

Health & Safety: Hazard Information

Physical Hazards

Physical hazards are those hazards arising from work-related tasks as well as from the physical environment in which work is being performed.

Examples of Physical Hazards

1. Task-Related Physical Hazards

- Refers to the hazards that can arise from physically engaging in the production process, excluding those associated with exposure to chemical or biological agents.
- Handling extremely hot or cold objects
- Handling sharp objects
- Lifting heavy objects
- Handling objects that vibrate for an extended period of time
- Engaging in repetitive motions for an extended period of time

2. Hazards from Physical Surroundings

A worker's physical surroundings can strain the body and lead to injuries. The effects of these hazards tend to manifest themselves after prolonged exposure; however there are some physical hazards that can cause immediate harm.

Potential for immediate harm:

- Small or congested areas
- Untidy areas
- Dilapidated equipment and furniture
- Foreign debris in the air (especially for the eyes)

Potential for harm after prolonged or extreme exposure:

- Extreme hot or cold environment
- Excessive noise
- Extreme lighting (dark or bright)
- Contaminated air
- Extremely Low Frequency radiation (ex: electrical wiring, electrical equipment)
- Non-ionizing radiation (ex: radiofrequency, microwave, ultraviolet, infrared)

- Ionizing radiation (ex: x-rays, gamma rays, alpha radiation, beta radiation)
- more so than those listed above, prolonged and extreme exposure to ionizing radiation can be very dangerous and should be avoided