

# Tool Box Talk

## Hazard Identification

**Hazard identification (ID)** is an important skill people involved in construction at any level must have to ensure no one is harmed at work. Hazard ID is the component of an assessment that identifies sources of harm or an adverse effect.

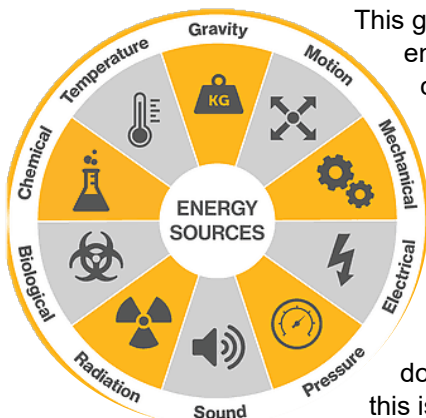
Harm can be defined as physical injury or damage to health. (CCOHS)

The main goal of this process is to find and record all of the possible hazards that may be present at your workplace. Hazard ID skills are used for daily hazard assessments; larger scope hazard assessments; site, office & yard inspections; incident investigation and more.

In order to acquire this skill, we must be aware of the basic classes of hazards:

- Biological- bacteria, viruses, insects, plants, animals, humans, etc.
- Chemical- bodily reactions depend on the chemical- i.e. carcinogens
- Ergonomic- bodily position, repetitive movements, forceful movements, etc.
- Physical- pressure extremes, temperature extremes, noise, etc.
- Psychosocial- violence, harassment, stress, etc.
- Safety- tripping hazards, guards on equipment (i.e. grinders & saws) fall hazards, etc.

These help us to classify hazards, but we must also look at a range of sources. Some generic sources might include substances, materials, sources of energy, conditions, processes, practices, and behaviors.



This graphic illustrates some energy sources that correspond to the classes of hazards. Uncontrolled sources of energy have potential to cause harm.

The hazard classes and this graphic can be a lot to memorize. Illustrating this on your documentation can help with this issue.

On a construction site, there are plenty of hazards that are generated due to the type of work being conducted. In general, construction can be deemed “hazardous”. However, if we consistently identify our risks we can eliminate many of the hazards, and mitigate unnecessary risk.

On a construction site, we can ID many general safety hazards. Since some hazards might be harder to identify, using a team approach to spot hazards will ensure precautions are taken. This team should consist of at least one experienced person, as well as newer workers who might see hazards that are not always apparent.

Below is an example of a hazardous process. These hazards should have been identified before the job started.



Hazards observed:

1. Worker under load, worker could be crushed- Safety hazard- Gravity energy source
2. Trench near footing while looking up at the load overhead, fall hazard- Safety Hazard- Gravity energy source
3. Spotter not wearing high visibility- safety hazard
4. Workers not wearing head protection on site- safety hazard

After hazards have been identified, we can take action to prioritize and control them. Hazard ID is of extreme importance, as we cannot fix what we do not know.

Sources: 1 <https://www.worksafefbc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/managing-risk/identifying-hazards/>; 2 <https://www.taproot.com/hazard-recognition/>; 3 [https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/hazard\\_identification.html](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/hazard_identification.html)

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When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks](http://www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks)

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool\\_Box\\_Meeting.pdf](http://www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf)

## About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.