



# SAFETY IS AN UPHILL BATTLE: LEVELING THE WORKING FIELD

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*Presented to the*  
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF  
**SAFETY PROFESSIONALS**

San Diego Chapter

# Introduction

Lee F. Donahue, CHST, CUSP, OHST



- Dad
- Electrician
- Teacher
- Consultant
- Safety Guy

Common thread...

Mr. Fix-It

# Think About Safety in Society

Society sends mixed messages...

- Drive it like you stole it
- Git 'er done
- Whatever it takes

We tend to blur the lines  
between humor and reality



# Home Life

- Cluttered stairs
- Blocked exits
- Trip hazards
- Cords

No one is more  
full of false hope than  
a mom who puts items  
on her stairs for her  
family members to  
carry up.

@amyandartdesigns

# Out and About

## Behaviors in Public

- Kids in shopping carts
- Get in and go mentality
  - Walk around?
  - Seat belts?
  - Lights?
- Feet on dashboard in cars
- Crossing without looking



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# Baja Challenge

- Professional builders
- Highly skilled
- Work at high end firms
  
- Saturday
- Different country
- Not “real work”



# How Did We Get Here?

- Systems are safer than ever before
- Cuts both ways
- People take them for granted

The result?

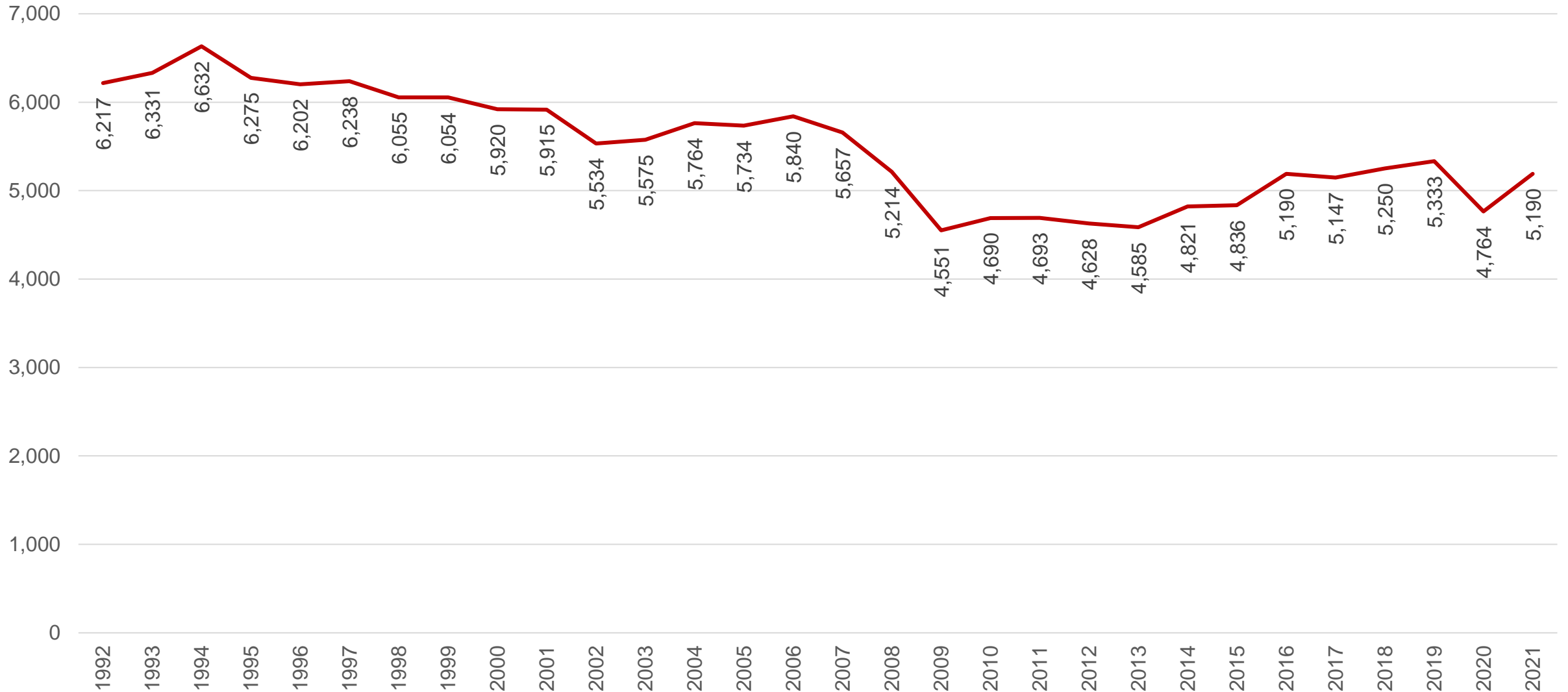
Improvements, but not perfection



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# Workplace Fatalities

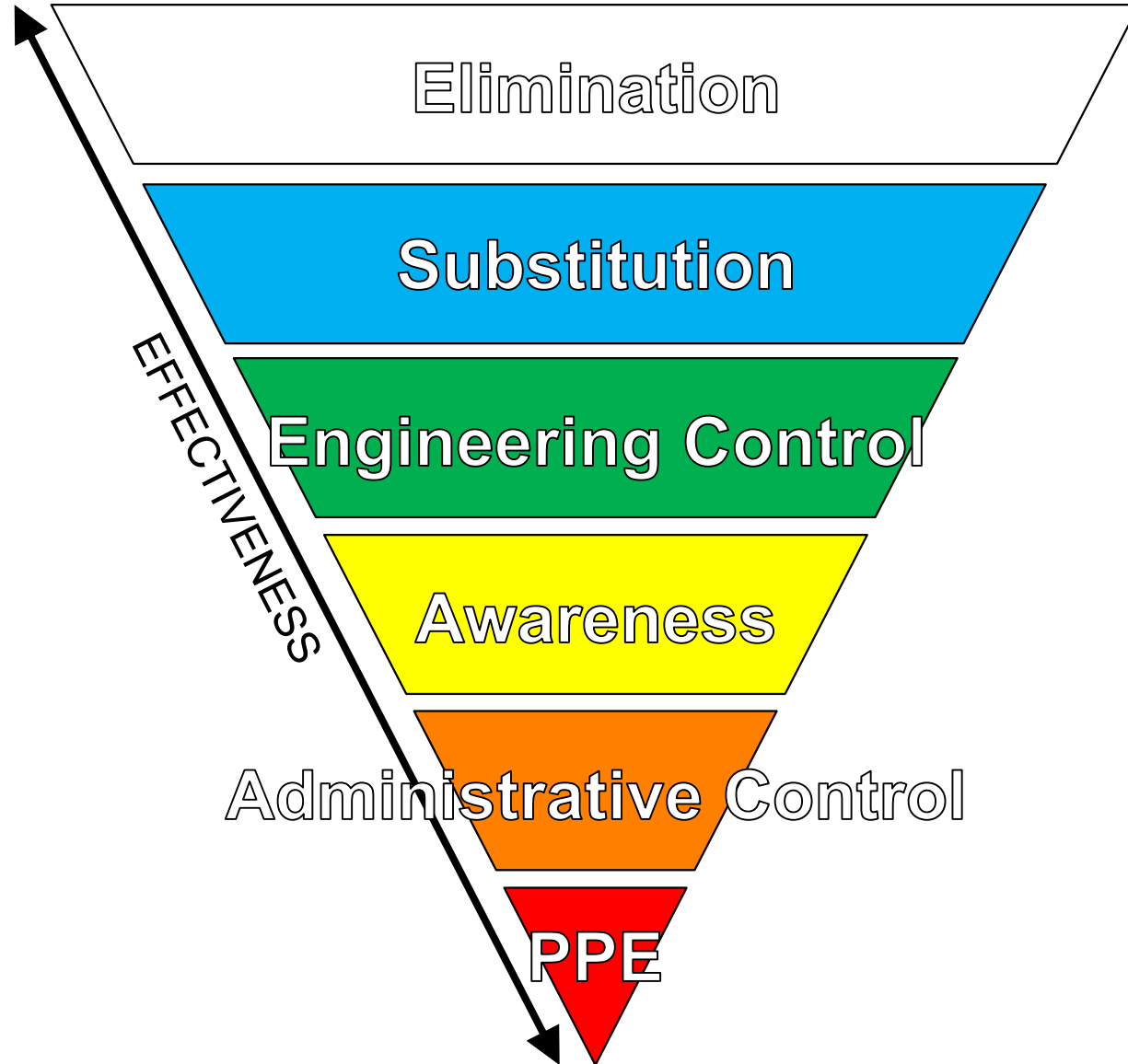
Number of Fatal Work Injuries, 1992-2021



Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, USDL-18-1978 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Summary 2021



# Hierarchy of Controls



- Physically removes the hazard
- Replaces the hazard
- Isolates workers from the hazard
- Communicates the hazard
- Changes the way the work is performed
- Protects the worker with Personal Protective Equipment

# Better Lucky or Good?

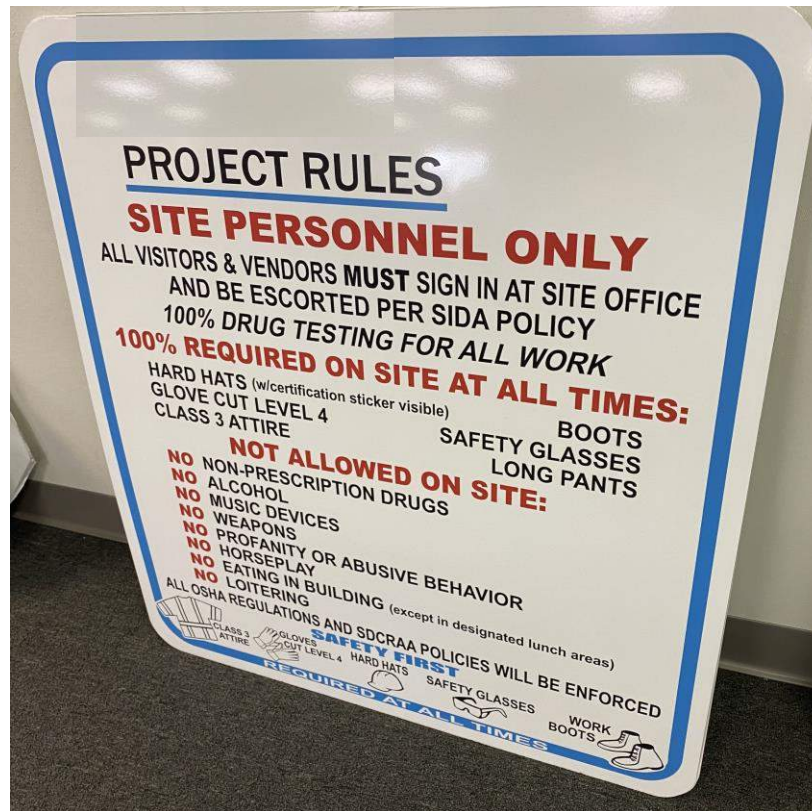


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# At the Workplace

Think About the Hierarchy of Controls Again...

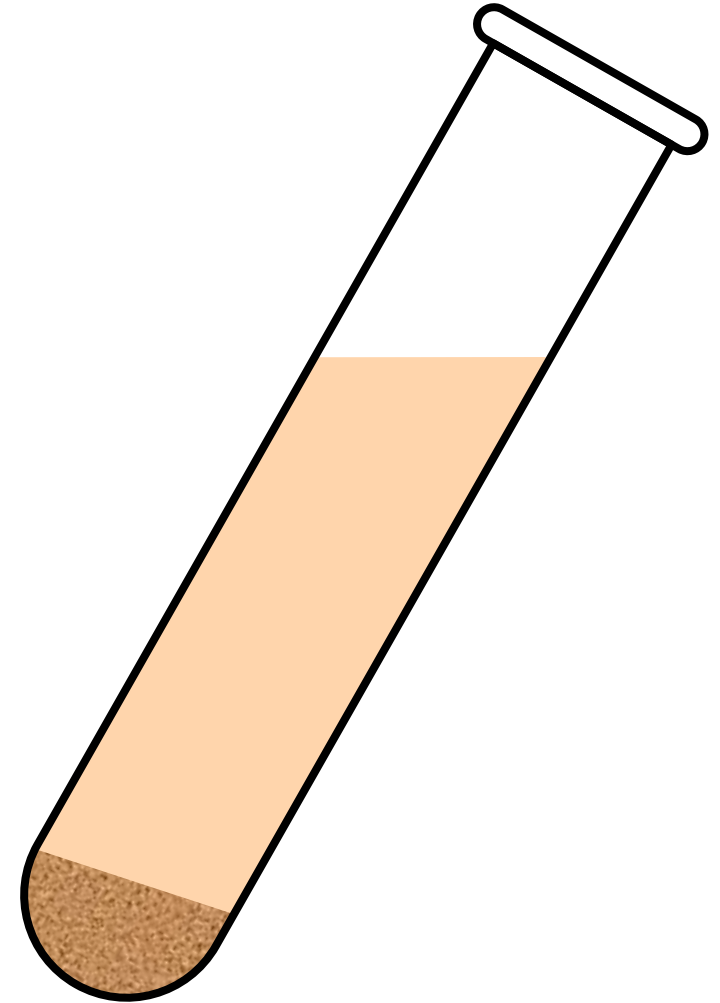
- Feels like PPE first
- Easy to forget or not know that the other controls have already been applied



# How Do We Fix It?

If you aren't part of the solution, then...

You're part of the precipitate!



# Exercise Vocal Leadership



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“Leading by example” often not enough

- Communication
- Direction
- Explanation
- Accountability

# Follow By Example



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Often, we aren't the "leader" per se

- Eyes are still on you
- Poor behavior undercuts the goal
- Can cause domino effects

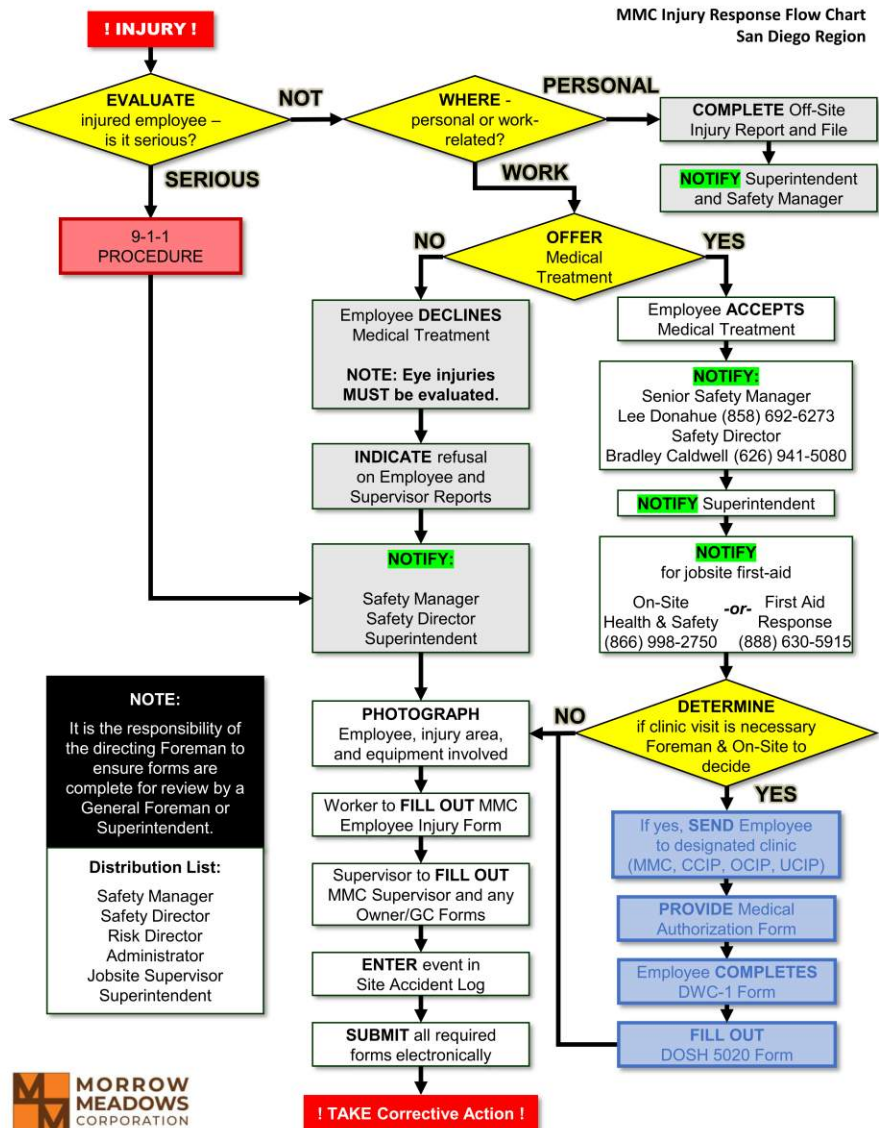
# Be Personal



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- “Acknowledge your own fallibility”
- Learn names
- Expect the same standards of others that you hold yourself to
- LISTEN to answers
- Consider if you were the worker – would you be satisfied?

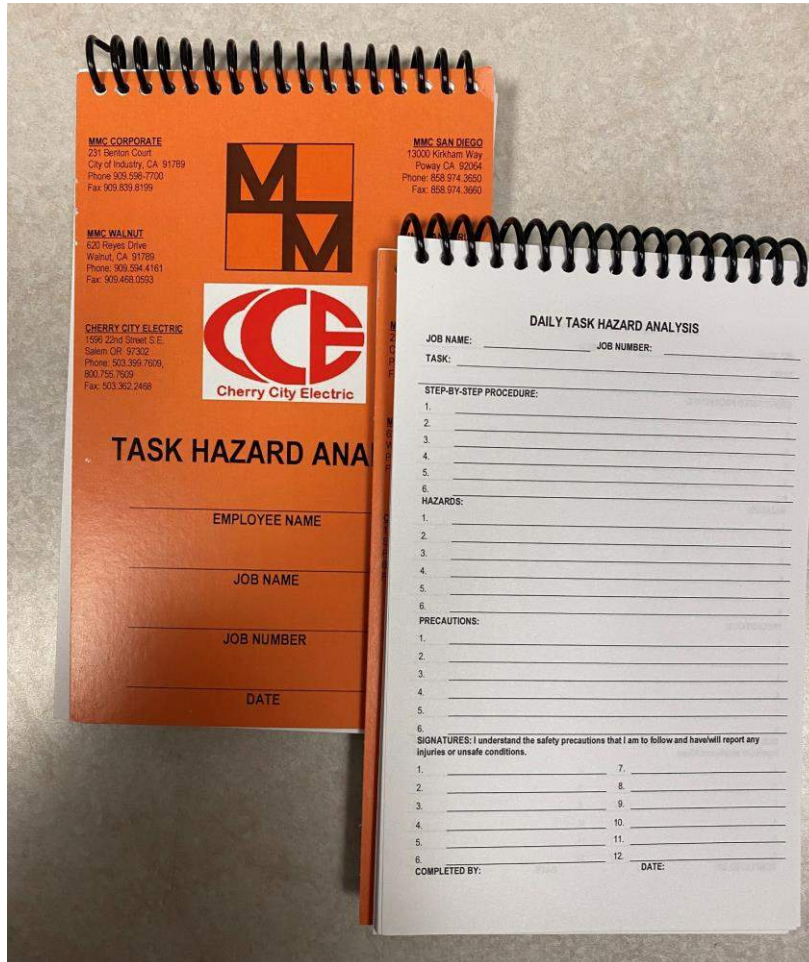
# Provide a Plan



- Develop a strategy
- Make it accessible
- Keep it as simple as feasible



# Worker Self Accountability



- Include workers in process
- Be transparent
- Keep it accessible
- Safety Third?

# Teamwork

Develop Awareness and Empathy



- Safety Third? Safety Always?
- Positive Peer Pressure
- Gives people the opportunity to develop into leaders

# Call It For What It Is



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- Don't pretend the standards are different at work vs. "real world"
- Challenge workers to find the fallacies
- Use the examples already discussed

# Do the Job Correctly

Define “correctly” with EASE

- Effective
- Accurate
- Safe
- Efficient

We do the job correctly.



**THANK YOU!**

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