

National Safety Council Labor Division Members

Sent on Behalf of Labor Division Chairperson, Paul Chaney

Sisters and Brothers

The last time we could all be together in-person is now well over two years ago. Some of us have met in-person during this time, but this is the exception rather than the rule. The Labor Division executive has met online and we are doing all we can to make our next full Division meeting in Tempe AZ an in-person session. Including the spring of 2020, the Labor Division membership has continued the business of the Division as best as can be done when forced, as we have been, to meet virtually or online. There is no substitute for being face to face and that is exactly why the Division leadership has also kept the idea of in-person meetings at the top of every agenda.

Also at the top of every agenda has been the principle of better communication between spring and fall Division meetings. The Division is helped in this by the NSC as Division information is part of the NSC's public facing online presence. The Division has also put out a couple of press releases telling the very important story of how the Division donates to local charities when in a community for meetings. The Division leadership is profoundly optimistic as we move towards spring meetings in May, but the leadership knows only too well that the last two years has left a big void in information that is begging to be filled. The process of reimagining ourselves in what is best described as a post-pandemic world is not as simple as just going back to the last known place of what could be called "normal" and carrying on. Much of what was normal and accepted will most certainly be part of the Division going forward. After all we have rules and accepted practices that are part of our identity and these cherished parts of who we are remain the anchor of the Division.

Having said all this, we need some fresh energy and one small part of this infusion of energy is going to be a series of short blogs on issues of safety and health, mental and psychosocial well-being and other related topics. Posted below, this introduction is the first edition of the blogs. The blogs will not necessarily appear at regular intervals, but the plan is to be frequent enough that people will hopefully look forward to them.

In closing, the spring Labor Division meeting in Tempe AZ agenda is now on the NSC Labor Division web page and we hope that people will give consideration to attending and to reigniting the NSC Labor Division with enthusiasm and the shared knowledge of safety and health.

Yours in Solidarity and Safety and Health

Paul Chaney, NSC Labor Division Chairperson

Blog #1

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A Look at Hazards and Hazard Recognition

Recognizing, assessing, determining how to control the hazards and then ascertaining the efficacy of the controls is a key piece of a successful safety and health program.

Hazard recognition and elimination and risk assessment and control" uses the following terms:

- Harm – physical injury or damage to health.
- Hazard – a potential source of harm to a worker.

Basically, a hazard is the potential for harm or an adverse effect (for example, to people as health effects, to organizations as property or equipment losses, or to the environment). If we know what a hazard is, we can then assess it.

Risk assessment is a term used to describe the overall process or method where you:

- Identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification).
- Analyze and evaluate the risk associated with that hazard (risk analysis, and risk evaluation).
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard, or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated (risk/hazard control).

A risk/hazard assessment is a thorough look at your workplace or the task or tasks at hand to identify those things, situations, processes, etc. that may cause harm, particularly to people. After identification is made, you analyze and evaluate how likely and severe the risk/hazard is. When this determination is made, you can next, decide what measures should be in place to effectively eliminate or control the harm from happening.

Hazard Recognition – the process of finding, listing, and characterizing hazards.

Risk Assessment – the overall process of hazard identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

Risk analysis – a process for comprehending the nature of hazards and determining the level of risk.

Notes:

(1) Risk analysis provides a basis for risk evaluation and decisions about risk control.

(2) Information can include current and historical data, theoretical analysis, informed opinions, and the concerns of stakeholders.

(3) Risk analysis includes risk estimation. One such example would be incident energy calculation when evaluating an Arc Blast/Arc Flash potential.

Risk evaluation – the process of comparing an estimated risk against given risk criteria to determine the significance of the risk.

Risk control – actions implementing risk evaluation decisions.

Note: Risk control can involve monitoring, re-evaluation, and compliance with decisions.

The most effective control is “at the source”. Lock-out/Tag-out is an example.

The next most effective control is “along the path”. Guardrail around an open hole is an example.

The least effective control is “at the worker”. PPE is an example.

The last step is the determination, over time, if the controls put in place maintain their efficacy and steps to take if determined that the situation has changed, and controls are less effective than designed/anticipated.

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