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Common hazards

A hazard is anything that might hurt you, either physically or mentally. Some are obvious like a speeding car. Others, like a bully, are less obvious. We face hazards all the time in life and workplace is no different.

Certain hazards are the cause of the majority of injury and ill health at work. Learn to spot them and it will help you 'stay safe.'

- Lifting or moving heavy objects
- Falling off things like ladders and scaffolding or down holes
- Moving around a site, for example being hit by a reversing van in a forecourt, tripping over cables and leads not tied up properly or slipping over liquid left on the floor
- Getting caught up in machinery
- Damaged protective equipment, for example cracks in hard-hats, holes in gloves or boots, ripped clothing
- Using certain chemicals or cleaners that affect your skin
- Things that vibrate, for example using machinery to dig up roads
- Aggressiveness, if you work with the public

Areas of work that commonly involve these types of hazards include:

- Construction and building
- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Transport
- Waste and recycling.

Some questions to ask your employer/supervisor when you start work:

- What are the dangers of my job?
- Are there any hazards I should know about?
- What job safety training will I receive?
- Should I get any supervision?
- Is there any safety gear that I'll be expected to wear? When will I receive my training in how to use it?
- When will I be trained in emergency procedures (fire, chemical spill etc)?



- Where are the fire extinguishers, first aid kits and other equipment located?
- What are my health and safety responsibilities?
- Who do I ask if I have a safety question?
- If I get hurt, what do I do? Who is the first aid person?
- What is your healthy eating policy?
- What is your mental health policy? Who can I speak to about this?

¹ HSE Statistics 2011/12.