

## **Do You Know What Hazards Your Employees Face On the Job?** *Conduct a Job Safety Analysis to Find Out*

An effective way to identify employees' exposures to job-related injuries is by conducting a job safety analysis (JSA) for common tasks performed in your business' operations. Developing JSAs involves a three-step process beginning with breaking down a common task or process into its component steps. With these specific steps identified, you then determine the hazards associated with each step and identify ways to perform the task more safely.

Good opportunities to conduct JSAs include when you create new jobs or add job functions to existing employees. Other scenarios that would pose a high priority for JSAs include: tasks that carry a potential for severe injuries if an accident occurred; job functions in which there is a history of disabling injuries (either within your business or in your industry); and tasks that create a high frequency of accidents. JSAs should be reviewed at least annually, but perhaps more frequently if changes to tasks, equipment or processes have been implemented. When developing a JSA, it is important to focus on a specific job task, not an individual employee. For example, an auto repair shop would create a JSA for "changing a tire", not for the position of "auto mechanic".

Look for potential hazards produced by the work itself and the environment. Ask yourself "What could trigger the hazard?" or "What outcome would occur if an accident happened?" Examples of hazards include: contact with machine parts or toxic chemicals; inhalation of airborne chemicals; extreme heat or cold; slips, trips and falls; physical strains due to lifting or pulling; and excessive vibrations or noise.

When developing solutions to mitigate a job hazard, consider whether or not there is a new way to perform the task. Can the physical conditions that create the hazard be changed? Can the work procedure or process be changed? Can the frequency of that task be reduced?

OSHA's "Hierarchy of Controls" should be followed when creating solutions. The first priority would be to engineer the hazard out of the work process. For example, can a less harmful material be used? Can you add guarding to a machine? If that is not possible, the second option would be to use administrative controls such as job rotation, new work rules, or training to reduce employees' exposure to the hazard. Only as a last resort should safety equipment or personal protective equipment such as gloves, hats or safety glasses be used.

If done right, JSAs are an effective way to help identify hazards *before* a workplace injury occurs. The end result is that employees are safer and employers incur fewer workplace injuries and enjoy the added benefit of lower workers' compensation costs.