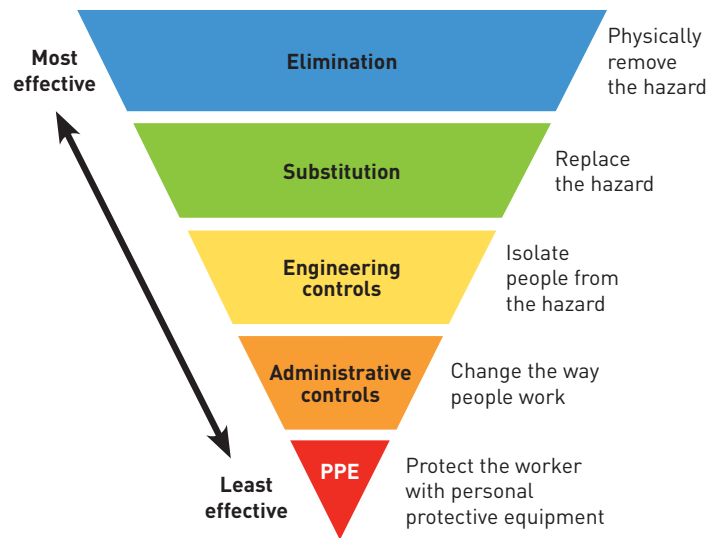


The hierarchy of controls:

Putting the model into practice



So, you've seen the hierarchy of controls model (saif.com/S1271), you know the categories from elimination to personal protective equipment (PPE), and you understand that you should try to focus on controls near the top to be most effective. Now what?

There's often a gap between understanding a model like this and applying it to the real world. This handout provides some tips that you can use to make this model work for you to improve the safety in your workplace.

Add controls to critical steps

When it comes to safety, steps in work tasks that are the most hazardous are the most important to control. Those areas are more likely to result in serious injuries and fatalities, so taking a little extra time to control those areas is critical to protecting workers. Review the serious injuries and fatalities quick reference card (saif.com/S1097E) to help identify those activities and situations.

Use a layered approach

If you can't eliminate the hazard, use a layered approach, which involves using multiple controls to address a hazard. For example, if you had a hazardous machine, you could follow these steps:

1. **Substitute** an easy to remove guard with one that has an interlock device that prevents the equipment from turning on without the guard.
2. **Engineering control:** Change flow of the work so that an employee doesn't have to do work near the hazardous machine.
3. **Administrative controls:** Have training and maintenance schedules to both keep the guard in place and train staff on the importance of leaving the guard on after maintenance.

Reviews and accountability

Whatever controls you decide to use, they have to protect workers. Regularly review how the controls are working to

ensure no changes are needed. Hold workers accountable to following the procedures and policies designed to keep them safe. Instead of blaming employees when they don't follow the policies and procedures, look for the reasons why, rather than assuming they are at fault. A great way to get buy-in for policies and procedures is to involve workers as you develop them. Over time, this will become part of the workplace culture. To reinforce safety policies and procedures, recognize employees when they follow them.

Involve employees when using the model

It's always best to involve workers who are doing the job when looking to make it safer. Including those workers will ensure that any control measures are feasible and will allow the work to be completed safely while still addressing production and quality. One great way to address hazards is to create a learning team (saif.com/S1096) that can help to identify the best controls and establish a process for continuous improvement.

Don't forget additional steps for each control

Even if you end up using PPE as one of the controls, it's important to know that you will need to have policies, training, and procedures around using that PPE, as well as supervision to ensure the training and procedures are being followed. The same is true for many of the other controls, so be sure to work that into the mix as you define your measures to address hazards.

Examples for using the hierarchy of controls

There is a great safety talk (saif.com/S1195) that includes some brief examples for using the hierarchy of controls. Here's one of the examples, using all five of the categories:

Example: An employee hurt their shoulder by over-reaching to a high storage shelf.

Elimination - Remove elevated shelving.

Substitution - Store materials in their individual/smaller packaging.

Engineering - Provide a stepstool at storage location.

Administrative - Write a policy to only store small, lightweight objects overhead.

PPE - Provide employees with grip gloves and traction shoes.

Remember that each category may have more than one control listed to help address each hazard.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- Group discussion: Look at a hazardous area in your workplace. Using the model (saif.com/S986), see how many controls you can come up with for each category. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of them?
- Review one of your workplace training documents. How well does it address important controls? Knowing the hierarchy of controls, is there anything you can add?
- Do a hazard mapping activity (saif.com/S1289) to identify hazards and use the hierarchy of controls to find the controls for each.