Hazard Observation Procedure

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to set out the requirements and processes to enable workers to identify and report hazards in the workplace in an effective and systematic manner. This procedure is a behaviour-based safety procedure that directly supports the 'Identify Risks' stage of the Risk Management Framework. Refer to the Risk Management Procedure for further information.

Risk Management is vital to the PK Plumbing and Gasfitting operations it is essential that all team members are aware, actively practice procedures and communicate issues for preventative measures to take place.

Our commitment is to ensure all safety of staff and community and our Hazard procedure ensures measures and actions assist this commitment.

Scope

This procedure applies to:

- all workers and other persons at our workplace
- all workers while present at another workplace (e.g. a customer's workplace)
- all workers in our vehicles and equipment or performing our work using someone else's vehicles and equipment
- any location where a worker undertakes activities on our behalf, including but not limited to our sites and offices

Procedure detail

Hazard definition

A hazard refers to something that has the potential to cause an incident, accident or other negative impact, for example, a breach of chain of responsibility. A hazard is different to an incident, which refers to an actual event that has resulted in or almost resulted in an incident, accident or other negative impact. Refer to the Incident Management Procedure for guidance on incidents in the workplace.

Hazards can be defined as an:

1. Unsafe act:

   An unsafe act refers to conduct, actions or behaviour that is not in line with policies, procedures, workplace safe practice or legislative requirements. Unsafe acts can create a hazard, prevent a hazard being avoided or increase the likelihood of an incident. Actions as well as inactions (failure to act) are unsafe acts as they create risk and the potential for an incident.

2. Unsafe condition:

   An unsafe condition refers to a condition (associated with workplace facilities, tools, equipment or general work environment) that is unsafe and if not corrected may result in an incident, accident or injury.

Common hazard categories

Workplace hazards will generally fall into one (or a combination) of the categories below. Several examples have been listed for each category and apply to workers, managers and visitors.

Appearance:

- No protective gloves while handling sharp objects
- Damaged protective eyewear while welding
- Loose long hair not tied back while operating equipment
- Entry into an area without complying with PPE requirements

Behaviour (general):

- Walking underneath a fully loaded crane
- Running down the stairs
- A worker throwing a piece of heavy equipment to another worker rather than passing it to them
- Not using designated walkways in the loading area

Behaviour (task specific):

- Using incorrect manual handling techniques to lift a heavy box onto a shelf
- Using nylon ropes instead of steel chains to restrain a load of sharp items on a heavy vehicle
- Skipping a safety critical step in a process

Task or process:

- A packing process that permits/requires carrying large quantities of heavy items across the warehouse floor.
- A scheduling process with no training or guidance on calculating safe shift durations.
- An administration task that requires the worker to manually staple large quantities of paperwork

Tools or equipment:

- Webbing straps used for heavy vehicle load restraint that are frayed and worn
- A fire extinguisher without a current inspection
- An electric drill that has been tagged as faulty and remains in the work area

Work environment:

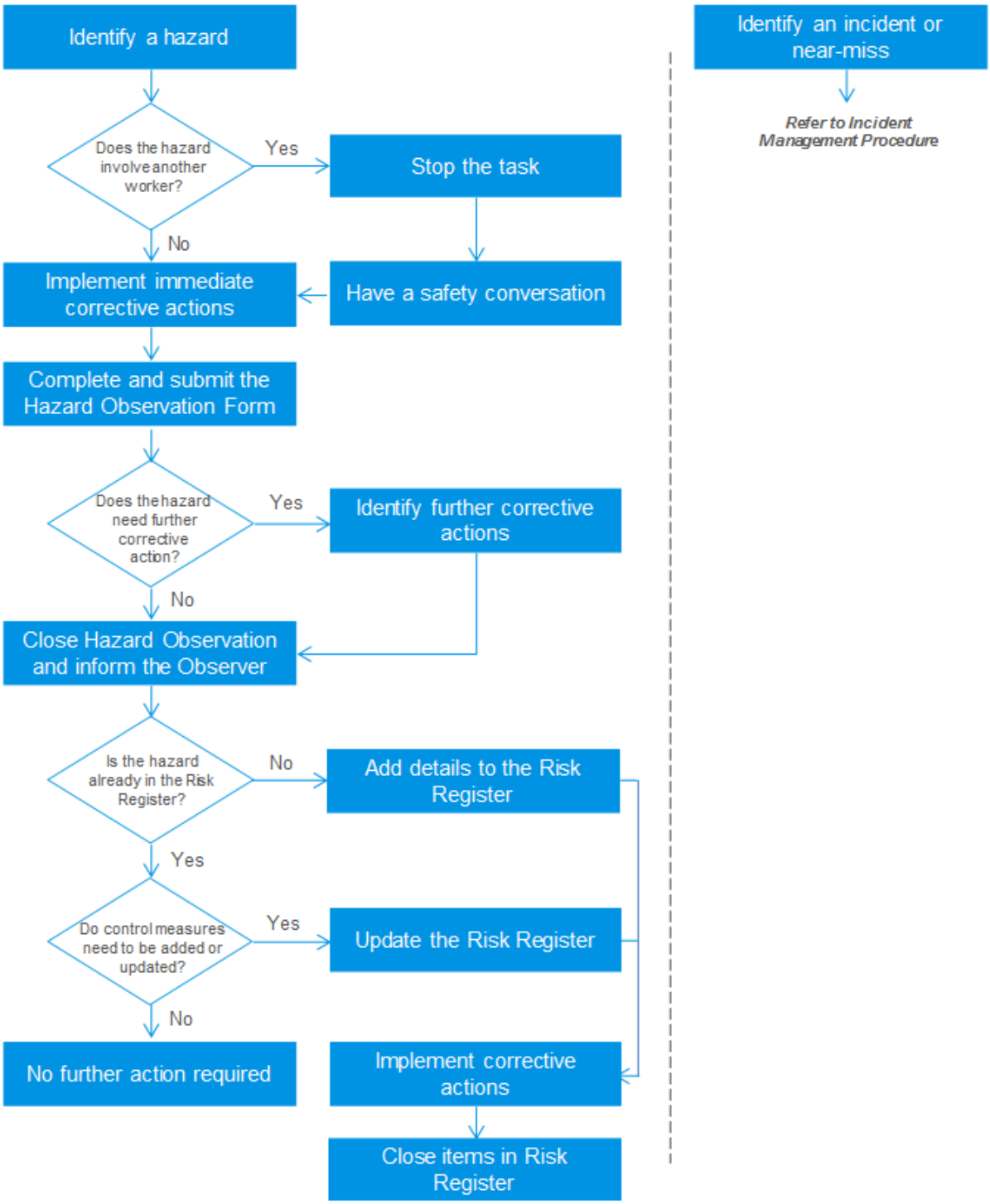
- A slip hazard created by leaked oil from a forklift
- A hazardous material being used in the workplace without an appropriate Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) available
- A first aid kit that has not been replenished and is missing most items

Hazard observation definition

The hazard observation process is designed to improve safety outcomes by encouraging safe work practices and identifying and removing unsafe acts or conditions. It is a process where any worker can observe an unsafe act or condition, discuss the hazard with any parties involved, resolve the hazard immediately (if possible) and report the hazard for further follow up and/or analysis.

Hazard observations can help to reduce the occurrence of work health and safety (WHS) incidents in the workplace, as the process identifies and treats the hazard before it results in an incident.

Hazard observation process overview



The hazard observation process will generally follow the steps below. Further explanation of each step is provided in the above diagram.

Step 1: Identify a hazard

The hazard is identified (observed) by the Observer, which can be any worker on an ad-hoc basis or alternatively by a manager or supervisor as part of ongoing hazard monitoring in their area of control.

Step 2: Stop the task

If the hazard involves another worker, it is important for the Observer to approach the worker without startling, distracting or surprising them. The Observer should ask that worker to stop the task or stop the behaviour or actions that are creating the concern.

Step 3: Have a safety conversation

The goal of the safety conversation is a constructive dialog that results in identifying what systems and processes are involved, what training has been provided and what needs to change to make the act or condition safe.

It is important for the Observer to focus the conversation on what they can physically observe (appearance, behaviour and actions, tools and equipment, work environment etc.) rather than assuming what the worker's attitudes, thoughts or intentions are.

The Observer should ask questions to determine the reasons behind the worker's actions (or inactions) rather than give instructions. It is important to involve the workers by understanding their views on the issues, understanding the impact of those involved and seeking their suggestions for improvements.

If the Observer takes notes during the safety conversation, they should:

- stick to the key issues
- not make any judgement or opinion about the action or inaction of workers
- record any suggestions for improvement
- record any immediate corrective actions agreed to be implemented (the full nature and extent of the issue and other solutions will be considered by management and/or Health and Safety personnel as part of the Risk Management Framework)
- allow the worker/s involved to see what has been noted and if there remains a disagreement, for their views to be recorded

Step 4: Implement immediate corrective actions

If it is safe to do so and within the skills and abilities of the Observer and worker/s involved, they should implement immediate corrective actions to resolve or reduce the hazard. Examples are provided below based on the example hazards listed earlier:

Appearance:

- Putting on safety gloves before continuing with the task
- Replacing damaged protective eyewear before continuing welding
- Tying back long hair before continuing to operate equipment
- Putting on appropriate PPE before entering the area

Behaviour (general):

- Moving out from under a fully loaded crane
- Walking down the stairs
- Agreeing to pass heavy equipment rather than throw it in future
- Agreeing to use designated walkways in the loading area in future

Behaviour (task specific):

- Using appropriate lifting machinery to lift a heavy box onto a shelf
- Replacing nylon ropes with steel chains to restrain a load of sharp items on a heavy vehicle
- Completing each safety critical step in the process fully and completely in accordance with the Safe Work Procedure

Task or process:

- Securing the assistance of a pallet truck or forklift and updating the Safe Work Procedure
- Providing training or guidance for calculating safe shift durations to ensure workers are not over-scheduled
- Outsourcing to professional printers, purchasing an electric stapler, sharing the workload, or taking regular breaks

Tools or equipment:

- Condemning and removing frayed and worn webbing straps and locating and using webbing straps that are in good condition to restrain the load
- Tagging out and reporting the fire extinguisher
- Condemning and removing the electric drill tagged as faulty from the work area

Work environment:

- Cordoning off the area covered in oil, obtaining a spill kit and using the kit to clean up the oil and dispose of the oil appropriately in line with Hazardous Material Disposal Requirements Tagging out the forklift and completing an equipment fault report for the forklift
- Obtaining the MSDS and training staff on its requirements or in the interim removing the hazardous material from the workplace and locking it up until an appropriate MSDS is provided with training
- Putting a sign on the first aid kit that it is incomplete and providing the location of an alternative first aid kit to be used until the kit is replenished, reporting the kit for replenishment

Resolving an unsafe condition can be very simple but it is important to determine where the systems, policies and procedures need to be improved to prevent a recurrence. This is important so that the unsafe acts can also be resolved, to limit the unsafe condition reoccurring and exposing workers to potential injury.

Step 5: Complete and submit the Hazard Observation Form

The Observer will then document the observation and any immediate corrective actions that were taken in the Hazard Observation Form and provide it to a Supervisor, Manager or Health and Safety Representative.

Refer to the Incident Management Procedure for guidance on completing an Incident Report Form to report an incident or near-miss.

Step 6: Identify further corrective actions

Some hazards will require the identification of further corrective actions by a Supervisor, Manager or Health and Safety Representative. Corrective actions can be identified by applying the Risk Management Framework. Common examples include:

- providing training, information and support
- providing new equipment, tools, facilities
- replacing or fixing faulty equipment
- implementing or updating policies, procedures or tools
- reengineering processes and workflows
- completing an inspection or review

Step 7: Close Hazard Observation and inform the Observer

The Hazard Observation can be closed, and the Observer informed of the outcomes of the Hazard Observation and also the issues being dealt with under the Risk Management Framework.

Step 8: Add details to the Risk Register or Update the Risk Register

Hazard observations directly support the 'Identify Risks' stage of the Risk Management Framework. Hazard observations can identify new risks in the workplace that have not previously been identified and are not documented in the Risk Register or existing risks that have ineffective risk controls. It is important to review the Risk Register and add or update all relevant details of newly identified hazards and risks or ineffective risk controls.

Remember that the risk is not just a recurrence of the particular hazard, but also what similar risks can be identified for example, a new reported hazard of a missing Safe Work Procedure for a task might indicate that a range of Safe Work Procedures are missing for a whole area of the business.

Step 9: Implement further corrective actions

The prompt and effective implementation of further corrective actions is critical to the success of preventing a recurrence. Each corrective action must have a responsible person and implementation due date allocated and be documented in the Hazard Observation Form and in the Risk Register.

Step 10: Close items in the Risk Register

Once all corrective actions have been implemented, the items in the Risk Register can be closed. It is important to inform the Observer of the final outcome of the observation and its closure to encourage future observations. If workers do not believe that their observations are genuinely considered, there is little chance they will report an observation in the future.

Regular monitoring, review and audit of hazard observations

To gain the full benefit of the hazard observation process, it is important for the organisation to collect and analyse all hazard observation data. This enables a deeper understanding of safety issues and safety behaviour patterns in the workplace.

Managers and supervisors should monitor and review hazard observation data for their area of control on a regular (e.g. monthly) basis and discuss the types of observed hazards, trends and problems with their team members.

Senior managers should analyse and audit hazard observation data and findings as part of regular (e.g. annual) audit processes.

Responsibilities

PK Plumbing and Gasfitting has identified the following roles within our organisation with responsibilities for hazard observations, as:

- ☐ the employer/ person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)
- ☐ managers/supervisors
- ☐ workers

A summary of the key responsibilities for each role are listed below.

Philip Kenny – Director

Cade Priest – Senior Plumber

Keyan Tuckett – Plumber

Steven Conte – Plumber

John Beale – Septic and Water

William Tyrrell – Labourer

Tamileigh Chirgwin – Administration Manager

Karen Shaw – Administration

Cherie Chirgwin – Administration

Brendan Mark – WHS Administration

Employer/PCBU Responsibilities

The Employer or PCBU can be a sole trader, the partners in a partnership, a company, an unincorporated association or a government department. In our organisation this responsibility is accepted by Philip Kenny, Director.

The Employer/PCBU must:

- ensure workers are provided with the:
  - skills and knowledge of the types of hazards and how to identify them
  - skills and knowledge of appropriate immediate corrective actions within their area of responsibility and skills
  - tools to easily report the hazard (i.e. Hazard Observation Form)
- ensure adequate resources (time and budget) are provided to implement hazard observations throughout the workplace

- ensure corrective actions resulting from hazard observations are promptly and appropriately implemented
- ensure documentation and records of all hazard observations are completed and maintained
- monitor trends in the hazard observations on an ongoing basis and audit hazard observation records as part of the annual audit process
- promote an open and transparent safety culture within the workplace which encourages the reporting of hazards

Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors are workers who have an area of control within the workplace. In our organisation, this responsibility is accepted by Philip Kenny, Cade Priest, Garry Davis, Jason Brown, Jake Smith, Steven Conte.

Managers and supervisors must:

- encourage workers within their area of control to take a proactive approach to hazard observations
- monitor all aspects within their area of control on an ongoing and scheduled basis to identify potential hazards
- complete the Hazard Observation Form if they observe hazards in the workplace or hazards within their area of control
- implement relevant corrective actions resulting from hazard observations
- provide feedback to workers on the outcomes of submitted hazard observations
- escalate hazard observations promptly (if necessary)
- add the details of any new hazards, corrective actions and implementation details to the Risk Register
- update the details of any existing hazards that require new or updated risk controls in the Risk Register
- monitor and review hazard observation data for their area of control on a regular (e.g. monthly) basis
- discuss the types of observed hazards, trends and problems with their team members on a regular basis

Worker Responsibilities

A worker is any person who carries out work for a PCBU, including work as an employee, contractor, subcontractor, self-employed person, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer' and volunteers.

Workers must:

- promptly report any hazards in the workplace by completing the Hazard Observation Form and submitting it to a manager, supervisor or HSR

- implement corrective actions (control measures) resulting from hazard observations relevant to their role

Supporting records

The following records are created, maintained and reviewed as part of the requirements of this procedure:

- Hazard Observation Form
- Risk Register
- Safe Work Method Statement

Supporting policies and procedures

This procedure operates within the Risk Management Framework outlined in the Risk Management Policy and Procedure and the Work Health and Safety Policy.

This procedure should be read and followed in conjunction with:

- Incident Management Procedure
- CoR Policy
- Document and Record Control Policy

Implementation and evaluation

PK Plumbing and Gasfitting will ensure this Procedure is reviewed and evaluated for its effectiveness in delivering objectives on an annual basis or earlier in the event of major changes to the legislation or our organisation structure and operations.

Procedure authorised by: Philip Kenny (Director)

Signature: P. Kenny

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