



MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER

Nurses and Workers in Direct Patient Care



Three Steps to a Safer Workplace

Active observation and follow-up will go a long way toward making your workplace safer. Follow these three steps:

- 1. Identify hazards or “what can hurt you at work.”** Walk through areas to look for things that can hurt employees, and monitor whether known hazards have been fixed. If you answer “no” to any of the questions below, follow-up is needed.
- 2. Propose solutions.** Assess what changes you can make on your own, and what you need to partner on.
- 3. Take action to make sure the problem is resolved.** Use the *Make the Workplace Safer* Tracking Chart at the end of this document.

Step 1: Identify Hazards

NAME		LOCATION		DATE
Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed	
INFECTIOUS DISEASES				
1	Are sharp objects always disposed in specific sharps container? Are sharps containers easily accessible and replaced before they overfill?			
2	Do workers avoid recapping needles? Do workers avoid removing needles from syringes by hand?			
3	Is an isolation room clearly marked with the type of isolation?			
4	Do workers have easy access to and use gowns, latex-safe gloves, eye protectors, and other protective equipment when they may be exposed to blood or bodily fluids?			
5	Do workers wear latex-safe gloves when they anticipate hand contact with blood, mucous membranes, Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM), non-intact skin, or when handling contaminated items or surfaces?			
6	Do workers entering an isolation room have easy access to and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the type of isolation room?			
7	Do workers wash up as soon as they leave the isolation room?			

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Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
INFECTIOUS DISEASES			
8			Are handwashing facilities conveniently accessible to workers?
9			If someone is stuck by a used needle, do they have access to counseling, vaccination, and testing?
10			Are all workers offered the hepatitis B vaccination at no cost?
11			Are annual TB tests given to workers at no cost?
12			Do workers wear a respirator when in the presence of a patient that has TB or is suspected to have TB?
SAFE PATIENT HANDLING			
13			Are safe patient handling instructions prepared for each patient, based on an assessment of the mobility needs of that patient?
14			Is staff trained in safe lifting techniques and equipment?
15			Is there a procedure in place for using powered patient transfer devices or lifting devices (as opposed to manual lifting)?
16			Are mechanical patient lifts in good repair and are they in a convenient and accessible location within each unit?
17			Are ceiling track lifts available to help with lifting?
18			When workers lift or transfer patients, do they use mechanical lifts and get others to assist?
OTHER ERGONOMICS			
19			Are workers able to work without stooping to the floor, twisting, reaching overhead, or bending to the side?
20			Are workers able to work at a comfortable speed without too many repetitive movements?
21			Do workers avoid lifting bulky or heavy materials or equipment?

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Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
SAFE CLEARANCE AND WALKING SURFACES			
22	Are pathways and aisles clear and unobstructed? Are they wide enough for movement of patients, equipment, etc.?		
23	Are cords for patient monitoring equipment, lights, etc., placed so as to prevent tripping hazards?		
VIOLENCE PREVENTION			
24	Do workers know how to respond to potentially violent persons or situations?		
25	Is there an established way to send a signal when there is a problem? (For example, a panic button or a special code such as "Dr. Strong".)		
26	Is there an effective communication system with security staff?		
27	At night, is lighting in the worksite and parking lot adequate for staff safety?		
CHEMICALS			
28	Do workers know the names and health effects of chemicals that they use or are used in their department?		
29	Do workers have what they need to work safely with the chemicals they use?		
OTHER			
30	Are there any new hazards or other hazards that have not been addressed?		If so, please describe below:

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WORKER KNOWLEDGE

Employees should receive health and safety training and orientation when they start employment, whenever a new hazard is identified, and periodically as a refresher on some topics. Examples of knowledge people should have are listed below. **Do workers in the department know:**

Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
1 The hazards common to your work, what protective measures are in place, and what safety practices to follow?			
2 How to identify safety concerns and who to report them to?			
3 The hazards of potentially infectious materials and the precautions to use?			
4 The hazards of chemicals you work with and how to work with them safely?			
5 How to obtain and use a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for chemicals you work with?			
6 How to choose, wear, remove and dispose of protective clothing and equipment?			
7 How to adjust and use a computer workstation, and how to move and position your body to avoid ergonomic injuries?			
8 Safe patient handling methods, including how to use equipment to safely lift, transfer, position or mobilize a patient?			
9 How to recognize and respond to threats and potentially violent people or situations?			
10 What to do in case of an emergency at work?			
11 How to identify safety concerns and who to report them to?			
12 Any other information or training needed?			If yes, please describe.



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FOLLOW-UP & TRACKING CHART



Step 2: Propose Solutions

For any “no” answers, think about solutions or ways to address the problem.

- First, think about ways to remove the hazard. This makes your workplace safer and ensures all workers are protected.
- If that’s not possible, think about any policies, procedures or personal protective equipment that is necessary.
- Think about what changes you can make on your own and what changes you need to partner with others (such as other workers, supervisors, facility management) to do.

Write your suggestions for solutions on the “Step 1: Identify Hazards” checklist and on the tracking chart on the next page.

Step 3: Take Action

Report any safety hazards you identify. Use the following chart to track and make sure the problems are resolved.

1. Give a copy of your hazard checklist findings to your supervisor or department manager, your UBT labor co-lead, and your Safety Team representative.
2. Decide who else should receive a copy of your findings, such as members of the UBT or Safety Committee or your shop steward. Make a note of who you gave it to and the date.
3. Follow up after a few weeks. If the problem was not addressed or resolved, think about your next steps.
 - + Who should be informed?
 - + Who can help you advocate for the needed solution?

MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER FOLLOW-UP AND TRACKING CHART

NAME		LOCATION		DATE
Safety/Health Problem	What solution is needed?	Date reported and to whom	1 month follow up	Next Steps
			Corrected Is being addressed Not being addressed Don't know/Other:	
			Corrected Is being addressed Not being addressed Don't know/Other:	
			Corrected Is being addressed Not being addressed Don't know/Other:	
			Corrected Is being addressed Not being addressed Don't know/Other:	
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