

HAZARDS AND RISKS

What is the difference between 'hazard' and 'risk'?

A **hazard** is something that can cause harm, eg electricity, chemicals, working up a ladder, noise, a keyboard, a bully at work, stress.

Risk is the chance or probability that a person will be harmed or experience an adverse health effect once to a hazard. It may also apply to situations with property or equipment loss.

A **risk** is the chance, high or low, that any hazard will actually cause somebody harm.




For example, working alone away from your office can be a hazard. The risk of personal danger may be high. Electrical repair is a hazard. If someone accidentally turned on the power the worker's life will be in a 'high-risk' category.

Five Basic Workplace Hazards

There are five major types of hazards which can put both your health and your safety at risk.

1. Chemical hazards
2. Physical hazards
3. Biological hazards
4. Ergonomic hazards or job related hazards
5. Psychological hazards or stress

1. CHEMICAL HAZARDS



If you are working with cleaning products, bleaches, paints, and other chemical agents, you need to understand what a chemical hazard is as well as how to protect yourself.

Chemical hazards include:

- liquids such a cleanser,
- acids, and paints
- vapors and fumes such as
- welding fumes
- gases such as carbon monoxide
- products that can catch fire or explode



2. PHYSICAL HAZARDS



Physical hazards include:

- Machinery
- Electrical power
- Noise
- Power and hand tools
- Working and walking surfaces
- Trip and fall hazards
- Ladders and scaffolds
- Heat and cold
- ventilation

3. BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS



Why be careful around ticks, mouse droppings, bird poop and wild animals?

Because you might get sick from working around certain animals, including people. Biological hazards include bacteria, viruses, insects, plants, birds, animals, and humans. The risks run from skin irritation and allergies to infections.

Dangers can come from:

- unclean restrooms
- mold and fungus
- bacteria
- insect stings
- animal bites
- poorly stored medical waste



4. ERGONOMIC HAZARDS



If your job is poorly designed, you can develop long term health problems. These problems can arise from simple things, like working for long periods in an awkward position or having to make the same motions over and over again.

Problems can come from:

- lighting
- chairs
- lifting
- repeated movements
- computer screens

5. PSYCHOLOGICAL HAZARDS



Those that are basically causing stress to a worker. This kind of hazard troubles an individual very much to an extent that his general well-being is affected

Stress can lead to long-term health problems. Headaches, anxiety, and impatience are early signs of stress.

Workplace causes of stress include:

- heavy workloads
- lack of control over the pace of work
- shift work
- noise
- working by yourself
- fear of job-loss
- conflict with the employer



What are examples of a hazard?

Workplace Hazard	Example of Hazard	Example of Harm Caused
thing	knife	cut
substance	benzene	leukemia
material	asbestos	mesothelioma
source of energy	electricity	shock, electrocution
condition	wet floor	slips, falls
process	welding	metal fume fever
practice	hard rock mining	silicosis