

Using Industrial Hygiene Results for Safety Management System Improvements

Industrial hygiene (IH) is a key element of any comprehensive safety management system (SMS). Industrial hygienists (sometimes called bioenvironmental engineers) are the professionals who support the IH program. Their job is to anticipate, recognize, evaluate, and control physical, ergonomic, chemical, and biological exposures. They conduct baseline, compliance, and periodic IH surveys to continually identify, assess, and measure workplace hazards.

Industrial hygienists prepare IH reports (sometimes known as biosurveys) to summarize their findings and results. This one pager provides ideas to use IH report findings and results for SMS improvements.



Your Safety Office needs to maintain an effective relationship with the Industrial Hygiene Office to promote ongoing IH support and SMS improvements

Image retrieved from [Yahoo Images](#) (Creative Commons)

EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION

Notifying your workforce of IH results supports an important employee right under 29 CFR 1960—the right to access records and documents regarding exposures. Consider the following tips to inform your employees of IH report results:

- Communicate any and all IH report results to all affected employees, no matter the results
- Decide which communication methods work best for your organization (e.g., one-on-one discussions, safety toolbox talks, morning meetings, safety huddles)
- Consider inviting industrial hygienists to briefings to explain and clarify IH results and answer questions
- Be sure to verbally review and discuss the findings and recommendations
- Use understandable terminology and language
- Document employee notification of IH results – while not required, some organizations have employees sign the back of IH reports to indicate the results were received, communicated, and understood
- Post a copy of the IH results in an area readily accessible to employees

BRIEFING MATERIAL

- ✓ Identified hazards and possible exposures in assigned work areas
- ✓ Protective measures and controls
- ✓ Actions employees can take to protect themselves against harm
- ✓ Actions others are doing to promote personnel safety and well-being (e.g., additional sampling, installation of controls)
- ✓ How to locate the IH results after the briefing

HAZARD ANALYSIS, INSPECTIONS, & DOCUMENTATION

IH reports provide details on hazards, possible exposures, controls in place, and recommended controls. This information can help you complete:

- Hazard analyses, such as job hazard analysis (JHA), activity/area hazard analysis (AHA), and personal protective equipment (PPE) hazard assessments
- Safety and health (S&H) documentation (e.g., programs, policies, procedures, training)
- Routine self-inspections, especially since these inspections are not conducted by S&H professionals



Image retrieved from Microsoft (Creative Commons)

Follow these recommendations to improve your hazard analyses, self-inspections, and documentation:

- Compare existing documentation against the hazards and controls identified in the latest IH report
- Integrate IH findings and recommendations into hazard analysis documents, inspection checklists and reports, and S&H documentation
- Communicate changes with affected employees and routine self-inspectors
- Refer to IH report results when analyzing or setting up new processes

PROTECTION MEASURES & HAZARD ABATEMENT

Act on any IH-related findings and recommendations. Consider these tips to address identified findings and recommendations:

- Capture all findings and recommendations on the abatement log
- Prioritize the items for correction
- Assign responsibility and timeframes to each finding
- Refer to the IH results to identify appropriate protection measures and hazard controls
- Request additional IH assessments to validate employee protections
- Conduct follow-up studies and evaluations to confirm implemented protections and controls are effective in mitigating/reducing identified hazards
- Track IH-related findings to ensure appropriate action is taken
- Keep leadership informed of open action items

HAZARD CONTROL SELECTION

- Review recommended controls – these can provide feasible, logical solutions to address identified hazards
- Identify PPE requirements and recommendations
- Follow the hierarchy of control to select possible controls
- Implement interim protection measures and controls, if needed

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website: <https://www.smcx.org/>.