



Step 4: Fix Hazards

Creating solutions

When a fix is not obvious, supervisors, employees and safety committee should work together to create potential solutions.

Employees play a key part in this step since they are very familiar with their work, and might already know of quick and easy ways to fix the problems.

It helps if everyone agrees on the problem you're trying to solve before you start looking for solutions. The '5 Whys' method in the sidebar is a good way to get to the heart of the problem.

Solution brainstorming

Put together a small team of people that work in the area where the hazard exists. The team lists ideas to fix the problems. Here are some effective hints for effective brainstorming.

- Start by having each employee think up and write down solutions on their own. Then have the group get together and discuss the ideas, and see if this generates even more ideas.
- All ideas from the session should be recorded on sticky notes and placed on a flipchart or wall so they are visible to everyone. Similar ideas can be grouped together.
- Brainstorming is not the time to decide if an idea will work. Put every idea on the flipchart or wall and evaluate them later. Sometimes an idea that seems like it won't work can be slightly changed to become a workable solution.

USING 5 WHYS TO FIND THE ROOT CAUSE OF A HAZARD

You can find out why a hazard exists by repeating the question "Why" enough times to get to the root cause of the problem.

Five is a general rule of thumb – you might need more or fewer questions.

Problem: You see an employee repeatedly bending over to grab parts from a box placed on the floor.

You ask the following questions:

1. Why is the employee bending over?
Answer: The parts box is placed on the floor by the warehouse.
2. Why does the warehouse place the box on the floor? Answer: This is the only open space.
3. Why is this the only open space?
Answer: There is no room on the workbench.
4. Why is there no room on the workbench? Answer: Unused tools and supplies are stored on the workbench.
5. Why are these things stored there?
Answer: Tools were not placed in the tool chest and unused supplies were not returned to the supply room.

Solution: Put unused tools and supplies in their designated storage places, creating space on the workbench for the parts box.



These resources can be helpful in creating effective solutions:

- L&I [Simple Solutions](#)
- L&I [Ideas Bank](#)
- Your industry association
- Equipment and tool vendors
- L&I [list of solution ideas](#) that have been proven to work and others that are best to avoid

Picking a solution

Now that you have come up with a list of potential solutions, the next step is to pick the most effective ones to try. Focus on the jobs with the most problems or are easiest to fix first.

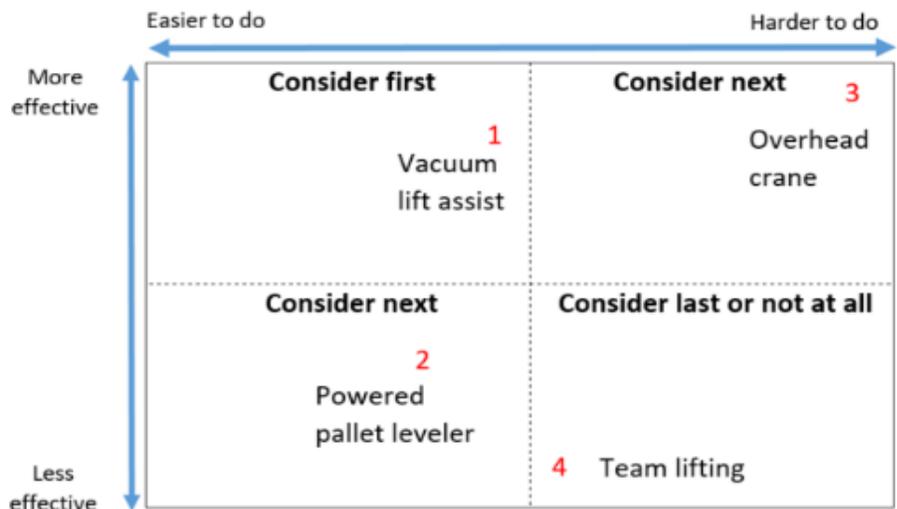
Solutions with the most “yes” answers to the three questions below should be worked on first.

1. Can the solution be quickly put in place?
2. Does the fix greatly reduce the likelihood of an injury?
3. Can employees easily use the solution?

One way to rank potential solutions is to use a matrix like the one to the right.

Rate the solutions based on how much effort it would take to put them in place, and how effective you think they will be in fixing the problem.

This can help you to prioritize which solutions to implement right away and which to do later. It can also help you decide which solutions shouldn't be considered at all.



You can create a larger version of this matrix, and use it to sort the sticky note ideas from your brainstorming sessions.



1. Involve Employees

2. Find Hazards

3. Assess Hazards

4. Fix Hazards

5. Check for Success

Implementing solutions

Now that you have decided what fixes to put in place, use the Hazard and Solution Tracking Worksheet found in [Step 2](#) to:

- Identify who is responsible for each solution
- Assign completion dates and track progress

It is important to remember to train your employees on any changes to processes, equipment and tools.

Keep in mind that sometimes success takes more than one try. Don't be discouraged if your first solution needs some modification to be fully effective.

Finally look at other areas at your workplace to see if the fix can be used elsewhere too.

Next Step

After the fix has been in place for a while it is time to check if it was successful in [Step 5](#).