

Hazard Rating During Workplace Inspections

It is important to consider not only the number of concerns identified in a workplace inspection but also the severity of the concern. For example, one case of a worker in an unshored trench is of greater concern than two indoor air quality issues.

Hazard Ratings

Classify each item that you observe and record during your inspection tour. This hazard rating establishes priorities for corrective action and also highlights the level of severity or seriousness of the hazards.

How does the ABC rating system work?

- The A, B, C rating method is used to rate items observed during a safety inspection.

The reason for this system is to highlight the degree of severity of those hazards and to assist both the inspectors and the employer in carrying out corrective actions. The following examples can be used as guidelines.

“A” Hazard

- Any condition or practice that has potential for causing loss of life, body part and/or extensive loss of structure, equipment or material.
- Generally this means that immediate corrective action is required. Activity should be discontinued until the hazard is corrected, e.g.
 1. A window washer is seen working on the third floor level without any safety belt, hanging on with one hand and leaning out to work.
 2. Workers are seen in a ditch, about six feet in depth, vertical sides, no shoring, sloping or other means of protection.
 3. Bricklayers are observed up on scaffolding, 15 ft. high, without handrails or safety belts.

“B” Hazard

- ☑ Any condition or practice with the potential for causing a serious injury, illness or property damage.
- ☑ Urgent situation. Requires attention as soon as possible, e.g.
 1. Forklift trucks are rounding a blind corner into a loading area without stopping.
 2. Someone has spilled lube oil on the main floor leading to the areas where workers must gain access.
 3. Workers observed smoking in a flammable storage area.

“C” Hazard

- ☑ Any condition or practice with a probable potential for causing a non-disabling injury or non-disruptive property damage.
- ☑ These types of hazards should be eliminated without delay, but the situation is not an emergency, e.g.
 1. Worker using a hammer with a loose head, in use on a daily basis for odd jobs.
 2. Worker using a heavy file without file handle.
 3. Oxygen and acetylene cylinders stored together, caps on, good ventilation, fireproof surroundings.

Example of Hazard Ratings for Many Common hazards are shown below.

Examples of Hazards and their Respective Ratings

Access and egress-restricted area used by general staff	A
Air quality-dust and bug problems	C
Air Quality Problems	C
Aisles – blocked by materials, equipment	B
Aisles – blocked exit	A
Aisles – blocked on both sides.	A
Aisles – main fire exits with less than 36	B
Book shelves – not bolted or gang bolted or no raised front feet	B
Carpet – tiles loose	C
Ceiling – tiles loose	C
Ceiling clearance less than 18	A
Chairs – 4 point base instead of 5	C
Coat racks – hooks installed at eye level	C
Coat racks – not fastened	C
Electrical cords – in main pathway.	A
Electrical – extension cord 3 prong into 2	A
Electrical box – unmarked	B
Electrical boxes – generic marking	C
Electrical closets – materials stored in closets	A
Electrical cords – cord clutter in work area	C
Electrical cords – underneath desk	C
Electrical equipment – loose wiring (that turns equipment on and off)	A
Electrical equipment – near source of water	A
Electrical equipment – no on/off switch.	A
Electrical equipment – water leaking, no GFC	A
Electrical outlet – no plates	B
Electrical power pole loose	B
Electrical Room – boxes stored in front.	C
Ergonomics – employee files claim and still working with inappropriate equipment	A
Ergonomics – employees working in awkward workstation set up or with inappropriate equip	B
Ergonomics – keyboards used at desk level	C
Extension cords (ie. 3 or more strung end to end)	A
Fans – unguarded blades (metal).	A
Filing cabinet – drawer stops missing (drawer comes out completely)	A
Filing cabinets (5 or higher) – not bolted, gang bolted or no raised front “feet”	B
Filing cabinets (5 or higher) – top drawer is locked (so drawer cannot operate)	B
Filing cabinets – more than one drawer opening at a time.	B
Filing cabinets – not bottom loaded	B
Fire alarm bell – not working	A
Fire doors – wedged open	A
Fire evacuation – warden list or route not posted	B
Fire exit – blocked by materials	B
Fire exit – impeded route by foliage	B
Fire exit door handles not working.	B
Fire exit lights – burnt out	A

Safety in Numbers – Workplace Inspection

Fire exit lights – need to be installed	A
Fire exit signs – pointing wrong direction	C
Fire exit signs – wrong side facing	C
Fire extinguisher – missing	A
Fire extinguishers – needs recharging	A
Flooring – uneven surface at entrance	A
Lifting procedures (where main part of staff work)	A
Lights – burnt out	C
Lights – in stairwell, burnt out	C
Lockout – no name on lock	B
Mail cart ergonomics (awkward bending over, etc.)	A
Mail carts – overloaded	C
Panic buttons – may not work	A
Paper cutter – not locked	C
Personal Protective Equipment missing (industrial equipment)	A
Personal Protective Equipment missing (office equipment)	C
Phones without emergency number stickers	C
Pigeon hole cabinets not stable, not fastened to base	B
Safe Work Procedures – industrial: equipment – grinder rest more than 1/8"	A
Safe Work Procedures – industrial: equipment not bolted or secured	A
Safe Work Procedures – industrial: information not readable	B
Safe Work Procedures – sharps procedure not posted by containers	C
Safe Work Procedures – shredder: not posted	B
Safe Work Procedures – spill procedures missing (hazardous materials)	A
Safe Work Procedures – toner replacement	C
Safe Work Procedures – working alone	C
Safety and Health Policy – out of date	C
Sharps – no containers available	A
Space heaters without automatic shut off (when tipped over)	A
Stairwell lights – burnt out	C
Storage – above 6'6"	A
Storage – boxes stored over 3 high	C
Storage – bracing required for stabilizing	A
Storage – equipment stored on chair	A
Storage – equipment stored on filing cabinet	B
Storage – materials (metal plates, metal drawers) on top of filing shelves/cabinets	A
Storage – materials on uneven surface (ie. Typewriter)	A
Storage – materials stored in electrical closets	B
Storage – materials under desk	C
Storage – on top of closed overhead bins	A
Storage – pictures leaning against shelves	C
Storage – shelving: bent shelves	C
Storage – shelving: loose bolts	B
Storage – upper and lower units not bolted together	B
Storage Room – no foot stool	B
WHMIS – MSDS out of date	C
WHMIS – unlabelled, controlled products	C
Windows – taped broken window	C
Workstation walls loose	B