

The Power of Simplicity**Too Close For Comfort: Identifying Hazards before Injuries**

An employee safety program is a must to ensure profits and success for all businesses. Injuries not only impact employees and their loved ones—especially in fatality situations—but they also affect the business. When assessing a safety incident’s monetary impact, one must consider the cost of both direct expenses, such as the injured employee, the damaged forklift, or the demolished wall, and indirect expenses, such as increased workers’ compensation costs, OSHA citations, and criminal charges. For these reasons, even an ergonomic injury related to computer office work can have be a serious financial undertaking.

So, what is the best course of action to avoid such injuries?

The first thing you should do is understand your business and what hazards will be present within employees’ job responsibilities. You may need to protect the employee from potential dangers by implementing certain procedures, using certain tools, and/or using personal protective equipment, such as gloves and safety glasses.

There are two basic ways for identifying hazards within your workplace. The first is by performing a **Job Hazard Analysis**. Let’s consider using a drill as an example. In this case you would identify the following things:

STEP(S)	POTENTIAL OR EXISTING HAZARD(S)	CORRECTIVE ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS
Using a drill	- Injury to hand with drill	- Provide training on use of drill - Maintain free hand away from drill bit

Another way to identify hazards is through a **Certification of Hazard Assessment**, as required by the Personal Protective Equipment regulation. In this case you would identify the following:

JOB TASK	IDENTIFIED HAZARD	REQUIRED PPE
Using a drill	- Injury to eye from flying particles	- Safety glasses or goggles

These examples can be combined in either procedure.

Once you have identified potential hazards in your workplace, the next step is to develop a formal written safety program covering each applicable regulation. The safety program should include anything from training on office ergonomics to the use of handheld power tools, hazardous chemicals, machinery and equipment. Our Paychex Safety Department will assist you in developing a program/manual that addresses such activities within your business.

Additionally, our Paychex Human Resources services can assist with any identified safety training requirements by helping develop **Job Descriptions**. In your employees’ job descriptions you would identify the duties of each employee, and then based on such activities you would determine required trainings.

Once training is provided it is all simply a matter of making sure employees are supervised by your company’s safety officer (the person responsible for implementing the safety program) to ensure that such outlined safety procedures are followed. This may require the safety officer to perform workplace inspections periodically as required by the industry (ex., office quarterly, warehouse monthly).



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Another important aspect of promoting a safe workplace is completing accident/injury reports, and near miss, or “almost-injury” reports. By conducting a thorough investigation, which includes completing accident, injury, or near-miss reports, one can ensure that any necessary procedures are modified as needed to prevent future accidents or injuries.

Our Paychex HR and Safety Team is here to help you get in compliance, and most importantly, to help you avoid injuries and their consequences. Take advantage of our safety service so we can assist you in being a successful business.

For more information, our Safety team can be reached at 877-405-5877 option 4.