S.O.R.T Tool Meeting Kit



The acronym S.O.R.T. is a tool that can help remind us to take steps to address hazards and create a safe work environment. S.O.R.T stands for **Stop, Observe, Recognize, and Take Ownership.**

Workplace hazards, when combined with demanding task, organizational factors, work environments, personal factors, and external factors can produce unacceptable safety risks to field personnel and may lead to severe workplace injuries. Workplace accidents are associated with potential negative economic and non-economic impacts on quality of work, worker productivity and work schedule.

S.O.R.T DEFINED – A WORKER´S CHECKLIST

1. **Stop-** It is necessary to take time not only at the beginning of the work shift to evaluate both the work area and equipment for hazards, but also as conditions change. When we are rushed we miss the small details that matter. Always take the time before a task begins to evaluate the work task you are about to do. Anytime conditions change or things are not going as planned, stop work and evaluate what needs done to correct the situation. Identifying workplace risk is to find anything which could potentially cause harm to the people working on your site. The physical work environment, equipment, materials, and substances used by your staff need to be assessed.
2. **Observe-** A safety observation report is a tool used by safety officers to document hazards as well as safety commendations in the workplace. Observe common working areas, equipment and procedures which can affect employee health and safety. Different workplace industries require different key areas of focus when it comes to safety. However, here are the important categories to inspect when performing a safety observation report for any given workplace:
3. **Common Working Areas**

These are areas where workers spend most of their time either working or passing through. A safe and tidy working area can minimize the risk of employee injury, health hazards and productivity loss.

What to check: lighting, accessibility, temperature, humidity, dry floor/ even pavement, no sharp edges of work tables or chairs, appropriate work tools and ergonomics.

1. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE is used to protect employees from physical harm. Not wearing or wearing damaged

equipment may lead to serious injury.

What to check: availability, condition and appropriateness of PPEs, damage, ratio of employees vs available PPE and training.

1. **Fire Safety Equipment and Procedures**

Safety equipment and procedures must be available and accessible at all times to employees in case of fire-related emergencies.

What to check: fire extinguishers, evacuation posters, fire drills, first aid kits, emergency lighting, sprinklers, fire alarms and emergency exits.

1. **Electrical Hazards**

Faulty and messy wiring can cause trip hazards, fire, electrocution and property damage.

What to check: wiring, outlet locations, extension cords and electric equipment.

1. **Proper Storage**

Proper storage of documents, materials and equipment can minimize trip hazards and injuries from manual handling.

What to check: tidiness, appropriate signage, proper location storage and ergonomic manual handling.

3. **Recognize-**It is necessary to be able to recognize the hazards of your work:

Recognizing workplace hazards helps to keep employees safe and reduces costs related to injuries and illnesses, including those leading to lost productivity. Make a checklist to identify all workplace areas in need of a safety inspection. The checklist should include buildings and grounds, equipment and machinery, and chemical storage and handling. Inspect buildings and surrounding grounds for possible hazards. Ensure pathways and walkways are clear. Inspect stairways; ensure that stairs have slip-resistant surfaces on the steps and handrails when required. Exits must be clearly marked and visible with the use of illuminated signs. Secure entrances as necessary to prevent unwanted or unauthorized visitors. Check the conditions of ceilings, ramps and driveways.

Inspect equipment and machinery for safety. Train employees on proper equipment use; they should wear appropriate protective gear when required. Identify any electrical, ventilation or maintenance issues. Review the maintenance schedule and identify any shortcomings.

4. **Take Ownership- Ownership is the most important part of the process.** Once the hazards are recognized on the job, own them. See through that they get properly corrected in a timely manner. It is easy to just walk past an issue and think that it is not your problem. In reality any hazard on the job is your problem. If someone else is hurt or there is property damage due to the hazard you recognized and walked past, it will have some sort of effect on you. Incidents affect a job site as a whole, and depending the severity, can have far reaching consequences for an entire company. There is also guilt you could feel due to an injury occurring to a coworker from a hazard you could have addressed. Taking ownership means more than just communicating the hazard to the other people in the work area. Stop work if necessary and get the right people involved to correctly address the hazard.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ‘TAKING OWNERSHIP’?

- taking full responsibility for your duties.
- delivering those duties on time and up to spec.
- recognising the impact your actions have on your colleagues and customers.
- communicating effectively and working with others to ensure the successful delivery of a task or project.
- going the extra mile to ensure a customer is happy or financial goals are met.
- admitting to and addressing any mistakes you make.
- looking beyond the remits of your job description to consider the bigger picture that the organisation operates within.

FINAL WORD

We often complete many of the same work tasks in the same way every day. This makes it easy to fall into a trap of having blinders on to hazards that could lead to an injury. Use the S.O.R.T. tool to remind yourself to take the time to really evaluate your work area for hazards and to take ownership of them.