Safety Management System (SMS) - Element 2

A health and safety management system in Saskatchewan's healthcare system includes the following six elements:
1. Management commitment and leadership
2. Hazard identification and control
3. Training and communications
4. Inspections
5. Reporting and investigations
6. Emergency response

Each element consists of sub elements.

Element 2 - Hazard identification and control:

A hazard is a situation that poses a level of threat to life, health, property, process or environment - anything that can cause an injury or illness.

Hazards may be grouped into five categories:
- Physical
- Chemical
- Biological
- Psychosocial
- Ergonomics

Hazard Identification
Identifying hazards means taking a careful look at the different activities that workers do, and the conditions under which they do them, and asking, "What could go wrong?" You are trying to find out about anything that could harm workers in the workplace. The purpose of hazard assessment is to prevent work-related injury or illness to workers.

How to Identify Hazards
Identifying hazards in the workplace should involve workers. A couple considerations are:
- Walk around and look at the workplace and at how work is done, ask the workers what they consider unsafe
- Review information on a particular piece of equipment or chemical about safety precautions
- Review previous incidents, including near misses

More formal processes for identifying hazards may include:
- **Job safety analysis** – identifying the hazards in a particular job and rating the risk.
- **Job task analysis** – breaking jobs down into tasks and identifying the hazards involved with each task and rating the risk.
- **Process analysis** – following a process from start to finish and identifying the hazards involved at each stage and rating the risk.

Risk Assessment

Hazards need to be assessed to determine the degree of risk posed to workers. When determining the degree of risk to workers, consider two main factors: probability and severity.

Probability is how likely the hazard is to cause injury and illness. Estimate how likely or probable it is that the hazard will cause injury or illness or damage to property.

Severity is the seriousness of the harm that could result from contact with a hazard. Estimate how serious the injury or illness could be using a scale of slight, moderate or extreme.

Risk can be calculated by using the formula: **RISK = Probability & Severity**

A Risk/Hazard Matrix is a method of evaluating the possible risks/hazards to determine which hazards need to be controlled first. Hazards with the highest risk that affect the most workers should receive the greatest attention.

Whenever possible, hazards should be completely eliminated. If this is not possible, they must be controlled. Control means reducing the hazard to a level that does not present a significant risk to worker health or safety - controls in order of preference, are:
- Elimination - remove the hazard completely
- Engineering controls - physically keep the worker from coming into contact with the hazard
- Administrative controls - manage how the worker works around the hazard to prevent injury
- Personal protective equipment - protects worker from injury when in contact with the hazard
- Combination - needed if any one type of control on its own is not enough

Safe Work Practices and Procedures (Hazard Control)

A **safe work practice** is a set of guidelines to help workers perform a task that may not require a step-by-step procedure. These are usually used for tasks with minimal risk.

A **safe work procedure** is a step-by-step process for performing a task safely from beginning to end. These are usually used for high risk tasks.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Considered when engineering and administrative controls are unworkable or impractical. The need for PPE arises from the hazard identification and control process.

Procurement

Health and safety risks need to be identified prior to purchase and consideration given to what is available to ensure the health and safety of workers. Having procurement standards for goods, equipment and services can help prevent the introduction of costly health and safety hazards. The employer has a responsibility to ensure that purchased goods and services meet all safety requirements.

A safety management system becomes part of the culture - the way people safely do their jobs.

(source: Safety Management System Basics, SASWH, 09/15)
additional Safety Talks specific to Safety Management System (e.g., elements, Leading & Lagging Indicators, Risk Matrix) are available on www.saswh.ca

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!