



QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE STARTING A TASK

Talking Points:

Before starting any work task, you need to understand the safety hazards involved. This proactive approach can help prevent injuries, reduce property damage, and improve productivity.

Why Ask Questions?

- Identify hazards that may be unknown or not readily apparent just by looking around the work area.
- Clarify responsibilities to ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. This will reduce confusion and risk.
- Increase communication. Communication increases teamwork and encourages everyone to share safety concerns.

The following questions should be asked by every employee for every task. It is vital to ask them and have a team discussion about new tasks and/or non-routine tasks.

1. What is the task, and what is our goal? Understanding the task, how it is going to be accomplished, who has responsibility for what, and what processes (tools, equipment, etc.) are vital to get the task completed safely and efficiently.
2. What are my potential hazards (is the work area safe)? Every task comes with its own set of risks. Before starting a task, evaluate the hazards to understand what risks you could encounter. The potential hazards could be – physical, chemical, ergonomic, and/or environmental (examples: outside conditions/weather or inside conditions/noise). This can be accomplished by completing or reviewing a JSA/JHA.
3. What PPE is required? Understand the PPE you need to complete the task and make sure you have all of it with you before starting the task.
4. Is there an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) for the task? If procedures are in place, have everyone review them and understand all steps involved. If no SOP exists, discuss how to create a safe work plan as a team.

5. Who is the designated person responsible for safety oversight? All employees are responsible for safety, but every team needs a leader. This person should have knowledge of the task and can address safety concerns as they occur.
6. What do we do if there is an emergency? All team members need to know what to do in case of an emergency. For employees working in a different area, building, workstation, etc., it is vital that they understand the work area emergency action plan (EAP).
7. How will we communicate? If noise, line of sight, or anything else disrupts employees using verbal communication, it is important to discuss how the team will communicate to keep everyone informed and safe.

Questions to Review Knowledge:

1. Why is asking questions before a task important? _____

2. True or False – Employees working in a new work environment do not need to understand the hazards of the job?
3. Why is communication something team members may need to discuss before starting a task? _____

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