How to conduct a Job Safety Analysis

Tip sheet

Job Safety Analysis (JSA) is a proactive safety management tool that helps prevent injuries and illnesses in the workplace when implemented effectively. The JSA process studies tasks in order to determine potential hazards and associated safe operating procedures for each step of a task.

Jobs vs. Job Classifications

A JSA operates at a very basic level – the individual task. It works by engaging employees and supervisors in the ongoing recognition of workplace hazards and safe operating procedures. When determining the list of tasks you will develop JSAs for, be sure you are defining a specific task rather than a job classification. For example, Landscaper is a job classification, and mowing, planting trees and trimming are three examples of the tasks within the classification.

Creating a JSA

The three-step process can be executed by a supervisor alone, but the most valuable process will include employees who do the task on a regular basis. Employees have a unique understanding of their own jobs, and helping to develop the JSA will also give them ownership of the solutions.

A sample JSA for a lamp replacement task is included in this toolkit; reviewing it may give you a head start.

1. Break down jobs into sequential steps.

- Fill out one JSA form for each task. You can think of the form as your rough draft, and after you have reviewed the JSA with employees and received their feedback, integrate it into a final copy.
- Identify specific tasks that may present hazards. Think of chemical, physical, biological and ergonomic hazards, and others that may be specific to your work environment (for example environmental hazards like hazardous waste, etc.).

- Prioritize tasks for developing JSAs. For example, tasks with a high frequency or severity of injury or illness should be analyzed first.
- Break each task down into 10-15 observable action steps.
- Number each step and begin the description with an action verb, followed by the item to which the action applies.
- Describe each step completely and concisely. The step tells what is done, not how to do it.

2. Identify all hazards

- Consider the environment, equipment, processes and employee work practices when looking for hazards.
- Use a checklist of potential hazards. A good checklist to use is located on the back of the JSA form.

3. Specify control measures or safe operating procedures.

- Control measures should be followed to eliminate or reduce hazards and prevent potential incidents.
- Examples of control measures include changing how tasks are done, engineering out the hazard (integrating a guard to prevent a cut or amputation), using administrative controls (like proper lifting techniques, etc.) or using PPE.
- When specifying control measures, avoid general precautions. For example, instead of saying "work safely," say "always put on safety glasses before starting equipment."

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JSAs are a process, not a one-time activity

When each JSA is completed, review it with the employees who perform that task to ensure you have captured all of the steps, potential hazards and controls. Incorporate employee feedback and create a clean JSA to store in a binder or file.

Now, the JSA process is just starting. You may want to assign each employee whose performs a task that is covered by a JSA to review them periodically for changes. In addition, JSAs should be reviewed when tools or equipment changes. Create a new JSA for every new task, too.

How to Use JSAs

- Set performance standards for job descriptions with the measurable guidelines in the JSA.
- Instruct new employees and temporary workers, and provide refresher training.
- Conduct safety observations using the JSA as a guide.
- Integrate safety into quality and production functions.
- Use when conducting incident investigation to help determine why the incident occurred, and whether the JSA should be updated.

The NSC Principles of Occupational Safety and Health certification covers more extensive training on Job Safety Analysis and other fundamentals of workplace health and safety. Learn more at nsc.org/posh.

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