

STOP–THINK–ACT

Safe Work Plans (SWP) are an administrative control used for preparing workers to perform tasks safely and successfully. An SWP provides written instruction on how to complete the task and identifies key safety considerations, including the necessary steps to mitigate the risk of being injured. A Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) compliments SWP's because they are performed at the field level before a task begins or when it changes. JHAs prompt workers to think about the job and the possible dangers they may face. Safe work planning and JHAs increase worker safety and awareness and enhance a mine's health and safety program. Identifying hazards before the job starts or reassessing after the task has changed, including a deviation from the SWP, is essential to the safe work planning process. Otherwise, hazards that were not previously accounted for may be overlooked, resulting in unsafe working conditions.

Over the last few years, several investigations have identified poor work planning, which has resulted in severe injuries, including fatalities in British Columbia's mining industry. In 2018, a worker drowned when using an amphibious excavator to tow a barge, a task not identified in the SWP or assessed by a JHA. In 2020, a supervisor was fatally injured after being struck by a blocked tailings line being cleared with a telehandler boom. The original SWP did not include instruction on clearing a stuck hose, and the SWP deviation or use of a telehandler boom was never assessed through a JHA. In 2021, two incidents were reported where SWP's were not in place. In the first incident, a worker was using a grinding wheel without proper eye protection; a wire ejected from the wheel into the worker's eye. In the second incident, a worker accessed a live breaker panel causing a minor explosion while manipulating switches.

These incidents highlight the importance of following an SWP and completing a JHA. In both the fatal incidents, SWPs were initially completed but failed to meet their objectives of guiding safe work as the tasks proceeded without proper assessment or reassessment. In the other incidents, no SWP's were in place to prevent unsafe work. Safe work planning is a critical step in preparing workers and helps guide the planning, initiation, and ongoing safe work performance.

When the task changes, the task must be reassessed to ensure work can continue safely

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Everyone involved with the job should regularly monitor for new hazards. Assessing risk and identifying hazards before work starts or when the job changes doesn't take much time. Workers, including supervisors, are reminded to **STOP-THINK-ACT** before undertaking a task. In addition, supervisors and mine managers are reminded of their obligation to keep workers safe while working through proper instruction, training, and supervision. Taking time to recognize the potential dangers of a job can save a life!