

SAFETY FIRST OF ALL

Safety in the **workplace** is the priority of organizations and companies towards their **employees**. No work environment is entirely **injury-proof** and an effective **risk management** process is expected to follow the following criteria:

1. A safe and healthy environment is a condition of employment and is both employers' and employees' responsibility;
2. Safety must be given as much importance as productivity, quality and cost control;
3. All **hazards** must be identified and controlled; accidents must be immediately reported and investigated into;
4. Safety and health education need to be **consistent** and **ongoing**.

Effective safety programmes must include hazard identification and control, risk analysis, safety education/training and appropriate practice **policies**.

Hazards are usually classified into health and safety hazards. The former include any agents, situations or conditions that can cause occupational illnesses: chemical substances (battery acid, solvents), biological agents (bacteria, viruses, dusts and **moulds**), physical agents (heat, light, vibration, noise, radiation) or ergonomic hazards (incorrect postures and long duration/continuous work). The latter are any agents, situations or conditions that can result in physical injuries such as cuts, fractures or burns. Moving parts of machinery, unsafe electric power points, **slippery** floors, ejection of material, pressure systems, falling, rolling or shifting materials, moving vehicles, **scaffolds** or **manual handling operations** of heavy objects may often be the cause of dangerous situations.

A **risk** is the **likelihood** that a hazard will cause specific harm or injury to people or damage to property. A careful risk **assessment** enables the employer to identify the best control procedures and take the most appropriate measures and actions to reduce such risks and ensure the well-being of employees (i.e. **compulsory** and readily available protective equipment such as helmets, gloves, and **goggles**).





Management responsibilities also include the **drafting** of a detailed documentation system containing the safety guidelines and **protocols of the firm**: these may vary a lot depending on the work environment but in electrical, fire safety or ergonomic matters, health safety must never be ignored. The employer is responsible for his/her firm's safety policies but the employee also plays a fundamental role in ensuring safety in the workplace: his/her careful **compliance** with the safety protocols is essential in preventing accidents at work.

1 Answer the following questions.

- a. What are the main criteria to be considered for an efficient safety policy in the workplace? •
- b. How do health hazards and safety hazards differ? • c. What agents can result in occupational illnesses? • d. What factors or situations can be the cause of physical injuries? • e. How can you define a risk? • f. Why is risk analysis extremely important for safety in the workplace? •
- g. Which safety issues are common to all work environments? • h. Who is responsible for workplace safety?

2 Complete the text with the words given below.

accidents – allows – benefits – both – careful – careless – common – costs – courses – damaged
delays – ensure – evaluates – exposure – high – management – organisation – penalties

Workplace (1) are increasingly (2) and any modern business or (3) has the moral responsibility to (4) the safety and well-being of its own workers. Safety (5) means that a company (6) safety concerns and identifies ways to reduce (7) to health and safety hazards in the workplace. (8) safety management not only aims at keeping (9) employees and employers safe but also (10) companies to be more competitive by reducing (11) A (12) management of safety issues may result in (13) insurance costs and workers' compensation, (14) equipment and materials, production (15) , expensive and time consuming selections and training (16) for replacement workers and severe (17) In conclusion, everyone (18) from a safe workplace: employees and employers must work together to follow safety protocols and foster a workplace culture of safety.

assessment: *valutazione*
compliance: *osservanza, rispetto*
compulsory: *obbligatorio*
consistent: *coerente*
drafting: *stesura*
employee: *dipendente*
goggles: *occhiali protettivi*
hazard: *pericolo*

injury-proof: *a prova di danno, lesione, ferita*
likelihood: *probabilità*
management: *amministrazione, direzione*
manual handling operations: *operazioni di movimentazione manuale*
mould: *muffa*

ongoing: *continuo*
policy: *linea di condotta*
risk management: *gestione del rischio*
scaffold: *impalcatura*
slippery: *scivoloso*
workplace: *posto di lavoro*



3 Listen to the conversations and do the exercises below.

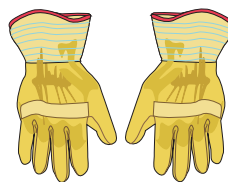
- a. Write the name of the equipment and the hazard it protects the worker from in the spaces.
Use the words in the box.
- b. Identify the equipment not mentioned and the hazard it protects the worker from.
- **equipment:** welding helmet • gloves • hard hat • goggles • respirator • work boots • overalls
 - **hazard:** chemicals • fumes • dropped tools or objects • falling objects • sparks • dirt/oil/paint • corrosive or irritant products



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