Safe Job Planning

Many tasks at Northwestern are hazardous (e.g., working on energized electrical systems, high-pressure steam systems, and at heights), and the potential for injuries is often high. With any hazardous task, regardless of whether it is routine or non-routine, it is important to factor safety into your planning. Complacency is common with routine jobs, and with non-routine jobs, especially those that are complex, high-hazard, and/or involve multiple people, it is easy to not recognize potential or actual hazards without safe job planning.

Without knowing the potential or actual hazards of a task and implementing control measures, it is impossible for you and your team members to stay safe. To accomplish this, there are several common methods; one method is a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), which is a deep analysis of each step of a process, associated potential hazards, and controls to mitigate the potential hazards.

Some complex hazardous tasks, such as those involving multiple entities (e.g., contractors, shop employees), unique hazards, or unfamiliar tools or work locations, require Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs), which factor in who performs each step of the task. Review Northwestern’s SOP guide and template to learn more about how and when to use an SOP.

Consider the potential hazards in the painting example to the right; what hazard controls could you put into place to mitigate the risk of each of the potential hazards?

If you have any safety concerns that need to be addressed, Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) can help develop a Safe Operating Procedure, conduct a formal hazard assessment, and more.

Report all injuries on Risk Management’s website or call 847.491.5582.

Learn more: Complete Job Hazard Analysis training and review OSHA’s Job Hazard Analysis resource.

Safety at Home

Whether you are doing a home renovation project or partaking in a personal hobby, including safety considerations in your plan can help keep you and your loved ones safe at home. Keep the following in mind:

○ Working with or on utilities (e.g., electrical circuits, plumbing) can be dangerous and cause extensive damage; do not touch these if you are not competent or qualified.
○ Whether knives in a kitchen or tools in the garage, keep sharp or dangerous objects and tools out of reach of children.
○ PPE is not just for tasks performed at work and may be necessary at home as well (e.g., hearing protection while mowing, pot holders while handling hot pans).

For Additional Information

Contact Environmental Health and Safety at ehs@northwestern.edu.