

# Follow up on hazards to control them

## Tips for effective follow up

Checking to see if things got done requires communication with others—here are a few tips to make the process go more smoothly:

- Use more than one channel of communication: meetings, emails, phone calls.
- Be flexible on due dates if circumstances warrant (like unavailability of a part).
- Be brief with follow ups—combine messages to the same person.
- Keep hazards on a list until they are resolved (use the STAR tool or another tracking method).
- Consider interim measures if the hazard can't be fixed right away.
- Thank the assigned person when the tasks are completed.

So now the hazards have been identified, prioritized, and ways to control them have been selected. What's next? The follow-up step of hazard identification and control is one of the most important, because it ensures that the hazard gets fixed. There's nothing worse than finding a hazard, suggesting a great fix, forgetting to follow-up, and then someone gets hurt by that very hazard. There are four important steps to following up:

### Document the plan

You may have heard the saying, if it isn't in writing, it didn't get done. When it comes to following up after identifying hazards, if it isn't in writing, it won't get fixed. We know it's important to document inspections, listing hazards and controls. In this step, the documentation includes the person who will address the hazard, the date it should be addressed by, and what resources are needed to get it done.

### Assign responsibility

Each hazard and its control should be assigned to a person capable of addressing it. If the hazard requires an outside contractor to fix, it will be someone who interacts with outside contractors. If it is a training need, an internal trainer might be assigned to that task. What is most important is assigning the responsibility to one person to ensure it gets addressed, and that the hazard gets fixed.

### Track progress

Tracking hazards to ensure they get fixed is another important part of follow up. The Safety Tracking and Resolution (STAR) tool ([saif.com/S1293](https://saif.com/S1293)) provides an easy framework for tracking hazards that includes columns for who is assigned to address the hazard, expected completion date, resources needed, and a notes section to include any additional

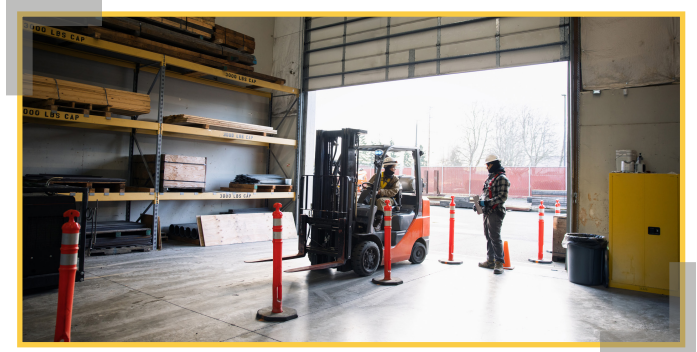


information. While you can track these any way you want, it's important to include these basic categories so everyone has clear expectations.

Identifying who will maintain the tracking sheet is also important. Some businesses might entrust it to their safety committees, and others might want someone specific to keep it. It's just as important to put someone in charge of the tracking sheet as it is to assign responsibility of a specific hazard to a specific person.

### Review effectiveness

This step may be formal or informal, but it's always important to ensure whatever took place fixed the hazard. For example, if an identified hazard is that an area doesn't have good lighting, it makes sense to check after replacing it to see that it has improved. Collecting data from incident and injury reports, interviewing individual workers, and checking to see if your efforts lowered the risk rating ([saif.com/S1292](https://saif.com/S1292)) are great ways to see if the interventions have been effective. If hazards keep recurring, consider an additional root-cause review or a more effective solution.



### Summary

**DOCUMENT**

**ASSIGN**

**TRACK**

**REVIEW**

Following up on hazards and their controls is a critical step in ensuring a safe workplace. Document the plan, who will address each hazard, and a date by which it should be done. Make sure you track each hazard to check that it is completed and then follow up to see that each measure was effective. If something changes or there is still room for improvement, create a new task to track and continue the process until the hazard has been adequately controlled.

### ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Group discussion: Talk about how you make sure hazards are controlled. Are there opportunities to improve your process?
- Using the STAR tracking tool ([saif.com/S1293](https://saif.com/S1293)), describe each control you want to put in place, who it is assigned to, and the date by which it should be completed. Who will be responsible for keeping the STAR tool updated?
- Review a control that was put into place to see if it has remained effective. Ensure you include workers from the area involved in your review.