

ADDRESSING HAZARDS: THINK BEYOND MAINTENANCE

When your committee identifies a hazard, remember that the solution doesn't always require a work order flagged as "health and safety." WorkSafeBC's hierarchy of controls encourages us to start with the most effective options—elimination and substitution—and work downward through engineering controls, administrative controls, and finally PPE.

Site-based committees often have real power at the administrative level. Adjusting work practices, posting signage, rethinking traffic flow, or changing cleaning or supervision schedules can meaningfully reduce risk right away. For example, if a slippery floor can't be resurfaced immediately, adding prominent signage and altering cleaning routines can significantly reduce the hazard in the meantime.

A Practical Example

If a school receives new shelving units that require wall anchoring, the JOHS team may identify tip-risk as a potential hazard. While waiting for Facilities to anchor the unit, the school can take immediate administrative steps—storing the furniture in a secure space away from students or positioning it in the most stable orientation. Then, a standard work order is submitted. This does not need to be flagged as an urgent health and safety request because the risk has already been mitigated.

A contrasting example that should be flagged as health and safety:

If your committee identifies exposed electrical wiring, a compromised structural element, or another condition that poses a direct and immediate risk of injury, this requires an urgent, health-and-safety-flagged work order. In such cases, access to the area may also need to be temporarily restricted until the hazard is controlled. These are situations where administrative steps alone cannot adequately reduce the risk.

If You Do Flag a Health & Safety Work Order

If your JOHS committee does identify a work order as a health and safety concern, please ensure your supervisor completes the required field in eBASE that asks:

"What mitigation steps have already been taken?"

This is essential information for Facilities staff—it helps them understand the immediate risk level and prioritize appropriately.

In addition, Facilities staff will respond to all health and safety-flagged requests through the discussion function in eBASE. This ensures:

- additional information can be gathered quickly,
- communication is clear and documented, and
- the loop is fully closed once the hazard has been addressed.

**Empower your team
to ask:
What can we do now,
at our level, to reduce
this risk?"
Small, proactive steps
add up—and keep
everyone safer.**