

Hierarchy of Controls

The Hierarchy of Controls is a system used in workplace health and safety to minimise or eliminate exposure to hazards. It is a fundamental principle in most states' Occupational Health & Safety legislation and guides the priority of control measures to address identified hazards.

When looking at problems identified on church properties, the hierarchy of controls should be considered to decide on control measures to be implemented. Options 1, 2, and 3 represent the best methods of addressing problems identified, as they require some physical change to the property, equipment being used, or the manner in which the task is being carried out. Using one of these approaches will usually be effective. Options 4 and 5 are the least effective, as they rely heavily on the person performing the task and are therefore not foolproof.

Table of Controls

| | Control Level | Description | Examples |
|---|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Elimination | The best way to control a hazard is to eliminate it entirely. | Remove the hazard by removing unsafe equipment or ceasing to perform a particular task. |
| 2 | Substitution | Look for another way of performing the work. | Use a less caustic cleaning substance, or a safer piece of equipment. |
| 3 | Engineering Controls | Physically change the workplace or equipment being used. | Use a guard, modify a piece of machinery, or automate a process. |
| 4 | Administrative Controls | Explain to people how to perform a task properly. | Introduce a written work procedure and train the people performing the task. This is a less effective method of controlling risks as it relies on the person performing the task following the procedure. Without supervision, this does not always happen. |

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|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| 5 | Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | This is the least desirable control measure to use. | Supply protective equipment, but people may not always use it. It is impossible to supervise those doing the task constantly. |

When implementing control measures, always start at the top of the hierarchy (Elimination) and work your way down. Only use a lower-level control when it is not reasonably practicable to implement a higher-level control.

Remember, the goal is to create the safest possible environment for all who use your church facilities. Your diligence in applying the Hierarchy of Controls contributes significantly to your overall safety management efforts.

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