

Small Hazards Matter — Report Them Early

Small Issues Become Big Problems When We Ignore Them

On any worksite, the big, visible safety items such as vests, gloves, and hard hats can be easy to notice. However, the hazards that usually lead to incidents are often the small things we walk past, such as:

- Loose grating
- Tools left on a walkway
- A vibration or noise that “doesn’t sound right”
- A guard not fully closed

They may not feel urgent in the moment, but these minor issues are often the first warning signs of more serious problems.

Why Reporting the Small Stuff Matters

When hazards go unreported, we lose the opportunity to fully understand and address the root causes of potential incidents. This can lead to repeated issues and a greater reliance on PPE as a last line of defense, rather than eliminating the hazard at its source. Early reporting allows us to identify trends, correct underlying problems, and reduce the risk before it escalates into a more serious event.

The Hierarchy of Controls reminds us that the safest solutions are the ones that remove or substitute the hazard.

Most Incidents Start Small

Many serious events begin with something minor, such as:

- A leak that slowly gets worse
- A temporary workaround that becomes “the way we do it”
- A missing or loose bolt
- A housekeeping issue that grows over time

Catching these early is the difference between a quick fix and a major event.

What Early Reporting Allows Us to Do

When you report hazards right away, we can:

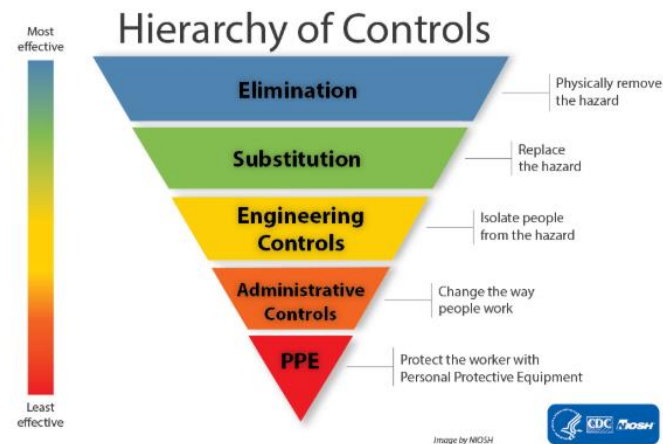
- Put temporary controls in place
- Review whether the hazard needs an engineering fix
- Break unsafe habits before they form
- Reduce dependency on PPE and administrative controls
- Prevent injuries before they occur

Your eyes and voice make the biggest difference.

The Bottom Line

- No hazard is too small to bring forward.
- No observation is too minor to matter.
- Early reporting allows us to fix issues before they turn into incidents and keeps everyone working safely.

At CEDA, there are several tools available to help report small hazards as soon as they are identified. Regularly inspecting the workplace for hazards can help identify deficiencies so that they can be addressed before an incident occurs. The Intervene, Correct and Eliminate (ICE) Card is used to assist in identifying workplace hazards and implementing appropriate control measures to eliminate or minimize the risk (applying the Hierarchy of Controls). By taking action early and using these tools consistently, we can prevent small issues from becoming serious incidents and help ensure a safer workplace for everyone.



A Quick Check in Your Work Area

As you walk through your job site, ask yourself:

If this stays the same for a week, will it get worse?

Would someone new to the area notice this hazard?

Are we relying on PPE or a “be careful” message instead of a better control?

If the answer is yes to any of these—report it. It’s that simple.