

Time Management: Taking Time for Hazard Assessments Picture This



This image shows a busy industrial worksite at the start of a shift. A crew has just received a task assignment and is moving quickly to begin work on recently modified equipment. Tools are already out, a supervisor is occupied on a phone call, and a pre-task hazard assessment form sits on a nearby table – blank and unsigned. The equipment has not been inspected for new risks, energy sources have not been verified as isolated, and workers have not been briefed on what could go wrong. One worker is already positioned in a zone that would be dangerous if the equipment activated unexpectedly.

In fast-paced work environments, pressure to start quickly is one of the most common

reasons hazard assessments get skipped or rushed – but unassessed tasks don't become safer once work begins, they become more dangerous. Before any task starts, stop and take the time to identify what could go wrong at each step and communicate the hazards and controls to everyone involved. A hazard assessment does not need to take long, but it does need to happen. Those few minutes could be the most important minutes of the workday.