**Health Services Support - Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)**

**1.1 Identifies Hazards/Risks in the Workplace and/or its Indicators**

* **Definition**: Hazards refer to any potential source of harm or adverse health effects on a person or persons, while risks are the likelihood that a person may be harmed or suffers adverse health effects if exposed to a hazard.
* **Types of Hazards**:
  + **Physical Hazards**: Noise, radiation, extreme temperatures.
  + **Chemical Hazards**: Exposure to toxic substances, fumes, and gases.
  + **Biological Hazards**: Viruses, bacteria, and other pathogens.
  + **Ergonomic Hazards**: Poor workstation design, repetitive strain injuries.
  + **Psychosocial Hazards**: Work-related stress, violence, and harassment.
* **Identification Methods**:
  + **Workplace Inspections**: Regular inspections to identify visible hazards.
  + **Incident Reports**: Analyzing past incidents to identify ongoing risks.
  + **Worker Feedback**: Gathering information from workers about potential hazards.
* **Example**: In a hospital setting, identifying hazards could include recognizing slippery floors (physical hazard), exposure to disinfectants (chemical hazard), and the risk of infection from patient blood (biological hazard).

**1.2 Requests for Evaluation and/or Work Environment Measurements of OSH Hazards/Risk in the Workplace**

* **Purpose**: Ensures that identified hazards are quantitatively assessed to determine their severity and the level of risk they pose.
* **Evaluation Methods**:
  + **Environmental Monitoring**: Measuring levels of noise, air quality, or exposure to chemicals.
  + **Risk Assessment Tools**: Using matrices or software to assess the probability and impact of risks.
* **Involvement of Experts**: May require specialists such as industrial hygienists or safety engineers.
* **Example**: In a laboratory, requesting air quality measurements to evaluate the concentration of harmful gases like formaldehyde.

**1.3 Gathers OSH Issues and/or Concerns Raised by Workers**

* **Importance**: Worker input is crucial in identifying hazards that may not be immediately apparent to management.
* **Methods of Gathering Information**:
  + **Surveys and Questionnaires**: Collecting anonymous feedback from workers.
  + **Safety Committees**: Regular meetings where workers can raise concerns.
  + **Incident Reporting Systems**: Encouraging workers to report hazards or near misses without fear of retaliation.
* **Example**: A nurse reports frequent headaches and dizziness, leading to an investigation that uncovers improper ventilation in a medication preparation room.

**1.4 Identifies and Implements Prevention and Control Measures, Including Use of PPE for Specific Hazards**

* **Hierarchy of Controls**:
  + **Elimination**: Removing the hazard from the workplace.
  + **Substitution**: Replacing a hazardous substance or process with a less dangerous one.
  + **Engineering Controls**: Isolating people from the hazard (e.g., fume hoods).
  + **Administrative Controls**: Changing work procedures to reduce exposure (e.g., job rotation).
  + **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**: Last line of defense, includes gloves, masks, and goggles.
* **Example**: Implementing a policy requiring the use of N95 masks in areas with airborne pathogens.

**1.5 Recommends Appropriate Risk Controls Based on Result of OSH Hazard Evaluation and OSH Issues Gathered**

* **Evaluation Process**: Using the results of hazard assessments and worker feedback to develop targeted control measures.
* **Risk Control Strategies**:
  + **Prioritization**: Addressing the most severe risks first.
  + **Tailored Solutions**: Developing controls specific to the identified risks.
* **Example**: After evaluating the risk of needle stick injuries, recommending the use of safety-engineered syringes and enhanced training on sharps disposal.

**1.6 Establish Contingency Measures, Including Emergency Procedures in Accordance with Organization Procedures**

* **Importance**: Contingency planning ensures that the organization is prepared to respond effectively to emergencies, minimizing harm to workers.
* **Elements of Contingency Planning**:
  + **Emergency Response Plan**: Detailed procedures for responding to emergencies such as fires, chemical spills, or medical emergencies.
  + **Evacuation Drills**: Regularly conducted to ensure all staff know the evacuation routes and procedures.
  + **Communication Systems**: Ensuring reliable communication during an emergency.
* **Example**: In a health care facility, establishing protocols for isolating and treating patients with highly infectious diseases.

**1.7 Provides Information to Work Team About Company OSH Program, Procedures and Policies/Guidelines**

* **Communication Methods**:
  + **Training Sessions**: Regularly scheduled to inform staff about OSH policies and updates.
  + **Bulletin Boards and Digital Platforms**: Posting OSH information where it is easily accessible.
  + **Team Meetings**: Discussing OSH issues and policies as part of routine team meetings.
* **Example**: Distributing an updated manual on the use of PPE in response to new health and safety regulations.

**1.8 Participates in the Implementation of OSH Procedures and Policies/Guidelines**

* **Active Participation**: Involves all levels of staff in the execution of OSH policies to ensure buy-in and effective implementation.
* **Roles and Responsibilities**:
  + **Supervisors**: Oversee the correct application of OSH procedures.
  + **Employees**: Adhere to the procedures and report non-compliance.
* **Example**: Actively participating in the rollout of a new ergonomic workstation setup to reduce repetitive strain injuries.

**1.9 Trains and Advises Team Members on OSH Standards and Procedures**

* **Training Programs**:
  + **Onboarding**: Introduction to OSH standards for new employees.
  + **Regular Refreshers**: Ongoing training to keep employees up-to-date with OSH procedures.
  + **Specialized Training**: Targeted at specific hazards or roles (e.g., handling hazardous chemicals).
* **Advisory Role**: Providing guidance and support to team members on OSH-related issues.
* **Example**: Conducting a workshop on the proper use of PPE for staff in a high-risk unit, such as an ICU.

**1.10 Implements Procedures for Maintaining OSH-Related Records**

* **Record-Keeping Importance**: Accurate records are essential for compliance, tracking the effectiveness of OSH programs, and for use in incident investigations.
* **Types of Records**:
  + **Incident Reports**: Detailed documentation of accidents and near misses.
  + **Training Records**: Documentation of all OSH training sessions.
  + **Inspection Reports**: Records of safety inspections and audits.
* **Example**: Maintaining a log of all workplace accidents, which is reviewed regularly to identify patterns and improve safety measures.

**Questions with Answers**

**1. What are the key types of workplace hazards, and provide an example for each?**

**Answer**:

* **Physical Hazards**: Noise (e.g., loud machinery in a factory).
* **Chemical Hazards**: Exposure to toxic substances (e.g., cleaning chemicals in hospitals).
* **Biological Hazards**: Pathogens (e.g., viruses in a healthcare setting).
* **Ergonomic Hazards**: Poor workstation design (e.g., uncomfortable office chairs).
* **Psychosocial Hazards**: Stress (e.g., high-pressure work environment).

**2. What is the importance of conducting workplace environment measurements, and which professionals might be involved?**

**Answer**:

* **Importance**: To quantitatively assess hazards and determine their severity and risk level.
* **Involved Professionals**: Industrial hygienists, safety engineers, and environmental health specialists.

**3. How can a company effectively gather OSH concerns from workers?**

**Answer**:

* **Methods**: Surveys, safety committee meetings, and incident reporting systems.
* **Example**: A suggestion box or anonymous online survey to collect feedback.

**4. Explain the hierarchy of controls and give an example of each level in a healthcare setting.**

**Answer**:

* **Elimination**: Removing a hazardous chemical from the workplace.
* **Substitution**: Replacing a harmful disinfectant with a less toxic alternative.
* **Engineering Controls**: Installing ventilation systems to remove airborne contaminants.
* **Administrative Controls**: Rotating staff to minimize exposure to repetitive tasks.
* **PPE**: Using gloves and masks to protect against infectious diseases.

**5. What should an effective emergency response plan include?**

**Answer**:

* **Elements**: Procedures for evacuation, communication systems, and specific protocols for various types of emergencies.
* **Example**: A detailed evacuation route plan posted throughout the workplace.

**6. Why is it important to provide ongoing OSH training to employees?**

**Answer**:

* **Reason**: To ensure employees remain knowledgeable about current safety practices and can adapt to new risks or procedures.
* **Example**: Regular fire drill training to ensure everyone knows the evacuation procedures.

**7. What records should be maintained to ensure compliance with OSH standards?**

**Answer**:

* **Types of Records**: Incident reports, training logs, and inspection reports.
* **Importance**: These records help in monitoring compliance, investigating incidents, and improving safety measures.