



# Learn to See Hazards



NATIONAL  
**SAFETY**  
MONTH 2019

Hazards are everywhere. Though you might not view your workplace as particularly 'hazardous', dangers are often there. You may have just become accustomed to them and aren't seeing them.

## Learn to see hazards

Once you train yourself to spot hazards, you'll notice them all around you. They may not always be obvious or immediate concerns, but they can still pose a risk to you and your coworkers. The sooner they're fixed, the better.

- **Spotting hazards is all about anticipation.** Start to ask yourself, 'If I take this action, what might happen?'
- **This applies to everything from working with dangerous chemicals and manufacturing machines to simply walking through your worksite.**
- **Picture yourself walking around a corner with your hands full.** When you ask, 'What might happen?' you can anticipate risks like someone else turning the corner at the same time. Then you can take simple steps – like taking a wider turn – and completely avoid the risk.
- **Plenty of hazards will be much more serious, but this same way of thinking can help you spot and avoid them.** Just be willing to speak up when you see them to keep your coworkers safe.



## Unseen/forgotten hazards

Your workplace may have policies in place for major hazards, but many hidden issues can still put you at risk.

- **Lighting** A burnt-out bulb can keep hazards in the shadows. Even if you're not the one to fix it, report this hazard right away.
- **Temperature** Plan ahead and dress appropriately for the temperatures you'll experience on the job. Watch out for other possible hazards caused by temperature, like early morning dew on concrete.
- **Air quality** Similar to temperature, make sure exhaust fans are running
- **Overexertion** This is the number one cause of work-related injury<sup>1</sup>. Report stress or strain on your body from heavy lifting or repetitive motions and talk to your supervisor to be sure you are performing these actions safely.

For more tips on learning to see, check out the latest visual literacy research from the Campbell Institute at [thecampbellinstitute.org/research](https://thecampbellinstitute.org/research).

## See hazards at home

Ask yourself, what are the items in my home that I think are harmless but could pose a hazard in the wrong hands? Prescription opioids, cleaning supplies and other potentially harmful substances should be stored up and away and out of sight from children and pets. Rugs should be secured and your walkways should be free of clutter. If you see an issue, clean it up or fix it right away to keep your loved ones safe.

## References

<sup>1</sup>According to *Injury Facts*

<https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/work-overview/top-work-related-injury-causes/>