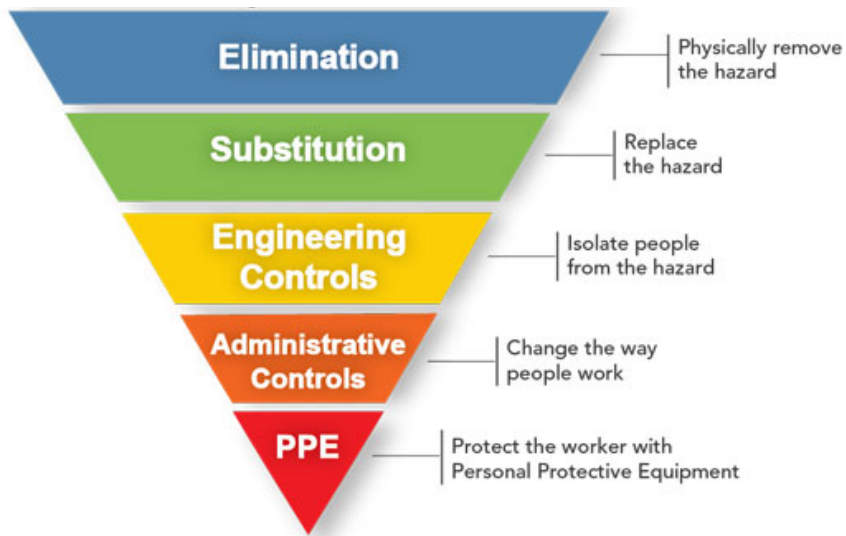


Hierarchy of Controls for COVID-19 Prevention



COVID-19 controls are now top of mind and are becoming integrated into existing safety work planning, such as; Scheduling, Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), Safe Work Procedures, Structured Toolbox Talks, and Plan Of the Day Cards (task specific JHA)

These above mentioned examples are created with the help of the Hierarchy of Controls. Safety Committees and safety professionals are heavily relied upon to plan for actual and potential hazards and implement these controls with input from management and workers alike and then review these controls for their effectiveness. It is also the responsibility of all stakeholders to constantly learn from experiences both positive and negative in order to continuously improve.

The application of the hierarchy of hazard controls is a recognized approach to containment of hazards and is fundamental in the world of occupational health and safety. An understanding of the strengths and limitations of each of the controls enables those tasked with planning to focus on the most effective methods first until those options are exhausted and then move to the next level of control. You will notice that some controls have elements of more than one category.

Below is a breakdown of the hierarchy of controls as it pertains to aiding in controlling the spread of COVID19 in the workplace.

Elimination

The most effective means to prevent exposures to COVID-19 is through elimination – physically removing the hazard (COVID-19); Which for the workplace is eliminating or reducing the amount of people in an area as well as not allowing people with symptoms or have come in contact with COVID19 into the workplace along with other criteria that will eliminate the chance of COVID19 entering the workplace.

Engineering Controls

Physical barriers established to restrict and control worker access to areas and limit numbers to ensure physical distancing; access to adequate amounts clean water and soap, handwash stations and hand sanitizer dispensers; Using equipment to eliminate the need for workers to work in close contact. (two scissor lifts instead of one, lifting devices to allow one worker to remain on ground level while other work is active in a scissor lift). Increased air filtration devices with HEPA filters. Extra exits and entrances, planned walk paths, redesigned work areas to reduce grouping of workers. Actual physical barriers between workers and public or between workers themselves.

Administrative Controls

Many of the controls for COVID19 related hazards are attached to the administration level of the hierarchy. The main forms are, policies, procedures, education, scheduling, and signage

POLICIES; New rules for the workplace that are designed to eliminate or reduce threats of COVID19. Examples would be – all workers must maintain social distancing or anyone entering the premises must complete a screening questionnaire.

PROCEDURES; the steps that will be created out of new polices. JHA, POD cards

Education; training all employees on the symptoms of COVID10 or training on handwashing. Toolbox talks

SCHEDULING; stagger break times or shift start times to reduce congestion of workers. Coordinate with other trades to ensure rooms do not exceed capacity that cannot offer safe work distances of 2 metres or more.

SIGNAGE; Placing appropriate messaging around a workplace directing or reminding all what are the rules of this area or the workplace.

PPE

The hazard is now potentially at the person and specialized personal protective equipment is now necessary to protect the worker. PPE including gloves, protective eyewear, coveralls, respiratory protection of all kinds may be required. Keep in mind this is the last form of defense and should only be used in concert with the above controls.