

Hazard identification at work place

[Business](#), [Work](#)



Introduction: With a rapid increase in industries from the last few decades, equally corresponding increase in the hazardous materials in process. The industries became larger and often situated in or close to densely inhabited areas. Therefore it is need of the day to develop comprehensive approach to the prevention of human and economic loss or any occurrence associated to the hazards. In the forthcoming paragraphs we will discuss in detail hazards, risks associated to hazards and how preventive measures can be taken to minimise the risks of any accident with reference to the Restaurants (McDonalds Restaurants Ltd).

Before to go further one should know what hazard means and how it can be defined. The most common definition of the word Hazard is, “ A potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons”. The word hazard has many definitions but most common when talking about workplace health and safety is; “ A hazard is any source of potential damage, harm or adverse health effects on something or someone under certain conditions at work”. In concise hazard is any condition, event or circumstances that could be the source of an accident.

Therefore hazard is a potential source of harm, for example sharp knife is a hazard while working in a kitchen because it can cut. A cutting board is a hazard as it can produce bacteria. Sometimes the meaning of the hazard is confusing. Often dictionaries do not give specific definitions or combine it with the term “ risk”. Such as, dictionary defines the word hazard as a “ danger or risk”. Hazard is not deemed to be identical with risk although it can be significant determinant of risk. This example will differentiate and explain appropriately the meaning of these two terminologies.

If there was a spill of water in a room then that water would present a slipping hazard to persons passing through it. If access to that area was prevented by a physical barrier then the hazard would remain though the risk would be minimised. Under the law it is required that the employers must to any extent identify the hazards in the workplaces under their control and assess the risks presented by these hazards. It is the responsibility of the employers to write down the workplace risks and how to deal with it, which is known as a risk assessment.

This means the employers must examine in the workplace that what could cause harm to the employees and other people including customers and members of the public. Moreover it allows the employers to evaluate whether adequate precautions have been taken or should do more to avoid harm. Hazard identified: In the process of risk management the most important step is to identify the hazard, the hazard not identified cannot be controlled. Whereas the identification process must be comprehensive and conducted in close consultation with the people performing the activity.

Under Section 20 of the Act 2005 it is required by the employer to prepare a written statement (known as safety statement) based on the identification of hazards and risk assessment. Safety statement must specify the manner in which the safety, health and welfare of employees shall be secured and managed. But still it is difficult to declare a hazard identification process as complete. Therefore it should be periodically reviewed. Moreover the process of hazards identification should be documented in the form of hazard logs. For hazard identification the workplace needs to be examined regularly.

It assists in determining exactly where slips, trips and falls or any accident on the same level have happened, or there is a potential of likely to happen. This could be completed through simple three steps to pursue; * Consultation with the employees, this is the legal obligation of employers to consult with employees when going through the steps of this procedure. * Regular inspection of the premises. This may be helpful in identifying the source of usual hazards. * Check records including incidents and injury reports, workers compensation claims, and workplace inspection checklists.

Whereas working in McDonald's Restaurants the hazards we might find in a kitchen or restaurant can be categories as: * Electrical equipment * Spills, trips and falls * Sharp equipment * Lifting and carrying * Cleaning chemicals * Cold areas such as chiller and freezer * Vats and hot oil * Grills * Toasters * Hot drinks machines * Compactor These are obvious or apparent hazards which can cause harm, while in the similar system or operations actual incidents that have occurred in the past can be beneficial for the identification of hazards.

Risks associated with hazards and control measures: Hazards and risks associated with them are everywhere. Everything we do exposes us to the hazards, but these can be minimised or eliminated with the known control measures to be taken. It is consist of actions to be taken to decrease the possibility of exposure to the hazard. It could be to remove the hazard or to reduce the likelihood of the risk to contact to the hazard being realised. When we look at control measures we often refer to the hierarchy of control measures.

It includes eliminating the hazard creating the risk, substituting the hazard creating the risk with a hazard that gives rise to a lesser risk, minimising the risk with engineering means, isolating the hazard, use of administrative means or using personal protective equipment. We will determine in detail the hazards and risk associated with it, and what could be possible control measures for it. The best way is simply to get rid of the hazard but this not always possible. For example it would be difficult to have a kitchen with no hot equipment.

If the hazard cannot be removed we have to minimise the risks. This in turn reduces the likelihood of an accident. For example wet or dirty floor in the restaurant is a hazard, which can damage the health of both employees and the visitors or customers by falling on the floor. This can have serious consequences both legal and of moral values. Whereas slips and falls are the most common type of accidents in the work place, therefore we should be extra cautious in this area. But still we can avoid the risk or minimise by adopting the proper procedure.

To eliminate or minimise the risk associated with a wet or dirty floor, the appropriate procedure is to prepare the area by putting the warning cones in the place to warn anyone approaching the area. To reduce the risks of slips and falls it is highly recommended to clean up spills immediately with a cleaning agent if required. The other example of hazard while working in the restaurant is the step ladders. These are potential hazard if not used safely. It can be the cause of major accident if appropriate precautions are not adopted.

While using these ladders in the time of need, one should make it sure that it is fully open with all four feet on the level, non-slip surface. And to make it sure that it should be used with dry and clean shoes. Always make sure to climb the steps one at a time, ensuring a safe foot and handhold, with a firm grip. The very nature of McDonald's restaurants, it has a lot of hot surfaces and hot liquids in the kitchens and front counter areas. While working near hot equipments such as grills, toasters, hot drink machines and fry vats extra care has to be taken; negligence can be very harmful and could result in severe burns.

For example the special grills used in McDonald's consist of a lower hot plate (temperature 218 C) with a moving top hot plate (temperature 177 C) known as platen, which has high risk of burns. Therefore to reduce the risk of burns it is highly recommended when not in use return platens to lower stand by position. This prevents the hot platens from being exposed and reduces the risk of burns. Moreover to reduce the risks we have to: * Check the design and safety of all equipment and chemicals used. * Develop the procedures and training Introduce special protective equipment if the risk is still too high. Such as for vats and hot oil filtering special protective clothing must be worn. This consists of long gauntlets, heavy duty apron and face visor. Work can be fun, but never at the expense of safety. Practical jokes can have tragic results; it can put the safety of employees or customers at risk. Every procedure we learn, or piece of equipment we use, has been designed with safety in mind. That is why it is so important to follow procedure.

It is to keep in mind that for the health and safety of ourselves and the people around us we shouldn't do any tasks which haven't been shown or we

not properly trained of. Conclusion: Safety is no accident. Every employee has a responsibility towards health and safety in their workplace. A lot of health and safety is common sense and nearly all accidents can be avoided if we always follow the correct procedures and to take reasonable care for health and safety of ourselves and of other people at work. It can be managed just as we manage every other aspect of the business.

This requires planning, well trained people, good supervision by managers, and the commitment of every single employee. We must work together to identify hazards and take action to minimise risks. We have to make sure that not to misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Words count: 1729. ----- [1]. Frank P Lees. Loss prevention in the process industries, hazard identification, assessment and control. 2nd Edition 1996. [2]. http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Hazards/Hazards_and_Risk.tml?showDoc=1 [3]. Hazard and risk: http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/hazard_risk.html [4]. A guide to risk management. <http://www.qast.org.au/Portals/0/PDFS/gde40v1.pdf> [5]. Hazard and risk; http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/hazard_risk.html. [6]. http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Topics/Hazards/Hazards_and_Risk.html?showDoc=1& [7]. Section 19 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 [8]. www.hsa.ie. [9]. Hazard management. <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/ohsw/procedures/docs/hazard.df> [10]. Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 [11]. Ibid. [12]. Guidance on hazard identification- March 09, <http://easa.europa.eu/essi/ecast/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/ECASTSMSWG->

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