

Recognized Hazards: Act Before Someone Is Exposed

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Why this matters

A crew may recognize a serious hazard before anyone can name the rule that applies. The immediate task is to protect people, report the condition and obtain the right assessment. Uncertainty about a rule number should not become permission to continue exposure.

Objective: Describe a hazard, identify the correction owner and verify protection before affected work resumes.

Key hazards or failure points

Exposure continues during debate; a generic instruction replaces a real control; nobody owns correction; a worker attempts an unauthorized repair; restart occurs without a check.

Practical controls

- State the task, condition and potential harm in concrete terms. Use the site reporting route and keep people clear through the approved safe arrangement while the concern is assessed.
- The employer assigns a person with the authority, knowledge and resources to assess the hazard and applicable requirements. Workers should not improvise technical fixes outside their role.
- Agree the interim protection, correction and conditions for restart. Use effective controls selected for the actual hazard. Tell affected crews about the restrictions and who can release the work.

Verify It in the Field

From a safe position, identify where exposure could occur and who could be affected. Describe the observed condition without staging a demonstration that puts someone in danger.

Ask the control owner which requirement, instruction or assessment supplies the acceptance criterion and safe check. Escalate an unknown criterion to the appropriate specialist; do not replace it with a guess.

After correction, compare the actual condition with the agreed criterion. Record the check, result, person and time. Confirm that affected workers understand remaining restrictions and the revised method before restart.

Stop and reassess

Hold affected work for a serious uncontrolled hazard, a missing or failed required control, unknown acceptance criteria or no authorized decision maker. Maintain protection while the issue is resolved. A completed action ticket does not establish that the correction works.

Ask the crew

1. What could harm someone here even if we cannot name a rule?
2. Who owns correction and what protects people meanwhile?
3. What evidence is needed before this work resumes?

Today's check: protect, assign, correct and verify.

Sources: OSH Act Section 5; OSHA General Duty Clause interpretation and hazard-control guidance.

Free next step: [JHA/JSA planning & field-verification worksheet](#)

Expanded guidance, references, supervisor check and attendance record accompany this talk.