

StepBack 5 X 5 Job Safety Activity

Co-Working Solutions Pty Ltd

What Is StepBack 5 x 5?

StepBack 5x5 is a simple activity that encourages workers to identify and deal with hazards associated with all tasks for all jobs and is completed at **each step in every job - all day long**. It helps to promote a hazard management culture through continual self monitoring of your job site and work activity. The higher the risk factor of the job you are undertaking, the more important it is to do effective StepBack 5x5 reviews all day long.

The Risk Management Model

All jobs should be assessed for their risk potential. These simple questions should be asked:

1. What is the sequence of steps in the job?
2. What are they hazards at each step in the job?
3. How can we control those hazards?

These are the three fundamental steps in the completion of any risk assessment and any formal Job Hazard Analysis. However, once complete, any risk assessment must be continually monitored for any changes in the work environment or in the job task itself that the risk assessment might not have identified. *This is the value of StepBack 5x5 – in a high risk, complex and rapidly changing work environment it allows you to continually monitor the job and stay on top of hazards.*

How Does a StepBack 5x5 Work?

To complete a StepBack 5x5, follow these steps:

1. Take 5 steps back from your job –

Put your tools down and step back from your job far enough to get a “big picture view” of what you are doing. Actually putting your tools down and stepping away from the work face allows you to disengage from the task and see things differently. You will more easily be able to spot hidden hazards and changes in the work environment.

2. Take 5 minutes to discuss –

- What has changed in the work environment?
- What are the known hazards in the next step of the job?
- What are the new or unforeseen hazards that we previously weren't aware of?
- Do we have these hazards adequately controlled? Or should we stop the job and reassess what we are doing?

This step is an active conversation between workmates on the job, not a silent meditation. A StepBack 5x5 doesn't work if you don't talk to each other.

3. Repeat the process for each identified step in the job, all day long, from the beginning of the job to the end of the job –

Whether you have completed a formal JHA or not, the StepBack 5x5 process does not work effectively if you don't continue it all day long for each step of the job. The step you miss will invariably hide the hazard that injures or kills you.

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4. Review –

- While you are working, monitor both the quality of the work, the interaction of your workcrew and the safety of their actions.
- Stop the job and get everyone to refocus on the hazard and the control measures whenever it's needed.
- At the end of the job, review the entire job and get feedback from everyone how it went. How did you feel? Did anyone get pushed outside of their comfort zone? What did you do really well? What will you improve on next time?

It's impossible to learn without feedback. If you actively review what you did, and discuss what you learned, you probably won't make the same mistakes the next time you find yourself in a similar situation. If you don't review – you probably will – and the next time, that mistake may injure you.

The Value of the Model

The StepBack 5x5 is such a powerful and effective work safety tool that we recommend everyone in high risk work environments do them continually all day long. If you adopt this practice, some day a StepBack 5x5 will save you or one of your workmates from a serious or fatal injury.

Don't ever feel afraid to stop a job when you think things may be unsafe. Under the OS&H legislation, all workers have a right to withdraw their labour if they feel a job is unsafe. Don't wait until someone is about to be injured.

Any responsible employer should insist that you also stop the whole job – if it's not safe for you, then it's not safe for anyone. You can all get back to work once you've discussed the situation and are satisfied the hazards are adequately controlled.

At Co-Working Solutions, we understand safety management and how to make it work at the job site. For more information, contact us at:

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