

Safety Training Guide for Outreach Workers

Identification and Control of

The Hazards We Face in Serving Others :

For Community- and/or Faith-based Outreach Workers



Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW)
Wisconsin Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (WISCOSH)

For more informational, visit :
www.osha.gov and www.cdc.gov/niosh

*The Medical College of Wisconsin
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In an Emergency
Know Who to Contact and How

Emergency Services :

911

For life threatening situations contact **911 Emergency Services** or the local equivalent. Not all areas have a 911 system. In others they cannot be reached from cell phone or digital phone lines. Some phone systems require you to dial a 1 or 0 before you have access to an outside phone line. Know how to contact the local Emergency Services before leaving on your assignment.

In my work environment I would call _____ to contact Emergency Services. If *other than* 911 I will have it on a dedicated speed dial on my phone.

For *non life threatening* situations I should call _____ to reach help.

Give the person answering the call your name, location and reason for calling. Be prepared to describe the situation in as much detail as needed. **DO NOT Hang up** until told to do so by the Emergency Services agency.

**Acknowledgment of
Community- and/or Faith-Based
Basic Safety & Health Training**

I have read, or had read to me, this **Safety Orientation Guide for Outreach Workers** for community- and/or faith-based service providers. I have also completed, either in writing or verbally, the quiz that is part of this training. I have had an opportunity to ask a knowledgeable safety trainer questions about the training and hazards. I have been told that this page may be a part of my personnel or training file with this organization.

Your full name: *(please print)* _____

Your signature: _____

Today's date: _____

Trainer's signature: _____

Outreach organization is advised to retain this form in the individual's training file for a period of three years from the date above.

Quiz

1. **True / False** Outreach workers, like all workers, need to know how to identify and control job hazards to prevent serious injury, illness or death.
2. Once identified, most hazards can be controlled by _____ them, _____ or using _____.
3. The 5 main job hazard categories are :
_____, _____,
_____, _____,
_____.
4. In staying alert for job hazards it is important to use your senses. They are : 1. _____
2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____
and 6. _____.
5. **True / False** One useful tool to help outreach workers stay safe is a Job Hazard Analysis which should be performed for each job or service.
6. One important way to control the spread of germs is to remember to _____.
7. **True / False** One good way to dispose of unused or old chemicals is to pour them into the sewer drain.
8. Two ways that germs can enter the body are through the _____ and the _____.
9. One of the steps in a Job Hazard Analysis is to _____.
10. One way to control chemical hazards is to _____.
11. One way to control physical hazards related to driving is to _____.
12. One way to control psychological hazards in outreach work is to _____.

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Introduction

Faith- and community-based outreach workers provide a sense of compassion and concern for those they serve. Outreach workers can become injured or ill due to hazards faced on the job. The best way to deal with the daily hazards and emergent situations is to prevent the former and plan for the latter before they happen.

This safety guide is designed to help you and your team become aware of your surroundings and the many safety and health hazards you may face while serving others. It will help you identify and control the hazards of day-to-day, and emergent, outreach work situations.

Help each other stay safe & healthy

Outreach workers serve our most vulnerable people at cultural events, meal programs, housing renovation sites, food pantries, in the street, in homes and more.

Every year caring workers are hurt, -or even die- while serving others. Remember: If it is not safe for you or your outreach team, it is not safe for those you serve.

To be safe from hazards, we first must be aware of them. Then we can anticipate, plan for, and detect them. Identified hazards can be controlled by eliminating them, by using safe work practices, or by using personal protective equipment.

Doing a Job Hazard Analysis will help identify and control hazards. For some hazards, and emergencies, effective control requires having policies. Having an emergency response plan will help you respond safely when things go wrong.

Safety is a team effort. Although you can go through this guide alone, it will be most rewarding if you do it with other team members. Keep your team safe!

Summary

Outreach work can be high risk.

Do a Job Hazard Analysis to identify and control hazards before doing a job, if a job has changed or to review the job.

Hazards can be controlled by :

1. Hazard Elimination,
2. Safe Work Practices,
3. Personal Protective Equipment.

Outreach work can be unpredictable and full of small emergencies. Sometimes you have to identify and control hazards while on the job.

Stay alert!

Outreach work sometimes involves responding to a largescale emergency. To be more effective and safer, integrate your activities into the local, state, regional or national command/control system.

Be sure you have needed policies in place, such as a respiratory control plan and an emergency response plan. You have the right and responsibility to come forward if you identify hazards, and you have the right to stay out of harms way.

Excellent resources are available for outreach workers, to tell you more.

What is your Respiratory Protection Plan?

Customise this page with your organizations
Respiratory Protection Plan information

Handbook Objectives

This handbook will help you and your outreach team be safer and healthier on the job. You will learn to identify and control hazards typical of the day-to-day and emergent situations of outreach work. Being safer increases your ability to provide needed services.

After having worked through this guide, you will be better able to:

- ✓ Do a Job Hazard Analysis to identify and control hazards associated with your outreach work
- ✓ Anticipate and prepare for hazards in emergent situations
- ✓ Find resource materials about specific hazards you face in your work.
- ✓ Come forward to identify and control hazards, and to walk away from or put a stop to situations you believe may result in harm to yourself or others.

Outreach Work Can Be Hazardous!

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control lists the ten leading causes of injury for several age groups in the United States. In approximate rank order for working age adults, these would be:

1. Falls
2. Struck by or against an object
3. Overexertion
4. Motor vehicle accidents-occupant
5. Cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds
6. Assaults

7. Bites, stings
8. Unintentional Poisoning
9. Other
10. Other transport

In addition to these causes of injury (due mainly to physical, chemical, or ergonomic hazards), outreach workers must also avoid illnesses from biohazards and psychological hazards.

These include:

- ➔ Infections (due mainly to biohazards)
- ➔ Psychological dysfunction, such as dysfunctional fear, frustration, fatigue, stress, risk taking, or post traumatic stress symptoms (due mainly to psychological hazards)

Adapted from: **10 Leading Causes of Injury, United States**. Office of Statistics and Programming, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, COC NEISS. Last accessed on 3/28/2006.

Identify Hazards

What is a hazard?

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) : "A hazard is the potential for harm." For outreach workers, a hazard is a condition or activity that, if left uncontrolled, can result in serious injury, illness, or death.

What are the main workplace hazards?

While it is impossible to list all possible job hazards in a booklet of this size, it will be helpful when identifying your workplace hazards to remember the 5 main hazard categories used by OSHA :

- 1) Chemical Hazards
- 2) Ergonomic Hazards

What is your Emergency Response Plan?

Sometimes the emergency is on a huge scale. Such as a hurricane, earthquake, flood or wild fire. More often the emergencies are the small but critical emergent situations that arise in day-to-day outreach work.

If you do Job Hazard Analysis and plan ahead, you will have fewer hazardous emergencies!

If you have specific emergency response policy or information add it in here.

- 3) Biological Hazards
- 4) Physical Hazards
- 5) Psychological Hazards

There are many possible hazards in each category.

Most jobs have more than one hazard. Often these hazards will be of more than one category. When hazards overlap there is an increased risk of injury, illness or death.

Sometimes "Respiratory Hazards" are also listed as a hazard category. Respiratory Hazards are chemical, biological or physical hazards that can be inhaled, and they often are controlled in similar way. (See page)

Use Your senses to Stay Alert!

Be alert to changes

Unlike traditional work environments, such as an office, store or factory, outreach work is more likely to be unpredictable due to helping vulnerable populations in a changing environment. So you *must* stay alert to any changes taking place around you.

Remain alert by using your gift of senses

To identify hazards in outreach service, use all of your senses to identify things or tasks that appear different, unusual or threatening

- Sight
- Touch
- Hearing
- Smell
- Taste

No matter where you serve, it's important to keep alert to your surroundings and use all of your senses to remain safe when helping others. And above all else use common sense!

Job Hazard Analysis			
Company Name <hr/> Job / Task <hr/> Completed by <hr/> Date <hr/>	Situation or Environment (Where is the task performed?) <hr/>	Identified Hazards (Are there chemical, biological, ergonomic, physical or psychological hazards present?) <hr/>	Controls Elimination, substitution, policy or work practice, personal protective equipment <hr/>
Tasks Performed			

Chemical hazards

What are examples of chemical hazards?

Many of the chemicals found in outreach work are the same ones used in households. Some examples include cleansers, pesticides, automotive products, workshop/painting supplies, garden products, and medications. Chemicals may be in the form of solids, liquids, or gases.

How can chemicals hurt me?

Chemicals can harm you by being breathed in, swallowed, or coming in contact with your skin. Some chemicals can burn or explode. If someone has been incapacitated due to a chemical get professional help rather than exposing yourself in an effort to help.

How can I control chemical hazards?

Chemicals, even those used in the home, pose a wide variety of risks. Always know what you are handling!

- ✓ Read container labels
- ✓ Consult the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) if other than household chemicals
- ✓ Don't rely on your sense of smell or taste to warn you of potential exposure
- ✓ Don't mix chemicals
- ✓ Carry and store chemicals in approved and properly labeled containers
- ✓ Avoid using unmarked or incorrectly marked chemicals.
- ✓ Dispose of chemicals according to directions; never pour them down sewers or drains
- ✓ Avoid eating or smoking where there are chemicals
- ✓ Wash your hands after using chemicals.

Job Hazard Analysis			
Company Name	Job / Task	Completed by	Date
Tasks Performed	Situation or Environment (Where is the task performed?)	Identified Hazards (Are there chemical, biological, ergonomic, physical or psychological hazards present?)	Controls Elimination, substitution, policy or work practice, personal protective equipment

Do a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)

What is a Job Hazard Analysis?

A Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) is a way of breaking down a job or service into simple steps or tasks and identifying and controlling the main hazards in each task. The JHA helps identify hazards *before* they occur and take important steps to control the hazards.

A job hazard analysis is one part of the organization's responsibility for your safety and health when serving vulnerable populations.

How do I do a job hazard analysis?

First break down any job or outreach service into tasks, (parts of the job.) Analyze each task to determine if there are hazards present. If so, find ways to reduce or control the hazard. (Can you eliminate it or substitute something else for it? Find a way to work with it safely? Use effective personal protective equipment (PPE)? Just not do that task until it is safe?)

Here is an example of seven basic JHA steps for outreach work:

- 1) Identify the jobs/services that have the highest likelihood for injury/illness
- 2) Break each job/service into simple tasks; avoid detail
- 3) List the tasks and note the situations or environments in which they are done
- 4) List hazards from the six hazard categories that apply to each task
- 5) Identify the tasks for which hazards are *most likely* to occur and for which the hazards would have the *most severe* effect on your health and safety
- 6) List ways to eliminate, reduce, or control hazards
- 7) Obtain personal protective equipment and training based on written programs for safe use of that equipment
- 8) Prioritize, implement your plan and periodically review. You may wish to start with the highest risks, and the things that can be readily fixed.

Chemical Hazards in My Work Area

Ergonomic hazards

What are examples of ergonomic hazards?

Ergonomic hazards are activities in which the job does not fit the worker, putting the worker at risk for injury. Job tasks that include forceful, repetitive or awkward movement, static postures, or tight gripping of unpadded hand-tools are some examples of ergonomic hazards. Other examples include working with tools that vibrate or working in very cold temperatures without adequate protection, overhead lifting or reaching, and lifting heavy objects with poor technique.

How can ergonomic hazards hurt me?

Examples of job injuries and illnesses from ergonomic hazards include muscle strains from repeated use or overexertion; peritendonitis and tendonitis; nerve injuries; and injury to the back, shoulders, elbows, wrists, or fingers.

How can I control ergonomic hazards?

Here are some ways to control ergonomic hazards due to lifting and moving tasks:

- ✓ Plan the work first
- ✓ Wear shoes with non-slip soles
- ✓ Get help or use lifting assist devices if load is too heavy
- ✓ Stand close to the object, or person
- ✓ Bend at the knees, keep the weight in close and avoid twisting.
- ✓ Lift gradually, using your legs, not your back .
- ✓ Push a load; don't pull
- ✓ Know your limits
- ✓ Avoid forceful, sustained, awkward, repetitive grasping

Control the hazards

What can I do to control hazards?

When you identify a hazard, the next step is to make yourself safe and to promptly report it to the site manager or supervisor. They are responsible for controlling hazards with policies and procedures to eliminate (engineer-out) hazards, provide training in safe work practices, provide the correct personal protective equipment, and provide training on equipment so you can stay safe.

As with all workers, you have a right to work in a safe and healthy workplace, free from recognized hazards. As an outreach worker, you have first-hand knowledge of many hazards and of ways to control them. It is important for you to share that information with your supervisors and coworkers.

When you identify hazards on the job

When you identify a hazard, some times you can eliminate it or control it. But, sometimes the very best thing to do is to remove yourself from the situation and task. That is your right, and your duty if confronted with a substantial hazard.

An excellent way for you and your team to identify and control hazards in advance is to do a **Job Hazard Analysis** (JHA). This is the best option as it allows you to control the hazard in advance.

The skills you learn doing a Job Hazard Analysis will also help you deal with unexpected on-the-job hazards you find in the emergent situations of outreach work.

Anticipate and Detect Hazards

Plan ahead

Knowing categories of hazards is not enough. You have to use that knowledge to anticipate and plan for specific hazards. Think and talk through the tasks, situations, and environments you're likely to face. Then identify the most common or worst hazards and plan how to deal with them.

Stay alert

Unlike routine work in an office or factory, outreach work is often unpredictable. So, you must stay alert. The people, situations, tasks and hazards may be constantly changing. Being consciously aware of things around you is one of the best ways to avoid hazards.

Use your senses

Look : What do you see going on around you? Does anything look out of place? Is anything different from what you expected to see?

Listen : What do you hear in your surroundings? Are there any unusual or unfamiliar sounds? Do you hear barking or snarling dogs? Do you hear arguments or loud and angry voices? A bad cough? Hissing gas?

Smell : What do you smell? Many hazards have no odor, but odor may sometimes serve as a warning. Do you smell gas? A strong, pungent, or unfamiliar odor? Smoke? Spoiled or rotting food or waste? Illness? Chemicals?

Taste : What do you taste? Some chemical hazards and a few biological ones can produce an unusual taste. Do you have a metallic or unusual taste; does the food or water taste rotten?

Touch : What do you feel? Do you feel an electrical tingling? Is the door knob hot? Are you dressed for the weather? Is there inappropriate touch? Slippery surfaces?

"6th" Sense : Do you have a sense of uneasiness or danger?

Ergonomic Hazards in My Work Area

Biological hazards

What are examples of biological hazards?

Biological, or germ hazards, may be present in stagnate water, unsafe food, blood or body fluids containing blood, or human/animal excretions. Persons who are coughing, sneezing, have infected sores, and/or have poor hygiene may also spread disease. Buildings, hay stacks, and air ducts are some example where mold may be present. Stacks of old newspapers, clothing, and "hoarded" items may contain dust mites.

How can biological hazards can hurt me?

Germs can cause infections, a serious illness or premature death.

How to control biological hazards

Often, you cannot tell if a person, animal, or worksite is capable of spreading a disease. So, treat all body fluids, excretions, and stagnant water or air as possibly infectious.

Here are a few basic control measures:

- ✓ Don't eat, drink, smoke or apply cosmetics or handle contact lenses where you suspect a germ hazard
- ✓ Wash hands correctly and frequently
- ✓ Know, use and ask others to follow cough etiquette
- ✓ Keep food and water safe
- ✓ Use gloves, masks and other personal protective equipment as directed
- ✓ Seek medical care for: cough plus fever, a "direct hit" with a needle/sharp or bloody diarrhea

It's important to keep alert for biological hazards. Trust your senses : if something or someone seems dangerous, it's not worth the risk.

Keep alert. Be aware. Trust your senses.

Psychological Hazards of My Work

Psychological hazards

What are examples of psychological hazards?

Psychological hazards are perhaps the most difficult to define. A psychological hazard can be a reaction to a stressful, dangerous or disturbing situations. According to a survey conducted for the National Safety Council, Americans are overly concerned with violent crime, natural disasters, and terrorism.

While these fears are common and normal, the real psychological hazards we face in serving others includes the threat of violent attack, long hours, feeling helpless at times, and seeing disturbing situations and neighbors in dire need of help.

How can psychological hazards hurt me?

Violence in outreach, while rare, does occur. And, when it does, it can leave permanent physical and psychological scars. More commonly, outreach workers report feelings of guilt and stress from a false belief of "not being able to help enough." Some reveal a fear of the unknown when seeing disturbing situations or people in harms way.

How do I control psychological hazards?

Know that what you feel is normal in outreach services. To better enable you to continue to serve, it is important to work them through by:

- ✓ Talking it out with others, promptly
- ✓ Finding comfort in faith, family, and community
- ✓ Taking a break
- ✓ Obtaining professional counseling, as needed
- ✓ Being prepared will greatly reduce the feelings of fear, helplessness and fatigue

Biological Hazards in My Work Area

Physical hazards

What are examples physical hazards?

Physical hazard common to outreach work include persons, places, or things, that result in preventable illness or injury. Examples include: speeding or inattentive drivers, poorly maintained vehicles, slippery or poorly lit walkways, broken or missing steps, high ladders, hot or electrically charged objects, radiation, and aggressive animals or combative people.

How can physical hazards hurt me?

Accidents, due to physical hazards, can cause serious and preventable injury or premature death.

How can I control physical hazards?

Outreach work frequently involves driving to and from the service area or providing transportation for those who are homebound.

When driving, remember to:

- ✓ Know where you are going before starting out
- ✓ Start out early to avoid temptation to speed . Buckle-up
- ✓ Stay alert
- ✓ Drive defensively

It's important to keep alert for physical hazards. Trust your senses : if something or someone seems dangerous, it's not worth the risk. Keep alert. Be aware. Trust your senses.

Physical Hazards in My Work Area