

# **ER Risk Management Plan Exercise**

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## **Reducing risk of exposure in the workplace**

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The goal of this exercise is to identify ways to reduce risk of exposures in the workplace by increasing your participation in improving workplace health and safety. This exercise provides an opportunity to review recent work experiences, review ways at your workplace for making health and safety suggestions, identify an area where risks could be reduced, and develop a plan to achieve that goal that includes charting to follow the progress you alone or you and co-workers make in putting the plan into practice.

This exercise builds on actions reported by refresher participants in the past that are known to reduce costs, including: treatment of injuries, lost material or product, need for outside help during a response, and down time.

Several interactive activities are used to generate ideas as you discuss experience and plans.

At the end of this exercise, you will have

- Reviewed successes in changing the workplace after training
- Identified an action that will improve health and safety at your workplace
- Discussed approaches and barriers to achieving an improvement in workplace health and safety
- Developed a plan to achieve the goal and chart progress and challenges

We hope that you will share with us your experience in putting your plan in place to make a change, so that we can document the use of training and be able to improve training for other participants in future refresher programs. We are evaluating what approaches to make changes are useful – not your particular success – and identification of what challenges are particularly difficult to overcome. The goal is to improve training.

## **Activity 1: Thinking About Past Years in Waste Work Practices**

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In this activity, the facilitator will review reports from participants over the years of how training has reduced risk of exposure to health and safety hazards and you are asked to think about how you have used training in the past year.

First: Feedback from emergency responder refresher participants during several years

Information provided by previous emergency responder refresher program participants shows that improvements were made in the workplace after training and participants reported influencing co-workers and neighbors regarding safety.

Your facilitator will provide Worksheet 1 – How Has Training Been Put into Practice? Review the table at the beginning of Worksheet 1, a summary of uses of training reported by participants in previous refresher programs. Below the table is a listing of specific examples of how training changed practices and procedures of responders.

Participants in Midwest Consortium refresher training have developed knowledge and skills to recognize hazards and make changes at work and at home. This is a substantial achievement by previous participants. Congratulations to all!

On the second page of Worksheet 1, note barriers that were reported that limited use of training knowledge and skills. Health and safety training can help you and your co-workers reduce risk. On the next page, complete the tables about how you, non-responders, and your family have benefitted from training.

Second: What happened at responses last year?

Sometimes you may observe an activity that could be done differently to increase the safety of you and/or coworkers; there may be a 'near miss' where an injury was avoided by quick action. A refresher program provides time to think about the events of the past year and identify other areas where training can be put into practice to increase health and safety.

Your facilitator will provide Worksheet 2 – Other Areas Where Training Could Be Put into Practice. Worksheet 2 will allow you to provide any examples you recall of how training has helped you and your coworkers during the past year. The second page of Worksheet 2 contains space for the group to list activities that could have been done differently to reduce risk of exposure to chemical or physical hazards. Please complete the summary table about your observations during the past year.

The information on these two Worksheets will be used in the next part of the exercise.

**Activity 2: Select an Area to Reduce Risk**

Workplaces differ in how suggestions can be made and how safety is promoted. The procedures at your workplace are important considerations if you want to use what you have learned in training to reduce risk of exposure to health and safety hazards.

Before thinking about reducing a risk, it is useful to review the current practices at your work place for making suggestions and the levels of involvement of co-workers in health and safety. This activity begins with two assessments:

- opportunities to report health and safety concerns at your workplace
- attitudes toward safety among your co-workers, supervisors and managers

Review all tables on Worksheet 3 – Current Practices for Suggestions and Emphasis on Health and Safety that is provided by the facilitator and make notes as appropriate. This information will be useful as you consider what you might want to change and how to make a plan to accomplish that goal.

The list below shows some specific areas that other emergency responders have suggested, and may not have been discussed in your group.

<b>Examples where improvement would reduce risk</b>	
Housekeeping	Use of respirators user checks
Increase time to plan before response initiated	Monthly PPE checks
EMT supplies replenished	Response team training drills
Respirators cleaned after each use	Update of chemicals used in a facility
Segregate and mark contaminated protective equipment	Semi-annual review of ERP
Respirator straps and face pieces checked according to schedule	Emergency notification practiced
Inform everyone on whistleblower policies	Tool inspection and repair tracking

This listing includes items that will not require a substantial capital budget; more costly changes may be identified as needed by you and co-workers, but these could take many

months or years to achieve. The area that you select to work on should be achievable in a few months and with limited resources.

From the successes listed on Worksheet 1, the observations on Worksheet 2, and the list from other responders shown above, select an area to work on where you think you can make progress during the next few months. You may do this as a group from the same employer, or as an individual.

### **Activity 3: A Plan to Reduce Risk**

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On Worksheet 4, you have selected an area where you'd like to use the knowledge and skills from training to reduce a potential hazard. A plan will be needed, and some milestones to mark progress toward the goal.

What do you need in order to make and implement a plan?

Three considerations are shown on Worksheet 4. Discuss each of these in your group:

1. What are the reasons (root causes) that this goal needs work?
  - What do we need to have in a plan?
  - What tools do we have?
2. What are strategies for overcoming challenges or barriers to achieving the goal?
  - What are the barriers and approaches to remediate each?
3. Determine an approach.
  - Current ways you can suggest changes at your work place (try to include what works in the plan)
  - How others view health and safety (guidance on who will/won't be supportive)

Now think about how to reach your goal. An example of a Plan for the goal of remediating missing items from the HazMat cart is shown as Example Worksheet 5: Build a Plan. Columns are provided for

- steps in the plan
- who is responsible for each activity
- any anticipated barrier and approach
- date to be completed
- reason for delay
- date completed, even if not successful

Your facilitator will provide you a hard copy and/or electronic version of Worksheet 5: Develop a Plan. Use this blank form, or develop one to better fit the approach needed to achieve your selected goal.

Describe your plan to other participants.

We hope you will provide feedback to us as the steps in your plan progress, so we can improve training and document successes from the training. Identifying barriers that are encountered is also important and this information will be used improve training.