MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER
Sterile Processing Staff

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
CHEMICALS				
1	Are chemicals stored in closed containers that have labels showing the name of the chemical and hazard warnings?			
2	If glutaraldehyde is used for cold sterilization, is the work area adequately ventilated using both general ventilation and local exhaust ventilation?			
3	When using glutaraldehyde, do workers use butyl rubber, nitrile or Viton gloves?			
4	Do workers wear goggles and face shields when doing work that could involve splashes to the face or eyes?			
5	Are Safety Data Sheets (SDS) available for each chemical in the work area?			
6	Are spill response kits accessible and fully stocked (gloves, goggles, absorbing material)?			

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Hazard		Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
CHEMICALS				
7	Are eye wash facilities and safety showers immediately available and flushed weekly?			
8	Have mercury thermometers been phased out?			
INFECTION CONTROL				
9	Are sharp objects always disposed of in specific sharps container? Are sharps containers easily accessible and replaced before they overfill?			
10	Are hand-washing facilities conveniently accessible to workers?			
11	Do workers wear latex-safe gloves when they anticipate contact with blood, mucous membranes, Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM), non-intact skin, or when handling contaminated items or surfaces?			
12	Do workers wear masks, face shields, thick utility gloves and aprons when sorting contaminated items?			
BURNS AND CUTS				
13	Do workers wait for items to cool before removing them from the autoclave/sterilizer?			
14	Do workers wear oven mitts when handling hot items?			
15	Do workers use forceps or other tools to handle sharp instruments?			
16	Do workers wear steel mesh or Kevlar gloves to sort sharp instruments?			

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Hazard		Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
ERGONOMICS				
17	Are workers able to work without stooping to the floor, twisting, reaching overhead or bending to the side?			
18	Do workers use carts with large, low-resistance wheels to move objects?			
19	When placing trays loaded with supplies onto carts, do workers place the heaviest trays on shelves that are easiest to reach?			
20	Are step stools and ladders available for reaching high shelves and other storage areas?			
OTHER				
21	Are floors kept clean and dry to prevent slips and falls? Do workers wear slip-resistant shoes?			
22	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	The hazards of the equipment you use and how to operate it safety?			
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 your work area and equipment, and how to move and position your body to avoid ergonomic injuries?			
8	What to do in case of a chemical exposure or leak?			
9	What to do in case of an emergency at work?			
10	How to identify safety concerns and whom to report them to?			
11	Any other information or training needed?			If yes, please describe.

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.

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?

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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:	
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			Corrected Is being addressed Not being addressed Don't know/Other:	
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