

TOOLBOX TALK: Hierarchy of Controls

Toolbox talks are a great way to share important information that can keep your workers and business safe. Take a few minutes to read through this document with your staff and contractors.

The **hierarchy of control** can be used to reduce and control risks.

The hierarchy of control uses a step-by-step approach to eliminating or reducing risks, with risk controls ranked from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest.

One control or a combination of controls can be used to reduce risk.

1. Elimination

Where possible, eliminate or remove the hazard from the workplace. For example:

- Remove faulty electrical equipment
- Eliminate the risk of electrocution when felling trees close to electric lines by having the electricity supply authority turn the power off

2. Substitution

If you are not able to remove the hazard from the workplace, substitute or replace it with a lesser risk. For example:

- Use mechanical felling processes rather than manual felling

3. Isolate

If not possible to either eliminate or substitute the hazard, isolate it by placing it in an enclosed or restricted environment. For example:

- Use a machine to shield workers from hazards on a log landing

Hierarchy of Control



4. Engineering Controls

This involves using special equipment to assist with managing the risk. For example:

- Using ROPS and FOPS to protect the operator from the risk of a machine overturning or objects falling on them

5. Administrative Controls

This step involves:

- Regular testing and inspection of equipment
- Conducting training
- Rotating staff to reduce risk of fatigue
- Safe working practices

6. Personal Protective Equipment

Use personal protective equipment. PPE should be used in conjunction with the previous steps. PPE includes:

- Protective clothing, gloves, masks, safety glasses, face shields, safety helmets, steel capped boots, non-slip mats etc.

Source: Safe Work Australia, 2023

Refer to key legislation and supporting documents for assistance:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Safe Work Australia Guides