

- 1) Hand out the **Workshop Assessment form** half-pages of paper (you can copy and print this page from the Supplemental Resources section of this manual). The workshop assessment is a tool to engage participants in assessing their personal knowledge of health and safety before and after the program as well as a tool for the instructor to gauge effectiveness of the training. This assessment is optional, especially for a shortened workshop format.
- 2) Introduce the Workshop Assessment Form as a tool to see what participants already know about their rights on the job and safety at work. Read each question aloud (this is especially important for participants who are less comfortable reading English) and have participants give their best answer, i.e. if you're pretty sure it's true or false, pick that answer, but if you really don't know, pick that answer.
- 3) Tell the participants that once they finished filling out the form to turn it over so the instructor knows they completed it.
- 4) Have the participants put these forms aside. At the end of the workshop, participants will revisit their answers to see if they would change any. Do not directly review the answers to these questions until the end of the workshop after the post-assessment.

Sample Workshop Assessment form filled out during training:

<b>Safety Strategies at Work: Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace</b>			
Training Organization: _____		Date: _____	
<b>Workshop Assessment</b>		<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
1. A hazard on the job is something that can injure you, <u>make you sick</u> , or harm your mental health.		<b>X</b>	
2. You have the right to receive training about the health and safety hazards on your job in a language you understand.		<b>X</b>	
3. Stress is part of all work, and <u>there is nothing a worker can do about it.</u>			<b>X</b>
4. Of the four main ways to reduce or eliminate hazards at work, the best way your employer can protect you at work is to provide you with safety gear.		<b>X</b>	
5. If you and your co-workers <u>don't</u> want to be hurt during a robbery, you need to show your strength. <u>Don't</u> let the robber push you around.			<b>X</b>

# Worker Rights

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## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Discuss basic information about DOSH.
- Identify worker rights under DOSH.
- Review employer responsibilities for health and safety.
- Discuss barriers and limitations to using DOSH rights among low-wage workers.

### Take-Away Message:

- Workers have the right to receive health and safety information and use their rights to ensure protection from hazards in the workplace.

**Time Needed:** 10 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- Worker Rights Handouts
- PowerPoint slides (optional)

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## Preparing to Teach This Lesson

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Before you present this lesson:

- Review the Worker Rights Chart in the curriculum manual.
- Review the Worker Rights Handout and print enough to distribute to the group.

## PowerPoint Option:

Slides 5-6



## This section adapted from:

Workplace Health and Safety ESOL Curriculum.  
Jenny Lee Utech, Mass.  
Worker Education Roundtable, ©2005.  
Handout 9. Worker Rights Under OSHA

# Instructor Notes

## A. Introduce Regulatory Agencies

1. Ask workers if they have had any experience with the regulatory agencies, DOSH or OSHA. Give a brief explanation of DOSH and OSHA and use this conversation and information to explain the list of rights. Tell the participants that there are rights that protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job.
2. Explain to workers that DOSH is the resource for workers in Washington State. OSHA only covers a small group of federal and special-case workers. DOSH should be their resource for questions about worker regulations and rights.

## Regulatory Agencies

**Washington State Labor and Industries (L&I)** – The Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) ensures that Washington’s employers provide their workers with safe and healthy workplaces. The WA State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) administers WISHA through its Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH).

**Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH)** - DOSH is part of the WA State Department of L&I that develops and enforces health and safety regulations

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** – OSHA is the federal regulatory body responsible for enforcing workplace safety and health rules throughout the country. Washington operates under a state plan, but federal employees, workers on federal reservations and military bases, tribal employers, and floating worksites fall under OSHA regardless of a state plan. OSHA monitors and partially funds DOSH.

**What is the difference between DOSH and OSHA?** – DOSH is Washington’s state health and safety regulatory agency. Regulations are as strict, and sometimes more strict, than those required by OSHA.

Source: *A Guide to Workplace Safety and Health in Washington State* [Pamphlet]. (n.d.) Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

## B. Worker Rights Discussion

1. It is common to see things that are unsafe and not know what to do about it. Workers have rights, but they may not be familiar with what worker rights are applicable to them. Acknowledging that workers have a wealth of experience and likely have experiences where their rights violated, have a short discussion around unsafe experiences at work, how that made the workers feel, and what their next steps were.
2. Discuss the question “Have you seen an unsafe activity in your workplace and what did you do about it?” and have the group share stories for a couple minutes.

## C. Worker Rights Handout

1. Distribute the **Worker Rights Handout** for workers in WA State. If there is time, read through the following list and give a brief example of each item. Emphasize the three main categories (a-c).

You have the right to...

### a. Information.

- 1) Workers have the right to **ask for and get information** from their employer about health and safety hazards on the job.
- 2) Workers have the right to **see copies of federal and state safety regulations** in their workplace.
- 3) Workers have the right to look at their **employer's records of injuries and illnesses** that have happened at work.
- 4) Workers have the right to **see their medical records or exposure records** from work

### b. A Safe Workplace.

- 5) Workers have the right to **a workplace that has no known hazards**. This is called the “General Duty” clause.
- 6) Workers have the right to **be protected from punishment** from exercising their rights under DOSH.

### c. Take Action.

- 7) Workers have the right to **refuse dangerous work** when certain conditions are met.
- 8) Workers have the right to **make a complaint to DOSH** about dangerous conditions on the job and participate in an inspection.
- 9) Every worker is entitled to **workers compensation benefits** if s/he is injured on the job or if s/he developed an occupational disease.

## PowerPoint Option:

Slides 7-11



This section adapted from:

"Mapping the Landscape of Low-Wage Work and Health in Syracuse." Zoeckler, Jeanette, and Michael Lax.

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries. Worker's Rights. <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/AToZ/WorkersRights/?F=HDI>

## PowerPoint Option:

Slide 12



### Instructor Note:

Under federal law, workers are entitled to a safe workplace. Employers must provide a workplace free of known health and safety hazards. If workers have concerns, help them to understand that they the right to speak up about them without fear of retaliation. If there is a serious hazard or an employer is not following the rules, help workers file a complaint asking DOSH to inspect their workplace:  
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/FormPub/Detail.asp?DocID=1784>

## Transition to Scenarios

3. Questions about the **Worker Rights Handout** may come up. If there is time, you can answer a couple of questions or ask them to save questions for after the class concludes.
4. Tell the group that you will be discussing scenarios to illustrate how these worker rights take effect and impact possible solutions workers have in resolving hazards.
5. Emphasize the **take-away message** for the Worker Rights section:

**Workers have the right to receive health and safety information and use their rights to ensure protection from hazards in the workplace.**

## Walking Off the Job

### Can I walk off the job to protest unsafe conditions?

No, you cannot walk off the job. However, you can refuse to do a specific task if you reasonably believe that doing so would be dangerous to your life and/or health. You need to stay on the job until the issue is resolved. If you walk off the job, DOSH may not be able to protect you. Your right to refuse a task is protected if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The refusal to work must be genuine. It cannot be a disguised attempt to harass your employer or disrupt business.
2. A reasonable person (or most people) would agree that there is a real danger of death or serious injury if you were to perform the job.
3. There isn't enough time, due to the urgency of the hazard, to get it corrected through regular enforcement channels, such as filing a complaint with DOSH.
4. When all three of the above conditions are met, you should:
  - a. Ask your employer to correct the hazard.
  - b. Ask your employer for other work.
  - c. Tell your employer that you won't perform the work unless the hazard is corrected.
  - d. Remain on the work site until ordered to leave by your employer.

Source: WA State L&I Worker Rights Pocket Guide

# Identifying Hazards on the Job

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## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Define the term “job hazard”.
- Identify a variety of health and safety hazards found at typical worksites.
- Locate various types of hazards in a specific workplace example.

### Take-Away Message:

- Workers in our society do not share an equal risk of injury and illness. Safety and health at work depend on who you are and your work situation. In all cases, there are actions you can take to improve safety and reduce risk in your workplace.

**Time Needed:** 15 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- PowerPoint slides (optional)

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## Preparing to Teach This Lesson

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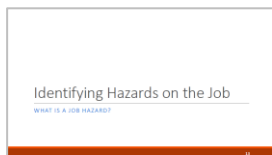
Before you present this lesson:

- Select a workplace you would like to focus on and review the list of hazards to identify those specific to the workplace you will be using as an example.
- Prepare the flipchart pages for this section.

## Instructor Notes

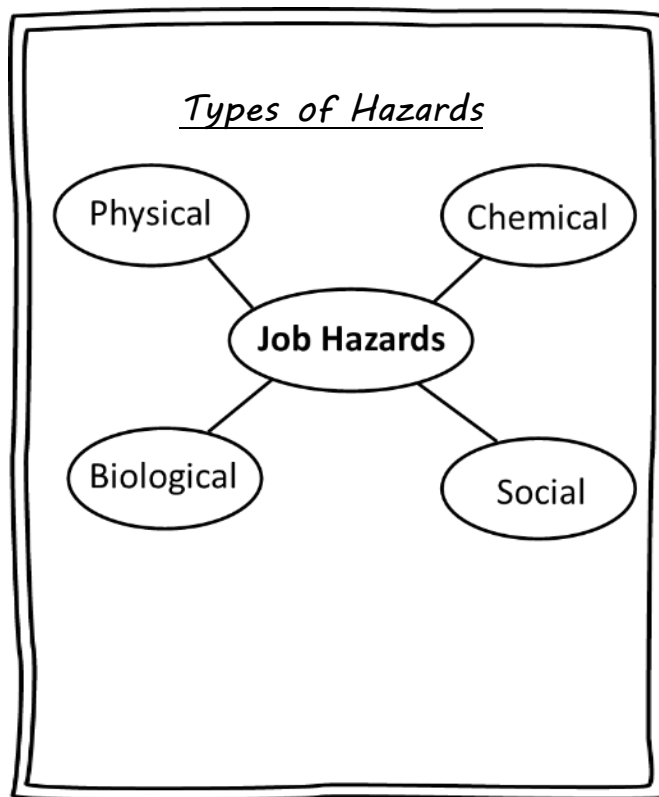
### PowerPoint Option:

Slides 13-14



### A. Introduction: What is a job hazard? (2 minutes)

1. Hang a flipboard paper with the four categories of job hazards listed: Physical, Chemical, Biological, and Social like the graphic below.
2. Remind the class that a job hazard is anything at work that can hurt you, either physically or mentally. Explain that some job hazards are obvious, but others are not. In order to be better prepared to be safe on the job, it is necessary to be able to identify different types of hazards.
3. Give a brief explanation of each of the four categories of job hazards with examples.





## TYPES OF HAZARDS

**Physical hazards** can cause immediate accidents and injuries. Examples: hot surfaces or slippery floors, trip hazards, sharp edges, etc.

**Chemical hazards** are gases, vapors, liquids, or dusts that can harm your body. Examples: cleaning products or pesticides.

**Biological hazards** are living things—bacteria, viruses, or animals—that can cause diseases such as flu, HIV, hepatitis, Lyme disease, tuberculosis, and methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). In the workplace, you may be exposed to biological hazards through ingestion, contact with used needles, sick coworkers/children/public, animals, etc.

**Social hazards** include things that can harm your health related to interpersonal relations, mental health, and work organization. These hazards are sometimes less obvious because they may not cause health problems right away. Some examples might be workplace violence, discrimination, fast work pace, and mental stress.

### Instructor Note:

See the **Job Hazards List** for examples of hazards found in each of the four categories.

### This section adapted from:

“Preventing Violence in the Workplace A health and safety curriculum for young workers” by U.C. Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) & Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MASSCOSH)

Slides 15-16



Participants may confuse the effects of hazards with the hazards themselves. They may mention “cuts” for example, instead of knives, which cause cuts. The cause is the hazard and should be listed on the chart. If people give effects rather than causes, ask them what causes the problem they mention. This will help later when participants discuss how to eliminate hazards.

1. Introduce the workplace scenario (i.e. fast food restaurant worker, custodian) you want to focus on for the course. This workplace setting will likely be familiar to your participants, but if it is not, ask participants to think about places they have worked, or workplaces with which they are familiar (restaurants, stores, movie theaters, offices, etc.), to identify potential hazards.
2. Hang a flipchart paper on the wall with the four hazard categories listed. Have participants call out possible job hazards related to the scenario and write each hazard under the physical hazard, chemical hazard, biological hazard, or social hazard columns as they apply. If participants are having a difficult time coming up with hazards, ask leading questions about:
  - Different locations around the workplace
  - Different types of jobs you would have at the workplace
  - Tools, chemicals, and equipment needed for these jobs
  - Hazards that are not obvious or may not be visible (social hazards?)

*Job Hazards*

<u>Physical</u>	<u>Chemical</u>	<u>Biological</u>	<u>Social</u>

3. Emphasize the **take-away message** for the Hazard Identification section:

Workers in our society do not share an equal risk of injury and illness. Safety and health at work depend on who you are and your work situation. In all cases, there are actions you can take to improve safety and reduce risk in your workplace.

#### PowerPoint Option:

Slide 17



#### Instructor Note:

You do not have to spend time making a comprehensive list. Get a good representation of the four categories, but do not spend too much time on this section. Refer to the Job Hazards list for extra examples.

### EXAMPLE: FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

#### JOB HAZARDS

##### Physical

- Cooking grease
- Fire
- hot ovens
- Heavy lifting
- Hot grills
- Hot water/steam
- Knives
- Slippery floors
- Falling objects
- Fatigue
- Needles

##### Chemical

- Cleaning products

##### Biological

- Needles

##### Social

- Angry customers (stress)
- Pressure to work fast
- Stress (from discrimination, harassment, understaffing, under-training)

## Job Hazards

### Physical Hazards

- hot surfaces
- slippery floors
- unsafe ladders
- machines without guards
- sharp knives
- hot grease
- needles
- unsafe electric circuits
- lack of fire exits
- motor vehicles
- cluttered work areas
- falling objects
- violence
- noise
- vibration
- radiation
- electrocution
- heat or cold
- repetitive movements
- awkward posture
- heavy lifting
- bending, reaching
- areas too dark or too bright
- standing for long periods
- weather conditions
- slips/trips/falls
- traffic
- Layout of work stations
- Crowding
- Ergonomics

### Chemical Hazards

- cleaning products
- pesticides
- solvents
- acids
- asbestos
- lead
- ozone (from copiers)
- wood dust
- mercury
- poor air quality
- gasoline

### Biological Hazards

- viruses
- bacteria
- molds
- animals
- birds
- insects
- poison ivy
- poison oak
- used needles
- bloodborne pathogens
- poor hygiene/not washing hands
- spoiled food

### Psychosocial Hazards

- fast pace of work
- stress due to lack of control over work, job insecurity, poor work/life balance, responsibility for safety of others, isolation, inadequate supervisions
- Discrimination based on age, gender, race/ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation
- wage theft
- limited language comprehension
- fear of retaliation for voicing concerns
- bullying
- lack of safety training and communication
- fatigue
- understaffing
- lack of support
- sexual harassment
- management structure
- threatening from customers/clients
- intimidation
- working alone

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## Options for Visual Prompts for Identifying Types of Job Hazards

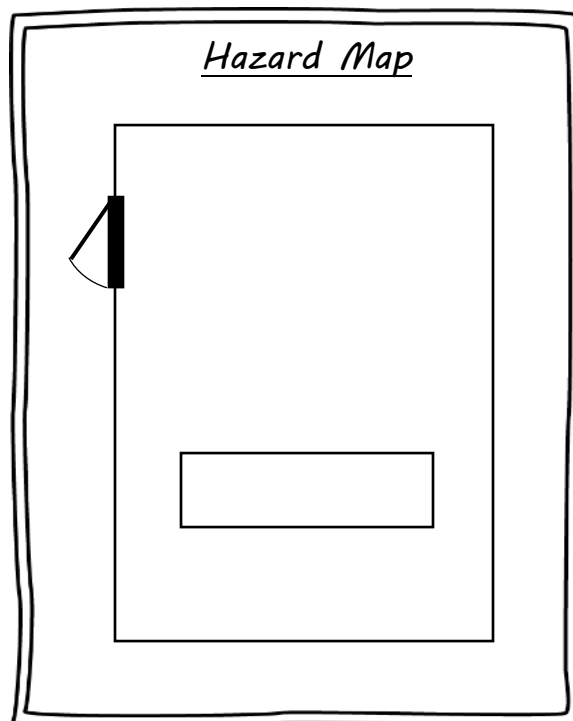
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### A. One-Hour Curriculum PowerPoint

1. If you are using the PowerPoint presentation, refer to the slides with pictures of your workplace scenario.

### B. Hazard Map (10- 15 minutes)

1. Explain that as a group you will create a map of a workplace and identifying job hazards in that workplace. If you have a very large group you can make multiple hazard maps in small groups. Choose a workplace the participants would be familiar with or where they work.
2. Draw a crude outline of the workplace on the flipchart paper to represent the workplace you select. For example, if you are working with gardeners, draw an outdoor yard, but if you are working with restaurant workers, draw a floorplan of a typical restaurant with a kitchen and seating area.
3. Select a participant to draw hazards on the map which coincide with the list of hazards you create on the flipchart paper entitled “Job Hazards”.



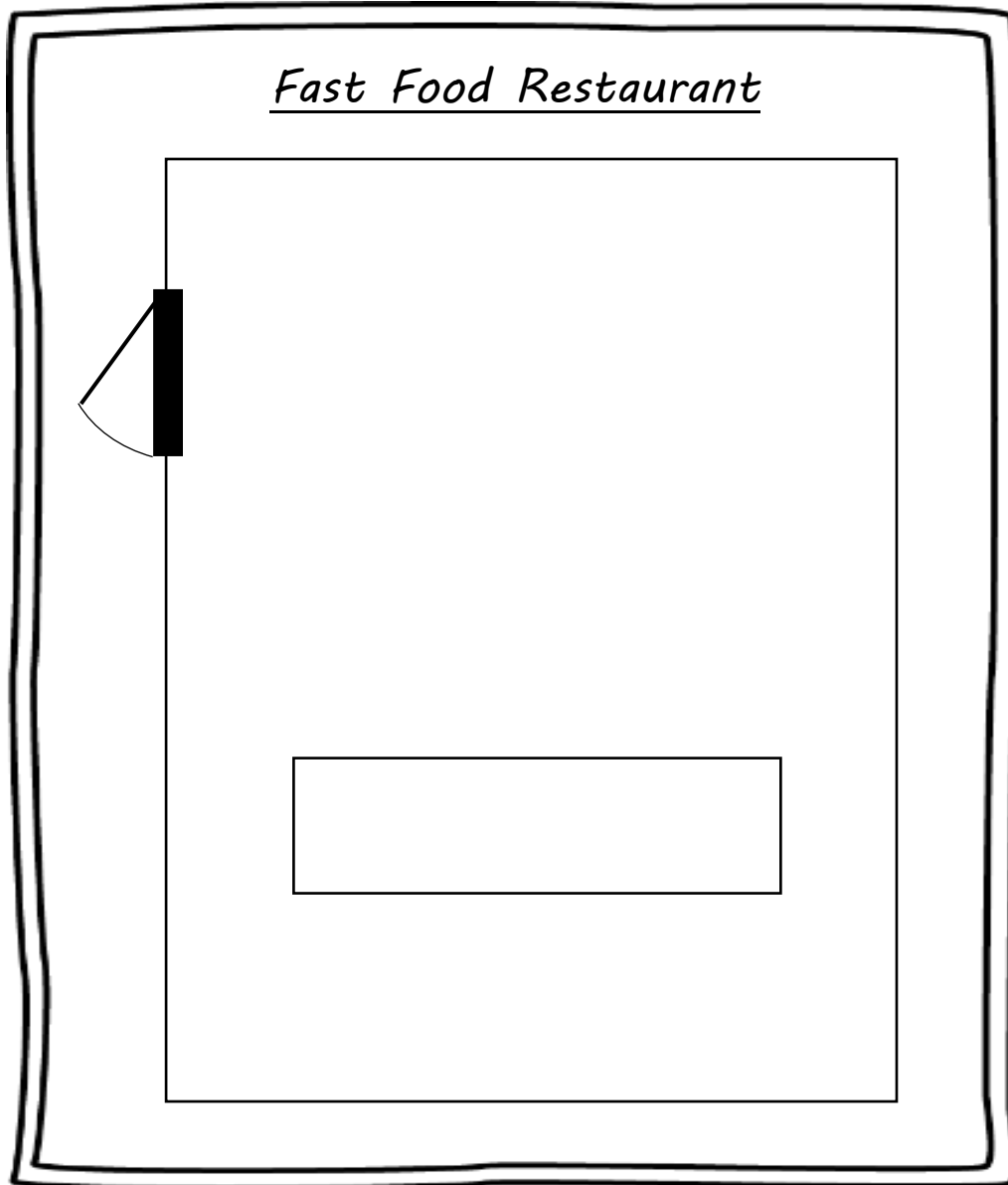
#### Instructor Note:

The Hazard Map can be an engaging activity, but it can also take a lot of time. If your program is focused on hazard identification in the workplace, this activity can complement the Job Hazard List activity in part B of this section.

#### This section adapted from:

“Preventing Violence in the Workplace A health and safety curriculum for young workers” by U.C. Berkeley Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) & Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MASSCOSH)

Sample Hazard Map:



# Understanding Effective Safety Strategies

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## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Describe the four main ways to reduce or eliminate hazards at work.
- Explain which methods are most effective for controlling hazards.
- Identify worker rights related to specific job hazards.

### Take-Away Message:

- Workplace injuries and illness are unacceptable. Safety strategies and support are available for reducing harm in the workplace.

**Time Needed:** 15 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- PowerPoint slides (optional)

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## Preparing to Teach This Lesson

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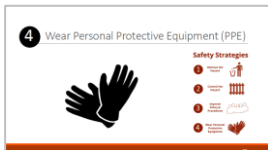
Before you present this lesson:

- Review the list of safety strategies to reduce or eliminate hazards in specific workplaces.

## Instructor Notes

### PowerPoint Option:

Slides 18-23



### A. Using the Four Safety Strategies (5 minutes)

1. Safety strategies allow us to determine the most effective methods for solving or mitigating hazardous situations. Draw the Safety Strategies graphic on a piece of flipchart paper and hang it on the wall. The graphic has four solutions categories: Remove the Hazard, Control the Hazard, Improve Work Policies & Procedures, Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
2. Explain that model employers use these methods to protect workers from hazards. Give examples of how safe and healthy workplaces use these safety strategies. Emphasize the importance of the order of effectiveness.





## SAFETY STRATEGIES

Safety strategies represent the order of effectiveness for actions employers can take to address job hazards. Most of these strategies involve action taken by the employer but it is useful for the workers to think along this framework to prioritize and suggest options and work with their employer to solve problems.

1. **Remove the Hazard** - This is the most effective method of controlling a hazard. If eliminating the hazard is not possible, there may be a viable substitution (i.e. substituting a less toxic cleaning product in the workplace).
2. **Control the Hazard** - If a hazard cannot be removed or substituted, an effective safety strategy can be to control (engineer out) as much danger as possible by relocating the hazard, creating barriers, machine guards, improved tools, and improved ergonomic work stations.
3. **Improve Work Policies & Procedures**- This includes training, making new rules, policies, or standard practices that decrease the risk from the hazard if it cannot be eliminated or substituted. This will take collaboration from employers and other workers, and making administrative changes may be difficult or impossible for some workers.
4. **Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Wearing PPE may be the least effective method of reducing risk since PPE requires proper use every time exposure is possible. Proper training and consistency are key.

These safety strategies are in order of effectiveness with removing the hazard (#1) being the most effective and most ideal method of controlling a hazard. Wearing PPE (#4) is least effective since the hazard is still present and mitigation relies on availability and proper use of PPE every time.

## PowerPoint Option:

Slide 24



## B. Hazard Solutions Scenario (10 minutes)

1. To best illustrate the Safety Strategies, choose a specific hazard scenario that relates to the job hazard list you created for the selected workplace (see Supplemental Resources). Read the scenario from the prompt or develop your own scenario related to a specific hazard or hazards to discuss possible solutions.
2. Ask the group to define the primary hazard in the scenario.

### EXAMPLE: FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

**Biological Hazard Scenario:** "A fast food worker is told to clean the bathrooms. One of the tasks is emptying the garbage. A used needle sticks out from the bag and pokes the worker in his leg."

**Primary Hazard:** Possible infectious disease from exposed needles (biological)

#### Safety Strategies:

1. **Remove the Hazard:** No-hands handling procedure. Never put hands in the garbage bag. Use a tool to push garbage down if needed. Use a picker in the garbage. Use tongs to pick up any needles.
2. **Control the Hazard:** Install a sharps container for needles in the bathrooms to keep them out of the trash.
3. **Improve Work Policies & Procedures:** Install signs directing people where to properly dispose of needles. Make sure all workers are trained on the hazards of discarded needles and procedures for handling them. Follow procedures for seeking medical care (for example, seek care within two hours of the needle stick because medicines to prevent infectious disease work best during this time frame).
4. **Wear Personal Protective Equipment:** Use proper gloves.

3. In pairs or small groups, have the participants use the four safety strategy categories to discuss what some possible solutions are to the hazards scenario. Some solutions may fall in more than one safety strategy category. To decide whether each solution is a valid one, it must:
  - Relate to the scenario
  - Be realistic
  - Be specific about the solution (ex., not just PPE, but what kind of PPE)
4. Regroup and discuss the safety strategies the participants developed for the scenario. Go further to discuss the following questions:
  - Which hazards get the most attention?
  - What are some barriers to achieving these safety strategies?
  - When may it not be feasible to take action to control a hazard?
5. Discuss why removing the hazard is the most effective method of controlling a hazard. Moving through the Safety Strategies towards PPE, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each level of the four strategies.

6. Emphasize the **take-away message** for the Safety Strategies section:

**Workplace injuries and illness are unacceptable. Safety strategies and support are available for reducing harm in the workplace**

## PowerPoint Option:

Slide 25



## Instructor Note:

For your scenario, think about which worker rights relate to these safety strategies. For example, workers have the right to workers compensation benefits if they have a qualifying injury. If this is part of your scenario, be sure to emphasize this right.

# Taking Action

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## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Explain what to do if you see something at work that could hurt you or make you sick or distressed, including where to go for help.
- Describe the options for taking health and safety actions.
- List some of the consequences that workers face for exercising their rights to protect their health.

**Time Needed:** 5 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- Resource handouts
- Flipchart paper
- Markers
- PowerPoint slides (optional)

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## Preparing to Teach This Lesson

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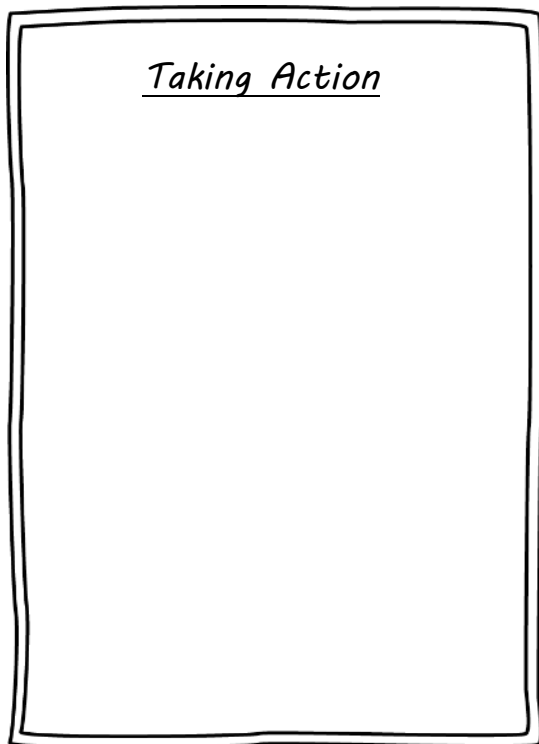
Before you present this lesson:

- Review Worker Rights Chart (in Supplemental Resources) to explain employer responsibilities and worker rights.
- Review the chosen workplace scenario worksheet and choose a scenario for the Taking Action discussion.
- Prepare community-based organization (CBO) handouts and additional resources you may want to distribute to your participants.

## Instructor Notes

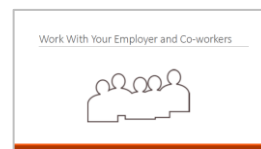
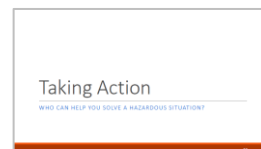
### A. Resources for Taking Action (5 minutes)

1. Workers have the right to a safe and healthy workplace, and to participate in activities that can reduce their exposure to hazards in the workplace. Small but significant choices have a great effect.
2. Hang a flipchart page titled, "Taking Action".
3. During this discussion, make a list of all of the people, community resources, and agencies who can help a worker solve a hazardous situation and implement the safety strategies.
  - Who can help you solve a hazardous situation?
  - Who could the workers contact for help?
  - What community resources are available?
  - Are there options that do not solve the problem?



### PowerPoint Option:

Slides 26-29



### Instructor Note:

For your scenario, think about which worker rights relate to taking action. For example, employers are required to provide a workplace with no known hazards, so employers should be included in the plan for taking action.

# TAKING ACTION

The following list suggests resources workers utilize to help address health and safety incidents in the workplace and solve future problems. Structural and power barriers may prevent workers from being able to take some of these actions or the highest priority actions, and each unique situation will dictate how workers prioritize seeking help.

1. **Telling a Supervisor/Employer:**
  - a. Write down the incident, including time, date, persons involved, and details of the incident.
  - b. Communicate with supervisor, employer, and safety committee about health and safety issues, and request that your employer correct unsafe working conditions.
  - c. Review workplace injury logs of past incidents, if available.
2. **Working with a co-worker to find a solution:**
  - a. Coordinate with co-workers to find solutions.
  - b. Contact/start a health and safety committee if it is not already required at your workplace.
3. **Request health and safety training:**
  - a. Employers are required to provide health and safety training to workers in a language that they can understand before they begin work.
  - b. Contact community-based organizations (CBOs) for industry specific best-practices handouts.
4. **Seek help from a health care provider:**
  - a. Workers have the right to seek medical care if injured on the job.
  - b. Reporting the injury to the provider as a work-related injury.
  - c. Receive workers compensation benefits, if appropriate.
5. **Seeking help from resources outside work/from a community organization:**
  - a. CBOs have the right to accompany an inspector in a workplace visit to be an advocate for the workers.
  - b. Contact Fair Work Center, Working Washington, Casa Latina, or other worker rights centers to help prioritize safety strategies and gain support for finding solutions to hazards at work.
  - c. Review inspection violations from L&I's online database.
  - d. Contact your union, if available.
  - e. Learn more about health and safety hazards and topics from the L&I website:  
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety/>
6. **Reporting the problem to authorities:**
  - a. Call DOSH to report a problem.
  - b. CBOs have the right to accompany an inspector in a workplace visit as a worker advocate.
  - c. Workers can exercise their rights under the law without retaliation or discrimination.
  - d. File a complaint asking DOSH to inspect their workplace if they believe there is a serious hazard or that their employer is not following the rules:  
<http://www.lni.wa.gov/FormPub/Detail.asp?DocID=1784>
7. **Seek technical assistance for controlling hazards in the workplace:**
  - a. Attend a University of Washington 2-hour Safety Clinic.
  - b. Ask L&I consultation services/SHARP for assistance.
  - c. Contact the UW Field Research and Consultation Group (FRCG) at [frcg@uw.edu](mailto:frcg@uw.edu).

## B. Taking Action in a Scenario

1. Choose **one** of the scenarios you discussed in the Safety Strategies section. The group will develop a plan for taking action using the available options.
2. There are many options for taking action. Based on the specific workplace, employee-employer relationship, workplace conditions, some options for taking action will take priority.
3. Using your scenario, ask the group to discuss the potential outcomes and repercussions from taking action to resolve a hazardous situation.
  - Which options for taking action are the highest priority?
  - What are the barriers to taking action?
  - What structural or power barriers exist that inhibit taking action?
  - How do you implement immediate solutions?
    - i. Examples: Call 911 for an injury, remove or contain the hazard, put out a fire
  - How do you implement long-term solutions?
    - i. Examples: developing workplace policies to address hazards, forming safety committees, install safer machines and equipment

### EXAMPLE: FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

#### Suggested Plan for Taking Action:

Seek help from a health care provider. Tell a supervisor/employer about the incident. Seek technical assistance for controlling hazards in the workplace, such as UW 2-hour clinic.

#### PowerPoint Option:

Slide 30



#### Instructor Note:

The following 'Taking Action' list includes recommended resources. It is conceivable and common that workers may not seek outside help to manage hazards and continue to take the risk. In some instances, workers may quit the job to avoid the hazard. If there is an immediate threat of injury or death, it is recommended to stop working, but this training is aimed at providing workers with resources and helping workers recognize and prioritize safety strategies and options for taking action to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

# Conclusion

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## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Explain how their knowledge about health and safety in the workplace has improved.

**Time Needed:** 5 minutes

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## Materials Needed

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- Workshop Assessment forms (from Intro section)
- PowerPoint slides (optional)
- Handouts from your organization

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## Preparing to Teach This Lesson

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Before you present this lesson:

- Be sure the participants retained their Workshop Assessment forms filled out at the beginning of the workshop.
- Print copies of any handouts and materials from your organization that you would like to distribute to the participants.



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## Instructor Notes

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### A. Post-Workshop Assessment

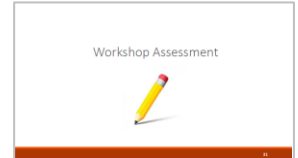
1. To assess how the participants' knowledge has improved, ask the participants to retake the **Workshop Assessment form**. They should circle any of their previous answers that they want to correct, and then mark the correct answer.
2. Tell the participants that once they finished filling out the form to turn it over so the instructor knows they completed it.
3. Collect these forms. See the Workshop Assessment Answers to help answer questions participants have about the Workshop Assessment.

### B. Conclusion

1. The goals of this workshop are to increase the ability of low-wage workers to recognize and prioritize the most significant hazards in their workplace and to use safety strategies to reduce injuries and illnesses. Be proactive by:
  - Identifying the hazards
  - Prioritizing the most effective safety strategies
  - Using resources (employers, coworkers, CBOs, regulators) to take action to mitigate the hazard
2. Thank the participants for their time and attention. Consider closing the training with:
  - "Nobody knows everything, but together we know a lot."
  - "You don't have to do this alone."
3. Offer additional resources:
  - What your organization can offer (give resource handouts, if applicable).
  - Promote the University of Washington 2-hour health and safety clinics where they can have more detailed discussions with experts about their specific concerns.

### PowerPoint Option:

Slides 31-32



### Instructor Note:

This is a good place to reiterate the three **Take-Away Messages** for this course.

Sample Workshop Assessment form initially filled out at beginning of training:

### Safety Strategies at Work: Job Hazards and Your Right to a Safe Workplace

Training Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Workshop Assessment	True	False	Don't Know
1. A hazard on the job is something that can injure you, make you sick, or harm your mental health.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You have the right to receive training about the health and safety hazards on your job in a language you understand.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Stress is part of all work, and there is nothing a worker can do about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Of the four main ways to reduce or eliminate hazards at work, the best way your employer can protect you at work is to provide you with safety gear.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If you and your co-workers don't want to be hurt during a robbery, you need to show your strength. Don't let the robber push you around.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT ANSWERS

1. A hazard on the job is something that can injure you, make you sick, or harm your mental health.

**Answer: True.** Hazards include physical, chemical, biological, and psychosocial exposures. These hazards cause injury, illness, and detrimental social outcomes.

2. You have the right to receive training about the health and safety hazards on your job in a language you understand.

**Answer: True.** Workers have the right to a safe and healthful workplace. Employers are required to provide training in a language you understand on job health and safety and provide safety gear and equipment. (Washington State Labor Education and Research Center. "Washington State Workers' Rights Manual, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2014, Abridged version)

3. Stress is part of all work, and there is nothing a worker can do about it.

**Answer: False.** Stress is a psychosocial hazard in the workplace resulting from pressures at home or at work. Stressed workers are more likely to experience poor health, low motivation and productivity, and be less safe at work. Good management and work organization can help prevent stress in workers, and workers should communicate the cause of their stress to their employers. (Leka, S., Griffiths, A., & Cox, T. (2004). Work organisation and stress: Systematic problem approaches for employers, managers and trade union representatives (Vol. 3). OMS.)

4. Of the three main ways to reduce or eliminate hazards at work, the best way your employer can protect you at work is to provide you with safety gear.

**Answer: False.** Safety strategies include removing or substituting the hazard, controlling the hazard, improving work policies & procedures, wearing safety gear, or personal protective equipment (PPE). The most effective way to mitigate a hazard is by removing it. Safety gear is sometimes least effective since it requires the user to properly utilize the safety gear every time.

5. If you and your co-workers don't want to be hurt during a robbery, you need to show your strength. Don't let the robber push you around.

**Answer: False.** Workplace violence includes everything from repeated harassment to someone being injured or killed. Employers should have a policy (plans or rules) for dealing with all of these possible types of workplace violence. If a workplace is robbed, the worker should:

- Cooperate fully and do not argue or challenge
- Explain each of their actions, avoid surprises, and use a calm tone
- Hand over the cash
- Don't try to fight or chase the assailant
- Lock the door as soon as the assailant leaves
- Call the police