



Occupational Health Unit

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Environmental & Occupational Health Assessment Program

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KEEPING CONNECTICUT'S WORKERS HEALTHY

WORKER SAFETY AFTER A NATURAL DISASTER

After a hurricane or other natural disaster, worksites can be filled with many new and unrecognized hazards. These can include electrical hazards, chemical spills, water contamination, unsafe walking surfaces, and structural weakening.



In 2005, three major hurricanes (Katrina, Rita, Wilma) struck the southeast United States. Site cleanup and recovery activities from these storms claimed the lives of 29 workers and injured many more. Almost half of all workers killed were victims of being struck by objects or fatal falls. Employers can help protect their workers after natural disasters by utilizing Job Hazard Analysis tools.

FAST FACTS FOR EMPLOYERS

An important and effective tool for employers preparing for business operations before, during, and after any type of natural disaster is the Job Hazard Analysis. The basic formula for Job Hazard Analysis includes the creation of a work plan based on specific tasks, identification of any potential hazards, and choosing/ applying appropriate controls. Even if job hazard analysis have been done at the worksite in the past under normal working conditions, natural disaster conditions can pose new hazards to workers that need to be considered.

6-Step Job Hazard Analysis:

1. List all the jobs that will be performed by staff.
2. Break each of the jobs down into simple tasks.
3. List the different environments and situational job tasks to be performed.
4. List the hazards that could be encountered for each task.
5. List the controls that should be implemented to reduce or eliminate employee exposure to those hazards.
6. Prioritize each task.

Worker training is another important part of an employer's emergency response and disaster recovery activities. Some items of particular interest after natural disasters include any new hazards introduced into the work environment, the need for and provision of basic and higher level personal protective equipment (i.e. respirators, protective clothing, hard hats), confined spaces issues (silos, trenches, and utility vaults), safety of walking and working surfaces, and the presence of new electrical and chemical hazards.

INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

OSHA Hurricane eMatrix: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hurricane/index.html>

OSHA Job Hazard Analysis Workbook: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3071.pdf>

OSHA Respiratory Protection eTool: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory/index.html>

OSHA Eye and Face Protection eTool: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/eyeandface/index.html>

OSHA Construction Safety eTool: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/construction/index.html>

