

Hazard Meaning and Definition

What is Safety Hazard?

In the field of occupational health and safety the word hazard is a little bit difficult to understand and explain since it is mixed with other terms like danger and risk.

We can **define hazard** as a cause or source of potential loss / danger.

Hazard can be a situation or an object that may cause harm to personnel or property if handled improperly.

If a person is working on height there is **hazard of fall** that could lead to death or injury.

If welding work is being done there is a fire hazard, there can be fire if proper measures are not taken.

In short we can say that “**A Hazard Can Cause Damage or Harm**”.

Workplace Safety Hazard Definition

Below are few definitions of safety hazards:

- Something that has the potential to cause harm(loss)
- The potential to cause harm, including ill-health and injury, damage to property, plant, products or the environment, production losses or increased liabilities. (Source: Successful Health and Safety Management, HSG65, UK HSE)
- The intrinsic property or ability of something (for example, work materials, equipment, work methods and practices) with the potential to cause harm.(Source: European Commission Guidance on risk assessment at work)
- A source of exposure to danger. (Source: South Africa Occupational Health and Safety act 1993)

Examples of HSE Hazard

Following are few examples of different safety hazards and harms:

- **Welding Process:** Fire hazard, fumes, eye damage etc.
- **Lifting of Weight:** Fall hazard, lifting gear failure
- **Wet Weather/Floor:** Slip/Fall
- **Natural Hazards** like floods, earth quacks, lightning etc.
- Running plants and machinery
- Work environments like prolonged working in hot or cold weather and lone works

- **Hazards related to working methods** like working at height and labours working on production lines
- Articles & tools i.e. chisels
- **Electricity:** Electrocution, electric shock, death, burn
- Substances and chemicals can cause occupational diseases
- **Fire:** Burn, collapse of structure

Types of Hazards

There are different type of hazards i.e. biological, chemical, ergonomics, natural hazards and physical hazards etc.